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of stats like Strength and HP). HP, on the other hand, is one of the stats that usually gets shafted through heavy materia usage, though the prevalence of the HP Plus materia goes far in helping you to alleviate this problem, and will later on help you to give serious HP boosts to your characters.

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Strength refers to a character's natural strength, and is a factor in a character's Attack, which in turn affects damage done by physical attacks. Strength goes up with each level up, and may also be raised via the Power Source item. Strength is one of those stats that is more written in stone than the others are because there is not much you can do to raise it (though a few scattered accessories will raise it a bit). Furthermore, materia will do nothing for this stat except lower it.

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Vitality is a character's natural resilience to physical attack, and is a factor in his or her Defense rating. It goes up as a character levels up, and can also be raised with the Guard Source item. Like Strength, there is not much you can do to raise this stat (except locate an accessory or two, one of which will actually pose a significant boost, but is regrettably rare and will not surface until late in the game). Also like Strength, you'll find that materia generally has a negative effect on your Vitality. Luckily, the effects aren't nearly as bad as they are with Strength, and are only present in the more potent magic materia.

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Dexterity is a character's speed or agility. Faster characters attack first in combat, and can get more attacks in over time. Dexterity goes up with each level up, and it may also be raised with the Speed Source item. Other than that, however, not much can be done to alter this stat, in one direction or another. One accessory out there can give you a boost to your Dexterity, and the Speed Plus materia and grant you large bonuses later on, but that's about it.

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Magic refers to a character's ability with magic, and has a direct affect on a character's Magic Attack. Magic goes up with each level up, and it may also be raised with the Magic Source item. Magic is like MP: there are a gazillion ways you can go about jacking this stat up to ungodly high levels. While there is an accessory that will give you a boost in this department, the usual method for raising one's Magic stat is just to put on some materia, almost all of which you'll find will raise this stat (usually at the expense of HP and Strength, mind you). However, even though you have the capability to take your worst magician and go far in increasing their magical prowess... why would you want to?

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Spirit means a character's resistance to magical attacks, and thus has an impact on Magic Defense. This goes up at level-ups, and can be permanently raised with the Mind Source item. Spirit, unlike Vitality, is a stat which is damn near impossible to alter. There is one accessory which will give you a boost in the Spirit department, and another which will grant you a heavy bonus on it, though the latter is very rare and does not surface until late in the game.



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Luck is a quite common stat in RPG's. It goes up occasionally at level-up, and can also be raised with the Luck Source item. For starters, you should notice that the Luck stat should be pretty even straight across the board with all of your characters. Secondly, it's pretty much going to stay that way. Aside from one accessory which will give you a bonus to your Luck, the only other way to alter it is with the Luck Plus materia, though the Luck Plus materia can eventually be refined to offer a rather big bonus to one's Luck. The exact role of the Luck stat is an enigma, but it is known to have an effect on the frequency of critical attacks. Physical attacks which strike critically do twice the normal amount of damage.

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Attack plays a direct role in how much damage your character deals with a physical attack. The factors that make up a character's Attack stat are their Strength stat and also the equipped weapon.

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Attack Percentage (also known as Hit Rate) is an indicator of how often you can expect a character's physical attacks to hit their intended targets. Usually, this statistic is very close to and often above 100% (to help compensate for the target's Defense Percentage, mentioned below). Unlike Attack, Attack Percentage is a direct result of your equipped weapon

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Defense indicates how much damage one can expect a character to receive from incoming physical attacks. Defense is a result of a character's Vitality and equipped armor.

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Defense Percentage (or Evade, as it is more commonly known) measures how often a character is able to dodge incoming physical attack completely. This is usually quite low, and is a result of whatever armor said character has equipped.

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Magic Attack indicates the level of potency a character will use magic, either direct attack magic or curative magic, so the name is a bit misleading. This statistic is derived from a character's Magic stat.

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Magic Defense is a measure of how much damage taken from magical attacks will be reduced by. This is a result of your Spirit stat and your equipped armor, and can also further benefit from some of the game's more potent materia.

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Magic Defense Percentage (or Magic Evade) indicates how often your character will be able to completely avoid a magical attack altogether. This stat is usually extremely low, and is a result of the armor your character is wearing.





"equipped" to "slots" in your characters' weapons and armor. Each weapon and piece of armor in the game has a certain number of slots that materia may be equipped to. In addition to this, the slots may either be "linked" or "unlinked", and each weapon and piece of armor also has a different "growth rate" for materia. These will both be explained momentarily, but first, on to the basics of materia.

You see, materia, much like your characters, gain a type of experience, called "ability points". Each materia retains its own ability points, regardless of which character earns them, and may be transferred freely. Ability points are never lost, but remain only with that materia, just as with experience for your character. The character equipped with the materia must also survive the battle for the ability points to be earned. In addition, the piece of weaponry or armor also has an effect on ability points that are applied to the materia in question. Specifically, this refers to the equipment's "growth rate", as mentioned above. Some weapons and armor, for instance, have a growth rate of two, meaning that the materia equipped to it will receive twice the amount of ability points as you earn in battle. Some extremely rare pieces even have a growth rate of three, which triples the ability points for equipped materia. Conversely, some equipment has a growth rate of zero, meaning that equipped materia will receive no ability points. However, the majority of the game's equipment has a growth rate of one.

Anyways, when certain levels of mastery (in the form of ability points) are earned, the materia "gains a level". These levels are represented by stars on the materia's information screen. Each materia has a certain number of "levels" that it can reach, and has a star for each level. As materia levels up, it will generally convey greater benefits to the user. Furthermore, when a materia reaches its final level and is considered "mastered", a brand new materia of the same type is "born" and placed in your inventory. "Born" materia are brand new and have no ability points; mastered materia, having reached their ultimate level of achievement, no longer gain ability points. As for the advantages conveyed by the materia at higher levels, as well as the potential number of levels for said materia, both are generally dependent on the type of materia you are using.

And keep an eye out for them as you travel! The better half of your magic materia and a few of your independent materia are purchased in shops (some command materia is sold, as well, but if you play your cards right, you should never have to buy any). Other than that, however, all of the game's materia are found just lying around, and the vast majority are not in chests (they just lie around in the open). As the game further progresses, they are hidden in less and less conspicuous spots, so keep your eyes peeled. It is especially important that you keep a vigilant watch out for materia because, as discussed in section I.F. of the FAQ, a number of rare materia are also lost-forevers.

There are five types of materia, and each has different uses and applications:

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Magic materia is the first and generally most prevalent form of materia. Magic materia is green, and will grant magic spells to the character who equips it. At higher levels of mastery, more potent spells may be unlocked from the materia. For instance, the Ice materia will grant the Ice spell to the user at its initial first level. When the materia levels up, however, it will also grant the Ice 2 spell to that character (in addition to the Ice spell). Magic materia will lower a character's Strength and HP when equipped while it raises their MP and Magic stats. More potent magic materia will also raise a character's Magic Defense stat at the expense of

Vitality. Magic materia will generally have three or four levels of mastery, though some have five. Note that among those magic materia with only three levels of mastery are single-spell materia that will not yield their lone spell to the user until the second level of mastery has been reached. Another note is that mastered magic materia will never convey any further benefits than an identical magic materia that has reached the next highest level before mastery. Magic materia are discussed in further detail in section XII.A. of the FAQ. The spells they grant you, however, are discussed in section XV. of the FAQ. Note that all magic materia, unless otherwise noted, is compatible with the support materia, All.

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Support materia is also a common form of materia, mainly because a certain materia in the group (called All) is pretty much the single most prevalent materia in the entire game. Support materia is blue in color, and does not function on its own. Rather, it conveys its benefits to other materia via "linked" slots in your weapons or armor. "Linked" slots are two materia slots that are joined together, and are present in most weapons and armor. "Unlinked" slots have nothing joining them together. For a support materia to function, it must be placed in one of the linked slots next to another materia. Linked slots have no effect on two joined materia if neither is a support materia. Also, for obvious reasons, two support materia linked together or support materia placed in unlinked materia slots will prove quite worthless in battle. In addition, support materia has no effect on independent materia (mentioned later). Anyways, using support materia is a rather simple process. Simply "link" it to whichever materia you desire. For instance, the All materia allows the spells of the magic materia it is linked to to affect all enemies or all allies on screen rather than a lone target. When you link an All materia to an Ice materia (which grants you the Ice spell), for instance, you will now have the ability to cast Ice on all of your enemies. Conversely, the Restore materia grants you the Cure spell, and linking it to an All materia will give you a Cure spell that affects all of your allies. On the negative side of things, support materia is usually severely restricted in its uses. And oftentimes, when you find yourself thinking "hey, that would kick so much ass if I linked this to this!", it usually won't work. For more information on the limitations of specific support materia, refer to section XII.B. of the FAQ. Anyhoo, support materia will either have two or five levels of mastery. The lone exception to this rule (isn't there always an exception?) is the Elemental materia, which has four levels of mastery. For more information as to the bonuses granted by specific support materia, refer to section XII.B. of the FAQ. On a final note, support materia has no effect on a character's statistics.

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Command materia isn't as common as magic or support materia, but there are still a number of them to be obtained. Command materia is yellow, and each will grant a different command to your character in battle, such as "Steal" or "Manipulate". At higher levels of mastery, the command will sometimes "evolve" into a better command (command materia will only have two or three levels, and only those with three levels will "evolve"). Steal, for instance, will become Mug at level two. So, in the end, each command materia will grant you only one command (the lone exception to this rule is the Throw materia). Then there's the E. Skill materia, which is a very special case in many ways. Anyways, command materia shares a characteristic with magic materia in that mastered command materia will never convey any further benefits than an identical command materia that has reached the next highest level before mastery, so command materia that do



In most games, normally RPG's, there are an abundance of things to collect, acquire, do, find, and see. While most of these can usually be done at your leisure, this section is dedicated to helping you find certain things that can no longer be done after a certain point within a game:

\* The entirety of the events described in section VII. of the FAQ fall into the category of lost-forevers. While not being actual tangible objects that you can acquire, you still only get one shot at one of four possible outcomes. This is determined through a series of events scattered throughout the early game that are mostly one-shot deals in themselves.

\* The Iron Bangles sold at various shops in Midgar are lost-forevers in a sense, as after reaching section III.C. of the walkthrough, you will no longer be able to purchase them.

\* The All materia in the Sector Seven Slums is a lost-forever. You must collect it before leaving the Sector Seven Slums.

\* One of the flyers you need to find to win the Turtle's Paradise contest (refer to section V.A. of the FAQ for more details) is a lost-forever. You must find flyer #2 while at Shinra H.Q. If you miss it the first time around, you've got one more chance to find it. Refer to section V.N. of the FAQ for more on that.

\* The Elemental materia that you receive from Mayor Domino (on the 62nd floor of Shinra H.Q.) is a lost-forever. Basically, you have one chance to get it, as mentioned in the walkthrough. Failing that, you will not receive the materia.

\* The All materia on the 63rd floor Shinra H.Q. is a lost-forever. The Star Pendant and Four Slots armor found here are also lost-forevers, but may be found elsewhere. At any rate, not only must you collect these during your first trip to Shinra H.Q., you're also barred from making further attempts to go for other items once you've collected, so you must grab the coupons for the items you want on one trip. For more information, refer to section V.B. of the FAQ.

\* The E. Skill materia located on the 68th floor of Shinra H.Q. is another lost-forever. You've gotta grab it before leaving.

\* Though not neccessarily a lost-forever, there are only two Chocobo Lure materia, and they do, in fact, come in handy later in the game. So, for the love of God, don't sell the Goddamn thing. And if for some reason you sell the first, don't sell the second one. Or ingore my advice, I don't care.

\* The battles at Fort Condor are laden with lost-forevers. For more information, refer to section X. of the FAQ, but of worthy mention are the items of note that may be lost forever at Fort Condor: the Magic Comb, Peace Ring, Megalixir, Vagyrisk Claw, Imperial Guard, Phoenix materia, and finally one of the four Huge Materia. Some of these, namely the Magic Comb and Super Ball, actually may be purchased later on, but so late that it's almost pointless to buy them.

\* The Shinra Beta armor is a lost-forever. You can steal as many as you want from the Marines on the Shinra Boat, but only while you're still aboard.

\* The All materia and Wind Slash, both found on the Shinra Boat, are lost-forevers. Note that if Yuffie has joined you, you will be unable to collect the All materia until the party regroups. Also note that the Wind Slash

cannot be found until the party regroups, so don't go nuts looking for it before then. Note that you may buy the Wind Slash later on in the game, but far too late to be useful to you at that point. Anyways, you must collect both before leaving the boat.

\* The Ifrit materia is a lost-forever. You must collect it before leaving the room where you battled Jenova-BIRTH.

\* The Four Slots sold at Costa Del Sol are lost-forevers, as they will cease being sold later in the game.

\* The Wizard Staff at Mt. Corel is a lost-forever. You must get it during one of your three possible falls off of the tracks. Note that the Star Pendant, also found down here, is also a lost-forever, but can be located elsewhere.

\* The Parasol is a lost-forever that must be won from the Speed Square at the Gold Saucer before going to the Temple of the Ancients (later in the game).

\* The Ramuh materia is a lost-forever. You must collect it before leaving the jockey's lounge at the Gold Saucer.

\* The Aqualung enemy skill is a lost-forever, as you may only collect it during the first disc when you have access to the enemy who teaches it to you. Also, it may be learned from a boss battle with Jenova LIFE, but that too, is a one-time-only shot.

\* Everything at the Gi Cave is a lost-forever. This includes the Added Effect materia and the Black M-Phone. Get them before you leave. Although the Black M-Phone may be purchased later on, it will be far too late for it to be of any use.

\* Tifa's Platinum Fist weapon is not a lost-forever, but will surface again far too late in the game to be of any use. Get it from one of the creepazoids at Nibelheim before leaving.

\* The enemy skill Trine is a lost-forever which you have three chances to learn. First, from the Materia Keeper at Mt. Nibel, secondly, from the Pagoda of the Five Mighty Gods at Wutai, and lastly, from the Stilve at Gaea's Cliff.

\* The Yoshiyuki is a lost-forever. You must collect it from Rocket Town before a certain trigger point in the game far later on (during Disc 2).

\* The Shotguns sold at Rocket Town are lost-forevers, as they will stop being sold later in the game.

\* The Wutai side quest is a lost-forever in itself. It is impossible to complete past a certain point in the game, however, after examining masses of reader feedback, it is my conclusion that this point is different in different versions of the game. So, to be safe, I'd advise you to complete the side quest as soon as it becomes available (this is when the game programmers intended for you to do it, anyways, so it all should work out). Granted, you may still travel to Wutai, three items received as a result of it (the HP Absorb, MP Absorb, and Leviathan materia) remain lost-forever.

\* Everything at the Temple of the Ancients is a lost-forever. This list includes: the Luck Plus materia, the Morph materia, the Bahamut materia, the Princess Guard, Trident, and the Ribbon. Grab it all before you leave or



you can never get it! Also note that certain unique equipment that is equipped can also be lost forever at the Temple of the Ancients. Refer to section III.E. of the walkthrough for more specific information. On a final note, though some of the things mentioned above can be bought later, again, the opportunity will arise far too late to be worth your time.

\* The Gigas Armlet, in a way, is a lost-forever. The game automatically grants you one copy, but further copies may be stolen from the Gigas creature at the Crater. However, you must steal all you want before you leave.

\* Everything at Gaea's Cliff is a lost-forever, including the Megalixir, Fire Armlet, and the Javelin. The Enhance Sword is here, too, but you can buy more later.

\* The MP Turbo and Neo-Bahamut materia are both lost-forevers that you must collect before leaving the Crater, as are the Kaiser Knuckle and the Poison Ring.

\* The Elemental materia at Nibelheim is a lost-forever. You must collect it during section III.G. of the walkthrough before traveling to Mideel. For more on this, refer to section V.F. of the FAQ.

\* All four Huge Materia you will encounter during your main-line quest are lost-forevers. Basically, for each Huge Materia, you'll get a chance to save it. Failing your mission, you lose the Huge Materia. An interesting collilquary to this rule is that you will always receive the Huge Materia in the same order, regardless of which missions (if any) you fail to save a particular huge materia. That order is: green, yellow, red, blue. In short, if you miss one huge materia, you miss out on the blue one. If you miss two, it's blue and red, etc. For more on the benefits conveyed by the Huge Materia, refer to section V.M. of the FAQ.

\* The Warrior Bangle is a lost-forever that must be stolen from the Eagle Gun during your fight with it.

\* The Shinra Alpha, Battle Trumpet, Scimitar, and Leviathan Scales are all lost-forevers that must be collected before leaving the Underwater Reactor at Junon. Furthermore, the Leviathan Scales must be collected in order to obtain two other items, both of which are lost-forevers in this respect. Also note that the Shinra Alpha is not actually found, but rather stolen from the Underwater MP enemy hanging around the Underwater Reactor.

\* Both of the items inside Da-Chao Fire Cave, the Steal as Well materia and the Oritsuru, are both lost-forevers that can only be reached if you managed to collect the previously-mentioned Leviathan Scales.

\* The Zeidrich is a lost-forever that can be stolen from Rude during your battle with him at Rocket Town.

\* The Zeidrich and the Tough Ring are both lost-forevers that can be stolen from Rude and Reno during an optional battle at the Gelnika (the side quest detailed in section IV.C. of the FAQ). While the side quest itself is not a lost-forever, the battle with the Turks there is. Reno and Rude will not appear here if you challenged them and Elena to another optional battle (at Midgar). Seeing as that optional battle is a lost-forever of and within itself, and also contains stealable lost-forevers, it is probably in your best interests to complete the Gelnika side quest as soon as it becomes available to you.



















When he joins you, by the way, you would be advised to enter the menu screen and move Barret to the back row to take advantage of his long-range weapon. Barret is almost as strong as Cloud, but not quite. In addition to the Sweepers, it will also take Barret more than one hit to dispatch the enemy known as Grunts. On the positive side of things, he can hit all the stuff in the back row for maximum damage, so use this knowledge to your benefit.

Anyways, talk to the other two members, Biggs and Jesse. They'll open up the doors ahead of you and lead you to a large room. If you head all the way to the bottom-right corner, you'll discover a chest with some Phoenix Down in it. The door to the elevator is just ahead of you. You'll step inside the elevator and descend into the reactor, Barret whining at you non-stop the whole way down (this guy really needs to learn how to shut up once in a while, don't you think?) You exit in this gigantic room atop a huge structure. A set of stairs spirals around the structure, and will take you to the bottom. The door to the next room is directly in front of those stairs. You'll continue along a very straightforward path from there until you reach a save point. If you've ever played a Final Fantasy game before, you should be familiar with these things. You shouldn't have to rest up, but you may want to go ahead and save. That being done, continue along the path towards the reactor's core.

As you step along, you should notice a Restore materia along the path. It's big, shiny, and obvious, but you'll still have to stop and pick it up or else pass it by. Nab it, but realize that all of the other materia in this game isn't quite this obvious. Then again, this couldn't be more obvious if it had a giant flashing neon sign that said "free materia" pointed at it. Anyways, step up to the core and Barret will ask you to plant the bomb. Cloud has some sort of weird memory lapse, but then continues to set the bomb as if nothing out of the ordinary had just happened. Then the timer starts. But, don't worry- you get more than enough time. But, it does count down during battles, so don't dawdle.

The Guard Scorpion arrives. If you've ever battled Mist (Final Fantasy II/IV) or Whelk (Final Fantasy III/VI), you should know exactly what you're up against. Basically, it's a stronger enemy that you are free to battle for awhile. However, at certain times during the fight, the Guard Scorpion will raise its tail into the air. Do not attack it at this time unless you would like to receive a big can of Whup-Ass. Other than its retaliation in that mode, Tail Laser, which'll do big damage to both of your characters, the Guard Scorpion basically just has a couple of moderately powerful single-person attacks. Just keep your HP up (with all those Potions in your inventory) and you'll be fine. And since you have nothing better to do but wait when its tail is up, that makes an excellent time to use your Potions. Anyways, Barret can't do much else besides attack, but Cloud's Bolt spell will take a nice chunk out of the Guard Scorpion. Your limit breaks also make excellent attacks when applicable. Win the fight, and you get the Assault Gun for Barret, which should be immediately equipped. Now get the hell out of here.

As you crawl back up the stairs, stop to help Jesse, who's foot has been caught in the grating. Whether or not you want to help her is moot, because she's the only person that can get you past the security doors on the level above. Continue out of the reactor the same way you came back to where Wedge was standing (you know, the fatass?) Then exit through that door. Outside the reactor, Barret commands the team to split up, and that you'll all meet at the train station. You should exit the screen via the only exit (press Select if you can't see it).

You emerge on the city streets. The flower girl (you know, the one you saw in the opening sequence), approaches you and asks you what's going on. This seemingly meaningless conversation actually will have some degree of effect on

the game later, however (refer to section VII.A. of the FAQ for more information.) You've been warned. Following that conversation, head south through the city streets. If you've got good eyes, you'll spot a Potion lying on the ground on the screen below this one. Yup. As advanced as the Final Fantasy series is, your characters have still yet to adapt the "Don't Drink Things you Find Lying in the Middle of the Street" trait yet. For God's sakes, I know hobos with more common sense than that. On the next screen down, you're approached by a couple of soldiers. You can either fight or run, it doesn't matter really, because more lemmings, I mean, soldiers will just come in to replace the ones you kill. You eventually find yourself surrounded by things you could easily kill with one swipe of your huge-ass blade. Nope. You opt for the daring escape, instead. In another dramatic movie sequence (not a full CG movie sequence this time, but one of those cutscenes where your characters still look like claymation action figures), Cloud hops off of the bridge onto the moving train below, and the disappears with it into the tunnel.

The scene cuts to the inside of the train, where Barret and the rest of the team wonder what could have happened to you. That's when Cloud busts in through the door from atop the train. Barret gets pissed off at you (you'll soon learn that it doesn't take too much to piss Barret off). And then the team heads towards the front of the train (with Jesse stopping to wipe your face clean before she leaves). In the front of the train, Barret talks to you some more. This time, they discuss Midgar. Midgar is a gigantic, round city that is divided into eight sectors that closely resemble slices of a pizza (the word "pizza" is actually used in reference to Midgar several times throughout the game. Mmm... pizza...). Furthermore, the majority of the city is built on a humongous plate that sits high above the ground (this would be the "pizza" the game references). The plate, like the city, is divided into eight sections. I know the idea of a floating city sounds really cool (actually, it doesn't necessarily "float", as you'll find out here in a minute), but you really never get to visit it. Nope. Because you spend all your time at Midgar underneath the plate, where there's somewhat of a separate, scummier city that makes Harlem seem like Beverly Hills. I mean, really. What can you expect the land value to be for a polluted hellhole built underneath a Goddamn floating city? This is one of the things Barret takes offense to, actually. For once, you can kind of understand why he's angry. Because he has to live in said hellhole. Cloud asks why everyone doesn't move onto the plate, but that's sorta like saying "why doesn't everyone have a million dollars?", no matter what kind of misguided response Barret gives you.

Anyways, you can talk to the rest of the team now (and the greasy hobo who lives in the back of the car), but the person you have to talk to to advance in the game is Jesse, who's standing at the front of the car. As you might have guessed, until you talk to her, this train is never going to get to where it's going for some odd reason. Anyways, Jesse shows you the computer screen that she's looking at, which shows you a cool little diagram of Midgar. It then shows you the course that the train is on. You were on the plate a minute ago, and now the train is taking you down below to the slums. The track spirals around a gigantic pillar, one of the eight total pillars that hold the plate up in the air (I told you it didn't float). And when I say gigantic, I mean it. The pillar is a tower unto itself. Anyways, at about this point in the conversation, you pass through a security checkpoint. Since this is the future, the lights just flash red for a few seconds, some mysterious force scans the ID's of everyone in the train, and then everything goes back to normal. Jesse tells you that you guys are all, obviously, using fake ID's. She then asks you a question, and your response is another seemingly harmless one that will have some sort of impact on the game later (again, see section VII.A. of the FAQ for more details).

Anyways, the train comes to a stop at a train station in Sector Seven.

Welcome to the Sector Seven Slums.

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--- Welcome to: The Sector Seven Slums

The team departs the train and everyone heads off to the left (towards the slums). You'll want to follow them. On the next screen to the left, there is a save point at the top of the screen that you may wish to use. There's also a guy standing next to it, and if you talk to him, he'll point at the gigantically obvious structure in front of you. The camera will zoom out, and give you a pretty good idea of just how big the pillar is (that is, the pillar that holds the plate up). At the bottom of the screen is the path to Sector Six, but it's blocked by a couple of soldiers. You know, the ones you can kill really easily if they try and attack you? Well, these ones just prefer making snide remarks, so there's really not much you can do with them at the moment. Exit the screen to the left and enter the slums.

Now, when I say slums, I mean it. Look at this place. It's horrible. I know hobos with a higher standard of living than this. Houses are constructed out of spare machinery parts and topped with sheet metal, for God's sakes (OK, maybe I'm exaggerating a bit, but it gets worse later on). And as if that wasn't scummy enough, there's a bar you'll be wanting to go to. It's at the bottom of the screen and shouldn't be too hard to spot, because you'll see Barret running inside and throwing everybody out (I guess nobody's going to argue with a man who's hand is a gigantic gun). Barret then calmly waits outside for you to show up.

The bar is called "Tifa's Seventh Heaven", and is about as run-down as everything else around here. Take note of the sign in the corner that says "Texas", a state which obviously does not exist in this game (something I've always found amusing, anyways). At any rate, walk inside the bar, and you are greeted by the bar's owner, Tifa, who congratulates you on a job well-done. If you bought a flower from the flower girl earlier, you've now got the option to give it away. This is another of those decisions that has an effect on the game later, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. After a brief chitchat, Cloud says that he just wants to get his money so that he can leave. Try to exit the bar, and Barret comes barging in. He yells that the "meeting" is about to start, and then walks over to the pinball machine. The pinball machine is actually an elevator which descends into the basement, which is kinda neat. The rest of the team hops into the hole after him, leaving you and Tifa alone. Once again, what you do now will have some sort of impact on the game later as referenced in section VII.A. of the FAQ. When you're done, hop down into the basement and chat with Barret and the gang.

Barret asks Cloud if anyone from SOLDIER was there during the mission. Cloud replies that if anyone from SOLDIER was there, Barret wouldn't be standing here right now. Barret gets pissed off. But as I've said before: walls, table lamps, and cereal bowls piss Barret off. Anyhoo, instead of taking out his aggression on Cloud, Barret kicks Biggs's ass for no good reason (well, he shouldn't have been standing there!) Tifa comes down and calms Barret down before he destroys the whole damn place, however. Then you go back upstairs to discuss your money. As you head for the door, Tifa comes back upstairs and asks you to please join AVALANCHE. When you refuse, Tifa yells at you and accuses you of walking out on your childhood friend. This is another response that affects the game later (see section VII.A. of the FAQ).

Either way, the scene flashes back to the promise Cloud made to Tifa as a child. Cloud and Tifa were sitting atop the village well when Cloud said that

he was leaving for Midgar to join SOLDIER. Tifa had asked him that if Cloud joined SOLDIER and became famous and if she was ever in a bind, that Cloud would come to rescue her. Of course, Cloud is currently neither famous nor in SOLDIER, but when Barret comes to pay him, Cloud has an apparent change of heart and offers to go along for the next mission.

You wake up the next morning in the basement. Head back upstairs to the bar and Tifa asks you how you slept. Again, your response affects the game later (again, see section VII.A. of the FAQ for more info). You also discover that Tifa is coming with your group for the next mission. Barret comes on inside and asks you about the materia you found the other day. Accept his tutorial if you need to know more (your decision here, despite what you might think, has no effect on the game later on, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ), but what this really means is that you can now manage your materia through the menu. You also gain control of the party, and Tifa mentions to you that the owner of the weapon shop wanted to talk to you before you leave.

Anyways, before you leave there are a few things you can/should do. A little shopping never hurt anyone, but remember that you only have so much money right now. Still, some new armor might be in order, and the item shop also sells (besides items, which you may buy a few of) materia. Buy whatever you want, but you probably won't have enough money for more than two pieces of materia, so choose wisely. Also, above the weapon shop (take the stairs inside), there's another room. This is a "training room", meant to get you acclimated to the various aspects of the game. It's worth visiting no matter how well you know the game, however, because there's an All materia and an Ether to be found here. Both, namely the All materia, are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

As for the All materia, you've got two options here. You can link it to a Restore materia for a Cure-all spell, or link it to one of the other materia for an attack-all spell. If you do this, you should probably know that many of the enemies that you are about to face are weak against lightning magic, so the Lightning materia is a good candidate for this. And even though Barret has the linked slots in his weapon, Cloud is far better with magic than Barret is, and would wield an attack spell with far better results. Anyways, one you've got your gear in order and your head on straight, head for the train station (and you might want to save your game at the save point before leaving, as well).

Hop on the train, and Barret will make yet another show of just how much of A jerk he can be. He harasses the hapless employee for no apparent reason. The employee cowers, saying that he's scared enough because AVALANCHE had proclaimed that there will be more bombings and that only the most dedicated employees would go to work today. This pisses Barret off. Go figure. Anyhoo, the train ride begins, and Tifa heads to go look at the computer screen (the one Jesse showed you the other day). Well, just as she begins to say something that sounds somewhat sexually suggestive, you pass through the security checkpoint. Oh, and guess what? You're fake ID's don't work this time around. The train enters security lockdown mode.

Well, the security check starts with the back car and moves forward, so you've just got to run to the front car. But it isn't as easy as you think, however. You see, the timer is running, and you've only got so long to get to the next car. If you don't make it, then that's where you get off, my friend. And the further you make it, the less you have to walk. Also, how far you make it in the car has an affect on the game later on, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. Along the way, a few things can happen, by the way. On the first car (the one you start on), if you speak with the bum in the back, he hands you a Phoenix Down. In the second car, if you speak with guy near the front of the car, he gives you a Hi-Potion. In the third car, a guy may run by and steal

something from you. If you want the item back, you have to go after him and threaten him, but it may take too much time to be worth doing.

Anyways, when and if you make it to the front car, that's where you hop off the train in daring fashion and land in a tunnel below. From here on out, you're on foot, my friend.

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--- Welcome to: Mako Reactor #5

Well, technically, you're still in the connecting tunnels adjacent to the reactor, but close enough, eh'? Here're the enemies you can expect to battle down here... First, there's the Blugu. It's a little pain-in-the-ass creature that can put your characters to sleep with it's Hell Bubbles attack. They fall prey to lightning magic very easily, however. Then there's a creature called the Rocket Launcher, which, as you might expect, has some pretty powerful physical attacks. Again, lightning magic makes very short work of them. Once you reach the reactor, you'll meet a few more generic enemies (SP. Combatant, Blood Taste), who are quite weak and can be taken care of extremely easily. Be warned that the Smogger, another more or less generic enemy, can poison your characters, however. The Smogger may also occasionally drop the Deadly Waste item after battle, which produces an attack far stronger than anything you can get at this point in the game, so you may want to fight around a bit and collect a few of those. Lastly, there's the Proto Machinegun. Their attacks aren't that strong, but they can take a bit of punishment. Still, lightning magic will shut them down very quickly.

Anyways, you're in the tunnel now. The direction you're headed is up, and the earlier you got tossed off the train, the further you have to walk. On the tunnel's southern end (this is where you'll land if you got thrown off in the first car), there's a station with an infinite supply of Sp. Combatants. Of course, they are extremely nice and won't attack you unless you attack them first. You can kill as many of them as you'd like without causing a panic, interestingly enough. It's just that for every one you kill, another will be sent to take their place. It seems like you could decimate the entire Shinra army base through this manner, but the steady stream of replacements is seemingly endless. It's like the Shinra has more people than the Chinese do... Oh, and don't worry: the soldiers will not do anything smart like alert the army to your presence, or even try to attack you unless you talk to them first. Anyways, once you've had your fun, head to the tunnel's north end.

Well, it seems that the tunnel is blocked off by giant, painfully obvious, flashing, neon security beams, so you've got to crawl through that clearly-marked "intruder's entrance" hatch to your left. It's a tight fit, but I wouldn't expect the Shinra to be too accommodating to people trying to break into their reactors. Just be glad that it's big enough for Barret to fit into. Follow the path (and be sure to grab the Ether lying on the ground along the way) to a ledge above the rest of the reactor (there's a ladder leading down here, but it's kind of hard to see without pressing Select). Climbing down that ladder, you'll end up downstairs on a sprawling catwalk. There are two ladders down here, but both will take you to the same room leading to the reactor. You'll also meet up with Biggs and Wedge down here. In the next room, you'll meet up with Jesse, who whines about her fake ID's botching the whole mission up. Ignore her whining, grab the Potion lying on the ground, and crawl down the ladder in the lower-left corner of the room. This takes you to another catwalk, where you'll find an Ether and a save point, as well as a ladder leading into the reactor itself.

You emerge in a very large room that should look extremely familiar. The only difference is that you took a different way in. Head to the door at the foot of the stairs and descend into the reactor. You'll end up at the reactor's core, and Cloud will be asked to set up the bomb. But first, however, you are treated to another of Cloud's memory spasms. This time, Cloud flashes back to a scene in another mako reactor. You see a younger version of Tifa kneeling next to her injured father, swearing vengeance on the Shinra. I guess this would explain why Tifa supports Barret's cause, though exactly what happened remains a mystery...

Anyways, Cloud snaps out of it, again seeing nothing unusual about what just happened, and nonchalantly sets up the bomb. Now, it's time to get the hell out of here. Head back upstairs to the giant room. You can't go out the way you came, you're going to have to leave the reactor as you did the first one you were in. Head up the stairs and you'll eventually end up in a room similar to the one where Biggs and Jesse had to open the doors for you. Well, this time you get to do it yourself. Cloud, Barret, and Tifa must all hit their respective buttons simultaneously to open the door. The computer takes control of Barret and Tifa, and you've got to hit the button when they do. No matter how many times you screw up, though, you can still do it. It's actually relatively easy if you just count to three or something, but I think it's kinda neat how Tifa and Barret move at the same consistent pace. After watching them for a few minutes, you'll start to think that they missed their calling as synchronized swimmers.

By the way, you're almost at a boss fight, so a little preparation is in order. You'll have no need for an attack-all spell, but a Cure-all spell might come in sort of handy during the upcoming battle. Also, Cloud's attacks will do a nice amount of damage, but the same cannot be said for Barret or Tifa, for some strange reason. Both of them will do more damage with magic (and the boss in question is especially weak against Bolt). For this reason, you may also want to move Tifa to the back row for the upcoming fight. Oh, and you might want to heal yourself up, if at all possible. You'll want to enter this fight with the fullest possible advantage. Once you're happy with the way you have the team set up, head on out.

Make your way towards the exit, where you'll be greeted by an entourage of Shinra soldiers. Then, a helicopter approaches... It's none other than President Shinra. Cloud seems surprisingly nonchalant about it, but something tells me that the world coming to an end wouldn't startle him too much. President Shinra recognizes Cloud as an ex-SOLDIER because of the result that mako exposure had had on his eyes. He doesn't recognize Cloud, though, saying that he'd have to have been another Sephiroth to earn his recognition. Sephiroth, of course, being the greatest SOLDIER to have ever existed. Anyways, Barret gets a little pissed watching Cloud and President Shinra chit-chat, and angrily yells at the President. In his evil manner, President Shinra just shrugs Barret off and hops back onto his helicopter. Instead of ordering his endless legions of troops down your throat, however, he just leaves you with a little "playmate" and just assumes that it will take care of the job for him. To quote Dr. Evil, "I'll just place them in an easily escapable situation involving an overly elaborate and exotic death." And there's little else more elaborate and exotic than getting your ass kicked by a gigantic robot, no? It's time to fight Air Buster.

First of all, you have Air Buster surrounded. This is actually more of a blessing than a curse (though it does prevent you from using a Cure-all spell too effectively). As you should probably know, it will really hurt this thing when you hit it in the back. Even though Tifa and Barret will still do more damage to the Air Buster with magic (see above), Cloud can really damage this thing if he slices it from behind. Also, you may want to save your characters'

limit breaks until you have the opportunity to hit Air Buster in the back with them, as any limit break striking Air Buster in the back (especially Braver) is going to kick its ass very badly. However, you've still got to watch yourself. Air Buster has a couple of powerful attacks. One will do a considerable amount of damage to everyone he's facing (so he'll only nail Tifa and Barret with it on occasion). It's also got an attack that does big damage to a lone target, so he will be able to wipe out one of your characters if you don't keep a vigilant watch over your HP. Anyways, when you kick Air Buster's ass, you win a Titan Bangle.

Air Buster, well, explodes. And it takes a good chunk of the catwalk with it. This wouldn't be so bad except that it damages the part of the catwalk that Cloud was standing on, leaving him dangling from the edge of the destroyed catwalk. Barret calls out to you, and you can respond any way you'd like (another response that affects the game later as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ), but your only real option is to dangle helplessly. I suppose Barret and Tifa would do something to help you out, but if you'll recall, you did plant a bomb in the reactor several minutes ago. And it goes off right about... now. Tifa reaches out for Cloud, but Barret grabs her and flees. Cloud, meanwhile, plummets. Gee, wasn't that fun?

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--- Welcome to: Sector Five

When we last left our hapless hero, he had plummeted several stories into God-knows-what below. We now join him as he is having a vague and, to be perfectly honest, rather disturbing conversation with the voices in his head. And yes, this weird behavior continues throughout the majority of the game. The voices tell him that he used to be able to get by with scraped knees. It makes really no sense, but when you plunge a gazillion stories into nothingness, I guess I wouldn't be that coherent, either. However, a third voice begins to break into the conversation. Cloud's eyes slowly open and he finds himself in a church. Standing next to him, trying to wake him up is the flower girl that you met earlier. She says that she was just standing there when you came crashing through the roof. Furthermore, you appear to have landed on a bed of flowers that she was growing in here. A giant bed of flowers... in the middle of the church? Okay... Anyways, Cloud is still kind of groggy, what with the plummeting hundreds of stories and all, but hops back to his feet and brushes himself off as if he had just bumped his knee on a table or something.

You talk for a bit with the flower girl. Have fun with the conversation- nothing you say has any impact on the game later on. Anyways, she introduces herself as Aeris. You banter about materia for a minute. She claims to have a materia that doesn't do anything. Her mother gave it to her, she says, and she keeps it with her wherever she goes. Keep talking to her, and as you do, a very creepy man will walk into the church and just stand there. You can attempt to talk to him, but he just says not to mind him. Rather, if you talk to Aeris again, she asks you if you'd be interested in being her bodyguard. I know a lot of people would reply with some snide remark like "I'd guard her body...", but if you haven't figured it out by this point, Cloud has the emotional responses of a brick. He agrees to do it, and Aeris offers to pay him with a date. Again, Cloud does not react to this in any way. However, it becomes quickly apparent that the creepy guy in the church has something to do with this when Aeris quickly whisks you away and asks you to get her home safely. You'll see the creepy man walk towards the back of the church, accompanied by several Shinra soldiers. The creepy man is Reno. He's an asshole, but we really don't know much more than that about him this point. The soldiers are expendable and meaningless.



Anyways, the scene shifts back to Cloud and Aeris as they make their way through the back of the church. You might as well go ahead and take time to equip Aeris right now. Especially considering that unless you know what you're doing, Aeris is going to be doing some fighting in a minute. Hand her some materia (Barret and Tifa apparently gave their materia to Cloud before he fell), and you may also choose to give her the Titan Bangle you won from Air Buster, given both her horrible survivalability and her proficiency with magic. It doesn't really matter what you give her, so long as you hand her something that she can do some damage with (in case you haven't noticed, that stick she's carrying isn't the most effective weapon in the world).

Head along upstairs until you reach a gap in the floor. Cloud jumps it with no problem, but as Aeris is jumping, the Shinra soldiers arrive and, with a hearty cry of, "stop the Ancient!" shoot at her... She misses the jump and falls to the floor below. I'm sorry, but when your job involves you shooting flower girls in churches, you might as well slaughter a bunch of nuns and kittens while you're at it, because your job as inhumanly evil as possible. You've now got an interesting notion, here. Instead of going downstairs and slaughtering the soldiers below, Cloud decides that he's going to have a little fun with them by dropping things from the rafters on them.

A few things to keep in mind: first and foremost, your performance here does have an affect on the game later, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. Secondly, if you want to do it right, you're going to have to work fast. Not only do you have a limited amount of time to make it to the appropriate barrel and push (I'm not even mentioning how long it takes to think about which barrel is the right one to push), but you also get into battles up here, as well. You'll fight things that are laughably easy to kill, but they still slow you down. The easy way out is just to keep telling Aeris to run. She'll only have to fight one soldier, and will be able to easily blow him away with any form of attack magic materia that you've handed her. But still, there's something to be said for doing things right. Here's what you've got to do: first, tell Aeris to "wait". Then, run upstairs and push the barrel on the left. Next, push the one in the far back. Finally, push the one on the right. This will see you both through the threat.

Anyways, Cloud and Aeris end up atop the church, and you traverse the city by jumping between huge piles of junk. Honestly, you're running along gigantic piles of spare machinery and garbage. And who says that this isn't the slums? Anyways, Cloud hops along the piles with ease, leaving Aeris in the dust. He then teases her as she tries to catch back up. Take note of this- it's the first sign Cloud has shown this far of any spark of humanity. He mentions that the guy (Reno) who was after Aeris was a member of the Turks. They work for the Shinra, but aren't necessarily a military unit. They're more of a slimeball unit. No task too sleazy for them, according to Cloud. For a real-life comparison, think of the Turks as an evil (well, eviler) version of the CIA. Anyways, it seems that the Turks have been after her for quite some time, for some-odd reason. What business they have with her, I can't say. Maybe it's just part of their "evil" quota, I don't know. But, anyways, you end up outside the church along the path to Sector Five. If you head south from here, you'll end up back at the church (and further south, actually, to get a lovely outside view of Midgar). However, the direction you're headed in is up.

There's enemies along the road, by the way. First, there's the Hedgehog Pie. This is the thing that you met back at the church. They're easy to kill, but are capable of casting the Fire spell (thankfully not with very good results). The Whole Eater is harder to kill than the Hedgehog Pie, but is mentionless otherwise. Watch out for the guy called Vice, however. These guys are exactly what they look like- thieves, and they can make off with one of your

items if you let them (note that if you kill them shortly after they've stolen from you, you'll still get the item back).

Anyways, it's a relatively short walk to civilization. Head north along the road, and make a right (going left leads to the road to Sector Six). You'll enter the slums of Sector Five. And, as you can clearly see, the standard of living here isn't much better than it was back in Sector Seven. As a matter of fact, there's one guy here living in a pipe. Yes, he's living in a Goddamn pipe! Go visit him, actually, and Aeris will blurt out one of the game's most hilarious typos: "this guy are sick!" Anyways, the guy are a real head case, who just sits there and spews out gibberish and nonsense. You do notice that he has the number two tattooed on his hand, which is not at all interesting, to say the least. Anyways, feel free to look around the slums. You may choose to do a bit of shopping here, you may not. It's up to you. Also, one of the flyers mentioned in section V.A. of the FAQ is here in Sector Five, so you may want to check that out, as well. Also, if you decide to further explore people's houses, you may talk to a kid in his sleep and hear him mutter about his hidden drawer. In it, you'll find 5 gil. You can either rob him now, or come back later in the game and he'll give you a Turbo Ether that he bought with the money. Of course, if you rob him, he won't buy the Turbo Ether. Anyways, when you're done looking around, head to the northeastern corner of town to Aeris's house.

Now, let me take a minute to explain something here. One of the things that flowers generally require to grow is light. Another would be a relatively pollution-free environment, but we'll let that one slide for a minute. I can understand how the flowers might grow inside the church, what with the light shining in from outside Midgar and all, but Aeris's home garden is a different story altogether. She has somehow managed to grow a thriving garden in this God-forsaken barren wasteland. It's as if she missed her calling as a horticulturist. Wait a minute, no she didn't... Anyways, scope out the garden-there's an Ether here, as well as the Cover materia. Then go inside her house.

Aeris's mother, Elmyra, greets you. The disturbing thing is that she doesn't seem to be in the least bit surprised that the Shinra is hunting her daughter down. She thanks you properly, and you mention that you'd like to head back to Sector Seven to see Tifa. Aeris asks you who Tifa is, and your response will obviously have a bit of an impact on the game later on (see section VII.A. of the FAQ). Anyways, Aeris offers to take you to Sector Seven (via Sector Six), and really doesn't seem to want to take "no" for an answer. Cloud seems awfully chauvinistic about it, but somehow I'd imagine that he'd react pretty much in the same way if it was Barret offering to take him back. Anyways, Elmyra asks you to stay the night and leave in the morning. Not approving of her daughter running off, she discreetly asks you to leave without Aeris. Cloud is only too happy to oblige (but don't worry, he doesn't succeed).

Cloud drifts off to sleep and has another lovely conversation with the voices in his head. If by this point in the game you haven't started to think that Cloud is a complete nut job, I can't even begin to understand why. This time, Cloud flashes back to the last time he slept in a bed. It was when he was visiting his home in Nibelheim. In his flashback, he lays on the bed while his mother yells at him about not having a girlfriend. Sad. You'll wake up in a room next to Aeris's. First, grab the care package on the floor (it's got a few curative items inside), and then exit the room. Now, you need to get out of here without alerting Aeris, so walk, don't run, to the stairs. Go downstairs, exit, and head to the outskirts of town. Remember where you turned right to enter the Sector Five Slums? The left path was the road to Sector Seven (that goes through Sector Six). Interestingly enough, however, Aeris seems to have magically teleported out here (don't ask me how). Again, she ain't taking "no"

for an answer. Head to Sector Six.

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--- Welcome to: Sector Six

You'll make it to a road leading through Sector Six. And I use the term "road" very loosely, because it's not so much a road as it is a huge pile of crap that used to be a road that you need to crawl past to make it to Sector Seven. And expect your journey to be monster-packed. You'll see the same enemies from Sector Five, plus a new creature called the Hell House. It's... um... a house... that attacks you... um... yeah... And we all thought that Earthbound was strange. Anyways, the Hell House has a strong physical attack, and also has an attack called Hell Bomber that nails your entire party at once. In addition, the Hell House takes a lot of punishment (heavy doses of any kind of magic is recommended). The Hell House is easily the most dangerous opponent in Sector Six, but all in all isn't too much of a threat. Just watch your HP, and you'll live.

Making it through the pile of junk is a different story, however. It can be awfully difficult to tell what you can and can't crawl on without the aid of select. Here's the path you need to take: crawl up the remains of a wooden bridge to a high section of the road, then, to your right, walk along the long, thin sheet of metal something or rather (that has a lot of holes in it) to another high section of road, go up and around to the right a bit and crawl down what looks like it was once a tower or something to a lower section of road, then go up and around to the left and crawl up a long... log, it looks like, to a higher section of road, and finally, head up and crawl down another wooden bridge to your right, landing you at the other side of the road.

Head up to the next screen and you find... a playground? You've now got the option of continuing to Sector Seven, or taking Aeris home. Your decision does affect the game later on, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ, but neither response will result in you actually having to take Aeris anywhere. Anyways, Aeris rushes up to the playground, saying that she can't believe that this place is still standing. She hops atop the slide and asks Cloud to join her. Cloud and Aeris start to chat for a bit again. She asks Cloud what rank he was in SOLDIER. Cloud has one of his memory lapses, and then responds. Apparently, Cloud held the same rank as Aeris's first boyfriend... how nice.

At about this time, you see the gates to Sector Seven open, and a chocobo-driven cart passes through it headed towards the Sector Six Slums, otherwise known as Wall Market. Cloud leaps up and notices one of the passengers on the cart... it's Tifa! Aeris runs after the cart, and Cloud runs after her. A few feet away (was the cart really necessary to make it all the way here?), you'll find yourself in Wall Market...

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--- Welcome to: Wall Market (Sector Six Slums)

Let me begin by saying that you are about to enter one of the most disturbing points in the entire game. Believe me when I say that you will question your own sanity at least once before this whole ordeal is over. This place is loaded with strange sexual references and things that will scar you for many years to come, so you have been duly warned.

Anyways, first things first. You might want to do a bit of shopping here at

the local weapon shop. Remember that Tifa will be joining you shortly, so take her into consideration when you shop. Then, it's off to find out what happened to Tifa.

Well, ask around town and see what's going on. There's a place called the Honey Bee Inn in the southeastern section of town. A guy hanging around just outside says that Tifa is one of the "new girls". And, as per custom around here, she was taken to see "The Don". "The Don" would be Don Corneo, a guy who makes President Shinra seem straight. He lives in that big-ass house on the northern end of town, so why not pay it a visit? By the way, you must talk to the guy at the Honey Bee Inn first to trigger the appropriate response at the Don's place. The guy at the Don's is, well, not very receptive to Cloud, Cloud being a guy and all. Aeris has a little better luck. But, Cloud's not about to let her go in by herself. That's when the plan is hatched... Why not dress Cloud up like a woman? Yes, you heard me right. Cloud gets to have a little adventure in cross-dressing! Aeris tells the guy that she'll be right back with a cute friend of hers. Now, you're off to dress pretty.

Let me begin by saying that the eventual outcome of all of this will have some sort of impact later in the game, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. That being said, you now get to go dress yourself up to the best of your ability. Basically, there's three types of each item you can get. Also, you've only got one shot at getting each item, so might I recommended saving your game beforehand in case you screw it up? Anyways, depending on how lady-like Cloud looks when he shows up, one of three different things can happen. Of course, likely the most amusing outcome is when Cloud is fully dressed up. But, hey, that's just my opinion, and I have been known to occasionally confuse "amusing" with "oh my God, somebody stab my eyes out, this is horrible". Let's get started.

Your first stop should be the local dress shop. It's at the top part of the lower section of town. Well, the girl there says that her father stopped making dresses and is currently getting plastered at the bar. Aeris and Cloud agree to help out, mainly because they need a dress. Head to the bar (it's on the left side of the upper portion of town), but again, you're not going to get the response you need until you've talked to the girl at the dress shop first. Cloud will approach the guy at the bar rather bluntly, and again isn't going to get very far with him. Cloud doesn't necessarily have the best people skills, y'know. I've seen rocks more personable than he is. But again, Aeris takes the guy aside and wins him over, talking about how Cloud wants to dress up all pretty and whatnot. She hits some sort of weird/perverted note in the guy's mind, and he agrees to make the dress. He asks you what kind of dress you want him to make. This is the first step in determining how well you've done. Get the best dress (the Satin Dress) by saying that you want something "soft" that "shimmers". The next-best dress (Silk Dress) is "soft" and "is shiny". The worst dress (Cotton Dress) is what you get when you ask for something that feels "clean". Anyways, the guy sits back and starts to think for a bit.

Hey, you want to see something amazing? Head back to the dress shop. He's already done with the dress! Holy crap, that was fast! But, you're still not done. Cloud's spiky hair is still a bit of an issue, seeing as the 80's is long since passed. You'll be needing a wig. Well, your dress-maker friend is there to help. He says that in addition to making the dress in the three seconds it took you to walk down here, he also spoke with a cross-dressing friend of his down at the gym. At about this point, Cloud begins to feel really insulted and asks Aeris just what exactly she had said to the dress-maker.

It's off to the gym with ya! It's the first building you see when you enter the upper section of town. A guy there looks at you and asks if you're the guy that wants to look pretty. Sure. It's not like you've got any self-esteem left

in you at this point, so now you've got to challenge Big Bro for a wig. In yet another sexually-slanted joke, you challenge Big Bro to a squatting contest to win a wig from him. Luckily for you, the game lets you practice a bit beforehand. It's quite easy, and if you've got the rhythm, you should have no problem beating him. Anyways, if you win the contest, you get the Blonde Wig (the best). Tie him and you get a Wig. Lose... Lose, and you get the Dyed Wig. And let's not even discuss where he's been keeping it.

Awright, now you've got the dress and the wig. These are the only two items that you really need to head to the Don's. And if you're really not trying to dress Cloud all the way up, I suggest that you quit now and head to the Don's with what you've got now (remember that first you need to head to the dress shop and get dressed). On the other hand, if you're up to it, there are a few other items that you may be wanting. Let's start with some cologne. It's kind of a roundabout way to going to get it, and you have to start at the local eatery (not the bar). It's located in the lower section of town. Head there and order something to eat. After eating it, say something complimentary (note that "I've had better dog food," is generally not accepted as a compliment), and you win free Pharmacy Coupons, which really makes you question the food you just ate. Head south a bit to the pharmacy. The pharmacy and the local item shop, actually, are one and the same, and it is just south a little bit from the eatery. Go there and exchange your coupons for one of three items. The Digestive ultimately gets you the best cologne, the Deodorant gets you the second-best cologne, and the Disinfectant gets you the worst. Take your item and head to the bar this time, and head towards the bathroom, where there's someone that's been in there for quite some time. Give him whatever item you got from the pharmacy, and you get the cologne in return (from best to worst, the: Sexy Cologne, Flower Cologne, or Cologne). Strange, I know, but at least you got what you wanted.

Next, the tiara. There's a shop around here (in the eastern part of the lower section of town) that really doesn't sell anything. That's because the owner is casually lounging on the counter, not really trying to do anything like run a business or any other thing else of the bothersome sort. He asks Cloud to do him a favor. Apparently, the guy at the inn has a vending machine, and he wants to know what's in it. He can't go back to the inn because there was some... unpleasantness. Anyways, before you head to the inn, make sure that you've got some money. The best item (that gets you the best tiara) is 200 gil, plus you'll also need 10 gil to stay the night at the inn (because you apparently can't use the machine unless you spend the night). The inn's really easy to spot- it's the first place you see when you enter town. Then, return to the guy with the item. The 200 gil item gets you the Diamond Tiara (the best), the 100 gil item gets you the Ruby Tiara (the second best), and the 50 gil item gets you the Glass Tiara (the worst).

Ok... Now for the creepy part. You'll also be wanting some... um... underwear. There's a guy walking around the southeastern section of town (not by the Honey Bee Inn, but close to the path to it). If you talked to him earlier, you'd have discovered that he was in a frenzy of indecisiveness. Well, talk to him now and he just gives you his Membership Card to the Honey Bee Inn because he can't make up his mind. Now, head to the Honey Bee Inn. Cloud will step inside, while Aeris waits for him outside. First off, what you're probably expect to happen here, won't. In fact, it'll be much, much worse. A girl in a bee suit greets you and asks you to pick a room. There are five rooms. The two on the right are both occupied, but you can spy on the occupants through the oversized novelty keyhole. Your reactions to the goings on in these rooms should range from slightly amused to downright disturbed. The room on the top is the dressing room, and therefore isn't available. This narrows down your choice to two different rooms. The Group Room and the @# \$! room. Choose your poison. Both are horribly painful experiences, but the Group Room does leave

you with the better set of undergarments (the Bikini Briefs). The @#\$! room, on the other hand, leaves you with the Lingerie.

Um... I really can't even describe what goes on in the @#\$! room, but you do wake up with a man in a speedo sitting on top of you and slapping you in the face. And if you thought that that was bad, try the Group Room. It's exactly what it sounds like. You get to take a bath with about eight or nine other oily, muscle-bound men, and their leader, Mukki (this is actually the guy that will slap you in the face if you go to the @#\$! room, so Mukki is sadly unavoidable). The game programmers went out of their way to make this scene as disturbing as humanly possible, and Cloud really doesn't sound like he's having a good time, either. You do walk away from the whole experience with the Bikini Briefs and scarred for life, however. God, somebody help me! Mukki is after me! I don't want to become Mukki's girlfriend!

Anyways, before you leave the Honey Bee Inn (if you haven't already run screaming from the place, that is), stop by the dressing room and ask one of the girls to apply some Make-up to you. This helps Cloud look as pretty as he can.

Now that you've got all the times that you'll be needing, head back to the dress shop. Cloud will gussie himself up the best he can, and he emerges... as... um, Cloudette? I dunno. Aeris grabs herself a dress, and the two of you head for Corneo's. At Corneo's, there's a guy who tells you to stay where you are and wait for him in the lobby. Blatantly disregarding him, head upstairs and go all the way to the left to a door leading down to the basement. Down in the basement, you'll meet up with Tifa. What follows is a rather amusing scene... Cloud doesn't talk to Tifa, but rather Aeris does. Only after a minute or so does Tifa realize that the other "girl" is Cloud. Anyways, it's time for the question of the hour: why is Tifa here? Well, when she and Barret returned from the reactor, Barret decided that he'd beat the crap out of somebody to see if he could find any information. The guy in question fingered the Don as somebody who might know somebody. And, against Barret's advice, Tifa decided that she'd come and hear the story straight from Don Corneo himself. At about this time, a guy walks into the basement and yells at you to get your asses to the Don. "Women..." he mutters to himself as he walks away. Resist the burning desire to bury your sword in his back- it just wouldn't be ladylike.

Now, the three of you head to see the Don. The Don picks his date for the night and throws the other two to the wolves (his henchmen, that is). Whom he picks is based on how well you've dressed Cloud up. He must be delusioned, because I wouldn't pick Cloud over Tifa or Aeris no matter how cute he looked as a lady (then again, maybe he knows that Cloud isn't really a lady...) If Tifa or Aeris is picked, you've first got to kill, spindle, and mutilate the henchmen that are trying to have sex with you, go rescue the other one that didn't get chosen, and the head to see the Don. If Cloud gets picked, then it's going to be Don Corneo who's going to be trying to have his way with your ass. No matter who gets picked, however, you'll be facing a choice that affects the game later on, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. Ok, ready, and... Go!

The scene ultimately ends up with Aeris, Tifa, and Cloud all standing over a half-naked Don Corneo threatening his life and his genitals. It's as if they missed their calling as torture experts... Anyways, Corneo divulges that someone to find "the man with the gun-arm". After some more... threatening, he says that that someone was Heidegger. Besides being an asshole, Heidegger is also the head of the Public Safety Department of Shinra. And, in case you haven't figured it out, "head of public safety" is just a nice way of saying "war minister". Anyways, after Tifa threatens to smash (!!!!) Corneo's little guys, he reveals the rest of the plot. Apparently, Shinra is going to destroy the pillar at Sector Seven. Now, for those of you that know you're physics, what happens when the only thing that is holding something up is destroyed?



When it hits him in the back it's going to really mess him up. Likewise, when it hits you in the back, you'd better be prepared to heal up. The wave will alternate in its direction, so you will always know what to expect. As for attacking? As I've already mentioned, any sort of magic is going to do more damage than a physical attack, and APS has a weakness to fire. Oh, and expect the Tidal Wave to push you to a couple of limit breaks, while you're at it.

The fight won, you've now got to hurry up and make it back to Sector Seven before squishy time. You may want to stop and heal up/rearrange your materia before moving on out, however. You'll run into two different enemies down here. The Sahagin is moderately powerful and is the more durable of the two, but not by much. However, it will probably be the one that takes longer to kill, as not only does it have no weaknesses, but they also have a very annoying tendency to use their shells to prevent any and all damage done by physical attacks. Granted, they won't think to do this until after you've popped them in the ass a few times, but you're still probably going to have to resort to magical means to finish them off. The other enemy is called Caesar, and ice magic will rip it up in no time.

Anyways, you should see a ladder that will led you hop up onto the ledge on your right. Follow the ledge around to the other end and crawl down the ladder there back into the sewage. Head towards the bottom of the screen and crawl up the ladder you find there to get onto the opposite ledge, and then head back towards the right. Oh, and you should pick up the Steal materia along the way for many reasons. First, it'll let you nab some kick-ass equipment from certain enemies that you cannot come back to steal from, so you'd behoove to have the Steal materia handy now. Secondly, I really don't think you feel like shelling out 1,000 gil for one later on. Head on downstairs. Down below, it's a very straightforward path to a set of steps leading back to the surface. Hurry along, now.

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--- Welcome to: The Train Graveyard

You'll emerge in a Train Graveyard adjacent to Sector Seven. You're almost there but you need to get past all this wreckage, which has been inconveniently placed in your way first. Again, you might want to rearrange your materia before moving out, because there're new enemies out here. The Ghost is a little pain in the ass that can drain large amounts of HP from you with its Drain attack. Furthermore, it disappears whenever you hit it, meaning that your next attack will miss (and then it will re-appear). The good news is that fire magic will toast them with little trouble. And not only that, but the Ghost is also weak versus holy-based attacks, meaning that the curative magic may also be used as an offensive attack against them if need be. The Cripshay is of little mention, and is probably the easiest thing here to kill. Its attacks are still fairly powerful, though, and it can cast Fire. Also, there's the Deenglow. It has a high resilience to magic, and absorbs ice magic, but is a pushover with physical attacks. Still, if you're up against several, a Fire-all or Bolt-all spell is still the most efficient attack (especially if you're Aeris). In addition, it knows the Ice and Demi spells. Lastly, there's Eligor (a creature you'll probably only meet in the second portion of the Train Graveyard). Eligor is a rare creature with moderately powerful attacks and can also put you to sleep. In addition, he can take an awful lot of punishment. Luckily, Eligor has no weaknesses, so blast away with everything that you've got. Also, feel free to utilize your Steal materia versus Eligor, and snatch the Striking Staff, an excellent weapon for Aeris.

Anyways, from where you begin, you'll see a car in front of you that you can



hop on. Do so, and make your way along it, picking up a Hi-Potion along the way. At the end of this car, you can jump off to the left real quick to nab another Hi-Potion, or continue along until you reach a big-ass steel girder (which you can hop on). If you go left, it'll take you to a small corner where you can grab an Echo Screen. Furthermore, from there, you'll be able to go back down a bit, make a right, and head down until you see a part of the car that you can enter to grab a Potion. Go right on the girder, on the other hand, and it takes you to an adjacent car. Head south on this one until you reach a point where you can jump off to the right. Use a nearby ladder to crawl onto the car to your right, run up to the next ladder, and then crawl back down. Head up some more until you see a section where you can enter the car to your right. Enter it, go up to the top of the screen, and then exit. From here, you can head up to the next screen.

On the next screen, hurry up to the rest of the wreckage. From here, you can head to the left parts of the screen for a Potion and an Ether if you'd like, but you've still got to get past these train cars. Hop in the car blocking your way to move it forward a bit (it will ram another car out of its way). Then, hop back in to move it back. This creates a path for you to make your way towards a second car (oh, and there's also a Hi-Potion sitting atop of another car to the right). Hop in the second car to move it forward a bit. This creates a bridge, of sorts. Hop on top of the second car and run across it. When you get off, keep heading towards the left. You'll end up back at the train station at Sector Seven. You made it!

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--- Welcome to: The Pillar

Waste little time in getting to the pillar, where you'll discover a battle going on. Just what the hell is happening here? The sounds of gunfire are coming from the pillar, and before you can react, a body flies off the top and lands on the ground in front of you. It's Wedge... I would make fun of him, but... I feel sorry for the poor guy. Basically, what's going on is that AVALANCHE is duking it out against the Shinra, who've come to bomb the pillar. Wedge tells you that Barret is at the top, and to go after him. Before you take off, Tifa remembers that Marlene is still at the bar. She asks Aeris to go get her and take her someplace safe. Tifa and Cloud continue along to the top of the pillar.

First of all, you may wish to save. Don't worry about your health- you just got a free HP/MP refill. Organize your materia and get moving. The one and only enemy you'll meet on the pillar is called Propeller. It's not a very strong creature, but they can take quite a bit of damage. The good news is that once you do a sufficient amount of damage to them, their propeller is destroyed and they become grounded. This decimates their defenses and makes them extremely easy to kill following that. Anyways, hurry along. Near the base of the tower, you'll meet up with Biggs, who is severely wounded. About halfway up, you'll see Jesse, who isn't in that great a shape herself. Hurry along to the top, where you'll see Barret valiantly staving off the Shinra encroachment. Actually, he's just shooting at anything that gets near him. He is pretty happy to see you, however. Take a minute to equip Barret, because you've got a boss battle coming up.

Anyways, the helicopter approaches the pillar and Reno steps off of it. You remember Reno, right? The asshole? Anyways, Reno walks right onto the pillar. Barret, for some reason, doesn't shoot him, instead letting him walk up to the pillar's main support structure and set a bomb. Well, that was just lovely. Furthermore, Reno deems your party a threat to his evilness, so he decides he's

just going to have to kill you, as well.

The Reno fight isn't too difficult if you know what you're doing. Fire and Ice both work quite well, but you'll find that a physical attack will deal about as much damage as Bolt will, so it's really not worth it. Reno attacks you with what appears to be a huge tazer, but it isn't horribly powerful. His really annoying attack is the Pyramid, which traps the affected character inside a giant pyramid. That character can't move until the pyramid is destroyed. To destroy the pyramid, just attack the afflicted character (don't worry, it won't hurt them). And then, continue to wail on Reno's ass. Keep fighting and the fight should be over before you know it. Instead of doing the noble thing and fighting you to the death, Reno instead does the sleazy, degenerate thing (to fit in with his lifestyle), and flees when he's about dead.

