

Dissidia: Final Fantasy Cloud of Darkness FAQ

by BlueSophia

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| Dissidia Final Fantasy
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| Cloud of Darkness Character Guide
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| V.2.0
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| By BlueSophia
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Contents

- AI) Legal Information
- AII) Update
- BI) About Me
- CI) Why Cloud of Darkness
- CII) Getting to Know Cloud of Darkness
 - C1) Brave Attacks
 - C2) HP Attacks
 - C3) EX Mode
- DI) How Cloud of Darkness is used
- EI) Character Matchup
 - E1) Warrior of Light
 - E2) Garland
 - E3) Frionel
 - E4) Emperor
 - E5) Onion Knight
 - E6) Cloud of Darkness
 - E7) Cecil Harvey
 - E8) Golbeza
 - E9) Butz Klauser
 - E10) Exdeath
 - E11) Tina Branford
 - E12) Kefka
 - E13) Cloud Strife
 - E14) Sephiroth
 - E15) Squall Leonhart
 - E16) Ultimecia
 - E17) Zidane Tribal
 - E18) Kuja
 - E19) Tidus
 - E20) Jecht
 - EX21) Shantotto
 - EX22) Judge Gabranth
- FI) Choosing Your Stage
 - F1) Chaos Shrine
 - F2) Pandaemonium
 - F3) World of Darkness
 - F4) The Moon
 - F5) Dimensional Fortress

- F6) Tower Ruins
- F7) Northern Crater
- F8) Ultimecia's Tower
- F9) Crystal World
- F10) Dream Zanarkand
- F11) Cosmos Throne
- F12) Chaos Throne

GI) Equipment To Use (unfortunately I have yet to understand equipment so I left this part out My apologies)

HI) Summons

II) Questions and Answers (If Any)

JI) Credits and Words of Thanks

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 |AI) Legal Information |
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As a rather informal person as such as myself, I could care less about any fancy wording or suchlike but since this is posted up for free, then if you have paid to read this guide, you have been royally gypped. The sale of any copies of this guide is also prohibited as this guide is meant to be free. Do not copy any text from this guide or post it in other places without my permission.

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- www.Gamefaqs.com
- www.Neoseeker.com
- www.supercheats.com

Now that all this is out of the way, let us get on with this guide.

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 |AII) Update |
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This guide has been rewritten to accommodate the changes to the American version of Dissidia Final Fantasy. Adjustments have been made to the matching and the Move sections. I may still use some of the old attack names so bear with it.

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 |BI) About Me |
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There really is not much to say. I am a casual gamer mostly although I may focus on games that I particularly enjoy. But you really would not care to listen to all that so let us just get on with the guide and forget whoever I am.

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 |CI) Why Cloud of Darkness |
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Cloud of Darkness is the main antagonist of the game Final Fantasy III and is faced as the final boss. The character of Cloud of Darkness does not appear many times over the course of Final Fantasy III but the main plot behind the game is to stop her from returning the world to the void.

In Final Fantasy Dissidia, Cloud of Darkness Serves as the Main Villain representing Final Fantasy III standing opposite the Onion Knight. As her role suggests, her character serves as one of the minions of Chaos and acts as a key warrior in the defeat of Cosmos.

Now Cloud of Darkness is quite an interesting character. She was redesigned based on Yoshitaka Amano's original artwork to look the way she does in the normal form. The form that you see in the original and the remake of the game has become Cloud of Darkness' EX mode. The question is why play as her?

Cloud of Darkness is actually a very sophisticated character to use. Those who love to use powerful attacks right from the start will be quite at home with her movesets. Cloud of Darkness can be quite a strong character if used correctly and the important thing about Cloud of Darkness is that she is a very offensive minded character, making her an easy choice to use to those who are used to playing aggressively. However, she is rather limited early into the game, making it crucial to learn how to use her attacks based on the situation and not to limit yourself to just a single attack when you have so many to use. The main advantage she has is that her HP attacks carry a very large area coverage, making her a versatile and deadly attacker.

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|C1) Brave Attacks |
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Before you even ask about her Brave attacks, it should be stated quite plainly, she does not have a lot. However, it should also be noted that because her brave attacks can strike from any direction, it means that they come out rather quickly and can be very difficult to dodge if you are unfamiliar with how they work. However, her brave attacks also come with the ability to change the secondary attack based on how you time the presses of the O button. This is perhaps one of the most difficult things to master about Cloud of Darkness as pressing too fast or too slow may yield completely different attacks altogether.

Ba) Tentacles of pain

LV: Default

Type: Ground

CP: 45/25

AP: 140

Description: Tentacles of Pain consists of a simple lash in the direction of your opponent. The attack comes out quick but the important thing to note is that this is the attack that is chained into the other moves. Specifically, the move does not need to hit in order for you to use the chained moves. Due to the fact that Cloud of Darkness can be used effectively on both ground and the Air, This move is quite useful and should be equipped at all times.

Chain 1: Tap O immediately after the initial attack.

This attack will hit your opponent 3x times and lead directly into a chase sequence. The usefulness of this move depends entirely of how skilled you are in a chase sequence. However, due to the nature of Cloud of Darkness' moves, it is highly recommended that you avoid using this move frequently unless you know you are better in chase sequences because Cloud of Darkness is weak at melee range. This attack can also be used to repel your opponent but there is a better attack for that.

Rating: 2/5 (Not very useful, there are better attacks.)

Chain 2: Tap O after the tentacles have swiveled away after the initial attack. This attack will send your opponent 4 times and send them flying very far away. This move is very important as it is your setup move to get your opponent into the optimal range. If you are cornered by your opponent, block and counter them

with this attack. This attack also deals more damage than the one before. However, due to the timing of the attack and the need to commit to it, you can be left open if you miss.

Rating: 4/5 (A good attack and useful for widening the gap between yourself and your opponent)

Chain 3: Tap O after the tentacles of doubled around but have not yet returned to facing forward yet after the initial attack.

This attack should always be used if your opponent is far away. The important thing is that whenever you decide to use this, you will never hit your opponent with the initial attack because it should never be used when your opponent is close at hand. What it does is that it summons two balls of dark energy that will attack your opponent from afar. It is a useful attack for catching your opponent by surprise and hitting them while they are in the middle of performing a time consuming attack. The only problem is that it has a long start up time so use it wisely. It can also be evaded altogether by dashing but If you learn to time your HP attacks to your brave attacks, this should not be a problem.

