

Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom FAQ/Walkthrough

by Vegita

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Ninja Gaiden III
Game by Tecmo
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES)

General FAQ/Walkthrough
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===== Ninja Gaiden III =====  
-----I: Introduction-----  
===== Ninja Gaiden III =====
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Welcome. My name is Eric Johnson, sometime answering to the moniker "Vegita" and sometimes simply going by Reverend Eric. I see you want help for the Nintendo game "Ninja Gaiden III". Good for you! This increasingly difficult game is NOT an easy task, so there's no shame in turning to someone (even me) for help. Besides, I've been playing this game ever since it came out, losing myself at least once a year to the entire Ninja Gaiden trilogy. Hey, it's tradition, and it's one that I've upkept for a while now. As such, I like to think of myself as proficient in the game, beating it numerous times. Therefore, writing a guide for it shouldn't be TOO much of a task...

First off, let's get one thing straight: Even though I like to think of myself as Vegita (baha), I will try to write from an un-biased point of view (although I still think I'm the best at everything). Second of all, if I catch anyone copying all or part of this FAQ, ANY part of this FAQ (not counting little, inconsequential sentences like "First off, let's get one thing straight), I will destroy you. I will rip you limb from limb like the excessively weak individual you are, and then I will sue you for copyright infringement. Well, ok, maybe I'll just sue you, but if I got the chance I'd certainly go for the ripping of limbs from other limbs.

Third of all, I do not own the rights to this game, the names of the characters in this game or FAQ, or have any ownership whatsoever of this game (except for the cartridge sitting in my room, that is). Those are the property of their

respective owners. If I find a website with this FAQ on it, and it has been changed in any way, does not give me proper credit, or is selling it without my knowledge and consent, then I WILL have my lawyers contact that site. Are we clear (this means YOU, Vertsk8!)?

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-----II: Game Story-----
=====

The Ninja Ryukenden (original title, meaning "Ninja Dragon Attack Story") series first appeared in arcades in 1988, initially created as an Arcade beat-em-up game. This ridiculously difficult game depicted a single Ninja, named Ryu Hayabusa (and - oddly enough for a ninja - unarmed for the majority of the game), sent on a quest to avenge his father's death. Ninja Gaiden ("Ninja Side Story", as the game was renamed for Americans) failed to captivate audiences, most likely due to its insane challenge rating, troublesome controls, lack of plot, and general muddiness in gameplay. You would beat up enemies, using the same few punches and kicks, then press onward to a boss that could kill you in 1 hit. There's nothing quite like an excessively difficult game, designed to suck the quarters out of your life, to make you appreciate home consoles. Thankfully, the Ninja Gaiden saga did not end at the arcades. Tecmo had enough foresight to know that home consoles were the way to go, and so that is the way they went.

The following year, Tecmo released Ninja Gaiden as a Nintendo Entertainment System cartridge. Shunning the previous style of game, Ninja Gaiden instead took on a 2-dimensional platformer mode of gameplay. Once again thrust into the role of Ryu Hayabusa, this time you were introduced to a plotline through the use of cinematics within the game. It opens with a panning shot of a field, where 2 ninjas are dueling. Upon one of them falling after a jumping slash, we are given a narrative through text - the fallen Ninja, a man named Ken, has left his son Ryu a note explaining where he has gone. Reading the note, Ryu finds that - should Ken not return from his trip - he is to take the family's sacred Dragon Sword and travel overseas to America. Once there, he needs to meet a man named Walter Smith, whom was an acquaintance of Ken's. This is where the first stage picks up, with Ryu travelling down a street towards Jay's Bar, combatting lowly enemies and using his impressive jumping, climbing, and bounding skills to traverse the landscape. The plot of this game would eventually take Ryu to caves, forests, lakes, ice fields, mountains, jungles, and temples, and would have Ryu facing off against expert fighters, demons, and a powerful magician - Jaquio - seeking to unleash a Demon's wrath upon the world.

...of course, Ryu defeated Jaquio, killed the demon, and saved the girl. As for his father, he may or may not have survived - it depends on whether or not you read the "Worlds of Power" Nintendo book. Although short, I found the book to be surprisingly well written, and suggest picking it up (although it does try to avoid violence as much as possible, proof enough by the lack of a knife in Ryu's hand on the cover of the book). Now, back to the story of the game.

Ninja Gaiden was a huge success, bringing wonderfully creative changes to the platform genre. The cinematic elements helped tell the plot of the game quite well, and the action within the game was top-notch - granted, the difficulty could get insanely at some points, almost to the point of smashing a controller out of frustration, but these sections COULD be bypassed. I still think it's a true test of a gamer's skill and patience to be able to beat Ninja Gaiden I.

As you might have expected, Ninja Gaiden had a sequel. "Ninja Gaiden II - The Dark Sword of Chaos" continued the plot of the first by introducing a new

villain, Ashtar, claiming that he was the master of Jaquio. Ashtar decides to press onward with his plans, unimpressed by Jaquio's death and failure to summon the demon. Elsewhere in the world, Ryu is attacked by men dressed in the same garb as Barbarian (the first boss in Ninja Gaiden I). He fights his way through the enemies, only to find himself facing off against a strange monster named Dando in a trainyard. Upon beating his adversary, a blond man from the shadows steps forward and tells Ryu of what he needs to do next (before disappearing back into the shadows). Thus, Ryu is sent on another quest, this one culminating in another gigantic life-or-death battle inside a giant fortress (and, oddly enough, also taking place in a 3-part battle with Jaquio...doesn't that guy EVER stay dead?). So Ryu defeats the madman again, and everyone goes home happy.

Although lacking in the challenge of its predecessor, Ninja Gaiden II was still a huge hit. Logically, NG III would follow shortly. Thus, let us fast forward to Ninja Gaiden's opening story:

---Ninja Gaiden III: Prologue---

Irene Lew, the CIA operative that befriended Ryu in NG I and II, is snooping around a factory in a rocky, cliff-edged landscape. Unfortunately, she is not as secretive as she hopes to be, and is spotted by a shadowy figure. This figure chases Irene to a cliff, where she is unfortunately left with no other escape routes. Turning to see whom has been giving her chase, she is shocked to find that it is Ryu. He laughs and wonders if she realizes that her life is over. Wanting an explanation, Irene is instead treated to more threats - anyone who has seen the inside of the laboratory is not allowed to live, and so she shall now die. Irene, backing away, takes one step too far and slips from the cliff, falling to her doom. "Ryu" looks over the cliff, then returns to the factory.

Ryu (the real one) finds that Irene has gone missing, and sets out to locate her whereabouts. In his searching, he finds that she has been murdered, and that HE is the one that killed her. Knowing that he obviously did not, he retraces her steps, arriving at the factory scene where she died. Ryu enters the factory, and is immediately beset by strange creatures and machines...

```
..=-++x,.                               ...and thus, Ninja Gaiden III begins.
x###++x+=++x###
+##  =xx+++++X#=
##  -Xxx++++++x#
#  #x+====++++=#
#  #+=-x#+x+++++#
#  -+-#x- , , ; ; =X#           ~Ryu sez: "Let's take out these mad creatures
#  .#####              and find Irene's killer, yo!"
;#  =##  -+#####-
#  .-+#-+-, .. #
#  - +++++##+##
-x# , =+ , ==+xxx#.
### X ##X; , -##
##- #+x;+###X#.
```

```
===== Ninja Gaiden III =====
-----III: General Info-----
===== Ninja Gaiden III =====
```

Before we get to the walkthrough, it helps if you know how to control Ryu in his plight. Therefore, let's discuss the controls of the game, how to read the screen, and the various items you collect. How's that sound? But before we

get to that, I should probably give a quick rundown on how to play the game.

~A~ Gameplay

=====
Ryu Hayabusa (of the clan Hayabusa) moves about in this horizontal (and occasionally vertical) platformer, using his weapons and maneuvering skills to both dispatch enemies in his way and leap from platform to platform. Each stage has a variety of powerups, items, and enemies, all located in the same locations each time (thankfully, though, the "elusion" glitch has been removed; for more info, go down to the "Various" section and read up on it); however, the difficulty arises when particular combination of enemy types and their locations are intertwined with the jumps you have to make. Predecessors of this game, such as Castlevania and Super Mario Brothers, were among the first to create such a concept...however, the Ninja Gaiden series took this conceptual style and sharpened it to a point of mass difficulty. Enemies, projectiles, and tricky jumps all combined into a wicked ballet of evil, your ninja dancing about the screen as he fights for his life.

...but I digress. Ryu jumps, climbs, and slashes through his opponents, using special attacks to handle enemies in different styles (above and below, distanced, etc), ultimately allowing him to progress further in the stage until he reaches the boss. These boss figures have a lifebar similar to Ryu's, and he must work their lifebar down to zero while keeping his own intact (duh...to quote Yogi Berra: "the best way to win is to have more points than the other guy when time runs out"). If Ryu's life runs out, or if he falls onto spikes or off of the screen into a pit, then he loses a life and is forced to restart at the beginning of the stage (or certain checkpoints, if he has reached one); he also loses whatever Ninjitsu Art he possessed, resorting to the Windmill Shuriken again (it is his base art, and he always starts with it). If he loses all of his lives, he must use a continue (you get 5) and then restarts the whole stage over. Run out of continues and it's game over, chum.

So that's it - run out of life, lose a life. Lose all lives, lose a continue. Lose all continues...and you lose the game. Wee!!!

~B~ Controls

- =====
A BUTTON - Attack. By pressing the A BUTTON, Ryu will swing the Dragon Sword horizontally in front of him. This is his primary attack, never requiring anything special to be performed. He'll never lose his sword, so make good use of it. It may not have that good range or damage, but it's a weapon you'll always have.
- DIRECTIONAL PAD UP + A - Ninjitsu Attack. By holding UP on the Directional Pad and pressing the A BUTTON, Ryu will perform a Ninjitsu Attack. Which attack he will perform, as well as whether or not he will have the energy necessary to perform it, depend on what the most recent Ninjitsu Ability he has obtained and how many Ninpo (ninja points) he has picked up. More information in regards to Ryu's Ninjitsu abilities will be covered in the "Items" section.
- B BUTTON - Jump. By pressing the B BUTTON, Ryu will jump upwards. As you'll notice, his Ninjitsu training

gives him a very impressive vertical jump, which you will use to traverse the landscapes and levels. This is use (arguably) more than the Dragon Sword, so you could say it's Ryu's #1 feat/ability.

- DIRECTIONAL PAD LEFT/RIGHT - By pressing either of these, Ryu will run to the left/right (corresponding to which direction you press). Obviously, this is important, since it allows you to move. You can control Ryu in the midst of a jump (B BUTTON) by pressing LEFT/RIGHT as well, giving him more control in directing where he lands.
- B BUTTON (TOWARDS A WALL) - Wall Climb/Jump. If Ryu jumps onto a wall, he will automatically grab onto it (using hidden "claws", which Ninjas were known for concealing within their sleeves, to make climbing easier). Once on a wall, Ryu can climb up or down it by pressing the DIRECTIONAL PAD UP/DOWN (depending on which direction he wants to go). Although Ryu cannot attack his enemies with the Dragon Sword while perched (apparently because it requires too much work to unsheath, strike, and resheath the weapon), he can still use a free hand to perform any Ninjitsu Attacks he (might) have. While perched, simply pressing the B BUTTON will cause Ryu to use the Ninjitsu Art he currently has equipped (LEFT/RIGHT will direct the attack in their appropriate directions). To dismount from the wall, simply jump off and direct Ryu to where his landing point shall be, or climb all the way off of the bottom of the wall (where applicable).
- B BUTTON (ONTO AN OVERHANG) - Grab and Hang. Certain ledges and overhangs can be grabbed onto by Ryu by holding UP when jumping to them, allowing him to hang from and move LEFT/RIGHT (depending on the direction pressed on the Directional Pad). While hanging, much like when perched on a wall, Ryu is relegated to the use of his Ninjitsu arts instead of his sword. In order to dismount, Ryu can simply jump down (Hold DOWN and press the B BUTTON), jump to the left or right (LEFT/RIGHT + B BUTTON) or jump up onto the ledge (only certain ledges can be walked upon; press UP + B BUTTON).
- START - Pause. By pressing the START BUTTON, you pause the game. Go ahead, take a breather from the game!
- SELECT - Nothing. What a waste of time! I wish they'd implemented a "Ninjitsu Art Select" ability, via the Select Button, that would allow you to switch from art to art at will. Since he does not, Ryu is forced to use the most recent art he has picked up. I call this "Early Platformer Syndrome" (EPS), since this sort of special-item regime was also followed by Contra, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and Castlevania. Wait a second...those are all Konami games! I blame you, Konami! You influenced Tecmo to put that idea into their game! YOU!!!

* - This begs the question of why can he NOT swing his sword while hanging from

is just how much life they have remaining. Unfortunately, Ryu's sword and Ninjitsu arts only do 1 point of damage per hit, so you're going to have to play the hit-and-run game a lot. Ryu simply can't tank like his opponents can, so going toe-to-toe is pretty much ALWAYS a mistake.

~D~ Items/Weapons

One of the most integral factors of the game are power-ups, 1-Ups, and points that Ryu can pick up throughout each stage. However, the most important series of items he can lay his hands on are the Ninjitsu abilities, since they give Ryu an added style of attack with which to destroy his enemies. Each one can be found by slashing open a floating orb (or "Item-Holding Container") that particular stage contains, and is picked up by simply walking over it (or jumping through it, or whatever - you simply have to come in contact with it). These orbs will flash what their contents are, allowing you to find out what you'll be slashing at before you...uh...slash at it. Let's discuss the items now.

---Ninjitsu---

The various Ninjitsu Abilities that Ryu can attack with all take a different amount of Ninpo to use, and have different damage levels and properties all their own. Unfortunately, you can only carry one Ninjitsu Ability at a time, so make good use of the one you have, and make sure you don't accidentally pick up on you don't want!

By the way...yes, I do use bad ASCII art to display all of the various items and Ninjitsu Arts. Hey, I never use ASCII art; besides, isn't it easier to look at what eat item looks like rather than reading a description and hoping that it looks (on the screen) how you imagined it? Oh yeah, and if you have trouble seeing what each drawing is, try squinting - it works for me!

```
.=- ,====xxxx+=,          WINDMILL SHURIKEN - 10 Ninpo
### # .# .. x##          This more powerful version of the Shuriken is larger and
# #-- # #;          more damaging, although it costs more to use it. When
# #,;==#####+          Ryu throws the Windmill Shuriken, it will travel
# #-,-##+.,; =          horizontally across the screen (in a straight line)
# # ++ -x-+ .##,          before halting in mid-air and returning on its original
##- +-++ -x. X, #.          path. It's applications are a little different than the
. -;..##+,-# #.          Shuriken, since you'll have to get in a little closer if
-#####+ ;--.# #.          you want to hit enemies in front of you; however, if you
# # -;# #,          jump over the Shuriken as it returns, it will pass behind
##X #, # +##.          Ryu, then turn around and boomerang back towards him
.+xxxxx+++.= -;          again. By keeping up a consistent jumping pattern, you
                          can have a veritable Windmill Shield that flits about
                          your Ninja, protecting him on a horizontal axis.
```

```
.+=xxx+==+xx+=,          ART OF FIRE WHEEL - 8 Ninpo
### .. == . x##          A more potent Ninjitsu magic than the Shurikens, you'll
# =##+ #,          most likely find yourself using this against bosses due
# # -#..X+ # #.          to its power and range. Ryu throws his hand outward,
# ; += ,## . #.          sending several bursts of flame at a diagonal-upward
# #X, X#, #.          level. These bursts expand, giving excellent anti-air
# x- =x #.          coverage and doling out a good bit of damage (each burst
#=#. #X. x# -#.          hits an enemy, meaning several bursts can do a LOT of
# - = #.          damage). Its Ninpo cost makes it a tad costly, but if
# xX, .x# #,          you save up your points you should be able to tackle most
-,#X # ,#xX#= #.+##          any problem with a little flame (several little flames,
```

X===++=-----==+=##= actually).

```

      .==+====+xxx==--,          ART OF FIRE DRAGON BALL - 8 Ninpo
### X#+ .. # -##           The antithesis of the Art of Fire Wheel, the Art of Fire
#      x      x#, #,       Dragon Ball provides a fiery offense at a downward angle.
# ,x#-   =### #.         Unfortunately, most enemies will be at either a level
#;+# ;## -, #.           field with Ryu or above him - because of this, his
##x #+;x;x## ,#.         opportunities to use AoFDB are quite limited. In order
#-   ###=x-=# -##.       to feasibly use it in most situations, Ryu will have to
#      . = x# = #X;#.     jump and fire off a salvo...which is usually not a wise
# #XXx .#=- #.           maneuver, given the fact that he has to then concentrate
# #x = #,                 on jumping, connecting with the Ninjitsu attack, then
##+ # -#X x##.           landing safely so that he isn't in harms' way. I'll
      .==+xXXX+=+xx+;       stick with the Art of Fire Wheel, thank you.