With Reno gone, your team attempts to disarm the bomb. Of course, you can't. As is that weren't bad enough, a helicopter approaches. Inside is Tseng, another member of the Turks. Barret sees nothing wrong with firing at him, but he stops when Tseng starts using Aeris as a human shield. Yes, Tseng has gone and captured Aeris. The most amusing thing is that she avoided the Turks for all these years on her own with nothing more than a twig to defend herself with, but once she finally gets an ass-kicking bodyguard, she's captured within a day. How sad is that? Anyways, Tseng reveals that the Shinra wants Aeris because she is the last surviving person of her race, the "Ancients". Aeris calls out to Tifa, "don't worry, she's all right!" Tseng then slaps her. I'm sorry, but if anything should piss Barret off enough to make him start blindly firing, it should be that. It doesn't, though, and the helicopter vanishes into the air. By the way, did you realize that you're standing atop a huge tower that's about to blow up? Might I suggest you leave?

The team frantically looks around for a way to escape. Barret finds a gigantic wire conveniently hanging near the edge of the tower. It's long enough that it should be able to swing you guys to safety. The entire team grabs a hold of the wire, and makes a daring escape, complete with a lovely rendered movie sequence. Enjoy. Actually, seeing as Sector Seven is being completely destroyed and crushed before your eyes, maybe "enjoy" isn't exactly the word I should be using....

You'll land back at the playground at Sector Six. Behind you, Sector Seven lies in ruin. Barret... Well, to say the least, he's quite pissed. He runs up to the wreckage and starts yelling for the rest of his team. He then starts angrily firing off his gun, and finally just breaks down in a mess of rage and despair. Tifa cheers him up a bit by mentioning that Aeris probably got Marlene to safety. Barret, obviously, wants to go see her. Cloud, on the other hand, is increasingly curious about the Ancients. By the way, the voices in his head start talking to him again. It mentions weird things, like about how it is an Ancient and is the rightful heir to this planet. Cloud's response to this is, "Sephiroth?" Cloud ain't the sharpest pencil in the box, as you can see. Anyways, Cloud takes off for Sector Five, Tifa and Barret behind him.

First things first, you probably saw the materia lying around back at the playground. You can't go back for it just yet. Start to walk towards Sector Five until Tifa and Barret come running up behind you. Now you may return to the playground and nab the Sense materia. That done, you should head back towards Aeris's house at Sector Five. See ya there!

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--- Welcome to: Sector Five (Again)

Back at Aeris's place, speak with Elmyra. She gets right to the point. Basically, Aeris is the last surviving Ancient. And, obviously, Elmyra isn't Aeris's real mother. Then, she begins to tell you much more of the story than you'd care to know. You see, back in the day, Elmyra's husband went off to war. She got a notice one day saying that he was going to be returning home on leave. She went to the train station every day, but he never showed. But one day, she happened upon a dying woman and her child. The woman's last words were to Elmyra, asking her to take care of Aeris. In Elmyra's own words, "I was probably lonely, so I decided to take her home with me." I can only pray that this was a mistake in the translation processes, because just the idea of someone imagining that they were "probably lonely" at one point is enough to make my head explode. I also find it amusing that her motives for doing this were purely because she had no one to keep her company.

Moving on, Elmyra details Aeris's childhood. She was a weird kid, to say the least. Not like that kid in class that eats paste, but still weird. She told Elmyra that she and her mother had escaped from a lab somewhere and that her mother had "returned to the planet". Of course, the clincher was when Aeris one day went up to Elmyra and told her that someone she knew had just died. Sure enough, Elmyra got word a few days later that her husband had, in fact, died. I tell ya, if my kid ever did something like that, I'd be freaked. I mean, "call the priest and get some holy water" freaked. Either that, or I'd think that we had another messiah on our hands, at least. Elmyra took it all in stride, however. Apparently, when you live in a city powered by crap you're sucking out of the planet with giant reactors in a floating city above you, you become somewhat desensitized to things out of the ordinary.

Of course, it wasn't long before the Turks became interested. You see Tseng talking to Elmyra about Aeris. He says things like "the Ancients will lead us to a land of happiness", and blah, blah, blah... Like we really believe him. Aeris stoutly denied being special in any way, and Elmyra just pretended not to notice anything unusual. And I'm sorry, when you've got a kid that talks to the planet, you're going to have to try awful hard to act like you don't notice.

Anyways, here's what went down: Tseng caught Aeris on her way back here. She agreed to go along with him in exchange for Marlene's safety. So Marlene is here and safe. Barret thanks Elmyra profusely, and Elmyra conversely yells at Barret about leaving the girl alone. This... doesn't piss Barret off. Barret, you'll realize, has a soft side (which, as you should know by now, is tied entirely to Marlene). Anyways, he rushes upstairs to see Marlene. Follow him. Head into the room and talk to Barret, and then try to leave. Marlene asks you a question now that has an impact on the game later on (see section VII.A. of the FAQ). Barret, on the other hand, is really mad that Aeris got captured because of Marlene. He offers to come along and help you. Go downstairs.

Downstairs, the plan is discussed. Cloud, wanting to know more about what is going on, really sees no other option than to head to Shinra H.Q. and free Aeris himself (or maybe it's just because he feels like the world's worst bodyguard right about now). As I've already mentioned, Barret is coming along because he feels guilty that Aeris got caught because of Marlene. Tifa comes along, as well, saying that she has to "push herself to the limit" right now and that she's going to go crazy if she just sits around and does nothing. Well, that and her bar got crushed and she really has nowhere left to go. Barret asks Elmyra to take care of Marlene for awhile, and also advises her to get out of the city. Elmyra agrees, but makes Barret promise that he'll come back alive.

Anyways, leave Aeris's house. You're now about to storm Shinra H.Q., to which I say "it's about Goddamn time!" Believe me when I say that this will be no easy task, and you should be duly prepared beforehand. The question also still remains, "how are you going to get there?" Ain't no train running there

anymore. Tifa suggests that the team head for Wall Market, and maybe you can find something out there. In video game terms, this means that you will find something out there. See ya at Wall Market!

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--- Welcome to: Wall Market (Again) & The Road of Junk

Well, first things first, then. You may wish to avoid doing any last-minute shopping, because as we've already discussed, you're going to have the opportunity to steal infinite amounts of the powerful Carbon Bangle when you arrive at Shinra H.Q.. That being said, buy what you need. Also, talk with the man at the weapon shop. He scavenged the wreckage of Sector Seven, found a few old Batteries, and fixed them up. He seems to sense through some unknown means that you're headed for Shinra H.Q., and implies that you'll be needing the Batteries. Cloud is a bit wary of buying garbage that some guy found and fixed up, but I for one would not argue with someone whose psychic abilities far outweigh my own. And indeed, you will be needing the Batteries, so purchase them and move on out.

Head up to the north end of town, and you'll see a bunch of kids running towards the northeast section. Follow them. You'll end up next to the gigantic wall that used to separate Sector Six from Sector Seven. It now separates Sector Six from a garbage heap. Anyways, amongst the wreckage that came crashing down is a long wire that drapes over the wall, conveniently allowing someone to climb up it. Barret is more than ecstatic, and proclaims it to be a "golden, shiny wire of hope". Climb up the golden, shiny wire of hope to the top of the wall. Also note the graffiti on the wall, and how disturbingly high in the air some of it is. Apparently, Wall Market's scumbags and hoodlums either have jetpacks or can fly.

You reach the top, where you'll see a couple of kids sitting on the wall and surveying the wreckage in the distance. Pretty heavy stuff, man... However, there's a great deal of wreckage hanging above you, and what you need to do now is crawl along said pile of rubbish to the top of the city. Or, as I like to call it, "The Road of Junk". Hurry along, then.

The Road of Junk is fairly straightforward and enemy-free. Early on, you'll have to place one of the Batteries to make a propeller move. The Battery dies very quickly, but the propeller will stop in such a position that you can crawl on it to the next pile of junk. That is one magic battery! The next Battery you must place moves an "arm" into a position that you can crawl along. You'll end up at a swinging bar that you've got to jump onto to make it to the next screen. All in all, it's fairly easy to do, but it does require good timing. Miss, and you've got to crawl back up and try again. Make it, and you can make your way to the next screen.

On the next screen, you'll have the option of hopping down to the pile of junk below. Your reward is a chest containing an Ether (you'll need to use your third and final Battery to open the chest). The downside is that you've got to crawl down to the screen below and make the "bar jump" again. Anyways, from this screen, it's a fairly short trek to the top...

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--- Welcome to: Shinra H.Q. (Part One)

You emerge at the foot of the hugest building you've ever seen... This is

Shinra H.Q., the heart of the beast. It's 70 stories tall, but every floor over the 60th is special and difficult to get to, even for employees. Oh, guess where you get to go? You've got two options, now. One is to bust in with guns blazing. The other is to sneak in quietly. This decision actually won't have as big an impact on your mission as you might believe. You are asked to make a decision now, but you won't be forced to stick with it. Rather, say what you'd like, and then take advantage of that save point over there. Your game saved and your head clear, decide what you'd like to do. Busting in (just walk in through the front door) obviously treats you to a nice wave of battles. Sneaking in (go around the building to a loooooong set of stairs), conversely, results in no battles. Note, however, that if you decide to bust in, you still may want to save first and try sneaking in, if not just to hear the amusing comments your team makes on the way up.

Anyways, there're a lot of new enemies here for you to play with. Enemies that you become very quickly acquainted with if you decide to break in. The Grenade Combatant, just like the SP Combatant, is really nothing to speak of. They lob grenades at you, which really don't hurt as badly as you'd think, and that's about it. The Mighty Grunt is a very durable enemy, and kind of like the Propellers, will have their armor destroyed once you do enough damage to them. From there, it's easy pickin's. And all in all, all this really means is that you'll spend twice as long trying to kill them. The Hammer Blaster is another durable creature. In addition to that, it can burrow underground for a short while (meaning that your attacks cannot hit it), and it also has attacks that can confuse your party members. The good news is that lightning magic rips it up in no time. Also note that battles with the Hammer Blaster will sometimes reap the Loco Weed, which is a joke opportunity even I'm not going to touch. It's a useful item, though, especially since you don't have the Mystify materia yet. Also, there's the Sword Dance. It's another generic enemy and an easy kill, but watch out for an attack which can infuriate (e.g., inflict fury upon) your characters.

Later on at Shinra H.Q., you'll meet three more enemies. The Warning Board... um... I dunno. It really doesn't do anything except sit there and let you kick its ass, which kind of worries me, but at least it's a free kill. The Moth Slasher is something you'll want to watch out for, as you can steal the very kick-ass Carbon Bangle from them. In addition, they're pretty tough to kill, but lightning rips them up very quickly. The SOLDIER 3rd, conversely, carries the Hardedge, a kickass weapon that you can steal and give to Cloud. Like the Moth Slasher, they can be difficult to kill, but do possess a weakness to fire.

Now, for a couple of things to watch out for. If you're busting in, take a minute to look around the first floor for a minute. Behind the stairs on the 1st floor, posted on one of the bulletin boards, is one of the flyers mentioned in section V.A. of the FAQ. In addition, this flyer is one of the lost-forevers mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. In addition, on the 2nd floor (just take the stairs in the lobby), there is an item shop. Seeing as you've just busted in and shot everybody, the shopkeeper is understandably scared of you. Barret calms the guy down, and he agrees to sell you items (that you may or may not want/need). There are two treasure boxes here, as well. If you try to open them, however, the shopkeeper's spine grows three sizes and he tells you that you can't open them. And, I'm sorry, but you can't have what's in them right now. Refer to section V.N. of the FAQ for more on these treasure chests, and also note that they, too, are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Oh, and if you're so inclined, check out the monitor to see a small FMV sequence that has absolutely no relevance whatsoever to the plot.

On the other hand, the only thing you should watch out for while sneaking in is an Elixir about halfway up the stairs.

At the 59th floor, you'll battle a group of guards and steal the Keycard 60 from them, a key item that will grant you access to any floor up to and including the 60th. Now, you can use the elevator to return to any floor you'd wish, including the 1st. If you sneaked in via the stairs, you may wish to head down there now for all the reasons previously mentioned. However, if you chose to bust in, you may probably deem it "not worth it" to down all those stairs (located at the top of the 60th floor) just to find the Ether there. When you're ready and set, take the elevator up to the 60th floor.

Now, here's the cool thing: no matter how big of a stir you created on the bottom 59 floors (remember, even if you sneaked in, you still ended up kicking a couple of guards' asses and stealing their Keycard), no one up here really realizes that Shinra H.Q. has been infiltrated. Really. The communications around here are that horrible. Even more hilarious is the fact that no one (well, almost no one) will seem to catch on to the fact that you are the people who broke into the building. Think about it for a minute. Your team consists of a huge man with a gun for an arm and a guy holding a sword that's bigger than he is (which is likely drenched in blood from mercilessly stabbing someone to death), and it doesn't dawn on anybody here that maybe you're up to something. Christ, how low is the bar when you're trying to get a job here? And these are the higher-ups of Shinra, no less! Good lord...

Anyways, on the 60th floor, watch as your team sneaks past the "security guard" and into the sixtieth floor. Ahead of you and to the left is a small room. There is a path leading from this room to a room on the right side of the screen, which is where you need to go. But, there are guards patrolling outside. Now, I did mention before the people up here generally will not realize that you are trying to break in, but that notion excludes monsters and guards (yes, there's monsters roaming around on some of these floors for some unknown reason). As for the set of guards that currently hinder your progress (you'll see them patrolling along the top of the screen)? You must make Cloud move along the screen when they're not looking, (he can hide behind the posts). Every time you press the confirmation button, whatever it may be, he will move to the next post. When he gets halfway through, he will stop to motion when it's safe for Barret, and then Tifa to cross. And then you repeat this for the second half of the room. First let me say that I feel awful sorry for those guards. Their seemingly eternal patrol routine must really suck. Secondly, if you screw up and are seen, the guards will attack, and then politely let you try again. However, you can only screw up so many times, before the game just hands it to you and you get to continue nonetheless. In the small room on the other side of the screen is a set of stairs to the next floor.

You emerge on the 61st floor. You may continue up the stairs, but will be unable to exit the stairwell unless you have the necessary card. Luckily for you, the door to the 61st floor is standing wide open, so waltz on inside. Basically, the 61st floor is just a big lobby for important bigwigs. Walk around and talk to a few folks (again, it's not like anyone is going to catch on that you broke in here). One guy actually gives you the Keycard 62, thinking that you're the repair men. Yeah, moron, that's what we do with these deadly weapons: fix things. Friggin' moron...

Anyways, head on up to the 62nd floor (you can use the stairs or the elevator). This is actually where Mayor Domino resides (look in the room on the left side of the screen). Don't worry, though. He's about as fond of the Shinra as you are. He'll help you, but not without a catch. You've got to guess his password, first. He even says that if you guess it right the first time, you'll get a bonus prize. This "bonus" is the Elemental materia, and is one of the game's lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. This generally means that you'll probably want to try your best to get it right the

first time. But, you see, the password is different every time, so I can't give you a straight answer. The guard outside the mayor's office offers to help you... for a price. But, since I'm helping you for free, punch him in the stomach and head to the library. Here's how it works... You've probably noticed that there are four very large libraries on this floor. The four libraries correspond to the four divisions of the Shinra: Space, Science, Urban Development, and Public Safety (War). In each library, you will find books relating to their branches. But, each library has one misplaced book. That is, one book has been placed in there that doesn't belong. You need to find all four of those books. Then, take note of the numbers at the beginning of each book. They tell you which letter to look at. That is, if the number was 9, then you would look at the 9th letter in the title of the book. From this research, you should gleam four letters. From there, it's a simple unscrambling process to find out the password. Return to Mayor Domino with the password to get your Elemental materia and his Keycard 65. Yup, you can go to the 65th floor now! Let's get moving, now shall we?

The 63rd floor is optional, but you can get some kick-ass stuff for your trouble. Check out section V.B. of the FAQ for more information.

The 64th floor is again optional. But it's a bit different than the 63rd floor. The 64th floor is a lounge for the Shinra employees. There's a sauna here, a gym, and a rest area (and such nice accommodations the Shinra provides for its employees, no?). So, let's forget for a second that you're stopping in the middle of breaking into a building to take a nap, because that's just not ridiculous-sounding enough... No, what's really incredulous is that you can approach the building's head of security as he jogs away on a treadmill and have a nice chat with him about how well he's protecting the building. And what really disturbs me is that by this point, the Shinra obviously has to know that you're in the building somewhere; they just apparently don't seem to care. Ugh... Anyways, after your refreshing nap and a save, head on up to the next floor.

Enemies patrol the 65th floor, so be warned. That said, the 65th floor had a gigantic room in the center with a big model of Midgar sitting inside it. However, several parts of the model are missing. What you need to do is retrieve the model parts (called Midgar Parts) from a nearby chest, and place them here where they belong. This will unlock another chest with more Midgar Parts in it that you can place here to unlock another chest and... you get the idea. The last chest will have the Keycard 66 in it. Got it? Good. Now, there are two small rooms to the left with a total of four chests in them. Initially, the only one that will be unlocked is the one on the left side of the top room. Take the Midgar Parts and place them in the empty spot of the model closest to the door. This unlocks the chest on the left side of the bottom room. Take the Midgar parts there and place them one spot counter-clockwise from the last spot you placed them. This unlocks the chest on the right side of the top room, which again contain Midgar Parts. Place those parts another spot counter-clockwise. The next chest opened is on the right side of the bottom room. You guessed it, there are some Midgar Parts inside. Placing them yet another spot counter-clockwise opens up a chest in a room in the top-right corner of this floor. In there, you will find the last set of Midgar Parts. Placing them in their proper place opens up the chest in the stairwell, which contains the Keycard 66. Moving right along, then...

There's no enemies on the 66th floor, and you're going to be in for a little recon work when you get here. Because, you see, the 66th floor is where the Shinra's big, evil meeting room is. And guess what? A big, evil meeting is about to start. If you talk around a bit, you'll hear two pieces of information that you should immediately tie together. First, it smells really bad in the meeting room. Secondly, you can hear distant voices in the bathroom. In case

you haven't figured it out, the air ducts connect to both the bathroom and to the meeting room. And, like in the movies, the air ducts were specifically built to be large enough for a human being to crawl through with little difficulty. Head to the bathroom and crawl into the duct. Head on over to the hole that will let you spy on the meeting, which you will conveniently arrive just in time for. That is, whenever you decide to show up. The Shinra may be evil bastards, but at least they're polite enough to delay the start of a meeting until you can make it there to spy on them. How nice!

So here's what's going down. Present at the meeting, we have President Shinra, Heidegger, and Reeve. Also present is a woman named Scarlet, who has no real apparent job here at Shinra besides "evil bitch". Also, you're introduced to a tub of butter called Palmer, the head of Shinra's Space program. Sheesh, another fatso. Hell, even the game stoops to making fun of him, later on. Anyways, Reeve begins the meeting by whining to President Shinra about the damages in Sector Seven, and repots an astronomically high amount of gil to repair it. President Shinra just laughs and says that they are not going to be doing any rebuilding. Rather, they are going with the Neo-Midgar plan. Apparently, Aeris is supposed to lead them to the "Promised Land" or something-rather... Until then, so sayeth President Shinra, they will just increase mako production in the seven other reactors. Following this is some very typical evil villain pratter. President Shinra gloats about being the man who saved Midgar from AVALANCHE... Barret gets pissed (understandably). However, that's when Dr. Hojo arrives. Hojo is the head of the fourth and final branch of Shinra: Science. The first thing you'll notice about Hojo is that the guy is obviously off his rocker. He shakes uncontrollably whenever he moves or speaks, and that's not even taking into account half the fucked up things he says. Hojo reports that he is still comparing Aeris to her mother, Ifalma (to whom Aeris is inferior, he claims). He also reports that his research will be nearly impossible to complete in his own lifespan, or Aeris's, for that matter, so he is considering breeding her... And as if that whole speech wasn't creepy enough, he goes into another one of his uncontrollably shaking spasms. The meeting ends shortly thereafter. Hurry along out of the bathroom and head back to the lobby. You'll see Dr. Hojo walking upstairs. Follow him.

Up on the 67th floor, Barret stops to ask Cloud about Dr. Hojo. Despite having been in SOLDIER, Cloud never met Hojo, however. Walk along the screen, headed towards the left side of the 67th floor. There, you'll watch as Hojo examines some kind of dog in a giant glass container. He sits there and cackles over his "specimen", and asks it to be sent upstairs. The platform that the... thing is on rises up to the next floor, and Hojo heads up the stairs in the back of the room. When he leaves, the party emerges from their hiding place and thinks aloud. What is Hojo up to? However, while Tifa and Barret are thinking, Cloud has found his way over to another container. As he spots what is inside, he freaks. I mean, he just freakin' flips out. Apparently, Jenova is being kept in that container. While you're not quite sure who or what Jenova is or why Cloud is so freaked out by it, Barret glances at it in disgust, saying something to the effect of "where's its Goddamn head!?" Leave the headless marvel behind for the moment and head towards the stairs. Be sure to nab the Poison materia out of the chest before you go, however (it's one of the only times you'll ever find materia in a chest, by the way). You also might want to save your progress, as you have a boss battle coming up.

Speaking of the boss battle... First of all, the boss in question absorbs poison magic, but all else will affect it. Your Poison materia will still do you a world of good, however, in conjunction with the Elemental materia and placed in somebody's armor (as the boss in question has poison-based attacks). The Star Pendant you may have picked up on the 63rd floor is also a good idea (but is redundant if the wearer already has the Poison/Elemental combo in their armor). Aside from the boss possessing poison-based attacks and the fact that



he also has three henchmen, their attacks are of little mention (but you do have four things attacking you, on the other hand). The worst part about the lackeys is that he will continually respawn them, so killing them is worthless. First of all, this means that attack-all spells really serve no purpose, but a couple of Cure-all spells will definitely help out. This also means that he will be in the back row for most of the fight, so single target magic attacks are really the way to go (kill the boss, and the lackeys go with it). Lastly, of Tifa and Barret, only one of them will be going into the fight with you while the other sits out. You can choose which one you want to take, however. Keep this in mind when equipping your materia, but also realize that who you decide to take with you does have an impact on the game later on, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ.

Up on the 68th floor, things go down. You'll see Hojo up here with his glass tube. Inside the tube you'll see Aeris and that dog thing. The party approaches Hojo and he explains that inside the tube are two species on the verge of extinction (I didn't know that dogs were going extinct). He had mentioned breeding Aeris, but...? No... That's just nasty... Your party seems to agree with you, and Barret puts his gun-arm to good use by blasting open the tube. The dog leaps from the machine and begins to rip Hojo's throat out (or something else horribly violent). Then, the dog stops to... talk to you? Um... It talks? "Lady, I'll talk all you want later," it responds. He tells you that they called him Red XIII here at the lab, and that you can call him anything you want. In order to continue the insult, you all just call him Red XIII. And, judging from the way he talks, Red XIII is what Yoda would be if he were a talking dog instead of a little green puppet. Hojo, understandably angry from having been brutally attacked, transmogrifies into some horrible, disgusting creature (though not as horrible and disgusting as Pauly Shore). Before fighting him, however, you've got to choose someone, either Tifa or Barret, to get Aeris out of here (remember, this decision affects the game later, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ). That done, the fight with HO512 begins, and goes down pretty much as explained in the above paragraph. When you win the fight, you'll get a Talisman.

The fight over, you'll find that Aeris and whomever you told to get her out of here made it a good three or four feet while you were fighting. Anyways, since you've accomplished pretty much what you came here for, the party now agrees to get the hell out of here. You should know that RPG's ban characters from traveling in large groups, so you decide to split up into two groups and head downstairs. Keep in mind that the group you choose affects the game later on (see section VII.A. of the FAQ). Once you've got your group chosen, move along now. First, you might wannagrab the E. Skill materia inside the glass tube, and then harass Hojo's lab assistant for his Keycard 68. That done, leave quickly.

Be warned, however, that on your trip downstairs, you will be attacked by Warning Boards, Moth Slashers and SOLDIER 3rd's, as described earlier in this section. You may very well wish to take the time right now to steal some Carbon Bangles from the Moth Slashers, as well as a Hardedge from a SOLDIER 3rd, because not only are they both very kick-ass pieces of equipment, this is the only chance you will have to steal them (in short, once you make it back to the elevator, you will lose this wonderful opportunity). And remember, you're headed for the elevator on the 66th floor, because the elevator does not go to the 67th or 68th floors.

Your party steps into the big, glass elevator with a sense of pride and accomplishment. You just took on the Shinra- and won! Nothing, I repeat, nothing can go wrong now! Well, except for maybe the Turks capturing your party as soon as you enter the elevator. Damn.

The entire party, save Aeris, is taken to President Shinra's office on the 70th floor. President Shinra explains that Aeris as an Ancient, or, as they called themselves, the Cetra. Aeris, he says, will show him the way to the promised land. Red XIII says that the Promised Land was only a legend. Legend or no, says President Shinra, the Promised Land is too valuable to pass up. You see, the Promised Land is supposedly very fertile. Fertile land has lots of... mako! Mako, my friend! That would be the answer! And the Neo-Midgar plan would be the one that involves sucking all of that precious mako out of the Promised Land. Why, that evil... He follows this with a hard-hitting quote: "these days, all it takes for your dreams to come true is money and power". Then, he has the Turks haul your party off to jail. So much for challenging the Shinra and winning...

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--- Welcome to: Shinra H.Q. (Part Two)

You'll wake up a bit later in one of the Shinra's detainment cells. You may or may not have seen these on the 67th floor as you passed by. Cloud and Tifa occupy the cell in the middle, and are flanked by cells containing Aeris (on the left), Barret and Red XIII (both on the right). First off, your following actions will have a significant impact on the game later on. See section VII.A. of the FAQ for more details. That being said, I know it is standard for all heroes who are captured by villains and thrown in jail to make a daring escape, especially considering that the Shinra left you with your weapons and materia... However, despite what you may think, your only real option is to sit here and stew for a bit. You can talk to Tifa, and also see what's happening with Aeris, Barret, and Red XIII (by the way, these would be the decisions mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ that have an impact on the game later on).

Aeris and Cloud begin to talk through the wall. Aeris mentions the date that they had agreed to, which noticeably pisses Tifa off. Tifa asks Aeris about the Promised Land, but there's truly little that Aeris really knows. People go to the planet when they die, she says, and she does "talk" to the planet in a way, but she really can't understand what it's saying. It's kind of like when someone comes up to talk to you, but doesn't speak any English. Despite all the stuff they prattle off that you can't understand, you can still make some form of communication through exaggerated gestures, facial expressions, and lots of pointing. Aeris's conversations with the planet are kind of like that, only completely different. I dunno, I can't explain it very well because I'm not a Cetra and I've never spoken with the planet before. Well, unless you count the time I asked a tree stump for directions. It didn't respond, but at least it was more helpful than some of the locals. But, I digress... Despite the Promised Land being a legend, Aeris's mother promised her that one day she would find it, so we're going to have to be content with that for now. After a bit of conversation, you fall asleep.

That when the creepy crap happens. You wake up to chilling music, which should be more than enough to alert you that something is wrong. Also note that the door of your cell is wide open and the guard is lying on the ground having been brutally murdered a few feet away. Hurry back to your cell, get Tifa, and let out the rest of the team... Red XIII goes on ahead to see what's wrong. Not necessarily the smartest thing to do, considering that whatever did this was obviously superhuman, but, whatever. Barret, on the other hand, says that he's going to stay back here and clean up. Again, not necessarily the smartest thing to do, given the large-scale spook factor of the current situation, but let him do what he wants. I learned a long time ago not to argue with people who's arms have been surgically replaced with guns. This leaves Aeris and Tifa to accompany Cloud. Equip them properly, based on the new wave of creature

features that you'll find roaming around the place (as mentioned below).

First off, the Elemental/Poison combo in someone's armor is still helpful, as two of the three new enemies you'll meet are level-three bio-hazards. The Brain Pod is an enemy that has a strong attack that will poison your character (hence my suggestion of the Elemental/Poison combo). In addition, it can also put your characters to sleep. It absorbs poison magic, obviously, but all other magic works quite well against it. For the Zenene, take everything I said about the Brain Pod and stick it here, with a few differences. One, it cannot put your characters to sleep. Two, it's physical attacks are considerably more powerful. Three, they are weak to the effects of holy magic, meaning that the Cure spell can be used in a pinch as a decent offensive attack. Lastly, we have the Vagrid Police. You'll probably do more laughing than fighting when you battle them, seeing as their attacks almost never hit you. And when they do, they'll take out all of one damage point. There's a catch, though. They turn somewhat suicidal when their HP is low, and explode themselves in your face for a considerable amount of damage. Of course, if you kill them quickly, you need not worry about that. Physical attacks and magic do good damage, but the best way to rid yourself of these things is with the Bio spell, which should do considerably more damage than anything else that you can scrounge up at the time.

Anyways, with your party outfitted, move along. There will be a trail of blood on the floor which you should follow, because your party obviously has a death-wish to meet up with whatever evil incarnation mercilessly slaughtered everyone in the damn building. The trail will lead to the left side of the 67th floor (where you saw Hojo earlier). Take note that the machine that had Jenova in it has been destroyed and Jenova is now missing. Hmm... Interesting. Anyways, follow the trail back up to the 68th floor, though you may wish to stop and save first. Anyways, head on up to the 68th floor and keep following the ominous trail of fresh blood. You'll head up past the uneventful 69th floor to the 70th floor of Shinra H.Q., where you discover President Shinra... dead. Stabbed in the back and slumped over his desk, the evil President Shinra is no more. Barret and Red XIII both arrive, and Barret, for one, couldn't be happier.

As the party speculates, Cloud spots something out of the corner of his eye. It's fat man Palmer! Still alive, at that! Palmer rushes from his hiding spot at a speedy quarter of a mile an hour, and Cloud, easily enough, apprehends him. The team grills him for answers. Palmer frightenedly replies that the massacre was at the hands of Sephiroth. He claims that Sephiroth arrived and said that he wasn't about to let the Shinra have the Promised Land, so he slaughtered the whole lot of 'em. Again, Barret is quite pleased, but Cloud stops him. Sephiroth may have wasted the Shinra, but he isn't necessarily a good guy because of it, Cloud says. Having pumped him for all the information he knows, Palmer wrestles away from you and hurriedly leaves in search of butter.

Anyways, just as Barret is about to pour some champagne and have a party, the team hears the sound of a helicopter outside. It's Rufus, the son of President Shinra! The party rushes outside to deal with him. On the rooftop, Rufus turns around to see the party headed towards him, and greets you in his villainous manner. Your characters introduce yourselves to them, attempting to sound cool, but that trails off by about the time it reaches Aeris. The interesting note here is that it is at about this time that your characters really begin to view themselves as a "team". Pretty neat, huh? At any rate, Rufus begins making a long-winded and evil speech about how he aspires to be even eviler than his father was... It's kind of like an Austin Powers sketch gone horribly wrong. Cloud puts an end to the bullcrap for the moment and commands the rest of the team to get the hell out of here. Barret being to stop him, but Cloud again commands him to go, amending this with, "this is the real crisis for the

planet!" That's all it takes for Barret to herd the rest of the group back downstairs.

They make it to the 69th floor when they begin to worry about Cloud. Tifa stays behind to wait, and you are left with a team of Aeris, Barret, and Red XIII. Equip them properly for the upcoming boss fight. As soon as your party steps into the main elevator (it didn't go to the 67th or 68th floor, but it does reach up here to the 69th floor, so it's a very short walk), a battle will ensue with the Hundred Gunner, which attacks you from the elevator opposite you as you ride down. This will be a long-range fight, so take heed. Barret is the only character who will be able to attack physically (though he will still be able to do more damage with magic, if he has any). Red XIII and Aeris will be able to attack only with magic, limit breaks, or items. Hundred Gunner is especially weak against lightning, and the Bolt spell will do lovely damage to it. Conversely, poison magic has no effect on it (but, as always, the Poison/Elemental combo in someone's armor couldn't hurt, as mentioned below). Lastly, the Hundred Gunner, despite the "Hundred" part of its name, is a lone attacker. Point in case, All paired with attack magic is worthless. On the other hand, Cure-all spells should be a great asset to you during this fight, because you can't rely entirely on Healing Wind. Keep all this in mind when outfitting your party. Now, the Hundred Gunner's attacks are weak and of very little mention, but when you kick it's ass, the real enemy arrives.

The Heli Gunner's attacks are considerably stronger than those of the Hundred Gunner. It has an attack that does big damage to a single target, and it can poison your teammates with wanton disregard. This is the reason I suggested the Poison/Elemental combo in your armor earlier. Lastly, the Heli Gunner had a powerful attack that will do big damage to your team, but it takes a turn to charge its gun up, thus giving you ample opportunity to heal yourself prior to taking the blow. Anyways, when you win the fight, you'll win an antiquated Mythril Armlet, and the scene will switch back to Cloud.

Calling upon all of his abilities to manipulate this continuum that we call time and space, Cloud can mysteriously take any of the materia that you've given to Barret, Aeris, and/or Red XIII, so go nuts. He'll be preparing himself for a quick fight with Rufus and his hound, Dark Nation. This will follow a brief speech by Rufus, in which he informs you that Sephiroth is also an Ancient, so he obviously is laying claim to the Promised Land. But for now, let's prepare for the fight.

Obviously, a Restore materia would be a pretty good thing to have handy. Secondly, Dark Nation, despite being a canine, has a powerful Bolt spell that may make you consider putting the Lightning/Elemental combo in Cloud's armor. However, Dark Nation is probably going to be the first of the two that you'll want to take out for two reasons. One, Dark Nation can cast Barrier, seriously hampering your progress. Two, if you give Cloud the Poison materia, Bio will take him out in one fell swoop (at higher levels, other magic materia or even a physical attack may produce the same effect, but I mention Bio simply because it is the strongest attack of the lot). So, in this respect, you may not necessarily need the Elemental/Lightning combo in his armor. But, if you've got the space, you might as well put something there to take advantage of the AP you'll earn from this fight. As for Rufus, once you take care of Dark Nation, the fight will degenerate pretty much into Cloud and Rufus trading blows. His pathetic little shotgun does far less damage than you'd expect a shotgun to do at point-blank range. On the other hand, the Bio spell that you used to kick Dark Nation's ass in one hit will also do a very nice job on Rufus himself. Failing that, other attack magic or even just wildly slashing at him will get the job done fairly quickly. When Rufus is damaged enough, he escapes on his helicopter. Cloud for some reason refrains from frying him with a Bolt spell or something like that and hurries off, taking with him the spoils of the battle (a

Protect Vest and a Guard Source). Cloud heads down to the 69th floor and meets up with Tifa, and the scene switches back to the others.

Barret, Aeris, and Red XIII head for the front door. Now, seeing as a massive slaughter has taken place here at Shinra H.Q., you are correct in assuming that a swarm of Shinra soldiers have arrived and await outside. Barret rushes to the door and tries to clear them out, but it's really no use. If he were alone it wouldn't be a big deal, he says, but he has to keep Aeris safe, as well. Tifa arrives downstairs without Cloud, which obviously confuses the rest of the team. She says not to worry and herds the team outside. You are treated to a very lovely CG movie sequence, where you'll see Tifa and the others headed towards a truck and hopping on. Meanwhile, Cloud comes roaring downstairs on a bitchin' hog. He then speeds out of Shinra H.Q., flies into the air, and lands on the highway just behind the truck. I'm sorry, but Cloud does not at any point in the game kick more ass than he does in this scene. By the way, you're not out of the woods yet. It's time for the chase scene...

First and foremost, you'll need to form a party. Do so, and realize that you've got yet another boss fight, so prepare yourselves adequately. The boss in question is weak against lightning, unaffected by poison, and resistant to fire. It also attack with powerful fire-based attacks, so the Elemental/Fire combo in someone's armor is recommended. Lastly, it is a lone attacker, so your All materia will be best used to create a couple of Cure-all spells. When you have your party created, take a moment to learn exactly what you will be doing. Basically, you will ride down the highway along side the truck and fend off the attacking Shinra troops with your big-ass sword. The motorcycle troops will attempt to ram the truck, which causes damage to your teammates. And since it is in your best interests to keep them healthy for the upcoming boss fight, you'll want to vigilantly defend them. This game is identical to a game you'll play later at the Gold Saucer, so for more in-depth strategy on this game, refer to section VIII.B. of the FAQ. And then, the chase will begin...

The mini game will end when the highway abruptly ends. You are then approached by a bad-ass boss called Motor Ball, and the team that you selected will fight it, whilst the remaining two sit on the sidelines and talk quietly amongst themselves (hey, get off your sorry asses and help us!) Motor Ball has a fairly decent physical attack, but the two attacks that you really need to watch out for are Rolling Fire and Twin Burner. First off, both are fire-based, so the Elemental/Fire combo in your armor really helps in this respect. Rolling Fire is a common attack that does a considerable amount of damage to the entire party. Twin Burner does huge damage to the entire party, so you really need to keep yourself healed. Luckily, Motor Ball doesn't use Twin Burner that often, and will do so only when in an upright position. The only magic that proves useful is ice and lightning magic (as always, lightning magic will rip up on our metallic friend, here). Failing that, physical attacks also work quite well. Anyways, win the fight, and you'll earn a Star Pendant.

Your team stands on the edge of the highway victorious. Cloud boldly proclaims that he is going after Sephiroth. He has to settle the score, he says... Since he had also mentioned that this was the real crisis for the planet, Barret decides to come along with him. The team makes their way to the outskirts of Midgar (which you should recognize if you came this way during your stay in Sector Five). You can now walk around and talk to the party as you wish. Barret will obviously be coming along to help save the planet. Tifa, as you should realize, really has nowhere left to go and will be accompanying you, as well. Aeris wants to learn more about the Ancients, so she comes along, as well. Red XIII, lastly, says that he will go with you as far as home (the location of which, by the way, he never really reveals). Well, this is it. You're leaving Midgar, and you can't return until much, much later in the game. Say your goodbyes and shed a tear to the heartfelt music score. Also, you need



also choose to raid a local home and steal the gun out of their treasure chest (the Peacemaker). You cannot use this now, but do hold onto it, as you may find a use for it later. By the way, you may opt not to speak to a few of the townspeople not just yet, and instead wait until your party is back with you (for reasons why, refer to section VII.A. of the FAQ). However, all the information you can glean from this town will be listed at the end of the next subsection of the walkthrough (--- Welcome to: The Flashback). Anyways, on that note, why not head to the inn and get things started?

You'll find the party waiting for you at the only room at the inn (gee, I hope that nobody else wanted to stay here tonight). There, the questions begin to arise... Thus begins the flashback.

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--- Welcome to: The Flashback

Cloud explains his relationship with Sephiroth in a rather long flashback sequence that begins now. He explains that after Cloud joined SOLDIER and worked a few missions with Sephiroth, they became friends. And then, one day, they went off on another mission... The scene switches to a couple of soldiers sitting in the back of a van. One of them is Sephiroth, who sits calmly on a box. Another is a very young Cloud, who excitedly runs around the van talking to all of the soldiers. Sephiroth finally breaks in and tells Cloud to calm down and shut up. Cloud goes on about how he joined SOLDIER so that he could be just like Sephiroth, but that the war was over by the time he made first class.

Anyways, Sephiroth lays the mission down to Cloud. There is a mako reactor that has been spitting out monsters as of late. Their first mission is to find these... monsters... and kill them. Next, they have to find the source of these monsters and neutralize it. The reactor in question, in case you were curious, is located in Nibelheim: Cloud and Tifa's hometown. At about this time, the monster in question arrives and attacks the truck. Cloud and Sephiroth leap out to fight it. Now... This fight... Let us first point and laugh at how absolutely pathetic, weak, and infantile Cloud is in this fight. Suffice it to say that he's come a long way in the five years since all this happened. If it was only Cloud in this fight, you might as well go ahead and throw out the controller now, but there's also Sephiroth. He's controlled by the computer, so you really have no say in what he does. However, he does end the fight fairly quickly by expeditiously kicking the monster's ass into last year. Even Cloud comments on how insanely strong Sephiroth is.

Anyways, the team arrives at Nibelheim. Sephiroth asks Cloud what it's like to be home. He wouldn't know, he says, because he has no parents or hometown. His mother was Jenova, and died in childbirth, and his father... He explains everything with a stern look on that one, pretty much. After this, the game relinquishes control of Cloud to you. As you head on into town, Barret astutely points out that Jenova was that "damn headless spook" living in the Shinra building. That is, it was before it mysteriously disappeared.

Cloud says that the town was quiet. Everyone was inside their homes, possibly scared of the monsters. "Or maybe they were just scared of us..." Cloud surmises. No, Cloud, they're scared of Sephiroth. You have the intimidation powers of a stapler, and nobody is scared of your weak, pathetic, little pansy ass except possibly other staplers. Anyways, Sephiroth heads towards the inn, leaving Cloud free to wander about the town.

There are two places to head. They are clearly obvious, because they are the only other two houses in town, just about. The first house would be Cloud's

(it's the one on the right). When you enter, you have the option of telling the story to the team, or quickly exiting without a word. If you are displeased with the text-heavy, non-smashie-smashie flashback and wish for it to quickly end, choose the latter and move on to the next paragraph. However, if you decide to delve into the story, Cloud begins by talking about his mother. She lived alone for most of her life, and inexplicably died a few days after Cloud visited. But, when Cloud saw her that day, she looked fine... You'll then see the scene where Cloud returns home and talks to his mother. Of course, the entire memory is completely glitched, and Cloud doesn't really appear to remember a damn thing. The scene does segue into the scene you saw earlier, though, where he's lying in bed and his mother yells at him about not having a girlfriend. Maybe, Cloud, just maybe, your dear, sweet mother died of... a broken heart? Meh. The scene ends, and Cloud exits again to the streets of Nibelheim.

Head along now to the house next door (to the left), which happens to be Tifa's house. Like Cloud's house, you've got the option of just not telling the story and leaving, or continuing inside. The difference is that inside, nothing really happens. You can continue upstairs and into Tifa's room. In her room, there's lots of fun things that you can do. You can play her piano, steal her underwear, and read a letter on her desk (and despite what you may think, none of your responses will affect the way Tifa feels about you). The letter is from the son of the clerk at the item shop, and it details his trip to Midgar and other uninteresting details. Apparently, everyone from Nibelheim (except Cloud) was there to meet him. He goes on to comment about how Cloud wasn't close to them, anyways, and probably wouldn't have come even if they found him. It's kind of sad, really, and gives you kind of a bit of insight into Cloud's past. You can stop or continue reading the letter, but the rest is mostly boring drivel. By the way, none of your actions here really effect the game later on (as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ), so go nuts.

Anyways, head back to the inn. There's a guy there looking for Sephiroth so he can take a picture of him. Cloud offers to let the guy take a picture of him, instead. The guy replies that he doesn't want a picture of a nobody. Comments like that I suppose would explain Cloud's self-esteem problem, at any rate. You'll also meet Tifa's martial arts teacher, named Zangan. Anyways, upstairs, you'll discover that the bedroom is one bed short for your team. Go talk to Sephiroth (he's standing by the window). He'll first comment on the scenery, but when you talk to him again, you're given the option to go to sleep for the night. And you do, though you never do find out how the bed situation worked out. Then again, if they fought for the beds, something tells me that it was Cloud who slept on the floor that night...

The next morning, your team stands ready on the north side of Nibelheim. Talk to Sephiroth, who says that you're leaving as soon as your guide gets here. The guide, by the way, is Tifa. Cloud is a bit shocked, not wanting to drag her into this. Sephiroth just tells Cloud to protect her, and she'll be fine. Though, given about how powerful Cloud was at the time, I'd say that Tifa would have been better off if he had just handed her a butter knife for protection. Before you leave, Tifa's father gets a snapshot of Tifa, Cloud, and Sephiroth. There's a memento for the ages, if I do say so myself. Anyways, the team heads towards Mt. Nibel, which would be the gigantic mountain resting behind Nibelheim where the reactor is located.

Well, upon entering Mt. Nibel, the team heads directly onto the rickety rope bridge of death. How cliché... After the inevitable and predictable breaking of said bridge, the party wakes up on a ledge below, sans one expendable soldier. Since he really wasn't that important to the plot, and nobody had even bothered to ask the guy's name anyways, the team continues along nonchalantly. As you walk along the very linear path, you may enter into a battle or two.



However, while Cloud may get in a pathetic slash at anything that happens by (doing little to no damage to it in the process), Sephiroth will effortlessly toast anything that dares cross his path. At the end of the path, you'll enter a cave.

Inside the cave, stick to the right and walk along that path until you reach the very back of it. There, you'll discover a mako fountain, spewing out pure, unspoiled mako. In the middle of it, you'll find a chunk of materia in it's raw form. Materia, you see, is little more than condensed mako. See, you learn something new every day! Sephiroth goes on to explain how materia contains the knowledge of the ancients and with it you are able to use the powers of the land with it. Or, in other words, magic. Cloud mentions the phrase "mysterious power", which makes Sephiroth laugh. He says that a man once told him never to use such an unscientific term, and that that man was Dr. Hojo. You see, five years ago, Dr. Hojo wasn't the respected lunatic that he is today. He was just an inexperienced young lunatic assigned to take over the work of another scientist, Dr. Gast (who's file you may have seen back at Shinra H.Q.). The party continues on after this.

You arrive at the reactor with little trouble. Cloud and Sephiroth continue inside, leaving Private What's-his-Name to stay outside and make sure Tifa doesn't run off. Follow Sephiroth into the back of the reactor where Sephiroth will quickly and effortlessly fix the problem, but that's not all of it. Sephiroth looks around and explains to you just why all the monsters were appearing. You may notice that the room you're standing in is full of very odd-looking pods. Well, have you ever seen a pod be used for anything besides creating monsters? Sephiroth explains that "normal members of SOLIDER" are exposed to mako to enhance their strength, kind of like steroids. But that they remain human. The things thrown into these pods are being exposed to uber-high amounts of mako, so much to the point that they are literally becoming monsters. And, of course, wouldn't you guess that Dr. Hojo was behind it all?

Hojo's insanities are actually the least of your worries right now. You see, Sephiroth had used the term, "normal members of SOLDIER" to refer to everyone except himself whom, as we've already established, kicks very much more ass than they do. Then again, brains must not have been his strong point, because this is the kind of thing it takes for it to finally dawn on Sephiroth that just maybe... this is how he came to be? He was... created? Of course not, Sephiroth, you were just naturally born like that. And if that's what you've believed for all these years, I've got a bridge to sell you while I'm at it. Needless to say, Sephiroth flips out, while Cloud leaves him to his insanity.

You are given the option to save your game at this point, which you may or may not take Cloud up on. More insanity to come!

Following this little incident, Sephiroth returned to Nibelheim and confined himself inside the friendly neighborhood haunted house, dubbed the "Shinra Mansion" by the villagers because people who worked for Shinra used to live there. Rather than populating it or at least tearing the Goddamn thing down and/or looting the place, they just left it as it was. Anyways, Cloud decides to go after Sephiroth. Head up to the second floor and to the right. There's a soldier standing outside a room that Sephiroth entered but never left. Inside this room, you'll find a door to a giant spiraling staircase that in turn will take you to the basement. Here in the basement, there's a gigantic library where you'll find Sephiroth doing his research. And in the world of Final Fantasy VII, a little knowledge is a very dangerous thing.

Sephiroth reads that Professor Gast, a long time ago, discovered an apparently dead organism in an ancient geological stratum. He named the organism Jenova, and soon discovered that Jenova was an ancient. Following that

began the "Jenova Project"... Amazingly enough, it is at about this moment that Sephiroth begins to grasp the concept that his mother, Jenova, and Dr. Gast's pet project may possibly be related. Again, brains were quite obviously not one of Sephiroth's strong points. Attempt to converse with him to no avail, and then leave him to his madness.

Sephiroth continues to stew in the basement for quite some time... And then, one day, Cloud wakes up in the Shinra Mansion to some very ominous music, which alone should tip you off to something. Head back down into the basement to find Sephiroth, quite obviously gone mad. He calls you a traitor, and then explains why. The Cetra, or the Ancients, were a nomadic race (and in case you haven't gotten it through your skull by now, Sephiroth is a member of said race). They would travel from planet to planet, populate it, and move on. At the end of their long journey, they were to discover the Promised Land. However, a faction disliked the nomadic life and instead opted to settle down and live the easy life. They took and took from the Cetra without giving a damn thing back. They would be the ancestors of the norms.

Long ago, a great cataclysm rocked the planet. The norms survived by hiding out. The Cetra sacrificed themselves to save the planet, after which the norms flourished. So, apparently, their only real crime was surviving (and I guess being a bunch of deadbeats). This is apparently enough to send Sephiroth off the edge, though. Well, he also finally appears to have come to the realization that he is the result of the Jenova Project... On that note, he strides towards Mt. Nibel to find Jenova. Follow him.

As Cloud exits the mansion, he finds that in the couple of moments that Sephiroth was outside, he has managed to set the entire village on fire, which, I have to admit, is quite a feat. Zangan sees you coming out of the mansion and calls to you, "hey, you're still sane, aren't you?" Well, "sane" isn't usually a word I would use to describe Cloud, but, for the moment and relatively speaking, he is. He leaps over the flames and assists Zangan in scavenging the village for survivors. Actually, come to think of it... this may be how Cloud's mother died... Anyways, Cloud looks over to the north and spots Sephiroth walking away from the village in a very kick-ass CG movie sequence.

Cloud chases Sephiroth to the reactor at Mt. Nibel. Heading into the reactor, you'll see Tifa and her father... You should actually recognize this sequence from earlier in the game. Tifa is kneeling beside her wounded father swearing vengeance on the Shinra and Sephiroth... sound familiar? Well, now for the part that you didn't see. Tifa, in an understandable rage, grabs Sephiroth's long-ass sword which he for some reason left lying next to the guy he mercilessly stabbed to death and runs into the back room. Tifa then charges Sephiroth at full speed wildly brandishing said long-ass sword. In retrospect, that was probably about the dumbest idea since the First Annual Broken Glass-Eating Contest, but you can sort of understand why she might not be thinking clearly at the moment. You can sort of imagine what happens next: Sephiroth effortlessly snatches the sword away from the enraged girl and slashes the hell out of her with it. She flies backwards through the air, sickeningly bouncing on the steps on her way down, finally coming to rest at the bottom. Ouch.

Cloud enters the back room in shock. Your first job should be to help Tifa out. For the moment, Cloud will carry Tifa out of harm's way. He's really too much of a dumbass to do anything helpful like or stop the bleeding or dress up her wound, so for the moment she's just going to have to lie there quietly and try not to stain the floor. It's actually a very sad and touching scene. Really. Cloud should then confront Sephiroth.

You'll find Sephiroth in the back room talking to Jenova. This is kind of odd, because Jenova has actually been dead for quite some time now. Anyways,

this doesn't stop Sephiroth from happily elaborating how he and her are going to take the planet back from themselves. He then grabs the oddly-shaped life form and begins to make off with it. Cloud, as you might imagine, is rather indignant with the senseless destruction of his hometown and angrily chides Sephiroth as he tries to leave. The intensity rises... Sephiroth on a binge of destruction... Only Cloud remains to stand against him... Too bad that at this moment, Cloud's brain performs an illegal operation and must be shut down. Seriously, of all the parts of the story that he could have forgotten, this would be the one part that I kind of assumed that he'd remember. Then again, maybe Sephiroth kicked his ass to the point of brain damage, which would go far in explaining Cloud's personality today.

Anyways, there're several holes in Cloud's story that for the lack of a better source of information you're going to have to let slide for the moment. The greatest of these, obviously, is the fact that Cloud challenged Sephiroth and lived to tell the tale. I guess a close second would be how Tifa managed to survive without so much as a scar. Also, there's Sephiroth. Y'see, official records state that Sephiroth is dead. But then again, Shinra Inc. has a bit of a monopoly on things of the official sort, so it's not like you could trust the information, anyways. But on the other hand, if Sephiroth truly is alive, and had Jenova with him when he left Mt. Nibel, how did Jenova end up at Shinra H.Q.? Cloud says that it was transported there following the whole incident, but if you'll recall, Jenova was missing from the Shinra building after the massacre... there's obviously something missing from the puzzle here. And at about this time, it all becomes too much for Barret, who's brain goes into complete overload. Please note that other things that cause Barret to become completely and totally confused include: thinking, conversation, opening doors, and other non-killing-related activities.

The whole scene ends on a touching note, when Tifa asks Cloud how badly she was cut up back at the reactor. Cloud replies that she was pretty bad, and that he didn't think that she was going to make it. And I've got to hand it to Tifa, surviving an attack like that took something that I don't even think Bruce Willis could muster. Then again, Cloud challenged Sephiroth and he still seems to be fine. "Fine" is determined quite loosely here, though, seeing as this is the same guy who has more people in his head to talk to than in real life and who's memory has more holes in it than my underwear, so I'll let you come to your own conclusions on that one.

The next morning, head on downstairs. Barret hands you the PHS, which is basically what you will be using to switch out your party members. You'll recall the ban on traveling in groups greater than three, so this glorified cell phone actually comes in quite handy despite its inability to be used indoors or within a fifty-foot radius of civilization of any sort. I mean, without it, you wouldn't see half of your team ever again. You are now left with the party that you had originally created back at Midgar. You are free to leave town, though first you may stop to converse with a few of the citizens (for an effect on the game later on, no less, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ) You don't find much else out here, though. The main news here seems to be that everyone is happy because the nearby city of Midgar has introduced to them a novelty known as mako power. Also, you'll find a lot of unemployed miners at the bar. They used to work in the Mythril Mines to the east, but have been out of work ever since hideous monsters started patrolling the area. Monsters! Heh! When I was a kid, I walked to school everyday barefoot in the snow fighting off hordes of the bastards and it didn't bother me one bit! In fact, I rather liked it! What else? Oh, yes. According to Shinra, AVALANCHE has disappeared... Which is interesting, really, because considering that their headquarters was recently massacred by a homicidal madman, PR really shouldn't be on their list of top concerns for the moment. Lastly, there's a guy here who saw Sephiroth heading east.

Anyways, take care of any other business that you may have around Kalm and then continue east.

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--- Welcome to: Chocobo Ranch

Continue east along the continent into the deep boonies. You'll know you're headed in the right direction when all of a sudden you have a burning desire to wear overalls and watch Hee-Haw. There're also lots of farm-themed animals out here that, despite what you may think, want to kill you. The Levikron is an ostrich-like creature that is fairly easy to kill, but has a nasty tendency to enrage you with its attacks. The Elfadunk is an elephant, if that helps. It also has an attack which can make your characters sad, so be wary of that, as well. The Mandragona has very high magic defense, and it takes quite a bit of magical effort to put them down. As you might imagine, physical attacks are generally a better route to go. It will not attack you unless you attack it. It is also a weed. A weed which has somehow sprung to life to attack random passersby. Pollution-much? Lastly, let's look at the Mu. It's one of those rare occurrences around here, but it's an enemy that you should seek out, if nothing more for the fact that it uses the Lv. 4 Suicide attack, which you can learn with your E. Skill materia. Needless to say, it's also a rather powerful attack when used against you, so be careful. Aside from the Lv. 4 Suicide attack, they also have another powerful attack called Sewer, which will do a very large amount of damage to one of your characters, so you'd be wise not to let these little bastards live for too long, no matter how ridiculously cute they may look.

Anyways, grab yer wife an' kids, hop in da pickup, and head on down to dat dere dun Chocobo Ranch. Ya can't miss it- it's a giant farm in the middle of nowhere. And I'm talking "kid with no teeth sitting on the front porch playing a banjo" backwoods middle-of-nowhere, here. You'll arrive at a very pleasant-looking ranch. The Chocobo Ranch: home of inbreeding and 75% of the world's illiterate. You'll see a bunch of chocobos hanging around out front, whom you can talk to. If you say, "wark", they get really happy and do a little dance and reward you with the Choco/Mog materia, so it's at the very least worth your time. Now, head to the house and speak with the head farmer here, Chocobo Bill. He tells you that the Midgar Zolom patrols the swamp to the south. This is important because you must cross said swamp to reach the Mythril Mines and therefore continue on your journey. He suggests that you acquire a chocobo to safely cross the swamp and refers you to his son in the stables for more information on that matter. Now, get out of here before he begins to talk about the UFO ride he took last week.

Head to the stables and talk to Chocobo Bill's son, Billy. I think his full name is Billy Bubba Bo Bob Brain, but I really don't think that that would fit in the text box, so Billy it is. He informs you that there are no chocobos available for rent, so you're gonna have to go rustle up your own. Of course, you're going to need some Chocobo Lure first, which interestingly comes in materia form. Materia is like Lunchables, I suppose, in that just about anything can be made into it. He does gouge you quite a bit for it, however. Now it is possible to cross the marsh without a chocobo (see below), but if you've got the gil, I would still recommend you pick it up while you're here. But, it's your call. Secondly, if you're going to have any chances of catching one, you may need a green. Pay no heed to Billy's relentless price gouging and just grab the cheapest crap he has- it's likely all you'll need, and this way you save more of your gil.

And, though not necessarily a lost-forever, the Chocobo Lure is mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. There's only one of them, or at least until one of my rumors at the end of the FAQ is confirmed, anyways. Don't sell this thing, lest you make Baby Jesus cry. Or at least don't whine about it after you do.

Now, it's time for the Chocobo catchin'. Even if you don't want to use one to cross the marsh (see below), you still may want to enter into a battle with one for two reasons. One, when you enter a battle with them, the battle music changes into an odd rendition of "Wipeout", which I find very odd given the Hicksville, USA motif of the area. Secondly, they use an attack called Chocobuckle, which you can learn with the E. Skill materia. However, they only use this attack when you use the Lv. 4 Suicide attack (learned from the Mu) on them. Anyways, now for the catchin'. You've got to defeat all of the enemies in the battle without harming the Chocobo (lest it freak out and run away). It actually has a tendency to freak out and run away without you ever actually touching it, hence the reason you bought the greens. You see, if you toss it the green during battle, it will just much away, completely unaware of its surroundings. Kind of like Palmer, y'know. That fatass wouldn't notice if he was on fire so long as you stuck something delicious in his mouth. The more expensive green you feed it, the longer it will take it to finish it, and the more time it will buy you. Of course, if you are at any kind of a decent level of experience and skill, these battles should progress fairly easily, and as I mentioned before, the cheapest crap that Chocobo Billy had should be more than sufficient in this respect.

Anyways, as I have made it a point to mention before, it is more than possible to cross the swamp without using a chocobo. It's just sort of hard to do without becoming a Midgar Zolom's bitch. Basically, once you set foot in the swamp, that thing will start coming for you. It is virtually impossible to make it across without it hitting you, though it can be done. When it catches you (if you're on foot, that is), you'll enter a battle with it. If you win the battle, you may continue as you were (though a new Zolom will appear, so you must hurry on). Lose the battle (quite likely), and you are ejected from the swamp. For those interested in doing battle with the Midgar Zolom, details are listed below. The rest of you, just skip to the next paragraph.

Wanna tangle with a Midgar Zolom, do you? First off, you're going to need Barret with you. Without Mind blow, you might as well just bend over and kiss your ass goodbye. You may also want to stick most if not all of your characters in the back row, as the Midgar Zolom has an uber-powerful attack. On a positive note, this does mean that you'll get lots of limit break opportunities. Again, use Mindblow early in the fight (you'll find out why later). Keep pounding away at it with all you've got. Magic attacks are the most effective (Bio really helps, as it may poison the Zolom), as are your frequent limit breaks. You'll want to vigilantly watch over your HP, however. Aeris can be an asset here with her Healing Wind, but you'll still need the aid of one or two good Restore materia-bearing characters. Hi-Potions and Phoenix Down in your inventory is also good to have. Anyways, after you do enough damage to it, it will "stand up", sort of. Its attacks don't change much, but it is a sign that if you haven't used Mindblow/Seal Evil yet, do so expeditiously. After more of an ass-whipping, the Zolom quite literally knocks one of your characters through the air, removing it from the battle (this will be the character that last attacked him). It's comical in a way, but it does serve a purpose. You see, at this point, the Zolom will begin using an attack called Beta, which will completely waste your characters. With one of them removed from the battle, you still lose, but at least it's not game over. But here's the catch: Beta is a magic attack. Mindblow will prevent it from using Beta, therefore allowing you to win the battle if you keep your wits about you. You really don't get much experience or AP for the effort, but you do get a nice feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Anyways, I need to stress a point about Beta, the attack used by the Midgar Zolom. Wasn't Beta such a kick-ass attack? You bet your ass, it was! There's some good news and bad news here. The good news is that you can, in fact, learn Beta with your E, Skill materia. The bad news, however, is that surviving the attack is sadly a prerequisite for learning attack. And, as you may or may not have discovered if Beta has had its way with your ass, there is no way in hell you're going to survive it at the moment. Do make it a point, however, to come back here as soon as you can to learn this most kick-ass attack. This may not be much longer into the game (you'll discover a Fire Ring before too long), but there is one final tip I will hand out to players making a return trip: there is an enemy skill called Laser which will easily be the most effective attack versus the Zolom in the early game. Its HP is at 4,000, and Laser will chop it in half. Use Laser again for 1,000 points of damage. Past this, however, you may wish to switch to other attacks, as once the Zolom gets to 500 HP, it will knock the person that last attacked it out of battle, and you don't want him ejecting the person carrying the E. Skill materia from the fight, now do you? Of course, Demi 2 may also be used in place of Laser, but this note is meant more for people coming back way too late in the game to have many attacks that won't kill the Zolom outright.

As you near the Mythril Mines, you are treated to a rather morbid scene. You'll find a Midgar Zolom impaled on the remains of what looks like it was once a tree. Lightning flashes in the shrouded sky in the background, making for a quite awesome scene. However, you might sit back and think for a moment that this was the work of Sephiroth. The person you are chasing... You're after a man that is capable of this, and you think for some reason that you're going to be able to stop him. Forget what I said earlier about Sephiroth's lack of brains, because it appears that your team is no smarter than he is. Either that, or they've got the courage of Bruce Willis. Proceed into the Mythril Mines.

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--- Welcome to: The Mythril Mines

The Mythril Mine is actually rather small, and your trip to the other side should be relatively short. However, there are several enemies in here that you would be wise to be aware of. The first would be a creature called Castanets. They are weak, pathetic fighters with a weakness against fire. So jes torch their highly-flammable asses to get rid of them quickly. Next, we have the Crawler. The Crawler is a small snake-like creature that has a tendency to attack in very large numbers. Then again, they are even weaker fighters than the castanets. To get rid of them uber-quickly, prey on their weakness to earth magic. We also have the Madouge, a ball and chain wielding maniac. I know it seems like a metaphor for being married, but again, don't expect them to put up much of a fight. You should make it a point to steal a Grand Glove from one of them, however. Lastly, we have the Ark Dragon, which would be another on of those rarer occurrences. The Ark Dragon looks something like a dragonfly on growth hormones, and is probably the most dangerous creature here. You're advised to track one of these things down, because they use the Flame Thrower attack, which you can learn with the E. Skill materia. However, be careful, as the Flame Thrower attack is somewhat of a striking contrast to the weak, pathetic attacks used by all of the other enemies. In addition to this, the Ark Dragon has considerably more HP than any of the other enemies here. The bad news is that since they are flying creatures, earth magic obviously will have no effect on them. In addition, they also absorb fire-based attacks. However, they do fall prey to wind-based attacks, so you may want to stick the Choco/Mog materia with the Elemental materia into the weapon of one of your characters and

use that character to inflict massive damage to any Ark Dragon that dares defy you.

Anyways, as you step into the Mythril Mines, you can either head right or left. If you head right, you'll head to a room in the northeastern corner of the Mythril Mine, where you'll find several treasures for the taking. First and foremost, there is a vine growing on a ledge near the room's entrance. Climb up this vine to the top of the ledge and take the Long Range materia you'll find atop it. Also in this room (up and to the right of the entrance) is a Tent and an Ether free for the taking. Anyways, back at the entrance to the mine, the left path will take you to another fork in the road. There, going right will take you to a chest containing a Mind Source, whilst going left takes you to another fork in the road. From there, going up is only a dead end, and going left continues to the next room.