Rating: 3.5/5 (Usefulness is limited but it is a good punishment move for attacks like Grand Cross.)

Bb) Tentacles of Suffering

LV: Default

Type: Aerial

CP: 45/25

AP: 120

Description: Tentacles of suffering is pretty much the same as Tentacles of Pain due to their extremely similar attack animation. The only real difference in them is that one is in the air and the other is on the ground. But once you chain them, that is a whole other story altogether.

Chain 1: Tap O immediately after the initial attack.

Practically the same as Chain 1 from tentacles of Pain but the only difference is that it hits less times. Again the usefulness is limited and it automatically puts you into chase. The difference is that you are in the air this time. Do not use this move if you can help it.

Rating: 2/5 (Don't use this often, it may put you in a bad position if you go through with the chase)

Chain 2: Tap O after the tentacles have swung to the side after the initial attack.

A vast difference from the ground, this is probably the attack that you should rely on the most if your opponent loves aerial melee because the attack has a VERY wide range and hits from all angles. This attack also hits many times and can be very useful to punish those who try to melee you in the air. Because this attack is very difficult to punish, it should be your main weapon when it comes to attacking your opponent especially if they relied on dodge to get away from the initial attack.

Rating: 5/5 (This is your bread and butter melee move, use it if you can but don't overestimate the reach)

Chain 3: Tap O after the tentacles have swung around twice after the initial attack.

Compared to the Tentacle of Pain equivalent of Chain 3, this attack leaves something to be desired. The attack sends two orbs of energy at your opponent but the movement of the orbs is fairly slow so it should be easy to dodge. Never use this attack if you can help it, you are better off dropping onto the ground and using Chain 3 of Tentacles of Pain if you want to use a brave attack. Also, simply dashing can bounce the attack RIGHT BACK at you. However, as a side note, those bounced attacks can be reflected with Wrath particle beam

for a free attack.

Rating: 3.5/5 (I would stay away from using this attack openly.)

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X=====X
|C2) HP Attacks |
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The difference between most characters and Cloud of Darkness is that unlike them, she has very few Brave attacks in order to have a very large roster of HP attacks. This makes her one of the most offensive minded characters in the game and can be quite dangerous to opponents who like to play keep away since her attacks were meant to defeat such opponents.

HPa) Anti Aircraft Wave

LV: Default

Type: Ground

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

The default attack that you get and perhaps one of the most misleading at the time. When you first get this attack, you may be tempted to stick to the ground when you are playing as Cloud of Darkness. This is not true. This attack is meant to be an attack that will get you familiarized with Cloud of Darkness' roster of moves. The attack goes from the ground up but the main difference between this and Ultimecia's Apocalypse is that it cannot be moved from under you. When you use this attack, try to use it if your opponent is either very close or has just escaped into the air after a dodge because it comes out fairly quickly. However, it has almost no horizontal reach so only use this attack if none of your other attacks can be used.

All this changes in EX mode. This attack is one of the most powerful methods of attack that Cloud of Darkness has in EX mode because of its activation time and priority. It can easily be used to catch your opponent with it for a quick breakout hit since it comes out so fast. The range is still an issue but it is no longer as easily avoided as before.

Rating: 3/5 <EX Mode 5/5> (Nothing special, would have been more useful if it had a wider reach)

HPb) Aura Ball

LV: Default

Type: Aerial

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

This is an example of an attack that will confuse beginners. Most of the time, those who are unfamiliar with Cloud of Darkness will just Tap O or stick to the ground due to this attack apparently being completely useless due to it having no range and takes a long time to use and recover from. That is not the case. This is actually one of Cloud of Darkness' most useful trapping moves because it is such a strange attack. By holding O, you can control the amount of spheres that come out while you create a form of defensive parameter that will prevent most opponents from getting close. The important thing to note is that this move is very circumstantial but the correct use of it pays off very well. However, if you are unwise, you may end up getting hit by other attacks so this attack should not be used on certain characters.

Rating: 4/5 (learn to use this move, do not take it for granted)

HPc) Wide Angle Wave

LV: 6

Type: Ground

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

This is the first ground HP attack that you get other than AA wave and compared to that, this is a slight improvement and a downgrade at the same time. This attack is very useful for warding off characters who love to stay on the ground like Squall and can be very useful in forcing them back. However, actually hitting them with this is also very circumstantial because by itself, it has a limited range and the vertical reach is far from infinite (actually it is pretty low). Use this as a Bridge attack or a warning attack to get them to move away or pay the price of some HP. But You should not rely on this move when there are better moves out there.

Rating: 3.5/5 (Try not to use this too often, it has a tendency to be pretty avoidable although it is pretty intimidating due to the large hitbox.)

HPd) Wrath Particle Beam

LV: 12

Type: Ground

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

Learn to love this attack. Now the important thing you should note is how you actually use this. The important thing is that doing this attack alone will have no effect whatsoever. You need to make your opponent perform a brave attack for it to work (may fail on some occasions). But if you succeed, the attack will be blocked and a counter attack of a vertical beam up the opponent will be dealt. This is practically unavoidable unless the opponent can move directly after the attack. This activates as fast as a normal guard but it does not last as long.

Rating: 4.5/5 (The timing has changed but it has the exact same use.)

NOTE: This attack does not work against other HP attacks.

HPe) Earth Void Wave

LV: 19

Type: Ground

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

A lovely attack that has you disappear from one location to appear a short distance away with a counterattack. This is your priority close range move that is not situational and it can be a very useful punisher if you can time the attack correctly. Simply make sure your opponent will commit to the attack before using this to warp away from the target and give them a quick HP attack before moving back to widen the gap again. The important thing to understand is that this move is a surprise or a retaliation attack and as a frontal attack, it can be quite difficult to use. However, this attack should be able to replace ground Retaliation Wave due to the fact that you should not be spending a lot of time on the ground in many situations.

Rating: 4.5/5 (A great surprise attack but not the best of frontal assaults. We have wide angle wave for that.)

HPf) Wrath Particle Beam

LV: Default

Type: Aerial

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

There was a reason why this was made an Aerial attack too, that was because you will be spending a bit more time in the air than on the ground. Like its ground based equivalent, you use this to reflect before counterattacking, the difference being that you will probably use this a lot more in the air as opposed to guard due to the difficulty to maneuver as it can let you get a free hit on your opponent from far away without having to dash towards them (which you should rarely do).

Rating: 4.5/5 (The timing has changed but it has the exact same use.)