```

```

      .+=xxx+--=xxx+=,          INVINCIBLE FIRE WHEEL - 20 Ninpo
###      +#      x##           Hoo boy...lemme tell ya about the Invincible Fire Wheel
#   ###+ +###+ #,           Ninjitsu attack. For a fairly tidy sum of Ninpo, you can
# #, # ,; =# = #.           have Ryu completely inscorled in flames, making him
# .# ,=# ,+x .##.           invincible for a short period of time. That's right, you
#X, ,##X #-;=+#.           can run through enemies and dispatch them simply by
#xx+#      ## #.           having this Ninjitsu art activated (although you can
# ## x###X .X#.           still die by falling down pits or onto spikes). If you
# # .+      #x #.           have this art, keep it for as long as possible so you can
# ;#- # = #,                 save it for those trouble spots!
###      #X#- +##.
      .+xxxx+=-+=xXx+;

```

```

      . . . . .          VACUUM WAVE ART - 10 Ninpo
      +. ;x..+= +.       Another oddity of an art, Vacuum Wave has Ryu shoot out 2
== # = -- ,# ;x         crescent blades, above and beneath him, that weave up and
# # .#==X- #, #         down before disappearing. Unfortunately, these provide
-x# .; . ;. X#=         absolutely NO horizontal coverage, meaning you'll have to
# .##      ##- #         be directly above-below your enemies to use it. Also, if
=#, ,+### ###x; #+     you're directly above/below an enemy, you're ill-equipped
-x. .,=##+, , .x+     to protect yourself if the attack misses or fails to kill
# -# -;,- # = #       them; thus, it's not all that good in terms of defense,
=- #- == .# ,x         either. This attack it so situation-oriented for its own
      x -# x+ +,         good, and I highly suggest you not bother picking it up.
      ,. -- . ,

```

---Items---

Although not quite as important as the Ninjitsu abilities, Ryu can collect items to aid him in his quest. Some give him more Ninpo, some increase his Ninpo Capacity, some restore health, some simply give points (good enough for the gaining of extra lives), and some are 1-Ups. Let's look at each item, eh?

```

-----;,+ -          BLUE NINPO
###x#####X#xx#-     These handy little items are your primary source of
#x;                      .#x # Ninpo, given the fact that they are quite abundant
# = ;### ## -# #X #     throughout each stage. By picking one up, you (re)gain
#+.; # -# #X #          10 Ninpo, not exceeding your maximum (your max starts out
#+,-;-##x ##X #X #     at 40, and can increase later on). Since each art takes
#+, ##.#;.=+ x#x #     a different amount of Ninpo, it's good to have as much on
#+ X#x      ##x #       hand as possible. However, if you don't need any, don't
#=#.#x ##### xx #     bother going after one if it means risking your life.
### ., . . . . ,## = #   These are bluish in color, with white writing on them.
=+++xxxxxxxxx+=.-x#     You'll have to excuse my rather shoddy ASCII art
, x+++++++==X###       representation of it.

```



```
-;-----;=,
###+x#####x+#=#,
#,;. ,x= #
.X-.-### x## .# ++ x
.X=,-, # .# x+ x
.X;=# #X- ##x ++ x
.X=- #X #; ;# = += x
.X=. =x- #x= x
.x-;x#+;#####x.== x
-+xX.....,X+- +
-----..,X
# .-----=X##
```

ORANGE NINPO

Even handier (and rarer) than the Blue Ninpo, Orange Ninpo icons fully restore your Ninpo count to its max. Of course, these are going to be harder to come across, but in later levels where you depend on Ninjitsu Abilities more and have a higher Ninpo total, finding one of these can be VERY beneficial. Don't forget, though, that the folks who make the levels for this game realize how useful Orange Ninpo is, and will often put them in troublesome sports where you're likely to be ambushed or killed by going after it. Use judgement before you go after one, ok?

```
X+++++-.
+=-----=+.
,+++++;
.,,.
,x---=x;
,x---=x;
,x-..;x;
#####+. =xx+.#####
#+-xx#X+-,,;+X#xx-=#
,x##x+-++++-+xX#x+,
-x#x+,;-----;,+x#x-
+xx=-.....,--xx+
#xx---;.....,---xx#
#Xx+++-----=+++xx#
###x+;-+++++=;+x###
###X+x+=; ;-x++XX###
```

HEALTH BOTTLE

Oh yeah, this thing is nice. Ryu will probably take a licking throughout the game, which is where this comes into play - pick it up and you'll restore a good portion of Ryu's life (10 bars). For some odd reason, these seem to appear in places where you not only need the life, but can easily access them (as opposed to 1-Ups or Orange Ninpo). It's almost like the programmers began to realize how difficult their game was, and therefore strategically placed these bottles to make the journey a little easier.

```
, ,x=X=
#-+==###+= ;==#x
#x-+###XX#..-X#XX
X#+ .#x,,-+ .,-#
## =x,.,.==;,,=X
+x. ;x +-+xX#;.#+
xXX#####. .X#x#;.Xx
.#++xXx=;. x#x,=X#.
##XX, ,x#x =-x##
;x. +xxx,x= -#
#x-x##Xxxx=-# #
,x++xx=,
```

DRAGON SWORD UPGRADE

Ah, another wonderful addition to Ryu's arsenal, this one new to the Ninja Gaiden series. By picking up the Dragon Sword Upgrade, Ryu's sword length is increased, giving him a much needed range boost. Unfortunately, these are VERY rare, almost as rare as Ninpo Scrolls. However, don't let that get you down - by nabbing one of these, you are pretty well guaranteed an easier time through the remainder of the stage. Extra range on your base attack is a definite plus, believe me. To top it all off, you even get to hit enemies that are slightly above and below your normal range, meaning you no longer have to crouch to catch pesky, smaller enemies - you can slash at them from a further distance without the trouble of getting down on your knees! Yay!

```
#==+++=-; ; ; -+=;
###, . +#####.,###.
.#. ##+.....;# #,
# ,#x;..;--; ;.#+ #.
#.,#-##+..... =. #.
#.;##+=#####X#; #.
#, ==. ##X#X#=# #.
#, ###X . . =; #.
# +#X##X#; ;=+, #.
#####.X.#=..##- #.
=;. x+- =##X.#+-
#x++++..=xx+-..==x
```

ONE UPS

The quintessential item...One Ups are small items that are embroidered with Ryu's head, increasing his total count of remaining lives by 1. This means more mayhem from the rogue Ninja, and more chances for you to get through the blasted game, so grabbing them IS in your best interests. However, 1-ups are often placed in very troublesome places, meaning you have to practically risk your neck just to get one. Logically, it doesn't make much sense to die while gaining an extra life, now does it?

NINPO SCROLL (Picture not available)

Ok, so I don't have a picture of these...big deal, eh? Arguably some of the most important things you can get in the game (and the most difficult to locate), the Ninpo Scrolls raise the total amount of Ninpo Points you can have. These increments come 10-per-scroll, so finding them can become extremely beneficiary to your cause. After all, having more points to use special attacks with can be VERY helpful, yes?

=====
-----IV: Walkthrough-----
=====

Oh boy, the walkthrough! This should be MAD fun, yo! For each stage, I'll give a brief plot summary, followed by if there is a Ninpo Scroll to be found (and, if so, what stage section it's found in) and the name of the boss.

One final note - I use the term "Flag" quite a bit throughout this guide. If you're not familiar with what I mean by it, then go visit Section VI-A.

~A~ Act 1: The Bio-Lab
=====

Plot: Ryu has traced Irene's work to this factory. Upon entering, he is attacked by a variety of strange robots and monsters, forcing him to take action. He drops into the factory, ready to do battle with all that dare face him...and then-some.

Scroll: None
Boss: Mantis Warrior

Ok, so this stage is just a warm-up for things to come. You can tell because it's short, it's easy, and there are items a-plenty that are easy to grab. Experiment with each item, getting a feel for how they work, and learn to maneuver around each enemy (as well as simply slashing through them). Get used to the controls, 'cause you are going to need to do so. Finish the 3 short sections and you'll be treated to an easy boss fight. Sound good? No? Well, though - that's how the game goes.

~~~~~Stage 1-1A~~~~~

Instead of a doing a step-by-step walkthough, I will instead give you "bullets" of information per each area. If it's pertinent to mention, then I'll do so; in later stage, I can pretty well guarantee that it'll get hectic enough for me to (almost) constantly give point after point, but I'll try to avoid placing information in-tandem as such.

---Stop before the end of the bar with the Spider Drone on top (and the Fire Dragon Ball above), as a Running Alien is headed your way. Jumping blindly will send you right into him, so halt, allow him to come to you, and slash him before he can harm you. Removing him this way saves you precious health, so don't risk it.

---Following cannister with the Orange Ninpo above it are 2 items that I highly suggest you pick up and try to hold onto for most of the remainder of the level: The Art of Fire Wheel ability, and a Dragon Sword Upgrade. Hey man, nothin' beats being able to run through your enemies without fear of being hurt, and having that much more range certainly ain't bad (even if this IS a "basic" level).

---By the 2nd bar of this area, the screen will probably be getting crowded

with enemies. I suggest you drop down beneath the bar, dispatching the Red Ninjas on either side (they usually have a break between them), then continuing on without bothering the enemies above. You don't have to jump up to their level (yet), so it's no worry.

---There's another Running Alien coming up, just after this bar on top of the taller cannister. Run up next to the shorter cannister to initiate his appearance, then slash him or avoid 'em altogether. As soon as you jump on top of the taller cannister, a White Wave-Floater will appear; make sure you stop and slash 'em instead of blindly running (this WILL get you nicked, unless you stop).

---Falling down between the ninjas in between the cannister and the wall, another Runner will enter from the Left side in an attempt to catch up. Wait for 'em to jump overhead, then dice him...or ignore 'em, climb the wall, and run off the right screen to the next area. It's your choice.

~~~~~Stage 1-1B~~~~~

---This is a vertical stage, meaning most of the work is travelling upwards. Unfortunately, this means that you'll be clinging to walls quite a bit, so if you want to attack your opponents without using any precious Ninpo, you'll have to dismount the wall and attack. Make sure you remember, especially if you're running low on points.

---There really aren't any specific things to mention here; there are a couple of White Wave-Floaters, but they appear on the opposite side of the screen, well before you reach them. As such, you should be able to dispatch them before they can reach you.

---Roughly halfway up, you'll encounter a vertical climb to the left, whereupon the top of the cannister is a Spider Drone and a Red Ninja. If you don't want to waste any Ninpo, just climb all the way up (make sure neither are near the edge, so you don't get hit), then leap to the wall on the Right before bounding (and slashing) back left.

---Once again, scale to the top and exit right off of the screen.

~~~~~Stage 1-1C~~~~~

---Very, very short section, although rushing through it can cost you a few hit points (if you're not careful). Move forward until the Running Alien and White Wave-Floater appear; hack through them in whatever order you choose, so long as you're not running into either. Walking further along the edge will cause another Running Alien to enter from the left, so dispatch him as well. Drop to the ground where a trio of Red Ninjas await, along with their pet spider-drone. Await their demise, that is! 2 more Blue Ninpo and a Fire Dragon Ball are to be had, followed by the exit stage right to fight the boss, Mantis Warrior (see the Bosses Section for more info).

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~B~ Act 2: Desert/Caves

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Plot: A mysterious figure has told Ryu that he knows about Irene, and that he is perfectly willing to inform Ryu of all he knows...if he goes to Castle Rock Fortress. Apparently, getting there requires that Ryu travel to the middle of a desert and then into a deep cavern system, because that's where this stage takes place.

Scroll: Yes (2-2C, along the left wall)

Boss: Night Diver

If you thought the first stage was a breeze, then you've been successfully deceived as to the nature of this game. The following stages, starting with Stage 2 (this one), are NOT easy by ANY stretch of the imagination. I hope you don't fret too much...this isn't an easy game, nor should you believe it to be.

This stage starts off as a desert locale, with irritating enemies above and the sand below you seeking to drag you underneath. Following this, you enter a series of caves that are dangerously close to a flow of lava - fall in and you're toast! Finally, you have to deal with another mechanical being, this one known as the Night Diver. Joy.

~~~~~Stage 2-1A~~~~~

---Welcome to the desert. The first thing you'll notice onscreen (at least, it's the first thing I noticed) is that there is a patch of ground in front of you that appears to be scrolling downward. This is actually quicksand, and is something you'll want to avoid standing in for too long. It impedes your movement, slowing you down, and if you are dragged too far down then you'll automatically die (as if you hit spikes or something). Don't that happen; by jumping, you leap out of the quicksand and return to the top of the much. Play it safe!

---The 2nd quicksand mess has a small, round creature standing on top of the quicksand. These guys will quickly become an irritation to you, assuming you do not wish to use a Windmill Shuriken to drop 'em. When you move close enough, it will start leaping right and left, which is difficult to avoid since the quicksand makes movement more difficult. Furthermore, it's a smaller creature (which I have playfully dubbed the "Ball Bounder"), so hitting it with your sword can be a challenge, too. My suggestion? Go ahead and use your Windmill Shuriken, then jump over it and allow it to take out the Running Alien (Version 2) behind you...and the next one to appear in front of you...and the next...see, frequent jumping can be helpful!

However, if you don't want to use any Ninpo, then I suggest timing your jump so that you end up following the Ball Bounder as it bounds to the right, slashing it at the apex of your jump (which, coincidentally, is its apex as well).

---Shortly before the next quicksand spot, you'll come across an orb containing the Art of Fire Wheel. This is what we like to call "foreshadowing", kiddies - you'll probably have to deal with some airborne enemies when you see this (or lower-enemies when you find a Fire Dragon, or a bunch of everything if you find an Invincible Wheel). In the next quicksand pit, you'll find 2 more Ball Bounders, shortly joined by 2 Sky Drones above you. If you wish to time it, move far enough over for the Drones to drop down, then get the Ball Bounder to jump and nail 'em all with a Fire Wheel.

---You'll soon come across another quicksand pit, this one with 2 more Ball Bounders. Slice 'em to ribbons and move further forward, where a Running Alien (ver. 2) will appear from the right. Most people seem to think that they can simply outrun him, and this is where you're wrong - stop and dice him before continuing, so that you don't end up with far, far more on your hands than necessary. Moving forward again, you'll see another Bounder and a Blue Ninpo above him - scroll the screen to flag the 2 Sky Drones to drop in, then Fire Wheel the Bounder, Ninpo, and 1 of the drones (you can slash the left one with your sword). Further down, you'll find another bounder, quickly joined by a flying Insect. Remember the eagles from Ninja Gaiden I, the ones that would quickly drive you nuts with their homing flight pattern? Well, that's what these guys are. Don't give it a chance, just Fire Wheel him before he gets

close.

If you didn't do all this, then you have 2-3 Bounders, 2 Sky Drones, 1 insect, and a Running Alien all crowding you. The insect makes it difficult to remove anything else, since he effectively lands on you and stays on you...so a little patience saves the day, eh?

---Once you exit the last sandpit, just keep running to the right. There will be a Running Alien that jumps in, but he'll soar overhead and you'll be free to continue on to the next stage.

~~~~~Stage 2-2A~~~~~

Welcome to the caves! You're probably not going to like them...see, there are quite a few areas where the floor has been eaten away by lava, making a volatile ground area to deal with; furthermore, the ceiling is covered in stalactites (not stalagmites; those start at the ground and work up), and touching these takes off a whopping 6 bars of life! No touchie!

---Running to the right, you'll see a Wave-Floater (brown) appear on the right. Ignoring it, running leap onto the bar above the lava and slash the stationary turret as soon as it opens up its doors (this should scroll the screen fast enough to elude the Wave-Floater). If you need the Art of Fire Wheel, drop down to hang from the bar, and wait for the soldier to move far enough to the left to give enough room to drop down and hack at him. Remember, you cannot hang-climb beneath the turret, as you'll still take damage from touching it.

---You see the guy on the platform to the right of the Bar, yes? Well, simply wait until he moves far enough right so you can jump over and slash him. Immediately crouch and get ready to slice the Spiney-Ball as it rolls towards you, and then exit this area through the door to the right.