In the next room, you'll meet up with none other than Rude of the Turks. You may remember him as the guy who threw your ass in jail back at Shinra H.Q.. Well, for the moment old Rude really doesn't seem to be that interested in you. He tries to be cool about things, but that's when Elena shows up. You see, after you kicked Reno's ass hardcore, the Turks sorta needed to hire a replacement for him. And judging by who they hired to fill his spot, it seems that the only other applicants for the job were a little girl with heavy brain damage that speaks no English or any other coherent language, and a slightly below-average mango. Elena is the most pathetic attempt at a professional badass I've ever seen. She goes on and on (making very little sense in the process) about how they're after Sephiroth and how they've got to stop you along the way, or maybe that it's you who's stopping them. We'll never know the truth, really, because Elena has been taking all of her orders from a Magic 8-Ball for the past three weeks.

Anyways, before Elena has a chance to make an even bigger ass of herself, Tseng arrives and makes her shut up. However, even he can't stop her from arbitrarily blurting out, "Rude and I will go after Sephiroth, who is headed for Junon Harbor!" Christ, Elena! Why don't you just get a giant flashing neon sign and broadcast your orders to the rest of the world? It's like Pinky and the Brain meets the morals of a Latin-American dictatorship. Anyways, Tseng has a few final words with you, which will be different depending on whether or not Aeris is with you, and then leaves with baldy and the dumbass. Oh, well. At least the Turks really don't seem to care much about you, anymore.

Near the back of the room you are standing in, you'll find another path, which will lead to a another room, where you will find a Hi-Potion and an Elixir. When you're ready, exit the Mythril Mine through the exit Rude and Tseng took (you'll have to crawl onto the ledge via a vine that grows alongside it).

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--- Welcome to: Fort Condor Area

You'll emerge in a beautiful countryside upon exiting the Mythril Mines. This area is rather large, and is filled with forests, sprawling plains, and rivers. You may want to use the map to ensure that you don't get lost. Anyways, standing not too far from the exit to the Mythril Mines is a large hill, atop of which sits the infamous Fort Condor. Going there is completely optional at this point, but recommended. At the very least, I suggest that you at least go there once and fight the first battle, if nothing more than to get a feel for how the place works (as you are forced to do battle here later on). Another worthy note that the Battles of Fort Condor and their respective prizes

are all lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. For more information on Fort Condor, refer to section X of the FAQ, and also take note that your actions taken during your first trip there will have some degree of effect on your game later, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. Also, one thing you may want to do right now is recruit one of the game's hidden characters. Instructions for this are detailed in section V.D. of the FAQ.

Anyways, let's also take a moment to examine the local monster activity. The Zemelett is a... very odd creature, to say the least. It's normal attacks aren't that bad, but it does have a very powerful Thunderbolt attack, which can rip up one of your characters pretty good. But, it really doesn't use Thunderbolt that often, and likely only will if you take too long to kill it. It also has an attack called White Wind, which you may learn with the E. Skill materia, but it will never use it. You must return to this area later on when you obtain the Manipulate materia. Lastly, the Zemelett is weak versus wind-based attacks, so the Choco/Mog and Elemental combo in someone's weapon will help you make quick work of it. Next on our list of monsters is the Neurosufferoth. It has a rather powerful fire-based attack called Heatwing which does good damage to one target, but thankfully the attack is used sparingly. There's also the Formula, which is a bird-like creature and likely the toughest creatures in the area. But they appear mostly in the forests, so you can go far in avoiding them by simply not venturing through any. Their main attack is called Blue Impulse, which is a powerful attack against the whole party. In addition to this, their normal attacks are powerful, as well. Both attacks are also long-range, putting your back-row members at risk. They are invulnerable to earth-based attacks and weak versus wind. However, since the Formula is by far the most dangerous creature you'll meet out here, you'll probably be more interested in attacks that will rid you of them quickly, such as Matra Magic, Fire/Ice/Lit/Bio-All spells, and the admittedly non-wind-based Choco/Mog summon. Lastly, there is a very good weapon they carry called the Boomerang which you might want to steal (if you've recruited Yuffie, that is). Truth be told, you might actually want to swipe multiple copies, as they make excellent projectiles for the Throw materia (which Yuffie brings into the party), as well. Next, there's the Capparwire. This is the one enemy that appears only in forests, and is probably the next strongest thing you'll face besides the Formula. Their main advantage is their ability to attack in very large numbers. Aside from that, they also have powerful regular attacks, and an attack called Grand Spark, which is like a regular attack, only a bit stronger. They have no weaknesses, but conversely, no strengths. Again, attacks that target all enemies are the way to go, especially considering that since they attack in groups, they inevitably have low HP (but probably not as low as you'd expect). Lastly, galloping across the plains, you may encounter the Hell Rider VR2. It has a mean normal attack and in addition, is rather durable and difficult to finish off, especially given that it has no weaknesses. It always travels alone, though, and just about everything will do good damage to it.

Anyways, you'll eventually want to head north to the port town of Junon. It can be difficult to spot, as it is built into the side of a cliff which faces away from you. It is at the northern edge of the mountain range, however, and is located near a very small, oblong bay. As you travel, you may wish to stick to the plains whilst avoiding the forests. As we've already established, the forests are populated entirely by the two most powerful creatures around here, while on the plains it's easy pickin's for the most part, though you may happen across a couple of Formulas. Anyways, see you at Junon!

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--- Welcome to: Junon



You'll ultimately arrive at a festering crap-hole called Junon. The place used to be a cozy little fishing town, y'see, but that was before the Shinra moved in and built a division of their company down here. Keeping in with their "screw the lower class" motif, they built a city on top of the town you see now, and the result is pollution and a general hatred of the Shinra abound. An old lady through some mystical force realizes that you're headed west (we are?), but says that the only way to do so is via a Shinra Boat. Look around town, but refrain from heading to the coast (in the lower-left section of town) before your party is prepared for the upcoming boss battle. Anyways, the shops here are crappy, and sell mostly bottom-rung garbage. There's no inn at which to rest, meaning that you'll have to step outside town and use a Tent instead. Which sucks.

Go ahead and arrange your materia for the upcoming battle. While magic, as always, is the best attack you can use, in this case it may prove to be the only attack you can use, as the boss battle in question is a long-range fight. So, unless your characters are packing long-range heat, the best way to go is with magic. Lighting magic will be especially useful in the upcoming battle, while earth magic will prove ineffective. Also, for reasons mentioned later, you may also wish to attach an attack materia to an All materia. Restore, needless to say, will be helpful. Anyways, get your team revved up, and then head for the coast (again, located in the southwestern corner of town).

You'll see a little girl named Priscilla playing with a dolphin by the beach. You approach her, but she seems to believe that you're working for the Shinra. Why, I have no idea. You sure as hell don't look it, that's for damn sure. But, maybe it's just something she's saying to try and piss you off, like calling you a booger head, or saying that your mother wears army boots. Anyways, the argument doesn't last very long until an unfortunate side effect of the water pollution comes flying towards you at a high velocity. Priscilla stupidly runs toward it. Your team, always ready and willing to save the stupid, runs after her and engages in combat with Bottomswell.

Bottomswell's main attack is called Big Wave, which will do a good amount of damage to the entire team. It uses this attack often, but no so often as to pose too much of a threat with it (though be warned it does use Big Wave as its dying attack, which if it catches you off-guard can wipe you out). Just keep your HP up and there shouldn't be much of a problem. The other attack you need to watch out for is its Bubble attack, which functions exactly like Reno's Pyramid attack did with two notable differences. One, the Bubble can only be broken with magic (hence my suggestion of an attack materia paired with All). Two, the Bubble, aside from completely preventing whomever is inside from moving, will also drain that character's HP. Meaning, you'll probably want to hurry up and get rid of it. As we've already established, lightning magic is going to be your best bet here, while earth magic is going to have no effect whatsoever. Also remember that this is a long-range battle, so you're probably going to have to stick with magical attacks for the most part. Anyways, just keep your HP up, and the fight will be over in no time. You'll receive a Power Wrist for winning this battle.

After the battle, you'll find Priscilla lying on the beach, unconscious. Before you can react, a man runs up from the village and demands that you perform CPR on her. Why you? Because you're the one holding the controller, silly. This little task can be a big pain in the ass if you're not quite sure what you're doing. Press the button to make him start breathing in, and press the same button to make him breathe into her. You'll have to hit it at just the right moment, though. The precise moment you need to hit the button is a split second after the bar reaches maximum height. You may want to let the bar run all the way up first without pressing the button to see exactly what level maximum height is (it's kinda tricky). And don't worry, she isn't going to die,

no matter how badly you screw it up. Hell, it took me the better part of an hour my first time, so take it easy. Anyways, once you've brought her back, the old man carries her off, and you're left alone on the beach.

Return to town and talk to an old lady hanging around the village's entrance. She congratulates you on protecting Priscilla, and offers to let you sleep in her home. Go ahead and take her up on her offer. Never mind that the whole place is made out of gingerbread... Anyways, at your command, the team will camp out for the night, and you all go to sleep.

And now, yet another interlude from the creepy voices in Cloud's head. Today's topic, like everything else that is ever discussed in the nether-regions of Cloud's mind, is complete insanity. This time, the voice makes references to that day five years ago and to Tifa. The voice gets very prodding, with questions like, "where was Tifa other than that?" and "why couldn't you see Tifa alone?" Cloud, being the dumbass he is, cannot provide an acceptable response to these questions (which may be mainly because the questions don't make any sense to begin with...) In response to this, the voice suggests that you ask Tifa if she remembers anything. While I'd be a bit reluctant to bring up a discussion I had with the voices in my head to anybody other than a licensed therapist, it does have kind of a point. Maybe Tifa can remember something that your hopelessly damaged brain can't? The voice then commands you to wake up, which you do. Tifa is standing over you, and there appears to be loud parade music playing in the background. On an unfortunate note, Tifa's memory appears to be just as bad as Cloud's is, so that's one more question unanswered for the moment. For now, lets go outside and figure out just what the hell is going on?

The entire team is gathered outside Priscilla's house. Try to enter Priscilla's house, and she will come out. In thank you for helping her, she hands you the Shiva materia. And I tell you, that's a hell of a lot more useful than a drawing of you that looks more like a misshapen green dog turd with three eyes. Anyways, Priscilla explains to you that the whole parade music is to welcome the new president of Shinra. That would be Rufus, by the way. Priscilla tells you how much she hates the Shinra, and how they moved in and polluted her city. Anyways, the team comes to the presumptuous conclusion that Sephiroth has already crossed the ocean and that Rufus is here to give chase. Well, the only way you're going to get to Upper Junon is by climbing a dangerous and deadly high-voltage tower. Guess who among you gets volunteered to do that? Follow Priscilla down to the beach now.

Arriving at the beach, Priscilla explains that maybe Mr. Dolphin will be able to help you climb the tower. She hands you a whistle that will make Mr. Dolphin come to you whenever you blow it. Barret shows up right about now to take the PHS away from you, saying that it'll break if it gets wet. He apparently doesn't seem to notice or care that Cloud will break if he comes into contact with that high-voltage tower, but... Anyways, there's a spot on the tower that you can safely walk across. The idea is to position yourself in such a way that when Mr. Dolphin launches you into the air, you'll land right on it. This isn't very hard at all: from the spot where you begin, blow the whistle and let Mr. Dolphin launch you into the air. From where you land, blow the whistle again, and you'll land right on top. Easy, wasn't it? You're now well on your way to Upper Junon

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--- Welcome to: Upper Junon

As you climb up to the top, you'll get a spectacular view of the Highwind, the world's premiere airship. Of course, it belongs to the Shinra, and is

currently undergoing repairs, so it's off limits to you now. From where you are, head south to a giant platform. Press a button on that platform to lower it, and enter the building near the bottom of the screen. As you step inside, you will be immediately mistaken for a Shinra soldier, and this is where the fun begins. Your drill sergeant corrals you into a back room and makes you get dressed. He then calls upon two of his lackeys to show you what you'll be doing. You, my friend, are going to be marching in Rufus's welcoming parade. Take heed of the controls and commands you learn here, and then follow them out of the building when you are finished.

Well... you'll exit the building somewhat late for the parade. It seems that while you were being an idiot and being mistaken for a soldier and all, they decided to start the parade without you. Following yet another berating from your drill sergeant, one of the soldiers with you gets the bright idea to sneak through the alleyways and inconspicuously join the parade. This is what you'll be doing. Watch as the soldiers in front of you sneak in and keep in step with the soldiers around them, and do exactly as they do. You can tell when it gets to Cloud, because he is the one who shrugs at the drill sergeant. Now, I know it all seems asinine, but the live TV ratings will be tied directly to your performance here. And the people out there aren't the kind who enjoy tuning in to see soldiers screw up. Nosiree... The slightest misstep has absolutely horrible effects on the ratings. It's like ratings system is run by Hitler, for God's sakes. Anyways, the TV producer is pretty much ignoring everyone else and keeping an eye squarely on you, as well. If you perform well (ratings at 50% or higher), the station thoughtfully sends you 5,000 gil as a reward (whilst ignoring the other thousand soldiers who also marched flawlessly). The next step down (40-49%) would be six Ethers, and below that (30-39%) six Potions. However, if you, like me, perform exceptionally horribly at this (29% or lower), not only have you disgraced the Shinra army, but you've also gotten some poor TV producer fired. His boss angrily demands that he send you a bomb for this insult, and you will receive instead a Grenade. It's a nice thought, though I seriously doubt that that's what his boss had in mind.

Anyways, following that little incident, you'll see Heidegger and Rufus in another section of Junon. They discuss issues of transportation. Apparently the Highwind (that giant airship you saw on the way here) is not ready for flight at the moment, nor is the Shinra Gelnika. So, it appears that they will be crossing the ocean via boat, instead. That's right, Shinra Boat. Anyways, Rufus takes some time to make it clear that he thinks Heidegger is obnoxious before he leaves (an insult which Heidegger will rather violently take out on you once Rufus leaves). When both Heidegger and Rufus leave, the soldiers mention that Sephiroth was supposedly seen roaming the city. Apparently, he showed up, killed a few soldiers, and then vanished. Following that, your drill sergeant dismisses the entire group of soldiers. Before you have a chance to move, however, he comes up to you and begins berating you. No matter how you respond, he's going to drag you back to the torture room for more "training".

Apparently, your next mission is to perform the send-off ceremony for Heidegger and Rufus. And to assist you in this mission are the same two miserable jackasses from before. Then, the drill sergeant proceeds to show you all of the basic moves of the send-off ceremony (though at the ceremony he will be delivering commands entirely at random). You can screw up all you'd like now, and can even do the same at the ceremony, if you'd like (though you may think twice about doing it). Anyways, following this horrid little training session, your drill sergeant will set you loose in the streets.

First and foremost, you may wish to save at that save point which has materialized out of nowhere right over there. Secondly, there are two exits to the building that you are in. One is the one that you already know will take you to the streets. The other is in the lower right corner of the room and is

an elevator which will take you back down to lower Junon. Though you cannot use it now, it would behoove you to remember that it is there. Anyways, head on out to the streets and see what you can accomplish. Notice that all of the buildings are lined up on one side of the street for easy access. Also note that what you see now is just half of the city- the other half can be found by continuing south along the street, past the hallway that leads to the Underwater Reactor (to which you cannot go at this time), and finally to the other side of Junon. Junon can be sort of difficult to navigate because the damn camera angle keeps changing, but once you realize that it's all just one straight path, you'll be fine.

Well, for starters, as you emerge on the street, you may happen to catch a glance of Rude of the Turks heading into one of his favorite bars. You can follow him and even converse with him once you get there, if you'd like, but it really doesn't do much. Above the bar, however, is an excellent weapon shop (though you may already possess the entire inventory through freelance theft). You'll actually find the rest of the Turks in another bar on the other side of town (interesting how Rude doesn't like to hang out with them). Anyways, take some time to do any shopping you need to get done (the Seal and Revive materia are both available in one of the better shops here). The guy who runs the crappier materia shop has hired some nice girls to invite people into his store, however, so it's worth a look if not just for that. Also note that your supplies going into the next part of the game may have an effect on the game later on, as detailed in section VII.A. of the FAQ). There's also a "training room" hidden here in Junon if you know where to look for it (in the basement of someone's house). It's an advanced version of the one you saw back at the now-decimated Sector Seven. Again, you probably already know what these ass-rammers have to say, but stop in anyways to pick up the E. Skill materia. Also, don't place yourself above theft. A lot can be gained from walking into people's houses here at Junon and just blatantly taking things. Among the items you can acquire here are: a Power Source, Mind Source, Speed Source, Guard Source, Luck Source, and two 1/35 Soldiers.

Once you're through raping and pillaging the town, continue to the other end of Junon (just keep following the path you're on until you reach the docks). Here, you'll meet up with Rufus and Heidegger again. Of course, they're too busy squabbling pettily to notice their arch-nemesis standing right next to them. The send-off ceremony is about to begin, but keep something in mind before you begin. How you perform during the send-off will affect the reward you'll receive upon completion (and again, you, for some reason are the only one who seems to be getting any kind of a reward). The president has a "mood" rating, which will go up by 10 points every time you do something right, and will not be affected at all if you screw up. However, at the end of the send off, it will inevitably go up ten points because Cloud will automatically do that part right (again, Rufus doesn't even appear to catch on to his rival's trademark stance). Anyways, the rewards for the ceremony are as follows: a Force Stealer for a mood of 100 or higher, an HP Plus materia for a mood of 60-90, and Silver Sunglasses for anything below that. You would be wise to know that the HP Plus has higher monetary value than the Force Stealer, and also is not available for purchase until later in the game than the Force Stealer is. You may also notice during the send-off, something red and furry poking up from behind a crate in the boat... Hmm...

Anyways, after the send-off ceremony, Heidegger presents you with your reward. Rufus mentions that he expects AVALANCHE to show up... Hmm... they might even be... right... here... Anyways Rufus and Heidegger leave (not without yet another violent outburst from the latter), and the soldiers sit down to discuss what an asshole Heidegger has been lately (as if he normally wasn't one). Apparently, he's been on edge ever since Dr. Hojo vanished, leaving a letter of resignation. Apparently having his throat ripped open by Red XIII

really didn't leave him in much of a condition to be working. Anyways, it appears now that the whole Sephiroth investigation has been placed squarely in the hands of Heidegger. Sephiroth, in case you haven't been paying attention, was the one who mercilessly slaughtered the majority of the population at the Shinra building, so you'd kind of understand why Heidegger is a little edgy... After this whole discussion, the troops take off towards the barracks, leaving you alone at the ship.

Again, you may have noticed earlier that Red XIII had managed to make it on board... You can either follow suit and get on the boat, or try to leave. If you try to leave, Red XIII will yell at you from the ship and make you get on, anyways. Either way, it's bon voyage for AVALANCHE!

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--- Welcome to: The Shinra Boat

About halfway across the sea, Cloud decides that just standing in the cargo hold like a putz isn't such a bright idea, and he begins to move around. Walk around the ship and talk to everybody. Roughly 50% of the crew are AVALANCHE members in disguise, however. Do be warned that several of your responses aboard the Shinra Boat will have an effect on the game later on, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. There's an Ether in a chest in the cargo hold, as well as an All materia. However, if Yuffie is amongst your numbers, she will be standing in the way, so you're just going to have to make it a point to come back for it after the team regroups. Also note that on the deck there's a sailor who's running a small business, though it's not apparent at first. If you tell him you're tired, he sells you a ludicrously overpriced energy drink that functions as an inn, and he also has some meager supplies to sell if you tell him that "something's missing".

Anyways, you'll meet up with Tifa and Red XIII (who is disguised, apparently, as a complete jackass) here on the deck. You saw Aeris and Yuffie back in the cargo hold... So where's Barret? If you haven't already, go talk to Aeris twice. The second time you talk to her, she asks you where Barret is and says that she hopes he's not doing anything stupid. Well, of course he's off doing something stupid. It's Barret, for God's sakes. You also must talk to Tifa, Yuffie (if she's with you), and Red XIII to trigger the next event. What happens, is that there is path on the deck that leads to the bow, or the front of the ship. And once you've talked to everybody, the idiot sailor who was standing in your way decides to move so you can get past. At the front of the ship, you'll see Barret spying on Rufus and Heidegger. Barret is, as you can probably imagine, very pissed. He's about to just give in and go kick their asses, when all of a sudden the klaxons begin to blare. Apparently, a suspicious person has been spotted on the ship... Have you been found out?

Barret and Cloud run back to the stern, where the rest of the team regroups. Everyone's here, meaning that the suspicious person must be... Sephiroth! Select a team to go investigate the matter further, but realize that you've got a huge boss battle on the way, so choose wisely. If Red XIII knows Lunatic High, you may choose to bring him along for this fight due to that alone, but all in all, it's really a matter of personal preference. With your team selected, you can wisely choose to save your game at a nearby save point (God, those things are everywhere!), and you may also talk to the sailor-turned-salesman who still has no qualms about selling you things or in any other way aiding you.

As for your materia set-up? The only ineffective magic in the next battle will be poison magic. Quake and Flame Thrower are both good attacks to use, but

are trumped by Ice 2, Fire 2, and/or Bolt 2, if they are available to you. Shiva and Choco/Mog will both help out in a pinch, but only as single attacks. Throw, by the way, is the most powerful materia available to you at the time, but only if you have projectiles on hand (and are willing to use them). Truthfully, it would be a better idea to just have the Throw materia handy and resort to using it only if you have to. And I probably shouldn't have to tell you this, but you're going to need some serious healage on hand. The Restore/All combo is by all means recommended for this fight, and you may even consider taking Aeris along for her Healing Wind (or Yuffie, if she already knows Clear Tranquil).

Anyways, proceed down into the cargo area, where you'll notice that there are now monsters on board the ship. First and foremost is the Marine. And the main thing concerning them that you should be aware of is that you can steal the most excellent Shinra Beta from them. In addition to being kick-ass armor, it's also one of the game's lost-forevers, mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Take your time and steal as many as you like from them, because these guys are seemingly endless. In combat, they are really nothing to speak of. They have an annoying tendency to put your characters to sleep, but that's about it. Also on the ship is an enemy called Scruitin Eye, which is a lot more dangerous than the Marine. They can cast both Fire 2 and Ice 2, so you've got to stay on guard around them. They have no weaknesses, and they are invulnerable to earth magic.

Anyways, you may want to fight around in the Cargo Bay for a minute or so whilst you collect some Shinra Beta. If you haven't already collected the All materia down here, you may also be wanting to do that right about now (the All materia here being one of the lost-forevers mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ). You might also want to build up your limit meters in preparation for the upcoming boss battle (especially Red XIII's, if he's with you and knows Lunatic High, that is). When you're ready, proceed through the door in the cargo bay into the next room. Just inside the next room, you'll see a ladder to your left. You can crawl atop it to the catwalk above and follow it to a chest containing the Wind Slash, a weapon for Yuffie and yet another of the game's lost-forevers (mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ) At the from end of this room, you'll see a sailor standing quietly against the wall. When you try to talk to him, he collapses at your feet... dead.

That's when Sephiroth appears. And by "appears", I really mean "rises up creepily from the floor beneath you". I'm sorry, but this is just getting just a tad bit creepy. Cloud tries to yell at Sephiroth, but he doesn't even give Cloud so much as the time of day. Instead, he just floats into the air, and then... launches himself into the air at an incredibly high velocity. You're left with no time at all to ponder exactly how weird, strange, unsettling, unusual, creepy, or disturbing that may have been, because a fight will immediately begin with a little playmate that Sephiroth has left behind for you. Say hello to Jenova-BIRTH.

Jenova-BIRTH's attacks aren't horribly powerful, but you'll find that it is atrociously fast, and that it's attacks often occur in tandem, thus giving you reason enough to worry. It's regular attack does a considerable amount of damage, and it also has its Tail Laser, which is a fairly powerful attack against the entire team. To make things worse, Jenova-BIRTH can make use of the Stop spell. And, unfortunately, neither Mindblow nor Seal Evil can prevent this attack. So, really, you've got no defense against it. The best thing you can do for yourself (besides quickly using Lunatic High, if applicable), if to just wail on its ass with all of the attacks that you've prepared yourself with (see four paragraphs above this one). And, perhaps most importantly, keep an eye on your HP during this battle.

After you've killed it, it's arm sits there on the floor and continues to



that), you'd be wise to loot the basement of its valuable contents, which include the Motor Drive, a Fire Ring, and a Power Source. Lastly, the item shop is of worthy mention in this town. The owner recommends that you buy a Soft as a memento of your stay. As idiotic as the idea of selling tenderizer to tourists is, there is a reason that it has become their number one commercial item. However, before you buy, realize one thing: there is only one enemy up ahead than can stone your characters. Furthermore, it is a slow stone (it takes 30 seconds to take effect), and even if you haven't managed to end the battle by that point, the condition will not last past the end of the battle.

You'll also find your team hanging around town in various places (excluding the ones who are with you, of course). Barret has commandeered the bathroom at the local inn and appears to be having some difficulty getting out of his sailor outfit. Tifa has located an old childhood friend and is chatting with him (a fact which would make Cloud jealous if he were capable of human emotion). Yuffie has found a part-time job at the local materia shop from a man whom she later intends to rob blind (Yuffie's not a very considerate person, you'll soon learn). Red XIII is napping on the sidewalk near several children playing soccer. More than likely, you'll find yourself giving in to the urge to run up to the ball and kick it at Red XIII, possibly repeatedly.

Lastly, Aeris is at the beach (accessible from the lower right corner of town). As you enter the beach area, Aeris will spot Dr. Hojo lying on the beach, surrounded by beautiful women. Never have I wanted more to be a flaky psychopath than I do now. The team approaches Dr. Hojo with an inquisitive mind. Of course, there's only so much information you can hope to glean from someone who speaks mostly to himself and entirely in indecipherable gibberish. He begins another one of his orgasmic seizures and pratters on about something calling you or that there's some place you feel like you have to visit. You know, sane things. Even Cloud, who has frequent discussions with voices in his head can't relate to this level of insanity, and replies that the team is after Sephiroth. After a little more questioning from the team, Hojo begins mumbling more nonsense, but thankfully manages to splice "head west" somewhere into it. Following this, you cease wasting your time with the lunatic and head back into town.

You'll probably want to take a nap at the inn (where your dreams will be accompanied by the soothing sound of the ocean waves), after which your team will "regroup". By regroup, I mean that the ones that were hanging around town have since left. Take the time to point and laugh at the materia shop owner who was grifted by Yuffie (interestingly enough, he still has the same selection of wares as he did before). And to answer a question that I myself had at one point: your team never sees a dime from Yuffie's thieving escapades. Even more weirdly, you can bring Yuffie back to the shop owner and neither of them will say a word to each other. Anyways, having accomplished all that need be done in town, say goodbye to the tropical paradise of Costa Del Sol and head westward.

In the fields, you will run into only one enemy in the local area. This enemy is known as the Garagan, and is what appears to be a gigantic floating barrel. If that wasn't ridiculous enough, once you damage it enough, it can generate a smaller version of itself called the Garagan Jr. The Garagan Jr., in turn, having reached sufficient levels of damage, can spit out three very tiny, very cute Garagan Jr. Jr's. Essentially, this is the kind of enemy that one would think up after about nine or ten hits off the crack pipe. To further substantiate my theory that the Costa Del Sol area monster activity was developed by a bunch of programmers in the span of about five minutes after two months of heavy narcotics use is the fact that the Garagan and its spawn have only one attack. It's called Silver Wheel, launches a shiny metal sprocket directly towards your face, and despite how painful it looks is a relatively harmless physical attack towards one of your characters. As far as fighting



them goes, they have no strengths or weaknesses to speak of. The Garangalan can take a lot of damage, however, but thankfully will only spawn a Garangalan Jr. when it is near death. The Garangalan Jr. can take a lot of damage, but not nearly as much as the Garangalan. It, too, when near death will respawn. The miniature Garangalan Jr. Jr.'s are very easy to kill and will likely fall in a single hit. When you kill a Garangalan creature, everything that it spawned will die with it, meaning that battles can easily be brought to an end by just wiping the floor with the original Garangalan. However, you will only get AP and experience for the creatures that you killed directly. So, if you're not in any kind of a hurry, you might want to stop and pick up a little experience by killing them all. Oh, and did I mention that the Garangalan(s) are immune to earth magic?

By the way, there actually is one other creature around here, but you will not encounter it unless you go down to the beach. And the term "ridiculously easy to kill" does not do the Beachplug justice. It is a weak, pathetic creature in every way. However, they do have an attack called Big Guard which you may learn with the E. Skill materia. They will never use it, however, so you're just going to have to remember to collect it once you pick up the Manipulate materia.

Anyways, head westward and follow the path through the mountains to the base of Mt. Corel.

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--- Welcome to: Mt. Corel

It's kind of misleading at first, because the base of Mt. Corel is a cave for some unknown reason. It's one of those flukes in video game physics. So just don't be surprised that after stepping into the cave you find yourself at the bottom of a rocky mountain path. A guy conveniently loitering around here will mention having recently seen Sephiroth pass by here. And Sephiroth must've been in a good mood, because this man is noticeably not hacked up into tiny little pieces. Hot on Sephy's trail, head on down the mountain path.

Before we go over the local monster activity, let's go over one detail right quick. Now, I know you're just dying to use your Shiva and Ifrit materia to nail and lay waste to all who dare oppose you... But, realize that by overusing those two materia, your MP will nosedive. However, realize that the Choco/Mog materia at this point is equally effective in annihilating all of your enemies, and at a much cheaper MP cost.

That being said, wouldn't you know that there's monsters here? Let's go over them now. The Bagnarada, first and foremost, is mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ. They are large creatures with an immunity to fire magic and a weakness to ice magic. Their attacks are weak, but they will occasionally use a powerful Poison Breath magical attack which will do quite bit of damage to one of your characters in addition to poisoning them. They are quite durable in comparison to the rest of the creatures around here, as well. Lastly, if you are so inclined, you may wish to steal a Diamond Pin from one. Next, we have the Boatfloat. The Boatfloat is a little flying creature that is both very weak and easy to kill. They have a powerful attack called Spiky Hell, but it is used only as a clutch attack. Being an airborne creature, they have a natural resistance to earth magic. They fall prey to wind-based attacks, but unless you've got the Elemental/Choco/Mog combo in someone's weapon, this isn't going to be a fact you can exploit. Either way, they're still easy to kill. Next up, we have the Cockatolis. The Cockatolis is a giant bird that you will meet upon emerging on the old railroad tracks. They are weak creatures, and their only

point worthy of mention is their Petrify Smog attack which, you should be aware of, is the reason that guy back in Costa Del Sol was trying to pawn off a bunch of Softs on you. However, it takes 30 seconds for the petrification to set in, and if the battle isn't already over at that point, the effects won't even carry over to the next battle, so there's really little point in being worried. At the main section of the railroad tracks, you'll meet the Needle Kiss, an evil little bastard. It's a bird with a powerful lightning-based magical attack called Thunder Kiss. Lucky for you, they're at least easy to kill, but they are immune to both lightning and earth magic. The Search Crown (also mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ) is an enemy you will be introduced to on the other side of the tracks. They are small and very easy to kill. However, they have a tendency to show up in numbers, and can show up in very large numbers at times. Their attacks are of moderate strength, but they also have a more powerful attack called Four Lasers. But again, what makes them most dangerous is their numbers. They are at least easy to kill, as I have already mentioned, but avoid using fire magic, as they will absorb the damage rather than take it. The last enemy you meet at Mt. Corel arrives at the bridge, and is a giant, floating Bomb. Against better instincts, you are to attack the volatile floating Bomb, which will, as you might imagine, anger it. It has 600 HP in all. One you deal past 450 damage to it, it blows up in your stupid-ass face. As you can imagine, this hurts quite a bit. The idea is to avoid bringing its HP down to 150, and then dealing 150+ damage to destroy it before it has a chance to blow up. It's normal attack is not horribly bad, but it does have a powerful fire-based attack called, get this, Fireball. It also gets stronger and stronger as it takes damage and grows in size like an evil blowfish. Hehe... blowfish...

Anyways, as you head up the path, you'll soon find yourself on a long bridge leading towards a mako reactor built into the mountain. Head towards the reactor, and from there, head south to the next screen. There, you'll emerge on an old set of railroad tracks. You'll see a set of stairs to your left which you can use to disembark the tracks, but they really won't take you anywhere (you can go underneath the tracks and up the stairs near the top of the screen, but the only thing you'll get from it is a nice view of the reactor). Staying on the tracks, head to the bottom right corner of the screen to advance to the next screen.

You find yourself atop the sprawling railroad tracks leading through the mountains. Before you advance any further, there is something that you should be aware of. In three spots on these tracks, the tracks are rotted. And when you step onto them, they will give way. You can press a button to avoid this, but keep in mind that you will only have three chances to fall off the side of the tracks, and there are two items that you can find down there that are for this reason considered to be lost forever. That is, once you've stepped on all three sections of track, there's no way for you to get back down there. The two items are the Wizard Staff (on the left) and the Star Pendant (on the right). You can only collect one item at a time, as you can only climb vertically on the tracks. Thus, you must make at least two trips down here to collect both items. To collect them, wait until the track gives way when Cloud steps on it and you fall. Hold left or right as you repeatedly mash the appropriate button (the game will tell you which button to mash). If you did it right, you'll grab a hold of the tracks near the bottom on either the left or right side. If you did it wrong, then you will grab on in the middle of the tracks and will thus be able to collect neither item on this trip down. Lastly, keep in mind that when the tracks give way, they will create obvious holes in your path, but you can just hop over them.

As for the tracks themselves, continue on until the track splits into upper and lower sections. For starters, not matter which path you take, there's going to be a rotted section of track just past the fork (you can tell which parts are rotted by the way they look). Anyways, going up takes you to a treasure chest

that is for some reason lying on the railroad tracks. Inside is the W Machine Gun. The tracks also end with the W Machine Gun, as the gap is too large to jump. Back at the fork, the bottom set of tracks will take you to the section of track where the upper and lower paths meet. If you go backwards along the upper path, you'll find a Turbo Ether, followed by the third rotted section, followed by a Transform materia. People leave such useful things lying on railroad tracks, don't they? Anyways, where the upper and lower tracks meet, the tracks again split into upper and lower paths. The lower path will lead to an area where the remainder of your team has converged. Their progress is currently stymied by a raised drawbridge. Rather than lowering it themselves, they thought they'd wait for you to show up and do it for them. If you'd like to change the members in your party, do so by taking the lower path and speaking with the team. If not, then take the high road.

As you continue along the high road, you'll spot the rest of your team on the tracks below as you hurry across the bridge. At the other end of the bridge, you'll see a small shack. Enter the shack and pull the lever. This lowers the bridge, thus allowing your teammates to cross it. You may also return to that spot and cross it. But first you may wish to follow the track that you are currently on as it twists around the corner. From there, you can scale the cliff to a small bird's nest. If you'd like, you can pilfer 10 Phoenix Down from said nest (at somewhat of an expense to the baby birds, mind you). In choosing this, you'll also have to fight the mother (a Cockatolis). By the way, your decision here has no effect on your teammates' feelings towards you (as discussed in section VII.A. of the FAQ), so go ahead and pilfer away if you so choose, you evil, heartless bastard.

So, return to the bottom and cross the bridge. Continue along the tracks until they fork. One path goes left to a seeming dead-end. However, if you walk across the path of junk and turn right underneath the tracks, you'll enter a small alcove where you can find a Tent, a Mind Source, a Power Source, and a lazy worker. Keep in mind that an arrow to the entrance will not appear even if you use the select button, so you'll have to find it on your own. Anyways, back at the fork, the right path takes you to the next screen.

The next screen is the longest rope bridge you've ever seen in your life. Now, I know your party has had negative experiences with rickety rope bridges in the past, but you really have no choice but to cross it. Miraculously, the bridge does not collapse into nothingness as you cross it. Someone must be watching over you...

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--- Welcome to: North Corel

Anyways, just at the other end of the bridge, you'll emerge in a quaint little town called North Corel. And by quaint, I mean "barren, deserted trash heap". A couple of scruffy-looking guys approach Barret and begin to relentlessly trash-talk him. Before you duck and cover to prepare for the expected bloodbath, realize that Barret is... taking it? The guys prod and antagonize him feverishly, calling him a traitor and blaming the current condition of their trash pile, I mean, town on him. Barret's only response is "I'm sorry..." before the guys just give up and walk away. Approach Barret and talk to him, but he just runs off, presumably to shoot something.

Take a look around through the filth and talk with the local residents. Like every other normal citizen of the world, they despise the Shinra. Of course, for some unknown reason, they despise Barret equally. There's a guy here who's considering getting a tattoo and asks your advice. If you reply that you

haven't a clue what he's talking about, he responds that he saw someone matching Sephiroth's description passing through here, and also that he had a "1" tattooed on his hand. Hmm... Anyways, seeing as the town is little more than "Jonestown: the Morning After", the shopping, as you might expect, isn't horribly great. Of course, there are a few decent buys at the weapon shop if you're at all interested and/or haven't already picked these items up yet. The item shop also sells meager supplies. When you're done scrounging through this hell hole, head to the trolley station in the far west area of town (and you might also want to get a tetanus shot...)

You'll find Barret at the trolley station, and at this point the team questions him. Barret explains that his hometown used to be around here. By "used to be around here", he means that the place wasn't always a landfill. It was once a cozy little mining town that, for some reason, nobody has bothered to begin rebuilding over all these years. One day, the Shinra came to said cozy mining town and asked them permission to build a mako reactor. At a village meeting, everyone in the town, even Barret, supports the idea, except for a man named Dyne. Dyne is the one that isn't about to throw away his ancestor's coal mines for the technology of the future. Also present at this meeting are a few Shinra troops led by evil bitch, Scarlet. Scarlet makes a few empty promises, and ultimately, Dyne is overridden and the reactor is built.

Barret and Dyne were good friends, you see. And one day, while they were off visiting the reactor, something happened. Barret and Dyne returned to North Corel only to discover that the Shinra had firebombed the place. Apparently, there was an explosion at the reactor which Shinra blamed on a rebel faction. I have to admit, in a way, Shinra's method for dealing with crime is very harsh to say the least. They decimate an entire city because someone in it pissed them off. Sure, it's effective, but it's just that if they keep it up, they're not going to have any cities left. Anyways, Barret blames himself for the whole incident, even though his only real crime was trusting the Shinra. He feels even worse because the fire killed his wife, Myrna. This, by the way, is why he feels so attached to Marlene: she's all he's got left.

The trolley is about to leave, and you should go ahead and get on. Barret steps onto the trolley, dejected. Your team follows him on, making all sorts of comments on the way. The only one who does not sympathize with him is Yuffie, who really isn't capable of such a non-evil emotion, anyways. The trolley takes off, and your team heads for the Gold Saucer.

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--- Welcome to: The Gold Saucer

The first time you go to the Gold Saucer, you are treated to a lovely, kick-ass CG movie sequence. The Gold Saucer is the coolest thing that ever was and the most kick-ass place in the entire game. You arrive just outside the Gold Saucer and a guy standing up front will charge you for a ticket. The price of a one day ticket is 3,000 gil, and a lifetime ticket is 30,000 gil. Keep in mind that you will want a lifetime ticket as soon as you can afford one, but you probably won't be able to afford one now. If you can, then by all means go for it. If not, just be sure to have all of your fun before you leave.

The team steps inside the Gold Saucer and splits up. Barret, obviously, is still pissed. And no amount of cheering up from Aeris will work. He eventually breaks off and heads off on his own. You at this point can choose one of your teammates to accompany you through the Gold Saucer. This decision will have an effect on the game later, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ. Note that if you try to leave without taking anyone, you'll receive a random teammate by

default. Truth be told, I believe that this "random" teammate may be decided by which character is the most fond of you at the time, but I really have no way of proving it.

Have some fun at the Gold Saucer, now. Most attractions here cost gil, but some will cost you GP (which can be acquired through various means). You may also want to stop by the Ghost Square to check out one of the flyers mentioned in section V.A. of the FAQ. For more information on the fun and attractions here at the Gold Saucer, refer to section VIII. of the FAQ. However, do not head to the Battle Square, as it will trigger an event which will end your stay at the Gold Saucer (though the event will not be triggered until you have triggered a previous event at the Wonder Square, meaning that if you'd like to visit the Battle Square, do so before going to the Wonder Square). You'll see some Shinra soldiers at the Chocobo Square, and at the Speed Square, you'll meet Dio, the owner and proprietor of said kick-ass place. Dio, if you didn't know any better, looks like one of Mukki's followers. He's a creepy, oily muscle-man in a speedo that keeps calling you "boy". He asks you if you've ever seen a "black materia", saying that Sephiroth came by looking for it, and reaffirms what the idiot back at North Corel said by stating that Sephiroth had a "1" tattooed on his hand. Dio then leaves you to your devices and heads off to the Battle Square, presumably to participate in some speedo-related activity.

I also mentioned a triggered event at the Wonder Square. As you arrive, you are approached by a gigantic stuffed animal. Its name is Cait Sith, and it is the worst fortune-telling machine the world has ever known. Cloud takes the bait and asks it where he can find Sephiroth. The response you get from it is both non-sequitor and blatantly wrong. Miss Cleo could give better advice by reading fortune cookies than this thing could. But he tries, dammit. He really tries. And at the end, he seems so pathetic as to need a hug just for trying. The last fortune he spits out is rather ominous, however: "what you seek will be yours, but you will lose something dear". Of course, he wants to know what the hell it means, so he decides to come with you. And he isn't taking no for an answer. Welcome Cait Sith to the party. He comes with a Transform materia (with 7,000 AP already on it, to boot) and the Manipulate materia. Joy.

With Cait Sith in your party, head on over to the Battle Square. You should be quite familiar with the sight of bloody massacres by this point, and that's exactly what you see here. There's a twist to this one, however. The people here were all shot. Sephiroth would never use a gun... One of the dying people fingers "a man with a gun on his arm" as the cause of all the slayings. Dammit, Barret! What have we told you about killing people!? Bad, bad Barret! No cookies for you! Dio arrives at about this time, and you party does the absolute stupidest thing imaginable: they run. Of course, they are easily caught. Your punishment? You will pay for your crimes "down below"... Before you can derive anything sexual from that remark, a couple of gigantic machines grab your characters and skydive out of the Gold Saucer.

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--- Welcome to: Corel Desert Prison

You find yourself in a ratty hellhole that almost makes North Corel look livable. Cait Sith mentions that this is a desert prison, where people are sent to rot, pretty much. In one special case, a man was set free, but since it would fall into the category of actual helpful advice, Cait Sith can't tell you much more about it. At the bottom of the screen, your party sees Barret. Approach him and speak with him, but don't expect to get much out of him. He pretty much just tells you to leave him alone and runs off again. Barret doesn't like to be bothered after his killin', you see. However, your party,

not being ones to follow common sense, unwisely should continue after the enraged man with a gun grafted into his arm.

Before you go any further, you should probably note that enemies wander the streets, and you're more than likely to get into a fight before going too far. You'll meet a lot of scum out here, beginning with the Bandit. If there's any place you can expect to do battle with things that will steal from you, it's here. As always, be wary of them and dispense with them quickly to avoid theft. They possess no weaknesses, but thankfully no strengths, either, and are relatively easy to kill. In addition, the Bandit is also mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ. In addition to also being mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ, the Bull Motor is a more viable opponent than the Bandit. While it cannot steal from you, does have the powerful Matra Magic attack (which you can take the time to learn with the E. Skill materia if you haven't already). Next on the list is the Death Claw. Again, there's not much to talk about here. It's a fairly tough opponent with no strengths or weaknesses to speak of. It does, however, use the fairly detrimental Laser attack, which is yet another worthy addition to your E. Skill materia, so you might want to take the time to learn it (you may also choose to utilize the Manipulate materia to speed the process up some). The 2-Faced is another... strange thing. It's a bouncing, spinning... thing. There's really not much to talk about with these things, but don't be surprised if you find them doing strange things like healing you or committing hara-kiri halfway through the fight. Lastly, we have an enemy that you will not encounter until your dumb ass wanders out into the desert (which, sadly, you'll have to do). The Land Worm has an insanely high amount of HP (making Laser a very good attack to use against it). Fire magic will only do half damage, so isn't really a good idea. In addition, the Land Worm is immune to earth magic, but is weak versus ice magic. More good news is that the Land Worm always travels alone. Do watch out for its attacks, however, as they are fairly powerful and do target the whole party.

Anyways, with that out of the way, follow Barret to the southern end of "town". You'll find him in a small, nondescript house somewhere on the right. You'll enter and attempt to talk to him. He turns around and... shoots at you. Seriously. Actually, when the dust clears, a man who was hiding behind the couch appears and collapses to the ground. I'm not quite sure why Barret shot him, but I'm fairly certain that his reasons were something along the lines of "he needed killin'." Barret just turns around and says that he doesn't want any of you to get involved. Well, dumbass, you went around and shot everybody and got us sent to prison, I'd call that pretty involved. The rest of the team arrives and it is Red XIII who finally brings up the massive slaughter to Barret. Barret denies having anything to do with it, saying that there is another man with a gun-arm... It seems just a little too far-fetched to swallow, but Barret provides proof in the form of a flashback sequence.

The scene begins right where the last one left off: with Barret and Dyne rushing through the mountains to help North Corel which, as you will recall, was being attacked by the Shinra. And when I say "attacked", I mean it. This wasn't just a routine city-bombing. An elderly old man comes hobbling the mountain path to warn Barret and Dyne of the disaster in the village and is shot in the back by a Shinra soldier. Christ, Shinra! When you are shooting elderly men in the back as they are slowly but surely fleeing your evil ass, you can no longer use "trying to crush a rebel faction" as an excuse for your actions, because at this point you are just blatantly committing genocide. Barret and Dyne now run for their lives from the firing Shinra soldiers. They probably would have gotten away, too, except that Scarlet, everyone's favorite evil bitch, shows up at this point and begins yelling at the soldiers for their horrible aim. She kicks one of the soldier's asses, takes his gun, and begins firing. And I've got to hand it to Scarlet: that woman is the best shot I've ever seen in my life. Dyne trips over the edge of the cliff and Barret grabs

his arm. As Dyne dangles over the edge, a bullet (presumably fired by Scarlet) hits them directly where their hands met, thus severely damaging both mens' hands, and causing Dyne to plummet into the abyss below. Barret never does explain how he managed to escape the situation with his life, though at this point I would not rule out divine intervention.

Anyways, Barret was an angry amputee for quite some time following. He finally decided to have a gun grafted into his arm, thus becoming an angry amputee with a gun. That's when he set out to mess the Shinra's world up. He mentions that the doctor who performed the operation on him (yes, Barret was through some strange means able to find a doctor willing to do this) said that another man had had the same operation, except that the other man had damaged the other arm. Barret can only assume that this man was Dyne. Again, we really don't get any explanation as to how Dyne could have survived that huge drop, but thus is the mysteries of life.

Cloud and the teammate of your choice will now accompany Barret to locate Dyne (because stupid things like "trying to get out of this hellhole" can wait). Again, whomever you choose will affect the game later on, as discussed in section VII.A. of the FAQ. The rest of your team will hole up in this God-awful shack, and you can return to switch out your teammate whenever you wish. The rest of the houses around here aren't much help, either, and are populated entirely by scumbags and sleazebuckets. There is a meager item shop in the far southeast corner of town, but that's about it. Do take note, however, of a cargo truck almost directly west of the building where your team is. Mr. Coates, the owner and proprietor of said hellhole is hanging around inside in his green leisure suit and has for some strange reason yet to be shot to death by a local ruffian. It may have something to do with the fact that he alone is in charge of the elevator that leads back up to the Gold Saucer. Nobody goes back up to earn a chance at their freedom without his go-ahead. And he, of course, says that you ain't going nowhere until you speak with "the boss". And for those of you who have never taken remedial plot-mongering 101, "the boss" is none other than Dyne.

To hunt down Dyne, head back up to the northern section of town from whence you originally came. Head north through the town and exit this screen on the right side of the fence you see. You should emerge on the right side of a fence in the middle of the desert (and your progress north should be halted by a gigantic chasm ahead of you). From here, just keep heading east through the desert. If you for some reason manage to mess up and get lost in the middle of the desert, a passing chocobo cart will pick you up and dump you back off at the beginning. But, it shouldn't be very hard to follow the directions "go east", should it?

You'll find yourself at yet another scrapheap. Before you advance much further, do take note that Barret is about to fight a boss battle alone, so you might want to go ahead and outfit him with the appropriate materia. Restore helps immensely. Poison might also be an asset, as the poison will help you out some. Then again, it's just going to come down to a shooting match, anyways, so your selection of offense is of very little concern. Anyways, continue north to the end of the scrapheap to meet up with Dyne.

Dyne... Well, he isn't the nice guy he used to be. He's actually sort of lost his mind and wants to kill everybody and everything. This becomes readily apparent when he fires a few bullets into Barret. They really don't hurt him as much as you'd expect them to. Your party tries to intervene at this point, but Barret insists that this is a fight that he must fight alone. Actually, no Barret, we just wanted to get our materia back before you dumb ass dies of multiple gunshot wounds. And the fight with Dyne begins... As I said above, it'll really just come down a to a firing match, but do have Barret cure himself

if his HP gets low. Dyne has an attack called S-Mine which is deadly in the sense that it can be used in tandem with a normal attack, thus doing twice the damage. At the very least, Barret'll get a few good limit breaks off. All in all, the fight should be over fairly soon.

Anyways, Dyne at this point decides to end his life by jumping off the edge of the cliff, which really isn't too bright of an idea when you consider that the last time this happened, he sustained no notable injuries of any sort. At the very least, before he goes, he tosses a pendant to Barret, telling him to give it to Marlene. It ends as yet another one of those touching scenes that shows that Barret has a heart after all.

Of course, Barret makes up for his rare show of emotion in the next scene. The party approaches Mr. Coates and demands to be sent back above. Mr. Coates sees the pendant that Barret is carrying and immediately understands the whole story. He explains that one person at a time can be sent above for a chance to set the party free. And then, just for good measure, Barret roughs Mr. Coates up a little, because he ain't no pussy! Now, I know you're probably expecting to have to fight for your freedom by explaining to some form of judicial body what really happened. No. That is antiquated bullcrap. Here, you fight for your freedom by winning a chocobo race. Maybe this is just my opinion, but racing is generally a very poor measure of a person's innocence. If anything, winning the race is an indicator that said person will have a higher than average chance to outrun the authorities after committing their next heinous crime. But, at least it's an easy way out for you guys, at any rate. Naturally, Cloud is the one person selected to go up above and fight for the team's freedom.

You are accompanied by Esther, a chocobo manager who heard of your plight and wishes to help you out. She'll explain to you on the way up how to properly ride a chocobo and all that, and then you arrive in the Jockey's Lounge. There, you'll meet Joe, one of the top riders. He says that he looks forward to seeing you again, though past this moment, you never will see him again. Esther hurries off to prepare a chocobo for you, leaving you in the lounge with all of the scary jockeys. The bell rings for the race to begin, and the jockeys, like zombies almost, hop up and file out of the room. After they have all left, Esther shows back up at the door. You can talk to her to begin the race, though before you do, I strongly urge you to grab that Ramuh materia someone left lying in the corner. The Ramuh materia is, as we all know, a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, so you'd be very wise to nab it while you can.

As for the chocobo race itself, this is something you'll probably become far more familiar with later in the game, but I'll go over the quick basics you'll need to win right now. From the outset of the race, just take off. Dash as far as you can until just before your chocobo's stamina runs out (if it runs out, your pace will slow to a crawl), and then let up on the acceleration. At this point in the race, you should be so far away from the rest of the pack that your win is in the bag. If you fail to win the race, you are sent back into the Jockey Lounge to relive the past five minutes of your life all over again until the end of eternity or until you finally win.

The above information should really be all you need to win, but if you still find yourself having difficulties, do yourself a favor and hold down the R1 and R2 buttons throughout the entire race. This will slowly refill your chocobo's stamina bar as you race, meaning that near the end of the track, you'll have enough stamina for a second wind.

Anyways, when the race is over, Esther hands you a letter from Dio. In it, Dio goes on and on with a lengthy apology, stating that how sorry he is and that



you are obviously not guilty if you possessed the skill to ride a Goddamned chocobo (which makes as much sense as assuming that one is a good chef because he or she wears puffy pants). And yes, he calls you "boy" throughout the whole letter. Goddammit, Dio... Anyways, as a further sign of his apology, he mentions that he has delivered a "gift" to you. Before your dirty mind can become frightened at that last remark, you get a call from Aeris on the PHS saying that Dio has given your party a buggy. A special buggy that can cross rivers and deserts, at that. Esther bids you farewell, saying that if you ever get a chocobo of your own to come back and she'll be your manager. And yes, you should be seeing more of Esther later on. See you later, Esther...

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--- Welcome to: North Corel Area

The game will tell you at this point how to operate the buggy you are currently driving. It's exactly like walking, except that you can now cross rivers and deserts. Also note that if you drive into Costa Del Sol with it, you can stow away on one of the boats at the dock to head back to Junon. There are several good reasons to do this. For starters, with that Fire Ring you found in Costa Del Sol, you can now return for a final showdown with the Midgar Zolom and learn the most kick-ass Beta attack. In addition, with the Manipulate materia on hand, you can also learn White Wind from the Zemzelett. You can also keep up-to-date with the Battles of Fort Condor, which are detailed in section X. of the FAQ. You can also visit the Sleeping Man, who is described in detail in section V.C. of the FAQ. You'll probably wish to return to the Costa Del Sol area and learn the Big Guard skill from the Beachplugs, now that you have the Manipulate materia, as well. You can also learn the Aqualung attack from the Chimeras around the desert (I talk more about them below), which you are now free to drive about in. This is a good idea, namely because the Aqualung enemy skill is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Oh, and by the way, back at Junon, feel absolutely free to head to the hallway leading to the underwater reactor (located at Upper Junon, between the two streets) and set off the alarm there. The only response the alarm will yield will be tough enemies appearing there in random encounters, making it a relatively good place to level up at this point in the game if you feel you need it.

Hmm... did the words lost-forever stand out enough in the above paragraph? Oh, well, I bet they do now.

I also should mention that this is the first time you will be exposed to the area surrounding North Corel. Let's examine the local monster activity, shall we? The first enemy is a badass called the Joker, who attacks you with surprisingly painful playing cards. The Spade is a physical attack, and the Diamond is a much weaker physical attack. The Heart, as a matter of fact, actually heals your character, which is pretty sweet. Club is more detrimental, as it casts Quake on a character. The worst card, however, is the Joker. The Joker is, as you may have guessed, instant death. Ouch. Thankfully, it's rather rare. The Jokers, lastly, are immune to earth magic, but weak versus wind-based attacks. Moving along, then, to the Flapbeat. The Flapbeat is a bird with a quite powerful long-range attack called Flying Sickle that it uses quite often. Lucky for you, they are easy to kill. Again, they are immune to earth magic, but fall prey to wind-based attacks. The Spencer is a completely generic enemy in every way, and had no attacks, strengths, or weaknesses to mention. They are also very easy to kill. Lastly, we move on to an enemy that you will only meet while driving in the desert: the Chimera. It has an attack which can poison you (it does no damage, thankfully), but that's not what you should watch out for. It also uses an attack called Aqualung which, you may know, is equal in power to Beta. I also mentioned in the paragraph above how it

is a lost-forever, so take note, young one. Now the good news is that the Chimera's magical capabilities aren't quite that of the Midgar Zolom, so it is possible to survive a shot of Aqualung (and also to learn it with E. Skill). Still, expect this attack to do several hundred HP of damage to each character, and be thoroughly prepared to kick its ass following your recovery from said attack. In the field of HP, the Chimera also possesses a lot of resilience, which is accented by its lack of a weak point. If you know Laser, it makes a good opening attack, by the way. The good news? Well, the Chimera always travels alone, so at least you'll only have to put up with one at a time.

Anyways, you may wish to spend some time cruising around, fighting and earning money (because you've probably gone and developed some sort of addiction to one of the games at the Gold Saucer by now). If not, then proceed west across the river into the Gongaga area.

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--- Welcome to: Gongaga

As you head west across the river, you'll enter some very thickly-wooded terrain. Welcome to the Jungle, baby! And now for a quick overview of the monster activity this side of the Mississippi. First, we have the Gagighandi, a creature who is of very little mention. They have a Stone Stare attack, but that just means you have half of eternity to end the battle lest you be turned to stone. There's also something called Grand Horn, which again merits very little mention. They have an attack called Grand Punch, which casts Quake on one of your characters, but that's about it. And lastly, I've seen some very poorly named enemies in the history of video games, but nothing could prepare me for the Touch Me. That's right: Touch Me. Finally, an enemy that sounds more like a bad 80's song than a bad guy. They are tiny little frogs with two very annoying attacks. One, called Frog Jab, will transform whatever it hits into a frog (or, if the target is already frogged, back to normal). You'll probably want to kill them before they have a chance to piss you off with it too much. However, their other attack is called Frog Song. Despite the fact that Frog Song is far more annoying and debilitating than Frog Jab, do be aware that this is something you can pick up with the E. Skill materia. To make things easier on yourself, you might want to utilize the Manipulate materia to achieve the desired end in this respect.

Anyways, you may spot a giant piece of junk nestled in the middle of one of the smaller forests in the area. Naturally, you must investigate. Hop out of your buggy and have a look-see, but first stop and make sure that your party is prepared for an upcoming boss fight. There are no real red flags you should be aware of, but keep in mind that powerful attacks like Beta, Ramuh, Bio 2, et cetera, will help end said boss fight very quickly. Also, the boss fight in question will feature two targets, so any attack magic materia you plan on using should be attached to an All materia where applicable. Throw is also a powerful attack, but with so many other powerful attacks (and the fact that Throw cannot be made to target all), there's really little point in wasting your hard-earned projectiles. On a final note, the characters you choose to bring with you may or may not have an effect on the game later on, as described in section VII.A. of the FAQ.

Entering the area, you'll emerge on a quiet forest path... well, quiet except for the two people you spy on the path ahead of you. It's Reno and Rude of the Turks! And the two of them are, of all things, gossiping. Apparently Rude has a thing for Tifa, Elena likes shiny things and also Tseng, but Tseng likes Aeris. Before they begin to discuss Tifa's cup size, however, Elena comes walking along the path behind you and begins to talk to you about how stupid

Reno and Rude are being. "It's so stupid!" Elena whinees. Yes, Elena, but apparently not as stupid as talking to people for twenty seconds before you realize who you're talking to. Indeed, after a few moments, she shuts up and stares blankly at you. She then runs screaming towards Reno and Rude, yelling, "they're here, they're really here!" Good work, Elena. Listen, we're going to be reassigning you to our "retard" division, ok?

Anyways, after some meaningless banter, Elena splits and Reno and Rude decide to throw down with you. But, as we've already established, a few castings of your ultra-powerful magics will introduce them to painful new ways to die. Laser, by the way, being a gravity-based attack, will not work. Neither of them have attacks that are too horribly powerful, but for what it's worth, Rude is the one with the Cure spell, so his ass needs to be the one to go first. But, most of your good attacks should be targeting both Rude and Reno, anyways, so this should not even be an issue. Once you've sufficiently dominated the two, they will turn tail and run. Actually, Reno is the one who runs. Rude just looks at his watch and casually meanders off... he's so cool. Anyways, your reward for kicking their asses is an X-Potion and the Fairy Tale.

Following the battle, Cloud voices his suspicion of the Turks. How did they know that you were coming this way? Was it a spy? Granted, it was just a matter of simple deduction, but when a group's main source of intelligence is someone like Elena, you become suspicious if they're so much as able to distinguish you from the buggy you rode in on. However, Cloud steadfastly expresses his trust in everyone in the group and pretty much drops the subject.

Before you go much further, might I remind you that you are currently in an enemy-infested jungle. While some of the creatures here are recycled garbage from the outside, expect to see a few new faces here. For starters, we have the Flower Prong. Its attacks aren't horribly powerful, but it does cast Bio 2, which you should probably be very familiar with. As you might expect, they absorb poison-based attacks, so they are not a very good idea. On the other hand, fire and earth-based attacks will mess them up pretty badly. There's also the Kimarma Bug, who has a most annoying tendency to hit you with its Stop Web. As you might expect, this will, well, stop you. Since they travel alone, it won't be too bad unless it has the time to afflict your entire party, but even then, you'll survive. However, it has a bit more HP than most of the other enemies around, so it can take a bit more time to get rid of. The last enemy is one you will not see until a tad bit later, and is called the Heavy Tank. The Heavy Tank has an extremely high amount of HP and takes a bit of time to kill, especially given their resilience to gravity based attacks. Its attacks are powerful, and it also has an attack called Big Spiral that will target your entire party for a decent amount of damage. The good news is that the Heavy Tank always travels alone, and is generally a greater test of your patience than your strategical skills.

By the by, you are currently standing at a fork in the road. It doesn't really matter, but we're going to be heading left first. Go left to a new screen and another fork in the road. First things first, grab that Deathblow materia you see lying on the ground. Secondly, the left path here will take you back to the world map, so go right.

You'll emerge in a quiet little forest town. The first thing Cloud notices is that exploded reactor in the distance. Seeing that, guess what just about every Goddamned person in this town is going to talk to you about? Here's a hint: it has something to do with that exploded reactor back there. The huts in this village are set up in an unusual fashion, as you can only access the second floor of each via strangely out-of-place fireman's poles built into each one. Scope out the town and the shops here, as well. Interestingly enough, from every shopkeeper in town, you have the option of buying from them, or asking to

hear a story. This really would have been a fun and interesting feature if not for one fatal flaw: everyone tells the same Goddamned story. And the story goes pretty much like this: "The Shinra built a reactor here. It blew up. The end." Thanks, shopkeeper. Because I couldn't derive that myself from taking a look at that gigantic blown-up Shinra reactor back there. Y'know, the Shinra just might have work for all of you in their special "retard" division. And say "hi" to Elena for us while you're down there. As for the actual shopping, at any rate, the weapon selection is the equivalent to the stuff back at Junon. Even if you might be interested in making a purchase, for one reason or another, do realize that another equipment upgrade is just around the corner, so you're advised to save your money at this point. However, you should definitely make it a point to raid a man's hut and steal his White M-Phone, because it is a good weapon for Cait Sith, but more importantly, it is also free. Lastly, you might also want to stop by the accessory shop and look around. The accessory shop is also the town's materia shop, by the way. Among the materia available here are the Time and Mystify, both of which you may choose to get while you're here (because in passing on either, you're going to have to wait awhile for the next opportunity).

Lastly, there's also Zach's house. Zach was a guy from this village (who, as we'll later discover, looked startlingly like Cloud) who left to join SOLDIER. Zach's parents quickly peg Cloud as an ex-soldier and begin barraging him with questions about Zach. Apparently, they haven't heard from Zach in 10 or so years, so you can kind of understand their excitement. But, lo and behold, Cloud knows nothing. If Aeris is with you, they mention that Zach had mentioned getting a girlfriend, and if Aeris happened to be it. Granted, the only thing they have to go on is the fact that Aeris is a girl, but it's worth a shot. Aeris and/or Tifa (whomever is with you) will leave in a huff. Your actions following this will have an effect on the game later, as mentioned in section VII.A. of the FAQ, but here's the basic gist of things. First of all, Zach was indeed Aeris's first boyfriend. He was also a SOLDIER 1st class, which makes things even weirder. Since 1st class is a fairly elite ranking, it seems very odd that Cloud and Zach had never heard of each other, not to mention the other creepy similarities between the two. Anyways, Aeris had heard that Zach had gone missing after leaving on a mission some five years ago and never returning. Aeris thinks that Zach, being a real ladies' man, had found someone else. Psychologically, this might explain her attraction to Cloud (who is obviously not a ladies' man). Anyways, as for Tifa, she was just pissed at the whole idea. She, like most other sane people, saw too many startling similarities between Zach's story and Cloud, which brought up the memory of Cloud ditching Nibelheim. Accomplish what you want to accomplish here, and then return to the original fork in the road (back where you entered from the world map).

Taking a right at the original fork in the road, you'll head towards that busted-up reactor. As you enter the shell of the reactor, a helicopter approaches in the distance, and the party runs to hide. Off the helicopter steps Tseng and the evil bitch. Cloud finally reveals that Scarlet is the head of Weapons Development at Shinra, but "evil bitch" still seems to be a far more appropriate title. She comes to inspect the reactor for materia, it seems, and comments disdainfully on the poor selection here. She says that she's looking for "huge" materia to make "the most powerful weapon ever". Which, when you think about it, doesn't make a hell of a lot of sense, seeing as the Shinra technically owns 90% of the world, anyways, and wins the rest by sphere of influence. The only remaining nation for the Shinra to attack is itself (though, as we have clearly seen in the past, the Shinra apparently has no problem with laying waste to its own cities...) It kind of reminds me of a kid who builds a sand castle just so he can knock it down... Anyways, following this, Scarlet zings Tseng a good one about his boss being Heidegger. And that hurts. Because it's Heidegger, for God's sakes. Heidegger. Sure, Scarlet may

be an evil bitch, but at least she doesn't have to answer to someone who gets angry and begins randomly assaulting people every time his boss hurts his feelings.