NOTE: This attack does not work against other HP attacks.

HPg) Fusilade Particle Beam

LV: 17

Type: Aerial

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

... What did they do to this attack? The range is calculated to be less than before as the previous version had a higher chance of catching an opponent on the return. It still is a great opening volley attack if you can get it off (since it is a quick way to attack in all directions) but it has a noticeably larger lag and a cut in range. The attack lost a lot of its impact from before but it still has its uses as bait or an opportunity attack.

Rating: 3.5/5 (The transition made this attack difficult to use.)

HPh) 0-form Particle Beam

LV: 38

Type: Aerial

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

Ah yes... The one attack that is the joy of all internet leet-speak, the ability to shoop da whoop. Zero Wave does exactly what it is supposed to do, fire a huge beam cannon at your opponent at point blank range. This is the one attack that is of no holds barred. The attack has no funny trajectory, no tricks and no follow up. The attack is simply a single straight attack at your opponent. Now normally this would be quite easy to dodge but the benefit that Zero wave has that moves like Shield of Light or Straight Arrow is that the trajectory can move to follow your opponent. The limit to this attack is that there is a maximum range for it and it cannot make sharp turns to follow your opponent. However this attack has an absolute trajectory so it can shoot through walls and other objects.

Rating: 5/5 (As of now your most trusted attack, never leave home without it.)

HPi) Long Range Particle Beam

LV: Default

Type: Ground

CP: 40/20

AP: 180

A more focused form of AA wave where you send a trail of homing pillars at your opponent. The glory of this attack is that while you have limited vertical range with this move, it has a very long reach and can be used to attack from afar while you try to ascertain your opponents timing or simply follow it up with another HP attack. This attacks use is very great because the attack passes through walls. This means that it can be used in many situations to pressure your opponent.

Rating: 4.5/5 (A very nice method to pressure but stay away from it at close range, the amount of lag here is crippling on a whiff.)

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X=====X
|C3) EX Mode |
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The side effects of Cloud of Darkness' EX mode is rather self explanatory. It gives her regeneration as a side effect and is the prerequisite to use her EX Burst, Super Wave Cannon.

Now As a side effect, her EX mode allows you to cancel your opponent's HP attacks by performing Retaliation Wave. This can be very useful if difficult to time because it is often easier to simply dodge and fire off an HP attack since they are now faster in EX mode.

Her EX Burst consists of a single gauge where you simply hold O until the gauge reads 120. Once it reads 120, she will perform Particle Beam to deal devastating damage. Letting go too soon or too late will result in her using a weaker attack.

Her EX mode simply makes it easier for you to apply pressure on your opponent and allows you to focus more on attacking your opponent without having to worry about having them retaliate with a brave attack.

Her EX mode is special in that you can now continuously chain together HP attacks and in situations even lock your opponent into an infinite combo. While this is looked down upon in competitive play it is an option for you to use if you come across a difficult opponent.

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|DI) How Cloud of Darkness is used |
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As a forward to this section, let us look at the pros and cons of Cloud of Darkness.

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| Pros |
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- + Extremely Versatile HP game
- + Can keep distance fairly well
- + Excellent anti-magic movepool
- + Capable of punishing long range brave attacks with ease

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| Cons |
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- Vulnerable to punishment if played incorrectly
- Relatively limited Brave pool
- Fairly vulnerable Cooldown time
- Lackluster Close range HP game

From this analysis, it should be pretty obvious that Cloud of Darkness is one of the few characters that should be played offensively from the get-go. But while playing as her, you should do one very important thing, USING YOUR HEAD. Remember that she has a variety of moves to suit the situation so remember to take advantage of them when you are facing your opponent. Try to establish the optimal distance between you and your opponent so that you can comfortably attack them without being pulverized yourself. You should also hold back on attacking with your HP attacks until you are fairly certain that you have established a good rhythm to your attacks. After that, make sure to keep on the move so that your opponent does not get the chance to punish you after your HP attack because you will be relying on them A LOT.

When you play as Cloud of Darkness, remember to follow these golden rules.

- 1) Keep your opponent on the defensive. The important thing about Cloud of Darkness is that she is geared for head on attacking and the best way to make use of it is to prevent your opponent from turning the tides against you.
- 2) Make sure your opponent cannot effectively counterattack after every HP attack. This is the number one priority since you will be HP attacking a lot. If you get hit directly after an HP attack, you can pretty much say good bye to

the entire strategy altogether.

3) Keep your distance. Cloud of Darkness is at the greatest disadvantage when she is close to her opponent because attacks have a brief startup time as well as a sizable cool down time. Make sure you have enough time to recover.

4) Save your EX mode. Just because it can give you the ability to pressure your opponent even greater does not mean that you should use it right away. When your opponent scores a lucky attack, use the EX mode to break out and score a counter hit before chaining it into your EX burst for a clean hit and to regain some lost Brave if your opponent gained a break on you.

5) Alternate between your HP and brave attacks. Just because your HP attacks are brutal does not mean you need to rely completely on them.

That should probably about sum up the basics of how to play as Cloud of Darkness. Just remember to keep your opponent off balance and you should be fine. Unlike most other characters, the lag between attacks means that Cloud of Darkness cannot chain her attacks so you should make sure you should not try to use any chain attacks because that is retarded.

Extra Note- Cloud of Darkness has moves that have an absolute range. The meaning of absolute range is simple, it means that the attack still activates regardless of the obstructions on the map. Her 0 Form Particle Beam can still hit even if you have a solid wall blocking your way.

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|EI) Character Match ups |
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This section is dedicated to How Cloud of Darkness matches up against her opponent and tips on how to deal with them. Nothing really special. Knowing is half the battle.

E1) Warrior of Light (All-Rounder)

The key difference between Warrior of Light and Cloud of Darkness is that whatever Warrior of Light can do, Cloud of Darkness can do better. Her Zero Wave automatically leaves Shield of Light in the dust, longer range and wider reach. Shining Wave is overtaken by Pursuit Wave because Shining Wave is ground based and the fight is rarely if ever on the ground. Radiant Sword has a pretty good tracking and it has an extremely good attack reach. However, it really is of no consequence against Cloud of Darkness. This really is a poor matchup.