~~~~~Stage 2-2B~~~~~

---Here's a good ol' fashioned vertical stage, where you start at the top and work down. Not too bad, as you'll often find yourself moving fast enough (vertically) to elude a variety of enemies. However, don't think you can outrun everything, since you might just be rushing into harm's way. That's how this game works, you know.

---After your first step dropping down, you'll see a soldier with a Sword Upgrade above him. For fun, take out the soldier and nab the upgrade rather quickly, then hang out there. You'll see a Spiney-Ball that was following you, only to roll right off the bottom of the screen (you hadn't scrolled far enough for the next platform to appear; thus, you eluded it).

---Further down are 2 blobs on the ground, which - when given enough time - will shoot little projectiles in 3 directions (left, right, and up). When you near them, they magically sprout up and turn into Spiney Balls...but enough of this, just run up and hack them to pieces. You'll also see 2 Spiney Balls drop in above you and start rolling down to your level; you can either outrun them and cause the screen-scroll to delete them, or stop and hack 'em up. Whatever, man.

---This bottom section has another little blob, ready to shoot you or turn into a ball and ram you. I would suggest using a Fire Dragon Ball to shoot 'em down, so you don't have to put yourself in risk of taking damage. Also, there is a Wave Floater (brown) here...but usually, your rapid descent from above causes him to fall off the screen. For more information as to why this happens, check out Section VI-A of this guide.

~~~~~Stage 2-2C~~~~~

It's the infamous lava-rising section! Have fun outrunning (and out-jumping) your doom, Ryu!

---Really, aside from a few specific sections of this stage, it's rather self explanatory - don't rush upwards, since enemies appear a half-second later than their platforms do. Thus, if you jump all the way up to a platform, you might still be in danger of an enemy appearing right on top of you. Haste is good, but the lava is at the BOTTOM of the screen. Don't hurt yourself while trying to avoid death, eh?

---Ninpo Scroll alert! Roughly halfway through this area, you'll find a long platform extending into the left wall, with an opening along the right wall. This platform contains 3 soldiers and a small blob, but more importantly...it has a Ninpo Scroll above it. Dispatch the soldiers and blob, wait for the screen to scroll, and nab that scroll! Yay, now you can have 50 maximum Ninpo!

---Just above this platform (with the Ninpo Scroll) is a bar. Jump up onto the bar, then wait for the screen to scroll up enough for the soldier to appear on the platform above. See, rushing onward can get you killed if you don't wait a bit first!

---Above this soldier, you'll see two platforms on the left and right. Wait for the soldier to appear on the right (and the turret on the left), then slash the soldier and grab the 1-Up above him. Now, dealing with the turret is fairly simple - you can leap from one platform to the other, so jump the gap and any bullets it might have fired (in volleys of 2), slashing as you land to take care of it. If your timing is right, you can even vault the Spiney-Ball that drops in, successfully avoiding it as well.

---Above this turret is another turret, followed by a platform above it and a platform left and up from this one (it has a Windmill Shuriken above it). Immediately jump to this platform, as the next platform to appear has a soldier on it...and if you don't make the jump before he appears, then you'll have to contend with the soldier preventing you from jumping easily. You can use a Fire Wheel to take care of him, but quickness (in this instance) can save you the trouble. Also, if you want the Fire Wheel to use against the boss, you'd better not pick up the Windmill Star...it's the last Art to be found in this stage!

~~~~~Stage 2-2D~~~~~

---You'll notice that there are lava pits that you can jump over. Yeah, you can just tell that something bad is going to happen, so jump. Upon landing, a ball of lava flies up and out of the crevasse, splitting into 4 balls that fall on either side of the opening. I would suggest trying to position yourself between the last two and crouching (while slashing the soldier in front of you). By making yourself a smaller target, this makes it harder to hit you. Makes sense, yes?

---Following this is a platform with another soldier on it. Inch forward until you can slice the soldier across the way with your Upgraded Sword (you DO have the upgraded sword, don't you?), then turn and slash the Spikey Ball that dropped in behind you. Now, when you jump across to the platform, you'll be greeted by another Lava Ball (crouch to avoid it again). Now, move to the other side of the platform, stepping to the very edge, and duck again...this time the Lava Ball appears in front of you, but by moving all the way forward, hanging 1 foot off of the platform and crouching, you'll avoid it. From here,

jump-slash the Soldier and Spikey Ball, and go fight a boss!

~C~ Act 3: Jungle/Caves

Plot: Upon finishing off the Night Diver, a video screen alights behind Ryu, showing the evil countenance of Foster, an old enemy of Ryu's. He is then informed that no one has ever gotten out of this area alive, and he hopes that the next time they meet, Ryu is alive to see it. He then fades out, leaving Ryu with no choice but to try and exit this heinous area and work his way towards Castle Rock's outer perimeter.

Scroll: Yes (3-2C, along the left wall)

Boss: Great Koganei

Apparently, the caves that Ryu entered in Act 2 lead to a Jungle, 'cause that is where Ryu starts off this Act. He travels above a rather dangerous river, with oversized Piranha seeking to knock him into the water by hefty jumps into the air. If you survive this section, you then enter another cave, this one full of trickling water and strange blobs that harm you simply by being there. Get through all this and you'll face off against another Mechanical Beast, this one named the "Great Koganei."

~~~~~Stage 3-1A~~~~~

Welcome to the Jungle, baby! You're gonna die!!! (End bad Guns 'n Roses joke)

You will quickly hate this level, mostly because of the Piranha. They simply MUST have a nibble of that Cool Ninja they see, and go to such lengths to ensure a bite that they'll even leap out of the river once close enough. Sometimes they fly high enough to run underneath, sometimes they don't...so it's usually in your best interest to step back, let them fall, and slash 'em.

---Following the first bar you see is a platform with a ninja and a couple of items. This is also your first introduction to the Piranha of the level, and it's on fairly easy terms. As I said above, step back and hack at 'em after he jumps, or let him descend and continue on however you like.

---After this first encounter, you'll see a rise/fall lift. Jumping onto it causes a Piranha to appear behind you, heading right-to-left. Remember in the first part of Stage 2, where you were clearly being pressured by the Running Alien that appeared behind you? Well, this is just the same, so turn around and leap back to the previous platform so you can dice the Piranha safely before continuing on. Moving far enough forward on the first rise/fall lift causes brings the 2nd one onscreen, as well as a reddish Wave-Floater. It's pattern of flight tends to make it troublesome to slash from the 2nd Lift, so stick to the first and wait until it's in range to destroy it (either that or use a Ninja Art to vanquish it).

---When you come across a red Ninja next to a Vacuum Wave art, kill the ninja and grab the art (don't do it the other way around...that could be hazardous to your health). The bar next to it has a spider drone on top (kill it), as well as one hanging from beneath, and a platform below it has a Ninja and an Orange Ninpo. Walk to the middle, above the platform, and wait for all 3 enemies to line up. Go ahead and use the Vacuum attack, since you'll immediately be replenishing your Ninpo. Yay!

---Here's a little trap that too many people fall for - 2 diagonally-moving lifts, with a 1-Up in the middle and a Piranha closing in. You want the 1-up, but the Piranha tends to get you if you try for it...and so, many people think

of the 1-up as a trap meant to kill them from the attempt. This is not true, and you don't need to resort to Ninjitsu to acquire it, either. What you do is simple - wait until the Lift is at its highest, then jump onto it. Now, continue running, falling off of the left side of the lift. That's right, you're going to fall off...momentarily.

Immediately after you fall, hold right to force Ryu to grab onto the underside of the lift (you can't hold down and press Jump to cling to the other side, since it is headed downward). The first Piranha - the one that has claimed many, many lives from many players through countless plays - will soar overhead, jumping too high to catch you. Once he's out of the way, jump back up to the lift, leap across, and slash the 1-up as you land on the other lift.

---Lift #2 has its own strategy, as another Piranha seeks vengeance for you escaping their little trap. Cling to the bottom of this platform (or use Ninjitsu, if you so choose, since you already have the 1-up and there is no danger of shooting it down anymore) and wait for it to soar overhead, then jump to the bar and slash the Spider Drone before it gets close enough to knock you into the river. That's no fun, believe me.

Oh...and I've also heard that jumping prior to the Piranha's leap causes it to jump super-high, making it whiff you...however, this just isn't consistent enough for my tastes. Plus, the under-over-under lift switches just looks flashier.

---There are a series of platform jumps just before the door, with a couple of Piranha seeking one last attack at you. Thankfully, though, you can backtrack a bit to handle them in a safer environment, then continue safely to the door. If you played this area safely, you can get through it without any loss of life and still have a good 200 seconds left on the clock!

~~~~~Stage 3-2A~~~~~

Welcome to the caves, where the background is...uh...weird, to say the least. However, what should really be troubling you is the number of enemies that will be invading your "personal space" in the hopes of destroying you in the process (or at least knocking you into a pit). Also, the water flow in this area moves you in 1 direction of the other, making movement in the correlating direction faster and the opposite direction slower. Keep that in mind, since you'll be facing tight quarters and small enemies that require precise aim.

---This platform in the middle is the beginning of the water trickle, and drops off the left and right sides. I would suggest dropping down the right side, where you will have more room to take care of the Ninja beneath and enough time to get rid of the Spineys that follow you.

---The next drop-down is actually onto a Hang-Bar, with 2 more Spineys tracking you. Kill the Ninja here, wait to dispatch the Spineys, then drop down past the bar (don't bother hanging, you'll just get hit by the blob). You'll land on another bar, with a pulsating red mass on top of it. Slash the mass, since these things shoot projectiles that roll across the ground, then jump off the right side. Heading right allows you to avoid the 2 blobs beneath this bar, as well as the Ninja on the left-hand side (which often ends up directly below you).

---Below this bar, you'll land between 2 more pulsating masses. Hack the one on the left, drop down, and slash the 2 on the following platform while heading right. After this is a bit of a drop down (it allows you to elude the Spineys that were following you), where - at the bottom - you'll encounter 2 jumping Mantis-like creatures and another Spiney. Dispatch all and exit stage Left

through the door.

~~~~~Stage 3-2B~~~~~

---Running to the left, you'll immediately see a bar with a blob on the underside and a soldier on top, as well a bar beneath it with another soldier guarding a Fire Dragon Art. Behind you comes a Running Alien, so jump up to the bar, dispatch the Soldier, then wait for the Alien to run below you. He jumps at the end of the platform onto the lower bar, so make sure you aren't in his way when he does. It's important to make sure he passes and you don't have that pressure from behind, trust me.

---Past this bar is an Orange Ninpo, floating above a small platform. Nab this if you wish; I prefer to toss out a Fire Dragon to clear out the Soldiers on the platform below it, as well as shoot down the Fire Wheel orb. Hey, it's free Ninpo, so why not? On this lower platform, once you pass the midway point of it (where the water trickle changes sides) you'll see another bar with a soldier on top of it, and a Running Alien will enter from the each side of the screen. If you're close enough to the left side of the platform, the one on the right will soar right over you...the one from the Right, however, should be killed so he's not pushing you into anything.

---Jump onto the bar left of the platform you were just on, and inch along until the Insect appears on the right (and another Running Alien from the left). The Insect will get to you first, so kill him, then kill the Alien and move further left on the bar. Yet another Running Alien will appear on the platform to the left; you can either jump over him or wait for him to jump up and slice 'em in two.

---Another insect appears when you cross the midway point of the following platform (the one with the Invincible Fire Art above it). Grab the Invincible Art after killing it, then run to the right and initiate the Art once you land on the next bar. You're going to find a difficult jump here, so you don't even want to mess around with whatever's in front of you. An insect will appear from below, and the small ledge on the far Left (in front of the door) has a soldier guarding it...so you either Invincible your way through them, or you wait on the Insect, kill it, then wait on the soldier, jump over, kill him, and proceed through. Hey, patience is one thing, but I also want to have enough time to beat the boss!

~~~~~Stage 3-2C~~~~~

---After a brief climb up, you'll find a bar that has Goo stuck on the bottom of it, a Pulsating Mass on top of it, and 2 Spider Drones beneath it. My suggestion is to jump over to the platform, kill the drones, jump up onto the far right section of the bar, and immediately climb onto the bar and slice the Mass before it can fire off anything.

---Health Bottle! If you need any health restored, grab this! It's above the platform, to the right of the bar with the mass, the goo, and the drones.

---Ninpo Scroll alert! While climbing up the right-side wall, you'll no doubt notice the Scroll above the platform on the left. In order to get it, you have to climb up to the platform where 2 Pulsating Masses and a Spider Drone are. Slash what you can...and remember, there's a bar directly above you, so if you have to jump, just remember that you might accidentally grab onto the bar, which is where the Goo will probably shoot you for your incompetence. Either keep your distance and destroy the projectiles shot from the Masses (you can slash through them), or be careful when jumping.

Anywho, just walk off the left side of this platform, kill the drone, and grab the scroll. Yay, you're up to 60 now!

---Near the top of the screen is a bar with goo on bottom and mass on top (by now, you should know what I mean by that), with a platform in the upper-left where another Mass is. The door is on the right, where another mass is busily pulsating away. Climb up the wall on the left, jump onto the platform, and dice the mass, then turn and jump, dicing the mass in the upper-left. Finally, jump and slash the mass in front of the door, and you're outta there!

~~~~~Stage 3-2D~~~~~

---The first thing that truly needs to be mentioned here, as it can be difficult (and possibly deadly) is when you hit the series of small platforms to leap from. Jumping onto the 2nd one, you'll quickly see a Running Alien leaping onto the next platform. You don't have to bother with this guy; in fact, you can bypass him, ignore the 2 Aliens above, AND elude the Insect heading your way from the left. Just jump right from this platform (# 2, slightly lower than the first tiny platform) past the next one onto the platform directly below the Fire Wheel Art. Jumping to the next platform will flag another Running Alien, which can be dispatched in midair as you safely land on the platform and claim your reward - a Sword Upgrade.

---Great, you got the sword upgrade...now, to survive with it. After getting it, another Insect comes buzzing in from the left, so jump and kill it before it can get to you or Fire Wheel it, if you don't mind the Ninpo; there are 2 blue Ninpo on the platform above, so you'll readily make up for it. Jumping back left, you'll flag an Insect from below when you land on the 2nd lower platform (the one you skipped). Jump over him and continue onto the first tiny platform, where another Insect will quickly appear from the left. The first Insect - the one that came from below - will have to doubleback to catch you, so you have time to slash the newcomer before dealing with him.

---Hopping to the small platform before the larger one (with the water flowing off of it, above the Sword Upgrade), you will be accosted by 2 more Running Aliens. Stop on this platform and slash them from a standstill to avoid any further damage. After this, it's a straight shot to the boss(es)! Hopefully, you've survived long enough to take more than 1 or 2 hits...if you can, then taking these guys down is much easier, since having that extra room for error is very handy. Defeat the Great Koganei and progress to Act 4, spud!

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~D~ Act 4: Castle Rock Defense Systems

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Plot: After defeating the Great Koganei, Ryu's clone shows up and challenges him. They duel, briefly, with Ryu (the real one) losing the draw. His clone laughs, then tells him that he was the one that killed Irene and that he is working for Foster. He then taunts Ryu and tells him to come to Castle Rock Fortress if they want to meet again. Shortly thereafter, Ryu arrives at the fortress defenses, ready to penetrate the complex and find answers to his questions.

Scroll: Yes (Stage 4-1, along one of the metal railways; VERY easy to find)

Boss: Sandeater

First, you must cross a perilous path across large...uh...drill bits, followed by a building positively full of traps. Man...I shudder to think about if there was a more difficult route than this.