Anyways, after the two leave, examine the reactor for the Titan materia, and then blow this popsicle stand. In case you've forgotten, you're still after Sephiroth. And he's not here. Hop in your buggy and continue east across the river and through the mountains...

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--- Welcome to: Cosmo Canyon

First of all, with the new land, comes a new set of enemies. First, we have the Desert Sahagin. If you'll remember the original Sahagin from Sector Five, you'll recall their annoying tendency to severely reduce damage dealt by incoming physical attacks (but again will only think to do so after you've hit them a couple of times with physical attacks). But, unlike their brethren, ice magic will ruin their day in no time. Just refrain from using fire magic, which has only half effect, and water magic, which it will absorb. Next, we have the Griffin. They are among the more difficult-to-kill monsters in the area, and can be very annoying when they utilize an attack called Peacock, which will drain lots of MP from each character on the team. There's also the Skeeskee. Besides having a name that's really fun to say, they are surprisingly strong, having more powerful attacks than the other enemies in the area. They also have a very powerful attack called Rage Bomber, which can cause rage upon your characters. Lastly, we have the Golem. The Golem, for starters, boasts more HP than any of the enemies in the area, and is by far the most durable. Its attacks, while slightly more powerful than those of some of the other creatures, are thankfully not horribly powerful, a fact which will be amplified by the tendency of the Golem to travel alone. The Golem is also mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ.

Anyways, as you drive through the mountain trail, the sun begins to set in the distance. It's supposed to look cool and go with the flow, but if you keep driving back and forth along the foot of the mountain, you can recreate an old Simpsons gag by making the sun go quickly down then back up again and back down and up until you get very bored from doing so or too tired to stay awake any longer. Sun goes up, sun goes down, sun goes up, sun goes down, up, down, up down, up, down... With this out of your system, keep driving until you begin to experience what we in the biz like to call a "mechanical breakdown". Goddammit, Cloud, I told you to put gas in this thing! Now Barret's going to get mad and start shooting people again! And, for future reference, when you start to hear your vehicle make a funny noise, turning up the radio to drown the funny noise out is generally not the best solution to the problem. At any rate, just be thankful that you conveniently broke down three feet away from a town. Let's head on inside, shall we?

Welcome to Cosmo Canyon, a tribal village built into the side of a cliff. Now, in the world of Final Fantasy VII, even a tribal village such as Cosmo Canyon is technologically advanced, but they are more or less the only village on the planet that is not affiliated with Shinra, Inc. You see, Cosmo Canyon, as the guy at the gate will proudly hail, is the home of the study of the life of the planet, so you can sort of imagine why nobody here wants the Shinra involved in their business. Before you even get to the gate, however, Red XIII bolts ahead of you and is promptly welcomed home by Gate Guy, who refers to him as "Nanaki". Nanaki, of course, being Red XIII's real name. A bit of confusion follows, and as you might expect, you can see a pretty hilarious conversation occur here if you had the foresight to name Red XIII Nanaki when you first met

him. Gate Guy is about to toss your ass back out onto the streets (I'd be wary of letting someone with a sword that big into my town, too), but Red XIII has a few words with Gate Guy, who'll then happily let you in, because helping Red XII was apparently a "horse of a different color" or something-rather.

Speak with the people around town, and you'll basically hear that you are in Cosmo Canyon, home to the study of the planet. Well, I already told you that, didn't I? You do meet a really nice guy who offers to fix your car, but talking to him isn't required for the car to get fixed. Interestingly enough, however, you can try to talk to him a bit later on (after he has already fixed the car), and even offer to pay him. You'll practically have to cram the 1,000 gil down his throat, and all you really get in return is him telling you that there is an Elixir underneath the couch upstairs at the inn.

Anyways, you'll see Red XIII hanging around the stairs on the west edge of town. He tells you that this place is the home of him and his tribe, but that he is the last of his kind (just in case you were getting your hopes up of seeing more talking dogs). His mother was a brave warrior and died fighting here, whilst his father, the coward, fled. He also says that his mission is now to protect the village, and that his journey will end here. Following this, he turns and heads upstairs. Follow him. You'll make your way through a couple of shops (I'll go over the shopping detail in just a few, so for now head to the top of Cosmo Canyon). On your way up, take note of the giant sealed door you'll see... it's important.

At the top of Cosmo Canyon, you may already have noticed, is a gigantic observatory. Inside said gigantic observatory, you'll meet Red XIII, and his grandfather, Bugenhagen. You should probably realize that grandpa is an honorary and not hereditary title from the fact that he is noticeably not a talking dog, but rather he looks like one of the guys from ZZ Top. He thanks you properly from bringing Red XIII back home, and then proceeds to reveal that Red XIII is really only a child, relatively speaking. Because of his tribe's incredible longevity, his 48 years of age are something more like a human that is only 15 or 16. Bugenhagen finds it amusing that you thought Red XIII was an adult, but the truth of the matter is that when you meet a talking dog, its age is going to be pretty far down on the list of things you're curious about. But, seeing as Red XIII is both the oldest and youngest character in your party, you can really perceive him as either/or.

Following this begins Bugenhagen's speech on when the planet will die. It could be tomorrow, or a hundred years away... More or less, take the prophecy of Armageddon and remove any trace of organized religion from it, and that's what he's talking about. He says that he can hear the cries of the planet, you see. He's not an Ancient or anything, he's just got some kick-ass equipment that can hear it for him. Planets are born and planets die, he'll say, but you'll get a more thorough lesson shortly. Red XIII mentions the fact that you are on a quest to save the planet. We are? Damn, I thought we were after Sephiroth to stop him from killing people (a mission we also seem to be failing quite miserably at). Well, I suppose we also hate the Shinra, too, but who doesn't? Either way, Bugenhagen finds it amusing that you're trying to save the planet, but he agrees to show you his observatory, anyways.

A man walks in, saying that several odd-looking people have arrived in the village. And when your team consists of a man with a gun grafted into his arm and a cat riding a giant stuffed animal, it really doesn't take much more than common sense to figure out that he's talking about your team. Red XIII tells you that only three people can fit inside the machine at once, and then leaves. Now, what you must do, obviously, is go back to the base of Cosmo Canyon and assemble a party to go inside the observatory. And no, Bugenhagen isn't nice enough to show it to the entire team- only three of you get to see it. And,

despite what you may think, your choices will not affect the game later on, as detailed in section VII.A. of the FAQ, so just go back to the foot of Cosmo Canyon, scrounge around until you find one of your teammates (excepting Red XIII, who has seen the machine more times than he cares to deliberate), and speak with him/her to bring up the PHS screen. The head back to Bugenhagen's Observatory for one of the most kick-ass movie sequences in the game.

Granted, your characters will still look the same, the observatory itself is still a sight to behold. First, your party will take in the beauty of their surroundings, and then Bugenhagen will get down to business and explain the Gaia theory to you. Except for in this game, it's not a theory, it's a fact written in stone. Basically, the spirits and souls of every living thing are all part of one collective force known as the Lifestream. When something is born, it takes "spirit energy" from the Lifestream, and when they die, it goes back into it. He then gives you a really neat visual. Bugenhagen further deliberates that it is spirit energy that makes it possible for planets to be planets. Without spirit energy (and you'll get a visual on this one, too), the planet will crumble and die. This, by the way, would explain just how badly the Shinra is messing the planet up with their mako reactors. So, basically, unless you stop the Shinra, the world is screwed. But, for some reason, Sephiroth remains to be Cloud's top priority (which really makes one wish that Sephiroth and the Shinra would have just taken care of each other back at Shinra H.Q.)

Following your little lesson, head back down through Cosmo Canyon. For further instruction, you can speak with the two elders hanging around town. One of them will talk about the Promised Land. More or less, the Promised Land was something that existed only for the nomadic Cetra, and it was basically the eternal happiness that they achieved when they died and returned to the Lifestream. So the Promised Land, essentially, is that which is all around us. This also means that the people at the Shinra are a bunch of friggin' idiots who are wasting their time looking for something that they already have. You'll find the other elder getting plastered at the bar. He's got a far more intriguing tale to tell. He talks about Dr. Gast, who, as we all know, was a well-respected biologist. He used to come to Cosmo Canyon back in the day, and the people here would never have believed that his ass had anything to do with the Shinra. The elder recalls the day he heard that Dr. Gast had discovered the body of an Ancient, subsequently naming it Jenova. But then, one day, Dr. Gast showed back up at Cosmo Canyon, mumbling some nonsense about Jenova not being an Ancient. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Gast disappeared, never to be seen again. Take this story any way you'd like, but either way, it does raise a few questions.

Oh, yeah, there's also shopping to be done here. The Tiger Lily Arms shop, first off, contains one of the flyers mentioned in V.A. of the FAQ. Secondly, you can buy some better equipment here than has been available elsewhere. You might want to save some gil for the materia shop (located further towards the top of Cosmo Canyon), because there are a few materia available there that you might be interested in purchasing. Of note are the now-unavailable HP Plus and MP Plus materia. The item shop (located on the east edge of town), lastly, will have anything you need to further round out your inventory.

When you've had your fill of shopping and talking to creepy old men, you'll find the rest of your team sitting around that eternal bonfire they've got going at the base of the village (something that either or both of the elders would have made a point of telling you if you spoke with them). Walk around the campfire and speak with your teammates, listening to the interesting things they have to say. Barret gives an inspired speech about how this was the place that AVALANCHE was born (which explains the name AVALANCHE, at any rate). But, sadly, Biggs, Wedge, and Jesse are all dead, having given their lives to their cause. But that don't matter to him, because he's gonna keep fighting!

Fighting until he's gone and saved the planet! And, even though he doesn't really say it, he has an epiphany at this point. Granted, the original AVALANCHE is no more, but take a good look around you, Barret. What do you see? A guy with a huge-ass sword, a big-breasted hottie who kicks more ass than Jean-Claude Van Damme, a girl who has an intimate connection with the planet, an incredibly wise talking dog, a thieving little whore (if you got Yuffie, that is), and... er, a cat riding a giant stuffed animal. Don't you see, Barret? That's right, AVALANCHE is reborn!

Tifa just stares thoughtfully into the bonfire and begins to bring up that day five years ago to you, but then stops herself. She says that she feels like Cloud is going really far away, and then asks if Cloud is really himself. Granted, this is a very weird question that would not merit a response from anybody, but Cloud more than likely doesn't answer on the grounds that all of the voices in his head are giving conflicting responses. Aeris, on the other hand, is feeling very sad. She spend a lot of time talking to the elders and learning of the Ancients. And it's just started to hit her hard that she's the last of her race alive, making her feel like she's alone in the world. Cloud tries to cheer her up, saying that he and the rest of the team are there for her. But, it's really no use. Though, I have to give Cloud credit for the unexpected and uncharacteristic show of affection.

As for the rest of the team? Since you can't really expect much from a cat on a giant stuffed animal I guess you can't really blame Cait Sith for not having much to say. In a nutshell, he sucks at fortune-telling, and he sucks at conversation, too. And Yuffie, if she's with you, is far more concerned with future stealing opportunities than she is with whatever the hell it is that your party is up to (you said you were trying to save a plant or something, right?)

Talk to Red XIII last. He'll begin to talk about his father and how much of a coward he was, but that's when Bugenhagen shows up and asks why Red XIII can't forgive his father. Red XIII stalwartly proclaims that while his mother fought bravely to defend Cosmo Canyon, his father turned tail and fled like a coward, leaving Cosmo Canyon and its people for dead. Bugenhagen, in lieu of a response, just asks Red XIII to come with him. Saying that the trip will be dangerous, he requests that Cloud also come along with the teammate of his choice. Sure, Bugenhagen, we have time to take a break from saving the world from Sephiroth and the Shinra to deal with your crap.

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--- Welcome to: The Gi Cave

Before we move on, let me take a minute to state that everything found inside the Gi Cave is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. That being said, let's go.

You may recall seeing the giant sealed door of doom. Well, Bugenhagen has decided to crack it open and show everybody what's inside. Bugenhagen will join your group before you venture inside the Gi Cave, but don't be expecting any help from him. No, no, he prefers to sit quietly on the sidelines and watch. Though, I suppose there's not much you can expect from a man whom you'll later discover is 129 years old. You do get some rather interesting commentary from him at rather inappropriate intervals, however. By the way, he was right when he said the place was loaded with baddies, so do yourself a favor and set up your equipment and materia properly before venturing inside.

The monsters here all carry a fun undead theme with them, though only a few carry the trait of the undead (a weakness to holy-based attacks). First,



there's the Gi Spector, which looks suspiciously like Slash from Guns N' Roses. Their attacks are of little mention except that they can cast Death Sentence, and the only reason I mention that attack is because you can pick it up with the E. Skill materia. You need not worry about Death Sentence unless it takes you more than 60 seconds to end a battle, in which case I pity you and your lack of mental competence. The Gi Spector isn't horribly difficult to kill, but fire magic makes your job much easier, as does their susceptibility to holy magic (meaning that curative magic is also an effective attack against them). The Sneaky Step is another enemy that has no real attacks of note, except for again Death Sentence. They are a bit more difficult to kill, however, and have no weaknesses as do the Gi Specters. Next on the list is the Heg, a snake creature that has the capability to show up in large groups. Their vice is the ability to normally poison you with their attacks, which can be annoying. Take advantage of their weakness to ice-based attacks to rid yourself of them in a hurry, but avoid using poison magic, which they absorb. Finally, we have an enemy called the Stinger. You will not encounter them randomly, but there are a few places where you will fight them in the third room. Expect a tough fight, as they have more powerful regular attacks than the other creatures here and are much, much harder to kill, as well. In addition to powerful regular attacks, they also boast the Rabbit Food attack, which is twice as powerful, as well as the Sting Bomber, which is a maliciously powerful attack which can very well kill a weakened character, so keeps your HP up.

Just behind the door, there's a long path leading to the cave below. Make your way down via the ropes as you hear the sounds of Cosmo Canyon fading further and further into the background, until you at last reach the entrance to the Gi Cave.

In the first room, you'll see a little path, and a total of four small alcoves scattered throughout the room. Kudos to you if you also see the very large, obvious materia lying near the top of the room, but you cannot yet reach it, so be patient. Anyways, of the four alcoves, each has a rock inside. Each rock is described with a different non-sequitor adjective. The one you're looking for is the rock inside the alcove on the upper-left. Break that rock open, and the door to the next room opens. Break any of the others open, and you are instead treated to no progress of any sort, and also a random battle. As you exit the room, Bugenhagen will stop to talk a bit about the cave, saying that all of the monsters here are the fallen spirits of the Gi tribe, who all perished in a certain battle. That must have been a big Goddamn battle, given that there are an infinite amount of spirits abound.

Moving along to the next room, you'll quickly hit a fork in the road. The left path will take you to that materia you saw earlier (which, by the way, is the Added Effect materia). On the way, however, beware that strange liquid on the floor that you really don't want to touch but have to because it's right in your way and your characters never learned how to jump. Walk slowly across it, because if you run, you'll slip and the walls will react somehow by skewering your ass with a bunch of pointy spikes. From the strange goo, you can go down to the materia, but the path leading up is a dead-end. Back at the original fork, continue up to another fork in the road. And since going up is a dead-end, go left until you reach some stairs and a path leading up. While the path leading up will take you to the next room, the stairs ultimately will take you to two treasure chests. If you go down the stairs and continue down, you'll reach a chest containing the Black M-Phone. However, if you go down the stairs and go right, you come to another fork in the road. Going down, as you might have seen already, is an ultimate dead-end, but you can go up to a chest containing an Ether. Hurry on to the next room now, stopping to listen to Bugenhagen pratter on a bit more about how lucky Cosmo Canyon was to have not had the Gi attack right through this cave.

In the next room, you'll see five separate passageways standing before you. To make things easier the only two worthy of mention are the second and fourth from the left. Both paths, for starters, are obstructed by gigantic webs. When you touch these webs, you will battle the aforementioned Stingers, so be prepared for that. Moving on, the fourth passageway from the left will take you to two treasure chests. One, in the upper-right corner of the room, contains an X-Potion. The other is accessible by going left when the path forks and underneath the intersecting walkway to it, which contains a Turbo Ether. The second path from the left will take you to the next room, but you might make it a point to deviate from the path, heading left and then down towards the bottom of the screen. If you emerge from a small cave (shaped like one of the original five passageways), you went too far down. Rather, go up a bit from there, and take a turn right, going behind a giant boulder to a treasure chest containing a Fairy Ring.

Before advancing to the next room, prepare yourself for an upcoming boss battle. The boss in question has no weaknesses except for holy-based attacks, and is unaffected by earth and, quite obviously, gravity-based attacks. Prepare your most powerful attacks (which at the time should be probably contained within the Throw and E. Skill materia). Also note that you'll be taking quite a bit of fire-based damage in this fight, so your Elemental materia paired with Fire in someone's armor, as well as the Fire Ring, which you might still have, can help in this respect. If you know the Big Guard attack, you may or may not want to bust it out during the next fight, as it will be a prolonged one against powerful opponents. In opting not to, you might at least want to take along a Haste-all spell to help you out. As you head towards the last room, Bugenhagen mentions that the Gi tribe was defeated here, but before Red XIII can get any ideas, you continue to the next room.

Meet the Gi Nattack and his two pet Soul Fires. Those of you who have ever battled Wrexsoul from Final Fantasy III/VI may know what to expect, but this fight plays just a bit differently than it. The Soul Fires will periodically "possess" a member of your party, but the only real detrimental effect this will have is that they will occasionally cause fire damage to that character. On the field, they are a nuisance, mainly because of their many resistances. They are immune to earth, poison, water, and gravity damage and in addition, they absorb fire damage (which is why they will constantly cast fire on themselves to heal up). They fall weak against wind and holy damage, meaning that if you really want to take them out, you might as well just Cure the whole lot of them. If not, then just concentrate your efforts on the Gi Nattack. Gi Nattack has quite a bit of HP, and has a nasty tendency to steal your HP and MP, so be prepared to bust out a couple of Ethers and Turbo Ethers in this fight. Physical attacks are decent, but any applicable magic attack is preferable in this fight, especially given the high HP of Gi Nattack. Throw, if you have any projectiles on hand, is a powerful attack to consider unleashing on the Gi Nattack. Also, if you're not really concerned about the Soul Fires, a good move you can bust out on Gi Nattack is Beta, which, combined with other good attacks, can have him dead in a few turns or even less.

Of course, if you wanna be a pansy and end the fight immediately by using an X-Potion or Phoenix Down on Gi Nattack, go right ahead. I, however, do not condone or endorse this behavior in the least.

Following the battle, Bugenhagen explains that this is why the cave was sealed. You continue to the back of the canyon, where the party is shown an imposing figure in the distance... It is Seto, Red XIII's father. His stoned body stands atop the canyon, long defeated from his battle with the Gi tribe. Bugenhagen, after getting rid of the rest of the team, explains that Seto left the village to fight off the invading Gi tribe, and succeeded. Because of Seto's brave actions, the invasion was fought off, and Seto did not stop

fighting even when the poisoned arrows turned him to stone (yeah, notice the fifty gazillion or so arrows sticking out of the stone statue... creepy). Before Seto left, he and Red XIII's mother made Bugenhagen seal the cave forever and promise never to tell anyone about it. And it's nice to see how well he's upheld that promise, isn't it? I guess the important thing is that Red XIII no longer thinks poorly of his father, and the asses of the dangerous things roaming the cave have now become thoroughly acquainted with your foot. As a final bonus, the statue begins to cry, and the teardrops form a most kick-ass weapon for Red XIII (the Seraph Comb). Red XIII hops atop the rock and howls at the moon, now proud of his father. Bugenhagen tells Red XIII to continue on his quest with the group. He says, in so many words, that your cause is hopeless and that you are fighting a losing battle against the inevitable, but you've got to try, anyways. Thanks for the encouragement, old man.

Your party, back at Cosmo Canyon, is informed that the buggy is fixed and you're ready to go. Red XIII isn't around, and the team expresses their feelings before packing up to leave. You'll make it to the entrance of Cosmo Canyon when Red XIII comes bolting down the stairs towards your group saying that he's coming too. "I think I grew up a little!" he excitedly shouts. Goddammit, Red XIII, just because Bugenhagen called you a kid doesn't mean you have to act like one. He's 130 years old for God's sakes! Dick Clark is a kid to this guy... With Yoda having rejoined the group, pack into your buggy and move out.

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--- Welcome to: Nibelheim/The Shinra Mansion

It's a short drive to where the canyon ends, and you'll cross another river at this point. And a new area means new enemies abound. The Nibel Wolf and the Volron are both very simple, generic, run-of-the-mill monsters, and are very easy to deal with. The Nibel Wolf is considerably easier to kill than the Volron, and the Volron may put up the occasional M-Barrier, but that's about it. If you happen to meander down to the beaches, however, you will meet a third enemy, the Crown Lance. They aren't too hard to kill, especially given their weakness to fire-based attacks. Just refrain from using earth magic, which they are immune to, and lightning magic, which they will absorb. Their attacks are nothing to worry about, but as a general rule, you are going to want to kill them outright in a single blow. This is mainly because they will retaliate to any form of attack by instantly stoning the caster.

Anyways, not too far into the distance, you'll spot a small town nestled into the mountains. It's Nibelheim, Cloud and Tifa's hometown. However, when you enter Nibelheim, Cloud stops to note how the village is noticeably not incinerated to a crisp as he remembers seeing it last. Well, Cloud, even though those bastards over at North Corel don't believe in it, it's a little something called rebuilding... But, alas, Cloud may have a point after all, as the village is completely identical to the condition it was in before Sephiroth's inferno. And as if that weren't eerie enough, start talking to the people around town. The normal citizens all seem to have collective amnesia, and no one seems to remember that little incident that happened five years ago. For that matter, nobody seems to know who the hell Cloud and Tifa are, and react rather violently when you try to talk sense into them.

Their credibility is pretty much destroyed, however, by the fact that they are coexisting with about a dozen or so creepy midgets in black cloaks who wander aimlessly about town chanting "Se...phi...roth..." and "Re...un...ion..." And that's creepy on a scale I can't even begin to fathom. Cloud will notice, upon speaking with them, that each one has a number tattooed on them. Even

though the spikey-headed idiot boy doesn't quite grasp the concept at the time, you might already be drawing a few parallels between Sephiroth's "number one" tattoo, the retarded dumbass living in the pipe back at Sector Five, and these creepazoids. Despite the overwhelming unsettling feeling it may give you, it's still a good idea to talk to the Sand People, because they are so completely out of it that Cloud can steal their personal effects from them while they go on about their Goddamned reunion. Among the loot you can get by speaking with the local cultists are: 2 Luck Sources, an Elixir, Turbo Ether, and the Platinum Fist. Take heed that all of these items, namely the Platinum Fist, are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, by the way.

The psychopaths hanging around the Shinra Mansion actually have the most useful information of the bunch. They utter that "Sephiroth... is near..." He's inside the Shinra Mansion! We all know what that means. It's time to go stupidly face off with him. The Shinra Mansion is kind of a pain to get through, but only if you've decided to take up the optional side quest of cracking open the safe here (highly recommended). In that case, you've got a big boss fight ahead of you and you'd best be prepared (refer to section IV.A. for more details). Regardless of your decision, you still get to put up with the obnoxious enemies hanging around the Shinra Mansion, however.

Keeping in step with the extremely eerie and creepy theme of the entire town, the monsters here achieve a 9.8 on the creepazoid scale. The Ghiorofelgo, for starters, is a man swinging on a giant anchor that is the most disturbing thing you've ever fought. He's not horribly powerful, but he's a pain to kill (lots of HP there). In addition, he's got a pretty high resistance to magic, and is completely immune to earth magic. Physical attacks work so-so, but he has an Achille's Heel that makes him the easiest creature here to deal with, especially given that he always travels alone. Gravity magic is twice as effective against him, meaning that Demi will slice his HP in half, and Laser or Demi 2 will kill him outright. Moving right along, we also have the Judge. The Judge is holding a scale, which will periodically tip. On one side of the scale, they are affected only by magical attacks, whereas on the other only physical attacks. They begin the fight with it on the physical side, later switching to the magical side. You can tell which side they are currently on by their attacks. Physical attacks on the physical side, and they switch to using powerful magic attacks on the magical side. This means that you'll probably want to off them before they have a chance to tip the scales. Their HP thankfully isn't as high as that of the creepy anchor man. Two things are of special note about the Judge, however. The first is that they use an attack called ????, which you may learn with the E. Skill materia. Don't worry: this attack is usually completely ineffective against you, but you can use it with better results. Secondly, the Judge is mentioned in section XIX.A. of the FAQ. Next on the list is the Dorky Face, probably the most common enemy you'll meet here. The Dorky face is a huge pain in the ass and has two attacks that you should be aware of. One will confuse the entire party, while the other will silence one member of the party. Both are very annoying, but at least the silence helps to lessen the severity of the confusion. In preparation, you might want to put the Added Effect/Mystify combo in the armor of your strongest character, as you'll find that attacks from some of them can really hurt. Secondly, even though these are battles you'll want to end quickly, refrain from using doomsday attacks like Beta. Cause guess what happens if you get confused before you can use it? That's right. However, summons make excellent attacks, because even if your character gets confused, the summon still affects the right party. Just set up your fastest character with a summon like Shiva or Ifrit (due to their thankfully low HP, anything higher than Choco/Mog should be enough to kill them in one fell swoop), and end these battles before they even begin. If you don't feel like wasting the MP on a summon, however, you might try setting up your fastest character with a good Sleep-all spell, or something like it. Since every status ailment will affect the Dorky Face, just pick your

favorite thing to shut them up long enough for you to kill them without worry.

As you move into the Shinra Mansion's basement, you'll meet an even creepier creature known as Ying Yang. Ying Yang is a single enemy that exists as two, but always travels alone. Ying has a very high resistance to physical attack, whilst Yang is difficult to hit with magical damage. You've got to kill them both to get rid of it for good, so both physical and magical attacks are needed. They have a mean physical attack, and some pretty nasty spells (Bolt 2 and Ice 2), but that isn't what is going to really piss you off about them. It's that every five seconds, the battle pauses so that you can watch them eerily writhe. It's enough to make you want to stick something sharp and pointy through your TV, and if there was some kind of "delay of game" penalty you could lay down on this asswipe, you would in spades. To make things even more annoying, they have quite a bit of HP each, and are unaffected by gravity magic. And sadly, you can't even put them to sleep or stop them, or anything else like that... you just get to watch them writhe... and then show them the true meaning of pain. The last enemy is really more of a nuisance than anything. It's the Giant Bat that also hangs around in the basement. Their attacks are laughably weak and do nothing but steal a little HP from your characters. They are more resilient than you'd expect from a bat, and are naturally immune to the effects of earth magic, but it shouldn't take much effort to shut these flying little bastards out.

Well, as I've already mentioned, the meat of the Shinra Mansion is the fun little sidequest detailed in section IV.A. of the FAQ. Even if you don't decide to go through with it right now, realize that there are a host of other items to be found scattered throughout the mansion- items that won't be horribly useful if you come back too much later to pick them up. Since collecting most of these items involve traveling all around the mansion, the very least you could do for yourself at the moment is figure out the combination to the safe (details in section IV.A. of the FAQ), which also involves quite a bit of running around and to pretty much the same places. Without further ado, the following items can be found lying around the Shinra Mansion: the Silver M-Phone in the room just right of the entrance, the Twin Viper found by going into the back hall from the entrance, hanging a right, and going into the back room, the Enemy Launcher in the chest in the room with all of the plants in it (found in the left wing upstairs), and lastly a Magic Source found in the back room in the right wing upstairs (the room just behind the stairs leading down to the basement).

With that out of your way, the path to Sephiroth is very short and straightforward. In case your stupid ass forgot where the stairs to the basement were located, just go upstairs and head to the right wing. Head down the stairs, into the basement, and towards the library. Guess who's been sitting here waiting for someone to come and yell at him for killing people? Sephiroth gets right to the point, asking Cloud if he is going to be at the "Reunion". Cloud, in an attempt to sound badass, angrily replies, "I don't even know what a reunion is!" Nice one, Cloud. But I suppose I should just be happy that Cloud knows enough to discern what is and isn't ok to stab to death. In a possible attempt to make Cloud jealous, Sephiroth deliberates how Jenova will be at the Reunion, and refers to her as a "calamity from the skies", a fact which intrigues Cloud. Sephiroth proclaims that he is heading north, past Mt. Nibel, and that if you wish to learn more, you should follow him. Sephiroth then hurls a materia at you, and then does that creepy crap where he flies away like Superman. And you decide to follow him. Why, I do not know, because as Cloud has again proven, confronting Sephiroth is doing you absolutely no good. You just bullcrap with him for a few minutes before he flies away. At this rate, the planet is going to be pretty screwed in a hurry. But, well, you've got to try, I suppose. Pick up the Destruct materia, which is oddly enough undamaged from being used as a projectile, and get the hell out of here.

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--- Welcome to: Mt. Nibel

Parts of this place may seem very familiar if you were lucky enough to maintain consciousness through the flashback at Kalm. You'll find yourself at the base of daunting Mt. Nibel. It's not much bigger than some of the other places you've been to, but there's an assload of baddies to worry about here. We first have the Zuu, a giant flying bird with a mean long-range physical attack. It may also use the Great Gale, which damages the entire team, but thankfully not for too much damage. It is also one of the rare enemies that is a long-range venture to you, meaning only characters with long-range capabilities may damage it physically. The Zuu is immune to the effects of gravity and earth, and has quite a bit of HP to sustain itself. The only weakness to speak of is wind, but at the very least the Zuu always travels alone. Next up, we have the Sonic Speed, a birdie that seems strangely reminiscent of the Formula from Junon. However, they are nowhere near as obnoxious. They just have a regular physical attack, and the ability to somehow fire a Harrier cannon at you, which will do twice the damage of a normal attack. Both attacks are long-range. The Sonic Speed is immune to earth magic and weak to nothing, as well. Next up, the return of the ball and chain man, the Screamer. Nothing to speak of here except an immunity to gravity magic. Then there's the Kyuvildens, an enemy supposedly named by mashing random letters on a keyboard. They are tiny insect creatures with a mean attack called Lay Flat, in which they more or less physically assault you with the entirety of their tiny, insect-like bodies. Fire magic should toast their ass in a hurry, though. The Twin Brain is a very obnoxious creature with an attack called Stare Down, which paralyzes your characters. They always begin the fight with this attack, and then resort to their Absorb attack, which isn't so much powerful as it is annoying, because you're likely to be paralyzed to retaliate. Thankfully, they have no resistances and are very easy to kill. Lastly, there's the Dragon. The Dragon is an enemy not to be taken lightly, and is easily the strongest creature at Mt. Nibel. They have an insanely high amount of HP, almost as much as some bosses. They attack you constantly with Flame Thrower (an attack which you likely know with E. Skill), and their physical attacks are just nasty (much more powerful than Flame Thrower). To make things worse, they absorb fire-based attacks and are immune to gravity magic. Not much else I can say except go kick some ass here, but if you have the patience, you can steal the Gold Armlet from them- the best armor available at this point in the game (and free of cost, too).

Moving right along, then. The path up the mountain as you see it is more or less straightforward. There are two deviations in the path, however. The first is a fork in the road that splits left and right. The right path spirals up a path leading to the Rune Blade, whilst the left path continues on. The second deviation in the path is very hard to spot, and is a path leading up shortly after the area where you jump down a ledge in the path (just before you continue left off of the screen). This is a very long path, which takes you back to the right a bit and finally spirals up to a chest containing the Plus Barrette.

Continue left to an area where you'll see five numbered chutes. Before going down any of them, however, you might want to go down those stairs in front of you and lower the ladder on the left side of the screen. This ensures that you'll be able to get back up here without going all the way around (I'll go into that shortly). Back to the chutes, however. Chute 2 will take you to a chest containing the Powersoul, whilst Chute 4 will take you to a chest containing the All materia. From either landing space, you can hop down to the bottom of the room. Chutes 1, 3, and 5 all take you to various spots in the room unworthy of mention that will also see you to the bottom of the room.

From the bottom of the room, you have several options. One is to go back up to the ladder which you may or may not have let down so you can go down another chute to collect more treasure. There's also a save point down here which you may wish to utilize. Oh, and you see that giant fire-breathing dragon standing over there? Don't touch it, or it'll attack. As long as you don't touch it, however, you can maneuver all around it. Since it's guarding the exit, you're going to have to fight it, however, so be prepared when you do. However, you might first want to take the long path around Mt. Nibel, as there is lots of treasure to be found here. Those impatient bastards who wish to skip this part and go straight to the boss fight should skip the next few paragraphs and also know that they are impatient bastards.

The rest of Mt. Nibel is one long, circular path, which can be accessed from two locations in this room. The first is right near where you let the ladder down at the top of the screen, and the second is on the bottom of the screen near the dragon. And since the second you step foot outside the bottom path, you hop down a ledge which you can get back up, you are advised to go this route rather than starting up at the top. And since we're going to assume that you were a dummy and forgot to lower the ladder before taking a chute ride, I guess you really don't have much of a choice (seeing as this is the only way for you to get back up there without the ladder). The exit at the bottom of this room takes you back outside to the mountain. Remember, once you hop onto the ledge below, there's no turning back. You'll land in front of a cave, and also see a path leading down. The path leads nowhere, so enter the cave instead.

This cave should look very familiar, as it is the same one you went inside so many years ago. As you take the path towards the back, however, there is a treasure chest to be found along the way. You just can't reach it. Beyond the chest, however, you will see a small tunnel which you can access. Enter that tunnel and go left, then down, then right to the treasure chest, which contains an Elixir. Then continue to the back of this cave to the old mako fountain. Your reward for searching the mako fountain is an Elemental materia which has appeared there over the years, so be sure to grab it before continuing on.

In the back of the room with the mako fountain is a path leading to another room. There are a lot of stalactites blocking your way around this room, but it isn't too hard to get around. There is a Sniper CR located in a chest near the top of the room, which you can access by going left from the start, or by going right and taking the first left you see. To reach the exit, go all the way right for the start, and then head towards the lower right corner of the room.

Exiting this room, you find yourself again outside Mt. Nibel. You'll see two paths, leading left and right. Since the right one is a dead-end, go left and up the long and winding road that takes you to the top of the mountain itself. At the top, you'll find the old mako reactor sitting there, being a mako reactor and not much else. You can go inside the reactor, if you'd like, but only if you want to stare at the pretty machinery and generally waste your time. Once you've had your fill, run beyond the mako reactor to that door on the right side of the screen. On the other side of that door is the room with all the chutes in it. You made it!

Though I start to talk about preparing for the boss battle in the paragraph below, I'd just like you stop and take this time to make extra certain to point out that you may learn the enemy skill Trine from it, which is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

Before attempting to provoke the dragon (named Materia Keeper) that wants to kill you, you'd be wise to prepare for the battle. For starters, there's the save point you would be wise to utilize. Secondly, equip materia appropriate

for the battle. Gravity magic, as always, has no effect, and fire magic also will prove inefficient, as it heals this boss. Anything and everything else works, though (including poison, which, as always, helps to take a good chunk out of said boss when cast early in the battle). Throw, as always, is your most powerful attack, but only if you possess and are willing to use the needed projectiles. Big Guard, again, is an attack which you might want to utilize in this fight, but you should at least carry along a Haste-all spell failing that. It (the boss) has some pretty mean physical attacks, but are overall not much to worry about so long as you take the proper measures to protect yourself. What you really need to watch out for is Trine, an attack strangely reminiscent of Beta that this boss will occasionally bust out with. That's the bad news. The good news, and there always is some, is that Trine isn't as bad as Beta was. Secondly, you can further protect yourself with the Elemental/Lightning and Elemental/Ramuh combos in your armor. Lastly, you'll definitely be wanting to take your E. Skill materia along, not only for the powerful Aqualung attack (probably the strongest attack you can use against this boss), but also to learn Trine (I mentioned this in the paragraph above, if you'll remember correctly). Anyways, with all the preparation complete, approach and do battle with the Materia Keeper. So long as you're properly prepared for the battle, you shouldn't have too much difficulty. Proceed to kick its ass; you'll know when its nearing death because it starts to cast Cure 2 on itself. But so long as you're piling on the big damage, it will be too little too late for the Materia Keeper. You'll win a Jem Ring when the fight is over, and also be sure to snatch up the Counter Attack materia it drops.

With the Materia Keeper gone, the back exit to Mt. Nibel stands ahead of you...

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--- Welcome to: Rocket Town

Exiting Mt. Nibel, you find yourself in a big field. And wouldn't you know it, but there's a lot of new enemies for you to face around here! For starters, the Nibel Wolf from Nibelheim is back. There's also a creature called the Velcher Task, a big ugly thing, but thankfully not overly powerful. Its attacks are moderate in strength, and it occasionally blows out poison clouds onto the party, but that's about it. Avoid using poison-based attacks, which it absorbs, but anything else goes. And if you so desire, you may also want to take the time to steal from them a Remedy, an item which you will not have the opportunity to buy until later in the game (and it's expensive, too). The other two enemies around here can be found only in forested areas. The first is the Bahba Velamyu. And is it me, or were the game's creators really running out of enemy names at this point? Anyways, it's really hard to describe this small little piece of crap, but its attacks thankfully are not horribly powerful. Other than that, they are nothing to speak of. Lastly, there is the Battery Cap, another enemy which may seem familiar to you. Their favorite attack, Seed Shot, does no damage at all, but their other attack, Four Lasers, is rather powerful and strangely familiar. And when you consider that they travel in very large numbers, expect to have it used against you once or twice in any given battle. Anyways, no weaknesses or strengths to speak of here, so have fun.

Anyways, you should see a small town in the distance, which you should at some point mosey on over towards. Why? Because it's there. As you enter town, Cloud looks up and sees a giant, rusted out rocket in the distance and comments, "I wonder what they'd make something that huge for." To go into space, dumbass. And someone who carries around a sword as big as Cloud's has no room to make comments like that in the first place.



Anyways, first things first. Let's go shopping! The item shop here has all of your item needs covered, and also offers for the first time available the Barrier and Exit materia. The local weapon store has a few good buys, which you should at least peruse (one of which, the Shotgun, is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ). If you look at the completely loaded gun rack at the weapon shop, Cloud comments that the owner of this store must be a real gun fanatic. Notice how he makes this comment under his breath, likely because the owner of this store (the aforementioned gun fanatic) is sitting right there behind the counter, discussing with every customer how much he loves his guns and how he uses them to blow the heads off of non-gun-lovers. It seems to me that Barret has a new friend. Also remember that you are not too good to walk into people's homes and steal from them, and that you may obtain a Power Source and a Drill Arm from doing so. Lastly, there is an old man in town that asks you to look at the rocket with him, and will give you the Yoshiyuki out of gratitude. The Yoshiyuki is notable as it is also one of the game's lost-forevers mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

Everyone around town keeps talking about a guy named Captain. You find a few things out, like this place was the original site of a rocket that was to be launched into outer space (oh, that's what that thing is for... I thought it was a decorative piece), but that the plan was scrapped and the Captain just spends his days working on the rocket. How fun. But, you'll find the most out in one of the houses on the right side of town. Go out into the backyard, where you'll see an aircraft known as the Tiny Bronco. It's a small plane bearing the Shinra logo, and, as Cloud so succinctly puts it, "is cool". Seeing as it has Shinra written all over it, your party's first thought it to steal the damn thing, but just as you're getting warmed up, a woman walks out into the backyard and asks you just what you're thinking of doing. Um... we were... uh, looking at it. Yeah, that's it. She directs you to go speak with the Captain if you want permission to borrow the Tiny Bronco, and indicates that he is more than likely inside the rocket.

Slither over to the launch pad and head into the rocket. Sure enough, you'll find a man inside, and are given the option of asking him several questions. First off, his response to your request to borrow his airplane is, surprisingly enough, a resounding "hell no". Secondly, he assures you that Rufus is indeed on his way here. But you'll find out the most information by asking him to just tell you about the rocket. The Captain laughs and begins his long-winded speech, first introducing himself as Cid. He then explains that this rocket was originally to be sent into outer space, and he was slated as the man to do the job. But because of a mistake made by Shera (the girl you met back at Cid's house), the whole project went to hell. Furthermore, the Shinra soon discovered that they could make a profit from mako power, and gave their space department the financial shaft following that. And since Palmer, the head of the space division of the Shinra, is far more interested in Twinkies and the possibility of more Twinkies than he is in asking for more funding to his department, you can sort of understand Cid's despair. This rocket has been sitting here ever since that day, and Cid has been wasting his life away. In a way, he just wants to leave this God-forsaken place behind him, but he has a new hope that the space plan will be renewed when Rufus comes to visit a little later on. He then hangs his head and you won't be able to get much more out of him. If you want to ask him any more questions past this point, you'll have to exit the rocket and come back. But, I'm assuming you've already found out all you need to know, so head back to Cid's house.

Speak with Shera again, who admits that it was her fault that Cid's dream never came true. Cid then returns home and gets hella pissed. Apparently, it's some sort of blasphemous and heinous crime that Shera has guests and has yet to serve them tea. And before your party can voice any objection to this, Cid replies with one of the coolest lines ever in a video game: "Shut up! Sit your

ass down in that chair, and drink your Goddamn tea!" Such hospitality there, Cid. I'd hate to see how you'd treat us if you didn't like us. Cid then meanders into the backyard to tinker on the Tiny Bronco and wait for Rufus to show up.

Your party, understandably, is just a little curious as to why Cid has this immense hatred for Shera and the entire world around him. Shera sighs and tells the story of that one day many years ago. Cid stands in the bowels of the rocket awaiting the launch. Shera, being the meticulous type, is doing some final checks on the oxygen tanks. Cid yells at her, saying that there is absolutely nothing wrong with them. Then, we switch to the scene where Cid triumphantly steps aboard the ship and takes to the controls. The door locks behind him and the countdown begins. However, it seems that his negligent crew has forgotten that Shera was still in the bowels of the ship, doing some final checks. Cid brings her up on the radio and yells at her to get the hell out of there, lest she be incinerated to a fine crisp. She replies that the results of the previous tests were not satisfactory, and that she is checking the tanks one last time for Cid's safety. Apparently, she doesn't realize that when the rocket takes off, there won't be enough of her left to scrape off the launch pad, but I guess that's besides the point. As the countdown reaches closer and closer to zero, and Cid becomes increasingly and increasingly worried he finally aborts the launch to save Shera's life. The rocket sputters and rises a bit, and then lands back on the pad with a crash, slowly tilting to the position it rests in now. So this, Shera says, is why she doesn't mind how poorly Cid treats her. He saved her life, so she will live her life for him.

Cid comes back inside at this point, infuriated that you have yet to be served your tea, and proceeds to bitch Shera out yet again. Then, just for good measure, he yells at you, too. He sits down and impatiently awaits the arrival of Rufus. Instead, however, who should come walking through the door than fat pile of goo, Palmer, whom Cid has a few choice words for. Palmer informs Cid that Rufus is outside, and Cid leaves, making sure to berate Palmer on his way out. Palmer goes up to Shera and requests a pile of lard, quite possibly with some tea floating around it. Sure, Palmer. We wouldn't want you to, you know, lose some weight or anything. He's actually so infatuated with the promise of food that he doesn't even seem to recognize you as the same group of people who marched into his office and started killing people a short while back.

Back outside, an interesting conversation takes place between Cid and Rufus. Rufus has no intentions of restarting the space program, but rather wants to borrow the Tiny Bronco so that he may give chase to Sephiroth. Cid, as you might expect, isn't too happy with this request. Rather, he is blinded with rage. And I'm sure he would proceed to introduce Rufus to the stabbidy death if he just had something sharp and pointy on hand, but something else appears to be going on right now. Shera approaches you and mentions that she believes that Palmer is out back attempting to steal the Tiny Bronco. This is a good thing, I suppose, because your party can really only take so much of dealing with the Shinra before they get so frustrated that they have to kill something. Now, let's go kill Palmer.

This isn't what you would consider to be a hard battle or anything. Not like the Materia Keeper or Gi Nattack, where you actually had to, you know, try. Fighting with Palmer is more like a personal challenge to see how long it takes to make the battlefield explode into a mess of butter and shrapnel. Palmer stands on one side of the screen, wiggling his fat body about in a presumed attempt to move, or perhaps communicate. Occasionally, he pulls out a gun and fires it at you. But since he went and ate all the bullets, thinking them to be Pez, the thing is running on a combination of materia and AAA batteries, and instead mimics the effects of Bolt 2, Fire 2 and Ice 2. But, he is susceptible to the effects of Stop, meaning that if you've got Seal Evil or some other



how to use the Tiny Bronco, but it's of worthy mention that the Tiny Bronco can sail across the rivers just as it can the shallows, meaning that you can cut across the large western continent via the river that divides it in half. Also, the next leg of your quest is going to force you to use Aeris, so if you've been neglecting to use her up to this point, you might want to level her up a bit and/or acquire some of her higher-level limit breaks. Next up, leveling-up and/or gaining a few more limit breaks might not be such a bad idea if you've been neglecting it for awhile, especially given that you now have the entire team on your hands. This should hold especially true if you have meandered over to the large island off the west coast, because it is there that you may participate in the game's major sidequest, which is detailed in section V.B. of the FAQ. Bear in mind that not only will you benefit greatly from getting it done, but also that it will have an effect on the game later on as detailed in section VII.A. of the FAQ. In addition to that, the side quest and its subsequent rewards are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. That being said, you might finally also want to traverse the known world and get any shopping done you've been neglecting to do or any missed E. Skills, items, etc.

Anyways, you at this point are more or less meant to wander the coast aimlessly. As you come up along the coast of Gongaga, you may notice a small house (which you might have even visited before, as it is mentioned in section V.C. of the FAQ). Since you really have nothing better to do, dock at the conveniently-placed beach and meander inside the guy's home. Talk to him, and he gets right to the point, telling you that the Keystone is no longer available. Before you can ask him what the hell he's talking about (look, asshole, we just wanted directions), he says that the Keystone is the supposed "key" to the Temple of the Ancients, which can be found to the east of here. However, as he already mentioned, the Keystone has sort of already been purchased by Dio, the owner of the Gold Saucer. Well, mayhaps you can go reason with him? I mean, all you really have to do is explain to him that the Keystone is in no way related to speedos, and methinks he'll just fork it right over. Let's go see what we can do.

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--- Welcome to: The Gold Saucer (Again)

You should be familiar with this place by now. Skeddadle over to the Battle Square and head to see Dio's trophy room, which you might have remembered from his shameless plug about it earlier on had you not been too busy at the time expressing your disgust with his speedo. Just inside the battle arena, take a right and head on over to Dio's trophy room. Now, I know that you're probably expecting to see, well, trophies here. But that's not quite it. Dio's trophy room is not so much a trophy room, you see, as it is a bunch of cheap crap. And prominently on display in this collection of cheap crap is the Keystone. As you are examining it, and more than likely contemplating stealing it (where's Yuffie when you need her?), world-renowned speedo man, Dio, approaches Cloud and strikes up a conversation. And I swear to God, if he calls me "boy" one more time, I'm going to knock his damn block off. Also note that the entire conversation has a "look at my speedo" subtext. Anyways, Cloud asks Dio for permission to have the Keystone, and Dio agrees, but on one condition: you must "entertain" him. Oh, my God, not that! Keep it in your Speedo, Dio! Oh, no... that doesn't fit in there! Arrrgh! Actually, all he wants you to do is fight in his battle arena for a few rounds.

You may wish to deny his request at first so you can enter the menu and properly equip Cloud (the person who must fight alone in the arena) with some good materia. He'll be fighting alone, but the battles are all very easy, as

all eight battles shall be against normal, everyday enemies. Which enemies, I cannot say, as they are presented at random, so prepare yourself with a variety of different attacks. Bear in mind that you can get your ass beaten and still earn the Keystone, but if you choose to and succeed in winning all eight fights, you'll also pick up a Protect Vest and a Choco Feather, which is a nifty bonus, to say the least.

Anyways, with this short and speedo-filled chore out of your way, you are free to leave and head on over to the Temple of the Ancients... or are you? Apparently for some plot-related purpose, the tram leading back to North Corel is out of service, trapping you inside paradise for the moment. Cait Sith hops his stuffed ass over to where you are about to kick the repair man's ass and mentions to you that he knows most of the crew here at the Gold Saucer and can get you guys a free night at the inn. Wow, Cait Sith, you saved us a whopping 100 gil. Oh, well, at least we can still use him for a pillow.

Over at the Ghost Square, the entire party meets in the hotel lobby and begins to talk amongst themselves. Cait Sith comments that the group never really gets a chance to sit down and hang around like this. Unless you count the fact that you have all been journeying together for quite some time now (it's just that nobody ever feels like hanging out with Cait Sith's stuffed ass). The group newbies, Cait Sith, Cid, and possibly Vincent, lobby for an explanation of just what the hell is going on. Barret dismissively comments that he's been around since the beginning and he still has no clue as to the current situation. Well, Barret, maybe if you'd take a break from killing things once and a while to stop and pay attention, maybe you'd know. Despite what option you choose, Cloud attempts (poorly) to retell the story. Aeris, sensing Cloud's complete lack of storytelling skills, breaks in and starts talking about the Cetra and the Ancients. Barret replies with a classic Barret line: "Cetra? Ain't that some kind of disease?" And you have to know that Barret has heard the word "Cetra" clearly defined at least ten or twenty times by now, which makes that line even more hilarious. Let's just hope that being a frighteningly dumb ass isn't contagious, Barret. The group also notes that in addition to searching for the Promised Land, Sephiroth also appears to be searching for the "Black Materia", which is something that no one in your group has apparently ever heard of. The discussion then turns to those numbered freaks back at Nibelheim. Red XIII looks down at the tattoo Hojo branded on him (the tattoo being, not surprisingly, the number XIII), noting that there must be at least twelve others. Aeris ponders the possibility of some involvement of Hojo in the predicament of the twelve caped freaks of nature, and then runs off to bed, followed by Yuffie and Barret. Red XIII asks Cloud if he's going to be the next one to lose it, given his number. Tifa walks over to Red XIII and tells him to be strong in an interestingly touching dialogue between the two. Shortly thereafter, the group adjourns to their respective rooms.

That night... Cloud stews in his room, perhaps ready to have another discussion with the voices in his head. But he is interrupted by someone barging into his room. That someone will be entirely dependent on your actions during the game thus far, as described in section VII.A. of the FAQ. But whomever that someone is, they ask Cloud to come on out into the Gold Saucer with them and hang out for awhile, and have a little bit of fun. So take a break, relax, and enjoy whatever scene you've earned. Though the scenes are described in detail in section VII.B. of the FAQ, there's nothing there you really need to know.

Your date is brought to an end, however, when you spot Cait Sith hopping his miserable ass through the Gold Saucer carrying the Keystone. When he sees you, he hops away. You are to give chase, but you will suffer more or less the same problems you have with chasing Sephiroth in that even when you catch up with him, there's not much you can actually do to him except politely wait for him to

get away again. You'll end up outside the arena at the Chocobo Square, and a helicopter approaches in the distance, piloted by none other than Tseng of the Turks. Cait Sith tosses the Keystone to Tseng, and Tseng flies evilly away in his helicopter of evil.

Time for the ass-kicking now. Cloud and his date approach Cait Sith fully intent to spread his insides around the Chocobo Square, but Cait Sith starts to weasel out of it. He says that he was simply doing what he was ordered to do by the Shinra, and that he really has been thinking about things since he has joined your group. Apparently, you have given him a new outlook on things, though not convincing enough to make him shun his evil duty. But perhaps his most compelling argument is that the cat and the giant stuffed animal are both inanimate and replaceable, and are being controlled by someone back at the Shinra building. He pleads with you to just let him travel with you so that he may learn more of your ways and also continue to spy on you, even though you appear to be getting ready to thoroughly introduce his stuffed ass to your foot. That's when he pulls out his trump card: he relays a message to you from Marlene, who has been captured by the Shinra and is being held at the Shinra building. And admit it, you saw this coming ever since you left her in the hands of Elmyra. Cait Sith gets to come along with your team once more, but this little stunt more or less cements his role as the team's bitch.

Before leaving Cloud's room the next morning, search the dresser in his room for an Elixir, and then head out to the lobby to form your team. Aeris is coming with you no matter what, so it's all a matter of choosing a third companion before heading on out. With your team revved up and ready to go, leave the Gold Saucer and head eastward.

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--- Welcome to: Temple of the Ancients

Before we get into things, I'd just like to note is that all of the items from this point forward (until the end of the Temple of the Ancients sub-section) are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, so be sure to grab what you want.

Between the eastern and western landmasses, there is a small island to the south where the Temple of the Ancients lies. If you happen to get into a battle during your short trip from the beach to the Temple nestled within the forest, be aware that the area is populated almost entirely by flying little bastards called Slaps. They are tiny clouds of wasps whose main attack does almost no damage, but will berserk your characters. In retrospect, this is probably the least wisest attack in their arsenal to be using as a main attack. They also have stings which can paralyze or poison you, but they rarely use them (though if they show up in large numbers, don't be surprised to see them bust out with them on occasion). But, again, the damage done is minimal, and your berserked characters will more than likely make short work of the Slaps, and that their resistance to earth magic and weakness to wind-based attacks should mean very little to you. There's also a creature wandering around called the Kelzmelzer, which is really not worthy of mention at all. It can poison you, but that's about it.

Anyways, as you approach the temple, Aeris runs off ahead of you and begins talking to the planet in nonsensical sentence fragments. As she is doing this, you've got a good eye if you happen to spot one of the creepy cloaked men at the top of the stairs leading inside the temple. Aeris says that she wants to go inside, and rejoins the group. Head to the top of the stairs and, after watching creepy insane tattooed guy number nine die a mysterious and meaningless

death, head inside.

Tseng of the Turks lies just inside, and he looks as if he's had a recent and intimate encounter with Sephiroth's blade. He's still alive, but barely. He says that it's not the promised land that Sephiroth was searching for. He might have been more informative in this respect, but he instead gets into an argument with Aeris. Finally, he hands you the Keystone, telling you to place it on the altar to enter the temple. Do just that, but be aware that once you advance past this point, it's a long road ahead with no turning back. When you feel ready, place the Keystone on the altar and watch the altar react. You then sink into the floor.

Before you can say, "Holy crap, I've died and gone to an Escher painting!", you emerge in the middle of a gigantic maze of stairs and dead-ends. Before we advance any further, let's delve into the local monster activity. The Doorbull, for starters, has a lot of HP and can take quite a bit of punishment. Add to this its immunity to gravity magic and the ability to absorb fire magic. The good news is that amongst its repertoire of attacks, none of them are very powerful. And also, the Doorbull always travels alone, so don't expect too much difficulty here. The Toxic Frog is a different story, however. It may be weak and easy to kill, but those little bastards, like the infamous Touch Me, utilize two very annoying attacks: Frog Jab and Frog Song. Both, needless to say, result in you becoming frogged. With these bastards, it's a "kill them before they have a chance to piss you off" deal. They are weak to ice magic, and given their low HP, can likely be taken out with a well-placed Ice-all spell. I'd advise you to set up whomever performs this action with some sort of protection against transformation, however (Added Effect/Transform in the armor works well enough). The Under Lizard is the considerably more powerful friend of the Toxic Frog, but their only real power is the ability to petrify you. This may prove to be your downfall only if you've let the transformation inflicted by the Toxic Frog's debilitate your offense (especially given that the Under Lizard has around three times as much HP as the Toxic Frog does...) But, again, it's attacks beyond that aren't too much to worry about.

There are three more enemies at the Temple of the Ancients, but all three are enemies are completely avoidable. The only one you may end up fighting is the Ancient Dragon, as two of them will be guarding the Nail Bat (an item you'll find later). They are immune to earth and water magic, but weak versus wind and gravity. Pay special attention to that gravity part, as you can have them down in no time flat with two Laser or Demi 2 spells (they surround you, sadly, preventing you from nailing both at once). Failing gravity magic, they have quite the supply of HP, so expect a bit of a fight, at least. In addition to having a strong physical attack, they also have an uber-powerful ice spell called Southern Cross, so watch out for that. Moving right along to the Jemnezmy. The Jemnezmy's greatest asset is the fact that you will likely spend more time staring at her than you will fighting her. They've got an ice spell called Cold Breath which does a considerable amount of ice damage to one of your characters, and also possess the ability to confuse one of your party members. Luckily, their HP is somewhat low, and they are easy to kill. They are immune to ice magic, but poison magic is their kryptonite. Lastly, we have the 8-Eye... which is a creepy blob-like creature that just must die. Though it's Absorb attack will siphon an ungodly amount of HP from its target, don't be fooled, the HP max of the 8-Eye is actually quite low. It is immune to gravity magic, but poison magic again is the key here. Their HP is low enough that a simple Bio spell would kill it instantly, but please note that poison magic of any sort is an automatic deathblow to the 8-Eye.

From your starting point, head right to the first fork in the road. There are some stairs to your right, and path to the left. The stairs lead to a dead-end, so go left. The left path circles you around and takes you down a level,

where you will see a small archway to your right, and a path leading down. The path is a dead-end, so head through the archway and crawl down the vines on the other side. Below, it may not be apparent which way to head, but do you see that treasure chest on the other side of the overhanging stairway? Go towards it (and also collect the Trident inside of it). From here, the path forks. The path leading up will take you to some stairs, and subsequently, a dead-end. The path leading right takes you to a huge wall, which you can scale via the overhanging vine. The doorway at the top of it is sealed for some reason, but you can continue up the stairs to your left. From here, there is an archway to your to your lower left, and some overhanging vines on the wall next to you.

First, you'll likely want to scale the wall. At the top, you can take some stairs down to a doorway to your left (making sure to nab the Mind Source along the way). Just inside the doorway is the hideout of that adorably cute bearded midget you might have seen running around the maze. According to Aeris, they are the embodied spirits of Ancients who have protected the Temple of the Ancients for years, but in that time appear to have lost the ability to talk. Aeris attempts to and fails to engage in basic communication with him, but Cloud can make various transactions with the guy, such as purchasing various items, asking to rest in his home, and saving the game. Admit it, at least one time during your stay here, you started thinking about taxi drivers. Oh, and be sure to steal the Silver Rifle from his treasure chest before leaving.

Going back to the archway, head through it, picking up the Turbo Ether on the other side. From here, take a long stairway leading towards the lower left corner of the maze. At the bottom, there is an archway to your left leading to another set of stairs heading in the same direction. From there, head down and left a bit further until you get to the chest containing the Rocket Punch. Follow the path to a set of vines, which you can scale to the top of a short wall. You see that little guy who just took off into that doorway to the left? That will take you to the next room. However, you may wish to first head up the stairs above you, go through the doorway, go down the stairs to the right, climb up the vines on the side of the wall at the foot of those stairs, and walk along the top of the wall to grab the Luck Plus materia.

Anyways, in the next room, you'll see a hallway leading to the right. The problem is that giant U-shaped rocks are constantly rolling down it. And guess what happens when you get hit by one? Actually, it doesn't hurt, but it does squish Cloud in a cartoonish manner and sends him back to the beginning. It's as if the rocks should have ACME stamped on the side of them. Anyways, head down the hallway, making sure to stand where the U-cut will not make squishies out of your team. Halfway down the hallway, you may notice how the path deviates to a small pool of eerily-glowing liquid. There is a Morph materia lying in front of it, which you should grab. Heeding the general law of common sense that you should avoid any an all things that glow eerily, your team does not mess with the pool and continues down the path. Once you reach the end, the boulders stop, but Aeris decides she's going to go screw with that pool in the middle of the room.

The pool, as all mystical pools tend to, shows you an image. You'll see Elena and Tseng walking through a room with a lot of writing on the walls (a fact which Cloud will later note). Tseng asks Elena out on a date, and then shoos her away. That's when Sephiroth appears. Never mind the fact that Sephiroth splits into two images during the conversation, or that the second image does nothing but stand off to the side and glow eerily... It serves no purpose except to make you think that your Playstation just broke. Sephiroth describes how he plans to become one with the planet, blah, blah, blah. He's not really making since at this point, because in a roundabout way all he's trying to tell us is that he'd really like to die. The then does something to Tseng that you've likely been wanting to do for the majority of the game: he



stabs him. Cloud at this point rallies the team to find that room, and that he is through dealing with Sephiroth. He decides that it's going to end here, and that he's going to take Sephiroth out. Sure, Cloud, we believe you... Anyways, talk to the little guy at the end of the hallway, if you'd like, to restore your HP/MP and/or save the game, and then continue to the next room.

The next room is a gigantic clock, with the hands forming walkways and doors at the end of each one. The game describes how to rotate the hands, but you can only rotate them once per visit to the room (meaning you have to leave and then come back if you screw up. Also beware the second hand, as it will knock your ass off if it hits you. You might want to let this happen at least once, as you do get the Nail Bat for your trouble. You'll have to make your way back here from the sealed door back at the maze, however. Anyways, without further ado, happy door hunting!

The door at one o' clock is a dead-end which also leads to an enemy encounter. You are advised to avoid it.

The door at two o' clock is also a dead-end, but with no enemy encounter.

The door at three o' clock, like the door at one o' clock, leads to a dead-end and an enemy encounter.

The door at four o' clock leads to the Princess Guard, an excellent weapon for Aeris.

The door at five o' clock leads back out to the maze, and onto a ledge where you can collect the Ribbon.

The door at six o' clock takes you to the "door maze", which in turn will take you to the room with the mural on the walls. Don't come here until you have collected everything you want from all of the other rooms first. For details on the door maze, see below.

The door at seven o' clock leads to the Trumpet Shell.

The door at eight o' clock leads to a Megalixir.

The door at nine o' clock leads to a dead-end.

The door at ten o' clock should be an easy one. It's the door you came in from.

The door at eleven o' clock is also a dead-end.

The door at twelve o' clock is the exit to the Temple of the Ancients. Come here after visiting the door at six o' clock.

Once you've collected the desired treasure, it's time to visit the door at six o' clock. This takes you to a maze of doors, and you'll also see another one of those cute midget guys hopping around. What he does now is move in a predictable pattern through all of these doors. The game explains to you that you can hop down to the ledge below if need be, but so long as you know the mechanics of the doors, it shouldn't take more than one try to capture this guy. You see, he will go into one door, and emerge out of another. You need to go into the door that he would have emerged from. Which door that would be is dependent on which door he went into.

There are 11 doors in all, but only 9 are part of the maze. The one on the right on the top floor leads back to the clock room, and the one in the middle

(that looks different from all of the others) leads to the room with the murals. Thus, the door on the left side of the top floor shall be door number 1. The doors on the second floor, from left to right, shall be numbered 2-5. The doors on the bottom floor, from left to right, shall be numbers 6-9.

If he enters door 1, he will emerge from door 9.

If he enters door 2, he will emerge from door 4.

If he enters door 3, he will emerge from door 6.

If he enters door 4, he will emerge from door 1.

If he enters door 5, he will emerge from door 8.

If he enters door 6, he will emerge from door 5.

If he enters door 7, he will emerge from door 2.

If he enters door 8, he will emerge from door 7.

If he enters door 9, he will emerge from door 3.

Oh, and you might want to get the Work Glove out of that chest on the bottom floor.

Anyways, when you catch him, the door to the mural room opens, and you may enter. But you might first want to prepare for the upcoming boss battle. This won't be a very difficult boss battle, as the boss in question doesn't have too much HP to back itself up. It has a pretty nasty physical attack which it uses quite often, and also a fairly powerful fire breath attack that will nail the whole party, but that's really all you need to worry about. The boss is immune to gravity magic, and will absorb fire magic. Everything else is game, however.

Inside the mural room, you will come face to face with Sephiroth. Sephiroth starts flashing eerily and self-replicating like nobody's business, all the while jabbering on about becoming one with the planet. When he finally stops with all of the flashy flying crap, he stops to explain his sinister plan to you, as do all evil villains with a sinister plan. It's as if the first lesson at evil villain college is "how to never keep your mouth shut". Anyways, Sephiroth explains that when the planet is damaged, spirit energy is gathered to heal that wound. But what if there were a gigantic wound that threatened the very life of the planet? Lots of spirit energy would be gathered, and Sephiroth plans to merge with that spirit energy and become God. And to inflict that wound, he plans to utilize the ultimate destructive magic, Meteor. Otherwise known as the black materia. What he fails to mention is that the power of Meteor will be enough to knock the Earth out of orbit and annihilate it completely, but meh. Petty details.

Sephiroth leaves you, and Cloud begins to freak out. And this isn't one of his normal freak-outs, either. This time, it looks like one of his personalities is trying to break free from the rest of his body. He completely loses it, spouting off random gibberish, until he pulls himself together. And then he goes on as if nothing out of the ordinary had just happened, as does the rest of the team. Ok, then... As the team discusses amongst themselves, the Red Dragon appears to do battle with the team.