E2) Garland (Power Attacker)

In sharp contrast to Warrior of Light, Garland is a major character to watch out for. Despite the slow ground speed and the nearly stunted attack reach of Garland, it should be noted that Garland is an extremely good HP punisher which means that if you landed an HP attack before hand, if you do not evade correctly, you will wind up in Break mode. In this case, the best way to fight is to keep far away. However, you should also make sure to note the priority of his attacks. Both Cyclone and Blaze are low priority and take time to use. You can use that window to deal a counterattack for some damage. However, keeping off the ground is crucial as Garland's ground HP attacks are fairly painful.

E3) Frionel (Weapon Master)

A rather tricky character to play against, on one hand a lot of his moves are made in combinations so you have to memorize his movesets before you begin to fight him. Straight arrow should not be any problem to avoid but Master of Weapons is definitely a problem attack since it can be used to punish you during your HP attacks. However, one of the things that makes Frionel easier to

deal with is that his air game consists largely of magic attacks. Do you need to hear that again? This means that Cloud of Darkness can use Retaliation wave with ease and easily toss Frionel around. Dropping to the ground is not an option since none of the attacks can hit Cloud of Darkness if she is not on the ground other than Straight Arrow. And what is the problem with that attack? It is easy to dodge. Watch out however Lead Axe, it has a pretty dangerous reach and can drag you into his range, something you do NOT want to happen. However, that is not to say that he is without weakness. Shield Bash is completely useless because a good Cloud of Darkness player will never use brave attacks on Frionel. Master of Weapons is also an absolute range attack, but it has no vertical coverage. This way you can prevent Frionel from taking advantage of any options in the air.

E4) Emperor (Trap Maker)

Again like Frionel, the best way to fight him is from the air. The difference is that unlike Frionel who has viable air attacks in both categories (still disadvantageous), Emperor has nearly no air HP game and unless he can lure Cloud of Darkness close, he has no chance to win. The Traps that he sets are generally stationary and with the exception of Light Crest and Sticky Bomb, you really are pretty much untouchable by Emperor standards unless you run into his flare attack. The aerial flare may present a problem but not by much given that it is stationary and you have your own methods of trapping him. Even in confined spaces, you may have the advantage because while his flares cannot strike through walls, your 0 Form Particle beam can!

E5) Onion Knight (Magic Fighter)

A sharp departure from the other two, Onion Knight is one of the more difficult opponents and it is highly recommended that you try to keep your distance because his attacks come out FAST. Also, it should be noted that no self respecting Onion Knight player would use him without Brave to HP attacks so this is one of those fights where you will be exercising your greater melee range so that you can lower his brave points or even score a break. (He may be faster in attack activation but you can still catch him before he hits you). The most important thing is to prevent them from gaining a solid lead or land a brave attack because it most certainly will be chained into an HP attack that you most likely can't punish in time. This is one of the few characters that you absolutely need to use your brave attacks at least half the time.

E6) Cloud of Darkness (HP Breaker)

This can be rather tricky. Cloud of Darkness was pretty much made to counter opponents such as herself (A mage killer so to speak) and when you pit her against herself, it pretty much evens out but the important thing to note is that both sides have attacks that have lethal force. Your brave attacks are not as useful while you may be finding yourself using Burst wave a bit too many times. Really, in this game, it is who has the better intuition and who can pull the trigger faster.

E7) Cecil (Form Changer)

Ah yes, Cecil. It should be noted that outside of Search light and dark wave, Cecil has nearly no ranged priority making it relatively easy to range attack Cecil. The problem with this is that both of those moves are very powerful and they are seeking attacks, making it difficult for you to fight Cecil at most ranges. Avoid Search light like the plague because the attack will almost always lead into a paladin force as well as giving him the leeway to get up close and personal with you. In comparison to Dark Knight Cecil, you are a bit safer since you can counter quite a few of his moves on the ground. However, you have to watch out for Paladin Arts because it may strike at your unprotected brave at close range. Dark Cannon is relatively punishable with Earth Void Wave if you step out of the hitbox of the spiraling orbs or evade to the side. Try to avoid getting too close to Dark knight Cecil in the air as it

allows for a quick transition to a Saint Dive or a gravity ball/Dark Cannon chain into a Soul Eater/Dark Lance/Dark Wave.

E8) Golbeza (Psychic Fighter)

Final Fantasy 4 is really not Cloud of Darkness' advantageous region. Golbeza's two stage attacks makes it difficult for you to properly evade his moves and foolish to block them entirely. However, his HP attacks leave much to be desired. His brave attacks are devastating, but as long as you are not within their reach, you can stay competent against Golbeza. However, in order to do this, you have to keep long range deterrent a constant against Golbeza. Genesis Rock is a very versatile attack but you can take advantage of its vulnerability to piercing to land a hit while he is in the middle of it. Night Glow has guarding properties but it is easy enough to dodge and it can't block HP attacks. Overall you should be wary of his attacks since he can easily punish your bravery with a well timed combo.

E9) Butz Klauser (Utility Player)

Butz is a... Rather humorous character. He has a very diverse movepool made of moves that are pretty much simply cobbled together from the other characters. However, the most important thing to do in this case is to keep your distance as Butz is faster than you are at close range. He also has access to a number of attacks that you should definitely be aware of like Whirlwind slash and Paladin force, both good priority attacks. Watch out for Holy, or to be more accurate, block Holy with a Retaliation wave so that you can turn a brave to HP combo against them. Other than that, fighting Butz is pretty similar to fighting Warrior of Light. Just keep your distance and maintain a constant attack from there so that he can't retaliate against you. Just watch out for Holy. He tends to be rather tricky when it comes down to it.

E10) Exdeath (Breath Defender)

Oh boy. The one character that is the exact opposite in the hands of a real life player than the computer. Set the computer to max difficulty and you will rip him apart with Cloud of Darkness (Burst wave is practically cheating). Turn that around and have a slower human player and expect the battle to be a whole lot harder. This is because Exdeath can pretty much block your attacks from nearly every angle with All Guard. However, your advantage is that any blocked attacks will not be as punishing because HP attacks can really only be cancelled by other HP attacks and none of Exdeath's moves are particularly dangerous in that regard unless you get too close or careless. The main method to defeating an Exdeath player is to use fake outs to trick them into using All Guard to early. Exdeath is also one of the few characters that you may be inclined to use Fusilade Particle beam more regularly because he moves so slowly. Also, you should maintain a constant defensive/Offensive huddle like using Aura Ball and Wrath Particle Beam to keep him on the ropes. Black Hole Presents a mobility problem but it isn't like Exdeath is fast all the time.