~~~~~Stage 4-1A~~~~~

---Yeah, there are moving scaffolds here. For the first set, I suggest clinging to the bottom of the first, then dropping onto the 2nd one (it's a more accurate landing than if you jumped). If you want the Fire Wheel, then go ahead and get it by jumping onto the moving apparatus first. I don't think you'll need it, but hey, whatever you want.

---When you reach the scaffolds where 3 Sky Drones drop in, you're probably going to wonder how to safely get past this without taking a hit (and possibly being knocked to your doom). Well, there are a few simple ways to pass this section.

- 1) Ride the platform, then ride it all the way back to the left (if you're uncomfortable with how close they get, drop underneath the platform and hang from beneath). Once you're back at the first platform, eliminate them at your leisure.
- 2) Jump while riding the platform, causing the drones to start their movement at a higher level and giving you more time to jump to the following moving scaffolding.
- 3) 4 words - Art of Fire Wheel.
- 4) You can throw out a Windmill Shuriken and then jump over it, causing the star to hit the drones behind you (and then the one in front, if you're timing is right). From here, simply continue on.

---Hey, look - that top Scaffold has a 1-up! Uh oh, here comes another Insect! The trick here is to not fret at all...just stay the ride until you can jump onto the railway. If handled right, you'll land on the very edge (be ready to slash the Running Alien headed your way) and the Insect will soar overhead and right off the screen. Now you're safe again, and you're up another life!

---Ninpo Scroll Alert! It's right there, right on that very platform after the 1-up! You can't miss it!

---The following bit of scaffolding's danger is foreshadowed by the Fire Dragon Art on the previous platform. Sure, the obvious way to dispose of the 2 Insects from below is to hit them with a shot of Fire Dragon...however, what about the guy that doesn't want to use any Ninjitsu abilities? Well, it's a little difficult, but here's how - jump onto the scaffold, riding it just long enough to flag the insects. Now, immediately jump back to the platform, landing between the Insects. Slash the one on the right, since it's the closest, then get the left-side one as it tries to halt its path. Having dealt with them, the path is now clear and safe!

From here, it's a pretty clear shot to getting inside the building.

~~~~~Stage 4-2A~~~~~

Interesting defenses this place has...the walls and floors have spikes in them, and there are a variety of monsters inhabiting the area. Well, there's no turning back now...and if there was, would you honestly want to ride those scaffolds again?

---Important fact #1: the spikes in the floor/walls don't kill you, but they do take off 6 hit points per touch. The lesson: do NOT touch those. Wait until they retract into their holes, then dash across to the next non-spike area. The first spike area is just past the entryway, so wait until they retract into the ground before rushing across to the adjacent wall. Make sure you climb high enough to avoid getting stuck in the behind, will ya?

---Ok, so you no doubt saw the Sword Upgrade hanging ominously above the Spike Floor you just crossed. How do you safely grab it? The trick is in the

chain...you can hang beneath it, you realize, so go from standing to hanging, jump-slash the sword, and try to grab it while reaching for the chain again. If you miss it, then the Upgrade (and possibly you) will fall down onto the floor, so time it so that even if you miss, you can still grab it without worries of being spiked. You can also walk right up to it and slash it, causing it to fall to the ground, then pick it up and book it back to safe territory...but that just isn't flashy enough for MY ninja!

---In the next spike-covered area, there are 2 large chains dangling from above. Wait until the spikes retract, then drop down, slashing the Ninpo as you go, then jump to the next wall and climb up. The Orb-Eyes shoot bullets in 3 directions (just like the piles of Goo in stage 3), so be careful about where you end up. The funny thing here is that the Ninja on top of the wall you're on will probably be right in your way of climbing up, so you'll have to wait on him...and there's an Orb Eye on the next wall on the right, which gives it a perfect shot to hit you. Thankfully, there is a slight pause between when the Eye fires and when the Ninja walks back, so you'll have time to get out of the way.

---Finally, there is an Invincible Fire Wheel above another Spike area. If you wish to get it, simply follow the same instructions that I gave for getting the Sword Upgrade. It's pretty much the same situation, with the differences being the item at stake and the lack of a wall on the right (it's a brick walkway instead).

~~~~~Stage 4-2B~~~~~

---Spikes, small platforms, and a vertical climb...meaning blowing a jump is going to be very painful. Wellsir, if your jumping skills are decent, you won't have too many problems during this area.

---When you reach the first brownish Shield-and-Gunman, there will be a purple-flying thing entering from the right. You can actually ignore this guy, slashing through the gunman and continuing upwards (to effectively run the Purple Flyer offscreen). Above this guy is another one on the right, with a chain above his head...you can ignore him and jump straight to the chain, maneuvering around the Spider Drone atop before continuing.

---Ok, now THIS Purple Flyer you have to deal with. These things usually start out slow, stopping after a bit to fire off 4 bullets in each diagonal...but if you move quickly to their horizontal line of movement, they'll suddenly speed up and ram you (even if you're behind them, they'll throw it into reverse and catch you anyways). Thus, be forewarned - when you jump to that little platform, get ready to slash it just in case. If he moves slow, then...well, just wait for it to come into range and chop 'em anyways.

---Here's another SaGunman on the right, with a chain above his head, this time a small platform separating you two. Once again, you can ignore him and jump straight up to the chain; the difference, though, is that he may have gotten a couple of shots off first. Time your jump to sail over the bullets, then go right the chain (and, once again, wait on the Spider Drone...look before you leap!).

---At the top of this stage, you'll have a Purple Flyer near the bottom-left, another incoming from the mid-right, and one right in line with the door on the left. The only one that actually concerns you, though, is the one coming from the Door, so wait on 'em until it's in range, slice it, and mosey through the door.

~~~~~Stage 4-2C~~~~~

---Great, you're immediately dealing with another spikey floor. Ok, then...wait until it retracts, jump over to the wall on the left, and climb up. You're safe from the Eye Orb's line of fire, so simply jump up and cleft the Brown Ninja in twain before he can get close to you.

---TThere is an Orange Ninpo above the next spike floor, if you're so inclined to get it (it's practically on the way), and an Art of Fire Wheel is located above the Next-to-Last chain in the stage, so feel free to get it if you would like it for the boss. You can use it to take out the Eye Orbs on the chain in front above the next set of spikes, which is immediately followed by a Blue Ninpo...but if you don't want to waste it, you can simply ignore them and jump ot the wall (it's not like they're in the way).

---The door to the boss - a creature called "The Sandeater" - is blocked by a Spike Floor (go figure). Wait 'til they drop, then jump down off of the chain and walk through the door to face the boss!

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~E~ Act 5: Castle Rock Fortress

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Plot: Since Ryu has breached Castle Rock's defenses, Clancy keeps his word and tells him what he knows about Foster's plans. He tells Ryu that he and Foster had been working on the 'Biohazard' plan (Resident Evil?), but he cannot work alongside him anymore. Foster has secretly created a monster called a 'BIO-NOID', experimental humans that have been transformed with life energy. Where does this life energy come from? There is an "open seam between dimensions that was created when the demon died," says Clancy. "An unlimited supply of LIFE ENERGY is flowing from the seam inside the ruins of the fortress," and Foster has been using this seam in his experiments. Furthermore, the person that killed Irene - the Ninja-Clone Ryu encountered - is a Bio-Noid (which explains how it beat him). Clancy then asks you to return to the now-rebuilt ruins and stop Foster's evil plans.

And thus, Ryu is forced to return to the upper regions of the Amazon and once again do battle in those, ruins, where the fabled battle between Ken Hayabusa and Bloody Malth took place, the place where Malth was struck down by Ken's son, Ryu, where Ryu ended the life (temporarily) of Guardia de Mieux, aka Jaquio, and where the climactic battle between Ryu and the Sealed Demon ended with Ryu triumphant. Because of that last battle and Foster's involvement on the project, the tear in dimensions was discovered and Foster began his experiments within the ruins. Ryu, you'd better get out there and stop that mad man!

Scroll: No

Boss: Ryu Clone

~~~~~Stage 5-1A~~~~~

Well, here we are...again. Ryu has returned to the scene of his final battles from NG I, and although the layout has changed, the difficulty has not (in fact, it is a bit harder than before). A heavy downpour accompanies your task...but thankfully, it does nothing to actually, physically stop you. It's just dreary, that's all.

---I don't know how many times I have to say this, but...look before you leap! When you walk up to that first pitfall, stop short of the edge and wait for the Running Alien to come to you. If you do not, you could very well be knocked

into the pit and die within the first 5 seconds of the stage. Don't do that! Make sure you kill his 2 friends as soon as you land on the other side of the pit, too.

---Following that trio of nuisances, you'll encounter 2 Sky Drones, 2 Rocket Carts, and a Running Alien from the left. What's a Ninja to do? Well, start off by jumping (and hanging) from the bar where the 2 Rocket Carts are, then flip up between them and destroy them. By then, the 2 Sky Drones will have reached your vertical level, so turn and wipe them out as well. A step further to the right will cause 4 Sky drones to appear, 2 above and 2 below you. Jump-slash the upper-left one, landing on the left side of the bottom one, and slay the remaining 3 from here. Further along this line, finally, will flag an Insect. You can elude him, lure him to one side and axe him, whatever you choose.

---The next bar has its own set of irritants, which we shall now dispatch in a particular order to ensure safety. First, jump across to this bar, causing the 3 Sky Drones and Ball Bouncer to appear. Now, your safest route is to jump back to the first bar, slashing the Upper-Left Drone as you do. From this vantage point, you can safely get rid of the rest of the drones before returning to face the Ball Bouncer and the Rocket Cart. Now, a common mistake is to try and crouch-slash the Ball Bouncer...remember, it's a jumping creature, which means it'll practically fly right into the path of your sword if you swing while standing. Move in closer to take out the Rocket Cart, avoiding its three shots at the same time, then move back left to give yourself space-enough to handle the remaining Drone (if it didn't follow you to the left, which is fairly common).

---Continuing right, you'll flag a Running Alien (no problem) and - at the very end of the bar - an Insect. Trigger the insect, slay it, and drop down to get the next Bouncer and the Soldier next to it. By touching down onto this walkway, you'll trigger another Insect from above, which I would suggest you kill before moving on. If you want the Vacuum Wave Art, jump back up to the bar and the leap to grab it. Finally, be ready to slash the incoming Alien as you land after the next jump. After him is the doorway.

~~~~~Stage 5-1B~~~~~

Believe it or not, this section is deceptively simple...unless you make a mistake, in which then you are going to deal with a LOT of bad guys VERY quickly. So let's start with the safe way through this area, and I'll see if I can't come up with a way to handle the "I made a mistake" situation. You start off seeing 2 Lifts, on moving Up/Down on the right side of the screen and a Diagonal one on the left. Your first inclination would be to run over to the right, then jump from that one onto the left...and you would be wrong. By moving up to a certain height, you'll incur 2 Sky Drones and 3 Purple Flyers. That makes for some hefty zoning, and you'll have to play a VERY patient game to get around these guys.

---The safe way through is to jump up onto the wall above the Door, then onto that platform. Since you're already on the left-side platform, you no longer have to worry about the Drones (although, just to be safe, you might as well slice through the closer one and the upper-left flyer). As soon as you see the platform above this one, jump up and grab onto it, then leap from it to the next platform (up and right from here). Now just jump from this platform to the door, drawing your blade out (and through the soldier on the ledge) before you land. Gee, that took all of 8 seconds.

---Ok, now what happens if you make a mistake and blow a jump, flagging the enemies but not being high enough to avoid them? Well, now it's time to start

playing the patience game and waiting for your opportunity to kill them. If you want to use whatever Ninjitsu Art you have on hand to make your troubles easier, then feel free to...but I like to see if I can't do things without having to use such weapons (unless it's flashy), so let's stick to swordplay for now. In general, you should take care of the Sky Drones (use the platform on the right), then wait for the Flyers to get within range for you to jump and cut them down from midair. Now it's safe enough to jump up and continue your ascent...well, safe enough. If you blow it again, climb back up and continue onward - the enemies in the upper region will respawn, so there's no point in killing them, dropping, then returning...they'll be back as well.

~~~~~Stage 5-1C~~~~~

---First step - after jumping down to the platform with the Blue Ninpo and the Health bottle, immediately slash to take care of the point-blank flagged Running Alien (how's THAT for a few adjectives?) and Ball Bounder. Also...hey, that Health Bottle is probably going to come in handy after that last section, eh?

---Don't like those pesky Bounders? Well, there's a fun way around 'em...but first, you have an Insect to take care of. Jump and hang from the bar (right after the Health Bottle), triggering the Insect; now, jump back to the previous walkway and hack 'em in two. From here, you can toy with the Bounders without putting yourself in any danger; see, Ball Bounders tend to try and follow your general location. Since you're below them, all they can do is attempt to stay on the same vertical axis as you, which means if you hang along the left side of the bar, they'll drop onto the walkway...and if you move back right, they'll bound right into the pit beneath. See? No muss, no fuss!

---Actually, there is a small fuss...further along the bar flags a couple of Insects to come and harass you, one from above and one from below. You have enough time to wreck the upper mechanical moron first, then sidestep the second and hack through that one as well.

---The next 2 platforms aren't terribly annoying, although 1 mistimed hit will send you down a pit and that's just it (end rhymes). Hop down and decapitate the soldier on the first jump, which will trigger 4 more Sky Drones and a Running Alien (the alien comes from the left). Jump-slash the alien and the Drone in the upper-left (you can get 'em both with 1 swipe), then jump back to the bar and take care of the bottom 2 drones (you'll scroll the 4th off screen, so you can deal with it later). Returning to the jumps, you now only have 1 drone and the soldier to contend with, so jumpslash the drone, land and coup de grace the soldier, and turn to take out another Running Alien on the left.

---The final bar of this stage (just past the Vacuum Wave art) has a soldier and a Rocket Cart, and is quickly joined by 1 Alien, then another. Hop up quickly and take out the soldier and cart, then deal with the aliens as they come. If you'd prefer, you can hang beneath the bar and flip up to surprise (and demolish) your enemies, but I find it a tad more difficult to avoid the rockets and safely climb up this way.

~~~~~Stage 5-2A~~~~~

"Welcome to the Rock." That's what Sean Connery said in the Michael Bay 'splodifest, and it holds equally true here...as 'true' as such a statement can be. Well, ok, so you're in Castle Rock (no relation to any Stephen King novels), and things are going to explode. Good enough?

---This stage is rather nondescript, although the enemy placement can sometimes be frustrating. I would suggest stopping to take out the "high-jump" soldier

that enters from the left, so that you don't run into any crowding problems with the other soldiers on the right.

---Say hello to the Laser Spiders, kiddies. These things suck. When you first see one, you'd best just let it drop down the passageway so you can hack at it...and I'd suggest a crouching slash, so that you don't accidentally get caught by any lasers that might escape its ocular cavity. At the top of this wall (the one that the first Laser Spider toppled off of) is another...and I don't think you want to rush it and cram a sword down its throat. No, I would suggest walking up, ducking the laser, then dismantling it after the laser passes overhead. Then, feel free to grab the Fire Dragon and Orange Ninpo above.

---Ok, you are given 2 paths here - upper and lower. Which one do you want to take? If you want the Vacuum Wave, then take the upper route (slash the Soldier immediately as you land) and grab it, then double-back and fall down to grab the Sword Upgrade. Continuing along the upper path is only going to give you a headache, as you'll have to drop down into an area full of Laser Spiders, Larger Ball Bouncers, and Soldiers. That's no fun, so take it 1 step at a time and you'll end up surviving the encounter!

---All right, so you've decided to take the lower route. Good. First off, if you did not go along the upper area first, then the Soldier above is going to rebound off of the left wall and turn to run at you. I would suggest pausing to kill this buffoon before you move onward; failing to do so will put you in a bad position as the Laser Spider will pin you down with its laser while the Soldier rushes you. Oh boy, isn't THAT fun? Grab the Sword Upgrade and demonstrate the power of an improved weapon, ok kids?