The Red Dragon, as I've already mentioned, isn't much of a difficult fight due to the comparably low HP it possesses. Spells like Big Guard, Slow, and Regen can all help, but given the possible short length of the fight, may not be

entirely necessary. Poison helps to do some good damage to him if cast early enough in the battle, as well. On a final note, go nuts with your MP, because you get a free refill after the fight. With those facts in mind, this fight should be over pretty quick. You'll earn a Dragon Armllet for your victory.

Following your squeaky-clean battle, the first thing you'll probably notice is the Bahamut materia left behind by the Red Dragon. After collecting it, head on over to the right side of the room and take a look at the little scale model of the temple itself. You are given several options of things to do with it, but any attempt you make to mess with it results in failure. Aeris gets the idea to ask the planet how to operate the damn thing. Interestingly enough, the planet responds to her. It seems that the Temple of the Ancients itself is the black materia. The little model of the temple contains several puzzles, and with each puzzle you solve, the Temple of the Ancients gets smaller and smaller, until it is big enough to fit into the palm of your hand. The catch? The puzzles can only be done from inside the temple itself, meaning that whoever goes about solving said puzzles will find himself unable to use the black materia due to the fact that he will be made to be somewhat squished by it.

So the black materia is safe here, right? Not according to Cloud. Cloud's idea involves releasing the black materia from the deadly trap so that you guys can hang onto it and keep it away from Sephiroth. This is probably the dumbest idea any human being in the history of mankind has ever had. Cloud does mention that Sephiroth has a gazillion flunkies which he would not think twice about sacrificing to obtain the black materia. This is true, indeed. But, what he neglects to mention is that most of Sephiroth's lackeys also lack the intelligence to chew without outside assistance, let alone solve ancient riddles, so I stand by my earlier comment that this is the stupidest idea ever.

Anyways, that's when the solution to your problem will present itself. Cait Sith will speak up (or call you on the PHS if he is not with you), saying that he does not mind in the least sacrificing his inanimate body for the good of mankind. And to make a long story short, you really have no option but to let him get himself killed, though I cannot see why you'd have any objection to this. I mean, sure, you're unleashing hell on Earth as we know it, but you're getting rid of that little bastard, Cait Sith, in the process. I think the latter outweighs the former, personally.

Now, you've got to get the hell out of here. Heading back to the door maze room, take the time to stop and chat with the little midget guy, because he will offer you rest and the chance to save up. Back in the clock room, the hands stand ready to allow you access to the exit, but you might first want to stop and prepare for a difficult boss battle. The boss in question has a couple of very nasty physical attacks, one which will do big damage to the whole party, and the other doing huge damage to a single character. Big Guard (or Barrier, at the very least), will prove to be a very big asset in this battle. Also expect the occasionally petrification attack, which under most circumstances wouldn't be so bad, except that the prolonged length of this battle will necessitate you have some way to counter it. If you do not know the Esuna spell, I hope you've got a few Softs or Remedies handy. Now, in utilizing Big Guard, a Haste-all spell is not needed, but the Time materia can still shine in the upcoming fight. If you have unlocked Slow, you would be wise to use it, as this will be a surprisingly speedy boss (which is a bad thing to be combined with powerful attacks). Finally, this boss will be immune to the effects of poison and gravity magic, and will be resistant to earth magic.

On a side note, there are potential lost-forevers here to be aware of (you know, what I talk about in section I.F. of the FAQ?) That would be Aeris's equipment. Make sure she's not wearing anything you really like.

Once equipped, step into the door at twelve o' clock and prepare to do battle with Demon's Gate. Demon's Gate, as we've established already, is a powerful boss to take on. Unload the most powerful attacks you have into it (expect to see a bit o' limit break action in this fight), while keeping your HP up. Other than that, I think I covered everything you need to know in the above paragraph.

After your battle, Cait Sith announces just a little too cheerfully that he's here and ready to help. Aeris tries to comfort him and make him feel better by asking Cait Sith to read y'all's fortunes one last time. This is a surprisingly emotional scene, given that Cait Sith is an inanimate object which is not particularly governed by the laws of life and death. Also, you hate Cait Sith. Aeris asks Cait Sith to predict the compatibility of herself and Cloud. He does so, and notes that the two are a perfect match. Of course, as has been proven several times in the past, Cait Sith isn't necessarily the most reliable source of psychic information. With this out of the way, the party leaves and Cait Sith heads towards the mural room for his last hurrah.

Despite the fact that he is not alive, the game does it's absolute best to make you feel sorry for the poor kitty. You'll see the stuffed animal trip, and then the kitty landing on his poor little kitty head, finally hopping back onto the stuffed animal and continuing towards the puzzle. And as if that weren't sappy enough, Cait Sith then starts talking like a bad episode of Sesame Street (who he's talking to, I don't know, as the rest of the team obviously cannot hear him), stating that, "There may be lots of stuffed bodies like mine, but there's only one me!" Good. That means we'll be rid of your backstabbing ass when you get crushed to death. Now get to work!

The Temple of the Ancients vanishes after Cait Sith reduces it to the black materia. You'll see a giant crater where the temple used to be, and the black materia lying in the middle of it. Cloud walks over to it and picks it up, proudly proclaiming that as long as you are in possession of it, then Sephiroth cannot have it. And anyone who has ever watched a movie before can tell you that you should never say things like that, because they will inevitably be followed by something very bad. Cloud then hopefully asks if anyone on the team can use it, somehow not realizing that it might not be a good idea to trigger Armageddon. Aeris mentions that the user of Meteor must have a lot of spirit energy, and the spirit energy of one person is not sufficient to use it. You'd need a lot of spirit energy... Like, the amount you might find at the Promised Land, which, as we've already discovered, does not exist. Well, at least not to non-ancients like Sephiroth (huh? Since when was Sephiroth not an ancient? Did I miss something here?) Anyways, Sephiroth shows up at this point and boldly proclaims that he is better than the ancients, as he is now a "traveler of the Lifestream itself", which at the very least explains that freaky flying-flashy-self-replication crap he's been doing lately. Just how he accomplished this, however, remains a mystery. He warps over to Cloud, supposedly to stab him. But he doesn't even have to do that. He just politely asks Cloud, and Cloud walks over to Sephiroth and forks over the black materia (and while he does this, you control Cloud's subconscious, but all you can really do is run around frantically while Cloud's body is busy sentencing the world to utter destruction).

Nice going, Cloud, you just doomed the entire planet. Sephiroth, pleased with himself, flashes off into the sky, leaving Cloud to his insanity. Aeris tries to comfort Cloud, telling him that it wasn't his fault. Really? Cloud walked over to Sephiroth and handed Sephiroth the key to destroying the world; now please tell me how this wasn't his fault. At this highly inappropriate time, Cait Sith's unrequested and unwanted replacement shows up. And seeing as he looks and acts just like the original, the only thing that has really changed in your life is that everybody is about to die because Cloud had to be an idiot and get us all killed.

Following some uber-insanity from Cloud, the screen goes white. You wake up in the middle of some forest (later identified as the Sleeping Forest), where you see Aeris running around calling out to you (Cloud). She tells Cloud that she's going to take care of Sephiroth herself, and that Cloud should take it easy so that he doesn't have a breakdown. Of course, if this is the sort of crap Cloud is seeing, I'd say he's way past the point of a mental breakdown. She says that she, being an Ancient, is the only person that can protect the planet from Cloud's stupidity, I mean, Sephiroth. Aeris then leaves to go to the City of the Ancients, where she claims she will be able to stop Sephiroth. Cloud tries to stop her, but obviously cannot, given that this is just a psychopathic dream and all. Sephiroth arrives and does his creepy Sephiroth crap. He seems angry at the possible interference of Aeris and appears to want to stop her by any means possible.

About this time, Cloud wakes up with Tifa and Barret standing around him. They mention that Aeris appears to have vanished, and that the rest of the team has left to look for her. Cloud details that Aeris is headed to the City of the Ancients to stop Sephiroth, and that Sephiroth is after her. Even though he may be right, I find it somewhat sad that we have resorted to taking advice from Cloud's random fits of insanity. Tifa and Barret get a little scared, and say that you've got to go help Aeris... and fast. Cloud, coming to the slow realization that he is a psychopath, begins to doubt that he should, saying that if he gets near Sephiroth again he may lose it. Well, Cloud, look at it this way: you already doomed the entire planet; what more harm could you possibly do? Barret at this time has a few choice words for the dumbass that condemned the Earth (spouting off his soon-to-be-famous quote: "there ain't no gettin' offa this train we're on"), but at least Tifa seems to support you.

Follow them outside the building you were in to find yourself back at Gongaga village. Barret and Tifa encourage Cloud to come along (though Barret's promise comes in the form of the assurance that he's going to kick Cloud's ass if he goes crazy on them again), and Cloud reluctantly agrees. Get your crap together and move out. You'll find the Tiny Bronco parked just off the coast of Gongaga.

Under most circumstances, you'd be forced to guess where to head next. But seeing as only one unexplored landmass remains in this world, it should be rather obvious that the Sleeping Forest, and subsequently the City of the Ancients can be found on the northern continent. Getting there can be a pain, as you can't reach it from the middle sea. Try approaching it from the west.

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--- Welcome to: Bone Village

Disembarking on the only non-frozen edge of the northern continent, you find yourself in a peaceful valley. And when I say "peaceful", I do mean it. The forests around here contain no enemies, and only rarely on the plains will you get into a fight. In that case, expect to do battle with a Trickplay, which is more or less a revamped version of the Mu. Sewer, as always, is kind of a nasty attack, but not too horrible. Lv. 4 Suicide, if it catches you off-guard, will waste you, however (and, of course, can be learned with the E. Skill materia). Sinking appears to now mimic the effects of Quake 3, but still does about as much damage as a Quake spell would. But, to even things out, they also have an attack that heals you.

Anyways, that little village nestled in the forest is called Bone Village, and is where you should head if you are interested in advancing in the game. Bone Village claims itself to be a village "for nature lovers". You can tell this,

because the entire village is built into the fossilized skeleton of a dinosaur. Damn yuppies. Anyways, first things first, you'll probably want to be getting you some shopping done here. The item shop offers a fine selection of armors from which you can choose, though I do find it extremely odd that these backwoods yuppie bastards have somehow acquired better military defense technology than the Shinra has.

The people in the village mention having seen a girl running into the Sleeping Forest, followed by a man in a black cape. The other thing they talk about is the Lunar Harp, a treasure around here that they are trying to excavate. The usefulness of said treasure will become readily apparent if you try to enter the Sleeping Forest (accessible from the back of the town). You see, if you don't have the Lunar Harp to "wake the forest up", you get to run in aimless circles around the forest for all of eternity. It doesn't make much sense, but you'll be needing the Lunar Harp.

It shouldn't be too hard to acquire the Lunar Harp, however. Talk to the foreman of the excavation site (he's the guy at the front of the village) and he asks you if you'll be wanting to dig. You are given the option to search for "normal treasure", "good treasure", or the "Lunar Harp". Normal treasure will yield garbage, mostly. Good Treasure, if you have your wits about you, will give you the most excellent Buntline, so you might want to take a break from saving the world and such and devote some time to finding that. And, naturally, opting to search for the Lunar Harp just might leave you with the Lunar Harp.

Do be aware that this'll be costin' ya money, because apparently these jackasses were just here screwing off waiting for some random passerby to come pay them to do their jobs. Walk around and dictate where you would like workers to be. Each worker you place will set a bomb, follow the tremors, and then face in the exact direction of the selected treasure. Though you can place five, common sense would dictate that you'd only need two. But given their extremely cheap cost (hmm... must be illegal immigrants), you'll probably want to hire all five since you don't know where the damn thing is, and there are two levels to Bone Village, anyways.

By the way, the Lunar Harp is the one treasure here whose location is set. It is on the top level of the village to the left of the tent. Just put two guys up there, pinpoint the location, and order the dig. I should note that unfortunately, this fact only holds true for the PSX version of the game, so you're pretty much on your own if you're playing the PC version.

The next morning, the results of the dig are placed in a treasure chest next to the foreman's hut. Assuming you've gone and obtained the Lunar Harp (and perhaps also the Buntline), there is nothing more for you here. Now make haste to the Sleeping Forest.

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--- Welcome to: The Sleeping Forest/Corral Valley

This place oughta look familiar. It's also a very short area. Despite the peacefulness, of the place, there are a few enemies running around. The odds of you running into them are virtually nil, however. But for what it's worth, the Boundfat is a little creature that is not worthy of much mention. It occasionally casts Ice 2, and absorbs ice attacks in return. But it's pretty easy to kill, anyways. The most important thing about the Malldancer is its mention in section XIX.B. of the FAQ. It is also immune to poison and water magic, but that is pretty much all that can be said about this relatively easy to kill monster. Lastly, the Hungry is a funny little guy that likes to cast

Mini, but can't really fight worth a damn besides that. He does have assloads of HP, but that's about it.

As you trot up the forest path, the Lunar Harp reacts and "wakes" the forest up. It really doesn't change things much, but it does look all green and glowy for a second, there. Those of you with good eyes will spot the Kjata materia to the left of the path. As you go to pick it up, however, you'll notice that it is moving. Chase that damn thing down! Or, if it gets away from you, just walk away and then come back to try again.

The next portion of the Sleeping Forest is a bit rockier. It's also where the enemies start to appear. From where you start, you might first want to take the right fork to a treasure chest containing a Water Ring. The Water Ring is important mainly because it will render you invincible during the next boss fight. Anyways, there's small ledge to the left of where you started that you can climb. From there, cross the fallen log across the chasm and out the other side of the Sleeping Forest.

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--- Welcome to: The Forgotten City (City of the Ancients)

You find yourself in the middle of a great valley. And experts agree that there's something very... unusual about this valley. The ground is oddly colored and everything around you has a strange glow to it. Not too far in the distance appears the Forgotten City, or the City of the Ancients. Go there now.

The game strikes an ominous chord as you step into the city, with an unsettling and foreboding score and a barren, desolate ruin of what was once a great city lying ahead of you. There are no enemies here, so take your time as you explore. As you advance towards the city, you'll see path's branch out to the left and to the right, and the final path will lead directly towards the center of the city. You're probably going to want to check out the side paths first.

Down the left path, you'll eventually come to the ruins of an old home, inside of which you will find a Magic Source. There is also a save point in this house for your saving pleasure. If you continue along the path as it circles around behind the city, you'll find an eerie machine set in the middle of a large chasm. Though you cannot use or even understand the machine, you can very well liberate an Aurora Armlet from a nearby chest.

Going down the right path, you'll come across two more ruined homes (there are two path's beyond them, but you cannot traverse wither at this point in time). Inside one home, you'll find a chest containing a Guard Source. Inside the other, you'll discover an Elixir and an E. Skill materia. There are also some beds here, and you are presented with the option to rest. And if there was ever a place or time where taking a nap probably wouldn't be the smartest idea in the world, this is it. Still, you'll probably want to rest up, if not for the upcoming boss fight, then to simply add to the mood. Cloud will wake up later that night, telling the team that he can sense something... Aeris and Sephiroth are both here somewhere. The group moves out, and you'll notice that a gloomy night has fallen over the Forgotten City.

Before advancing any further, you might want to pause and prepare yourself for the upcoming boss battle. The boss in question is a water-based enemy, and has attacks that are all water-based. Thus, anyone wearing the Water Ring will be invincible during this fight. As further insurance, you might put the Leviathan/Elemental combo in someone's armor. Gravity magic, as always, will

prove ineffective, and water magic will be absorbed. Earth magic, on the other hand, will work quite well. However, as this boss also likes to cast Reflect, making Destruct a good materia to take with you into this battle. Also note that one of the three attacks used by this boss is the deadly Aqualung, and you're probably going to want to be prepared for that. If you haven't already learned Aqualung with your E. Skill materia, shame on you. Aqualung is used rarely, but the other two attacks are still quite powerful, as well. But, with ample protection from water magic, you really have nothing to worry about.

Head straight towards the center of the city, where you'll find yourself inside yet another ruined home. There is a large spiral staircase, at the top of which you'll discover the Comet materia. About halfway up the staircase, however, you'll notice a stairway deviating from the original staircase, leading down. As you walk down that stairway, you'll find yourself approaching a beautiful crystalline city below. In all honesty, words cannot convey the raw beauty and celestial purity of what you behold.

At the bottom of the crystalline stairway (admit it, you started humming Stairway to Heaven when you were going down them), you'll find yourself in the heart of the City of the Ancients. And kneeling at the altar at the center of the city is Aeris, silently locked in prayer. You'll probably want to make use of that save point over there before heading down the stairs below you, which will in turn take you to a series of raised steps resting in the pool beneath you. These steps lead to the altar at the center of the city. The team begins to walk towards the pylons, but Cloud stops them, insisting he go it alone from here. Make your way over to where Aeris is.

When you reach Aeris, Cloud has another one of his freak-outs. Who woulda thunk it? You can walk around and everything, but talking accomplishes nothing, and every time you attempt to make Cloud take some sort of action, he just ends up doing something stupid. For instance, first he draws his sword, then he stands behind Aeris, and then begins to draw his sword back. Mysteriously, Aeris does not even flinch. Luckily for her, the rest of the team starts yelling at the Goddamned psychopath to put his sword away.

And that's when it happens. Out of nowhere, Sephiroth drops from the sky with his sword drawn, impaling Aeris as he lands. Her eyes thrust open as she goes sickeningly limp on Sephiroth's sword, and the force of the blow jostles her ribbon loose. Her cherished "useless" materia falls from her hair and gently bounces over the ledge and into the pool below, sinking into eternal nothingness. For Christ's sakes, this is a girl that could withstand a nuclear blast in the midst of a heated battle, and Sephiroth here takes her out with one sword thrust to the abdomen. Video game logic... Sephiroth seems just a little too pleased with himself, as if he is awaiting for the judges to award him a perfect "10" in the "spilling the blood of the innocent" category.

Cloud pretty much loses it at this point, rushing over to Aeris's body and holding her, frantically crying out in anguish. It's actually a very startling contrast to his usual indifferent attitude, and it just goes to show that when you show no emotion of any sort at any time, it's all going to come out at some time. Sephiroth spouts off some more garbage about becoming one with the planet, but Cloud tells his ass to shut up and starts yelling at him for killing Aeris. As mad as Cloud is, he still for some reason does not see it fit to attack Sephiroth in any way, instead allowing Sephiroth to calmly explain that he is heading "north past the snowy fields" to become one with the planet. Sephiroth then flies off as he always does, leaving you to do battle with Jenova LIFE.

The battle with Jenova LIFE has a very solemn note to it, as Aeris's sad theme continues playing as you fight. You can almost feel Cloud's anguish with



every slash of his sword. As for the battlestrategy itself, it was more or less covered a few paragraphs ago when I was detailing the preparations for the battle. But to recap: water and gravity attacks are bad, earth attacks rock, and if you're wearing the Water Ring, don't even bother with strategy because you're not going to die, anyways.

When the fight is over, a solemn Cloud takes Aeris out to the middle of the pool and says his final goodbyes. He then lets go, and watches as Aeris's body descends into the water, never to be seen again...

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--- Welcome to: The Corral Valley Cave

Well, the good news is that the game is going to stop trying to make you cry for now. The bad news is that Sephiroth is still out there and still needs his ass kicked. Though Cloud has repeatedly proven in the past that he is in no way up to this task, he decides to set off, anyways, but not without giving an uninspiring pep talk to his teammates. This is mainly because his pep talk consists mainly of "please come with me and make sure I don't do anything stupid", as if chasing Sephiroth wasn't something innately stupid to begin with. The good news is that Cloud appears to be tapping into his psychic powers, and is able to determine which direction Sephiroth headed (which would be down the path leading east from here). I'd insert a bad joke about Cait Sith right here, but I'm too lazy, so make up your own.

Head down the path until you see a gigantic conch shell. For starters, you may encounter an enemy here, in which case it's going to be something from the Sleeping Forest. Secondly, before you climb up the conch shell, you might want to first go around it (on the left side), and circle around to the treasure chest over there, as it does contain the Viper Halberd. With that done, crawl up the conch shell and circle around to the top. At the top, begin to circle back down in the opposite direction, only to be dumped off at the entrance to the Corral Valley Cave (note: completely different than Corel Valley).

Inside the Corral Valley Cave, expect to see a bit o' monster activity. The place is populated mostly by little midget soldiers called Grimguards, who carry around shields that are bigger than they are. Their main attack consists of futilely spinning the shield around, accomplishing absolutely nothing in the process. They may occasionally bust out with a Bolt 2 or Ice 2 spell, or that's it. They are immune to the effects of ice and lightning magic, as well, but aren't horribly difficult to deal with. The Acrophies is a different story altogether. It is a large dragon-like creature that has a healthy supply of HP behind it. It's attacks are not that bad, but it does have a particularly nasty Tidal Wave attack. Since it always travels alone, it's usually possible to rip it to shreds before it has much of a chance to attack, though. Expect water magic to be ineffective, and it also absorbs wind-based attacks for some reason.

Anyways, the Corral Valley Cave is more or less one giant wall you need to scale. You accomplish this by shimmying up the cracks in the wall there they are narrow enough to do so. The first one you see upon entering the cave is too wide, so you'll have to go up that one on the left, instead. Climb up, and then hop off to the left. Head left to another gap you can shimmy up. At the top, you can either go left or right. If you go left, you can pilfer the chest on the ledge above you for the Bolt Armlet inside (the same can be accomplished by crawling up to the ledge where the chest is, but it is not necessary). Head over towards the right side of the screen now to another gap. First, you might want to head down to the treasure chest below and nab the Hypnocrown. From there, head back up to the top of this gap and hop off to the left. Continue left to another gap, and crawl to the top of it. Again disembarking on the left, head in that direction until you reach a vertical railing that spans the height of the entire cave. At the bottom of it, you will find the Magic Plus materia. At the top, you will find a ledge which leads right and to the exit.

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--- Welcome to: Icicle Inn

You'll emerge from the Corral Valley Cave in a snowy field. And with a new area comes a new set of enemies. But, like most enemies as of late, they ain't much to worry about. The Bandersnatch sounds more like a bad porn title than an enemy, but what are ya gonna do? There's not much to mention here except a weakness to fire magic. The Hopping, is a cute little snowshoe bunny that hops up and down on the battlefield, If you can take it upon yourself to harm these adorably cute and relatively harmless creatures, note that physical attacks tend to miss more often than they should, but the problem isn't too detrimental. Still, magic is the easier way to get rid of them, even though they have no weaknesses. The final enemy is one that can only be encountered on the few small, unfrozen tips of the land. Still, you'll likely want to go out of your way to face the Vlakrodos, for several reasons. For starters, they are mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ. They can also be very important to chocobo breeding (for more on that whole mess, check out section X. of the FAQ). But the fight itself isn't quite so easy. Consider yourself lucky that the Vlakrodos has very weak attacks, because it's a pain to kill. It's HP is astronomical, and despite only being half-effective, gravity attacks are still the way to go in this fight (you'll probably want to start off with a shot of Demi 2 or Laser, and then go with Demi 3 for the rest of the fight). The Sense materia, sadly, does not work on them, but I'll give you a little heads-up and inform you that their HP max is 33,333. That's more HP than most bosses.

Anyways, from the exit to the Corral Valley Cave, just keep heading straight until you see the mountains jutting further out towards the left. Go around them, and then start wrapping around to the right (you should spot one of those unfrozen tips of the land in the distance). As you keep wrapping around to the right, you'll eventually make it to a small village called Icicle Inn.

I'll go over shopping detail and other things shortly, but for now, we're going straight to the meaty part of things.

Probably the most interesting aspect of this peaceful little retreat, is that it happens to be the area that Professor Gast retired to after his little breakdown with the folks over at Shinra. It was here (well, we assume, at any rate) that he met a woman named Ifalna. This name should sound really familiar, because Ifalna was Aeris's mother, if you'll recall. A lot transpired here, and lucky for us, the professor was smart enough to capture most of it on videotape. You can view these tapes at Professor Gast's home (you can't miss it- it's the

one with all of the computer equipment in it). Scroll through his personal video collection (which sadly does not contain any porn), and scope out the rare footage.

In the first tape, Ifalna talks about the original disaster (the disaster that Sephiroth spoke of earlier in the game). A great calamity fell from the sky and injured the planet. The site of the injury came to be known as Knowlespole, was located in this general area. The Cetra gathered at Knowlespole and began to read the planet. They did their best to cultivate the land and summon spirit energy to heal the wound, but due to the massiveness of the wound, it could only be healed over the span of several thousand years. But that's when "it" appeared. "It" being the calamity that fell from the skies. It appeared to the Cetra as a friend at first, but oh, how they were deceived. It spread a virus to the Cetra gathered at Knowlespole, killing them off like flies. It then traveled the world, wiping out the other Cetra clans with wanton disregard. At this point in her descriptions, Ifalna begins to get sad, and Professor Gast cuts off the taping.

The second tape picks up where the first one left off, beginning with Ifalna confirming what you have probably already guessed. That calamity which fell from the skies, that "it" that killed off her people was indeed Jenova, the organism that had once been mistaken for an Ancient. Professor Gast, judging by those comments he made to the elders at Cosmo Canyon, knew this already. This also, by the way, finally explains to us how Sephiroth is not a member of the Cetra race. Anyways, Ifalna goes on to talk about Weapon. Weapon was created by the planet when it realized that as long as Jenova existed, then it could never heal. Jenova was ultimately defeated and contained by a small group of surviving Cetra, but Weapon did not cease to exist. Rather, Weapon lay dormant somewhere on the planet, watching over Jenova and awaiting further instruction. You see, Jenova had been contained, but was by no means dead. The planet seemed to know this, and kept Weapon around, awaiting the day that Jenova would rise again. This does raise the question: why has Weapon not yet gone after Sephiroth? But, alas, your question goes unanswered, and the tape cuts off.

The final two tapes are the ones labeled "private". They were taken after the marriage of Professor Gast and Ifalna, and concern their baby: Aeris. That's right, Aeris is (was) Professor Gast's daughter. But all was not happiness and sunshine, as only 20 days following the birth of Aeris, Professor Gast received a surprise visit... from Hojo! A surprisingly young-looking Hojo bursts into Professor Gast's home, accompanied by Shinra soldiers. A very touching, though horribly cliché, scene follows, in which Professor Gast attempts (and fails) to defend Ifalna and Aeris. Ifalna offers herself in exchange for Aeris's safety. Hojo, however, is fully intent on using both Ifalna and Aeris for his twisted experiments. Before anything else happens, one of the soldiers turns to shoot out the camera, so all that is left for the ensuing struggle is audio. Professor Gast, sadly, died in the struggle. Ifalna and Aeris, as you should know, were taken back to Shinra H.Q., but were ultimately able to escape the clutches of the evil Shinra, and, well, you know the rest of the story.

With that revelation out of the way, you're free to explore the rest of Icicle Inn (except the back, which is currently off-limits to you). For starters, you can take the Turbo Ether that Professor Gast was keeping in his basement. Other items that can be stolen from people's houses around here involve a Hero Drink, Vaccine, and an X-Potion. The weapon and item shop here are one and the same, and is run by a geezerly old man who needs to be woken up by his daughter when customers arrive. It seems like such a rustic, backwoods operation, but the weapons offered here are anything but. Go nuts, and buy what you need, but don't blow a hole in your wallet, either.

One thing you need to do is stop by the old house of a man who left to climb the Great Glacier. His wife tells you that he is there somewhere, and that if you are going that way, to seek his aid. You'll also hear that there is no chance in hell you cannot make the trip without a map. While you probably can, the Glacier Map is a key item that the game requires you to get. Just tear it down from the wall and move along.

As you try to exit through the back of Icicle Inn, the guy back there stops you and tells you that the slope takes a steep drop from there, and that to advance any further is dangerous. As you are busy ignoring his advice, a familiar figure enters Icicle Inn: Elena, of the Turks! And furthermore, she appears to be here without any supervision. This may explain why she's still wearing her bib. Anyways, she and a couple of troops charge up towards you, and Cloud demands to know what she is doing here. Elena replies by saying it's a "Se-cr-et". Honestly, she spells it out for you. And she seems so damn proud of herself that you almost want to give her a gold star sticker (though I suppose someone should have told her that "se" isn't a letter). But then she begins to wildly accuse you of killing Tseng. Cloud explains to her that Sephiroth was the one who killed Tseng, but Elena does not listen and goes right on with her obviously rehearsed speech. Never ceasing to amaze me with her idiocy, Elena spends the next three sentences or so telegraphing the punch she is about to throw at Cloud. This is a bad idea, because I've found that physical assault is often much more ineffective when the target has been warned minutes in advance of the incoming attack. You can press the directional buttons to step off to the side if you'd like, but the only real consequence you suffer for getting hit is the embarrassment of being knocked out cold in one punch from someone who still needs training wheels. Assuming she misses, the weight of her enormous, retarded head sends her off-balance, and Elena more or less rolls right out of Icicle Inn. And who said this girl wasn't a complete dumbass?

Anyways, there is one final task you must accomplish before heading down to the Great Glacier. You're not allowed to just walk down the hill: you've got to shred down it. So, instead of making it to the bottom with a few cuts and scrapes, you'll now be making that trip in several pieces, and quite possibly wrapped around a tree. There's a house here with a kid who got injured from snowboarding a while back. You can't miss it: he's the only kid in two with a Snowboard. Anyways, go talk to him and he starts to tell you how he got injured on his Snowboard. Then he just looks at you and says you can have it. He gives you no indication as to why he's doing this, and you had made no mention of even wanting it. It's as if he was just sitting here waiting to hand his Snowboard to any random stranger that wandered into his room and began talking to him. Meh. Grab his Snowboard (after politely asking first, at least) and head off to the exit at the back of the town.

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--- Welcome to: The Great Glacier

The Great Glacier begins with a most excellent mini-game that entails snowboarding and not getting your ass beaten by it. This mini-game will be mimicked by the snowboarding game at the Gold Saucer, so you might refer to section VIII.C. of the FAQ for more information. However, there are not time or technique penalties for screwing up, and the balloons that appear throughout the course here are entirely meaningless except for possibly a cheap thrill. This is good, because it is impossible to collect every balloon on this course, anyways. Also note that the Great Glacier course is different and much longer than the three located at the Gold Saucer (as opposed to the G-Bike, which was identical to the Shinra chase). The one point that needs to be stressed,

however, is that the path will fork twice near the end of the course, and which direction you go at those forks will affect your starting point at the Great Glacier.

Going left at both forks lands you in Area 3 to begin with.

Going left then right takes you to Area 1 to begin with.

Going right and then left will start you off in Area 9.

Going right at both forks will place you in Area 5 to start off.

Anyways, a conventional walkthrough for the Great Glacier just isn't going to cut it. There are various paths you can take, in addition to different starting points. But, to make a long story short, the Great Glacier is broken up into thirteen different "areas", as labeled on the map. These thirteen areas are the main sections of the Great Glacier, but they are separated by numerous side paths that run between them all. Your ultimate destination is the base of Gaea's Cliff, located just north of Area 12, but there are several items to be found at the Great Glacier, as well.

Do be aware that you are racing against the clock, however, and that spending too much time out here will result in your party succumbing to the sub-zero temperatures. Granted, all that will happen is that you will be rescued and taken to the base of Gaea's Cliff, it can still be a pain in the ass if you happened to be far away from Area 12. It is virtually impossible to collect all of the items at the Great Glacier on one trip through, though, so you can more or less expect collapse sooner or later. The good news is that if you're too lazy to navigate the Great Glacier, all you need to do is wander around until you pass out.

Before we get started, let's kick off with the local monster activity. The Bandersnatch, which you may or may not remember from just outside Icicle Inn, is back with a vengeance. There's the Frozen Nail, which is an enemy that can't have a whole lot said about it. Accompanying it is usually the Shred, which has a few noteworthy attacks. The Crazy Claw has been known to berserk its target, and the Shred also knows the Cure 3 spell (which it rarely casts, thankfully). Fire and wind are the Shred's weak points, but it is immune to the effects of ice, earth, and water magic. Next up is the Ice Golem. It is an adorably cute enemy, because it is about 1/8 your size. It's main attack is called Cold Snap, and is a magical attack of the icy property. Thankfully, its no more powerful than its normal attack (which again isn't too powerful). It can take a lot of punishment, and also absorbs ice-based attacks. Everything else works, though. Finally, we have the Magnade. The Magnade is extremely evasive of physical attacks, so magical means are suggested to kill them off. All magic attacks work, but fire and gravity magic are its weak points and work especially well. But, like everything else around here, the Magnade really doesn't have any horribly powerful attacks to watch out for. The final enemy is the Snow, which is a lot like the Jemnezmy from the Temple of the Ancients. Snow is an extremely rare encounter, but odds are you'll meet her at least one. This is because you will meet one at Area 13, if you venture out there. She can confuse you, and also has a Cold Breath attack which does a moderate amount of magical damage to one of your characters. She can take quite a bit of punishment, but given the "boss battle" motif, is horribly easy to kill. Prey on her weakness to fire, and she's out for the count in no time. Just avoid ice magic, which she absorbs. Oh, and one last thing, you can steal the Circlet, a kickass accessory from her, so don't forget to bring the Steal materia along.

Area 1 would be the entrance to the Great Glacier. If you head south from here, you can go back to Icicle Inn. You can also make this your starting point

by going left then right at the snowboard course. This is the best starting point to choose if you'd like to back off, save, and take your time going through the Great Glacier. There are no items or other things of interest to be found here, but from here, you may head west to Area 2, north to Area 3, or east to Area 5.

Area 2 is located quite some distance northwest of Area 1. Like Area 1, there is nothing to do or see here at Area 2 except advance to other areas. The path leading south from here will take you to Area 1, the east path goes to Area 3, and the path leading north heads to Area 6.

Area 3 is a maze of trees directly north of Area 1. It's where you'll land if you chose to go left twice back at the snowboarding course, and there's also a Mind Source lying around here somewhere. From here, you can travel south to Area 1, west to Area 2, or east to Area 4.

Area 4 is nestled in between Area 3 and Area 5, and is more or less northeast from the entrance to the Great Glacier. Area 4 rather large, as well. The lake at the Great Glacier borders Area 4 on its northwestern side, but a large slab of ice grows on it, allowing you to cross. For starters, you can pick up the Potion located on the slab. Secondly, if you exit the screen on the northwestern side (where the slab is), you are taken to an ice cube maze. You have probably seen these kinds of puzzles before, where you can only jump on the overturned cubes, but when you jump onto one, the status of all cubes adjacent is reversed? Your reward for making it to the other side is the Safety Bit. Anyways, back at the main section of Area 4, you can exit the screen on the left side (heading west or south) to go to Area 3, on the right side (going east or south) to go to Area 5, or head north (along that thing ridge) to Area 9.

Area 5 is located east of the entrance to the Great Glacier, and rests at the base of the large mountain on the eastern side of the area. There is a cave here at Area 5, but there is nothing in it. Rather, it is a very long ice slide that will eject you from the Great Glacier if needed (though, personally, I think that the escape route would have been a lot more effective had it been located further from the entrance). You might also have landed here if you chose to go right at both forks back at the snowboard course. Other than that, the paths on the northern edge of Area 5 fork. The left path goes to Area 4, and the right to Area 10. You can also head south from here to go to Area 1.

Area 6 is located on the western edge of the Great Glacier, and lies some distance northwest of Area 2. There is a small cave here (which has two entrances, as you might see), that contains an Elixir. You can also travel south to Area 2, east to Area 7, and both paths leading north will take you to Area 11.

Area 7 is probably as close to the center of the Great Glacier as you are going to get. It lies just north of where the lake spawns a river, and consists mainly of a log bridge crossing that river. Other than that, there are really only two places you can head from here. Exiting Area 7 on the left side of the chasm takes you to Area 6, while exiting on the right goes to Area 9.

Area 8 lies almost directly north of Area 9, but the only path that runs through it connects to Areas 10 and 12. Area 8 is an important stop on the map if you're headed towards Area 13. Since you'll probably end up coming this way, anyways (unless you're approaching from the west), you'll likely want to stop and touch the Hot Springs here. Touching the Hot Springs has no visible effect on your character, but is helpful in acquiring something from the crazy lady at Area 13. From here, head northwest to Area 12, or southeast to Area 10.

Area 9 is more or less a featureless terrain that borders the eastern edge of

the lake at the Great Glacier. There is a lone tree here (which also appears on the map, mind you), but that's about it. This is also the furthest into the Great Glacier as can be chosen as a starting point, and can be reached by taking a right and then a left back at the snowboarding course. From here, you can head south along the edge of the lake to Area 4, east and up the mountain to Area 10, or west to Area 7. Note that going north, rather than taking you to Area 8, will also take you to Area 7.

Area 10 is located in the heart of the large mountain on the eastern edge of the Great Glacier. Several paths converge here, as well. The southern path leads to Area 5. The lower left path heads to Area 9, and the higher left path takes you to Area 8. The northern path should take you to Area 13, but does not (even though you can take a path from Area 13 to area 10, it's more or less a one-way trip). This path will instead take you to Area 8, but it is important to note that when traversing this path (from Area 10 to Area 8 rather than Area 13), that you can find the Added Cut materia lying along the northern edge of the path (on the second screen of the two-screen path). It blends in very well with its surroundings and can be very hard to spot, so keep your eyes peeled.

Area 11 is a quiet, lonely place that rests along the northwestern mountain. It is located near where the river flowing north from the lake turns right. From here, you may head west to Area 6, south to Area 7, or east to Area 12 (these routes may look a tad different if you happen to be looking at them on the map you blatantly stole from Icicle Inn, though).

Area 12 is a God-forsaken blizzard-ridden snowfield located on the northern edge of the Great Glacier. Take special note as to which direction you are facing when you enter Area 12, because the game does its absolute best to disorient you. You are allowed to place markers as you move, and do so with wanton disregard (you have an infinite amount). You're best advised to move slowly, placing markers as you move. When the camera begins to spin, wait for it to stop before moving on. Also, there is a small cave located in the direct center of area 12, which helps to serve as a mark, as well as containing an All materia. Remember that the entrance to the cave faces south. The western exit of Area 12 leads to Area 11, the southern exit leads to Area 8, and the eastern exit is the only way to access Area 13. The northern exit, lastly, takes you to the base of Gaea's Cliff. Go there last.

Area 13 is the far northeastern corner of the map, deep within the mountains. The creepy snow lady lives here, and if you speak to her after touching the Hot Springs at Area 8, she freaks out and goes psycho on your ass. The snow lady would be the one and only occurrence of the Snow creature mentioned in the enemy activity paragraph, and will indeed reap the Alexander materia when killed. Back outside her cave, you can head north back to Area 12, or south to Area 10 (though be aware that the path to Area 10 is a one-way trip, because for some reason you will not be allowed to take the same path back to Area 13).

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--- Welcome to: Gaea's Cliff

Before we set off, I'd just like to make note that everything at Gaea's Cliff is indeed a lost-forever, as discussed in section I.F. of the FAQ. This includes not only the items, but several enemy skills, as well. Not all of the enemy skills here are lost-forevers, mind you (only Trine is), but this is still the last chance until the end of the game you'll have to pick up Magic Breath and Bad Breath. Take heed, and then let's get moving.

One of two possible events will land you at the base of Gaea's Cliff. The

first would be actually traveling here from Area 12 of the Great Glacier. The second, and most likely method is having passed out back at the Great Glacier, and through some miracle were discovered by this guy who just happened to be passing by (which is even more amazing when you consider that this is a guy who never leaves his cabin). Anyways, he introduces himself as Holzoff, a fellow rock climber who has been living here at the base of Gaea's Cliff for the last 20 years. Hey, asshole, maybe you should go back and visit your wife back at Icicle Inn every once in a while 'eh? Anyways, despite any effort you make to not hear his boring old man story, he is going to force you to sit down and listen to it, anyways (honestly, I clearly and specifically told him "no", and he still went on with the story. Unreal.)

Anyways, him and his climbing buddy (someone named "Yakuza", or some other unpronounceable name), were scaling the cliff. Needless to say, it was colder than Hillary Clinton on a bad day. And, well, the other guy couldn't handle it anymore, so he cut his rope and plummeted to his death. Holzoff didn't notice until it was too late, sadly. He now resides at the foot of the cliff giving unsolicited advice and stories to passing climbers. He does give you two seemingly vital pieces of information, however. The first is to always "check your route" as you climb. Don't try to make any sense of it, because I was thinking on that one for the better half of an hour. That isn't a tactic which is limited to rock climbing, dumbass. Anyways, the second, and more useful piece of information is that you must periodically stop and "warm yourself up". What you do is rapidly press the appropriate button to rub your body against itself to generate heat. This idea really makes you want to take Tifa along, doesn't it? Before leaving Holzoff's cabin, finally, you can and should both rest and save.

Outside the cabin, the rest of the team has gathered. Barret starts to get really philosophical at this point, because at this point he is literally struggling against the planet he is trying to save. If you talk to Cait Sith, he also lets you in on the fact that Rufus is headed out this way, as well. On a final interesting note, nobody on the team really seems to appear to be that cold, except for Yuffie. Tifa, especially, worries me. Given what she's wearing, she should be freezing her pretty little ass off. Either that, or she's a robot. Anyways, from here, you can either form your party and move out to Gaea's Cliff, or head back into the Great Glacier for missed items. Amazingly, no matter how many times you go back to the Great Glacier and pass your stupid frozen ass out, Holzoff will rescue you. It's like he's stalking you or something. So get what you need done, and then let's advance

You'll find yourself at the base of Gaea's Cliff. Climbing it isn't horribly difficult, as Cloud ascends without the assistance of tools of any sort. He just grabs ahold of the ledge and up he goes. Note the red flags along the way that mark the ledges, but they are really of little importance. Just keep climbing, and Cloud more or less goes in the direction he needs to go. Be wary, however, of your temperature. If it drops below 26, you pass out and Holzoff has to come rescue your frozen ass. As a general rule of thumb, you'll probably want to stop and warm yourself up if your temperature hits or drops below 30 degrees or so. But what's really amazing is the extremely low temperature your bodies can survive being at for some odd reason. The average human can't drop far below the average body temperature of 98.6 degrees, while Cloud and company have no problem with their body temperature at 30 degrees (which, by the way, is enough for their blood to have frozen over) and lower, even. Absolutely amazing. Anyways, at the top of the edge is the entrance to the caverns of Gaea's Cliff.

By the by, I've probably received more e-mail concerning the above paragraph than the rest of the contents of this FAQ combined. Many people felt the need to let me know that in the parts of the world that aren't America, there's this strange method of gauging temperature known as Celcius, and in Celcius, the



numbers listed above actually make sense and wouldn't result in your blood becoming a non-tasty popsicle treat. But this is Texas. And down here in the state where we're lucky to have electricity and running water, we still found it biblically screwed up to see Cloud prancing about in temperatures lower than Hilary Clinton. Frankly, I blame the translators. Lazy bastards. Anyways, on with the dungeon.

You need not worry about the temperature in here, but there are some enemies you should be aware of. The Evilhead is more of a pain in the ass than anything. Its attacks are not that powerful, but Ultrasound also silences you and Blood Suck heals them in the process (but is thankfully so weak that it really wouldn't matter one way or another). They have no weaknesses, but are really easy to kill regardless. The Zolkalter is also of little mention. It can poison you with its Toxic Barf, but is overall a very weak and easy to kill monster. Simply avoid poison magic, which it absorbs. The Head Bomber is a bit tougher than the first two enemies, but is still not of too much concern. It can enrage your characters with its Extreme Bomber, possess semi-powerful physical attacks, and can take a moderate amount of punishment, to boot. Moving on, then, to the Stilva. The Stilva is a badass that will more than likely introduce you to its Magic Breath attack. And if you're not keeping that HP up, Magic Breath is enough to wipe out your entire team in one blast alone. However, you can use its own attack against it by learning Magic Breath with your E. Skill materia. It is also capable of casting Trine (another attack you can learn with E. Skill), but rarely does. In addition, its physical attacks are just nasty. Thankfully, its HP isn't too high (2,000 HP, to be exact), meaning that it won't have the chance to damage you too badly if you lay on the big damage right from the outset of the battle (though you should still be warned that Magic Breath is usually the Stilva's opening attack). If not, then by all means beware the Magic Breath. The Malboro is another odd enemy. You'll only meet it at some of the "outdoor" areas of Gaea's Cliff, and it always travels alone. Nine times out of ten, it attacks with its Frozen Beam, a powerful ice magic against any one character on your team. Its other attack, it uses rarely, but it can completely ruin your day if you're not prepared for it. Still, you might want to whip out the Ribbon to prepare yourself for the effects of Bad Breath, because you can indeed utilize the attack for yourself with the E. Skill materia. The final enemy here is not a random encounter, but an enemy you'll have to fight a few times to advance at a certain point. I don't suppose you could call the Icicle an enemy, as it is an inanimate object, but you are required to fight them, and they do retaliate with a slightly damaging physical attack every time you hit them. They always appear in the company of Evilheads, but here's a hint: kill the Icicle, and the battle is over. The Icicle absorbs ice, but has several weaknesses, including fire, earth, and gravity magic. Failing all else, Demi 2 or Laser is an instant deathblow to the Icicle, and ends the battle immediately.

Anyways, you'll find yourself inside an ice-filled cavern. Begin by heading into the back of the first room, and you will emerge on a small ledge. You can't advance very far into this room, as the pathway is blocked with stalagmites. And as we all know, your team is completely incapable of melting them, or just kicking them or something... Noooooo, we have to go it the hard way. To the left of the way you came in, you'll notice a second path leading back to the room you came from. Take that pathway, and follow it (it is linear, but be sure to nab the Javelin from a chest along the way). It wraps around and leads back to the top of the room with the stalagmites. You'll see a boulder at the top of the path which you can push. It moves excruciatingly slow, given the supposed amount of inertia it should possess. It does do a good job of taking out the stalagmites, though. Return to that room and cross the newfound path. From there, the exit is close by.

You'll emerge on the cliffside once more. It really doesn't matter which

path you take at the forks, because all of the routes merge eventually, so go nuts. Just keep moving up (movin' on up... to the east side). Again, stop to warm up if your temperature drops, cause you really don't need to be going back to the start.

Inside the next cavern, you'll find yourself unable to reach the exit because a small puddle of water is resting between the exit and the rest of the room. You're not allowed to jump it or wade through it or anything... nooooo... because again, we have to do things the hard way. Also note that treasure chest in the corner that you can't get to right now because video games just suck like that. What you're going to have to do is exit through that door to the right.

You'll find yourself in the middle of a narrow valley, on the right one of two paths wrapping around their respective mountains, separated by a very narrow chasm. And no, you aren't allowed to jump the damn thing... gotta do things the hard way... Follow the path until it wraps around the ledge and up to a new room. In this room, there will be four Icicle battles. After each battle, you are given to option to jump down to the room below, but you're going to want to fight all four battles before doing that. Also, before jumping down, you might also want to empty the two treasure chests in this room. They contain a Fire Armet and a Last Elixir. Why it is called "Last Elixir" is beyond me, but it is in reality a Megalixir. Anyways, if you have already chopped down all four icicles, just exit the room, come back in, and walk over to the ledge. The game should ask you if you want to jump down or not. Unless you want to stick around up here and look at the pretty colors, hop on down.

Back on the bottom floor, you'll find that the Icicles whose asses you kicked dropped down to form a convenient bridge to the exit. Before leaving, you might also want to nab that Speed Source before moving on to the next room. The icicle bridge leads you, of course, to the other side of the great chasm. And by "great chasm", I mean that three inch gap that you were too much of a pussy to jump over. First, grab the Enhance Sword from the chest to your left, and then follow this path to the third cliffside area.

If you managed to scale the first two cliffsides, then the third should be no problem to you. Again pay no mind to which way you are going, so long as you travel upwards, you'll make it. And do mind to keep yourself warm, cause it's a long way back from here, and you really don't want to make Holzoff come all of the way out here to rescue your frozen ass.

Just inside the next cave, there's a save point and a pool which will restore your HP/MP. Methinks there's a boss fight pending? Indeedy-do. Let's prepare. The next boss is actually two targets in one, making things doubly dangerous. You also need to kill both of them for the thing to finally die. The left target is ice-based, and thus absorbs ice magic. The right side is fire-based and thus absorbs fire magic. Both are immune to gravity magic, and neither possesses any weaknesses. Depending on the side attacking, they will attack with either a powerful Ice Breath or Fire Breath attack, which does some pretty nasty elemental damage to each opponent. But be the most wary of the capacity of both sides to cast Quake 3 on the entire party. Also note that both sides get Quake 3 as a dying attack, meaning that if you don't keep your HP up, it's going to take you down with it. First and foremost, you may wish to equip weapons, accessories, and/or materia that will protect you from the affortmentioned attacks. That being said, you probably should still take other measures to defend yourself. Big Guard will be a major asset in this fight, obviously. If you find yourself having to recast your barriers (possibly using a Barrier materia attached to an All materia), M-Barrier tops Barrier in this fight, for obvious reasons. You should hopefully have Regen by this point, and it should also help to keep your ass alive more so in this fight than many others. Other than what I've already mentioned, bring along anything you feel

comfortable using (except for sex toys- they never help in a battle).

Heading down the hallway on the next screen, you won't get very far until you are attacked by Schizo. Schizo is a gigantic, two-headed dragon, and each head is a target. The battle itself is more or less covered in the previous paragraph, so check back there for more details.

With Schizo defeated, step out onto the ledge of Gaea's cliff and scale the peak. Just over the horizon, you'll see it in all it's glory... It's Knowlespole, otherwise known as the Crater.

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--- Welcome to: The Crater (AKA "The Whirlwind Maze")

The team emerges on the edge of a gigantic Crater, glowing with an enormous amount of spirit energy from within. This truly is a special place... Well, it's also home to a host of new baddies, so let's go over them now. The Gigas, for starters, is about ten trillion times the size of everyone else in your group. But don't be fooled into thinking that that fact alone makes him any stronger than you or harder to kill. In fact, he's actually a huge pussy. He's got quite a bit of life, but other than that, don't expect this lone attacker to put up much of a fight. If it catches your fancy, you might could steal you a Gigas Armlet or two, but this opportunity is a lost-forever, as detailed in section I.F. of the FAQ. Moving along, then, there's not much I can say about the Gremlin, except that he looks like he wants some freakin' Honeycomb. Seriously, he looks like that little freakazoid from the commercials. But, he has no real powers to speak of. The Sculpture is an odd enemy... because it is what appears to be a walking bed. That attacks you. And your team sees nothing strange about this. Its physical attacks are not bad, but it does have a more powerful attack called Fire Shell. Next is the Killbin, another very odd creature. It's a box, which attacks you with either a physical attack, Fire 2, Ice 2, or Bolt 2. Granted, it almost always goes with the physical attack, which is considerably weaker than the magic. No weakness or strengths to speak of, sadly. Lastly, there's the Wind Wing. You are only made to fight them as punishment for being knocked on your ass by one of the windy sections of the Crater. Its attacks are not that bad, though it may choose to bust out on your ass with a devastating Aero 3 attack. Thankfully, this is rare. It also knows White Wind, but never uses it. You may choose to manipulate it to learn White Wind with your E. Skill materia, if you don't know it already. But, again, no strengths or weaknesses at all.

Another point that needs to be made is that all of the items to be found at the Crater are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

That being said, the Crater's path is very linear. Just mosey on inside, picking up the Neo Bahamut materia along the path. You don't get very far inside, however, before Cloud spots something approaching in the distance... it's the Highwind!

Cut to the bridge of the Highwind. Rufus stands at the front, accompanied by Heidegger and Scarlet, the evil bitch. Rufus gloats that he has finally found the Promised Land. In the back of the cockpit, you see Rude chilling with Hojo, who states that this is indeed not the Promised Land, but where the "Reunion" will take place...

Back to Cloud. Continue down the path until you reach an area where the wind blows. You need to cross when the wind is calm, lest you be knocked on your ass and be forced to battle a Wind Wing. Oh, and you might want to pick up the Hi-

Potion and Ether over there, too. Anyways, past that is a long and winding road, where you'll also find a chest containing the Kaiser Knuckle. You'll then come to another windy area, but with a twist. In addition to just being windy, green energy waves move through at predictable intervals. Avoid being hit by those, as well.

Before advancing any further, you may wish to stop to prepare for the upcoming boss battle. Not much can be said in the way of preparation, except that this boss likes to use a lot of fire magic, so choose your materia and accessories appropriately. This boss can also cast Silence, so prepare for that, as well. Obviously gravity magic will have no effect, but everything else works.

Just ahead, you'll see Sephiroth using a couple of his flunkies for target practice, slashing them up and sending them into the abyss below. Jesus, Sephiroth, lay off! Good flunkies are hard to come by nowadays... And then he does his little vanishing act. Your team, for once, is surprised. Some weirdness ensues, going on about the black materia and the cells of Jenova and such. Don't try to make any sense of it. What eventually happens is that Sephiroth flies through the air and knocks out your entire team. When they wake up, they get to face Jenova DEATH.

Jenova DEATH has a few powerful fire attacks, but nothing too damaging. If you prepared yourself, you'll be fine, as it attacks almost exclusively with fire magic (as Jenova LIFE did with water magic). Jenova DEATH occasionally casts Silence, which is something that can be a pain in the ass if you're not prepared for it. Other than that, just wail away on its ass to get this fight the hell over with.

After the fight, the entire team converges where the fight took place (there's also a save point here for your saving needs). You now have the black materia in your possession, but it's probably not the wisest idea in the world to hold onto it. Hand it to one of the characters not in your group (it really doesn't matter who, because the eventual outcome here is inevitable), and then move on down the path (Tifa, by the way, comes with you at this point if she isn't already with you, so be sure to equip her properly).

From here, note the save point just a little further down the path for all of your saving needs. Do so with wanton disregard, and also be sure to nab the MP Turbo materia and the Poison Ring lying around here. Other than that, it's a relatively short journey from here. You will encounter yet another windy path, and this time you not only have wind and green energy waves to deal with, but lightning strikes the path at regular intervals, as well. Jesus! Just wait for an opening, and then take it.

As you near Sephiroth, the scenery begins to change... to Nibelheim? Yes, friends, it's Nibelheim. And according to Cloud, Sephiroth is trying to psyche them out by showing them false images. No, Cloud, if Sephiroth wanted to psyche you out, he'd show you a picture of your ass just before he kicked it to high hell. What you first see is Sephiroth entering Nibelheim that day five years ago... and behind him is not Cloud, but a soldier who will later be identified as Zach. Cloud laughs at the stupidity of all of this, and if you talk to Tifa, she just tells you it's an illusion and not to worry about it. Despite her own words, Tifa seems pretty freaked out, if you ask me. Also note how Cloud becomes increasingly defensive.

The next scene plays, again switching out Cloud for Zach. This time it's the day where Sephiroth barbecued the whole village. Cloud and Tifa talk to each other right now literally like a couple of kids who are being picked on and are trying (poorly) to act like it doesn't bother them. Cloud calls out to

Sephiroth, saying that he knows that Sephiroth is trying to make it look like Cloud was not at Nibelheim five years ago. That's when the real Sephiroth appears, glad that Cloud has finally realized this. Cloud replies with a, "what you are trying to say is that you want to confuse me, right?" Sephiroth replies with a few words of his own, but this whole discussion can more or less be translated into: "you're a poop-head," and "I know you are, but what am I?"

Sephiroth does have a point though, as he more or less elaborates on. Plus, he delivers one of the coolest lines in the game: "what I have shown you is reality. What you remember, that is the illusion." Walk up to Sephiroth and talk to him, and Cloud will ask him why he is doing this. Sephiroth explains that this is Cloud's true self, and that he never imagined that a "failed experiment" would turn out so useful. He stops beating around the bush at this point, and openly tells Cloud that he is nothing more than a clone of Sephiroth himself, constructed by Hojo after the incident at Nibelheim. Furthermore, he was the "failed" clone, that wasn't even given a number. And when you take a look at the freaks walking around that actually got numbers, that's probably the biggest insult thrown Cloud's way thus far. Sure, Cloud may be a mental case, but at least he can still kick your ass once he's done freaking out. These Goddamned caped freaks don't even have the capacity to wipe themselves after going to the bathroom.

The scene gets more pathetic when Cloud talks to Tifa. She tells him not to listen, and Cloud assures her that he's not. This could not get any more childish if Cloud were to suddenly burst out with, "I am rubber, you are glue!" But the interesting thing is that the both of them really are bothered here. Tifa claims that she has known Cloud since childhood, and that they have many memories together. Thus, there is no way Cloud could have been created after the fact. Sephiroth then threatens to make an image out of what if currently on Tifa's mind, and that shuts her up pretty quick, though. Hmm... interesting...

Talk to Tifa again. Cloud goes about ten minutes too far in trying to defend the fact that he is actually who he claims to be. Why he is explaining this to the one person that actually believes him, I do not know, but then again, Tifa seems to be a little confused herself. It almost seems like she's starting to believe what Sephiroth is saying, given her withdrawn reply. Sephiroth comes to explain that the cells of Jenova inside of Cloud have merged with Tifa's memories to create the memories they have together, which may have included a childhood friend named Cloud. This is probably one of the most screwed up explanations for anything I have ever heard, but sadly, it's the least screwed up explanation we have so far. Tifa at this point just tells Cloud to stop thinking, as if that was going to help at all.

Some more banter between Sephiroth and Cloud ensues. Sephiroth, tiring of this, decides to pull out his trump card, which would be the photo that was taken of the team before they ascended Mt. Nibel. Indeed, Cloud is absent from the photo, having been again replaced with Zach. Cloud gets a little more defensive at this point, spouting off every single action he took from the moment he set foot in Nibelheim that day five years ago. "Well first, I put my finger in my nose, like this, and then I dug around a little, like this, and then..." That is, until he gets to the part about him being in SOLDIER. Suddenly, his memory gets hazy. This is not an unusual occurrence for Cloud, by any means, but this time, it really seems to bother him. He cannot recall when or how he ever joined SOLDIER, freaks out a little bit, and then goes completely and eerily silent. The screen goes dark, and you hear Tifa call out to Cloud. Cloud announces that they should be moving out, and that he is all right. And of all the adjectives I would choose to describe Cloud right now, "all right" is definitely not one of them. And where are you going? You saw Sephiroth; you had your damn chance. Might I suggest that when you encounter Sephiroth next time that you kick his ass rather than argue with him?

The scene switches to the friendly Shinra folk. Rufus, Scarlet, and Hojo make their way deep into the Crater, discovering a beautiful, untouched geological stratum that is not only a sight to behold, but also laden with raw materia. Rich, flavorful mako on the outside, and abundant, crispy materia on the inside? No, it's not Rufus's favorite breakfast cereal, but he does claim that this place is the Promised Land. Hojo, as always, is around to tell Rufus that he is a Goddamned moron who has no clue what he's talking about. True, but at least Rufus can go five minutes without spasming violently, you creepy little man. Rufus doesn't particularly enjoy having his parade rained on, and falls back to more or less calling Hojo an idiot in response (for lack of anything intelligent to say). The cavern begins to shake, and Scarlet sees something inside the wall moving. A gigantic eyeball flashes open, and Hojo immediately recognizes this thing as Weapon. Hojo calmly explains that Weapon was created by the planet to destroy everything in sight whenever the planet was in danger, or so it was stated in Professor Gast's report. I would expect Scarlet and Rufus to at least be a little freaked out at the threat of certain doom. They don't even have to scream and panic, just a startled gasp would be good enough. Rufus's response? "You sure keep a lot of things to yourself." You seriously have to admire that level of blatant stoicism.

Cut back to the rest of your team, who is waiting somewhere else in the crater. It probably would have been a good idea for them to, you know, get the black materia the hell out of there, but alas, they did not. The person holding the black materia talks to the rest of the team, before the rest of the team vanishes before their very eyes. As that character runs about aimlessly and confusedly, Tifa appears to them. Tifa says that the rest of the team is waiting just up ahead, and to hurry along that way. As that teammate heads off, Tifa takes off her disguise, revealing the face of Sephiroth, who then chuckles and says in an evil voice: "and don't forget the black materia!". And I suppose this should probably go without saying, but I just know that if I don't say it then some idiot is going to be really confused: that was not Tifa; it was Sephiroth disguised as Tifa. Tifa is not a traitor. Tifa also has large breasts. I like Tifa's large breasts very much.

Back with the Shinra folk, Scarlet is the first to express some, if any concern with the fact that they are all about to be eaten alive, saying that she has a bad feeling about this place. Well, I would have a bad feeling too, if something five hundred times bigger than me was slowly waking up next to me and was intent on killing me. Rufus calmly explains that they should be getting back to their ship (you know, before they were all brutally dismembered or something), but that's when Cloud and the team are magically transported into the room. Scarlet angrily asks where you guys came from. Though I'd be tempted to respond with a smart-assed response involving the stork, given the situation on hand, I suppose a more appropriate answer would be "Hojo made me." Cloud says to the Shinra folk that they'd better clear out, because things are going to get rough. This place is where the Reunion is going to happen, and that is going to be a supposedly bloody event for all involved. Rufus responds with a dismissive laugh, as if to say, "oh goody, we're all going to die. Who wants pie, then?"

Whichever teammate was holding the black materia arrives at this point. Cloud walks over to that character, stopping every few seconds to spasm. Finally reaching that character, Cloud asks for the black materia, saying that he's going to take things from here. You've gotta be joking. The last time Cloud had the black materia, it took all of thirty seconds for it to become the property of Sephiroth. And that was back when he was still semi-sane. You'd have to be some kind of a dumbass to hand him the key to destroying the world now that Cloud has completely lost his mind. And then your teammate does the stupidest thing imaginable: they hand it over. They give Cloud the Goddamn

black materia! Arrrgh! Does not anybody on this team have an inkling of common sense!?

Cloud, standing in the middle of the room, tells everybody that he's sorry. He says it four times. Seriously, he's really sorry that he has to bring death and destruction to us all. As a final benediction, he tells Tifa that he hopes that she one day meets the "real" Cloud, which I imagine would be kinda hard to do once the planet has been reduced assorted wreckage and debris drifting aimlessly through outer space. But, some of them aren't necessarily unhappy what with the impending doom. Hojo, actually, is thrilled that something he built actually works. He eagerly asks Cloud what number he is. Cloud sadly replies that he was never given a number, and asks Hojo to please give him one. Hojo, upset at this turn of events, calls Cloud a miserable failure. Meanwhile, that tiny voice of reason inside your head is probably saying something to the effect of, "hello? You're all about to friggin' die! Get the hell out of there!" Cloud, downtrodden and depressed, floats up into the air with the black materia in hand as the screen goes white.

Hojo begins with his long-winded explanation (as an alternative to escaping this place before he is burned alive, I suppose). Cloud is a clone created after the real Sephiroth died five years ago. Using a combination of Jenova's cells, mako, and spare parts dug up by his assistant, Igor, he created Cloud (it's just too bad that his budget ran out and he wasn't able to provide Cloud with a brain). In practice, Hojo completely failed to clone Sephiroth, as Cloud noticeably looks and acts nothing like the original. However, this did help to prove Hojo's Jenova Reunion theory. This theory stated that even if Jenova's body was dismembered, it would become one again. And seeing as Hojo had to be an idiot and distribute Jenova's cells all over the place, that is why we are seeing this mass convergence of failed Sephiroth clones meeting here at the Crater. He had originally thought that they would all converge at Midgar, where Jenova's body was stored, but he was wrong. Jenova literally began to move (with the help of Sephiroth, of course).

I suppose that the Sephiroth thing merits an explanation, as well, given that he is supposedly dead. In case you haven't figured it out, what you've been dealing with thus far is not the original Sephiroth. It's the only Sephiroth clone that ended up looking like him (hence the number one tattooed on his hand). According to Hojo, Sephiroth himself is manipulating the clones from beyond the grave. How exactly he is doing this, I am not sure, but the best explanation I can come up with is this: Jenova is an abomination that is not of this planet. Sephiroth was made from Jenova, thus when he was not entirely able (or willing) to merge with the planet's lifestream. This at least explains how he was able to become a "traveler" of the lifestream, at any rate. From there, I suppose he would somehow be able to control clones of himself, at least. This is all purely speculation, but I defy anyone to come up with a better explanation.