E11) Terra Branford (Magic Master)

Probably on of the easiest characters to deal with? Terra is SWIMMING in opportunities to use Retaliation wave on since her brave attacks consist entirely of magic making it almost child's play to deal with her. Your attacks also have greater ranger than hers, Flood being easily evaded, Tornado leaving her very vulnerable at the attack climax and Meltdown having an almost laughably huge charge up time (that you can simply evade or even hide from by ducking behind a solid obstacle). There really is not much strategy in fighting her, just time your retaliation wave to her attacks and mix around with the range of her attacks.

E12) Kefka Palazzo (Trickster)

Again like Terra, but with a more offensive approach and less trying to fight him on even grounds. Unlike Terra, it is entirely possible to outgun Kefka with

sheer brutality without even bothering to use Retaliation wave because his attacks have such a strange pattern. While Kefka has many attacks that can be difficult for you to follow, he also has a huge lag time while using them so you can do some pretty interesting things against him. There really is not much else to say since his attacks tend to be rather narrow in terms of attack window. The key is to really understanding the nature of his attacks and overwhelming him instead of trying to match him blow for blow.

E13) Cloud Strife (Blow Smasher)

As it should be pointed out, Cloud is a Blow Smasher which means that his attacks are singular and meant to hit hard and deal heavy damage to your brave, but ONLY IF THEY HIT. With that in mind, stay away from his attack range, evade the blade beams and concentrate on attacking him from a range. Really, if you do that, Cloud has only two HP moves that can cause some damage to you, Braver and Slash blow>Omnislash v.5. Both moves can be countered in very simplistic ways. Taking a page out of Cecil's book, evade out of the way of Braver and use 0 Form particle Beam or Anti Air particle Beam immediately after you dodge to get a clean hit before he has a chance to move out of his Braver attack. Slash Blow is pretty easy, to block by itself and by avoiding the ground, you can make sure that Climhazzard will not be able to hit you to translate into Slash Blow>Omnislash v.5. Pursuit wave is also a great way to warn off dash attempts at you since it is a seeking attack with a great vertical range, making evasion difficult. Remember that Cloud is only dangerous if he actually hits you.

E14) Sephiroth (Blade Master)

Ironically, Sephiroth is actually harder to fight against than Cloud but not by much. His Blade beam is faster and his brave attacks have a large melee range, making it difficult to really get close to Sephiroth. But again, why bother getting close to him when the only attack that can hit you from a distance is Blade Beam and his laughably inaccurate Shadow Flare? Prison gate has nearly no chance to hit you whatsoever, Octoslash and Flash are only good if you are directly in front of him and in Black Materia's case, you can barrage him with two HP attacks before he even completes it. he can put up a fairly nice brave game if the player is skilled enough but the problem is actually hitting with those rather lackluster HP attacks.

E15) Squall Leonhart (Combo Master)

Squall is one of the most impressive brave fighters in the game and can combo most characters into oblivion with his chains of brave attacks, easily placing them into break. However, the key to really defeating him is his HP attacks, they are so dastardly hard to hit with that it is almost foolish to even try. However, with the transition, Squall was given an attack that allowed him to let loose on Cloud of Darkness' air game. Aerial Rough Divide has a longer reach than most Absolute charging attacks and in that regard, it allows him to not just fight outside Cloud of Darkness' optimal range, but it also allows him to easily command the terms of the battle because while you can't hit him with your attacks, the same cannot be said for him. Also, with his melee brave game so domineering, you would be ill-advised to take the fight any closer.

E16) Ultimecia (Magic Shooter)

It should be noted, Magic characters will have a hard time with Cloud of Darkness. Ultimecia is not one of them. Despite her slow speed and laughable charge time, she is an excellent character at dragging out a fight and keeping you very far away. It is also notable that even if you activate retaliation wave, you cannot actually return it against her unless it is with her Knight Sword attack because with every other attack, she is not committed to it and strong Ultimecia players USE THEM OFTEN. Dashing at her is also not an option because Knight Sword activates faster than you can put a retaliation wave up when you come out of the dash. Her HP attacks are also positively brutal and with the exception of Great Attractor (Burst Wave), her attacks are brutal

especially Apocalypse with its infinite vertical range.

The real question is how do we deal with her? Since she outclasses Cloud of Darkness in the range game, the only real way to fight her is to get up close where you can make use of Wide Angle Wave and Earth Void Wave. Also, if you can, use Tentacle of Pain chain 3 to force a dodge on her. Ultimecia is one of the few where you probably will need to seek cover to really fight effectively. In all, you should try to outsmart her instead of trying to outgun her because Ultimecia can almost always beat you at that game.

E17) Zidane Tribal (Air Master)

Whew, Air master indeed. Zidane Tribal is one of the fastest characters in the game and in EX mode, it maybe difficult to hit him with even a burst wave if he uses all 15 of those jumps. Keeping that in mind, it should be noted that while his brave pool is pretty large, outside of Grand Lethal, his HP attacks leave him wide open (both Tidal Flame and Shift break have some HUGE exploitable points). The important thing is to keep away from his Brave attacks so that he cannot chain them into his Brave>HP attacks. Pursuit Wave and Burst Wave are great attacks if he is not in EX mode, but if he is, by gods get out of the air because he will rule them.

E18) Kuja (Range Master)

Another mage, but this time, one with exploitable points. Most of his brave attacks can be deflected or countered with Retaliation Wave with the exception of his melee brave attacks which are fast and brutal. His Flare Star attack is VERY difficult to evade and you should not try to get close enough for him to use it. Instead, you should exploit his other 2 HP attacks, Holy Star and Ultima. Holy Star is easier to avoid. It can be evaded by being on a different elevation, by dodging or simply by running or dropping out of the way. In any case, that attack is easily punished while he is busy detonating the attack. Similarly, Ultima is also punishable because if you dodge out of the maximum reach, you can get a free shot at him while he is completing the attack. In any case, as long as you can pre-empt and dodge Kuja's moves, you can put up a fairly solid fight against him. It should be noted that a well timed Tentacle of suffering Chain 2 at the right time can beat Flare star to the punch in speed. However, most of this is easier said than done and the one major reason why Kuja is considerably more difficult to fight than most other mages is because he is so blindingly fast. The most important thing to be careful of is to make sure that you can see his attacks coming or you will be pummeled.