~~~~~Stage 5-2B~~~~~

---This is a rather easy stage, especially if you have the Sword Upgrade (which I don't know why you would skip). Simply climb the walls, jump-slash anything in your way, and at the top simply wait until the Spider Drones aren't next to the edge when you jump down and attack the Ground Turrets. Don't forget that you can destroy the bullets fired by those turrets, so there's no fancy dancing required to avoid 'em. Presto, nothing too difficult to figure out on your own!

~~~~~Stage 5-2C~~~~~

---...and the last stage was simply foreshadowing what was going to come, eh? Here we have a long bridge, with enemies constantly dropping in all around you. The difficulty of the bridge, however, is that it disappears once you start running on it, forcing you to continue moving across without stopping for too long. As long as you keep a cool head, though, you can survive the bridge without even encountering much danger. Keep running to the left, slashing the soldiers in your way. The items above you - especially the 1-up - are meant to entice you into jumping, which is where the Sky Drones will get you. However, there is also a conveniently placed Invincible Fire Wheel Art on the bridge, which you can then initiate and simply walk through everything else you see.

~~~~~Stage 5-2D~~~~~

---Once again, this is a rather lax stage, with situations that aren't too difficult to work around. I feel I should mention the Health Bottle that is a little ways up in the stage, which - if necessary - is a welcome sight for sore eyes (and wounds). More Eye Orbs litter the walls, but you don't even have to bother attacking them (for the most part)...just jump around them and work your way to the top.


~~~~~Stage 5-2E~~~~~

---Well, it was bound to happen - more Laser Spiders and the return of the "Insect"; it isn't known as an Insect anymore, though, despite the similar flight style. No, this thing looks like a helicopter prop was slapped onto a world globe. Whatever the case, you'll get your first taste of one if you rush blindly towards the Laser Spider on the ledge just past the door. Instead, take a couple of steps onto the ledge to trigger the Globecopter, then drop back left and eradicate it before continuing on.

---You see the Orange Ninpo that was just beyond that Laser Spider? Wellsir, don't get it just yet...instead, walk towards it. This triggers a Laser Spider to fall down behind you; kill it and THEN get the Ninpo. See, it's playing safe!

---Another jump and another Laser Spider await you, as well as a red Wave-Floater, a red Ninja...and a Laser Spider that is about to fall off of the ledge and join the melee. Crouch the laser from the first spider and chop through the Ninja's knees, then take out the 2 drones as soon as the laser passes. From there, turn around, take out the Wave-Floater...and for good measure, jump and take out the Ninja on the upper level, too. That'll teach 'em!

---Further along this path will trigger a Soldier from the left, and another Laser Spider on the floor. You can get rid of this guy before he can shoot a laser, so there aren't too many worries about catching an eyeful. There's another high wall with a Laser Spider on top of it, so I would suggest you allow it to fall down to your level before massacring it. All that's left of this stage is to drop down in front of the door, taking care not to land on one of the two Laser Spiders down there, and finish out the level!

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~F~ Act 6: Subspace Rift

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Plot: Ryu succeeded in destroyed his evil Bio-noid Clone, and now stands before Foster, ready to confront him about his evil deeds. However, from the background comes laughter, as Clancy steps forward and congratulates you and Irene on your work. Even Foster is confused by this turn of events, as Clancy informs you all that he intends to keep the ruins for himself. Greedy for the secrets of the Life Energy and the powers it can bestow upon people, he enters the rift...and Foster, seeking to stop him, enters as well. However, Foster is ripped apart by the sheer power of the Subspace Rift; thus, Ryu opts to enter (stopping Irene from going, since it would probably kill her as well). Thus, Ryu enters this strange portal, not knowing what he may face...

Scroll: Yes (Stage 6-2A, along the left wall)

Boss: Mutated Foster

~~~~~Stage 6-1A~~~~~

Subspace has 2 forms that Ryu must pass through: a crystalline passage where familiar enemies exist (and were probably spawned) and the crystal-like ground of the first section is slick enough to cause Ryu to slide, and a less-corporeal area where Ryu sinks into the ground unless he takes care to stay aloft. Well, let's get to it!

Ooh, and something to keep in mind - when you run somewhere on the Crystal, you'll slide; however, if you jump, you'll land and there will be no sliding at

all. Thus, if you need a more precise stopping point, just jump.

---When you reach the end of the first bar (the one you see when you first enter), stop so that the jumping soldier doesn't end up tackling you in midair. Continue to the middle of this Crystal platform, allowing the Soldiers beneath to run along their merry little ways (without crossing paths with you), then drop down to the lower level.

---When you hit the small platform jumps, you'll want to halt before making the first of such leaps - remember the lava pools in Stage 2, with the spurts that would rain down on you? Well, those happen to be here as well. Try to position yourself so that you'll be in between the falling bits, then continue. Jumping onto this platform, you'll quickly encounter another soldier, as well as another splotch of lava. Kill the soldier, dodge the lava, and stick around on the platform so you can take care of the Wave-Floater so that it doesn't become a problem.

---The next platform has another Soldier (left) and Wave-Floater (right) coming at you, which I would suggest waiting to kill instead of blitzing past. Once gone, jump and hang onto the bar, then flip up and crush the 2 ninjas (Ninji? Octopus, Octopi?). Following this bar is a small platform with another Ninja on it; jump down, slashing him, then immediately jump back to the bar to effectively take care of the Globecopter coming up from below. Aside from that, there is nothing left of this area to challenge you.

~~~~~Stage 6-1B~~~~~

You start this area out by falling a good, long distance. It really shouldn't come as much of a surprise that you must then climb back up the middle, contending with purple flyers along the left and right walls and the occasional irritation from directly above.

---Careful when you leap onto the 2nd bar up, as a Purple Flyer from the right will come screaming at you. Slash him before he becomes a problem, eh? Now, when you go to jump up to the next level, hold jump and immediately hold DOWN on the control pad; this will prevent Ryu from grabbing onto the bar above him. If he does grab onto the bar, then the Flyer on the right will crash right into him; however, jumping without grabbing will flag the flyer without the physical damage, and will allow you to deal with him, the Flyer on the left, and the soldier above in a more timely fashion.

---The next 2 platforms are crystal, which means you'll be sliding on them if you try to walk. As you might guess, both of them have their own respective Flyers (the right one from the right, the left one from the left), so stop and dispatch them both. The 2nd one has its own trap involved, though, due to the sliding on the crystal - in order to stop, you have to either walk in the opposite direction (and halt your progress, but probably get hit by the flyer), slide right off, or jump...and once again, the game tricks you with another overhang. Jumping here will cause you to grab onto another ledge, which has its very own Flyer to irritate you once you latch on. Thus, if you're going to slide off, you can jump...but make sure you hold DOWN when you do.

---The rest of this stage is more timing-based than anything. Jump up next to the soldier on the bar above (go for the far left side, so you don't become sandwiched), then take out the Flyer moving in behind him. Above this is another platform, which I suggest you jump up on the left side so as to avoid leaping onto another enemy soldier. Kill this soldier, destroy the Flyers on the left and right side of you, and swat down the Sky Drones before you jump down the right-side passage to get to the door. Oh, and do be careful when you jump, since that crystal is awfully sharp. You don't want to land on it, it'll

hurt!

~~~~~Stage 6-1C~~~~~

---Careful! The first drop-off here has another lava spurt, so crouch and hope you don't get hit! After that, THEN jump over and dice the ninja.

---You see that bar above, with the Goo underneath? Good. Jump to the platform beneath it, landing on the edge (so you won't get hit by the shots it fires). Now you can safely destroy the Wave-Floater on the right, and either kill the approaching Soldier from the left or climb up onto the bar and allow him to pass underneath.

---The next bar you find will have a pair of Globecoasters fly up from underneath. The funny thing about their flight pattern is that it really isn't very threatening...they criss-cross their paths, one of them coming up from the left (kill it) while the other comes from the right (also kill it). They arrive at your level too far out to be effective, so you can destroy them both without any frustration.

---The platform after this bar has 2 soldiers rushing you as soon as you land (the first running, the second jumping). I am not impressed, and neither should you...so just kill 'em and move on. Further along the platform, a new Soldier will come from behind and another will jump in from the right; once again, kill them both for their stupidity.

---After the next bar is a small platform with a red Ninja on it. Jump down to kill him...and this triggers another Globecoaster. Oh well...jump to the next platform and drop the Turret as soon as it opens to fire, then turn and kill ol' Globey as it flies at you from the left. Finally, there will be another soldier coming at you from the left...but he can't possibly catch you, so ignore him and keep running to get to...

~~~~~Stage 6-2A~~~~~

Remember that part where I talked about the strange, area where you could sink into the ground? Well, you've just stepped into it (ha ha ha). Despite this area's disturbing look (it resembles intertwining intestines), you shouldn't find yourself having too much trouble...that is, unless you're jumping too much and aren't paying attention to where you're landing.

---Unlike the floor, the walls are perfectly fine for climbing, so start out the stage by moving up the right-side wall and jumping to the small patch of...uh...STUFF above you. The black portion next to it is actually a pitfall, which you can fall through (back down to the bottom), so jump over it and move through the partition in the middle of the screen. Here you'll encounter 2 Ball Bounders, which you should remove ASAP.

---Ninpo Scroll Alert! Climb up the left wall, past the first break (where the Skull Soldiers are) up to the second level is. Wait until the Skull Soldier on this level (that's right, there's another one) moves toward the right, then jump down and slash him. This will trigger the Sky Drones above (if they weren't triggered before), so jump and slice them out of the sky before they can become a threat (this will probably also cause the Scroll to fall onto you...no problems with that, though). You'll also see a Pulsating Mass on the ledge to the right (there's another pitfall, so jump over it), which is just ITCHING to be hacked in half. Jump over (make sure it has already fired off its shots before you jump) and kill it, then continue on to the wall. If you want the Orange Ninpo, drop down and grab it...but be wary of what might be down there.

---The remainder of this area is fairly easy, actually - on the next ledge up, jump up and hack through the Pulsating Mass and Skull Soldier. Now, you'll have to jump soon to avoid getting sucked down, so do so...and you'll end up triggering the Sky Drones above you. Don't worry, they won't be a danger just yet - continue moving left, take care of the remaining Mass, and jump onto the wall. Scale the wall all the way up to the top, skipping that other junk on the right, and then jump your way to the door. You don't need to deal with anything, and 1 lousy Blue Ninpo is NOT worth the effort you'd put into getting it.

~~~~~Stage 6-2B~~~~~

---Unfortunately, it's a horizontal stage, which means you'll have to do more jumping just to make sure you don't die. Actually, the area isn't too difficult for the most part, practically giving you an Art of Fire Wheel, an Orange Ninpo, and a Sword Upgrade with no challenge toward getting them.

---So you've gone halfway through the stage and you see that 1-up hanging around in the middle of the ceiling...and you don't know how to get it. Man, didn't you just get the Art of Fire Wheel? Jump back left (if you have to) and fire off a round, then collect the goodie as it falls to the platform beneath.

---The 2 platforms after this can be a little difficult, if you're not paying attention. First off, you need to move forward enough to cause the Skull Soldier to appear...then all you have to do is wait for him to move to the far side (so you have room to jump), leap and slash, then take out the drones overhead. Sure, if you're rushing through this area then you might have a problem, but...why are you rushing? Haven't you learned by now that it's a BAD thing?

---Ok, so you're off of the platforms and back on a larger stretch of...intestine-based land. Just past the divider is a Ball Bouncer...but surprise, surprise, you've been caught again! When you move past the portion that connects the top and bottom portions of the screen, 3 more Ball Bouncers and 2 Sky Drones drop in to play. As long as you stay stationary (i.e., don't jump forward), you can safely destroy these fools and continue on to the boss fight. Have fun taking down Foster, now in a Mutated Form!

~G~ Act 7: The Ancient Ship of Doom

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Plot: ...and Ryu has passed through the rift. He stands within a highly-technological room, but his attention is drawn to the voice behind him - Clancy, now showing a bluish skin color and an evil look in his eyes, is impressed that Ryu survived the trip. "You're just a little too late," Clancy says with a grin. "I've already made the energy mine. I'll show the world the power of these ruins." He continues: "Do you have any idea what these ruins really are? We're still inside the ruins!! We're inside a dimensional warship!"

Clancy explains that these ruins are the foundation from which he will create a new world, and decides to demonstrate the power of the Warship by destroying a hefty section of the landscape. He then informs Ryu about a new age is beginning...and he isn't to be included. With that, a secret door appears beneath Ryu, and he falls outside of the ship, landing on a metallic rung. Ryu must return to the interior of the ship and stop Clancy!

Scroll:

Boss: Clancy (Form 1), Clancy (Form 2), Ancient Security Robot

~~~~~Stage 7-1A~~~~~

Congrats, you've reached the final section of the game. I'm sure it's been a trip...and now, it's only going to get harder. Let's not waste time, so get to it!

---The wind outside of the ship is constantly forcing Ryu back (i.e., to the Right), which makes his running and jumping a little difficult. You just have to learn to deal with it, I'm afraid. Also, you can grab onto the bottom of the catwalk, so if you need to, drop down (and hold up) to avoid an enemy or two.

---Stop at the edge of the first jump to trigger the Wave-Floater, then wait for it to swing along for you to kill it. If you don't, then you're going to have your hands full when the Globecopter and Turret show up. Jumping over this gap will cause the Globecopter to rise up and the Turret (on the left) to start firing. Getting out this one is simple, as you can jump straight up to avoid the 'copter and it will sail right off of the screen. Now, rush the turret and destroy it, then take out the Soldier creeping up from behind.

---Next up, you'll notice a bar near the top of the screen. Shortly prior to it, you'll see an Art of Fire Dragon orb...and this, once again, is foreshadowing the upcoming danger. Now, there are a couple of ways to get out of this situation unscathed.

- 1) Jump up onto the bar and immediately rush left, slashing the Turret as soon as its gate opens. The foreshadowing pays off here, where 2 Globecoasters slowly loft up from the bottom of the screen. By immediately going after the turret, you place yourself somewhat between the 'copters as they rise (if necessary, you can run a little bit further left to widen the gap). This allows you enough room to slash the one on the right (it reaches your height first), then turn and destroy the 2nd one before it can reach you. However, there is also a 2nd turret that is on this bar, and by now it will have released a pair of projectiles; you can either destroy these, or simply drop to a hang and climb underneath, flipping up in front of it to destroy it.
- 2) You can run towards the Turret, flagging the Globecoasters, then immediately run back to the Right and jump down to the lower Bar. From this vantage, you may safely dispose of the 2 'copters, then return to the Turrets and dismantle those as well.
- 3) Same as #1, except you time a jump so that one of the Globecoasters on your X-Axis flies up and off of the screen. You are so high that they are unable to stay level with you, and inadvertently elude themselves right out of existence. However, this does not actually destroy them, and so if you were to rescroll the screen back to their flag-points again, they would be regenerated. You have to actually destroy them for the flag to be removed (or simply avoid that flag altogether, whichever is easier).

---The next higher-level bar you come across is ominously devoid of enemies. Drop down to the small platform after it, then run forward until the Soldier is triggered. Dispatch this rushing fool, then walk to the very edge of this little platform to flag the Globecopter. It will float up, slow enough for you to jump straight up and have it end up on your right side. You now have the safety to destroy it at your leisure.

---The next small bar has an Art of Fire Dragon above it. Grabbing it, however, flags a Soldier from the right and a Globecopter from the upper-left. I've found that, while it is possible to get right of the soldier and still

have time to jumpslash the 'copter before it can harm you, the safer solution is avoiding a direct confrontation. Drop to the underside of the bar and hang there until the Soldier runs past, then flip up and destroy the 'copter as it flies at you. From here, you can simply let the Soldier run straight off of the screen and not worry about 'em anymore.

---When jumping to the next bar , you will trigger another Globecopter (gosh, aren't these guys annoying?) in midjump. Thankfully, you should be able to adequately clear it, grabbing the Blue Ninpo in midair. You have just enough time to turn and dispose of it before it can become an issue, then shift your focus to the turret on the other side of the bar. I enjoy the hang-to-flip maneuver, avoiding the projectiles until you are right in it's face.

---The next bar has a Red Ninja (which you can dispatch by standing at the very edge of this bar and slicing 'em as he walks to the edge of his own). However, shortly past this Ninja is another Turret, and jumping from bar to bar will cause a Soldier to appear from the right. I suggest you kill the Ninja, then jump out just far enough to trigger the Soldier...then immediately hold right, landing on the first bar again (not the one with the turret), dropping to the underside as the Soldier runs past. Move far enough to the right so that the Turret disappears from the screen, thus halting any more projectiles (until you move back Left again). Once the soldier is clear, run back left, jump across, and destroy the turret as soon as it opens. Sure, this may be a bit time-consuming, but it's better than taking a bunch of unnecessary hits!

---Finally, the last Bar (near the top) has the door, a Turret in front of the door, and a Globecopter floating up from the bottom of the screen. Since, at this point, time is of the essence, I suggest not even bothering with these two. Just jump over the Turret and enter the door.