Hojo and Rufus continue to banter. Hojo explains that he had been wondering where all of the clones were heading, but that he was never able to figure it out. All that he knew was that they were ultimately going to end up back where the original Sephiroth was. Meanwhile, Cloud is somewhere up near the ceiling summoning Armageddon. Cloud, taking note of the Jenova inside him, notes that he was not pursuing Sephiroth. Rather, he was being summoned by him. This is when Cloud realizes his duty, which is to deliver the black materia to Sephiroth. And as Cloud walks along the... stuff growing on the ceiling, Sephiroth's body, preserved entirely in mako, drops into plain view. And Hojo couldn't be more ecstatic. "Did you see it!? It's Sephiroth! So he IS here! This is perfect! Both Jenova's Reunion and Sephiroth's Will!" He might also want to throw "Destruction of the Planet" in there somewhere, too.





to exactly how he ended up there is nonexistent, but rather, they almost immediately recognize each other. Tifa asks him a few questions, but each one is met with one of Cloud's classic memory spasms. Cloud mentions that it had been five years since he saw Tifa... referring to the incident at Nibelheim. But he was wrong. According to Tifa, it had actually been seven years. Tifa does not come out and say it, but what she is hinting at is that Cloud really wasn't at Nibelheim five years ago. From what she could tell, Cloud had got his wish, joined SOLDIER, and quit after the incident at Nibelheim. For those five years, he had become a mercenary. But something seemed odd to Tifa then. Cloud did not remember things that he should have remembered, and knew things that he shouldn't have. And that's when Tifa heard of Cloud's plan to leave... to go somewhere far away. Tifa didn't want that. She wanted to keep an eye on him, to learn more about him. So she told him about the AVALANCHE job so he would stick around. And so the truth comes out. Could this all mean, then... that Sephiroth was right all along? That this was not Cloud, but the workings of the cells of Jenova, which somehow merged with Tifa's own childhood memory and transformed the image of this... experiment to that of the boy named Cloud? Alas, you really have bigger problems than that to worry about right now.

Tifa wakes up on a table in some strange room. Barret is standing in the corner, and seems kinda happy to see her wake up. The first part of their conversation makes literally no sense, but they end up on the subject of Cloud somehow. Barret explains that nobody has any clue what happened to him or if he made it out of the Crater alive. Tifa asks how long she's been asleep, and Barret mentions that she's been out for an entire week. He neglects to mention the important details, such as where in the hell you are right now, or what happened to the rest of the team.

But that's when Barret begins with the bad news. For starters, Sephiroth remains at the Crater, which is now protected by a completely impenetrable barrier of light. There's really nothing that anyone can do, except wait for old Sephiroth to wake up. On top of that, Weapon has been going around destroying things left and right. Weapon's motives are unclear at this point, but I think that "death and destruction" is pretty high on its "to do" list. Currently, Rufus is trying to battle Weapon, which makes even Barret admit that the man has balls. But when you think about it another way, Barret, it's not really like Rufus has any alternative to fighting Weapon, seeing as his is the only nation on Earth, so he really doesn't deserve any credit for not just bending over and kissing his own ass goodbye. Barret mentions that AVALANCHE should have been the ones to take out Weapon, because everyone knows that a small, ragtag team of vigilantes can accomplish what endless legions of soldiers cannot (this is true for any videogame, actually). But, again, that's when he points out that you've seriously got bigger things to worry about. Barret walks over to the window and opens the blinds. There, looming in the sky, is Meteor. Well, that just sucks. Kinda puts a damper on your day, doesn't it?

Rufus enters the room (heralded for some reason by the Turk's theme song), wondering aloud why Cloud has yet to show up and "rescue" you. I guess this sort of means that Tifa and Barret are being held captive by the Shinra somehow. After a brief discussion about Cloud, Rufus more or less openly admits that the world is screwed. What he has decided to do now is to publicly execute Tifa and Barret and blame the whole mess on them. "People are ignorant," he says. "They'll feel better as long as someone is punished." The hell!? A maliciously evil hellbeast is rampaging the Earth, destroying everything in its path, Sephiroth sleeps in the Crater, awaiting the day of mass destruction, and a giant Goddamned Meteor is going to reduce our entire planet to rubble, and your biggest concern is PR!? Isn't there some way we can impeach your stupid ass?

You gain control of Barret after Heidegger ties his arms up. A soldier

personally escorts Tifa down to the execution chamber, but Barret is more or less left alone. I guess they just sort of assumed that the gigantic, angry man with a gun for an arm would politely follow to his certain and untimely demise without being instructed to do so. Alas, there is really not much Barret can do but follow, and also make use of that save point you see on your way down.

You might want to stop right now and give Barret some materia (yes, despite being tied up and away from the rest of the team, he still mysteriously can access their materia). It really doesn't matter what the hell you give him, just so much as your battle options aren't limited to "fight" and "item", you should be all right.

Down in the press room, Scarlet, the evil bitch, does her absolute best to demonize your team to the media. Granted, she has absolutely no proof or even evidence that your team has done anything wrong, but don't think that that's going to stop her. Scarlet explains that with all of the chaos abound, that Shinra desperately needs to rally public support (an area in which, I admit, they are currently desperately lacking). So, someone, anyone, needs to be punished severely. I can think of far better candidates than the ones who are taking the fall, it's just that I doubt that Rufus would want to execute his own employees. Evil Bitch makes a pretty good point when she notes that even though no one will admit it, people love this kinda stuff. And when Tifa is taken to the gas chamber and Barret angrily yells that if anybody is going to be executed first, it might as well be him, Scarlet reaches a new low in demanding that the camera's get a good close-up shot of Barret's "tearful goodbye". Good lord, Scarlet... that's evil even for your evil bitch ass.

Scarlet leads Tifa into her "special gas chamber", accompanied by a generous amount of shoving. As Tifa is thrown into the chair and strapped in, Scarlet looks at Tifa disdainfully, calls her a "stuck-up bitch", and slaps her. I don't even know where to begin picking this one apart, but I think what it comes down to is that while Tifa's personality was sacrificed in order to make her extremely attractive, Scarlet's was instead sacrificed to make her unfathomably evil. And I honestly think that Scarlet is jealous because Tifa is so damn hot (plus, well, her being unfathomably evil and all). Eat that, Scarlet. Scarlet and the soldier walk out of the gas chamber, making extra sure to drop the key to Tifa's shackles as they leave.

Klaxons blare as Scarlet exits the gas chamber, announcing that Weapon is rapidly approaching Junon. And in case you haven't figured it out by now, you're at the Junon branch of Shinra H.Q.. Everyone files out of the room except for that ugly Cait Sith-shaped reporter, who walks up to Scarlet and says, "How does it feel now, Scarlet?" Before she can respond, he knocks her out with sleeping gas and takes off his disguise, revealing Cait Sith underneath. The soldiers that were accompanying Barret attack you, but battling them will probably be the hardest thing you've had to do since tying your shoes this morning. After the battle, Barret rushes up to the door and tries to open it, but to no avail. This is bad...

Cut to Heidegger, who rushes into Rufus's office. Rufus, of course, is not in the least bit concerned that Weapon is approaching the city at a high velocity intent on destroying it. He calmly tells Heidegger that he knows his orders, and Heidegger orders his troops to give Weapon a blast from the giant canon. For once, I guess we should be happy for the Shirna's technological advancement. I don't know if you ever noticed the giant cannon before, but it's that huge thing built into Junon that's about as big as the city itself. Jesus!

And the cannon fires. Unfortunately, whoever fired the damn thing forgot to aim it at something, and the blast flies a gazillion feet through the air and finally just crashes into the water, damaging nothing but the reputation of the

Shinra. Rufus, having seen this, in a presumed attempt to be funny, goes, "did we get 'em?" Well, Rufus, unless we were looking to blast a hole in the water, no, we didn't get him. You bastard.

A few minutes following the dead silence, the klaxons roar back to life, and Weapon rushes towards the city. Heidegger seems shocked at this, because he for some reason thought that you had hit Weapon dead-on. If by "dead-on", you mean "missed completely", yeah, I suppose you're right. Also, you are a jackass. As for the current situation, Weapon is barreling towards the city, and the cannon will take some time to reload. In the meantime, it appears that the Shinra will be resorting to conventional firepower. They might as well be using rocks and pointy sticks, because the one or two percent of the ensuing shots that actually come into contact with Weapon don't appear to be slowing it down in the least. Weapon rams the city head-on, not doing much initial damage, but jostling it about quite a bit.

The scene cuts to Tifa, who feels the chamber shake from the impact of Weapon. And that's when the gas starts pouring out. Barret yells through the door for Tifa to hold her breath and that he'll find some way to get her out of there. Sure, Barret. There's nothing that you can do here, because it seems that the door to the gas chamber is kept locked from a different room. Barret and Cait Sith rush out into the hallway, only to have the door to the previous room lock behind them. Inside, they can hear Scarlet cackling that they'll never save Tifa now. Barret is a bit pissed, but Cait Sith says that he may have an idea, and that the team needs to head to the airport. Barret is a bit untrusting, but there's not much else you can do at this point except go along with it. The path is fairly linear, and Cait Sith will direct you in the proper direction you need to go. Any fight you get into will be ridiculously easy, and over with in a hurry, though I do find it amusing that there are soldiers who care enough about the escaping prisoners that recapturing them will take priority over doing battle with the thing that is about to eat their city. You'll see a TV reporter on your way to the airport that turns out to be Yuffie, who will also accompany you to the airport. Just over the horizon, you will see Weapon slowly rising, seemingly intent on doing something very painful in a minute. You should waste little time in hurrying to the Airport at this time. As the team reaches the airport, a brief dialog ensues between Barret and Cait Sith. It ends with Barret grabbing his gun/arm and saying to Cait Sith, "Yo, you better watch my back till the end... partner." It's kind of touching how even Barret knows the power of forgiveness... even if it is a slimy, backstabbing traitor like Cait Sith.

Cut back to Tifa. Despite all of the commotion outside, it is deathly silent on her gas chamber. She at this point gets it through her head that there isn't anything Barret can do to help, so she needs to get that key for herself. It's really easy to do (and I'm really curious as to why she didn't think of this sooner): just grab the key with her legs, transfer the key to her mouth by pressing both buttons at the same time, and then transfer the key to one of her hands. In freeing that hand, transfer the key to the other hand. And take your time: that poisonous gas has no visible effect on Tifa whatsoever. You're still going to want to shut off the switch when Tifa finally frees herself, though. But, as you try to open the door, it's really no use, as you are sealed in.

Help is on the way, though. Outside, Weapon is preparing an extensively painful blast for the city of Junon. He charges it up, and then lets it rip. Now, I know you were expecting some nuclear-concussive blast or something, but such is really not the case. Rather, it just makes a small incision in the wall of one of the buildings, conveniently enough located right next to the gas chamber. And maybe it's me, but that's just a little too ridiculous to swallow. At about this time, the giant cannon (located a good two or so meters away from Weapon's face), fires again, resulting in an almost cartoonish explosion.

Weapon looks at the giant cannon strangely, and then slowly leaves for the time being. Lovely. The strongest weapon in the world was enough to confusedly stun Weapon. We're doomed.

And, well, according to a couple thousand e-mails I've received, it turns out that what I said in the above paragraph was false. Apparently, I just wasn't watching close enough and didn't see that the shot did indeed blow Weapon's head right open, killing it in a quite gruesome fashion. Of course, if you were paying good enough attention during the CGI sequence back at the Crater, you'll know that there's still more Weapons (or WEAPONS) left to deal with, so there's really no cause to celebrate quite yet. On another note, of all the WEAPONS, this poor bastard is the only one who was not given a name by the game programmers, quite possibly due to the fact that the programmers were lazy pricks. Final Fantasy VII fanatics jumped at this opportunity, and seem to have unanimously bestowed upon him/her/it the name Sapphire WEAPON. I have decided to break with tradition, however, and shall call him Gus.

Anyways, Tifa at this point takes full advantage of her new escape route and crawls out of the hole blasted into the wall, then begins to scale down the building, pursued by Scarlet and a few expendable troops who were never taught how to climb, and thus plunge immediately to their deaths upon attempting to give chase. Tifa scales the building and runs along the top of the giant cannon (note the name "Sister Ray" is etched onto the side of the giant cannon, as this is its proper name). But, alas, she reaches the end of the line when she runs out onto the barrel of the cannon, which rests hundreds of feet above the ocean. Scarlet approaches Tifa and a cold standoff ensues. Scarlet, still on her "stuck-up" kick, slaps Tifa again. And here's where things get fun. You get to slap back. So have some fun, slap that bitch, and enjoy watching the catfight of the century. Meee-ow!

Needless to say, Scarlet will probably lose. Being the sore loser she is (no pun intended), she calls in her troops to finish Tifa off. That's when you hear a voice calling out for Tifa to run to the end of the cannon. Don't think, just run. And as you near the end of the cannon, something begins to rise in the distance... it's the Highwind! Barret throws a rope over the edge for Tifa to grab onto, and she leaps towards it. A suspenseful note is hit when the rope sways away from her and she falls, only to barely grab onto the rope at the bottom as it snaps back towards her. Following this, the Highwind turns and flies off into the sunset, leaving Junon behind them and making for a fitting end to this daring escape.

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--- Welcome to: the Highwind

Before I go any further, I'd just like to say that I hope there was some brilliant part of Cait Sith's plan that he neglected to mention. Tifa escaped mainly as a result of her own skill and luck, and as far as I can tell, Cait Sith's plan more or less consisted of escaping in the Highwind and leaving Tifa to die. Maybe he planned to do more or less the same thing that Weapon accomplished with one anti-climatic blast, it's just that this part seriously bugs me, is all.

Anyways, Barret appears glad enough to see Tifa. Cait Sith is here, as well. He says he'll fill you in on all of the details later, but to make a long story short, the Highwind now belongs to you. Sweet! He hops off into the cabin, followed by Barret, leaving you to explore and snoop around for yourself. Do so, because the Highwind will be from here on out your base of operations, so it would behoove you to become familiar with it. There's an operations room just

inside (there'll be more you can do in there later), and also even a room to store a chocobo (which, again, becomes more useful once you have a chocobo to fill that room with).

Down in the main hallway (just inside the cabin), you can speak with the lone crewman that is trying to look like he's working. He'll give you instructions on how to fly the airship if you ask, but if you choose the "chew the fat" option, he will kindly explain to you exactly how you came into the ownership of the Highwind.

You must first understand that the crew of this ship was already disgruntled, given that they worked under Heidegger. Heidegger, if you'll recall, has a little anger management problem. Rufus periodically makes fun of Heidegger, who then takes out his anger on the first living thing he sees. The crew of the Highwind got it pretty bad, and most (if not all) were literally beaten by Heidegger on a routine basis. The crew put up with it, but only because their only alternative was to quit their job. But then came their chance for mutiny, which is a chance they took.

It all started a week ago, back at the Crater. It was during their escape that everyone came rushing back onto the Highwind. That is when, the crewman notes, that he met Cid, the legendary pilot. If you'll recall, Cid was the original pilot for the Highwind, so he began looking around the Highwind all nostalgic-like. The crewman says that Cid even talked to him, and was "every bit as warmhearted as (he'd) ever heard." Cid? Warmhearted? Those are two words that just don't seem like they belong together, if you ask me. Like "Oprah" and "tolerable". Anyways, Cid noted the horrible conditions that the crew had to work under, and commented that things would be different if it were him running things again.

And, well, that was all it took. Once the ship returned to Junon, the crew rebelled and the ship was placed in the hands of your team. Unfortunately, Tifa and Barret were captured during the process (exactly what happened, I'm not sure). So, the rest of the team waited and plotted, waiting for the perfect chance to strike. And strike they did.

Anyways, on the bridge leading to the cockpit, you'll see Barret talking to Cait Sith. Barret is still kind of a bit overwhelmed, an emotion which he obviously will express with anger. "Dammit! Why didn't you tell me you could fly an airship!? I thought Tifa was gone for good..." Aww... how poignant. Cait Sith apologizes for the confusion and hops off to the cockpit, followed by Barret

Tifa happily exclaims "Everyone? Everyone's here!?", and hurries into the cockpit herself.

Stepping inside the cockpit, she is greeted by Cid, who welcomes Tifa to his airship. Cid is excited as hell, but Tifa isn't. She walks into middle of the room, and looks around disappointedly. Cid seems curious why, but Red XIII steps in and just gives him a look, which Cid seems to understand. Tifa is sad because Cloud is missing...

Talk to Red XIII, who asks Tifa if the team is going to be strong enough without Cloud around. Surely, the team will be able to stop Meteor without Cloud's help. Tifa shakes her head and takes in the situation around her. The whole world is screwed right now, and she doesn't know what the hell to do. Barret comes up behind her and tells her to get ahold of herself, and then throws in his "there ain't no getting' offa this train we're on" quote in there for good measure, but it's no use. Tifa sighs. If only Cloud were here, he'd know what to do... If only Cloud were here, he could handle things... If only

Cloud were here, we could play a game of ringtoss on his head... Barret gets kinda mad at Tifa for being such a wimp, but Red XIII may have a point, after all. He doesn't come right out and say it, but something in his voice suggests that Cloud may be the only one who can take on Sephiroth. Sure, there, Red, because Cloud's shown us numerous times in the past just how capable he is of killing Sephiroth. Wait, no, he hasn't.

Finally, talk to Cid. He gives a short speech about how Cloud was kind of a cool guy, despite all of those dumbassed things he did. He says that if you can find out where he ended up, then the Highwind can get you there in no time. Red XIII mentions that Cloud is still buried deep within the Crater, but that he is more than likely in the Lifestream, itself. At a certain point on the Earth, the Lifestream gushes up to the Earth's surface, but he is not quite sure where. And just let me say that there's something incredibly frightening about that notion, Red XIII. The Lifestream is not something that any jackass needs to have access to.

Anyways, before moving out, there is something that first needs to be done. While Cid "teaches this moron how to fly the ship" (and these are the people that think Cid is a warmhearted guy, by the way), you need to head to the operation room and form a team. The team will be Cloud-less, but I think you can manage. With that out of the way, speak with the trainee on the bridge whose skill level appears to be going up every time you talk to him, and it's time to make tracks.

Well, if you fly around and ask people from the various towns in the world, you are more or less pointed in the same direction. Because there's really only one town left that you haven't visited, and that is obviously where you need to go. Make a course for the southeastern islands.

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--- Welcome to: Mideel

Actually, before you head down to Mideel, there is probably some business you'll want to take care of first. Screw finding Cloud- his ass can wait. For starters, you might want to knock sections V.F., V.G., V.H., and V.I. of the FAQ off of your list of things to do. V.F. is the important one here, because the reward here is one of the gamers lost-forevers mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. V.G. and V.H. can more or less be done at your leisure, but V.I. will pretty much go hand in hand with your trip to Mideel, anyways. There's a new battle taking place at Fort Condor right now, too, by the way. But other than that, there's not too much left for you to do. Dio had to be an ass and close down the Gold Saucer for the time being, so you'll eventually meander over to Mideel for lack of anything better to do with your time.

I suppose I should go over the enemies you will encounter around this region. But I'm going to start off by saying that this place, overall, makes for one of the better places in the game to level-up, and is thus mentioned in section VI.A. of the FAQ. Furthermore, the only time you would really ever find yourself dealing with them is if you find yourself choosing to level up in this region. That being said, let's delve into the local monster activity. The Head Hunter and the Crysales are both very nondescript enemies who hang around the jungles surrounding Mideel. The Crysales has an annoying tendency to put your characters to sleep, but that is the only noteworthy aspect concerning the offensive abilities of either. For more on the benefits of fighting them for the purposes of leveling-up, refer to section VI.A. of the FAQ. Moving right along, the Spiral is another generic creature that can be found hanging around the plains outside the jungle. Their only notable aspect is their mention in

section XIX.B. of the FAQ. Lastly, around the beaches of Mideel you may run into a big-ass creature called the Sea Worm. It's big and menacing, and has a lot of HP, but should pose little to no threat to you at all at this point in the game. Ice is a weakness, while fire and gravity are ineffective. Earth is also absorbed. On a final note, the Sea Worm always travels alone.

Enter Mideel, a quiet, peaceful hot springs town. There ain't a whole lotta much going on, but you'll probably want to do some shopping here. There's nothing that you haven't seen before at the materia shop, but the weapon shop has some powerful new buys. Note that every store is simultaneously populated by the same psychopathic lady who is stocking up on supplies for the big strike. As if having 99 swords on hand when Meteor strikes is really going to make a lick of difference one way or another. Instead of being dead, she'll be dead and stupid. That's about it. Oh, and the adorably cute white chocobo referenced in section V.I. of the FAQ is hanging out in the item shop, too.

Anyways, as Tifa heads into the main section of town, she sees a puppy crying in the middle of the street. As she goes to console the poor animal, she overhears a couple of men talking about a "poor pokey-headed guy" who washed ashore a few days ago. Tifa springs to life, suddenly forgetting about the puppy, and asks them for more details. One of the men says that he was discovered maybe seven days ago washed ashore near the edge of town, and that he is currently in the hospital. Elated, Tifa runs to the doctor's office.

She bursts inside, happy as a lark, and speaks with the doctor. The doctor tells Tifa that Cloud is indeed here, and is over in the next room, but he has sustained major mako poisoning and... Well, Tifa isn't really listening to him at this point. She runs into the next room to see Cloud. He's there, but when she talks to him... What the hell? Cloud is here, in one way or another. His body sits in the wheelchair in front of Tifa, but his mind is a million miles away. His head rocks back and forth aimlessly; he is literally a human wasteland. And Tifa is crushed, to say the least. The doctor walks in at this point, explaining that Cloud has been exposed to an incredibly high amount of mako energy, and that it's a wonder he's even alive. I really don't think Tifa's listening, though. The doctor senses this, and shoos everybody out of the office, leaving Tifa and what remains of Cloud alone together. And Tifa deserves an Oscar for the following scene, where she pours her heart out to the shell of a man, asking him to please just show her some sign that he can hear her. "This is too cruel!" she finally explodes.

Back outside, the doctor speaks with the rest of the team. It is again restated that Cloud has mako poisoning. The case is so bad that no normal human should have been able to survive it. And just to clarify the amount of mako he was exposed to: he was carried halfway across the planet by the Lifestream itself. That is the literal equivalent to jumping into a nuclear reactor core. And then the doctor explains to you that the only real thing you can cling on to is hope. That is, if that crazy shopper hasn't gone and bought up all of the hope already.

Tifa walks out of the office, a little flustered, but ok. She explains to the rest of the team that she no longer cares about anyone or anything but Cloud right now, and that she is going to remain here by his side. The team understands, and heads back to the Highwind.

Back in the Highwind, a solemn mood prevails. Barret, at the head of the bridge is completely lost. What is the team going to do now? What can the team do now? Cait Sith steps forward and makes himself useful, for once, allowing the team to eavesdrop on a Shinra meeting. Good work, Cait Sith! And we were just about to chop you up and make pillows out of you! This little act of espionage may have just saved your life!

The Shinra staff sits around the table in the now-infamous meeting room. It is still not apparent exactly who is pulling Cait Sith's strings, but I suppose you can be pretty sure of a few people who are not. Rufus marches into the room and announces his top two priorities. One is to eliminate Meteor, and the second is to remove the barrier surrounding the Crater and defeat Sephiroth. He neglects to mention Weapon, but I'm pretty sure that it's somewhere there on his list of priorities. Heidegger and Scarlet explain their plan to collect huge materia and ram it into the Meteor. Huge materia is kind of like regular materia, only, well, huge. The only two huge materia still to be collected are those from North Corel and Fort Condor. Troops are currently on their way to North Corel.

Barret is kind of pissed off about the strike against his former home town. He vows not to let the Shinra have the huge materia. Well hell, Barret, they're just trying to save the world from complete and utter destruction with it! And until you can think of a better way to prevent Meteor from killing us all, I say let them do what they hell they want with it. Red XIII also mentions that the huge materia should have some reaction with your regular materia when they are placed near each other. Barret hits a sentimental note when he says that Cloud is gonna freak when he comes back and sees the huge materia. Cait Sith notes that even though Barret is always picking on Cloud, he really does miss him and wants him to come back. Barret, at the risk of showing any kind of emotion, responds by yelling at Cait Sith.

And then the issue of leadership comes up. Barret admits that he isn't cut out to be a leader, so he instead wakes up Cid and tells him that he's the new leader, instead. Cid's reaction? "Pain in the ass. Forget it." Barret yells at Cid, saying that Cid's the captain of the ship, so he should have to be the damn leader. He strikes a chord with Cid on that one, and he finally agrees to take the job. This makes Cid the third team captain you've had in the last week. Hell, and I thought Latin American governments were unstable.

Anyways, form a team, get you some materia equipped, and then it's time to head out to North Corel. Speak with the pilot on the bridge, as always, to move out. Despite now being a level six pilot, he still can't take off without screaming like a maniac. Good lord, maybe we should stop promoting his ass every five minutes until he can at least get that part right.

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--- Welcome to: North Corel/Mt. Corel (Again)

First things first, you'll probably want to save your game before heading back to North Corel. The huge materia you may or may not earn from this mission is indeed one of the game's lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, and thus if you screw this mission up, it is gone for good. There is another lost-forever in this mission, which is something that must be stolen from one of the bosses you will fight, so bear that in mind. That being said, head on back to North Corel, and speak with a couple of the local villagers there. They all claim that the Shinra has been poking its head around there, looking to take the huge materia from the reactor up in Mt. Corel. And it's up to you to stop them.

As far as preparations go, you're really not in for the most difficult battles in the world, but a couple of things that it couldn't possibly hurt to have on hand would be water, lightning and gravity magic. If you want to nab the aforementioned lost-forever, you'll also want to bring along the Steal materia. Also, bear in mind that you have a time limit for the upcoming



battles, so you'll want to set your team up to strike hard and strike fast.

Reaching the reactor should be notably easy, mainly because the enemies here are the same Goddamned ones you fought during Section III.D. of the walkthrough. This means that you will reach the reactor without too many hassles, and will be scraping the remains of your enemies off the bottom of your shoe when the couple of guards standing just outside the reactor recognize you and attack. They begin by turning their backs to you politely so that you may dismember them in a quick and convenient manner. Such service!

After the battle, the train begins to move. I don't know how they fit such a gigantic train inside the reactor, but when your team moves out of the way, you'd be surprised by what comes out of that sucker. After your team watches the train slowly pass by without at all attempting to stop it, that's when Cid decides he's going to give chase (kinda makes you wish Cloud was still around). Head into the reactor, and you'll come out riding a small train engine. And the chase is on.

You've got ten minutes in all to stop the train. There are several penalties to failing to stop the train in time (see below), so get your asses in gear and move out.

Controlling the train engine shouldn't be too difficult. Just work the levers back and forth, establishing a steady rhythm. If you try and pump them too fast, you'll screw up, guaranteed. But, assuming you're not a complete idiot, you should find yourself gaining on the Shinra's train in no time. That's when Cid tells they team that you're going to jump. And when I say jump, I mean it. Your party flies across the tracks at a high velocity in a daring jump that Evil Kenivel wouldn't even think of trying.

On the train ahead of you, you need to hop from car to car. On each car, you will fight a different battle, starting with the Gas Ducter on the first one. The Gas Ducter is a fairly tame enemy, to say the least. It's attacks are really little to worry about, and Smog Alert (it's most powerful attack) does only moderate damage at best. For a regular enemy, the Gas Ducter has quite a bit of HP, but you can still take it out in a couple of attacks. Just avoid using poison magic, which it absorbs.

On the second car, you fight two Gas Ducters. Oh, joy!

On the third car, you battle this... thing called Wolfmeister. It's a big, hairy creature carrying a giganticsword that puts Cloud's to shame. This is why it strikes me as kind of odd that his main attack is to punch you, because I sure know that if I had a sword twice as large as my opponent, I would sure as hell use it. Strangely, his sword doesn't do that much more damage than his normal attack when he does use it, and in the end, both of his attacks end up moderately powerful at best, and not much to worry about. What you should take not of, however, is his very high HP (10,000, to be exact). And since you're on a time limit, you'll want to get rid of him as fast as possible. Water is his weakness, but you might want to soften him up with some gravity magic, first.

On the fourth car, Eagle Gun arrives to do battle with you. It's a cool-looking flying shooting thingy, who's attacks don't really seem to hurt much at all. It does have an insane amount of HP (17,000), and is immune to water and earth magic. Lightning is its weakness, but again, gravity magic will help to soften it up for the slaughter (cast at the beginning of the fight, even Demi will do 4,250 damage, and Demi 2 an impressive 8,500). Oh, and you can steal the Warrior Bangle from Eagle Gun, as well, which is the above mentioned lost-forever, as again discussed in section I.F. of the FAQ.

Making your way to the fifth, car, you have your very anti-climatic battle with the engineer, whom you should bend over and make your wife in no time. But when he's gone, you've still got to stop the train.

If you've got a large enough amount of time left, you probably shouldn't worry about it too much, as it seems almost inevitable that the train will stop. What you've gotta do, is work both levers up, then both down, and keep it going, to stop the train. It's actually a bit harder than it looks, so don't be surprised if it takes you a minute or so to get it down. Thankfully, the effort required to stop the train is minimal.

And finally, for the grand finale! Assuming that you stopped the runaway train, you will approach North Corel at a high velocity, but the train will come to a screeching halt at the last second. Disembark the train, taking the huge materia with you, and go to speak with the villagers, who are just thrilled with your team right now. They praise you to no end, and will even reconcile with Barret, if he is with you. They heartily shout that they are miners, and they'll just dig tunnels and hide from Meteor. Yeah, sure, let us know how that works out, you idiots. Furthermore, you'll receive the Ultima materia for your troubles, and also a free night at the inn.

Conversely, if you failed to stop the train, you'll again see the train approaching North Corel at a high velocity. The only catch is that it doesn't stop before entering North Corel. Rather, it plows through people's shanties and destroys things, and causes about a million or so gil worth of improvements to the craphole. I'm not sure what exactly does stop the train, but I think it may be that villager caught in between the wheels. Suffice it to say that the villagers are not at all pleased with you, and the huge materia is gone for good. Furthermore, if you want the Ultima materia, you'll have to speak with the kid who fished it out of the well and pay him 50,000 gil for it. And I'm sorry, but I think that his little materia racket puts a 25 cent lemonade stand to shame.

Anyways, regardless of your level of success in this barren wasteland, you can still speak with a lady in one of the houses around here and collect Catastrophe from her. With that out of the way, make your way to the other place that the Shinra was planning to steal huge materia from (Fort Condor, in case you forgot).

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--- Welcome to: Fort Condor

Seeing as the entirety of Fort Condor strategy is covered in section X. of the FAQ, there is really not much I can say about this mission. Again, you're going to want to save your game, because you've only got one shot at getting several rare items during this battle (the huge materia, the Imperial Guard, and the Phoenix materia), and they are all lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Furthermore, if you screw this battle up, you are ejected from Fort Condor for good (cause we don't tolerate failure 'round here!), meaning that the All materia sold in the item shops here is also a lost-forever in that respect.

I mentioned the All materia currently being sold at the materia shop, which is a purchase you might consider making, as well as perhaps one of the other rare materia now available here.

Anyways, you should be familiar with this place by now (or not, if you, like me, ignored this place for the majority of the game). Walk up and talk to

Headband Guy only to find that the Shinra is making its last stand. And thus the final battle begins. Scope out section X. of the FAQ for the details.

Following the battle, something starts to happen to the Condor atop the mountain. In a kick-ass FMV, it does a little flash of light thingy (I don't know, you become desensitized to things glowing eerily when it's all your team ever sees), and then it just... dies. Jesus, then what in the hell have we been fighting for!? But wait, the egg is starting to crack open! And it's a cute widdle birdie! Aww... Headband Guy tells you to go outside onto the mountain and check, and that's where you'll find the Phoenix materia. Also, before leaving, you're going to want to talk to that guy downstairs (Headband Guy's father).

Father of Headband Guy hands you the huge materia, because through some psychic ability of his, he was able to sense that you wanted it. He tells you that he stole it out of the reactor a long time ago, knowing that this day would come. He admits that you weren't fighting to protect the reactor, but the condor sitting atop it. He says this as if this was a fact that you were not already aware of. Well, Cid seems surprised, at least.

Back in the Highwind, your team realizes that the only huge materia left to collect is the one from the Underwater Reactor at Junon. However, they also come to the brilliant notion that the Shinra is more than likely on full alert since you always seem to be messing with them. Well, since when has that ever stopped us in the past? Regardless, your team decides to go check up on Tifa and Cloud back in Mideel before carrying through with their mission to save the world (because Meteor can just wait until we're good and Goddamn ready to stop it).

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--- Welcome to: Mideel (Again)

You sense that tension in the air? You feel it? You know what it means? There's a boss fight headed your way. And it's a tough one, you you'd best get your ass prepared. The boss in question uses magical attacks that are enough to knock the entire team on its ass in a few turns flat, so protection against them is a must. Of the two attacks, one is Quake 2 versus the entire team (which does big damage, despite what you may think), but the more powerful of the two is non-elemental. This means that protection from earth can help out, but Big Guard or an M-Barrier is still recommended. Regen also seriously increases your chances of survival. Attack-wise, bring along your best, and lay off the gravity magic, which we should all know by now isn't going to get you anywhere. Limit breaks will be a big factor in this fight, however, so bring along the most damaging ones you've got. On a final note, if you find that your characters are at low levels (and therefore low HP totals), you might consider bringing Vincent along for the HP bonus conferred by his transformations.

Anyways, head on back to Mideel and go to the doctor's office. Tifa is, well, not happy. Cloud doesn't seem to know who he is or what is going on, and she's worried that he may never recover from his predicament. And as if that weren't bad enough, the ground starts to shake beneath you. Cid and the rest of the team rushes outside to see what's going on, telling Tifa to stay inside.

Outside, you discover that the cause of the tremors in the ground are due to the Lifestream rushing up to the surface. Exactly how Cid comes to this startling realization is beyond me, but it means that he just passed up Cait Sith in the field of psychic ability (which isn't saying much, I suppose, given that my jockstrap has accomplished pretty much the same thing). Tifa comes

outside and asks what's wrong, and Cid tells her to get back inside and let him handle it. He then, for some unknown reason, yells "Ok, here I go!" and runs to the center of the village. Apparently, he would like to be at the dead center of the impending earthquake.

But that's when something flies up from the distance. Your team identifies it as Weapon, but those of you with good enough eyes will recognize that this is a different Weapon than the one that attacked Junon. That and, as I was forced to acknowledge earlier, the one back at Junon is sorta dead, so it's at the very elast somewhat doubtful you'll be fighting it again. This one is Ultimate WEAPON, and it descends upon your team with the utmost fury.

You're not going to kill Ultimate WEAPON, but you do have to damage it enough so that it turns tail and run away. Surviving this fight is tough, especially given its powerful attacks. Hope you brought protection. Other than that, just wail away at it, and use your limit breaks often. The fight should be over before too long, but things are not looking good, given that you barely put a dent in the thing.

After the battle, things are calm. Or are they? The ground starts to shake violently again, and there's no stopping it this time. Cid yells at the team to get out of there, and then he shouts at Tifa to get herself and Cloud the hell out of the village. Tifa stalls for an unreasonable amount of time, which isn't the brightest idea in the world. Finally, accepting the idea that taking refuge in a wide open space might be a good idea after all, she grabs Cloud's wheelchair and tries to get them both out of Mideel.

In the following cutscene, Tifa runs through the village with Cloud, as the ground is cracking and being destroyed behind them. It almost looks as if they're going to make it, but a gigantic crack opens in the ground ahead of them, and Tifa can't hold on to Cloud. The two of them plummet downwards and into the Lifestream, which actually looks like strangely glowing toxic sewer water than anything else. It might also help to explain the poisoning, too.

Tifa and Cloud are now lost in the Lifestream... what will become of them? Stay tuned to find out!

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--- Welcome to: The Flashback, Part II

Tifa appears in a world of complete blackness. Strangeness ensues, but we are to get the gist that Tifa is lost, alone, confused, and scared. Furthermore, Cloud seems to be missing.

You then find yourself in the middle of some strange, mystical world. Three paths branch off from where Tifa is standing, and an embodiment of Cloud is sitting a short distance down each path. Furthermore, a gigantic illusion of Cloud looms over the sky above, and appears to be having some sort of fit of insanity. Tifa looks around and comes to the almost immediate realization that she is somewhere within Cloud's subconsciousness. She doesn't seem the least bit shocked that she is currently inside someone's mind, and shouts out to Cloud that she's going to help get the "real (Cloud) back". This, I'm assuming, is my punishment for referring to Cloud as a retard for roughly 100% of the game.

Start with the path at the top of the screen. Cross over some floating platforms and talk to the Cloud sitting there. He points forward to the illusion of Nibelheim ahead and correctly identifies them as such. This is where it all began, according to him, and Tifa thinks it's a good idea to start

out here, then. She gently reassures Cloud that even though things will be hard, she'll be right there by his side throughout the whole ordeal. Tifa then runs into Nibelheim and starts randomly pointing out landmarks, and ends by calling the place "our Nibelheim". Tifa's a bit off on that one, as she seems to have forgotten that the Shinra technically owns every city in the world.

Talk to Cloud, and Tifa will ask Cloud to show her what happened five years ago. The original scene, with Sephiroth and Cloud entering Nibelheim plays back, but with Tifa's added commentary. She explains how she finally met Sephiroth so many years ago, but that she thought him to be cold, and felt a foreboding feeling about his presence. And then, she comes out with the truth. "Cloud was not at Nibelheim five years ago", she says to Cloud. She speaks to Cloud in the third person for some reason which evades me at the time. But she explains how she waited and waited, but Cloud never showed up. Tifa tells Cloud that she didn't say anything about this before because she felt that something bad would happen. As if any bad could come from telling Cloud that he's full of crap. But the most eerie thing about this moment is the fact that Tifa is having to explain Cloud's own memories to him. Tifa wraps up her conversation with Cloud #1, and tells him that he needs to find the answer for himself. Hey! What the hell ever happened to "I'll be right there by your side," you whore?

For those of you keeping score, we have just learned that Cloud never showed up at Nibelheim five years ago, and we are either continuing on our quest to learn more, or rapidly pushing buttons in a vain attempt to end this Goddamn flashback sequence and get on with the Goddamn game already. Your next target is the path off to the left of the screen. Approach the Cloud sitting on that path, and he refers to that starry night at the well and the promise he made that night. You know, how he'd come and rescue Tifa if she was ever in trouble? It's ironic, because she's spent the last few parts of the game rescuing Cloud's sorry ass. But what if... What if the memory was just a lie? Things get more interesting at this point, because Tifa's own memories are at stake here, too. Tifa calmly reassures Cloud, and the camera zooms into the starry sky above.

Taking it from the beginning, as Tifa states, you'll see Cloud and Tifa as kids sitting down at the well. That's when Tifa begins with her explanation (and yes, she actually starts to make sense near the end). She claims that Sephiroth once said that he made up his memories by listening to Tifa's stories. Ergo, Cloud may not have really remembered any of this at all. But did he imagine the events of that night? No, he remembered them. The stars in the sky and the promise he made... But Tifa says that these memories are not enough. Memories are things that have to be subconsciously recalled, so there is no knowing whether or not they might be real. They are different, she says, then feelings that are locked up in one's heart. So rather than her explaining her memories of Cloud to him, she asks Cloud to explain one of his memories of her. And when she thinks back and remembers what he is talking about, it becomes "their memory", and she will be assured that this is indeed the Cloud she grew up with. This makes a lot of sense, as it allows the one sane person here become the mental anchor. But then again, she is going to great lengths to achieve that which a vigorous blow to the head could just as easily accomplish.

And then she starts to think... why did Cloud join SOLDIER in the first place? It seemed like such a sudden decision to her, but that's when things start to make sense. Cloud isn't necessary the poster child for full disclosure, but he pretty much makes it bluntly clear that the only reason he joined SOLDIER was to get Tifa's attention. He says that if only he could get stronger, then maybe someone would recognize him. That someone was Tifa. Tifa seems a little shocked about this, and you might, too, seeing as Cloud gets so much Goddamned attention from Tifa that it's unreal, and he really doesn't seem to care much about that attention in the least. But Cloud #2 looks at her and asks her if she forgot about "those days". Tifa doesn't appear to have a clue

what Cloud is talking about, and mentions this to both Cloud #2 and Cloud #1. Cloud #1 hops over, saying that Tifa can be forgiven for not noticing him back then, that she was too wrapped up in her own problems. Whatever he's alluding to, we seem to be progressing further and further towards a horribly clichéd story, here. He mentions to Tifa that the memory to which he refers is very important, and if she'd like to see it. Well, of course she'd like to see it, you dumbass! Why else would she be asking to see it?

Walk over and talk to Cloud #3 (you know, the only one you haven't talked to yet), who refers to a sealed up memory of his. My, my. No, we appear to actually be getting somewhere. Cloud #1 will join you for this next part of the story, as well. Walk over and talk to him, and he shows you a window. Cloud #1 is standing by a window, and when you talk to him, he asks you to look inside. The camera then sweeps over and takes you through the window and into Tifa's old room.

Cloud mentions that it was the first time he had ever been inside her room. The scene cuts to Tifa sitting in the corner with her head between her knees, and a guy nearby who is notably not Cloud. The guy mentions that he sees Cloud coming down the path, and wonders if he wants to come inside. Tifa looks up, and then puts her head back between her knees without a word. Real-life Tifa at this point starts to make a few assessments of her own memories. She had known Cloud since they were kids, and had always thought they were close, but now that she stops to think, she can't even remember him being in her room. Cloud #1 just nods and points to the three guys that are hanging around with Tifa in her room, saying that she was always hanging around instead with that "three-some". Jesus, Cloud, you could have picked a better word than "three-some". Because believe me, three guys hanging around with a teen-aged Tifa alone in her room is suggestive-sounding enough.

Cloud gets a bit pissy at this point. He talks about how he used to think that Tifa and her group were so childish and immature. Tifa takes a bit of offense to this, and points out that they, as children, had a prerogative to be childish and immature. Cloud admits that he was the stupid one. But you know how it goes; you've seen this same tired story a million times. Boy wants to be with rest of group. Group rejects boy. Boy harbors feelings of resentment for the group and starts to feel that he is better than them. He admits that he started to feel like he was different from everybody else... and then came that night when he called Tifa out to the well. He thought that she hated him and that she would never come. Tifa, searching through her memory, now admits that she was a bit surprised the day Cloud asked her to meet him at the well. She redeems herself by admitting that after Cloud left town, she thought about him a lot, and even started to read the papers hoping to see an article about him (though she never does mention whether or not she was looking for mention of Cloud in the obituaries). Cloud #1 tells Tifa to mention that to real-life Cloud when and if she ever escapes this nightmare, and that it'll make him happy.

Tifa tries to get back on subject at this point. "What happened on this day?" she asks. "Was it a special day?" I mean, there was obviously some reason that Cloud's memory took her back to this one specific point in time. I don't know whether or not we should call it "special", but this happened to be the day that Tifa's mom died. Cut back to childhood Tifa with her head between her knees. She looks up and says that she wants to go see her mother, then runs off.

The group of children emerge at the foot of Mt. Nibel, with a guitar strumming soulfully in the background. One of the kids mentions that Mt. Nibel is scary, and that nobody crosses it alive. That thought gives Tifa the bright idea that just maybe her mother is on the other side of Mt. Nibel. Tifa runs

off, followed by two of her friends. The third flees in terror, and passes Cloud, who is coming up the mountain path behind them. Off in the distance, Tifa nears that infamous rope bridge. And experiences with rope bridges in movies in video games rarely, if ever, turn out positive. The two friends following her at this point leave, and the screen slowly fades to black.

You'll see childhood Cloud and Tifa lying on the ground. Real-life Cloud and Tifa stand over them, and for some strange reason, a silhouette of Cloud is also present. It really has no business here, if you ask me. Talk to the silhouette, and the story is explained. Tifa, crossing the bridge, missed her step. Cloud tried to save her, but missed and both of them ended up flat on the ground. Tifa was hurt pretty badly, but Cloud managed to get by with only a couple of scraped knees. And if you think back to one of Cloud's earlier psychopathic fits (after he plummeted from the mako reactor), you may recall the voices in his head telling him something about scraped knees. This is the incident to which the voices were referring. At this point, a couple of adults show up and see the two kids lying on the ground. Cloud, being the less injured one and all, gets a bit of a chewing out from the adults, and is more or less blamed for bringing Tifa to Mt. Nibel. The adults carry Tifa away, but seem strangely uninterested in Cloud. This may be because Tifa would spend the next seven days in a coma. Nobody thought she would pull through, but she did. In fact, this may be what toughened her enough to survive a brutal onslaught from Sephiroth (see later).

Anyways, Cloud's childhood was more or less messed up by this one little incident. He felt like Tifa blamed him somehow for the whole incident, and he was mad at himself for not having been able to save her. He became very violent, starting fights for no reason, and spiraled completely out of control. That's when he heard about Sephiroth... If only he could become strong like Sephiroth, then maybe Tifa would notice him. Just maybe, huh?

You find yourself back in the mystical world again now. Tifa apologizes for conveniently not remembering how much of a bitch she had been as a child, and Cloud more or less forgives her. A question still looms in the air, but Tifa reaches an epiphany at this moment. She refers back to a time when the two were eight years old, and says that she remembers clearly now. Cloud wasn't created five years ago, she says. And now she has proof. Tifa tells Cloud to hang in there just a little while longer, and that she has almost found the "real" him. Then, she and one of the Cloud clones (I forgot at this point which one was which, as more and more clones appeared to be randomly and spontaneously generating out of nowhere) run towards Nibelheim for the thrilling climax.

Tifa and Cloud end back up at the reactor five years ago. And here's a scene you should all remember: it's Tifa getting the crap slashed out of her by Sephiroth. Poor Tifa, she can't go five minutes in this game without getting her ass kicked. But, then again, she always seems to be fine (unlike some other girl in this game I could mention). But it wasn't Cloud who came running up to her when she landed. It was Zach. Or was it? Zach runs past Tifa, trampling over her slashed and bleeding body as he rushes up to face Sephiroth. And, well, you can more or less imagine what happens next. Zach is royally nailed by Sephiroth and ejected from the back room in a timely fashion.

But, then, how do we explain Cloud having remembered the entire situation? Well, that's cause he was there. A mysterious figure runs past Tifa and grabs Zach's sword. This figure runs into the back room, and skips right past the yelling and and gets right to the stabbing Sephiroth part. And as the figure, one of the bottom-rung guards that came along to assist Sephiroth and Zach, walks down the steps, he removes his mask, revealing Cloud underneath it all. He then returns to make good on his promise by coming to Tifa's aid in her time of need.

And the truth shall set us all free from this Goddamned nightmare. Cloud was at Nibelheim five years ago, just not in all of the glory of his original story. He was there the whole time, keeping an eye on things, but he was too embarrassed to let anyone, especially Tifa, know that he had failed to become a member of SOLDIER and instead ended up serving as a member of an army filled with retards. This also makes sense of the scene where Sephiroth is entering Nibelheim. He indeed had turned and asked if this was the first time Cloud had been back in his hometown (this was, of course, after Tifa had left thinking that Cloud was not there). This was something that would not have made a whole lot of sense had Cloud not been there, of course, seeing as Zach was from Gongaga.

The scene goes back to Cloud and Tifa inside the reactor. Sephiroth lurches from the back room, in an obvious state of pain, but other than that strangely unaffected by the gaping stab wound in his chest. He walks out of the room with an angry glance, and Zach, who is currently lying in some contorted position on the other side of the room, asks Cloud to kill Sephiroth. Well, crap, Zach, I already stabbed him, for God's sakes! What else can I do!?! And Cloud must be feeling cocky by now, because this time, he goes after Sephiroth unarmed. He approaches Sephiroth as he is limping down the suspended walkway. Sephiroth gets a bit pissy and impales Cloud with his own long-ass sword. But an amazing thing happens. Cloud grabs the sword, which is still sticking through his chest, mind you, removes it, and tosses it and Sephiroth off the side of the catwalk and into the abyss below. The game does neglect to mention how Cloud mysteriously survived being stabbed, but I guess it may go far in explaining how he ended up as Hojo's test subject.

Anyways, back in the mystical world, the nightmare draws to an end. All of the Cloud clones merge into one singular being, and the giant floating image of Cloud floats down and merges with them all to create what appears to be beef jerky. Have Tifa talk to the beef jerky to make it flash and other weird crap, until it finally becomes Cloud. Cloud is a bit groggy and confused, but Tifa wastes little time in yelling at him, calling him a jerk and telling him how worried everyone was about him. Cloud just collapses to the ground again, talking about the voices and crap. It finally starts to dawn on Tifa at this point that the two are floating around in the highly-toxic lifestream, and that it might be in their best interests to get out of it. Through some miracle of willpower, Tifa transports the two of you out of the Lifestream and back into the real world.

Tifa and Cloud end up washed ashore near the wreckage that was one point Mideel, surrounded by the rest of the team. Tifa sort of snaps out of it, and talks to Barret for a minute before passing out again.

You end back up in the operation room of the Highwind. Cloud apologizes to the team and admits that he made up the stories he told of what happened five years ago. As opposed to retelling the entire story of how he had actually been at Nibelheim five years ago and such, Cloud just says to the team that he had heard the entire story from his friend, Zach and then tried to pass himself off as a member of SOLDIER, doing so to the point that he actually started to believe the lie. And the deception was fairly easy for him to do, because he is built just like a member of SOLDIER. You see, Hojo's plan to clone Sephiroth wasn't much different than the process it took to make a SOLDIER out of someone. Members of SOLDIER were not just exposed to mako; they were actually injected with Jenova cells. In his own words, he was created more or less as a result of Jenova's cells, Sephiroth's will, and his own weaknesses.

In summary, the entire team before this point already had a good idea as to why Cloud was able to be manipulated by Sephiroth. Cloud is just trying to





your team to Junon and head to the upper city. However, you can't use Mr. Dolphin, anymore... because Mr. Dolphin is dead! Ok, I just wanted to make the little kiddies cry. He's not dead, but he sure as hell isn't around Junon anymore. Talk to the guard standing by the elevator, whom you will have to bribe with 10 gil for passage. And if you don't have 10 gil lying around, you spent way too much Goddamned time at the Gold Saucer.

Up on the city above, snoop around. There are a couple of soldiers at the airport who, when talked to, begin discussing Shinra's inside secrets with each other as if you were not standing right there listening to them blab on and on. Apparently, the Shinra uses military service as a means of weeding out its stupider citizens. At any rate, they divulge that the Shinra is currently collecting the huge materia from the Underwater Reactor here at Junon (how polite of them to wait for you, wasn't it?), and that it will be transported to Rocket Town by means of Gelnika. Jesus! I sure hope these guys get demoted or killed or something.

Oh, and since Meteor has been summoned, the shops here have since been upgraded. But the crap they're selling is so damn antiquated, it's a wonder they even bothered. It is a good way to pick up a lot of the weapons that were considered to be lost-forevers, but the sad fact is that although they might have almost been useful about a disc and a half ago, they're beyond laughable now. These shops are only useful if you're the kind of anal retentive freak that wants a copy of every damn weapon in the game but inexplicably missed one earlier, if you needed an extra weapon with double the materia growth for leveling-up purposes, or if you just want some dumbasses to laugh at. And as if you needed any greater indication that whoever came up with these shops was diseased, you can buy a Mop in one of the shops, which is the final weapon in the series of the weapons that lacked materia slots but were still somewhat powerful. You know, the ones that stopped being useful after all your normal weapons outclassed them? Need I even comment on the fact that they're selling some of your characters initial equipment! I guess Junon must be where all things you sell in RPG's eventually end up, which in turn answers a question that has plagued RPG experts for centuries.

In case you forgot, the path to the Underwater Reactor is about halfway down the city path. As you race down the street towards the Underwater Reactor, however, Cloud stops and asks the group, "I may be wrong, but doesn't it feel like there's something missing?" Well, Cloud, if I had to take a guess, I'd say that what you are missing is sanity. The party then continues as if nothing out of the ordinary had just happened.

You'll emerge at the path to the Underwater Reactor. But, as you might expect, there're monsters in them thar' dunes. The Death Machine is an enemy that will only appear on the top floor, and won't show up unless you're stupid enough to trip the alarm sitting there on the wall (which in turn triggers random encounters in the area). It is an enemy that, for this point in the game, possesses weak to moderately powerful attacks. It always travels alone, however, which minimizes the threat. The Slalom is a very weak enemy with weak attacks that is easy to kill. Do avoid poison magic, which it absorbs, however. The Underwater MP is the generic baddie around here. It's easy to kill and has weak attacks, for the most part (though they may bust out with a Grenade, which is moderately powerful). The most notable thing about them is that you can steal the Shinra Alpha from them. So get them while you can, as they are one of the game's lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Next up, we have the Ghost Ship. The Ghost Ship is, well, an eerie skeleton paddling a boat across dry land. You'll meet it in the underwater tunnel, and if crap like is just randomly hanging around the Shinra's power plants, you'd think that they would have done something about it by now. I mean, exorcize the bastards or something. Snide comments aside, it has a lot of HP, but this is offset by its

weak attacks and tendency to travel entirely alone (as if anything wanted to hang out with a Goddamn ghost and his paddle boat). Gravity and earth magic is ineffective against the Ghost Ship, and water magic is only half as effective. The weakness of the Ghost Ship is holy magic, but before you go and try to kill it outright, note the most important aspect of the Ghost Ship, which is the fact that they can be morphed into the Guide Book. The Guide Book, aside from being a lost-forever as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, is also an important quest item, the use of which will present itself in section IV.E. of the FAQ. Also in the underwater tunnel is the Corvette, which rather than a sports car, is a strange serpent-type enemy reminiscent of the Sword Dance. The Corvette has weak to moderately powerful attacks, is resistant to water magic, and immune to earth magic. The Diver Nest, also found in the underwater tunnel, would be more of a threat if it ever used its powerful wind and water attacks, but it usually just decides to give you a weak tap instead. Because it cares. Kick its ass anyways, but avoid water and earth magic, which they are resistant and immune to, respectfully. The Hard Attacker appears inside the Underwater Reactor itself, and is a fairly weak opponent of almost no mention at all except that it resists ice and water magic. Deeper inside, expect to meet the Guardian, a creature that somewhat resembles the Hard Attack, but looks much stronger. The keyword is "looks". They, again, are very weak, though a bit tougher to kill. All kinds of magic work, however, so go nuts. Finally, the Senior Grunt is more or less the commanding officer in a group of Underwater MP's. And given the intelligence of those things, it doesn't take too much intelligence to become the leader. They're not horribly powerful, either, but they do resist water magic.

Whew! Anyways, when you show up at the Underwater Reactor, you'll see the same troops that have been training there since you last saw them during Disc 1. Their cruel boss finally dismisses them, and they scatter down into the reactor. Coincidentally, that's also where you're headed. Step into the elevator leading down to the Underwater Reactor, where you will promptly be recognized by two of the soldiers. They start talking cockily amongst themselves, which should fuel your desire them to impale them in a timely fashion. After the battle, the lady who operates the controls to the elevator is, well, mortified. I'd probably piss my pants if a couple of guys walked into my place of business and brutally murdered the security guards right in front of my eyes, too. She is very cooperative, however, and takes you down into the reactor.

Expect several more fights from many more weak Underwater MPs as you advance through the reactor. Before long, you will begin to think of them as lemmings, suicidally launching themselves at you in a vain attempt to halt your progress. The path is very linear, and does not merit much of a description. You'll notice a door blocked by a dog just as you exit the elevator, but you will not be able to enter it. Rather, continue down the series of hallways until you reach the underwater tunnel. The underwater tunnel is a gigantic glass tunnel that connects the city of Junon to the Underwater Reactor. It is a very beautiful sight, to see the ocean around you and such. It would also be peaceful, if not for the random battles that for some reason occur here.

Continuing into the Underwater Reactor itself, there is a save point just inside. You may wish to use it, as there are several upcoming lost-forevers (namely the Huge Materia) as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, and you might want some insurance on getting those. You also may want to prepare for the upcoming boss battle. Today's boss is unaffected by poison or gravity magic, and is weak versus lightning magic. Other than that, take along the same stuff that always helps you out during a boss battle.

Continuing on into the Underwater Reactor, expect many more fights from many more lemmings. Again, the path is linear, and is easy to follow. When you reach the reactor core, your team spots the huge materia being extracted from it

and being transported to the loading docks. Hurry along after it. But, when you emerge at the docks, you'll meet up with none other than Reno, of the Turks! Your team threatens him in their usual fashion, but Reno is too smart to sit here and get his ass pummeled by you. So, he leaves a boss to do his dirty work as he flees. You, being the idiot you are, choose to battle the boss rather than chase Reno.

Carry Armor consists of three parts: the body, and two arms. Kill the body, and the rest of the thing dies with it, so that's definitely where you'll want to focus your attacks. Its physical attacks are fairly powerful, but what really hurts is when it occasionally busts out with its Lapis Laser, a spell which nails your entire party for huge damage. Luckily, Lapis Laser is used sparingly, but you should still remain on guard. That being said, take the necessary precautions to defend yourself, and then wail away. To repeat myself, earth and poison magic shall be ineffective, while lightning magic shall work very well. After winning the battle, you'll receive God's Hand.

Following the fight, you'll see the submarine you're after taking off. What choice do you have except to pursue them in another submarine? Well, just forget for a second that you have zero submarine-driving experience? Still doesn't sound like a good idea? Well, this is a video game, dammit. So get ready to steal that enemy sub at the far end of the docks. First, you may want to head left from where you are standing and get the Battle Trumpet out of the chest over there. Then, head back to the farthest dock, making sure to collect the Scimitar along the way. Finally, before boarding the sub, head all the way over to the left towards the end of the docks and grab the Leviathan Scales from that chest. All three items are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, so it would be in your best interests to grab them while you can.

With that out of the way, board the ship, laying waste to any soldier stupid enough to try and stop you. You make it to the cockpit with minimal difficulty, and are given the option to slaughter the remaining crew, or to take them hostage. Even if you do take them hostage, you'll still be confident enough in your own piloting capabilities to steer the damn thing yourself, so only choose to do this if you're feeling merciful or just don't feel like fighting another battle.

And now for the mission itself. The red submarine, which is carrying the huge materia, is to be guarded by every other submarine in the fleet, which are coincidentally all yellow (except for the one you highjacked, oddly enough. It must've been getting repainted.) However, you should take this to mean, "kill the red sub". Cloud sits down and tries to pilot the thing, and you're well-advised to read the instruction manual, which gives you all of the controls, before attempting to operate the submarine. Once you at least have an inkling as to what to do, let the game begin.

The ensuing mini-game is similar to the one re-created in the Torpedo Attack game at the Gold Saucer, meaning that more in-depth strategy can be found in section VIII.D. of the FAQ. However, this mission is painfully simple, given that you know what to do. With ten minutes to find one submarine and blast it out of the water, time is definitely on your side. Destroying enemy subs is a very simple process, especially given that they seem very reluctant to fight back or escape. Simply pull up behind them, unload about five or six torpedoes, and that bastard is gone. Toasting yellow subs can be a fun venture, and can help reduce the amount of hostility you encounter whilst you search for the red sub, but the only requirement to end this mission is to kill the red sub. The only real danger you're up against in the end is your own navigational ability. In case you haven't noticed, there are depth charges planted in literally every last corner of the ocean, and you're going to want to do your best to avoid

hitting those, cause your mission is over if you sustain too much damage. Do be careful, however, as your prize for winning this battle (the Huge Materia) is one of the game's lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

Following the battle, Cloud intercepts an order for the crew of your new submarine. Yup, that thing is yours now. But don't worry, no matter how many vehicles you manage to steal from the Shinra, they don't seem to be the least bit interested in taking them back from you. Anyways, the orders detail for the troops to return to Junon at once. But Cloud has a better agenda to attend to, and it involves that Huge Materia. And I'm not talking about the one that as in the red submarine, I'm talking about the one that's still back at Junon and about to be transported to Rocket Town by means of Gelnika. The team decides that time is of the essence at the moment, and that you don't have thirty seconds to stop and collect the Huge Materia form the sub you just shot down. Rather, you need to get back to Junon, and quick.

It really doesn't matter how long it takes you to get back to the airport at Junon, because guess what you will inevitable arrive just in time to see? Yes, it's the Gelnika, taking off for Rocket Town with the Huge Materia payload. And it's up to you to put an end to the Shinra's attempt to save the world, so hop into the Highwind and head over to Rocket Town as fast as you can! Actually, take your time. The Shinra again will politely wait for you to arrive and intervene, so sit back, have a smoke, and relax for awhile.

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--- Welcome to: Rocket Town (Again)

The citizens of Rocket Town are all focused on the rocket when you arrive. The Shinra has arrived, and they've hurriedly fixed the rocket up to be in enough shape to launch towards Meteor. So this is it, I guess. Two things are worthy of note before you go any further, by the way. One is that you've got a very easy boss battle coming up, but I guess it wouldn't hurt to have some sort of protection from the lightning element. You may also wish to have the Steal materia handy, as something carried by the upcoming boss is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. The other is that, as you might have expected, you will be required to have Cid with you for the next portion of the game.

As you approach the rocket, expect more battles from more suicidal soldiers. At this point, notice how they now officially recognize the team as "terrorists". Terrorists? No, we're just trying to stop the Shinra from blowing up Meteor and saving the planet is all. How does that make us terrorists? Anyways, as for the boss, you will encounter Rude of the Turks on your way up. Rude, unlike Reno, isn't a pussy and has no qualms about taking you on himself.

Rude isn't horribly difficult to defeat. You might want to first take out the two soldiers accompanying him, as they are easy to kill and may put you to sleep otherwise. With that out of the way, wail away on Rude. His attacks are fairly strong, but his two lightning-based attacks are considerably more powerful. Guard Spark and Bolt 2 deal a good amount of physical and magical damage, respectively, and may be something you'll want to guard against. However, this may or may not be entirely necessary, given Rude's low HP. With a couple of powerful attacks, this fight could be over with in a hurry. Rude will start to cast Cure 2 when his HP gets low, but at this point in the game, that shouldn't be much of a problem. If it in any way is, then I must first say that your extremely low levels are a substantial danger to the trials ahead, and then say that the Reflect spell cast on Rude may help you out in this respect. Oh,

and on a final note, you might want to steal the Zeidrich from him before you kill him, seeing as it is one of the game's lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

With that fight out of the way, break into the rocket, and Cid asks the crew just what the hell is going on. The Shinra, obviously, has set the crew to fixing up the ship so that it can be launched into Meteor. It is carrying a materia bomb on board, and essentially is going to save the planet. One small problem is that the auto-pilot device is malfunctioning, meaning that someone actually has to navigate the ship manually into Meteor. Well, it looks like Cid's dream is going to come true, after all.

After shooing everybody except the rest of the team off of his ship, Cid heads into the cockpit. An argument ensues between Cid and Cloud concerning the Huge Materia. Cid, really, could care less about it, while Cloud goes on about how the knowledge of the Ancients should be saved and all. The argument really gets you nowhere, and what eventually happens is that Shera, who was working on the ship, finished what she was doing, so that dumbass Palmer just went ahead and hit the launch button without bothering to check if anyone was on the ship. You'll hear him warbling nonsensically over the radio, and I'll be damned if I didn't want to reach through that radio and kick his fatty ass until he died five times over.

And thus it happens. We cut to a CG movie sequence, and the rocket's engines fire up. The countdown begins, and the tension builds. Then, as the countdown reaches zero, the rocket fires, creating high-speed winds in its wake that tear through the neighboring village. And then... you find yourself in outer space.

Well, Cid got what he wanted. But there's the small issue of your team blowing up with the ship when you hit Meteor. Not to worry, because Cid keeps an escape pod on the rocket. But before you leave, there's also the Huge Materia to worry about. Cloud really doesn't want to leave it behind, and Cid really has no objection to this. So head up the ladder to your right and into the room with the Huge Materia in it.

Well, the catch is that you need a password. And furthermore, you don't know that password. You've also only got three minutes to figure it out. The only real solution is a combination of guessing randomly and listening to Cid's advice. However, be mindful that the Huge Materia is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. And if you really don't want to risk losing it, I've listed the solution to the password puzzle in the next paragraph.

Assuming that you are playing the Playstation version of Final Fantasy VII, the password is: circle, square, X, X. I do not know for sure the exact combination for the PC version of the game, but it's the general command equivalent.

With the Huge Materia in hand, it's time to make tracks. Return to the cockpit and head down from there. You'll find yourself running through the room filled with oxygen tanks when something very bad happens. Tank #8 explodes, trapping Cid underneath a large piece of wreckage. Realizing that it was indeed Tank #8 that malfunctioned, Cid suddenly finds himself with a renewed respect for Shera, as she had been right about it all along. This doesn't solve the problem that Cid is currently trapped and you're all about to die, however.

Cid commands the team to leave without him, but Cloud refuses. The team attempts and fails to free Cid from the wreckage, all the while Cid is cursing at you something fierce to get the hell out of the rocket while you still can. But help is on the way, and Shera comes walking into the room. She says that

she trailed along to help, and with her help, you are finally able to free Cid from the wreckage. He swears a bit more, but ultimately makes amends with Shera about their past. With that taken care of, hurry along to the escape pod.