E19) Tidus (Dodge Attacker)

It should be noted that Tidus is a very fast character and is very skilled at counterattacking which means that you should not ever be close to Tidus during a battle because he can tear you apart with his lightning fast attacks. While playing against Tidus try to make sure you are at least two dash lengths away so that you have time to perform your attacks (Jecht shot is about 1 dash length long so he has to dash twice to actually use it). However, this is also a beautiful case where you can use Tentacles of suffering chain 2 to really put the hurt on Tidus because the attack has beautiful range and it covers her angles for a long time, enough to make sure that she will not get hit by Tidus' dodge attacks (often times both with cancel out). The key to beating Tidus is not to let him use any moves that will punish your HP attacks and as long as you stay out of his range, he should not be able to do that. However, it is noticeably easier to take the fight to face value because while his brave options are better, his air HP attacks are of little use compared to yours. Again like Frionel, you should try to take the fight to a vertical game since you have better timing and angle options than him.

E20) Jecht (Ultimate In-fighter)

Jecht an example of a character that can be completely locked down by Cloud of Darkness if you can play her right. On one hand, his brave combos are ruthless

and damaging but that is only if his attacks connect. With this in mind, you should remember to never try to directly engage Jecht in melee combat because you will almost certainly fall victim to his death dealing combination attacks. Instead, dodge his attacks or keep your distance, in both cases using long range attacks to keep him off balance. The main problem with his attacks is that he literally has no range game whatsoever. With this in mind, you can forget completely about Retaliation wave and focus entirely on an offensive moveset because in a battle against Jecht, the only real way to fight is to counter his melee combat with long range attack power. Spherical wave is also very useful to prevent him from dashing towards you. Also, with the nerf to Jecht Block, he falls victim to having too little options against Cloud of Darkness.

E21) Shantotto (Level up magic)

Shantotto is rather interesting in that her primary roster of attacks consists of her magic spells while her brave pool is mostly incapacitation attacks. With that in mind, it should be noted that you should keep your distance from Shantotto, but not so much that you will end up far out of her reach (Her HP attacks leave her wide open if she misses). However, Shantotto is the major foe that you should watch out for while you are HP attacking her. Due to her ability to strengthen her attacks by accumulating brave, it is all the more important not to let her gain a break on you because if she does, guess what? Its EX time! And what does that mean? it means that once she hits once with her extremely powered up HP attack, she will follow up with an EX burst with all the previous Brave points. So if she succeeded in gaining 4000+ brave in EX mode, consider yourself lost because her second attack will hurt like hell and even more dangerous, SHE STILL CARRIES THAT SAME AMOUNT FOR HER NEXT HP ATTACK AS WELL. Fighting her is not hard, it is trying to recover from the damage and actually turning a break around that is the hard part. For a character that is so reliant on her HP attacks, no opponent is more fearsome than Lady Shantotto and her level up magic.

E22) Judge Gabranth (EX master)

It should be noted, outside of EX mode, Judge Gabranth is not just a pushover, he is a sitting duck. Absolutely no ranged attack whatsoever, Gabranth can pretty much be destroyed by a barrage of attacks from Cloud of Darkness and he is given no luxury to charge his EX gauge if you can keep up a constant pressure against the judge. However, by the off chance that Gabranth can enter EX mode, you are in for the fight of your life. Gabranth is faster, stronger and has a huge range in EX mode. Innocence is a mass of 4 consecutive waves which makes it difficult to dodge (its better to hide then to evade). If he does that move, HOPE that you are close to a map action trigger because it really is the only real way to evade them other than Zidane's EX jumps. Of course the alternative is to cancel his attacks by striking him first but you need to be close to him for that and that too is not an option because Hatred and Execution are just as dangerous as Innocence. Instead, try to wait out the EX mode (fat chance) or use your own so that you can end the fight on your terms. By the way, he is not called EX master for nothing, his EX mode attacks are UNGODLY powerful and just a few hits can turn you into swiss cheese. The solution however is your own EX mode. Cloud of Darkness' quick hit options and versatility options are much better over the course of an uneven game. Gabranth is very straightforward so it is quite possible to abuse his air game. It does not help that his aerial innocence is stopped... by the ceiling.

O=====O
|FI) Choosing your stage |
O=====O

Now the effectiveness of the strategies with Cloud of Darkness is dependent on the stage and how you use them. It will also vary depending on the character so

I will also be listing the characters that you will have the advantage against in certain stages as well as what HP attacks you can viably use in the stage.

F1) Chaos Shrine

Your standard Arena type, the exterior having wide open space for all range combat with the interior having tight spaces and a large central area. This stage will drain your brave points in the alternate selection. This shouldn't be much of a problem as Cloud of Darkness if you keep up the constant attack. This actually works to your advantage sometimes because it will let you sometimes gain the rare break on your opponent outside of EX mode.

There is not a lot of options in this stage to exploit since it is pretty basic. The roof can be broken by an attack and the pillars can also be destroyed. There really is not much that this stage has that can limit Cloud of Darkness very much save for the space behind the pillars where your ability to move is limited. However, this stage gives options to fight almost every character in the game since it provides some forms of cover as well as open space.

X=====X

| HP Attacks |

X=====X

Anti Aircraft Wave

Spherical Wave

Wide Angle Wave

Retaliation Wave

Earth Void Wave

Burst Wave

Zero Wave

Pursuit Wave

X=====X

| Characters to fight |

X=====X

None (No advantage or disadvantage)

X=====X

| Characters to Avoid |

X=====X

None (No advantage or disadvantage)

F2) Pandaemonium

A sharp turn away from Chaos Shrine, Pandaemonium gives you only one viable location for open space with a lot of limited spaces in the battlefield. No real destructible objects to take advantage of. The alternate variation of this stage has trap zones which further makes this a horrible stage for you to fight in.

This stage narrows down your roster a bit. On one hand the stage prevents you from effectively using Burst Wave in the small areas because the blasts will collide with the walls but it also allows you to more easily hit your opponent with moves like wide angle wave or Zero wave. However, cramped spaces do not really work for Cloud of Darkness so this stage is quite the handicap.

X=====X

| HP Attacks |

X=====X

Spherical Wave
Wide Angle Wave
Retaliation Wave
Earth Void Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave

X=====X

| Characters to fight |

X=====X

Ultimecia
Gabranth (evade EX mode)

X=====X

| Characters to Avoid |

X=====X

Tidus
Jecht
Squall
Cloud
Sephiroth
Zidane
Butz
Garland
Cecil
Onion Knight
Golbez
Frionel
Emperor

F3) World of Darkness

World of Darkness, Cloud of Darkness' home stage. The stage itself consists of a flat plain with a number of large destructible pillars standing in rows with a central pathway. Map action allows you to run vertically up the pillars. The alternate form of the stage summons you in a large open space with a few floating platforms and blank space below or another stage filled with solid angular pillars.

