

= Free Collars Kingdom =

Free Collars Kingdom ( ????????????? , Fur? Kar?zu Kingudamu ) is a Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Fujima Takuya . The individual chapters were serialized in Magazine Z , and compiled into three tank?bon volumes released by Kodansha from February 2003 to March 2004 . Set in Ikebukuro , Japan , the series revolves around the struggle of two stray cat groups . Cyan , a young newly abandoned cat , joins one of them , the Free Collars . Each cat has two appearances ; to humans , they appear as normal cats , but to other cats , they appear as catboys and catgirls . Each cat has their own attack , and some carry weapons .

While drawing the series , Fujima changed his art style from one used previously , though he was asked to use his original styling . He also noted that the series was different from his other works , and was unsure of how the audience would respond to it . Free Collars Kingdom is licensed for English language release in the United States by Del Rey , which released the series in 2007 , and in the United Kingdom by Tanoshimi , which released it in 2008 . It was licensed for regional release by Tong Li Publishing in Taiwan , Jonesky in Hong Kong , and Star Comics in Italy . Free Collars Kingdom garnered mixed reviews from critics . The series was praised for its artwork and humor , but criticized for its plot and characters .

= = Plot = =

Cyan is a young Abyssinian cat who lives with a boy named Kokoro and his parents in Ikebukuro . When Kokoro becomes sick , his parents abandon Cyan , leaving him in the basement of their apartment complex . Soon he discovers a group of stray cats called the " Free Collars " , who control East Ikebukuro and believe that collars hold down cats ' " Wild Spirit " . Cyan is given the opportunity to join , provided that he removes his collar , the symbol that he is still Kokoro 's pet . Cyan declines , opting to remain in the basement and await Kokoro 's return . However , Cyan comes to realize that he must join the Free Collars if he hopes to survive and reunite with Kokoro . He removes his collar and joins them in their fight against Siam , a rival gang leader who wants control of East Ikebukuro and plans to rule the world and enslave humans .

In his ensuing adventures , Cyan grows close to the Free Collars , yet still longs for Kokoro . He becomes frustrated by Siam 's continued advances on East Ikebukuro and his teammates ' unwillingness to mount an offensive attack . Convinced that Siam must be destroyed , Cyan confronts her and learns she was once a Free Collar until her brother , Puriam , was chased onto a road by humans and killed by a bus . Cyan is able to defeat her , and , reminded of Puriam , Siam silently wishes him farewell . Soon after , Cyan learns that Kokoro had recovered but is moving away . Saddened by the thought of leaving the Free Collars , he meets Kokoro at the train station and gives him his torn collar as a memento . Kokoro promises to visit Cyan , and Cyan returns to his new friends .

= = = Characters = = =

The Free Collars are a group a stray cats who have removed their collars and refuse to have any relationship with humans . Cyan is a young Abyssinian who joins the Free Collars after being abandoned . He tends to be childlike , which sometimes irritates other members of the group . Scottie is a Scottish Fold who spends much of her time with the Free Collars but is not a member . She was discovered by Amesho , an old American Shorthair and leader of the Free Collars , in a bookstore . Char is a Chartreux and was once part of the " Cat House Kingdom " , a household of high @-@ class cats , but left , feeling she was being used by humans . Rat is a Korat and the most talented with gadgets and technology within the group . Coon is an easily angered Maine Coon who specializes in swimming . Minky is a Tonkinese who befriends Cyan and Scottie and is named after her mink @-@ like fur .

On the opposing side is Siam , a Siamese cat who controls all of West Ikebukuro and is the leader of the Siam Army . Siam 's principal henchman and general of the Siam Army is Kline , who has a

distinct hatred for humans and sees them only as her potential slaves . Acting as Siam 's bodyguards are A @-@ Ko and I @-@ Ko , two Manx cats . Having been previously discriminated against for their lack of tails , A @-@ Ko and I @-@ Ko pretended to have tails , fearing rejection from Siam .

= = Production = =

Fujima had originally been asked to draw Free Collars Kingdom in a style he had used previously on other works . However , his drawing style evolved during the development of Free Collars Kingdom .

In the first volume of Free Collars Kingdom , Fujima expressed his feelings on the series ' release , while also stating that " it went to the press before I knew it " . Fujima noted that the series was " quite a bit different " compared to previous series he had worked on , and that he " had no idea how " the audience would respond to it . He explained that " if you have fun reading it , then I 'll be happy " . In volume two , due to having left @-@ over " open pages " , Fujima used the extra pages to " describe characters " and " have fun " .

= = Media = =

Written and illustrated by Fujima Takuya , the individual chapters of Free Collars Kingdom were first serialized in Japan in Magazine Z from 2002 to 2004 . Those chapters were collected and published in three tank?bon volumes by Kodansha , with the first released on February 21 , 2003 and the last on March 23 , 2004 . On July 27 , 2010 , the company Ichijinsha released a reprint of the series in two collected volumes .

The series is licensed for English language release in North America by Del Rey , which published the series from January 30 , 2007 to July 31 , 2007 . In the United Kingdom , it was published by Tanoshimi from February 1 , 2007 to August 2 , 2008 . It is also licensed for regional language releases in Taiwan by Tong Li Publishing , in Italy by Star Comics , and Hong Kong by Jonesky .

= = = Volume list = = =

= = Reception = =

Free Collars Kingdom received mixed reviews from English @-@ speaking audiences . Matthew Alexander of Mania praised the artwork , noting that characters were " cute and sexy with a wide variety of clothing that does a good job expressing the character 's personality " and that , overall , the artwork was " very clean with attractive characters and well @-@ detailed backgrounds " . In his review of the second volume , Alexander wrote that " so far , the story continues to be a fun examination of what life might be like from the cat 's point of view , but I don 't know how the whole Wild Cat storyline is going to be wrapped up in only one more volume " . In his review of the third volume , Alexander felt that " the story probably received an early ending " , but concluded that " despite the series only being three volumes , it really is a worthy read and quite funny if you 've ever owned a cat " .

In reviewing the second volume , Manga Life 's Dan Polley felt " Fujima [ did ] a very good job of laying down the framework and executing a plot for fun and carefree adventures . " In his review of the third volume , Polley wrote that " the art is enjoyable , but can sometimes be overloaded " and that " often there are sequences in which there is too much going on and it is hard to decipher exactly what the eyes are seeing . " However , he noted that " fans of the series will continue to enjoy the animalistic cheekiness . "

Writing for School Library Journal , Benjamin Russell criticized the series for being " slow and formulaic " with " similarly formulaic " character designs that made " it seem staid " . He also stated that the " animal world " portrayed could be fun and that it was " interesting to see humanoid

characters so tiny next to artifacts of human culture " , but it failed to hold the reader 's interest . Casey Brienza of Anime News Network heavily criticized the story , grading it as an " F " and calling it " a pastiche of a large number of manga and anime clichés , not because it seems like it was intended to be a pastiche , but because the manga artist [ Fujima ] flatly is unable to sustain a coherent , unified storyline that is his own , original creation . " However , Brienza did praise the artwork , grading it as an " A " and calling it rich and " beautifully drawn " . In Manga : The Complete Guide , Jason Thompson notes that the series ' " hook " is that characters are all " drawn as hot anthropomorphic cat @-@ girls and cat @-@ boys " and praises it for having a " unique twist " .