The escape pod jettisons from the rocket moments before the climatic CG-rendered collision with Meteor. The comparably tiny rocket approaches the gigantic Meteor hurling through outer space and nails it head-on, causing a huge explosion. This is actually incredibly amazing, given that outer space lacks the oxygen necessary to create an explosion of any sort, meaning that whatever kind of bomb was on that ship must've been one hell of a bomb. You'll cut to the citizens of the Earth cheering for the rocket, and also to Bugenhagen, who witnesses the explosion hands-on at his observatory. By the way, don't feel bad for having removed the main component of the bomb, because Huge Materia or no, it seems that the bomb has the same effect either way.

A large chunk of Meteor is damaged, but the vast majority of it remains intact. Furthermore, the Meteor begins to draw some sort of mystical energy and slowly pieces itself back together. And, well, the Earth's citizens are not very happy about this, seeing as this rocket was their last hope and all. Oh, boo hoo. So, you're all going to die. Cheer up!

You'll end up back aboard the Highwind, and a somber mood prevails over the team. Tifa tells the team not to worry, but to think. It is finally Cid who steps forward and gives a very inspiring speech. He says that Tifa's right, and that once you start worrying, there ain't no stopping it. It just gets worse and worse until it drives you crazy. Cid says that he's been thinking about things ever since the escape pod landed. He had used to think that the Earth was such a big place, but he sees now just how small the world truly is. To him, the Earth is still a fledgling planet. And it, like a small child, needs to be protected. And he'll be damned if it ain't AVALANCHE that isn't going to step in and make sure that the planet is all right. His speech moves the entire team, including Barret, who then asks Cid what his plan of action is. That shuts Cid up pretty damn fast, though.

A loud, pained sound can be heard in the distance. In effect, you've just heard the planet scream. Cloud is confused, seeing as only the Ancients can hear this sort of thing. Something bad must be happening, and there is nothing that you apparently can do to stop it. Red XIII at this point directs you back to Bugenhagen's observatory, where Bugenhagen, hopefully, can give you some clue as to what you can do next. So head on over to Cosmo Canyon.

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--- Welcome to: Cosmo Canyon (Again)

Back at Cosmo Canyon, head on up to see old Bugenhagen. Your party asks him for advice, and you get more or less the same advice you'd expect to get from an old man who floats around wherever he goes. He tells you to look into your heart... to "remember" something. Naturally, you all come up dry, and even after the entire team is summoned to Bugenhagen's chambers, you have really not come up with anything. Someone mentions Aeris, and Cloud says that Aeris had told him that she was the only one who could stop Sephiroth. This was right before she headed off to the City of the Ancients, and it is Bugenhagen who finally suggests that you take him there.

Before you leave, Cloud will ask Bugenhagen to hold on to that Huge Materia you've been lugging around. So he stashes it in his observatory. And when you see the size of these things, you will be amazed as to how your team has been lugging that crap around. They do serve a purpose besides just sitting there

and looking pretty, however, which is detailed in section V.M. of the FAQ.

Moving right along, then, cut to Bugenhagen aboard the Highwind. He quite literally floats around, checking the thing out. He is amazed with the machinery and such, though what's more amazing is the fact that Bugenhagen can fly better than the Highwind can. He then floats up to the deck and waits for you to take him to the City of the Ancients. And again, this is one of those times where it really doesn't matter how much you procrastinate doing it, so long as you one day get it done, it will suffice.

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--- Welcome to: The Forgotten City (Again)

Returning to City of the Ancients, head towards the back of the city (where that strange machine is). When you enter the area, Bugenhagen floats over towards it and starts examining it all over. He also talks to the planet or something. But what you glean from this is that a great crisis is impending (well no crap, Sherlock), and at times of great crisis, Holy shall arise to battle Meteor. Holy is, of course, the ultimate white magic (to counter the ultimate black magic). Anyways, when a soul seeking holy reaches the planet, the holy materia will glow a pale green, and at that point is activated. Cloud notes that Aeris is dead, and seeing as she is the only one who could have accomplished this, he then jumps to the conclusion that the whole world is more or less screwed.

Bugenhagen takes note of the writing on the machine. Granted, he is entirely unable to decipher the Ancients' writing, he is at least able to make out the scrawled words of a dying scientist at the bottom of the machine. "Key in magic box". Bugenhagen notes that the scientist probably used his last breath to scratch out those two words. Two, Bugenhagen? I count four. New math? Anyways, what happens next is more or less dependent on whether or not you actually have the key. The more ambitious amongst you probably already have it, in which case skip to the next paragraph. But, running under the assumption that you don't, the party has reached somewhat of a roadblock. You have searched the world over, but have found no key. If that's the case, then maybe it's time to search underneath the world, hmm? Bugenhagen stays here at the City of the Ancients while your team runs off to find a needle in a gigantic haystack.

Anyways, hop into your submarine and cruise the depths of the sea. Assuming this is your first trip down under, there are a few things to make note of. One is that there is a creature wandering around down here named Emerald WEAPON, and that if you come into contact with it, you will get into a battle with it. Unless you have a burning desire to become intimately familiar with what your insides look like, do not approach Emerald WEAPON. If you find that it is chasing you, just surface and then go right back down; it should be gone. Anyways, there are three things to do down here. First, you might want to check out section IV.D. of the FAQ, as a small portion of it is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Besides, it's not like Bugenhagen can't wait for you or anything. It's not like the entire planet is riding on your actions right now... oh, wait, it is. Secondly, assuming that you have not done so already, you might want to go loot the remains of the Shinra sub for the fourth and final Huge Materia. It can be found in the southeastern corner of the sea. Anyways, the third and final thing you need to do is find that damned key. You'll find it in a small cave along the northern edge of the inner sea. How it got there is beyond me, but there it is, just floating all around, waiting for someone to come by and pick it up. As you approach it, your submarine's analyzation equipment goes to work and looks the currently



unidentified object over. While your submarine is unable to identify the item, it does estimate that it is several thousand years old. This means that it may likely have once belonged to Dick Clark. But, anyways, head on back over to the City of the Ancients for now.

Back at the City of the Ancients (or, if you never left), Bugenhagen floats over to a small contraption on the far side of the room and jams the key inside it. Water begins cascading down all around the platform in the center of the area, right where your team is standing. In the midst of this watery enclosure, your team looks around in confusion- what just happened here? But then it becomes apparent that the streaming waterfall is what the Ancients used as a projection screen, which seriously kicks ass. The image of Aeris dying appears on the water, and then you'll see her materia falling from her ribbon. You see it falling into the water and slowly sinking to the bottom, and yes, I do believe it is glowing a pale green. Cloud realizes that thus is the gift Aeris left for you, after all. Before anyone else caught on, she realized what she had to do, and came to the City of the Ancients to do just that. And she ended up paying for that gift with her life. But the question still remains: why isn't Holy already activated? Well, it seems that something is stopping the spirit of Aeris from returning to the planet. And that something, of course, is Sephiroth. So, to make a long story short, kill Sephiroth and all of your problems will die with him.

Anyways, your party sets off to leave about now, but they don't get very far before hearing from Cait Sith. He asks you if you remembered when the Junon cannon disappeared. Actually, for those of you who were very astute, you may have figured out that the canon is what Cloud was referring to when he said that it felt like something was missing. But, more likely, you're just now finding this out. But, according to Cait Sith, it didn't disappear; it was moved. You see, Rufus, with his enormously huge balls, decided he was going to take out Sephiroth. The Junon canon ran off of huge materia, but since your team had to go and steal it all, the canon was moved to a place where materia, no, mako is gathered. That's right, before you can even jump to your own conclusions, the scene cuts to several helicopters flying through the air. The camera dramatically zooms out, revealing the Junon canon in its full splendor, resting dauntingly across the vast majority of Midgar. Hmm, I wonder if we should be worried about this?

Cut to Rufus, Scarlet, Heidegger, and Reeve hanging around Shinra H.Q. and feeling quite pleased with themselves. Apparently, Shinra H.Q. plans on dispelling the barrier protecting Sephiroth's cave by giving it a direct blast from the Junon canon. A blast so powerful, it can manage to nail its target located on the far end of another continent. Rufus informs Reeve that it will be his job to up the mako production to run the canon, and Heidegger just sits and laughs about how all of their problems are going to be solved. Scarlet is far more interested in her own ego and points out that first and foremost, this was her idea and hers alone. And then, she dictates that the Junon canon is to be referred to as the "Sister Ray". This kinda makes sense, seeing as it happens to be the actual name of the canon and all.

Anyone who has resorted to using chocobos as a main method of travel may be quite lost for the next portion of the game, due to what happens next. As you exit the City of the Ancients and (presumably) get on the Highwind, something happens. Weapon rises from the sea and begins to march towards Midgar. Aboard the Highwind, Barret begins to worry about Marlene, but Cait Sith assures him that she and Elmyra are both safe somewhere. Then, the two of them get into it after Cait Sith brings up how Barret never cared about how many people he killed when he blew up the Sector One reactor. Tifa shuts the two of them up, pointing out that there are indeed bigger things to worry about right now. The team decides to do what you've probably been wanting to do for quite some time now:

take on Weapon alone. It may seem just a little ludicrous, but it really makes sense that the penultimate force in the word (read: a small, ragtag group of vigilantes) should be what stops Weapon from killing everybody.

Anyways, attempting to ram Weapon results in little more than a chewing out from Cid. You're going to have to wait for Weapon to reach the shores of Midgar and then fight it on the ground. What this means is that you get to fly around for a few minutes and casually wait Weapon to reach the shores of Midgar. Interestingly enough, once Weapon reaches Midgar, it will just stand there and politely wait for you to come up and kick its ass. I have seriously gone and done a couple of side quests, came back, and found Weapon still standing right where I left it. One reason I would recommend you take a break now is that you get to fly around while listening to Cid's most kick-ass theme as you traverse the world map. And it's funny that people in Midgar are staring at a gigantic thing waiting to kill them all while you're at the Gold Saucer trying to nail a top score at Torpedo Attack.

Another good reason to wait, at least for a minute or two, is that you're gonna have to properly prepare yourself for the fight. Weapon (more specifically, Diamond WEAPON) is immune to any and all physical damage. Meaning that you're going to have to take it on through magical means alone. What's this mean? You want your strongest magical attacks at full command (Ultima, Contain, and Comet all come to mind). You're also going to be wanting a good supply of Ethers, lest you run out of MP and find yourself screwed. This also means that a more magically-oriented party should be in order. Cait Sith, with his high HP and good magical skills, can prove to be an asset. Another thing to take along is some method of protecting yourself from the effects of silence, lest your party be screwed royally. A Ribbon, or an Added Effect/Seal combo in someone's armor will suffice, preferably with a Heal/All combo also on that character. And, of course, you should bring along what you would always bring along to a boss fight, anyways (healing magic, Big Guard, etc.) Also note that it is preferable to place your curative magic in the hands of a character who is protected entirely from the effects of silence, as this character should always be available to heal when needed. If you have Knights of the Round, you can quite literally end this fight before it even begins, but you will have to live with the fact that you are a complete pussy for doing so. Anyways, get what you need in order, and engage in combat with Diamond WEAPON!

Diamond WEAPON is a large and very imposing boss, but he's not as horribly difficult as you'd expect a doomsday creature to be. Its attacks are quite powerful, but Big Guard (more specifically, the M-Barrier) can reduce the severity. The only thing you really need to be aware of is its Diamond Flash attack, which does major damage to your characters and mutes the survivors. It also sounds like something I watched American Gladiators for ten years waiting to see. Lucky for you, it telegraphs this move far in advance, giving you plenty of time to prepare. Regen seriously helps bring your characters back up following the attack, but you should also want to hit them with other curative magic as soon as possible. And, of course, there's the silence issue. But there's no time limit on the fight, so take your time and you shall emerge victorious.

Following the battle, Diamond WEAPON is stunned, but not defeated. As your team stands on the shores of Midgar, an eerily silent and cold wind blows, and Diamond WEAPON starts to come back to its senses. Cloud says, "It senses... murder". Right, Cloud... but I do think that you should all be getting out of here before Diamond WEAPON destroys everything. Cait Sith tells you that crap is about to go down, and you seriously need to get out of there. The team hightails it back to the Highwind as Diamond WEAPON slowly advances towards Midgar.

And then it happens. Zoom to Midgar, and the eight reactors fire up, one after another (hey... isn't that the reactor we blew up over there?) Each reactor sends large amounts of mako pulsing through the city towards the canon, which warms up and readies fire. Then, with an Earth-shattering blast, it fires, rattling Midgar, and drowning the city in a hail of broken glass shards that were once the windows of Shinra H.Q. Cut to Diamond WEAPON, standing along the shores of Midgar. Sensing the blast coming its way, it unleashes a salvo of blasts of its own, which race towards Midgar at a high velocity. The view sweeps past Diamond WEAPON's blasts as they barrel towards the city, but not halfway there they are met with the blast of Sister Ray, which tears past them and streaks towards Diamond WEAPON with incredible force. The canon's blast blazes through the countryside and rips through Diamond WEAPON so fast it has no idea what even hit it. Diamond WEAPON is knocked flat on its ass, and perishes on the shores of Midgar. Meanwhile, the Sister Ray's blast cruises across the ocean with the trajectory of a ballistic missile and rapidly nears the Crater. The blast strikes the barrier head-on, and a mystical glow shines brightly. The barrier absorbs the blast, then disappears. You know what this means? Rufus actually managed to do something right for a change.

And Rufus couldn't be happier. He stands alone in his office, extremely pleased with himself, and blissfully unaware of the deadly barrage headed in his direction. Rufus stands and casually watches the salvo unleashed by Diamond WEAPON streak towards Midgar, as if to openly mock death. Well, he's not getting away this time. Fire rains into Midgar, and the top floor of Shinra H.Q. takes a direct hit. A wholly satisfying close-up ensues of Rufus dying in a fiery explosion, and then the vast majority of the shots fired by Diamond WEAPON sail harmlessly past Midgar.

With all of that out of your way, your team decides it's time to take out Sephiroth once and for all. Take the Highwind towards the Crater, fully intent to kick some Sephiroth ass. But, as you are making your approach, Cait Sith has to butt in again with more "news" from Midgar. Only this time, it's quite serious.

Cait Sith is talking to Scarlet and Heidegger, and it becomes very quickly apparent that Cait Sith is none other than Reeve (as if you haven't already guessed that). Anyways, all contact with the president has been cut off, and furthermore, the reactors appear to be still pumping out large quantities of mako energy. Some idiot has switched the canon's controls over to manual and is overworking the reactors, and that idiot is Hojo. Apparently, he's going to push some buttons and overload the reactors and blah, blah, blah, big explosion. And Heidegger and Scarlet really don't seem to care. So, it looks like your team gets to stop it, instead. Reeve informs Heidegger and Scarlet that you are on your way, and that they should stay out of your way. Reeve is then promptly escorted from the building by guards. Well, that was really smart, you dumbass. On another interesting note, Reeve is still able to control Cait Sith, which raises the question: "how in the hell is he doing it?" This question, like so many others, never gets answered.

So, you're off to Midgar. And again, take as long as you want. It's not like Hojo is actually going to accomplish anything that he wouldn't have accomplished already if it took you all of three seconds to make it there. So take your time (just refrain from flying anywhere near Midgar until you're sure you're ready).

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--- Welcome to: Midgar (Again)

Before we get this section underway. Let me stop and take a minute to mention that everything you can find in Midgar is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Three of these lost-forevers in particular must be stolen during an optional boss fight, so make sure you have your Steal materia handy if that is important to you. That being said, let's move on.

As the Highwind approaches Midgar airspace, the scene cuts to the Highwind cockpit. Barret speculates as to how exactly the team is going to get into Midgar. You see, the city is sort of under martial law, so storming it by land isn't going to work. It's not to say that you couldn't effortlessly kick the asses of every last soldier in the city, but there's the little issue of the rule of RPG's that states that you are not allowed to kill things unless they engage in combat with you. Anyways, Cid is the one who brilliantly points out that an approach by air is not only possible, but also a good idea. With that, the team rushes gung-ho from the cockpit off to the deck of the Highwind. Once there, the game asks you if you'd like to change your party members, but since you will land directly next to a save point, the question is rather pointless. With that, the team leaps off the side of the Highwind and into Midgar.

A kick-ass CG scene follows of your team dropping out of the dark sky. They fall in an almost circular pattern over the city, and one by one, parachutes pop open above each character. And I seriously am curious as to exactly how Red XIII was able to pull his own cord, not having opposable thumbs and all (Cait Sith is a close second in this thought process).

Cloud lands on the streets of Midgar, and Cait Sith comes immediately hopping up to him, telling him that Heidegger and Scarlet are after you and that traveling on the streets is a bad idea. So, he pulls the team into an alleyway and suggests you travel underground. Despite how much you'd rather take your chances with Heidegger and avoid traveling in the sewer, there's really no arguing with him. Then again, I suppose you should just be happy that sewers in RPG's are not really as disgusting as the ones in real life, and more resemble the clean, spacious, and well-lit sewers present in old Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles cartoons.

The team gathers in a an alley next to a manhole and a save point. Now is an excellent time to prepare yourself for the trials ahead, and I suppose that means we should go into the local monster activity. There's not a whole lot to worry about at this point in the game, and there's a good chance you seriously outclass the local enemies. But, for what it's worth, the Crazysaw has a tendency to confuse you. This is something that can be very detrimental to powerful parties, and is something you would be well-advised to protect against. Though they are relatively easy to deal with, lightning magic is especially effective against them. The Cromwell is an adorably cute little tank which attacks very quickly (which is odd, given that tanks are supposedly slow). However, they are still not overly powerful, and can still be easily dealt with. Lightning magic will make your job easier, though. Moving right along, we have the Manhole. The Manhole is ridiculously weak and easy to kill, and its only advantages is that wherever it goes, it carries with it three manholes from which to attack. It appears in only one of them at once, and changes positions quite frequently. Worse yet, your party is often too stupid to not attack the noticeably unoccupied manhole. The best way to get around this is to use attacks that target all enemies. The Grosspanzer and Shadow Maker are two more enemies of negligible mention, except that the latter is very easy to kill. Both suffer weaknesses to lightning magic, which can make your quest even easier, however. Lastly, we've got the Behemoth, an enemy which for some reason is roaming the sewers. It is significantly stronger and harder to kill than the rest of the enemies around here, but conversely always travels alone. It has no weaknesses, but shouldn't be too difficult to deal with.

You will crawl down a very long ladder into the "sewers". Well, technically, these really aren't sewers. It's a bunch of scaffolding spread out across a gigantic subterranean space, but since the game still would like to call them "sewers", who am I to argue? At the bottom of the ladder, you'll see a very long staircase near the bottom of the screen, which will take you to another ladder, which in turn takes you to the next screen.

At the bottom of the stairs, you are given the option to go either left or right. Going right takes you to a "point of no return", so, if you're at all interested in what lies at the end of the path, you are advised to go left first. Going left takes you towards the back of the screen and towards yet another ladder, this one leading back up the way you came. This ladder is very tall, taking you to a ledge resting high above the majority of the area. On the ledge is a chest containing the Aegis Armlet.

Back at the original fork, let's head right. You won't get very far before the floor drops out from underneath you, landing you on another ledge below. From here, head left and climb up those ladders conveniently placed along the pipes. After much climbing, you'll emerge on a ledge back in the upper area of the "sewers". Follow the ledge to the other side, where you'll see a dust chute that has for some reason been placed here. It's as if the Shinra knew you'd be coming this way and wanted to make your journey as convenient as possible.

You'll emerge on a ledge in the eastern section of the area. From here, you can either take some stairs to the upper area, or a ladder leading down to the ledge below. But first of all, you'll probably want to check out the contents of the two chests on either side of the ledge you are standing on. Your rewards are the Starlight Phone (from the chest on the left) and an Elixir (from the one on the right).

In choosing to head to the ledge below, you'll find another dust chute at the very edge, which will lead you to another ledge in the upper section. There will be a ladder at the end of that ledge which will take you to the topmost ledge in the entire area, at the end of which is a chest containing the Max Ray.

Back to the original fork, the path which will advance your progress involves taking that very large set of stairs to the area above. You will emerge at a ledge containing a save point and a small hole in the wall which leads to a tunnel that will take you to the next area of the "sewers".

Before going any further, you may want to prepare for the optional upcoming boss fight. Even if you aren't planning on fighting it out, it will be followed by a mandatory boss fight soon afterwards in which you would be best advised to have the Destruct materia handy (in addition, of course, to the materia you'd usually carry into a boss fight). In this fight (the optional one, that is), there will be three targets. And while it should be expected that they are all immune to gravity magic, note that each also absorbs an attack from a specific element. One absorbs lightning magic, one absorbs fire magic, and one absorbs ice magic. Ergo, avoid any of those three elemental attacks that target all enemies. Poison can be a triple asset in this fight if paired with an All materia, as it will drain from all three targets at once. Elemental protection from lightning and fire magic can also help, with lightning more than likely taking preference. Finally, you'll definitely be wanting to take along the Steal materia to take advantage of some of the lovely prizes that can be gifted from your enemies. Oh, and I need also mention that the fight in question is the fight mentioned above in which three lost-forevers (discussed in section I.F. of the FAQ) may be stolen.

Crawling through the hole, you'll emerge in the actual "sewer" part of this

area. From here, you can go north or south. Going south is entirely optional, but in going that route, you will find a Power Source, a Guard Source, a Magic Source, and a Mind Source. You'll also discover a teammate or two to inform you that north is where you should head. The tunnel leading south ends with the W-Item materia and a save point.

As you begin to head north, however, you are hastily approached by Elena of the Turks. She wonders aloud what she should do, and then Reno and Rude show up, chastising her for some reason about being weak (as opposed to getting on her about being a profoundly dumb ass). To make a long story short, the Turks have orders to kill you, and even with the impending disaster in the city, they are willing to follow those orders to the very end. Ultimately, the decision rests with you as to whether or not you wish to fight them, but realize that if you choose to fight them, you will have the opportunity to steal several potentially useful items from them. Also realize that they are not too difficult to face, even though they are considerably more powerful this time around than any time before you have faced them.

Reno, Rude, and Elena, should you choose to do battle with them, will attack you en-masse. While Reno and Rude both have powerful attacks (most of them are lightning-based), Elena's are probably the worst, because not only can she attack the whole party (with her own fire-based attack), she can also confuse your teammates. I mentioned earlier that each also absorbs an attack from a specific element. That is to say Reno absorbs lightning magic, Rude absorbs fire magic, and Elena absorbs ice magic. They all have much more HP than ever before, but you should still be quick in stealing from them any item you desire. This includes the Zeidrich from Rude (God, he must have a stash of those somewhere), the Tough Ring from Reno, and the Minerva Band from Elena.

Moving on north, you'll hit a fork in the road, and whatever teammate you see hanging around the area isn't going to be of much help to you in deciding which way to go. Heading right will take you to another fork, from which you can head left to check out section V.N. of the FAQ (which is highly recommended). Taking a right from said second fork is a dead-end and thus is a waste of time. Back at the original fork, however, head left and keep moving to find yourself back on the streets of Midgar.

You won't get very far on the streets before you are approached by a gigantic robotic killing machine. It stops directly in front of you and hold out its hand, upon which stands Scarlet and Heidegger. Their obnoxious laughs sound in unison to create the audio equivalent of a rake screeching across a chalkboard in a room full of starving cats. They also laugh at how you've treated them like crap for all this time, and now how they will finally have their revenge. You have gotten in their way before, "but let's see how you fare against anti-Weapon artillery!" Scarlet laughs before engaging you in combat. Granted, in real life, you would have a rather difficult time attacking a building-sized tank with little more than your bare fists and a handful of melee weapons, but don't think that it's going to stop our intrepid warriors from reducing the whole thing to a pile of smoldering rubble.

The Proud Clod is what Scarlet has affectionately named this walking tank of death you are battling on the city streets (odd how none of the local citizens see anything unusual about this). It consists of two parts: the body and the armor. So long as the armor exists, any and all attacks you make to the body will only do half damage (also note that attacks to the armor, naturally, will also only do half damage). Given the stamina of the body, it is probably in your best interests to off the armor first. Big Guard, as you might expect, can come in very handy during this fight, as the Proud Clod boasts an assortment of powerful attacks, both physical and magical. Another attack to watch out for is Rainbow Ray, which casts Reflect on a member of your party. This poses no

immediate detrimental effects, but as you can imagine, it makes healing rather difficult. You are advised to cast De-Barrier on said character with the utmost of haste. Other than that, you should be nigh familiar with the workings of boss battles by now, so get to it! When you decimate the Proud Clod, you will receive the Ragnarok for Cloud. Cloud, of course, has little to no difficulty wielding the oversized weapon.

Oh, and another thing. Don't be surprised when after the battle is over, the gigantic weapon explodes following Scarlet's and Heidegger's lamentations. And not only does the explosion not damage anything nearby, it also leaves absolutely no visible trace at all. No remains, no rubble, no wreckage... nothing. Video games are like that. But, you've little time to worry about that, for you've almost reached Hojo! Just north of here is a save point, at which you are advised to put Barret in your party if he is not there already. This is because just a little further ahead, you will discover Barret's Missing Score, but it will only appear if he is in the party with you. And need I again mention that the Missing Score is, like everything else here, a lost-forever as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ? I thought not. Now, move along.

Oh, and hey, you might also want to equip someone in your party with a Ribbon. And have that person equipped with the Heal materia, so that he or she can keep his or her teammates free of status effects in the upcoming boss battle.

Anyways, tension hangs in the air as your team climbs the tower to the north. The wind blows cold, and you can sense that Hojo is near. As you approach the Sister Ray, the last of your teammates will appear to wish you luck. Climb up the tower quickly, making extra-sure to pick up the Missing Score.

As the team approaches Hojo, he turns around and says, "oh, the failure." Cloud, a little pissy, says that Hojo could at least remember his name. Enough with the semantics, already, Cloud! Hojo gets even madder because even though Cloud was labeled as a failure, it's according to him that Cloud was the only one that succeeded as a Sephiroth clone. This is nonsense, of course, taking into consideration Sephiroth clone number one. This is also curious because Cloud looks nothing like Sephiroth. What this does allude to is the fact that Cloud is possibly the only person that can take Sephiroth out. Anyways, Cloud bluntly tells Hojo to shut the hell up and quit with the nonsense already. Hojo, being insane and all, doesn't listen. He just says that his "son" needs a hand. Sephiroth, it seems, is Hojo's son, which is horribly ironic when you consider that Sephiroth thought that Hojo was a complete idiot. Now, this part may not have been as shocking had you already gone to section V.K. of the FAQ, but you do glean from this that Sephiroth would very well have been born a normal child had he not been injected with Jenova cells while still in the womb. Goddamn Hojo, this is all his fault. So, naturally, your team takes their frustrations out on him by kicking his ass five ways from Sunday. Well, that and the fact that he's going to blow up the city if you don't stop his crazy ass.

Battling Hojo probably isn't the hardest thing you've ever had to do, given the point in the game you have reached, but it's still a boss fight, and a boss fight is a boss fight, after all. Hojo begins the fight by standing there in his creepy manner, looking to be in somewhat of a daze and not apparently aware that there are three people about to kill him. Just wail away on him, and do ignore the minions he pulls out of his pants. They just respawn if you kill them, and he's got a million of them in there, anyways. The only problem with Hojo is that when he dies, he doesn't quite get the idea that perhaps he should remain dead, and he comes back from the grave with somewhat of a vengeance.

In Hojo's seconds form, he is a body with two arms that act as separate

entities. Granted, this is a monumentally weird thing to witness in real life, but it's actually a rather common theme in video games. All you really need to know is that when the Body dies, everything else dies with it. The Right Arm is actually very easy to kill. And since it's attacks are worse than those of the other two targets, offing it with the quickness may prove to be a wise investment. Even if it does regenerate later, it's not as if the thing was hard to kill. The Left Arm has almost as much HP as the body does, so killing it is really more of a waste of time than anything. Other than that, just rip up on the body. There is really nothing to watch out for, except the occasional Sleepel spell (oh, my! Not that! Whatever will we do!?)

In the spirit of things that just don't know when to die (see: Mega Man, Survivor, Police Academy, Pauly Shore), Hojo comes back at you again, looking as if he has just had a radioactive waste bath. The only real notable thing about this single-target battle is that Hojo has graduated to biological warfare, and now can nail your ass with status ailments. Of course, if you're prepared for them, then it shouldn't be much of an issue at all. Just wail away on him with everything you've got (except for gravity which, as you should know by now, will get you nowhere).

Following the battle with Hojo, the team returns to the Highwind, where Cait Sith announces that the Shinra is done for. We never do figure out exactly what happened to Reeve, though. Anyways, Red XIII states that Meteor has seven days left until it falls, and that's when Cloud gets one of his bright ideas. He asks Red XIII if he wants to see Cosmo Canyon again, to which Red XIII replies "yes". He asks Barret if he wants to see Marlene again, and then segues into a horribly uninspiring speech about how if you fail this mission, then everyone is going to die, and that if Sephiroth kills you, then you'll just go faster than everyone else. Way to rally the team up, Cloud. What's next, do we get to watch some kittens die? Anyways, he points out that everyone on the team needs something to fight for, and must understand what that something is. He, for instance, intends only on kicking Sephiroth's ass, and saving the planet is just collateral damage that comes with the territory. Way to prioritize, Cloud. Barret shamefully admits that even though he is trying to save the planet, he's killed a hell of a lot of its inhabitants in the process. At first, he says, he was just out to mess the Shinra's world up. But now... now he is trying to make the world a better place for Marlene. By killing everyone. Smart, Barret. Anyways, Cloud demands that everyone disembark the Highwind and go find that one thing they're fighting for, because something like saving the world from Meteor can take a backseat to this inspirational bullcrap. Someone should tell this guy that it's ok to put off a book report that isn't due for a week, but saving the world is something that you really should not procrastinate in doing. I do like how Cid is the first to point out how nobody may come back, and Cloud admits that he wouldn't hold it against any of them that didn't, because you can't fight without a reason. I dunno, I see high school kids do that all the time.

Anyways, everyone except Cloud and Tifa get off the Highwind. Tifa, of course, has nowhere to go, so she stays on the Highwind with Cloud. Methinks all of that inspirational crap was just an excuse for Cloud to be alone with Tifa for a couple of days. The two of them sit on a quiet, grassy hill just outside the Highwind as the bright dusk sky looms over the horizon. The two stand there, wondering if anyone is going to come back. Tifa happily mentions that with Cloud by her side, she'll never give up. Aw, how sweet. The conversation gets even more sappy when Tifa says that no matter how close you are now, not too long ago you were very far apart, and that when she was alone in the Lifestream, surrounded by pain, misery, and despair, she heard Cloud calling out to her. Cloud admits that he heard her voice calling out to him, as well. A little more mindless babble ensues, before Cloud breaks out with the standard line of how he had been wanting to talk to Tifa for so long, but now



that the two are alone, he has nothing to say. Tifa looks at him and sweetly says that words aren't the only thing that can express what a person is thinking.

The scene cuts to Tifa and Cloud sleeping together on the hillside. Cloud looks up into the sky and says to Tifa that it is almost dawn. Tifa, still tired, asks Cloud to let her sleep a little longer. She says that she wants to at least have this moment, because this day will never come again. Cloud replies with the affirmation that this may be the last time they ever have together with each other. Way to make her feel comfortable, you jerk.

That morning, the two stand near the Highwind, surveying the horizon. Cloud says that y'all need to get going, even though nobody has returned. Tifa starts to protest, but Cloud says that even she said yesterday that with Cloud by her side she'd be all right. I hate to have to be the one to tell you this Cloud, but people say stuff like that all the time. They don't necessarily mean it.

Anyways, the two stand on the bridge alone in the Highwind, and it is deathly silent. Cloud says that he'll make enough ruckus for everyone, and besides, he's the pilot (really? Since when did this happen?) And besides, you don't have time to feel lonely, what with the impending Armageddon and all. "No more flying around casually like before", he says. However, feel free to completely disregard his advice and fly around casually, because the complete and utter destruction of the Earth will delay itself while you head on over to the Gold Saucer for a quick game of G-Bike. However, as the two of you talk, the ship begins to move.

Tifa and Cloud run into the cockpit, passing up Cait Sith (whom Tifa and Cloud entirely ignore), and see Barret and Cid standing around the controls to the ship. Barret says in a rather sarcastic tone, "Oh, is it all ok with you?" Red XIII arrives and starts to butt in, but Cid shuts him up, mostly because he wants to hear what Tifa has to say. Tifa comes to the rather quick realization that everyone saw Tifa and Cloud, um, doing whatever it was that they were doing on the hill and decided to leave them alone. Judging from her reaction, I'm going to venture to say they did a bit more than just talk to each other. Vincent is the next one to show back up, which rather surprises Cloud. Cloud has always thought Vincent to be cold and distant, and this surprises Vincent. Vincent just shrugs it off and says that maybe that's the way he comes off. He then leaps into the air and returns to his designated waiting area. It is at this time someone (Barret) finally notices Cait Sith standing near the entrance to the cockpit, and he seems at least a little bit happy to see him. Reeve says that he wanted to be there in person, which probably wouldn't have been such a great idea given how much of a pussy Reeve is in real life. I mean, he couldn't even take out two bottom-rung Shinra soldiers! Your team could slaughter an entire army of them without getting winded. Anyways, he happily proclaims that he will devote his stuffed body to the cause. Wow, what a sacrifice, what with the rest of us are giving our actual bodies to the cause. Anyways, everyone is accounted for now except Yuffie, whom nobody assumes is going to return. She flies into the cockpit and seems rather angry at this remark, saying that she's not missing out on the final action after coming this far. Then she storms out and returns to her position on the bridge.

Cloud thanks the team for coming back, but Barret cuts through the inspirational crap by making it very clear that "we didn't come back for your spikey-headed ass!" He came back for Marlene, and, uh, he sort of trails off because the subject he's discussing doesn't involve killing something. Red XIII notes that Aeris left the team a shining ray of hope, and that it would be a sin not to use that hope. "Aeris... she was smiling to the end," Cloud notes. He says that Aeris should have returned to the planet by now, but it seems that she hasn't. It seems that even though she should have already returned to the

planet, something (Sephiroth) is stopping her. And you have to kill Sephiroth to rectify the situation. Granted, this is coming from someone that is in no way qualified to make this sort of assessment, but you take what you can get, I suppose. And killing Sephiroth, in any event, is a good idea.

Cloud orders Cid to move out, and Cid moves over to a couple of the levers on the ship that he says have been bothering him for quite some time. Cloud, in the meantime, is going on and on about the mission, but Cid's mind is firmly on the levers. He has no idea what they do, and being the idiot he is, he flips them. Instead of sending the Highwind nose-diving into the ocean (which would be hilarious, come to think of it), Cid inadvertently discovers the "haul-ass" button. Cut to a CG of the Highwind, where you see the propellers being ejected into the sea and a jet exhaust flaring out in their place. And interestingly enough, the Highwind appears to carry a lifetime supply of fuel on-board.

Though the Highwind doesn't seem to be moving already faster across the world map (I suppose you can't ask for much more than the ability to circumnavigate the globe in ten seconds), the effect is quite more noticeable in the cockpit. Cid is clinging onto the controls for dear life while everyone else stands around, sipping tea, and mocking him in their minds. That's when the crew members come rushing into the cockpit and run towards Cid. Cid, naturally, yells at them. They hold him down and help him steer the Highwind, so I suppose they're at least good for something (and maybe Cid should lay off the cigarettes while he's clinging onto the controls of the ship for dear life at least, hmm?)

And the Highwind travels towards the North Cave...

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--- Welcome to: The Final Cave (The Crater... Again)

The camera pans down the Highwind, parked just inside the great northern Crater (note the sexy lady painted on the side of the ship). Granted, you can just up and leave right now and come back at your leisure, which is recommended if you still have any side quests or such to knock off your to-do list (section V.O. of the FAQ, for instance, is now available to you). Furthermore, a return visit to section V.K. should now be in order. Do note, however, that a few materia are located in the Crater, and all are located before the "point of no return". These materia should all come in very handy if you decide to tackle section IV.E. of the FAQ, and also at the Battle Square at the Gold Saucer. They're also somewhat necessary in reference to section V.M. of the FAQ. Finally, even though you can come back to the Crater as much as you want to, there is one opportunity here which is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. It will be discussed later, but consider yourself warned at the moment.

Anyways, assuming that you're ready to head on in, let's take a moment to go over the extensive bestiary of the Crater. Being the final stage in the game, expect a very wide assortment of baddies to be found here. In the first area, expect to deal with Gargoyles, which can be obnoxious despite how easy they are to kill. This is because they will begin the fight completely invincible in their stone state, and all you can do is wait them out. When they break free, they are very easy to kill and have no powerful attacks to speak of except that they use L4 Death as a dying attack, so be mindful of this. Next up, we have the Dark Dragon. Its attacks are fairly powerful and it has quite a bit of HP, but this is negated by the fact that it tends to travel alone. It knows both Laser and Dark Force, skills which you may learn with the E. Skill materia, but it will use neither without outside assistance from the Manipulate materia. The Parasite is next. Its got a lot more HP than you'd expect of something its

size, but it's not horribly powerful. Their main attack does induce sadness, which can get very annoying. They also know L5 Death and Magic Breath, two more attacks you may learn with your E. Skill materia, but only if you have the Manipulate materia on hand (I suppose you should be thankful that they would never actually use such attacks against you, lest they actually be challenging). You may prey on their weaknesses to wind or holy magic, if you wish, but do avoid earth magic, which will not affect them at all. The Scissors is what kind of horror that might spawn if you somehow cross-bred Jason with Edward Scissorhands. It's funny-looking and not very powerful, but it is capable of instant-death attacks. Master Tonberry is a creature of worthy note, as he is one of the most dangerous things you will face. He advances towards you slowly, and every attack he strikes with has the possibility of being an instant death strike. If not, then it is still very powerful. In addition, Master Tonberry has an insane amount of HP. And by "insane", I mean, Knights of the Round-worthy. It takes a lot of effort to put this thing down, and the fact that it absorbs gravity attacks doesn't make your job any easier. But once you become accustomed to dealing with him, then you might check out section XIX.B. of the FAQ, in which he is mentioned... twice. At the very least, the game makes him easier to deal with by ensuring that he always travels alone.

As you move on to other areas, the creature activity will begin to shift. More specifically, there is a fork in the road, and depending on which path you choose, you will deal with different enemies. The following are enemies which appear only on the right path. The Death Dealer is a more advanced version of an enemy you may or may not remember from North Corel. In addition to having a mention in section XIX.B. of the FAQ, it suffers more or less the same problem as all of the other enemies here in that the one deadly attack it possesses it doesn't ever seem to want to use. This means that you'll again be needing the Manipulate materia to learn Roulette with your E. Skill materia. The same can be said for the Pollensalita, who would be a real nuisance if it actually ever used the useful Angel Whisper spell, which you can again pick up with your E. Skill materia. The Pollensalita can induce confusion, however, so do be aware of this and take some measures to defend against it. Moving right along, the Dragon Zombie is a particularly rare creature along the right path, but also one of the far more dangerous ones. It's got a pretty nasty regular attack, which is actually the worst of your worries. It has two extremely powerful attacks called Shadow Flare and Pandora's Box, which it thankfully never uses. But if you want to learn them with E. Skill, you're going to have to manipulate him and actually use them on your party. Do not underestimate their power, or you will find your entire party wiped out in one fell swoop. At the very least the Dragon Zombie always travels alone, and is also weak versus holy-based attacks. In addition to the aforementioned enemies, the right path also contains Parasites (from earlier in the North Cave) and Marlboros (a creature you may remember from Gaea's Cliff).

The left fork is actually two separate paths. Though a few enemies are common to them both, they have for the most part entirely separate enemy activities. We'll begin with the upper path, which is first and foremost a popular hotspot for leveling-up later in the game. For more information on leveling-up in this area, refer to section VI.B. of the FAQ. That being said, the Magic Pot would be the primary reason why people enjoy leveling up here. These creatures reap 1000 AP when destroyed, as well as a wealth of experience. The downside is that they begin the fight invincible, and can only be made vulnerable by feeding it an Elixir. Ergo, if you do not have one to spare, then simply run from the fight. And don't worry, until you feed it, it really has no attack besides yelling at you. Even when you do, you should be able to easily kill it before it gives you much trouble. The Movers would be the second reason that leveling up around here is such a good idea. Granted, the Movers are rare, but are always welcome when they appear. For all practical purposes, they are three small red harmless bouncing dots that are very easy to kill and

reap, above all else, 2,400 AP when killed. Moving right along to the nuisance enemies, then, we have Christopher and Gighee. These are two enemies, one a demonic young boy, and the other a horse, that always appear together. Christopher is capable of inducing sadness, whilst the Gighee can infuriate your characters. As a pair, they are not much more than irritating, but the Gighee is mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ. The Allemange, finally, is a giant floating eyeball which has no real attacks of any mention except one that causes sadness. It is fairly resilient, but not overly difficult to deal with. Wind is its weakness, while it is immune to earth magic. Master Tonberry, mentioned earlier, also appears out this way.

Finally, we have the lower path. The King Behemoth may appear out this way, and is a somewhat resilient creature, but is quite weak and easy to take out, especially given that it always travels alone. Conversely, the Iron Golem is a much tougher customer, standing as one of the most powerful regular enemies in the game. It has a lot of HP and an attack that nails the entire party at once. However, it thankfully is very slow, and always travels alone. In addition to this, the Iron Golem is mentioned in section XIX.B. of the FAQ. In addition to these two enemies, you may also find Master Tonberry and the Allemange along this route.

As is fitting of the game's final stage, expect a long road ahead, accompanied by some very blood-pumping music (and a return of a few other favorite tracks a bit later on). However, this place really cannot hold a candle to such classic finale stages as Kefka's Tower (Final Fantasy III/VI), The Black Omen (Chrono Trigger) or Infinity (Breath of Fire II). Hell, it doesn't even stand up to some of the less-intimidating final dungeons. And if you've actually taken the time to level up/master your materia/battle Emerald or Ruby WEAPON, expect the easiest (and frankly, most disappointing) romp you've ever experienced in your life.

But, enough whining, let's rock and roll! As you step onto the edge of the top of the hill, Cloud will take over and race to the bottom. You'll emerge at the top of the very large crater on a ledge that conveniently spirals down towards the bottom. Right next to where you land, you'll see a cave, which will take you back to the top of the hill where the Highwind sits, if you are so inclined. Of course, I'm going to assume that since you just came down here, you're not yet very interested in going back, so let's continue. Do make extra-sure to loot the nearby treasure chest for the very important Save Crystal. You will be glad you have this later on, believe you me. Other than that, just continue along the ledge, and don't feel bad when a large portion of the ledge crumbles underneath your feet. No matter how big a gap it creates, Cloud will still be able to effortlessly cross it in a single leap. So, no worries. Oh, and be sure to nab that Guard Source out of a chest on your way down.

You'll emerge on a series of rocky ledges. From the top, you can either go left or right. To begin with, you'll prolly want to head right first. Follow the ledge to a point where you can jump down to the ledge below (of course, the drop will be so far that you will not be able to jump back up). On the ledge below, you'll see a chest containing a Guard Source. A little bit over, you'll reach a point where you can make another big jump down to the ledge below, and to a chest containing a Mind Source. You're now at the bottom of the small cliff and may continue on, but you may first wish to go back up the left path (it's the only way to go back up) and pick up all of the items along the way. These items include an Elixir, Power Source, and the HP Absorb materia. These items collected, let's move on.

The next screen takes you to another series of ledges, along with a set of caverns you need to deal with. Oh, joy. To the left of where you start is a cave, which will take you to an ultimate dead-end at the bottom. There is a

Guard Source and a Power Source along the way that you might be interested in, however. Two ledges below, you'll notice that a treasure chest (which by the way contains a Mind Source) stands between you and a second cave. Oddly enough, you can't hop over the chest, but you should have little difficulty in making the much-steeper jump to the ledge above so that you may go around to the other side and enter the cave, inside of which you will discover a Megalixir. Back outside, on a small ledge on the right side of the screen (which should be one level below the last cave I mentioned), you will find a third cave. This cave will take you through a small cavern, and you emerge from a cave on the ledge below. From here, you will have to hop down a series of ledges to get to the bottom. As you hop down, stick to the right. If you meander to the left, you will hop down a ledge which you cannot jump back up. You will then have to hop down to another cave, which connects with the first cave you saw at the top of the screen. However, if you stay to the right, you'll make it to the bottom of the cliff, and advance to the next screen.

You are now about halfway through the North Cave. You'll emerge in a large, open area where the rest of the team has also gathered. The path splits up at this point, and then the game does something seemingly innovative by allowing your team to split up. However, there is really little to no point behind this unless you plan on exploiting a glitch in the game (refer to section XIX.E. for more details). Do note that this opportunity is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, so take this opportunity now if you wish to do so. That aside, the simple fact of the matter is that you will only control whomever goes with Cloud (until everyone unites at the center). Your other characters, when you meet them, will all give you items they found along their respective paths. However, since the number of items on each path more or less outnumbers the characters in your party, this makes just about no sense at all, so if you're looking to find everything that needs to be found, expect yourself to personally go trekking down each individual path. On that note, then, it really doesn't matter which way you take Cloud at the moment, or where you send everyone else. For what it's worth, however, I should mention that both the right path and the upper left path are one-way only. The lower left path is the only one which is traversable both ways, meaning that you can shave off an extraneous trip by not taking the lower left path on your first run through.

The right path begins as an ominous trek down a gigantic spiraling stone ledge, with a familiar tune playing in the background. This is a very straightforward path, and there will be both a Mystile and an Elixir along the way to collect. At the bottom of the path, you'll emerge on a new screen. Ahead of you, a barren wasteland lies. You'll find a Speed Source shortly up the path. From there, you can deviate from the path in either direction to find a Megalixir (located a bit to the north) and a Tetra Elemental (nestled in the southern area of the screen). Both can be very hard to spot, however. Back in the middle of the area, continue northeast towards the next screen (stopping to pick up yet another Megalixir along the way). In the next screen you will see before you the skeletal remains of a gigantic dragon. Hop on, and walk across the spine of the giant beast to advance. The tension looms as you make your way across the bones, for you are nearing the center of the great Crater. And as you hop off the end, you will find yourself at the Crater's center. To continue, skip the next two paragraphs below.

The upper-left path takes you to an eerily calm and oddly out-of place swampy area. From where you emerge in the first screen, you can move along the bottom towards the right and collect the Magic Source from that chest in the middle of the swamp. To advance, walk out onto the branch and hop over to the ledge along the upper-left corner of the screen. Walk over to its edge, and you will jump into the swamp and "walk" over to the other side, then hop out. Well, that was certainly unexpected. From where you emerge, you may continue east to the next screen, but you may first wish to grab the Remedy from that chest right over

there. The next screen is more of the same swampy area, the main feature of which is a small path encircling more swamp in the middle of the screen. First of all, there is a small treasure trove hidden away in the small alcove located along the upper left corner of the screen. It contains a Vaccine, Imperial Guard, and the Shield materia. There's also a Hero Drink in a chest on the right side of the screen. The exit is on the right side of the screen as well. Reach it via the small path that branches off of the main circular path leading towards the ledge on the upper right corner of the screen. As you enter the next screen, you will begin to sense the center of the Crater rapidly approaching as you find yourself in the midst of a mysterious forest bordering a small crater with a bright mako fountain shining in the center of it. Before leaving this area, there are two things you should stop to pick up. You'll find the W-Magic materia very well-hidden along the edge of the trees directly north of the center of the crater, and the Counter materia is located at the dead-center of the glow. It is invisible to the naked eye, but Cloud should have no difficulty in finding it if you place him right near the glow and make him look around. Having collected what you wanted, please exit this area stage-left, where you will find yourself at the Crater's center. To continue, skip the next paragraph below.

The lower-left path is a series of rocky ledges leading directly towards the Crater's center. This path is fairly straightforward, though in the first screen there are a few points in which you can hop over to other ledges to collect a couple of items. In the first screen, the items to be found include a Remedy and an X-Potion. Other than that, just hop along the rocky ledges to the next screen below. On the screen below, continue along the narrowing stone ledge until it ends as a large, flat-topped stalagmite in the middle of an encircling narrow stone ledge. Hop down below, and you might also want to grab the Remedy from the nearby chest. Then, continue along the straightforward ledge, picking up the Vaccine located in a chest along the way. As you walk along the path, pay extra-special attention to when you begin to near the waterfall along the left side of the screen, for it is a little-known fact that the waterfall's glow masks a Magic Counter materia lying along the narrow ledge you are standing on. Anyways, continue along to the next screen. As you emerge on the next screen, you'll find an X-Potion in a nearby chest. From there, continue along the narrow pathway suspended high above the abyss below, with the waterfall glowing eerily in the background and the excellent Crater theme still playing in the background. At the bottom of the screen, a series of rocky ledges lead to a clearing where you'll discover a Turbo Ether in a nearby treasure chest. Before continuing, you may wish to hop over to that ledge over on the left side of the screen where a Speed Source lies in a chest. Also note that the Mega All materia lies on the very small stone ledge you must hop across to make it over there, but if you do not press the command button as Cloud lands on the ledge, he will hop right past it without picking it up. Anyways, when you are ready, exit this screen at the bottom and you will emerge at the Crater's center.

The party unites at the deathly-silent circular ledge overhanging the direct center of the Great Northern Crater. Speak with everyone to hear their thoughts on the situation, and also to receive an item that they picked up. From here, you may continue on, but do not move on unless you are absolutely sure you wish to move out, for this is the point of no return. On that token, if you haven't yet used the Save Crystal, this is a better place than ever to use it. Not really so much for the camp-out, but for the convenience. If you are interested in getting everything, you will be coming out this way quite a few times. And, again, this is the closest point to the end of the game without breaching the "point of no return".

Before moving out, take the time to prepare your team for the final battles. Obviously, you need only prepare your initial team of three, but it would also

be in your interests to give the other members some materia, as well, as there is a chance you may be utilizing them briefly during the final battles. As for what materia you'll be wanting to take along, this is it. You'll want both materia that can do big damage to multiple targets as well as materia which can do cumulative damage to a single target. Destruct will also be very useful in the final battle. This is in addition to everything which I should not even have to tell you will come in handy (Restore, Big Guard, etc.) The Ribbon is a very useful accessory to have around, and for additional protection, the Heal materia (with Esuna/Resist) can come in handy in a pinch. Oh, and if you happen to have the Knights of the Round materia handy, you can win the game without even trying, you bastard.

When you are ready, move on out. Rather than doing the wise thing and assaulting Sephiroth en masse, your team agrees that only three of you will suffice as the initial wave. Which is very stupid, but at least complies with RPG regulations. Select your team and move deep into the crater itself. Pure lifestream energy shines all around you as you heroically tread across a series of suspended ledges conveniently leading towards the crater's direct center. Along the way, expect to fight the most powerful regular enemies in the game: the Iron Man and Dragon Zombie.

At the center of the crater, you will meet the final form of Jenova: Jenova SYNTHESIS. Jenova SYNTHESIS is a creature with five separate targets. That's three parts torso, two parts arms, and all parts pure, unadulterated evil. The arms are fairly weak and fall easily, but it's the torso that must be taken out to put Jenova down for good. In this battle, whip out your power attacks, focusing on your multiple-target ones (Ultima, summons, Coin, etc.) A proper defense (Regen, Big Guard, and the like) can be very helpful, especially for Jenova's countdown attack. When Jenova hits 0 on the counter, it lets loose with Ultima, which hurts to say the least. If your party is powerful enough, you should have little difficulty in ending the fight before this happens, but in the event that's not a guaranteed thing, your defenses should be of the utmost priority.

Depending on how you performed during the Jenova SYNTHESIS battle, you will be prompted to split your party into one, two, or three teams. Which of the three occurs depends on how poorly you fared against Jenova SYNTHESIS. The better you did, the fewer the teams enter the next battle. The only thing you need to keep in mind when forming your party(s) is that the first party will be the one to move on to the final battle following the upcoming one. Other than that, any and all teams on the battlefield will be needed to at least some extent, so do not make any one team too weak to handle itself. This next boss fight also introduces the concept of status ailments, so that's something else to keep in mind whilst forming your parties. Yet another thing to keep in mind is that during the next battle (which only your first party will advance towards), status ailments will be an even bigger problem.

Bizarro Sephiroth would be the gigantic creature which appears before your party(s). This is also a creature in five parts, but there are only two that should be of interest to you: the torso and the core. The torso is what you must kill to make the entire creature fall. The core is what you must destroy to have any hopes of damaging the torso. The other three targets (head, right magic, left magic) are all easy to take out, but are just as easily revived. The addition of a second or third party to the mix complicates matters in that for every additional team, there is an additional "side" to the core which must be destroyed. Each team will have access to their own side of the core, and only that side. Thus, it takes the cooperative efforts of each team to dismantle the core. Then, anyone can go for the torso. You will begin the battle as the first team, and you are from there given the opportunity to switch to the next team in line every time a part of Bizarro Sephiroth is destroyed.





the appropriate subsection of the walkthrough, section III.D. You are also going to have to prepare for a difficult boss battle, especially if you are opening the safe on your first trip through the mansion (though the fight is not impossible at this point in the game, it is still a good challenge). In preparation, you will obviously want some good curative materia handy, and a host of your best attacks. While there are no resistances or weaknesses to mention (besides a resistance to gravity magic, obviously), bear in mind that the Poison materia may come in handy during this fight. You should also have the Time materia at this point in the game, and the Haste-all spell will be a welcome addition. You may also wish to take Aeris along for her Seal Evil limit break, which makes the fight much easier. The Choco/Mog materia and/or the Added Effect materia combo in one's weapon also work, but are far less reliable than Aeris's Seal Evil attack. Keep that in mind. Another point is that you might also want to take along someone who is a relatively decent physical fighter, as well, because you will more than likely be doing quite a bit of hand-to-hand in the next battle. And before you get carried away, a point I should make is that Mindblow will be ineffective in the upcoming battle, so bringing Barret along for that sole reason is inadvisable. The main magical attack used by this boss is Bolt 2, so the Lightning/Elemental combo in someone's armor will offer you some much-needed protection. And on a final note concerning protection, if you have learned the Big Guard skill on your E. Skill materia, you might also want to bring it along, as well.

Upon entering the Shinra Mansion, you may notice a pile of notes lying on the floor just left of the entrance. They detail the same mad scientist pratter you'd expect from anyone living in this hellhole. "Anyone who gets in my way... they will never stop me...! Hahaha!" That sort of garbage. They do make reference to a man from the Turks, who has been scientifically altered and locked up in the basement, however, which should be more than enough to titillate your curiosity. That being said, you are pointed in the direction of the safe upstairs. There are four numbers needed to open it, and each is hidden somewhere in the mansion. Clues for each number are offered on the last page of the pile of notes.

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The first clue refers to the lid of the box with the most oxygen. Oxygen, as you might know, is what is produced by plants. Where are there a lot of plants in the Shinra Mansion? That's right. Check the lid of the treasure chest where you found the Enemy Launcher to find the first number in the combination.

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The second clue is hidden at the "ivory's short of tea and ray". This is actually probably the hardest one to figure out. Don't waste your time looking for a kitchen, because that's not the right idea. Ivory, you see, is the main component in many different things... like piano keys. And if you've ever had the opportunity to play the piano here at the Shinra Mansion, you may have noticed something unusual about it: the keys for ti and re ("tea and ray") do not work. Now we're getting somewhere. Look on the floor behind the piano for the second number in the combination.

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The third clue is located five steps left, nine steps up, left two more steps, and finally up six last steps from the creek in the floor near the chair. The only hard part is finding the starting point. The floors won't squeak as you walk across them, you've got to actually examine the area as you walk past. And if you look around, you'll find the squeaky floorboard in

question in the room with the stairs leading down to the basement. Find the squeaky floorboard, and follow the directions from there to the third number in the combination.

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The fourth clue, as you may have probably realized, does not exist on the list of clues. However, if you move your cursor down to where the fourth clue should be, and click, Cloud will discover the fourth and final number in the combination written in invisible ink. Because apparently, Cloud has x-ray vision and can read invisible writing without the aid of special lighting.

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With the full combination in hand, head to the safe upstairs (you'll find it in the back room in the left wing). You'll have 20 seconds to operate the digital lock on the safe. Press right or left on the controller to bring the counter to the appropriate number, and then press the confirm button to enter that number. However, so not go past any number or the combination will not work (for instance, going any further right than 36 for the first number will result in failure, even if you don't punch any of those numbers in). And in case you forgot the combination already, move right to 36, left to 10, right to 59, and finally right to 97.

All hell breaks loose when you open the safe, and you enter a battle with a creature called Lost Number. Lost Number attacks with fairly powerful physical attacks, and much more powerful magical attacks. If you've got the Haste-all spell handy, cast it as soon as possible to get the drop in the speed department. It would also behoove you to poison Lost Number as early in the fight as you can, as the damage it deals over time can really begin to add up. You should be able to paralyze it for the first half of the fight (preferably using Seal Evil, as it is the most reliable means of doing so), but you should still be on guard. Because, you see, the first half of the fight is the easy part. About halfway through the fight, half of Lost Number will die. This will depend on which type of attack was last used on it. If the last attack was a magical attack, the physical side dies, leaving you to face the magical (red) side. However, if the last attack was a physical blow, the magical side will die, leaving the physical (purple) side behind. No matter which way you slice it, both sides on their own are menacing opponents. The magical attacks of the red side are far more powerful than before, and the physical attacks of the purple side are almost directly on par with them. However, the purple side also has a special attack, which does an extraordinary amount of damage, and is enough to kill one of your weaker characters in a single blow.

For several reasons, the red side is probably the easier side to deal with. For starters, the red side has powerful attacks, but at least does a consistent amount of damage (unlike the purple side, which will occasionally bust out with its badass attack). Secondly, you at least have some means of protecting yourself from the magical attacks of the red side (Elemental/Lightning), whereas your only defense from the purple side is to move all of your characters into the back row (which doesn't help as much as you'd think).

On a final note, your methods of attacking must change. The red side has a very high resistance to magic attacks, and the purple side can nary be hurt through physical means. Both sides are very strong, and will be pushing you constantly to limit breaks. And your limit breaks are, you guessed it, physical attacks, meaning that you'll likely want to be up against the red side. Also, by this point in the battle, you will probably be wanting to conserve your MP for healing purposes, anyways. If you have the E. Skill materia on hand, you



you should definitely seek out. They have two attacks you should be aware of. The first, Spaz Voice, will enrage the recipient. The second is called Magic Hammer, and would be a pain in the ass if they ever used it. Thankfully, they never do. But what this does mean is that you will have to manipulate them to learn it with your E. Skill materia. Another worthy fact about them is that unlike their cousins down at the Chocobo Ranch, their magical defense is no higher than that of anything else in the area. And since they have no real strengths or weaknesses, nail them with the attack of your choice. Lastly, there is a creature that hangs out only on the beaches of this area (and is the only creature that hangs out along them). It is known as the Adamantaimai, every spell-checker's worst nightmare. It has quite a bit of HP, more so than any other creature in the area, and this fact shall be amplified by not only its immunity to gravity magic, but also its tendency to cast Barrier and M-Barrier. Luckily, its attacks are weak and it always travels alone, so expect nothing more than a slightly longer battle than usual. Like the Razor Weed, the Adamantaimai is an enemy you might want to seek out due to its Death Force attack, learnable with the E. Skill materia. However, to have any hopes of learning it, you'll have to take the Manipulate materia along.

Anyways, you won't get very far until you enter a clearing. Yuffie comes running up to your party and proclaims that she knows the area very well. For some strange reason, your party begins to become very suspicious of her. Before you can get much out of her, you are ambushed by a couple of Shinra troops. "I swear! I had nothing to do with this one!" Yuffie exclaims, which sounds suspicious enough without her turning tail and running away, leaving you to deal with the Shinra troops on your own. These guys are more or less just souped-up versions of the Marine from the Shinra Boat, which you may recall using those annoying attacks that put your teammates to sleep? And guess what happens next. You laugh at the petty excuses for warriors and yawn as you reach for your E. Skill materia or some other doomsday attack. But just before you can yell, "eat Beta, ass!", your head turns and you come upon the painful realization that every last materia to your name is gone. Sure, Yuffie may be a thieving whore, but I have to hand it to her: that was the most amazing display of robbery I have ever seen in my life. One second she was talking to you, and then she left- she never even came into contact with you! Anyways, you're down to weapons only, but this fight still should not be too difficult. If it is at all hard for you, then you definitely have no business going through with the rest of this side quest at your current level of skill and/or intelligence.

Following the battle, the party determines that Yuffie headed north through the mountains. You must follow, but be extra careful as you do. All the monsters around here are far greater threats without your materia. You may wish to re-arrange your team at the moment to exclude characters like Aeris and Cait Sith. Red XIII, with his Seraph Comb (still a very powerful weapon at this point in the game), and Barret, with his fighting prowess, are two good characters to have on hand at this point. Vincent, for his limit breaks alone, is also a good guy to have handy, though this is more of a factor in the upcoming boss battle (later).

Make your way north and across a bridge built across a wide chasm. At the other side of the bridge, turn left and cross yet another bridge. Granted, its probably not the smartest idea to be crossing rickety rope bridges in the middle of nowhere that shake when you walk on them, but I'd walk the Earth for a Klondike bar... er, for my materia back. At the other side of this bridge, the road splits in two. Despite what you may think, turning north leads you to a dead-end, so rather turn south and head that way. The path ultimately curves left and brings you to another bridge across another chasm. From here, it's a long, but straightforward trek north to the mysterious kingdom of Wutai.

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--- Welcome to: Wutai

Holy crap, it's feudal Japan! You really don't have time to ponder much the existence of this backwoods nation in the technologically-advanced future, because the first thing you see upon entering town is Yuffie, who promptly runs away from you. It looks like you're going to have to run her down... the only way you know how. Check out the various buildings around here. The weapon shop (the building just left of the village entrance) appears to have no wares for the moment, possibly because the owner appears to be stoned out of his mind. The item shop is the building next to the village save point. And it, as you might expect, is a stop you'll definitely be wanting to make right now. Without materia, items will be your life-blood for a short time, so make sure that you are adequately supplied. Also note the Swift Bolts and Fire Veils on sale at the item shop. If you decide to pick up a few to assist you in the battles ahead, realize that a few is likely all you'll need, so refrain from wasting your cash on excess purchases (two or three of each should be sufficient). You might also notice the treasure chest in the item shop. You'll loot it and retrieve the MP Absorb materia, which is promptly stolen by Yuffie, who drops in out of nowhere and vanished again. You make no attempt to catch her during this, you just watch like the dumbass you are. At this rate, you could be here all week...

Anyways, continuing in your search for Yuffie, head to the local bar (that's the building in the lower-left corner of town). Of all the people you'd expect to run into... it's the Turks! Elena spots you and leaps from her chair, intent on hurting you for some reason. Seriously, by the way she's acting, it's as if her daily horoscope had told her that today she was going to kick something's ass hardcore. This theory was discounted, however, when I remembered that Elena can't read. Reno and Rude, on the other hand, are so crapfaced that they are making about as much sense as Elena would be if she were trying to explain Einstein's Theory of Relativity (and please bear in mind that this is a person that has difficulties explaining how a spoon works). But to make a long story short, the Turks are currently on vacation, and the last thing they're interested in right now is dealing with the likes of you (and also possibly because the last time you talked to them, you ended up wearing their asses as shoes).

Anyways, as a last resort, speak with the local villagers, who point you in the direction of Godo's house, located in the northwest section of town. Godo's house is the one on the right. That giant pagoda in the distance, for reasons mentioned in section VII.A. Of the FAQ, you'll may want to stay away from for the time being. Anyways, Godo has a pretty sweet pad, to say the least. You can make yourself at home in his guest room and have a nap, and there's also a hidden passageway in the eastern room, which leads to a treasure chest containing Red XIII's Hairpin. You'll find Godo taking a nap on the floor in his room. Talk to him to get more or less the same response you'd expect from someone that you just woke up after breaking into their homes. Given his grogginess, you'll have to talk to him a few times about Yuffie to get some answers out of him. He will continually deny knowing anyone by that name, but this is eventually disproved when Yuffie shows herself (apparently, she had been hiding here all this time) and begins to verbally abuse Godo. It becomes readily apparent that Godo and Yuffie are father and daughter, and even more apparent that Godo is more or less the leader of Wutai. Yuffie yells at him about letting the nation go to crap after the Shinra kicked their asses hardcore, and that at least your team has the balls to stand up to the Shinra. Sure, Godo may be a pussy, but can you really blame him for not wanting to take on a nation that consists of every other city in the world except for Cosmo Canyon? To put this into terms you can understand, the Shinra is like a tank,

and the technologically-backwards warriors of Wutai would be kind of like toothpicks launching themselves at the aforementioned tank in an honorable but pathetic attempt to destroy it. I mean, just look at the odds, here. Rufus has the largest and most powerful nation on earth, an industrial monopoly, and seemingly endless legions of biologically-altered soldiers. Godo has trees, a bratty daughter, and the way of the ninja. And if that's not one-sided, I don't know what is.