Not surprisingly, the world of darkness is one of the stages that Cloud of Darkness can be quite at home at. The stage has an abundance of cover that is destructible, allowing her leisure to escape certain attacks while still having space to use a majority of her attacks.

X=====X

| HP Attacks |

X=====X

Anti Aircraft Wave
Spherical Wave
Retaliation Wave
Earth Void Wave
Burst Wave
Pursuit Wave


```
X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X
```

Squall
Sephiroth
Cloud
Butz
Jecht
Tidus
Zidane
Cecil (Pillars conveniently can block Paladin Force but not search lights)
Garland
Gabranth
Frionel
Emperor
Kefka

```
X=====X
| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X
```

Ultimecia

F4) The Moon

The Moon is a large stage with an abundance of ground obstacles and map action triggers but also a huge wide open space above. The stage has little else to mention although the alternate form features many destructible rocks.

The Moon is both a blessing and a curse at the same time. Because of the many cracks and crevices of the moon, it gives you the liberty to escape the assault of many characters while still giving you the freedom of the sky but at the same time, it also allows other characters to evade your attacks altogether because of the trenches in the stage. However, it does make certain moves that you have stronger in battle than you may think.

```
X=====X
| HP Attacks |
X=====X
Anti Aircraft Wave
Spherical Wave
Wide Angle Wave
Retaliation Wave
Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave
```

```
X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X
```

Ultimecia
Kuja
Terra (laughably so since Meltdown actually bounces off many of the rocks)
Frionel
Warrior of Light
Garland

X=====X
| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X

Onion Knight
Tidus
Cecil
Sephiroth (black material anyone?)
Emperor (oh yeah those traps can be hard to see)
Golbez

F5) Dimensional Fortress

A stage where there is a castle with floating platforms on the corners of the stage. There are also surfaces along the stage that features teleportation features. The alternate version has teleportation surfaces that move throughout the stage.

This stage provides a lot of on and off problems. Although the stage will remain like this for the majority of the match, it can be difficult to find cover in the more open areas of the map against certain characters. However this can also be beneficial because the stage allows you to exercise the strengths of Cloud of Darkness in many ways. But the abundance of empty space does remove some of her ground effectiveness. This is also due in part to the fact that the stage is really just too huge for many of her attacks.

X=====X
| HP Attacks |
X=====X
Spherical Wave
Retaliation Wave
Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave

X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X

Tidus
Onion Knight
Frionel
Squall
Cloud
Golbez
Garland
Emperor
Kefka
Gabranth
Cecil
Warrior of Light
Butz
Terra

X=====X
| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X

Ultimecia (most definitely a pain to fight in this stage)

Zidane
Kuja

F6) Tower Ruins

Kefka's stage, the final battle dungeon. The stage is a mishmash environment with a basement area and an upper location with bridges, pipes, destructible tubes and funky doodads.

Without a doubt one of the worst stages that Cloud of Darkness can ever fight in. The limited environment pretty much renders her strongest move ineffective, leaving her in an environment where she can virtually be destroyed because unlike Pandeamonium, there really is no place in this stage where you can effectively use Burst wave without it being interrupted by the walls.

X=====X

| HP Attacks |

X=====X

Spherical Wave

Wide Angle Wave

Retaliation Wave

Earth Void Wave

Zero Wave

Pursuit Wave

X=====X

| Characters to fight |

X=====X

Ultimecia

Terra

Kuja

Gabranth (unless he runs away to charge his EX gauge)

X=====X

| Characters to Avoid |

X=====X

Warrior of Light

Garland

Frionel

Emperor

Onion knight

Cecil

Golbez

Butz

Exdeath

Kefka

Cloud

Sephiroth

Squall

Zidane

Tidus

Jecht

Shantotto

F7) Northern Crater

The stage of the landing site of Jenova, and the place where the lifestream is present within. The stage itself is made up of a series of hovering platforms arranged in a spiral around a central large one. Some of the platforms are destructible and the stage features many lifestream wisps that can be used with map action.

A nice balance of land and air makes this a rather fun stage to play as Cloud of Darkness with. There is an abundance of Vertical height to take advantage of so that you can move well within and the balance of terrain allows you to hide behind objects while still using some of your attacks. Stay conscious of the center as that platform is indestructible and may yield an EX core.

```
X=====X
| HP Attacks |
X=====X
Spherical Wave
Retaliation Wave
Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave
```

```
X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X
```

Ultimecia
Gabranth

```
X=====X
| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X
```

Zidane (It can be difficult to judge the distance and with the hover platforms combined with his jumping ability, you may have a hard time keeping up)
Shantotto (Do not needlessly land. Aero, Stone and Water automatically home in on your location)

F8) Ultimecia's Tower

The place of the final battle with Ultimecia where she is exacting her ambition of time compression. The stage features levels of floors with a central spiral staircase in the center. The top and the bottom of the stage will automatically teleport you to a set location. The alternate stage features time distortion, brittle floors on the spiral staircase and gears that damage you if you go too near them.

Whoa, lots of cramped space... This is another example of a stage that Cloud of Darkness may have problems on but not as much as she would had she been fighting on Tower Ruins. The lack of useful ground terrain makes this a stage that pretty much forces you to focus on Cloud of Darkness' air game unless you cornered someone in one of the cramped rooms.

```
X=====X
| HP Attacks |
X=====X
Anti Aircraft Wave
Spherical Wave
Wide Angle Wave
Retaliation Wave
```

Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave

X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X

Warrior of Light
Frionel
Kefka
Zidane

X=====X
| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X

Garland
Tidus
Jecht
Shantotto

F9) Crystal World

The world of the genomes and the place where Kuja exacts his final battle against Zidane and his party. The stage features a single large platform in the center with multiple floating platforms around the stage. It also features regenerating platforms in the alternate stage.

Crystal stage works very similarly to the Dimensional fortress but less of the gimmicks with a more straightforward approach. You can virtually fight on this stage the same way you would fight in the dimensional fortress. The only difference is that the warps cannot be used unless you drop to the stage floor.