~~~~~Stage 7-2A~~~~~

Welcome back to the inside of the Ancient Ship of Doom. Here is where you will find the greatest ratio of enemies-to-screen, with more opponents bothering you than flies at a picnic. Swat those you can, but remember that time is going to become important very, very shortly. If you played the previous area quickly, it might have taken you 30-40 seconds. You only have 250 seconds all-told to get through the entire area and 3 bosses, which means in all likelihood there will be at least 1 death. Hopefully you've built up a nice reserve of extra lives, 'cause this stage is going to drain you of them. Don't let it get to your nerves, though, or else you'll NEVER survive the game.

---Immediately after entering, run to the right wall, climbing up to the first platform, then jump onto it (triggering the 4 Sky Drones). You really can't afford to stop and waste time with these ninnies, so jumpslash the one that appears at centerscreen, then crouch on the upper platform and take out the upper-left one. From here, jump up to the right platform (that extends to the wall), taking out the Spider Drone in the process. If it's far enough over, then you can simply ignore it, but it's usually going to be right in your way.

---Leaping off of the right wall to reach the next platform, you will be able to see an Art of Fire Wheel (on the platform below you and on the left, next to a Turret), as well as an Orange Ninpo. I wouldn't suggest bothering with the Fire Wheel, and the Ninpo isn't a necessity either (you will get another one in a much safer location shortly). Take out the Turret on the next platform up (in the middle of the screen); jumping to this platform triggers 2 to 3 Purple Flyers on the walls (1 on the left, 2 on the right...sometimes the left-side one doesn't show up). You can actually ignore all of them, much as you did the lower 2 Sky Drones in the beginning of the stage.

---From this vantage point, jump straight up to trigger the Skull Soldiers on the left and right platforms (sometimes they don't appear; this is good for you). Jumpslash either one (I would suggest the upper-left one, since it puts you in the vantage point to grab a Blue Ninpo and you won't have to deal with the right-side Flyer), then jump straight up again. This will trigger the next platform's Skull Soldier and a weird, jumping creature (kinda looks like a Praying Mantis). Jumpslash them both, then leap up to this platform.

---You notice that Art of Fire Dragon orb above this platform? Yeah, that's foreshadowing. Jumping up to get it will flag 4 more Sky Drones (these guys don't always appear, which is a definite plus for you); if they appear, stop to destroy them, and if not...well, good! Jump to the Right Wall, above the electricity field (careful jump!), then climb up until the platform above you triggers the Skull Soldier. By now, you'll be able to see the Turret on the Left, 2 more drones will have popped up from below, and a Purple Flyer will have entered from the Left. There are a few ways to get through this, depending on how much time you want to spend dealing with it, if you're willing to take a hit, if you want to use the Fire Dragon you (probably) just picked up, and what enemies show up.

Let's assume all enemies have appeared and you don't want to use any Ninpo...then what? Well, start off by waiting for the Skull Soldier to move far enough left for you to jumpslash, putting you onto his platform (and putting him out of his misery). By now, the drones will be closing in, so all you have to do is run off the left side of the platform, between the drones and onto the lower platform where you can safely dispose of them. (It would be good to time this so that you don't end up falling onto any shots fired by the Turret.) Now, destroy them, jump back up, run over to the turret and destroy it, then run underneath the Purple Flyer and exit this area. If you do manage to take a hit by something (say, the projectiles), use the temporary invincibility you have while flashing to run through everything and just get to the door. Hey, it works for me!

~~~~~Stage 7-2B~~~~~

---Guess who's back? That's right, it's the Insects! No longer appearing as floating amalgams of Geography and Aerodynamics (Globecoasters), you are forced to deal with mechanical representations of bugs! Joy...and the first one you'll encounter will appear when you cross halfway along the small rise in the first portion of this stage (before the level where the soldier is). Jumpslash this pest, then run to the very edge of the rise to flag another one from the right. Turn and dispose of this one as well, then drop down and coup de grace the Soldier. Fun, eh?

---Despite its odd appearance, the machine you see on the Bar above you is actually a form of Turret - this one, however, fires off balls of energy instead of pellets...and that's about the only difference. You still have to wait for it to open up its firing mechanism before you can destroy it, so wait until it does before swinging wildly. Be careful when grabbing the Orange Ninpo next to the electrical grate on the left, too...if you move too far over, you'll get hurt just trying to grab it! I would also suggest getting that Sword Powerup, since you will definitely require it to survive this stage. Crossing underneath the bar, you'll encounter another Insect from below. You barely have enough time to hand-over-hand past the electricity above, then leap up and destroy the Insect before it can hit you. You'll probably want to grab that Vacuum Wave Art, too, since there will be enemies coming up that attack from above and below.

---You see the bar in the middle of the screen? Well, when you jump to it, you'll trigger 2 Sky Drones to appear from the top of the screen. Since they

automatically drop to your level, I suggest you jump onto the bar as high as possible, then immediately jump back and destroy the upper-right one. You can then wait a little bit until the Left one will move within striking distance, then leap out and hack through the bar to destroy it. From here, climb straight down onto the platform, killing the Soldier before you land (make sure he moves left before dropping down; if you don't, he could hit you and send you off the bottom of the screen for an instant death).

---All right, moving up the left side of this pillar will bring forth a Turret on the top of the left platform, as well as 2 more Sky Drones from the bottom of the screen. Since there aren't any enemies approaching from the top of the screen, you can safely head up and land in front of the Turret, destroying it. Move further left until you can see the Soldier on the platform across the way, and wait until he moves left (so that you can leap out and kill him). This will trigger 2 more Drones, these from the top of the screen; jump and take out the upper-left one, then wait on the remaining ones and slash them.

---From here, you get to deal with the oh-so-wonderful moving bar below. The problem with the this bar (and the one following it) is the electrical grates blocking your passage. You'll have to maneuver around them, above and below the bar, then jump to the upper bar and do the same before you can safely leap to safer ground). I have 2 ways of safely getting past these annoyances without taking any (probably deadly) hits.

1) Position your wary Ninja on the right side of the platform, then wait for the bar beneath you to start heading left (have your rear foot at the very edge of the ledge). Since you can jump a little bit faster (laterally) than the bar travels, you'll want it to be ahead of you so that you don't overshoot it and plummet. If you jump left from here, you should be able to pass between the electric bars on the upper track and the set just above the lower track.

2) If your timing is all right, then this way might prove to be a little easier for you... Perch yourself on the left side of the wall (where the Windmill Star and Turret were located on top of), and wait for the bar to pull as far right as it can go. Jump to it, then immediately hop over the first set of electric bars. Following this, you can either hop over the next set, or you can drop to a hang, then leap back up onto the bar after you pass underneath the hostile environs.

After these, you'll have to contend with the upper bar; the important thing to remember is that it is far, far safer to hang beneath the bar and flip up after it begins moving left. By doing so, you won't have to worry about being run into the Electric Wall on the right side of the track.

---Ok, so you see the 1-Up, and you want it. No problem, just jump out and grab it...and you'll also take out an Insect in the process! Great! Now, don't fret as you land on the small platform, as the Soldier on it is almost always on the Left Side, which gives you enough room to land and kill him. Pause after this (don't jump up and grab the Blue Ninpo), since the 2 Running Aliens will be falling overhead and down into the pit. As long as you don't jump, you won't be in any danger. Still, just to be safe, you might as well move a little bit to the left...and crouch, if you're THAT insecure.

---Hey, you see that bar? The one with the Soldier on it? Well, sir, if you grabbed the Sword Upgrade (which you SHOULD have), then you can jumpslash the lower-ranking Military fool once he moves far enough right. If not, then that's ok; just jump and hang from beneath, then leap up between the 2 Soldiers patrolling the top of the Bar. I would suggest you kill the one on the Right first, since an Insect will be coming from that direction as well (and you can get 'em both in 1 slash). If you want, you can jump up and take out the one on the left, then turn and get the 2 on the right...but whatever, man, you get the



gist of it.

---Hey, the door is just past this bar! However, don't leap after it just yet...instead, walk to the left end of the bar, triggering the Insect from below, then kill it. From here, you can leap the Soldier in front of the door and run right past him.

~~~~~Stage 7-2C~~~~~

---A vertical climb, with the walls lined with electrical goodies. Oh boy...looks like it's platform-hopping for you, Ryu! Start off by leaping on top of the left Lift, then leap to the platform on the right. 2 Insects will then fly up after you, which both can be temporarily delayed by jumping straight up (causing them to pass beneath you). Careful, though, as you might accidentally cling to the underside of the Lift beneath you; this won't help much, so drop off. 1 of the 2 Insects will then elude itself by flying straight off the Right, while the other will double-back from the left; I would suggest destroying it before progressing upward.

---Leaping to the Diagonally-travelling Lift, an Insect will fly at you from the left. Destroy it, then continue to ride the platform until you see the Turret on the upper-right platform open up. This is your time to jumpslash it, landing safely on the platform, grabbing the Orange Ninpo above it, and even safely leaping over the 2nd Insect to appear during that platform's path. You are now free to turn back left and destroy this Insect as well.

---The next platform will have 2 Insects coming from opposite sides in rapid succession, meaning you'll have to kill the one on the left quickly before the 2nd one has a chance to hit you (you can't leap either of them, so it's out-and-out physical confrontation here). Finally, there's 1 more jump to the platform on the Left, which takes you up to the level with the door, a Soldier, and another Insect from the upper-left. You can actually outrun this Insect, but it's always good to be sure that you won't be hassled...so turn and destroy it before moving on.

~~~~~Stage 7-2D~~~~~

---Yes, this stage DOES have a bit of an awkward "no-enemy" introductory section. That's what is meant to throw you off - by now haven't you learned to expect something like this? This entire first section is meant to get you into a position where you will be forced to take a hit SOMEWHERE...so let's see what we can do to avoid that. Moving forward towards the Soldier on the bottom floor will cause 3 Ball Bounders and 3 Sky Drones to fall from above. As soon as they fall, take a quick step back left in between 2 of the bounders (you have plenty of room), then take out the 2 Bounders on the Right and keep moving (you'll also get the Soldier, too, so there aren't too many worries here). Jumpslash the Orange Ninpo (and a Sky Drone), then leap to the Right Wall.

Since you continue moving, this gives the Rocket Cart above you very little time to try and fire off any shots at you. That's a good thing, trust me. Leap up off of the right wall onto the level above, where a Ball Bounder will be in mid-jump towards the right. Nail this guy with a midair slash, then turn around and take out the Rocket Cart with another jumping slice. You will have eluded 1 of the Sky Drones, but the other will be in hot pursuit...so crouch-slash this one, then (finally) jump up and grab the Health Bottle. After all you've been through, this is a VERY welcome sight.

---Ok, so you see the Vacuum Wave art with the Ball Bounder beneath it. Wellsir, you know that they always start out Bounding to the right, right? That's your chance to drop down and kill it before it can head left and hit

you; furthermore, you might as well continue right and take out the next one as well before it can become a nuisance as well. This will trigger a one-of-a-kind enemy, the Face-Shield...and you'll probably end up destroying it with the same Swipe that takes out the 2nd Ball Bounder. Oh well, it's not like this guy is special or anything...it only appears once!

---Keep running to the right, leaping onto the Wall and immediately jumping back up-left so you can destroy those 2 Rocket Carts on the above platform. You don't want these guys making your life any worse, and besides...if you keep running, you won't have to worry about the Aliens closing in from the Left. Also, the 2 carts will have launched their salvos towards the Left (after you've run underneath), giving you time enough to destroy them before another Volley can come forth.

---After the Platform with the Blue Ninpo above it (to the right of the platform the Rocket Carts were on), keep running and land on the Bar in front of you. This will trigger another Rocket Cart on the bar, which should be immediately destroyed. Now, drop to a hang beneath this bar, climbing over to the Soldier on the platform in front of you; once he has moved far enough over, drop down and kill him, then wait for the next Soldier to move far enough right for you to jump to his platform and dispatch him as well. This gives you the opportunity to grab a 1-up, something that you'll definitely need...after all, you're most likely going to run out of time in this stage. Also, by immediately dropping to a hang you will avoid the Running Aliens above, saving you more precious health.

---Double-back to the bar, leap up, and head right to find the next Stage. Now, if you die (which you probably will), you won't start all the way back at the beginning of Stage 7-2.

~~~~~Stage 7-3A~~~~~

Welcome to the final leg of your journey, one that is quite the thorny path (ha ha). The background has changed to a Bluish one, with White being the color of the platforms...and the spikes that protrude from the walls, floor, and ceiling. Safe landing areas are few and far between, while enemies are aplenty...and seeking to drive you onto an (impending) impaling doom. Whee!!! Good luck, mate...you'll need it.

---The spikes all along the edges here will retract back into the walls after a set amount of time, then shoot back out after another pause. The first set, on the Righthand wall, can be scaled past as soon as they disappear...but if you're not comfortable with making such a quick climb, you can also leap to the Right Wall, then wait for them to slide away before continuing. The 2nd set on the Right Wall should be waited on, so that you can climb up to their temporarily-vacant spot before leaping to the Left. Jumpslash the Skull Soldier on this area, then grab all the goodies you see. Don't forget to destroy the Orb Eye and Blob, so that you don't have to deal with any projectiles either.

---You see the bar, right, the one with the Goo beneath? Well, jumping onto it is (of course) going to trigger a few enemies, this time a trio of Sky Drones. Take out the above one, then immediately drop back down to the previous spot (where the Skull Soldier was), allowing you more room to take out the 2 lower drones. Falling will cause the Purple Flyer to enter from the Right, on roughly the same level as the above Bar; jump up and destroy it as well, then wait on the spikes on the left to disappear. I don't just mean the Right side of the Left wall (the spikes that almost extend to the Bar you're standing on), I mean the far left Wall (on the edge of the screen). Trust me, you'll want to be over there.

---After scaling this thing to the top, you'll see another Bar with Goo beneath and a Skull Soldier on top, as 3 Sky Drones enter from the below the bar and another comes from the Right. You can simply wait on the 3 beneath and crouch-slash them, then destroy the last one as it comes toward you. Finally, wait for the last section of Spikes to retract before leaping to the door.

~~~~~7-3B~~~~~

Ooh, you are going to LOVE this place!

---All right, so you're on the bar a short walk from the entry door, yes? I hope I don't need to tell you that waiting to take out the Globecopter (yeah, it's back to THOSE things) is a good idea. Leap to the next platform, destroying the Ninja as you land...and you'll notice that the block you're on immediately starts to disappear, just like the Bridge from Stage 5-2. This is meant to make you panic and rush into danger, trust me. Jump and take out the 'copter behind you, then jump and land on the last Block of this decomposing bridge. This will trigger 1 more 'copter from the right, which leaves you enough time to destroy it and take a running leap for the wall on the Right before the block beneath you disappears. Great!

---The next bar you see - apparently every single bar you find is going to be dangerous - is followed by another set of blocks that disappear when you land one 'em. Jump down and kill the Ninja, then jump to the first block of the next set, slashing the Wave-Floater as you go. While on this single block, it's safe to jump (almost) straight up and land on the block right next to it, allow the incoming Globecopter to pass beneath you and elude itself right off the screen. Jumping to the first block of the next pair will yield another one; this one you will have just enough time to destroy it, landing on the next block (much the same as the previous set), and jump to the next group of disappearing blocks.

---Are we having fun yet? No? Oh well...kill the first Ninja on this set of blocks, then jump-slash the incoming Globecopter and Blue Ninpo at the same time. When you land, take out the next Ninja on the platform, then move to the 3rd block from the end of this bridge. This will trigger another Globecopter, this one from the upper-left, which you should destroy before leaping to the Bar above you.

---Leaping to this bar brings for 2 more 'copters (from beneath), so immediately jump up and kill the Ninja, landing between the 2 'copters, before you destroy them. Finally, leap down to the platform in front of the door, killing the Ninja in front of it for his insolence...and continue on!