X=====X
| HP Attacks |
X=====X
Anti Aircraft Wave
Spherical Wave
Retaliation Wave
Earth Void Wave
Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave

X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X

Tidus
Onion Knight
Frionel
Squall
Cloud
Golbez
Garland
Emperor
Kefka
Gabranth

Cecil
Warrior of Light
Butz
Terra

X=====X
| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X

Ultimecia (most definitely a pain to fight in this stage)
Zidane
Kuja

F10) Dream Zanarkand

The final stage of battle where Tidus confronts Jecht as the final Aeon and to put an end to sin once and for all. The stage is very simplistic, a broken set of bleachers dot the side with a central platform that extends to one side of the stage. The area in between consists entirely of empty space with only a single slide map action rail and a number of broken islands.

Again this stage can be comparable to both Dimensional fortress and the crystal world but the difference is that the area you have to fight on in the center platform is a lot smaller than usual whereas the side platforms have a larger amount of space to fight on. With that in mind, you should make use of the open terrain to fight as you wish but again, due to the limited ground territory and wide open empty space, you may find yourself relying more on your Air HP attacks than your ground ones.

X=====X
| HP Attacks |
X=====X
Anti Aircraft Wave
Spherical Wave
Retaliation Wave
Earth Void Wave
Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave

X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X

Tidus
Onion Knight
Frionel
Squall
Cloud
Golbez
Garland
Emperor
Kefka
Gabranth
Cecil
Warrior of Light
Butz
Terra

X=====X

| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X

Ultimecia (most definitely a pain to fight in this stage)
Zidane
Kuja

F11) Cosmos Throne

A unique stage that is the throne where Cosmos sits when she is guiding the warriors of Light. Cosmos Throne is a large flat stage with barely any obstructions on the field itself and instead revealing an abundance of sky. Various map action trails are there for rapid travel throughout the stage. EX cores appear around the edges of the stage or on top of the throne. The alternate variation fo this stage sets the Break number at zero and will not increase as the battle goes on.

This stage is the default "no special features" stage where everything goes and you can pretty much use any attack you want. No teleportation spots whatsoever, just one large arena for you to have your fun. Happy fighting!

X=====X

| HP Attacks |

X=====X

Anti Aircraft Wave
Spherical Wave
Wide Angle Wave
Retaliation Wave
Earth Void Wave
Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave

X=====X

| Characters to fight |

X=====X

Warrior of Light
Garland
Frionel
Emperor
Onion Knight
Cecil
Golbeza
Butz
Exdeath
Terra
Kefka
Cloud
Sephiroth
Squall
Zidane
Tidus
Jecht
Shantotto

X=====X

| Characters to Avoid |

X=====X

Ultimecia
Kuja
Gabranth

F12) Chaos Throne

The polar opposite of Cosmos Throne, Chaos throne is a small stage that is barely adorned, a simple arena with no obstacles, only a single piece of land for you to go at it. The true stage for a deathmatch.

A deathmatch is right, this stage pretty much can be used by Cloud of Darkness for every move in her arsenal but only if she has the time to use it. The stage is literally a deathmatch battlefield and it can be absolutely devastating if you are facing a foe that works well in close proximities.

X=====X
| HP Attacks |
X=====X
Anti Aircraft Wave
Spherical Wave
Wide Angle Wave
Retaliation Wave
Earth Void Wave
Burst Wave
Zero Wave
Pursuit Wave

X=====X
| Characters to fight |
X=====X

Warrior of Light
Frionel
Emperor
Terra
Kefka
Sephiroth
Squall
Kuja
Shantotto

X=====X
| Characters to Avoid |
X=====X

Garland
Onion Knight
Cecil
Golbez
Cloud
Ultimecia
Zidane
Tidus
Jecht
Gabranth

O=====O
|GI) What Equipment to use |
O=====O

Unfortunately, since my Japanese Kanji readins is quite poor, I cannot really decipher them so I always just end up using no equipment anyway when I evaluate characters. This also remedies the problem known as the Infinite EX mode as that is just complete and total rape.

```
O=====O
|HI) Summons |
O=====O
```

This section is dedicated to the summons that will be particularly useful to you in battle. It should be noted that this section will have summons that are useful on every character in the game so it would pretty much apply to everyone, not just Cloud of Darkness.

Shiva

*The summon that can save your life and give you a free tap of Brave at the same time. This is referring specifically to the auto-summon Shiva. The manual version will freeze your opponent to a specific spot so they can still land an HP attack on you if they choose to. However, an Auto Shiva will only activate after they use an HP attack so either one is your choice.

Magic Jar

*Copies your opponent's brave to your own. Very useful because this lets you recover somewhat from a break as well as build up sufficient brave for another attack.

Pheonix

*This is probably the one summon that can save your life. Because of the offensive nature of Cloud of Darkness, she is prone to being broken due to her constant barrage of HP attacks. Pheonix can help to prevent you from hitting break and giving your opponent a boost.

Titan

*A summon that can be VERY useful in battle by having you stomach a few HP attacks in exchange for ramping up your Brave points exponentially. Can be quite risky though because your opponent may catch on and simply brave attack you until you are in break and then wait the summon out.

Carbuncle

*Carbuncle is pretty useful in the regard that it can make your opponent prone to being broken, thus a chance to net yourself a large amount of brave. But be careful as its activation may put you on the downside as well.

Demon Wall

*Other than Pheonix, this summons is also very important because it is another way to prevent your opponent from breaking you. In this case, it prevents your brave points from dropping, thus a great saving.

Odin

*This summon is based entirely on luck but if it does succeed, you will LOVE it. This basically gives auto-break so you can get more brave for your trouble.

Iron Giant

*If there was a way to describe this summon, it would be hell yes. The summon halves the opponent's brave points for every successful HP attack. That means that a constant barrage of HP attacks from you can lead your opponent that much closer to break.

Tiamat

*Although it takes some waiting, it is well worth your effort. For a set period of time it does nothing until after it runs out from which you will gain a large chunk of brave points in return.

Kraken

*A useful one if you find yourself in the dire situation called break. Last until the timer runs out and you swap brave pools. Just try not to get hit by their HP attack.

O=====O
|II) Questions and Answers |
O=====O

If you have any questions or comments, just ask. My E-mail is:

outofammunition@yahoo.com

You can also try posting on the Dissidia message board if you have any questions or comments, I would be happy to reply when I have the time.

O=====O
|JI) Credits and Words of Thanks |
O=====O

Square Enix: For making this great game.

Final Fantasy Wikia: For the translations on some of the attacks.

An Anonymous Friend: For getting me hooked in the first place.