~~~~~7-3C~~~~~

---Wait for the spikes on the right wall to retract, then leap off of the wall and onto the bar in the middle. From this vantage, jump to the platform in the upper-left, then (once again) wait on the spikes to disappear before continuing up. Simple enough, yes?

---Once you leap off of the left wall and onto the small safe area (with the Orange Ninpo above it), I really should suggest that you make sure you are far enough away from the wall so that the returning spikes don't catch you in the back. Hey, it's happened to me before, so there's no sense in letting it happen to you. I'm here to help, remember?

---Ok, so you slashed the Orange Ninpo and the Sky Drone...now what? Well, you can wait for the next one to come into range, then leap up onto the bar above

and take out the Goo (watch out for projectiles!), then leap up onto the bar and destroy the soldier as well. This, of course, is going to trigger more Sky Drones - three, to be exact - whom you'll want to get rid of before progressing. Remember, you can actually jump through the ceiling (provided there aren't any Spikes in the way), so you can actually position yourself so that you are jumping straight up THROUGH the spike-covered column when destroying the 2 top Drones. There are 2 above this bar, and the left-side one gives you a better vantage. After this, crouch-slash the remaining drone, then wait on the spikes so you can leap up and onto the small Spike-Free area on top of the right Column.

Note - to make leaping onto these columns easier, you can jump straight up, then hold left (or right) to guide Ryu onto the wall. No sense in attempting a horizontal jump that, if missed, will send you into a wall full of tooth-like protrusions.

---All right, raise your hand if you did NOT correctly guess that 2 Insects would come a-buzzin' at you once you jumped to this small No-Spike area. Anyone? Oh well...jump straight up to avoid one, then destroy the other. Got it? Oh, and this will trigger 2 Sky Drones in the upper-left; you can wait on them, if you'd like. It does make things safer, after all.

---Jump up to the bar on the left, killing the Soldier as you leap, then wait on the 2 Drones from below. It's safer to get rid of 'em now than to try and outrun them, trust me. Now, all you have to do is wait on the spikes, climb to the very top of the Left Wall (as far as you can go), then leap back right, taking out the Insect as you go, then dispatch the 2 Soldiers and run for the door!

~~~~~Stage 7-3D~~~~~

Thankfully, the last bit of the final Stage (that's this section, in case you didn't know) isn't too terribly difficult...but it does have a couple of sections that almost feel like they are guaranteed damage towards your hapless hero. This isn't true, so let's see if I can't guide you to safety past these Uncharted Waters, eh?

---Scale the first 2nd bar, waiting just long enough for the Skull Soldier to move to the Right (giving you enough room to drop down and kill him). Immediately move to the right side of this small landing, which will cause a Sky Drone to drop in on both sides of the above bar (and, more importantly, you can immediately elude the Laser Spider that appears on the Left). Should you not move quickly enough, this Spider will fire off a Laser Bar that will certainly get in the way of things and make maneuvering quite difficult (that is, unless you're willing to wait for it to pass...but remember, time is of the essence!). Jump and take out the 2 Drones before leaping to the next Bar.

---Ok, so this bar will flag 2 more drones, these coming from Below. What're you gonna do? Well, climb up on top of the bar and drop down to the next landing, where you will have enough room to take out these two pests. I would suggest taking out the Skull Soldier as you land, too...you know, since that's easier than ignoring him.

---You see that Blue Ninpo, just past this 2nd Skull Soldier? Don't grab it, just walk up beneath it. This will trigger 4 Sky Drones (2 on each side), as well as 2 Laser Spiders. Crouch and take out the Spiders, then wait on the drones and destroy them as well (you'll probably have to continue ducking the Lasers shot out by the Spiders, so be careful).

---Finally, there is 1 more Skull Soldier that you have to "drop in" on, and

past the stage is smooth sailing. Decide which Ninjitsu art you want - Fire Dragon, Fire Wheel, and Windmill Star all appear here - and then go on to do battle with the final villains.

~~~~~Indeed~~~~~

Congrats, you've gotten to the bosses of the Ninja Gaiden series! This is not going to be a picnic, lemme tell ya...but getting this far is a testament to your gaming abilities, no doubt. Now, finishing off all 3 with 1 life...THAT's difficult. Let's see you do it without using any Ninjitsu, either!

...ok, don't worry about making the game any harder than it already is. That's just unfair!

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~Ryu sez: "Good job, yo! You gotta be some sort of super Ninja to do all 'dis, yo! Woo!"

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===== Ninja Gaiden III =====
-----V: The Bosses-----
===== Ninja Gaiden III =====
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Hey, a boss section! If you don't know how to handle a particular boss, then I'll do what I can to help. That includes what to do with each Ninjitsu art, by the way, so there's no fretting over "Well, I don't HAVE that art, so what do I do with the one I DO have?"

~A~ Mantis Warrior
=====

A greenish-being, humanoid in shape (basically), but sporting 2 large Mantis-like "blades" on its forearms. The Mantis Warrior has 2 modes: walking forward with its armbldes drawn in, covering its chest, and down so that it may spew small bursts of flame. These flamebursts travel across the ground, in intervals slow enough for Ryu to jump between them. Furthermore, Mantis stops moving when it is creating these flames, which means you do not have to worry about it pressuring you any further.

(Man) Handling the Mantis Warrior is rather basic - move in close, wait for him to drop his arms, slash him a couple of times, then jump over the 3 flames. If you feel confident enough, slash him while jumping over the flames; in this case, having the Sword Upgrade is major bonus, since you can space yourself further away and thus have more time to jump over the fire. Keep this up until he's toasty (ha ha). Now, onto strategies revolving around Ninjitsu abilities.

Windmill Shuriken: Fairly simple - wait 'til it's throwing flame, then toss a Shuriken down its gullet, jump the fire, and do it again.

Fire Wheel: Wellsir, thankfully the Fire Wheel has somewhat decent horizontal range...however, you really should have a different ability than this. Attack much the same as if you were equipped with the Windmill Shuriken, but get a little closer before unleashing your flaming fury.

Fire Dragon: Hang on the left wall, wait until he (it?) takes a couple of steps forward, then pelt 'em as soon as he opens up.

Invincible Wheel: Bah! Not only do you ONLY get 2 uses of this (at max), but it doesn't keep you invincible versus the fire...and it immediately disappears after hitting Mantis once...AND it only does 1 point of damage! This is probably the most worthless Ninjitsu you could take into this fight! In all seriousness, I suggest you not even ATTEMPT to use this during the fight; just go out with your sword and hack him down to size.

Vacuum Wave: This is NOT a good Ninjitsu to have; furthermore, just to have it in this fight you would have to avoid picking up quite a few items. The only way you can make use of this is by jumping over the Mantis and hoping it hits him. Since you'll probably end up trading hits with him doing this, that means you're in even WORSE condition for having it!

Sword Upgrade: The Dragon Sword gives you that much range, which means you don't have to get as close when he opens up to release his ground flames. However, you shouldn't have to worry too much about getting away from 'em when he moves forward again, since he's rather slow and doesn't move too far to begin with.

Preferred Ninjitsu: Fire Dragon. Hang out on the wall, pelt 'em with whatever you have, then engage with normal weaponry. Sounds good to me, since it gives you plenty of uses (compared to the others) and it leaves you nice and safe while attacking. The Windmill Shuriken is good, but the only way you could have it against him is if you didn't pick up any items along the way; this is not too terribly difficult to do, but it's a lot easier to progress through the stage if you hack down all the enemies you see. Sometimes, items get in the way, and since the last one you can pick up is the Fire Dragon, it makes sense to have it as your weapon.

~B~ Night Diver

Resembling a large, winged machine with a maw and 2 hands, the Night Diver is an interesting creature to behold and fend off. Suiting the areas previous to your locating him, the Night Diver enjoyed chucking fireballs at you...although his flying is something of a quandry, as he is very far from the outdoors and (logically) would probably not be a creature of flight unless he occasionally visited the outside.

Regardless, let's talk of how he tries to hurt you. As with any other boss in the game, physical contact will damage Ryu. Unlike the first boss, where he moves slow and is generally VERY easy to avoid touching, the Night Flyer enjoys flitting about the room, flying in a slightly off-kilter wave pattern; sometimes the apex of his flight is in the middle of the room and near the bottom, sometimes it is near the ceiling...you get the picture. That's not all, though, as sometimes ol' Nighty likes to stop and chuck a volley of 5 fireballs down towards the ground. These don't have too terribly large a spread, though, so you aren't in much danger from them.

You basic gameplan is just as you'd figure - don't stand underneath so that

you're not in danger of being set on fire. What else? Try to avoid getting pinned in a corner by monitoring his flight plan, moving left (or right) to keep away from him while he's coasting about. When he's low enough, take a swing or two at him (preferably if he's stopped to chuck some fire), then move back so that you don't get hit as he continues up back towards the top of the screen. It shouldn't be TOO difficult, so let's get to the Ninjitsu abilities; after all, these make the fight a LOT easier, n'est pas?

Windmill Shuriken: The Windmill Shuriken - although not as difficult to hold onto as in the previous stage (since you can pick one of these up prior to the boss battle) - isn't the best applicable tool against him. It gives you more range in terms of hitting him, meaning you can distance yourself further away while pelting him for damage. However, you still have to wait for him to come down to the ground, and if you whiff the Shuriken then you either have to try and boomerang it into him - which can be dangerous, given his flight plan - or simply grab it and throw another one. A wasted effort, as it is.

Fire Wheel: Do I even have to explain this one? Ok, then...the Night Flyer is usually above you and (hopefully) in front of you. The Art of Fire Wheel travels upwards and in front of you, and covers a fairly nice spread...thus, walk into the room and chuck those flames at your airborne nemesis.

Fire Dragon: This isn't TOO bad an art, although it's not my favorite. Since his flight plan isn't the easiest to follow, this means you're going to have to use the platforms to your advantage when the Fire Dragon is in your possession. Wait until he flies low enough, then lambast him with whatever you have. It's important to remember that it's much, much safer to drop to the ground instead of jumping, since jumping puts you higher in the air and in a less-maneuverable position. Bad news, especially if you have to get out of the way when he's a-coming up.

Invincible Wheel: N/A. This doesn't exist in this stage.

Vacuum Wave: N/A. This doesn't exist in this stage.

Sword Upgrade: By allowing yourself more distance, that gives you an almost-free range to attack from without fear of being hit when he hovers back up again. Still, don't be TOO confident or you might get nudged and still take some damage.

Preferred Ninjitsu: Fire Wheel, by far. This allows you the freedom to roam about the room while still retaining the safety of attacking from a distance and having a good shot at connecting with that attack. Plus, you get the most number of attacks possible (assuming you have 50 Ninpo, you'll get 6 tosses), so that's 3/8 of your opponents' life gone. From there, you only need 10 more slashes to get the job done, and that shouldn't be TOO hard, eh?

~C~ Great Koganei

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A strange, pink creature of sorts, the Great Koganei is a master of the leaping tuck. While this might not affect you that much, just wait until you meet his twin brother. The twin, invincible brother. The same brother that likes to bound about the screen at the same time as the original.

Now, these two don't create much of a problem through their bounding. Granted, the pools trickles of water on the platforms make it difficult to run and jump

accurately, but their leaping should be the least of your concerns. After every 3 jumps, this dastardly duo stops where ever they are perched, followed by the slinging of 3 Windmill-esque Stars. These stars don't boomerang, but are each tracked to your location at the moment they are thrown. Thus, you have 6 throwing stars all homing in on where you are, and it's best that you avoid being hit by those. Following these, they return to their leaping antics, rebounding off of the walls so as to stay onscreen.

How do you cope with this? Well, first off the only one you can hurt is the one that starts off on the Right half of the screen. Thus, keep track of this one; he's the one you should be gunning for. Your best opportunities for attacking via swordplay are in the middle of his jumps, when he's about to touch the ground - slash at him during these leaps and you should do fine enough (when you first enter the room, you can run over and land as many as 6 hits before you have to jump away or become Shuriken fodder).

The most difficult thing about these two, however, is the fact that after a while one of them will lose the timing that the second one has for throwing. That is to say, eventually one will be throwing Shurikens while the other is still jumping, then THAT one will start throwing shurikens...so you'll have more than just 1 volley to deal with, you'll essentially be avoiding 2 sets of blades being hurled at your head. No easy feat, what with those two jumping and the watery platforms impeding your safe jumping.

With a little bit of luck (and the right Ninjitsu art), you should be able to dismantle these two before they can get to their 4th volley of Shurikens. If not...then good luck.

Windmill Shuriken: Ironic, eh? It's a big Shuriken Fest, and they are on the winning team (trust me). However, with the Windmill Shuriken, you can pelt the damage-able one from much further away, giving you the ability to concentrate more on dodging the other jumping fool.

Fire Wheel: Ah, another good fight...see, these guys like to jump at you. Furthermore, they will sometimes find themselves on the platforms above you. What does this mean? Duh, stupid, that means they are right in the way of being set on fire with your 1337 N1nj4 5k1ll2, yo.

Fire Dragon: Er...well, if you can hold onto one of these by the time you reach the Great Koganei(s), then good for you - stand on one of the platforms and pelt them from above, then run away as those Shurikens come a-calling. However, clinging to the wall and firing these off isn't the best idea, since you have to jump down before you can successfully evade their attacks.

Invincible Wheel: Despite how easy it makes some of this stage, I would NOT suggest holding onto the Invincible Wheel up to these guys. You're only looking at 1 point of damage per hit - which means you only get a lousy 2 points of damage at max Ninpo - but even worse is the range on it. Finally, you're not protected from the Shuriken with this equipped, so you still have to dodge them all. Not a good thing...you'd best get a better Ninjitsu to suit your needs.

Vacuum Wave: This wouldn't be a bad Ninjitsu to have on hand if there weren't a few problems with it. First off, there's no difficulty finding yourself beneath one of these two...however, you still have to avoid the Shurikens, and it's better to NOT be directly below one of 'em (meaning less room to dodge) when the Shuriken come out.

Furthermore, Vacuum Wave costs 10 Ninpo, which means even your maximum number of uses will only give you 5 shots. You get more with Fire Dragon or Fire Wheel...and they are easier to keep ahold of, too (they appear more frequently towards the end of the stage). I wouldn't suggest trying to keep this, since it'll just make the entire stage more of a chore.

Sword Upgrade: Wow...to be honest, the difficulty associated with getting this sword upgrade actually makes up for itself by how much easier it makes this fight. By giving you a greater range of horizontal AND vertical damage, you can hit these two bounders with a lot more safety. This means you have more room to book it out of town when the stars start flying at your head, and that's a definite plus.

Preferred Ninjitsu: Fire Wheel. They jump, which puts them in range. They're usually above you, which means they're free for attacking. You get 6 tosses (at max, although you'll probably only have 3-4 when you get here), and - best of all - it's the last Ninjitsu before the door. You don't have to worry about holding onto it or anything!

~D~ Sandeater

Man...honestly, these things don't look THAT weird, but they are pretty iffy lookin'. Anywho, the Sandeater generally looks like a Turtle wearing a helmet and sporting a couple of spikes on it's shell. The Sandeater is quite the step down in terms of difficulty, when compared to the Great Koganei (the previous boss)...and that's not really a bad thing, given how difficult this game can be.

The Sandeater has 4 things he does - jump out of the ground, walk slowly across the ground, burrow back into the ground, and chuck a few volleys of the Art of Fire Wheel while underground before jumping back up. There are 3 platforms for you to abuse, which I heartily suggest you do - by getting directly above where the Sandeater is (throwing the Wheels from), you can pretty well avoid them entirely; however, following these volleys, he will jump back up from the ground again, attempting to spike you with the points on his back. Be ready to jump to the side when he leaps back onscreen, as it is most definitely hazardous to your health if you do not.

In terms of attacking...just wait for him to hop up, then slowly follow him and hack away. If you're good, you can knock off 8-10 bars of life in just 1 sitting, then book it up to the roof and avoid the Fire Wheels before moving off of the platform (where he'll be jumping shortly). Nick the rest of his life off...and if you have to, go back up for another round. Be careful, as he alternates between 5 and 3 volleys of Fire Wheel (first round, 5, second round 3).

Windmill Shuriken: The Windmill Shuriken gives you the luxury of hitting the Sandeater while remaining closer to a wall, so you can get up to the top of the screen in a quicker fashion. Works for me, eh?

Fire Wheel: The Fire Wheel allows you the ability to pelt him as soon as he jumps, as well as the entire time he is on a platform. Unfortunately, this time is brief - he quickly drops back to the ground - so you'll have to make fast use of it.

Fire Dragon: This should be fairly simple to figure out - he likes to

walk on the ground, so stand high on a platform and hit him a few times without having to even get near the lout. Plus, you don't have to run to a platform to avoid the Fire Wheels - you're already there!

Invincible Wheel: N/A. There isn't one of these in this stage.

Vacuum Wave: One of the last Arts to appear in the stage, the Vacuum Wave isn't too terribly bad to have on hand. When he first jumps onscreen, the Sandeater lands on a platform. You have ample time to run beneath that platform and unleash a few Waves into his underside before hacking at his back, giving you even more free damage. Heck, since you don't really need Ninjitsu to win this fight, why not go ahead and use it?

Sword Upgrade: Although not too terribly necessary, since Sandeater is a slow buckaroo, but it IS nice to have; problem is getting the blasted thing, which means you have to avoid the spikes below it and survive the rest of the trip up to Sandeater's quarters. Personally, I would suggest you not bother - it doesn't aid that much in the stage itself (you can manage without it), and you don't put yourself in a perilous situation when trying to get it.

Preferred Ninjitsu: Fire Dragon, if possible. You have a safer vantage point when attacking with it, so you can worry less about avoiding the Fire Wheels. I'd say the Vacuum Wave is a good art, too, despite its extra cost...however, you ultimately do not need anything except your Sword to win this fight, so don't fret over which art you have and which one you MIGHT need. Any Art will do just fine.

~E~ Ryu Clone

I'm sorry, but THIS is a clone? Man...ok, granted, he transforms prior to the fight, but still...maybe he's just going Super Saiya-Jin, eh? I mean, that's what it kinda looks like...although it's all shadowy and such...ah, whatever.

The Ryu Clone is a bio-noid that was built to resemble Ryu, fight like Ryu, talk like Ryu, cook a mean Quiche like Ryu...you get the picture. However, upon transforming into this form, the Ryu Clone's only similarity to Ryu is that he incorporates the Windmill Shuriken into his attack pattern. He jumps twice on the right side of the screen, each time throwing a Shuriken at ground level, then high-jumps to the center of the screen, dropping 3 flames at the top of his jump, then jumps to the left side of the screen, depositing more flames into the Bank of the Ground. He then jumps twice again and repeats the pattern.

Now, there are several times where you may attack him during all of this. If you jump the initial Shuriken, you have the opportunity to slash at him a couple of times. When he bounds out to the middle of the screen, he's open from the left side (or right side, depending on which side he's jumping to), and then it's back to the Shuriken jumps. Another bonus is the fact that there are deadspots between the dropped flames, which means you can stand between the fireballs and continue attacking him. Hey, it makes for good maneuvering AND easy attacks!

Windmill Shuriken: A taste of your own medicine, eh? The Windmill Shuriken allows you the ability to attack him from much further away. Since his attack styles seem to make it difficult to get in close, this is a definite plus. Chuck one out for

an almost guaranteed hit, since you'll most likely be jumping (and, thus, whiffing will soon be rectified by the boomerang effect).

Fire Wheel: The Fire Wheel is a godsend here. Your clone enjoys superjumping (maybe he stole Samus Aran's Power Boots?) while attacking, then jumping around the room some more. This puts him in absolute prime positioning for a few Fire Wheels to be lobbed in his general direction. Plus, they're fairly cheap to use (when compared to the Vacuum Wave or Windmill Shuriken)!

Fire Dragon: Now this is NOT a Ninjitsu you want to have on hand when you reach ol' Cloney (George?). It requires a downward angle of attack, which means you can perch yourself on the left wall and hit him for a whlie...but you have to time it just right so he is grounded when you throw it (not too easy), or wait until he gets closer to hit him. The 2nd option puts you within physical reach, which isn't good at ALL...so you'd best make sure you have another Art on hand when you reach him. Hey, it's not like you can't get the job done with just your sword...

Invincible Wheel: What do you plan to accomplish with this? You're not invincible to his attacks, nor are you invincible to him. Now, I can see how keeping the Invincible Wheel is a handy idea - it makes the stage a lot easier to swallow - but the boss fight gains practically nothing from your holding onto this. No, you should drop it in favor of another art before entering the room.

Vacuum Wave: Initially, I had thought this to be a worthless art; however, I was actually wrong about that idea. Here's how - you know how the Ryu Clone jumps across the room in 2 leaps? Wellsir, position yourself under him when he's jumping and throw out a Wave Art. Hey, that's an easy hit, a little easier than trying to get close enough to slash at 'em. Of course, it's not much, but there's a certain level of safety it provides that makes one realize how handy it can be.

Sword Upgrade: It's not necessary to the fight (duh), but it certainly doesn't hurt to have that much more range on your physical attacks against him. You can get further away from the Shurikens when hitting him, and you don't have to get as close (i.e., put in as much danger) when he bounds to the middle and left/right side of the screen. I'd suggest grabbing it.

Preferred Ninjitsu: Fire Wheel, as usual. You find a lot of enemies that are airborne, so logically the best art to use is the one that has good range and tags enemies in the sky. That's the Fire Wheel!

~F~ Mutated Foster

"Australian for Beer."

It's interesting to see that Foster was ripped apart by the Subspace energy... and yet, he gets to come back stronger than ever. Ryu, on the other hand, is strong enough to simply move about in the Subspace rift...but he gains no powers from it. Bah!

So Foster got mutated, and seeks to kill Ryu. Gee, big surprise - it was about

"Boss Time" anyways. So Foster is a yellowish being forced to crawl along the ground, with a big spike on the top of his head. He can open his arms (or whatever's left of 'em) and fire off a fireball at you, forcing you to jump. He then rams himself into a wall (spike first), causing several little creatures to drop through the area. He then fires off another fireball before ramming the opposite wall.

This fight can be difficult for a few reasons. First of all, the floor continues to drag you down, meaning you have to jump to move quickly (and avoid being pulled down). This means avoiding his fireball and dash attack is best left to hanging on a wall. 2 problems arise with the wall, however...when he rams it, you fall off (and, subsequently onto him). Furthermore, ramming the wall - as I said before - causes several creatures to drop down upon you. This means you to have to jump over him and avoid the creatures. This is a problem because this is also (conveniently) the only time you get to attack him. Joyous, eh? Well, at least you can destroy the falling creatures...it might not seem like much, but there IS a way to handle them effectively (cough VACUUM WAVE cough).

So here's the gameplan - jump on the wall, wait for him to ram it, then jump off, hopefully avoiding any buggers falling from the ceiling. If you're safe, then turn and slash him a couple of times, then start heading towards the other wall. Your emphasis should probably be on avoiding the falling critters instead of wailing on him, since that could get you killed rather quickly.

Finally...supposing you DO beat him, I suggest you cling to a wall - the floor can still drag you under and kill you while you're busy watching Foster die. Don't let that happen!

Windmill Shuriken: The Windmill Shuriken has the range that gives you a great lead in this fight. You no longer have to worry about landing anywhere near Foster, so you can avoid the beasts from above and still manage to land a hit or two on him. Good for you!

Fire Wheel: Ooh...probably not a good pick for this fight, since you have to get rather close to make sure you hit him. Honestly, when you're at that range, you're probably better off just slashing the beast. However, it does redeem itself by allowing you to destroy some of the falling creatures. You get a little bit of protection while attacking, but nothing major...after all, it's not directly up, now is it?

Fire Dragon: Well, it's not the Fire Wheel, I'll give it that. The Fire Dragon is actually near-impossible to use, since you have to wait until Foster is vulnerable, then turn, jump, and lob the blasts at him. If you could easily turn in air and throw them, that would make dealing with this fool a lot easier...but that just doesn't happen, so you're going to have to make due.

Invincible Wheel: N/A.

Vacuum Wave: Surprisingly efficient, if you use it right. The trick is, you're not supposed to use it as an offensive weapon; when Foster rams the wall, drop down and start the Vacuum Wave to take out the falling bounders. This means you are free to hack at his hindside! Yay!

Sword Upgrade: The funny thing about this stage is that there are two - count 'em, TWO - Sword Upgrades to be had. Grabbing a 2nd doesn't increase it anymore, however, so it's not exactly required that you survive long enough to get them both. Still, being able to get further away from Foster means

you can worry less about the falling stuff and how precise a landing you nail. It's just slash and jump, jump and slash from here on!

Preferred Ninjitsu: I'd say my best bet is the Vacuum Wave, especially since you no longer have to worry about the falling critters above - just use it as protection instead of an offense, and you'll survive this encounter relatively unscathed. However, the Vacuum Wave Art IS difficult to hold onto, so you're probably going to have to just go at it with Ye Olde Sworde.

~G~ Clancy (1st Form)

You know, the cutscene prior to this fight depicts Clancy as...the Super Shredder. Sure, I'm being facetious, but he DOES kinda look like 'em, with the build and the spikes an' all...

Seeking to destroy all of Mankind, Clancy has harnessed the power of the Ancient Ship of Doom and turned himself into a super-powered being. Offering Ryu the opportunity to join him in the rebuilding of a new world, Clancy was shunned by the Ninja due to his plans for mass genocide. Thus, it's time for some ninja-thwomping!

Clancy's "super life power" body is quite different-looking than what the cutscenes would lead you to believe. Instead of a yellow, mutated being who appears as if his skin is ready to fall off, you instead fight a large, red character that looks as if he is sporting a vest alongside a pair of Football Shoulder Pads. Apparently, he has a jetpack on him somewhere, 'cause he enjoys flying, too. Remember the Night Diver, that annoying cave boss from Stage 2? yeah, well, Clancy flies in the same style of pattern; however, Clancy doesn't go near the ground, which means you have to jump to reach him. That's bad news for Ryu. He also likes to toss out 3 homing bullets, which - as the name would dictate - track your location and attempt to hurt you. Thankfully, you can destroy these bullets with a sword slash or Ninjitsu attack, so get 'em off of your back in a hurry!

So guess what happens if you manage to hit Clancy? Well, he stops moving and stops hurling projectiles at you. Believe me, this ISN'T a good thing - when this happens, he calls upon the mighty power of Zeus and asks for a great rain of thunder and lightning, the likes of which have NEVER before been seen, so that they may raze the ground and destroy everything around him for CLANCY HAS DECREED THAT THOU SHALT PERISH FOR THINE SINS, FOOLISH MORTAL! A HA HA HA!!!

...anywho, he stops moving, but this means you should START moving. 3 bolts of lightning strike the ground, one at a time, at the near-exact location you're standing. The trick is to move out of the way before you get hit, and keep running so the second (and third) don't catch you either. If you run into the corner, you'd better hope you can double-back in time to make it out of the threat range, or else you'll be zapped good by a shock of electrical fury. After these 3 bolts (which are QUITE difficult to avoid, so hope for the best), Clancy returns to flying and throwing.

So in order to beat Clancy, you have to hit him; however, whenever you hit him, he stops moving and starts up with the lightning. If you have the right Ninjitsu, hit him a few times before the first Bolt hits the ground, then dodge them and resume your attacks. If you have to attack via swordplay, then make sure you are close enough to hit - you don't really have too much to worry about, since connecting causes him to stop moving. It's frustrating to hit, then run away, then hit again...but it's probably the safest method I know of.

Windmill Shuriken: The Windmill Shuriken, as usual, gives Ryu the luxury of keeping his distance while pelting his enemies with weaponry. Unfortunately, Ryu doesn't get as many tosses of this as he does the Fire Wheel, which means he's going to have to get in close with his sword more once the Ninpo runs out. Quite dangerous...however, you have to jump and slash at Clancy to hit him, while the Shuriken can be used from the opposite platform or from a distanced jump. Yay, it's that much safer! Heck, if you're daring, then you can throw one out, jump over it so it'll boomerang, then dodge the lightning bolts while it flings about, eventually careering into Clancy's reddish backside. See, you can turn any opportunity into a chance to attack!

Fire Wheel: Just like the Night Diver, you're fighting an opponent that is above you. So once again, it's an optimal weapon for the airborne foe...what else is nice, though, is that you get a whopping 11 tosses at max Ninpo (that's almost 3/4 of his life), it's easy to get ahold of (being one of the last Ninjitsu Arts to be had in the level), and it tears through those pesky homing projectiles and still socks Clancy in the Mean Bean Machine. You can throw several of these, dodge the lightning, resume throwing until you run dry, and then slash him a scant few times to win the match. Not too difficult; you should only have to encounter the lightning 2-3 times, if you're playing well.

Fire Dragon: This Ninjitsu is SUICIDE...but if it's all you have, then you might as well work with what you've got. Jump up to a platform, wait until Clancy flies low enough to be hit, then jump and hurl as many Fireballs as you can before you return to dodging lightning bolts. It's not the safest maneuver, since jumping down from the platform can cost you just enough time so that you could very easily be hit...but hey, you're the one that kept the Fire Dragon. I mean, seriously - you could have had the Art of Fire Wheel, which was RIGHT before the boss's room...

Invincible Wheel: Well, it's not THAT bad...I mean, the Invincible Wheel protects you from those homing bullets, which is good. Unfortunately, those bullets only come out if he's not being attacked, which is the direct antithesis of your agenda in this fight. It's kinda handy to have, but I wouldn't hope for it doing much offensively for you. It does nothing versus the Lightning, either, so you're out of luck there, too.

Vacuum Wave: Surprisingly good, given the fact that your opponent never drops to a low-enough level to hit you physically. Thus, initiating the Vacuum Wave and running beneath him is pretty much a guaranteed hit. Of course, you still have to dodge the lightning, but with the Vacuum Wave you are at least assured a few hits while running back and forth.

Sword Upgrade: Very, very handy weapon. This allows you to not even bother with the platforms, simply jumping and slashing a couple of times from the ground level before dodging those searing bolts of glory. No platforms means more time to worry about where you need to be and when...plus the added range is ALWAYS nice to have.

Preferred Ninjitsu: Fire Wheel, by far. It takes care of the projectiles, it's an easy find, it gives you plenty of damage to inflict, and you have relatively no aiming to worry about. It's not a true fire-and-forget...but as

long as you're not facing the opposite direction, you're pretty well assured some damage. It can be very quickly fired off, giving you several hits before you have to begin dodging the lightning...and that's a definite plus, eh?

~H~ Clancy (2nd Form)

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All right, so you beat up on Clancy...and now, this weird thing in the back wall has come to life and decided to try and obliterate you. Awesome. As Ryu deftly informs the crowd, this is Clancy's real form, and is not one to be trifled with. Resembling an Alien (from the "Alien" movie series), Clancy's 2nd form has him plastered to the back wall, with only his head and 2 hands protruding. Despite he previous attire, this "true form" is yellowish in hue, contrasting the reddish background he exists in.

His forms of attacking very basic, yet the can be very devastating if you are caught off-guard. Shortly after the fight starts, you'll notice 5 balls of energy that float up from the bottom of the screen towards one of his hands. It is in your best interest to avoid these things, so that you don't get hit. These are grasped within his claw, before he combines them and hurls them as 1 larger ball. This ball is sort of a dumbfire projectile, as it haphazardly tracks your position; if it fails to hit, then it explodes on the wall/floor in a fairly large blast. This is also good to avoid. He (it?) then summons another group of 5 balls, this time to his opposite hand, and repeats the attack.

So what's the best way to tackle this fool? First off, the 5 energy balls always go to the left-side hand. There are 2 things you can do here - position yourself between the 2nd and 3rd orbs so that you won't get hit by them, or jump to the right platform and leap the 1 ball that comes close to you. To avoid the large fireball, hop off of the platform and position yourself directly below Clancy's head. As the fireball is released, move closer to the hand that threw it - the ball will travel towards your original location, but won't be able to correct its trajectory in time and will instead careen into the floor. From here, simply jump back up to the opposite platform, avoiding the balls, and repeat the whole mess.

Oh, and by the way - in case you hadn't figured it out, his face is his weak spot. Jump and slash at the fool, man!

Windmill Shuriken: I have no problems with the Windmill Shuriken during this fight, personally. If you position yourself on the opposite platform, you have to jump over 1 of the balls to avoid getting hit...however, if you have the Windmill