This whole display is almost interesting enough to make you forget the whole reason that you were here in the first place. Oh, yeah! That whore stole your materia, didn't she? And by the time that dawns on you, Yuffie is long gone and Godo is in the process of ejecting you from his home. You'll have to do some looking around to find Yuffie at this point, but it shouldn't be long before you find yourself inside the house just right of the village's entrance. As you enter, the owners look at you and begin to repeatedly refer to you and your teammates as "weirdos", which is quite rude, to say the least. But I imagine that barging into people's houses without being invited or even knocking is equally inconsiderate (and is in many cultures also considered to be weird). At any rate, you see that little, um, thing you change clothes behind? Guess who you find hiding behind it? The only problem is that the second you find Yuffie, she just runs away from you again. Which really begs the point: why even bother hunting her down if you're not going to make any attempt to apprehend her when you find her? Come to think of it, this is more or less the same crap that your team has been doing with Sephiroth for quite some now, so make of that what you will.

Yuffie's next hiding spot is a little more obvious. It's that giant clay jar by the bar that is rocking back and forth. As you approach it, your team splits up and seals off all of Yuffie's possible escape routes (unless, perhaps, she finds herself able to brave the foot-deep river that runs through the village... which we all know she won't). Cloud walks up to the jar, and instead of skewering the damn thing with his sword like he should, will begin to hit it repeatedly (you'll have to press the confirm button to make him do it). After a few this, the lid flies off, and Yuffie pops out. She tries to escape, but finds herself trapped. Reluctantly, she agrees to give you your materia back, and leads the team through the village...

Meanwhile, back at the bar, the plot thickens. As Reno and Rude continue to drink themselves into a stupor, and as Elena enjoys the pretty shiny lights bouncing off of her glass, a couple of Shinra troops walk into the bar, accompanied by a priest, a minister, and a rabbi. The troops announce to the Turks that they have found "him", and that they are requesting the Turks as backup. But Reno and Rude aren't about to get off their asses and help. Reno shoots back with an angry "...don't bother us! Just lookin' at you is makin' me sober!" Elena gets kind of pissy, and yells at them for not getting up and helping. Reno's words of wisdom on the subject are, "A pro isn't someone who sacrifices himself for his job. That's just a fool." This is coming from the guy who's job is to get his ass beaten by Cloud and company, by the way. Anyways, the troops depart in a huff, and Elena goes after them. Reno and Rude make no attempt to stop her, thinking maybe that she probably isn't going to get very far because her brain usually crashes when she tries to do two things (e.g., walking and talking) at once.

Back to Cloud and the gang. Yuffie leads you to her basement of mystery and such, and apologizes for her actions. She whines about Wutai, and almost begins to cry... saying that maybe if she had enough materia, she could fight to restore Wutai to its former glory. It's very touching, but Cloud, incapable of hu-man com-pass-ion, stoutly proclaims that he doesn't give a damn about Yuffie or Wutai and that he just wants his Goddamned materia back. With a sigh, she tells you that you will get all your materia back by pulling that mysteriously

unmarked lever on the left in the back of the room. But, then again, both levers do pretty much the same thing: drop a cage around your teammates while Yuffie laughs at you and runs away. That... little... whore... Free your teammates, and also make sure to read the banner on her wall before leaving, as it is one of the flyers mentioned in section V.A. of the FAQ.

You'll find Yuffie next at the house across the street from Godo's Pad. Walk up to the center of it and ring the giant gong, which is a magical gong that makes a hidden door appear on the side of the building. You'll enter into the secret door in just enough time to witness the abduction of Yuffie, however. Pursuing her captor, you find yourself face to face with... Don Corneo? Great, just what you need, a date rapist. Don Corneo does one of his sickening little dances and announces that he has come to Wutai in search of his unwilling bride. And not only does he have Yuffie within his grasp, it appears that he has also kidnapped Elena, also! Well, capturing Elena wasn't the most difficult task his henchmen have ever had to accomplish, and something tells me that they got the job done with little more than a piece of rope and a sign that read, "free pie!"

Anyways, chase the fat bastard through the place, until he finds himself surrounded by your team and a legion of Shinra troops. The Shinra troops rush towards Don, but the Don leaps out of the way, and the Shinra troops instead attack you. And you'd think that maybe after the tenth or eleventh blows had landed, the troops would maybe sit up and realize that they missed their intended target, but no such luck. You are forced to fight out the entire battle of the troops with Elena-like intelligence, and to be frank, I'm surprised that troops that stupid aren't being made to wear dunce caps. As for the battle itself, it is more or less identical to the battle you fought earlier against the same expendable jackasses, except that now you may wish to end the battle quickly with a Fire Veil or a Swift Bolt. But by the time the battle is over, the Don will be long gone. Goddammit, Shinra... with troops like that, I'm actually at this point rather surprised that they were able to defeat Wutai in the war.

Anyways, you'll emerge in Godo's house. Quickly head back to the streets, and you'll see the Reno and Rude running by. Stop them and talk to them. Reno makes it perfectly clear that he has no intentions of joining you, but for the moment he's willing to... not bother you in the common interests of your parties. He informs you that Don Corneo has absconded to "the place that stands out the most". Mayhaps he could be referring to the gigantic mountain behind Wutai? Indeed, he is. The path leading to the Da-Chao mountain range is to the right of the item shop. Head there quickly.

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--- Welcome to: The Da-Chao Mountain

Before heading to the Da-Chao mountains, consider stopping by the save point to add Vincent to your party. His transformation limit breaks will prove to be a valuable asset in the upcoming boss battle.

The Da-Chao mountain is something of a demented Mt. Rushmore, with Lincoln, Washington, Roosevelt, and Jefferson having been replaced by: (from left to right) man with fire on head, creepy fat guy in funny hat, midget making peace sign, and some constipated dude. Arrive on the mountain path to see Reno and Rude for some reason politely waiting for you to show up. They announce that they are splitting up, and that you can do whatever you want so long as you don't get in their way. They tell you not to endanger Elena and further than her grotesquely underdeveloped brain already does, and that they will in turn not harm Yuffie. Then they take off.

There are enemies scattered around the mountain path. They're not horribly difficult, but remember that you are currently fighting at a severe handicap. Returning from the fields outside Wutai, we have the Razor Weed and the Bizarre Bug. As for the new faces, there are a few here. The Jayjujaye is probably the biggest insult yet that the game has tossed us in the enemy name department, and that's saying quite a bit. They have the ability to confuse you, but very rarely use it. The attack they normally use just slows you down and nothing more, which isn't that bad at all. They are weak and easy to kill. Next on the agenda is the Foullander, who occasionally busts out with Flame Dance, which does damages your entire party at once. Attack them with either physical attacks or with the Bolt Plume, as they absorb fire magic (and thus the Fire Veil would really do you no good vs. them). Conversely, the Garuda is affected by fire magic, but absorbs lightning magic, instead. Their attacks are probably the worst of the bunch, as they cast Bolt 2, Ice 2, and Fire 2. They also have an attack which drains MP from you. While this may not piss you off due to the fact that you are currently not in need of MP, it may piss you off because it allows them to continue casting powerful magics on you.

To make a long story short, any Fire Veils or Bolt Plumes you bought should be used to make your trip up the mountain easier. And since the boss in question is barely affected by magical attacks at all, you need not worry about conserving them. To repeat myself, the Bolt Plume works on all enemies except the Garuda, and the Fire Veil works on everything except the Foullander.

The mountain path is fairly linear, and has no treasures to speak of. Reno and Rude split up and head down ever God damned dead-end path on the range, so if you see them, you know you're probably on the wrong track. From the foot of the mountain, head until the path forks up and right. Go up. This takes you around to an up/down fork in the path. You'll see a cave not too far up the path, but it is currently burning with some sort of eternal flame that makes it impossible to enter. Do make it a point to stop by and pick up the Dragoon Lance just inside, however. Also note that you can come back to this cave later in the game (for more information, refer to section V.L. of the FAQ). Anyways, take the path leading down. This takes you to where Don Corneo is currently standing. Also notice that Yuffie and Elena have been for some reason strapped to the eyes of that fat man's face carved into the side of the mountain.

I love the classic screams of "Let me go!" that come from the girls, as if they at this point actually expect this nut job to listen to them. Corneo, more or less oblivious to the fact that you are ready to kick his ass, begins hungrily deciding which girl he wants to have his way with, happily proclaiming, "I think I've found a new hobby!" Rape is not a hobby, you asshole. And in addition to being a date rapist, Don Corneo is also now a child molester in choosing Yuffie as his companion for the night. But don't blame Don. He's not a pedophile or anything; he just chose Yuffie because Elena's most prominent hole is the one in the back of her head.

Don also gets a bit pissy about you having kicked APS's ass back at Sector Five, so he calls in RAPPS to finish you off. RAPPS can be a difficult fight, especially given your lack of materia. Even with your magical items, you'll still want to go with physical attacks due to RAPPS's extremely high magical defense, however. And in the end, limit breaks are probably going to be what wins you the fight. Keep your HP up, however, as RAPPS has an extremely powerful wind-based magical attack called Aero 3, which can easily kill off someone in your party in a single casting if their HP is not well-tended to. Vincent can be a Godsend in this fight for the fact that not only does he get a big HP boost with his transformations, but also that he will likely be able to take on RAPPS single-handedly due to the offensive boost he will get from them, as well.



Following your squeaky-clean battle, Corneo pulls out his trump card. With a press of a button, Yuffie and Elena are turned upside down. He holds out a controller, proclaiming that, "If I press this button, they'll fall upside down, and we'll have a SQUASHED TOMATOES!" I don't like to think of this as a gross mistranslation; I like to think that Don Corneo has the grammatical capacity of a three year old. Reno and Rude show up at about this point, however, and start to kick Don Corneo's ass in style. Corneo falls off the side of the cliff and grabs on; Reno strides over to him, steps on his fingers, and then kicks him off after insulting him, Turk-style. This is the last you ever hear of Don Corneo, though I'm assuming that he attempted to molest whatever he landed next to.

Elena happily exclaims from the cliff that she knew Reno would come for her. Reno looks at her and says, "Elena, don't act so weak. You're a Turks!" God damn, whatever we're paying our translation staff, it's far too much. Reno also gets a call from headquarters at this point, with orders to hunt down Cloud and company. Cloud and the team look at Rude and Reno as the tension builds. Reno coolly asserts that the Turks are on vacation and walks away.

You'll end up back at Wutai, with Yuffie re-applying your materia to you. Of course, she screws up the placement, ruining any work you had already done with them. She also gives you the MP Absorb materia she may have earlier stolen from you. Yuffie is saved and your materia is back, and you'll find yourself outside Wutai. But the side-quest is far from over. For starters, you might want to head back into town and do some weapon shopping (apparently, the owner of said shop just got done making some new weapons, which despite the cultural differences are exactly identical to your weapons of choice). Also, next door to Yuffie's house is a house infested with cats. Go there now, and one of the cats will have moved, allowing you access to the upstairs, where you will find the HP Absorb materia. Lastly, if you have been keeping up with them throughout the game, you should by now have found all six flyers advertising for the Turtle's Paradise, so you should be able to go there now and claim your prize. If not, then refer to section V.A. of the FAQ for reference points as to any flyers you may have missed.

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--- Welcome to: The Pagoda of the Five Mighty Gods

This would be the final test of your skill in the Wutai side quest. You've got your materia back, but the battle is far from over. If you think you've got what it takes, then march Yuffie back into town to show these bastards what she's really made of. Before heading to the pagoda (located near Godo's house), however, you might want to stop by the item shop and purchase some Ethers and Hi-Potions, both of which will more than likely prove useful during the upcoming battles. You'll have five battles to fight, between which Yuffie has no real chance to stop and rest, but you can at least use items. That being said, march over to the pagoda.

Yuffie fights the feats of strength alone. For this reason, you'll want to give her the best equipment you have, and the choicest materia. E. Skill, for starters, can serve as several materia in one. Big Guard is a huge assistance, as it is Yuffie's protection and speed bonus in one (with emphasis on Yuffie's need for protection if you are attempting this at an early level). Beta or Aqualung, secondly, are two of the most powerful attacks you have at this point in the game, and will nail the opposition in no time. Lastly, E. Skill will not penalize Yuffie in the HP category at all, which is perhaps the biggest asset. Of course, a Restore materia is invaluable with Yuffie, as well, as you cannot entrust her well-being entirely to White Wind and items. Cure 2 will

prove useful, and Regen even more so if you know it. Lastly, Time can still serve a purpose with the Slow spell unlocked, as it makes an excellent follow-up to Big Guard. Attack-wise, Beta and Aqualung kick some serious ass, and can quickly end most of these fights (though, given the MP cost, you'll want to have a few Ethers on hand). Bolt 3, Ice 3, or Fire 3, all work much better, but the MP issue is even worse here than with Beta or Aqualung. The Throw materia is powerful, though dependent on whether you have any projectiles lying around. There's also Yuffie's limit breaks, which she will be constantly forced to during these battles. Greased Lightning is a passable attack, but it really helps to have acquired Bloodfest going into the pagoda. Anyways, materia-wise, fill in any remaining slots with spare HP Plus or MP Plus materia. Lastly, if you have the Earrings accessory, they can assist Yuffie's magical offense. If not, the Power Wrist is a nice fallback, but magical attacks are still the best you've got.

In addition to the above preparation, for the first fight, Yuffie may want to defend herself with the Elemental/Gravity combo in her armor, and may also wish to boost her offense with the Elemental/Choco/Mog combo in her weapon. However, this is the only fight of the five where her physical offense can really be boosted, and as it stands, the best attacks she can whip out during these next battles are, as I've stated above, all magical. If you do plan on going the physical route during the next battle, however, you'll probably also want to bring along the Destruct materia.

And when you're ready, battle Gorki, the ugly fat man on the first floor. For what it's worth, he is immune to the effects of gravity magic. He uses Barrier and attacks with Demi 2 and physical attacks. Even with Barrier, you can still do a decent amount of damage to him if you have the wind element on your side, but the proper magic is still far more powerful. A few castings of something like Beta or Aqualung, and Gorki will be your slave in no time. You'll win an X-Potion and access to the second floor of the Pagoda.

In preparation for the second fight, you may want to put the Added Effect/Choco/Mog or Time combo in Yuffie's weapon, as the next boss is extremely vulnerable to the effects of Stop. If you do not plan on using the Choco/Mog summon attack itself, then you may wish to instead go with Added Effect/Time (this can also be useful in that it nails him with Stop and Slow at the same time). Drop the Elemental/Gravity combo in her armor if it's there, and you're good to go.

Shake is, well, a kid. And you get to kick his ass. Shake is very fast, and attacks with a powerful attack called Rage Bomber. In addition to sending Yuffie into a state of fury, this is also a very powerful attack. The only type of magic that will not affect him, obviously, is gravity. He is vulnerable to the effects of Stop, and whichever way you have of inflicting it on him (either the Choco/Mog summon or a Stop-imbued weapon) should be your attack of choice. Do be aware that if this chosen method is attacking Shake with a weapon laced with Stop effects, then your accuracy will go down considerably following Rage Bomber, so strike early and strike fast. Once he's not moving, however, you'll probably want to bust out with Beta or something of the sort to end the fight in a few turns as with Gorki. You'll win a Turbo Ether following this fight, and advance to fight Chekhov on the third floor.

If you have the Jem Ring handy for the next fight, equip it. It is the only way you can prevent being paralyzed by Chekhov (who is more or less the same as the Twin Brain from Mt. Nibel). If not, don't sweat it. Drop the Added Effect materia and/or the Choco/Mog materia if you are equipped with either and again make sure that any spare slots left are filled up with any spare HP Plus or MP Plus materia. Then, advance to the third floor.

Checkhov will ask you for confirmation before you fight him. While both responses seem rather antagonistic (to me at least), only the response on top counts as a "yes". Then, the fight with Checkhov begins. If you know the Slow spell, open the battle with it. Checkhov is slow enough without being exposed to the Slow spell, and having been slowed down you will usually be able to shake off the paralysis he induces with his Stare Down attack before he gets a chance to move again. As always, Haste or Big Guard will compound the effects of the Slow spell, but for obvious reasons, Slow is the more important spell in this fight. But Barrier-side of the coin is extra important in this fight, as not only does it prevent damage to you, but it also lessens the amount of HP he gains with his Absorb attack. Following that, wail away at him with everything you've got (everything will work against Checkhov except for gravity magic), and it shouldn't take long to shut Checkhov down for good. You'll win an Ice Ring for this battle.

There's really no preparation for the next battle, except perhaps removing the Jem Ring if you equipped it during the last fight. And if you wanna win the next fight the really cheap way, make sure you have the E. Skill material firmly in place and your Lv. 4 Suicide attack ready to go.

Staniv is by far the cockiest boss in the pagoda, proclaiming that even though there are five stories, no one has ever advanced past the fourth. Staniv, sadly, is one of the easiest bosses here to take out. His attacks are not that powerful, and his only special attack doesn't do much besides inflicting sadness on Yuffie. Big Guard and Slow can help you out, as always. But following that, your strategy is pretty much the same: wail away on his ball and chain-wielding ass with powerful attacks like Beta, or anything else that isn't gravity magic. And as I alluded to in the paragraph above, if Staniv's cockiness decrees that me be immediately destroyed in some horrible fashion, Lv. 4 Suicide takes him down in no time flat, eliminating the need for any kind of "strategy". You get an Elixir for kicking Staniv's ass. Staniv is shocked, and he and the first three bosses all march up to the fifth level of the pagoda for the final showdown.

The fifth boss here at the pagoda is, as you might expect, the toughest of them all. However, if you know the Magic Hammer E. Skill, you can more or less eliminate 90% of the difficulty this fight has to offer by completely depriving this boss off its powerful offensive and defensive magic. Assuming this attack is present in your arsenal, expect an easy fight, and you can take the rest of the advice in this paragraph lightly, if at all. That being said, the boss in question uses a lot of powerful attacks, such as Demi 3, Trine, and Bio 2. He also occasionally busts out with Sleepel and Mini. Of all these attacks, by far the worst is Mini, as it is the only one you can't defend against simply by keeping your HP up, and it can make the fight much harder on you, by preventing any damage done by Yuffie's limit breaks or by any counter attacks. Thus, a protective accessory (which you probably don't have handy) or the Added Effect/Transform combo in Yuffie's armor is recommended (the Heal materia will also suffice if you have acquired Esuna). Also, much more so than the previous fights, you will stand to greatly benefit from poisoning the next boss, as you also will from having the Counter Attack materia handy. Lastly, if by some stretch of the imagination you have somehow earned Demi 3, then by all means take it into battle. If not, Laser or Demi 2 will work just fine in this fight. You're also going to need a super-powerful attack handy to bring the battle to an end (as this boss will keep healing himself as his HP starts to get low). If you have Bloodfest, then you're fine. If not, take along something else very powerful, like the Odin or Throw materia. Failing all of the above, I hope you have Magic Hammer, because if not, you're in for one hell of a long fight.

Oh, and one last thing I should mention is that the upcoming fight will mark one of the chances you get to learn the lost-forever enemy-skill, Trine, as



that it is located atop a mountain in the Cosmo Canyon area, and people in video games never learned how to climb mountains. The Ancient Forest itself is probably the most unique side quest in the game, and advancing through it involves clever and strategical manipulation of the environment around you (more on this shortly). You may access the Ancient Forest in one of two ways. This first, and earliest way to do this is to breed a mountain chocobo or better (refer to section IX. For more on chocobo breeding). The other way is to take out Ultimate WEAPON, who will plummet to the Earth after you kick his ass and create a huge crater where he lands, allowing you to reach the previously inaccessible Ancient Forest.

Before we go any further, let me issue a warning to those of you with customized control configurations (at least in the PSX version, anyways): the button that sends you back to the beginning of the Ancient Forest is the same no matter what. Because of this thoughtless programming, so players may find themselves inadvertently sending themselves back to the very beginning time and time again, which is very annoying to say the least. Take it from someone who has put more than one controller through the wall because of this place: do yourself a favor and resort to the standard controls for this stage.

With that said, let's go over the local monster activity. And maybe it's just me, but the monsters are especially obnoxious around here, merely because their interruption of your thought process can reach intolerable levels. The Rilfsak, above all else, is the most obnoxious creature here. Not that any of its attacks are that damaging, but physical attacks almost always miss, forcing you to take less-timely measures to get rid of them. Other than that, they are at least weak and easy to rid yourself of. The Epolnis, by any standard, is a pathetic enemy and easy to dispose of. You might steal a Wizard Bracelet from them to negate the high cost of purchase at Mideel, but otherwise, let's move on. We finally have the Diablo, which is again a creature of no noteworthy appeal. In short, the enemies here are about as generic as they come, but you'll still hate them, anyways.

Now, let's explore the basics of the area. It isn't horribly difficult to spot which items can be picked up and used somehow and which ones cannot. You press a button to pick something up, and a button to drop that item where you're standing. If you drop them in the right places, good things will happen. And you can only carry one item at a time. Possibly because you're likely already loaded down with 99 Tents, Hi-Potions, weapons, and full suits of armor. Flies can be used near the Venus-flytrap-type flowers to make them close up. Please bear in mind that when I say "Venus-Flytrap", I refer to the small hanging plant with a little hole atop it that, when closed up, will strangely be able to support your weight as you hop atop them and use them as stepping stones. However, you only have a short amount of time before they digest the fly and open back up. Frogs can also be used in this manner except that the Venus-flytrap will expel the frog rather than digesting it. Anything standing atop it (including yourself) will be launched upwards at a high velocity. Frogs, in this respect, can be used time and time again. You should note, however, that frogs eat flies, and will do so whenever placed close to one. Finally, there are significantly larger and eviler-looking plants that will clamp down on you if you attempt to walk past them (these man-eating evil plants are not to be confused with the aforementioned Venus-flytraps). They are evil, hurt very badly, and should be avoided. However, if you find a honeycomb, you can make it close up for good. This knowledge alone should be almost all you need to know to get through the Ancient Forest, but as always, the exact solutions are detailed below.

The first area is very simple. There are three flies and a frog lying around, but you'll really only be needing the flies. Grab all three flies and move them towards the three Venus flytraps hanging from the top of the screen

near the center of the area (don't actually place them inside the Venus-flytraps until you have all three moved over, else you won't have time to make it before it digests). With all three flies in hand, release them near the Venus-flytraps so they close up and form a bridge over to the far right side of the screen. Over there, you can approach the gigantic evil flower from the right and grab the Supershot ST (do be careful not to alarm it, however). Other than that, there's not much else to do here, but do be sure to grab the Spring Gun Clip lying near the edge of the path before advancing right and into the second area.

The next area is a bit more complicated, but not horribly difficult. A giant man-eating flower impedes your advancement eastward, and there's also a materia lying just inside it. Any and all attempts to grab it right now will end in pain and failure, but I'm not going to stop you from testing that theory a few times, if you feel like it. Once you've been eaten alive, grab one of the flies lying around and then walk towards that springy tongue-looking thing, which Cloud will jump up and grab onto upon command. It bounces and springs you onto a ledge where you'll see two of those Venus-flytraps, one open and one close. Use the fly to shut the closed one up, and hop across. On the other side, Cloud grabs another springy tongue-thing and rockets to the middle of the area. Over here, you'll see a frog and a ledge leading to two more Venus-flytraps (one on either side of the ledge). First, place the frog in the one on the left, hop on, and await launching. You will be rocketed onto a ledge containing a honeycomb, which can be used to shut up the giant man-eating flower and allow you access to the Slash-All materia. With that out of the way, pick the frog back up, place him in the other Venus-flytrap, and get yourself launched to the right side of the screen. From there, keep heading right and into the third area.

The third area is a bit more confusing than the last two, but still not too bad. The worst part is that you have to take it on in two parts, which can sort of jumble your thought process a bit. Lucky for you, the first part is very simple. Directly right from the start are two Venus-flytraps leading to another spongy-springy tongue thing. Grab two flies, use them on the Venus-flytraps, and grab onto the tongue. It launches you up into the treetops

There are a few things to do in the treetops. First things first, you may wish to make your way to the left, and then down one of the trees. This lands you back in the second area, but on a ledge where you can grab the Minerva Band. From there, you'll have to make your way back up into the treetops, and this time, head right. You will again reach a tree trunk which you can crawl down, but before you do, notice the spongy tongues located just to the right of that tree. Head up just a bit and jump onto them, as they will lead you to the Typhoon materia. Having collected it, return to the tree and climb down it (for some stupid reason, this is the only tree the game will allow you to climb down).

You'll emerge near the center of the third area next to a giant man-eating flower and a couple of flies. Grab a fly and use it on one of the Venus-flytraps to your right. Using it and the other Venus-flytrap next to it (it is already closed), hop up onto the ledge with the honeycomb on it. Use the honeycomb to shut up the man-eating flower, and then use the remaining fly on the Venus-flytrap just beyond that man-eating flower (the one hanging across the gap to your left). Back on the left side of the screen, grab a fly and place it near the tree with the hole in the side of it. If you placed it properly, a frog will leap out of the hole and devour the fly. Place this frog in the Venus-flytrap to your right, and stand there and wait (and be sure to be facing right, or else you will be ejected towards the left). Anyways, the Venus-flytrap will eject you and the frog, sending you both in that direction. After landing, go pick up the frog, and then use it on the Venus-flytrap on the right side of the screen (I refer to the one that you used to climb up towards



is dependent on whether or not you're already gone back to Midgar and had a final showdown with the Turks. If not, then you will find Reno and Rude loitering around here. Granted, the last fight you had with Rude must have been one of the most painfully easy battles you've ever thought (come to think of it, all of the Turk battles have been like that), Reno and Rude are significantly stronger this time around. But, on the other hand, they really don't pose much more of a threat than the powerful monsters hanging around the Gelnika. Their attacks are not too much more powerful, and the worst they have to offer is Reno's ability to confuse your teammates, something I strongly advise you protect yourself against. But, since you are already advised to be protecting your team against the effects of confusion whether or not you expect to do battle with Rude and Reno, there isn't much I can say along the lines of strategy except the usual, which has probably been so firmly implanted in your brain by now, I doubt I have to say anything. This is just sort of a heads-up to the upcoming fight, and also a reminder that you might want to bring along the Steal materia, as two things which may be stolen from this fight are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

Anyways, when you find the wrecked Gelnika, approach it and board it. Lucky for you, there seems to be an eternal amount of oxygen remaining in the non water-filled sections of the place, so don't worry about it. In the main room, you will see a chest containing the Heaven's Cloud, a save point, and two exits, leading up and to the left. After looting the chest and making use of the save point, you'll first want to head up.

In the upper room, you'll emerge on a catwalk. Just ahead of you, you'll see a chest containing the Conformer. To the right, there is a chest containing a Megalixir. There are also two items on the floor. One is the Double Cut materia, hidden in the upper-right corner of the floor (there is a glowing yellow light on the other side of the screen that resembles a materia and is meant to confuse you). You can also find the Escort Guard down here.

Back in the original room, head left. In the next room, you may or may not meet up with Rude and Reno of the Turks. They for some reason see fit to explain that this was a Gelnika loaded up with secret experimental weapons designed to take on Weapon. Ironically enough, the Gelnika was sunk by Weapon, meaning that they must have been pretty ineffective weapons. But assuming that the cargo would be the weapons in response, your party should be able to put them to good use. But first, you're going to have to fight Rude and Reno.

With those two out of the way, head on up into the cargo bay (the next room) and loot the place. You will find in this room the following objects: a Megalixir, the Spirit Lance, Outsider, Highwind, and the Hades materia. Having found all of these items, there is nothing left for you in the sunken Gelnika except for the monsters themselves.

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I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this

















more information on chocobo breeding). Approach the top waterfall from the mountainside and disembark just slightly to the left of it (there should be a small strip of parkable land surrounding the lake). Just behind this waterfall is the cave where Lucrecia awaits, but it isn't going to do you any good unless Vincent is with you when you go. This means that completing section V.D. of the FAQ is an additional prerequisite to this task.

Inside the crystalline cave, Vincent will see Lucrecia and run towards her, but she tells him to stop and not come any closer. Then, the scene flashes back to Nibelheim. You'll see several scientists approaching the Shinra Mansion, accompanied by a Turk. And that Turk... why yes, that's Vincent. Anyways, it's really no secret that Vincent had the hots for Lucrecia, and you'll see several cutscenes of Vincent talking to her. This is followed, of course, by a scene where Vincent watches Lucrecia in the arms of one of the scientists. And yes, I do believe that scientist is Dr. Hojo, which might explain why Vincent has this undying urge to kill him.

Further into the flashback, Lucrecia is slated to be the one to give birth to Sephiroth. Vincent, of course, protests this. Nobody, including Lucrecia, listens to him, though. "Why not? We're both scientists!" she replies. By "both", I assume that she's referring to herself and Hojo. Gast's only part in this whole business, apparently, was orchestrating it. It is interesting to note how Gast and Hojo actually once worked together, though. But, what Gast lacked in pure insanity, Hojo apparently made up for. This is demonstrated in a scene in the basement of the Shinra Mansion, where you'll see Vincent pleading with Hojo to please stop this madness. Hojo, tiring of Vincent's sanity, shoots him. Then, Hojo patches Vincent up and turns him into... well, whatever he is today. This means that the mad scientist who came up with that little game back at the Shinra Mansion was none other than Hojo himself. And admit it, when you think about it, it had to take a nut job like Hojo to do something like that. What exactly Hojo did to Vincent remains unsaid, but it's enough to make Vincent transform into monsters at will, so it must be pretty bad, at least.

Vincent, rather than being angry about the whole situation, accepts it as his punishment for failing to stop Hojo and Gast and allowing Sephiroth to be born and the woman he loved to suffer. Lucrecia tells Sephiroth that she came to this cave because she wanted to be alone. Truthfully, she wanted to crawl into a hole and die, but the Jenova cells within her wouldn't let her, so here she is, alive and alone. Lucrecia expresses her guilt about never having been a real mother to Sephiroth, which is something she should have actually expected from the very beginning, I suppose. She asks Vincent if Sephiroth is actually dead. Cloud steps forward to answer, but Vincent stops him. Then, he calmly replies that Sephiroth is indeed dead, and the scene ends.

You'll exit the cave with no real bonus to speak of. Those will have to be earned during your second trip there. Lucky for you, you can make that return trip any time you wish, providing that at least ten battles' worth of time has passed since your first visit. Return to the cave once more with Vincent in your party and approach the area where Lucrecia stood. Vincent will find the Death Penalty and Chaos, his ultimate weapon and limit break, respectively.

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L. Da-Chao Fire Cave















This is an easy one. Tifa asks you the next morning how you slept. "Next to you, who wouldn't?" may seem a little straightforward (and it really seems to catch Tifa off-guard), but it will raise her opinion of you. On the other hand, a reply of "Barret's snoring kept me up," for some reason will raise Barret's opinion of you. Again, if you're going for anyone other than Tifa, respond with, "Barret's snoring kept me up."

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Think that teaching Barret how to use materia will make him like you any better? You're dead wrong. It has no effect at all.

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When the train enters security lockdown mode, making it all the way to the front car will raise both Tifa's and Barret's opinion of you. Whether you're shooting for Tifa or for Barret, this is a good move.

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Cloud will end up dangling from a ledge. If he chooses to "be strong" about it, Barret's opinion will go up. On the other hand, if he says "he doesn't know if he can hang on", Tifa's opinion will go up at the expense of Barret's. To make a tired point, if you're aiming for anyone other than Tifa, be a man and be strong.

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Another interesting note, the conversation you have with Aeris in the church really has no effect on her one way or another, which is amusing, given some of the blatantly rude things you can say to her. However, the following scenario does have an effect on her (when you have to push the barrels to stop the Turks encroachment). Basically, the worse you screw up, the more detrimental effect it's going to have on Aeris's opinion of you. She gets mad when she has to do things like fend for herself, or when you act like an idiot and push the wrong barrel (the latter will really piss her off). Of course, do things right, and she'll like you even more. And hey, don't sweat it either way- Aeris has the highest initial affection rating for Cloud, so don't kick yourself if you screw this one up (just watch your step later).

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This is another easy one. Aeris asks you if Tifa is your girlfriend. Say yes, and obviously her opinion of you goes down (though it has no effect on Tifa's opinion of you). On the other hand, a reply of no will cause it to go up.

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When you make it to the playground at Sector Six, you're given the option of taking Aeris home or not. Don't worry, because no matter how you respond, she isn't going anywhere. Of course, if you don't even suggest taking her back, she's going to like you better.

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Ok, this one's really complicated. Don Corneo will choose either Cloud, Aeris, or Tifa as his... "date"... In the event that Tifa is chosen, you

will go to meet up with Aeris. Your response of "We've gotta help Tifa!" is taken as a blow to Aeris's opinion of you while asking her if she's all right will make her like you better. In the event that Aeris is chosen, it works exactly in the opposite manner, for some odd reason. Tifa actually will like you better if you respond with "We've gotta help Aeris!", and will for some reason like you less if you ask her if she's all right. Finally, if Cloud is chosen as the Don's date, you have the option to score some points with Barret. Tell the Don that there's "somebody else", and then finger that somebody else as Barret. Nothing else in this scenario has any effect on anyone's opinion of you, so go nuts. As for the best choices you can make? Obviously, if you're aiming for Barret, you're going to want to dress Cloud up all the way so that Corneo chooses him as a date. For Yuffie, make little attempt to dress Cloud up, and when Tifa is chosen as the Don's date, take advantage of the opportunity to piss Aeris off (as she has more affection for Cloud that needs to be destroyed than Tifa does). For Tifa or Aeris... all in all, it doesn't really matter. Tifa and Aeris both give you many opportunities to win their favor, so if you're aiming for a date with either of them, expect to win it by a long shot. So if you really want to see Don Corneo hit on Cloud, go for it. Or, if he chooses either Aeris or Tifa as his date, take the appropriate action. And have fun, you cross-dressing weirdo.

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When you land in the sewer beneath Sector Six, you've gotta go help both Aeris and Tifa to their feet. Whomever you go to first will have a higher opinion of you. If you're aiming for anyone other than Aeris, help Tifa first.

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Later, Marlene will hint as to whether or not Aeris likes you. This is another easy one, and the results of your response are obvious. "I don't know" raises Tifa's opinion of you while lowering Aeris's, and "Let's hope so" has the exact opposite effect. Either way, expect Marlene to call you stupid... brat... And it goes without saying that unless you're aiming for Aeris, you should choose the "I don't know" response.

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When you first meet Red XIII, you have to choose between Barret or Tifa to fight with you. Choose Tifa to fight with you, and Barret's opinion will go up. Choose Barret, and Tifa's opinion will go down. All in all, choosing Tifa is the best choice unless you're trying to get a date with Yuffie.

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After the battle mentioned above, your party splits up. Whomever you include in your party (Aeris, Tifa, or Barret) will have a higher opinion of you. Red XIII is a nice option to place in your party if you don't want anyone muscling in on your affection points. Then again, if you're shooting for Tifa or Aeris, there's very little harm in taking Barret along for the ride, as well. And if Yuffie or Barret is who you're shooting for, the best option you can take here is to take Barret and Red XII with you and send the girls off on their own.

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This's a big one, and can likely single-handedly make or break you. When you're in the jail cell with Tifa, she asks you if you can break out.



"Leave it to me," carries her favor and "kinda hard" lessens her opinion of you. The catch? You can do it as many times as you'd like, meaning right here, right now, you can completely destroy her reputation of you, or build it up as high as you'd like. The latter is a good option if Tifa is whom you're after, especially if you've gone and screwed up already and made a few wrong choices. The former is an excellent idea for anyone else. Take note that it is still possible to win a date with any character you'd like without exploiting this fact. Also take note that you can only destroy Tifa's opinion so much before it hits zero and isn't going to go down any further, and that there are still plenty of opportunities to bring it back up. The reverse holds true, as well.

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Still in jail, you're given the opportunity to wonder about how everyone else is doing. The first person you wonder about likes you a lot more, while the second person likes you a little bit more. The third person will have no adjustment to their opinion of you. If you're aiming for Barret, think about: Barret, Red XIII, then Aeris. For Aeris, reverse the order (Aeris, Red XIII, Barret). For Tifa or Yuffie, the best choice is: Red XIII, Barret, Aeris.

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When you leave Midgar, your party splits into two groups. The same rules apply here as when you did this earlier at Shinra H.Q. (see above) with one exception. There are a few options you'll get at Kalm (mentioned later) that can have positive or negative effects on whomever is with you at the time. Meaning that Barret and Red XIII are still the best characters to have on hand if you're aiming for Barret, but if it's Yuffie you're after, you'll want to take Tifa and Aeris along to take advantage of the opportunity to piss them both off

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When Barret tells you to get a move on, you get three possible replies. The one that carries his favor the most is "beautiful, just beautiful." Detrimental to his opinion of you is, "is that all?"

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At Kalm, there are two conversation options which will raise/lower the opinion of whomever is in your party, though they have the most pronounced effects on Barret. You're going to have to hunt down these people yourself, however- they don't just come up to you. Secondly, their affects are not cumulative, as with Tifa in the jail cell. The first is a woman who says that mako energy is convenient. Agreeing pisses your characters off while disagreeing makes them like you better. There's also a girl who says that maybe the old life was better. Agree to score some brownie points with your characters, or disagree to tick them off.

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This here's another common mistake, so it's worthy of mention. No matter how Cloud responds to Tifa during the flashback at Kalm, her opinion of him is not affected in any way, not matter what he says.

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During your first visit to Fort Condor, you have an other opportunity to

garner favor with or piss off whomever is in your party. It probably in your best interest to take along whoever you'd like to win favor with, as well as Red XIII. When you talk to the old guy inside, first agree to listen to his story, and then agree to help him. Both responses will have positive affects on whomever is in your party (especially Barret). Alternatively, replies of "not interested" at any time will have a detrimental effect.

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Here's another big one. It's when (and if) you meet Yuffie. You have to take a certain conversation path in order for her to join you (refer to section V.D of the FAQ for more information). For each correct response, her opinion of you goes up. Incorrect replies have no effect on her opinion of you, but you fail at getting her (and you need to try again). You can keep doing this over and over to raise her opinion of you. However, much like Tifa in the jail cell: don't get cocky. There's still plenty of room to screw up. And also much like Tifa in the jail cell, it's completely possible to win a date with Yuffie without resorting to this devious method.

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On the Shinra Boat, you'll learn something about Yuffie (if she has joined your group by this time). It seems that she takes to motion sickness quite easily. If you talk to her and either don't have a Tranquilizer handy, or you just won't give her one, her opinion of you goes down. It goes up if you give her one, though.

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On the Shinra Boat, Aeris asks you about the airship. Tell her that you'll take her someday, and she likes you better. The other response has the opposite effect.

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Also on the Shinra Boat, Tifa makes a comment about war. Your reply of "yeah..." raises her opinion of you while the other one will lower it.

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Have fun in Costa Del Sol and Mt. Corel. Nothing you do in either place, despite what you may think, has any effect on anyone's opinion of you.

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At the Gold Saucer, the character you choose to accompany you will have a higher opinion of you. Choose the appropriate character, or Red XIII if it's Barret you want to date.

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Whomever you choose to accompany you and Barret to go see Dyne will have a higher opinion of you. Choose whomever is appropriate, again Red XIII or Cait Sith if it's Barret you want to date. Note that Aeris's boost in her opinion of you if you choose her is substantial.

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In Gongaga, you've got yet another opportunity to either score some points



like. There are two basic ways the play can end, either with you vanquishing the Evil Dragon King and everyone living happily ever after, or by you screwing the play up. This, in turn, will make Aeris mad. She will then slap Cloud and then kick the crap out of the Evil Dragon King. Amusing, to say the least. Whichever you would like to go for is completely up to you, and thankfully, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to predict which of the lines given to you will lead to which result. That being said, there are a few different ways you can go with your lines, but there's actually very little to be seen in the means of variety. The only interesting thing to do is to talk to the knight and ask him to defeat the Evil Dragon King. He tries. And he gets the crap beaten out of himself. It's funny. Also note that once the knight has gotten his stupid ass killed, you still have time to obtain either the "good" or "bad" endings to the play. With the play over, Aeris decides that she is next going to take you on the Gondola at the Round Square. Romantic music plays and you are treated to a visual feast of sights and fireworks. A short while into the ride, Aeris begins talking. She mentions how eerie it is how you and her ex-boyfriend look, walk, act, and talk so much alike. But things are different with you, she says. As the camera zooms out, the conversation hits a higher note. Aeris tells Cloud that she's searching for him... and that she'd like to "meet" him. I'm sure we all know what she's trying to say. Hell, anyone with an intelligence level higher than that of a stapler knows what she's trying to say. Cloud just doesn't get it, though, and the date comes to a bit of an anti-climatic end with Aeris promising to take Cloud out again sometime.

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The date with Tifa, for those of you that fancy her, is the best of all the dates. While the date with Aeris fit very well with the plot, and more than likely made a lot of you horny, note that Tifa's date works just as well. It's just that it steers the plot in a more Tifa-related direction (and if you've gone and earned the date with Tifa, it's kinda obvious who you're more interested in, anyways). You see, rather than focusing on the sexual tension that exists between Aeris and Cloud, Tifa's date instead gives us a look into Tifa's mind, which is very intriguing in conjunction with the game's plot as a whole. On that note, the date with Tifa is, in my opinion, the most heart-warming of them all, if not purely for the way it unfolds. Tifa shows up at Cloud's room, claiming that she thought had about what she was going to say, but that it's kind of embarrassing. Rather, she decides to sneak off with Cloud and spend some time with him. And she's not taking "no" for an answer. You'll end up in the Event Square, where you will be again declared to be the 100th couple of the night and forced into starring as the leads in the show. The play itself works in the same way as it did when Aeris was with you. But, I suppose it couldn't hurt to go over the details again. Should you find yourself with the overwhelming desire to screw the play up (a temptation that is indeed difficult to resist), go for it. This is because your actions during the play will have no bearing on what happens during the rest of your date, so do what you like. There are two basic ways the play can end, either with you vanquishing the Evil Dragon King and everyone living happily ever after, or by you screwing the play up. This, in turn, will make Tifa mad. She will then slap Cloud and then kick the crap out of the Evil Dragon King. Amusing, to say the least. Whichever you would like to go for is completely up to you, and thankfully, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to predict which of the lines given to you will lead to which result. That being said, there are a few different ways you can go with your lines, but there's actually very little to be seen in the means of variety. The only interesting thing to do is to talk to the knight and ask him to defeat the Evil Dragon King. He tries. And he gets the crap beaten out of himself. It's funny. Also note that once the knight has gotten his

stupid ass killed, you still have time to obtain either the "good" or "bad" endings to the play. Anyways, Tifa then drags you onto the gondola at the Round Square, and the two of you take in the wondrous sights of the Gold Saucer together. Near the end of the ride, Tifa finally brings herself to say what she's been meaning to say. She says that she's just going to come right out and say it, and begins by saying how it's hard being old friends. "I mean, timing is everything" she says. I think we can all guess what it is that she's trying to say, but she doesn't say it. She just goes silent and freezes as the ride ends. The date ends as the two of you get off the gondola and Cloud asks Tifa what it is that she was going to say. She just says "nothing" and then makes a comment about how late it's getting. Nice cover, Tifa.

---

The date with Yuffie has to be one of my favorites, probably because during the entire thing I couldn't get the words "statutory rape" out of my mind. It's sweet and innocent, yet completely repulsive at the same time. Yuffie shows up at Cloud's room and gets right to the point: she wants him to keep her company for the night. Before he can object, she's behind him shoving him out the door. At the Event Square, it's the same deal as before. You are the 100th couple of the night, and get to star as the leads in the show. The show works in the exact same way as it did in the dates with Aeris and Tifa. At the risk of sounding repetitive, should you find yourself with the overwhelming desire to screw the play up (a temptation that is indeed difficult to resist), go for it. This is because your actions during the play will have no bearing on what happens during the rest of your date, so do what you like. There are two basic ways the play can end, either with you vanquishing the Evil Dragon King and everyone living happily ever after, or by you screwing the play up. This, in turn, will make Yuffie mad. She will then slap Cloud and then kick the crap out of the Evil Dragon King. Amusing, to say the least. Whichever you would like to go for is completely up to you, and thankfully, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to predict which of the lines given to you will lead to which result. That being said, there are a few different ways you can go with your lines, but there's actually very little to be seen in the means of variety. The only interesting thing to do is to talk to the knight and ask him to defeat the Evil Dragon King. He tries. And he gets the crap beaten out of himself. It's funny. Also note that once the knight has gotten his stupid ass killed, you still have time to obtain either the "good" or "bad" endings to the play. Anyways, on to the Round Square next, and the two of you get on. Yuffie spends most of the ride hanging over the back of her seat and staring out the back window at the sights of the Gold Saucer. Finally, she gathers up some courage, walks over to Cloud, kisses him on the cheek, and sits back down. Cloud goes silent. Completely silent. And Yuffie is mortified, not to mention completely embarrassed. As the date draws to a close, she keeps telling Cloud to please say something... anything to break the awkward silence. Cloud finally responds with "...something", and Yuffie promptly slaps him. She ends the date by musing that tonight she is going to sleep well, and you can derive from that statement whatever you'd like.

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And finally, the moment you've all been waiting for, the date with Barret. Jesus, this one is funny. It's actually even funnier if you've earned at least one of the other dates before, because you'll know what events take place during the date, and consequently why your entire evening with Barret is more or less one big gay joke in disguise. He shows up at Cloud's room, saying that he feels like going for a walk. Cloud's like, "What, just the



At the forefront of the bottom floor of the Wonder Square is the Arm Wrestling machine. Basically, you pay 100 gil and choose between two difficulty levels: the wrestler (easy) or the sumo wrestler (hard). To win, just rapidly mash the assigned button. If you mash fast enough, you win, and will get 1 GP (from the wrestler) or 2 GP (from the sumo wrestler). It's not a horribly effective way to win GP, but it is nice practice in button-mashing.

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The Super Dunk is a basketball game in the bottom right corner of the first floor at the Wonder Square. It's all a practice in timing. You hold the button down and release after you've built up enough power. Let go too early, and you fall short. Too late, and you throw the ball too hard. Your GP reward goes up by 1 with each shot you make, until you reach 10 GP. Past that, each successful basket doubles the payoff amount. If you've got the skill, this is actually the absolute fastest way to earn GP here at the Gold Saucer. However, those without the skill should avoid this game, or at least limit its use to practice in good timing, because you lose the game whenever you miss a basket, and it costs you 200 gil a pop. And especially early in the game, this can become a serious gil drain if you're not paying any attention to how much you're spending here.

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The Wonder Catcher, located in the back left of the first floor, is kind of like those crooked skill cranes you see at most arcades, except that there's absolutely no skill involved. Rather, you simply deposit 100 gil into it and wait for it to spit out your reward, which will either be a small amount of GP, a Potion, or nothing at all. A similar effect can be achieved by flushing your gil down the toilet, only the latter has a higher innate entertainment value. Note that there is a very small chance you might actually win something worthwhile (75 GP), but that's roughly the same chance as winning the lottery in real life, and not nearly as satisfying in the long run.

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The Fortune Teller (located on the left side of the second floor), isn't really a game. Rather, you pay it 50 gil to get a fortune. It's a more accurate future-prediction device than Cait Sith is, but so is that oil stain in my driveway. Either way, it is useful for mild entertainment purposes only, and you will continue to get the same fortune through subsequent uses unless you leave the Wonder Square and come back.

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The 3D Battler is that giant machine in the middle of the second floor. It looks really complicated at first, until you realize that it's nothing more than a glorified version of "Rock, Paper, Scissors", with the rock, paper, and scissors being replaced (respectively) by Lower, Upper, and Middle body attacks. You may be surprised that a game such as this can have difficulty levels, but it does. Your first battle will be with a fairly easy to kill opponent, and the first person to take 10 hits will lose. If you win, you advance to the next opponent with a clean slate. On the negative side of things, the only real rewards to speak of in this game are 2 GP for advancing to the third opponent, and a supposed 20 GP from making it to the fourth. Not to mention that it's a real crushing blow to your









least one of them to hell. As you leave the ghost-filled area, your score (assuming that you are shooting for 5,000 points), should be somewhere in the vicinity of 160-240. Any less than 160, and you'll be having some tougher times ahead, but there's still plenty of room to catch back up. Any higher than 240, and you're doing excellent thus far, but don't get too cocky, because there's still plenty of room to screw up.

Just as you either hit or missed the last of the ghosts, you should see some vines in the distance. They will move out of the way as you approach, but you can get a head start by shooting through the vines at two cacti, both kissing the right edge of the opening. There's actually a third there that you won't be able to hit until after you've crossed through the opening, but since they're worth less points than the planes you'll be seeing, the planes should take priority. As you coast through the opened vines into the desert-themed area, keep your crosshairs near the lower right side of your screen, as an airplane will soon be cruising in for you to hit. However, hit it quickly, as a second plane will be flying in right above it, and it makes for another easy hit if you can get to it in time. You'll see a plane flying in the distance to your left, but it's very hard to hit, not to mention probably not worth it. Keep your crosshairs near the upper right corner of the screen, and you should be able to blast two cacti that you will be soon approaching. No sooner will you plug those cacti, when four planes will almost simultaneously barrage the screen, coming alternately from the upper right and lower left sections of the screen. Don't get flustered, just try your best to at least get one or two, as blasting three or all four out of the sky is damn near impossible. Directly following this, a giant rock will plop down in the middle of the screen with a cactus atop it. Hit the cactus, and then move your crosshairs down in order to pick off an approaching plane from the bottom right of the screen. Directly after hitting that plane, scroll upwards with your fire to nail two more planes flying in from the upper left. Your coaster continues, and you'll get two more easy shots on the upper left hand side of your screen. You'll have little time to react after blasting them, because you'll also be wanting to try to nab the third plane which comes flying in from the upper right. Again, with little time to react, a fourth bogey flies in from the upper left corner and makes for an easy kill. After shooting that thing, focus your efforts on the back edge of the canyon. If you've got good eyes, you should notice a yellow boulder back there, which you should be able to hit for a hefty 200 point bonus. As an added easter egg, yet another plane should cross your path shortly after you have been gunning for the boulder (assuming you haven't wildly moved the crosshairs out of the way after hitting it), and make for yet another easy shot. At about this point, your score (again assuming that you're going for 5,000 points) should be somewhere in the neighborhood of 1000-1100 points. Any lower, and you can still make it, but you're really going to have to get your crap together in the next few areas. Any higher, and you're crapping in high cotton, but don't get cocky just yet.

Keep your crosshairs on the left as you move- there'll be two more planes approaching from the upper left for you to shoot down (you should be able to get at least one, at any rate). Directly following that, if you've got good enough reflexes, you might be able to blast the third plane that will be making its approach from the right, but your window of opportunity is very short, and you may not be able to hit it in time. Very shortly thereafter, two more planes approach from the right, and you should be able to nail at least one of them. What appears to be two cute scud missiles will fly over the track right in front of you following this, but you likely won't be able to hit either. You'll continue for a short distance along the tracks and see a yellow missile flying around. Don't try to shoot for it, just move your crosshairs to the left. The missile will fly around, and if your crosshairs are anywhere near the left side of the screen, fly right into your line of fire. You'll continue on the tracks for a bit, but expect to see, in quick succession, two more of the yellow

missiles pop up from underneath the tracks, from the right and left, respectively. Again, these are two easy shots to make, if you're prepared for them. Directly following them, shooting stars begin to fall. They move very slow, and it will be easy to shoot the first two you see appear on the upper left corner of the screen, and then in the middle. However, several will fall on the right side of the screen after this. You should be able to shoot every star except one of the first of the bunch, which will fall from the top right hand side of the screen to the center of the screen. Somehow managing to shoot that one star in addition to the rest that fall would take some sort of miracle of dexterity that even I could not conjure. If you're keeping a running tally on your score, expect it to be about 1600-1700 right now. Any less, and you have just about lost any hope of scoring 5,000 points. Any higher, and you're doing mighty fine.

Then, your roller coaster will nosedive into an icicle-filled cavern. The cavern is a confusing mess of icicles that crash from the ceiling. They drop very fast, and your window of opportunity to hit them is very short. You will not be able to get all of them, but a good player can blast the majority of them. A common mistake is to move your crosshairs all about through the mess and attempt to blast at the icicles. This is a bad idea, and will more than likely result in very few points for you. The graphics do a poor job of revealing this fact (on purpose, I imagine), but the majority of the icicles are hanging almost directly above the tracks. Thus, when you shoot, it would behoove to shoot directly ahead of you on the tracks. It helps, actually, not to even look at the icicles as you shoot, as they often prove to be a confusing mess of ice that will cause you to misfire. Just keep your eyes on the track as you fire. Exiting the cavern, expect a score of around 2200-2300. It is almost impossible at this point to catch up from too much lower than this. A higher score will be a great safety net if you happen to do bad in the next few areas.

Keep your guns low as you enter the next area. This is going to be another one of those areas that messes with your head, so watch out. You'll see bunches of colorful balloons slowly floating up from the bottom of the screen, but since there's so many of them to be shot, their super-slow movement will be cancelled out. You should be able to shoot most, if not all of them. However, a super-fast-moving UFO shoots into the area in quick little bursts. Ignore it while you gun for the balloons first. Because guess what happens when you try to train your gun on something moving in rapid, short bursts? That's right, it moves out of your way before you can shoot it. If you're going to nail it, it's going to have to meander right into your gunfire, and it might as well do that while you're shooting down all of the balloons near it. Also note the big balloon, which is worth more points. A few more tiny UFO's follow after this, and the same rules apply to them, as well. Hitting them is all a matter of luck, and you're probably just best off firing directly ahead of you and hoping that one or two of them don't know how to steer clear of a laser beam. Watch out for a slow moving pink missile that will move in from the upper left corner of the screen at this point. You see, the (remaining) UFO's' fast rate of movement are creating an optical illusion of chaos. If you can see past them for a moment, the pink missile should be a really easy shot. Following this, three more pink missiles move in. The first from the lower left corner of the screen, the next two from the lower right. Keep your sights low, and two out of three isn't a hard task to accomplish. Another pink missile appears shortly thereafter, and with the distracting UFO's gone, should be an easy kill. Raise your sights a bit and focus them directly ahead of you on the track- two pink missiles will hop the track very quickly ahead of you, and are very hard to hit. If you can hit them, however, more power to you (and you might as well try, you know). Leaving this area, your score should be dancing in the area of 3200-3300. As if it needed repeating, being any lower than this and you can kiss 5,000 points goodbye, and any higher is a marvelous thing.

The coaster rapidly descends into the fiery pits below, which makes for some very confusing action. There are only a few lava rocks here which can be shot, and they flash all over and at random places on the screen. As you descend into the area, keep your crosshairs in the far upper left corner of the screen and watch for a few dark red lava rocks. With any luck, you'll hit one. After the screen wildly thrashes you about a bit, your next opportunity will occur directly on the track in front of you, so train your sights there and fire away. As you exit the lava area, focus your efforts on the right side of the screen, where two helicopters will appear. If you're good, you'll nail both. Quickly switch to the left hand side of the screen and take down two more helicopters. As the two helicopters on the left arrive, one will also be arriving on the right. By the time you've shot them down, another will have appeared on the right. Switch back to the right and you should be able to at least shoot down the most recent helicopter, and if you're really on the ball, you'll get the second one, as well. Also note that two more helicopters appear in the distance on the right hand side, and both make for easy final kills to round out this area. Note that if you do not have at least 3,700 points leaving this area, there is virtually no hope of you scoring 5,000 points. If you have just about anything higher, then your victory is just about in the bag.

You'll now come face to face with the big UFO. It sits there and floats menacingly in front of you for a few moments while you shoot at it. Most players make the mistake of rapidly pounding the fire button at the thing so fast that they punch a hole in the Goddamn controller, but also realize that repeated sustained shots work just as well on the big UFO. Just don't let the gun's power fall out of the green, and you'll be fine. Also note that the UFO fades away and reappears once during the shootout. You can't damage it for a brief period when it's faded, so use this small timeframe to recharge your gun/rest your hand. Your bonus for destroying the big UFO? 1,000 points. And believe me, unless you're God, there's no way you're going to be scoring 5,000 points without that bonus.

The rollercoaster ride picks back up following this. Keep your gun trained on the upper right hand corner of the screen, as your final three targets (all varying sorts of planes) all appear shortly from the upper right hand corner. It is fairly easy to shoot down one, or maybe even two of them. Getting all three is very difficult, which is why there was little hope of you climbing back up from a score of less than 3,700 points. Now, I understand my math is a bit suspect, but that is because there is also a final 200 point bonus to be grabbed. As the roller coaster rolls back towards the base, aim your gun at the absolute bottom left hand corner. As your coaster makes the final right turn, start firing. You will shoot out one of the spotlights, thus nabbing your final 200 point bonus. And that, my friend, is how you earn 5,000 points at the Speed Square. Let's move on to your prize!

There are two special prizes you may win for your score of 5,000 points in the Speed Square. The first is the ~Parasol, a weapon for Aeris. This can be won only during Disc 1. The second is the ~Flayer, a weapon for Cid. It, in turn, can be earned only during Disc 2 or Disc 3. No additional copies of either item may be won, so don't waste your time trying. Thank you, and good night.

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Section VIII: The Gold Saucer

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

Section VIII: The Gold Saucer
G. The Battle Square

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

Section VIII: The Gold Saucer
H. Odds & Ends of the Gold Saucer

And now, a few assorted tidbits of miscellaneous Gold Sauce info that didn't fit anywhere else in this section:

Think of GP as "Gold Saucer Money", that can only be earned and spent at the Gold Saucer. GP can be earned either through a variety of the games at the Wonder Square (see sections VIII.A and VIII.B of the FAQ), Chocobo Racing (see section VIII.F. of the FAQ), or via the "GP Man" (see below). The main use of GP is that some attractions (the Speed Square and the Battle Square) charge GP for admission. However, GP has other uses around the Gold Saucer, as well, as listed below.

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A lady at the Wonder Square offers prizes in exchange for your GP. You know, kind of like how arcades give you prizes in exchange for tickets? The only difference, of course, is instead of cheap crap, you can purchase battle accessories (this practice was outlawed in real life some years ago when a group of misguided liberals shut one certain arcade down for rewarding a six year-old boy with a bayonet). Most of the prizes here suck, however, and can be found much, much more cheaply elsewhere. The two items that you can buy exclusively here are the mystery prizes for 1,000 and 2,000 GP each (the Gil Plus materia and the Exp Plus materia, respectively). Note



Catching chocobos is really the least of your concerns, and is something you can get out of your way very quickly. Beforehand, you'll be needing to purchase you a few stables at the Chocobo Ranch (something that cannot be done until you have reached at least section III.H. of the walkthrough). Go talk to Chocobo Bill, who begins a very long-winded speech about how we're all going to die a horrible fiery death and how things suck so badly, so why not raise a chocobo? Hell, he can even rent you the stables at the cost of an arm and a leg each! At least four are recommended, though you'll probably want to go ahead and nab all six. Money really shouldn't be much of an issue to you at this point, and if it is, I strongly advise against chocobo breeding for now (as feeding these little bastards is going to run you a pretty penny, indeed). Also, if by some stretch of the imagination you didn't buy it earlier, you'll also be needing the Chocobo Lure materia from Chocobo Billy.

And, assuming you went and sold the Chocobo Lure materia like I told you not to several times already in this FAQ, then you can find a second one hidden on the ground to the right of the screen outside the Chocobo Ranch, next to the fence. If your stupid ass goes and sells that one, then I'm not helping your brain-damaged ass anymore. Use a Gameshark or start over.

Anyways, now it's time to fill out your shopping list. You'll first and foremost be needing a "good" chocobo and a "great" chocobo. In some versions of FF7, two greats will work, but to be on the safe side, just stick with the plan (unless you happen to know that two greats will work on your particular copy, then go nuts). The great ones can be found around the chocobo tracks near Mideel. They'll appear to you in fights alongside Spirals, so those'll be the ones you'll be wanting to capture. You may wish to have a cheap green along to feed to the chocobo in battle so that it does not run away. But given the point you are at in the game, it should not be overly difficult to quickly dispense of the enemies surrounding it. Just be sure not to use any attacks that target everyone, because I've found that chocobos tend to become somewhat pissy after having their asses kicked (though, interestingly enough, they cannot be killed by any means).

After winning the battle, you'll find yourself on top of the chocobo. Disembark, and the game asks you if you want to set it free, or send it back to the Chocobo Ranch. I don't know how in the ten thousand hells of the great Lord Chaos it happens, but if you opt to send it back to the Chocobo Ranch, the chocobo will just run off into the distance and end up there without any outside assistance whatsoever. Never mind the fact that it has no idea where it's "supposed" to go, has to cross oceans and mountains to get there, and probably doesn't want to go there, anyways... Jesus, that's a mind bender.

The good ones can be found near the Gold Saucer area. You'll probably have to capture a few before one turns up "good", though. You'll know it's good because Chocobo Billy will tell you that it's a good chocobo. But before heading back to the Chocobo Ranch, you might wanna go ahead and read the next paragraph. Useful info and such.

Now, as you might expect, these two chocobos will have to be male and female (sadly, you are not allowed to introduce your chocobos to the joys of homoeroticism, and that would just prove fruitless, anyways.) However, the chocobo's sex is not determined until you actually get back to the ranch. Meaning that all you have to do is save before you go there, and two chocobos will be all you need at this time. Go speak with Chocobo Billy about "moving chocobos", and he'll help you sort through your "inbox" of chocobos and either move them into the stables, or give them the boot. You can tell which chocobos are "great", because Chocobo Billy will comment, in no uncertain terms, that "this is a great chocobo!" As for the gender, need I repeat that you'll be





materia. By this point in the game, you should have several mastered, and several more on the way, so you probably wouldn't mind parting with a few.

And, in the interests of saving your time and sanity, you're probably going to just want to feed your choccos Sylkis Greens and be done with it. The three chocobos that you have captured all stand to benefit from a full 99 Sylkis Greens each. However, each subsequent chocobo (that is, any chocobo that you breed yourself), will not see any real benefits past 25 Sylkis Greens. "Skimping", if you're really that hard up for cash, is something you can get by with, but I strongly recommend you read the paragraph below if you plan on doing so. Even if you do not plan on skimping, you may find useful information down there, but it's not really necessary for you to know.

Let me take a minute to discuss the three stats themselves for a second. Intelligence is the absolute least of your worries, and is the easiest stat to max out. Furthermore, it is one that can (and should) be maxed out with your original chocobo, and thus will be something you need not worry about for any future generations. Stamina is the most difficult stat to max out, requiring the most amount of greens for your buck, but again is something that can be maxed out with your original chocobo, and again be passed down to every future generation. If you find yourself skimping on the greens, this is the stat that will suffer (which isn't much of a bad thing, as the problem should alleviate itself within a couple of adequately-fed generations). Just be aware that racing is already going to be hard enough for your first generation of chocobos, and denying them their stamina is just going to make things more difficult on you, which is precisely why I do not recommend skimping. Lastly, speed is the one stat that should be of your utmost concern. It is not as difficult to raise as stamina, and you should make every effort to raise this stat as high as possible for your current chocobo. Unlike intelligence and stamina, however, the limit on a chocobo's speed will constantly be rising as you breed further generations of chocobos, which alone is what necessitates that you feed those generations, as well (as opposed to starving them, I suppose).

Anyways, do remember where the Chocobo Sage lives (a small secluded hut nestled into a snowy mountain valley), 'cause you'll be making several trips out to see him during the course of your chocobo-breeding career. Yes, it's very annoying how you can't carry more than 99 Sylkis Greens at once, but at least be glad that you have the superhuman strength mobility to haul around all that crap in the first place and still have the mobility to function effectively in battle.

To move the greens from your backpack to the chocobo's mouths, speak with Chocobo Billy. And that, my friend, is all that can be said on the subject.

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Well, before you go about breeding your chocobos, you've gotta train 'em first. Training them has very positive effects on the abilities of the offspring, or, depending on how you want to look at it, neglecting to train them will generally have a poor effect on the offspring of said chocobo. Besides,

the most beneficial part of racing your chocobos doesn't come in the form of statistical bonuses, anyways (though they certainly don't hurt). The true benefit of racing your chocobos is for the fun prizes offered by the Chocobo Square management. The Chocobo Square suffers from more or less the same issues as the other branches of the Gold Saucer in that rather than offering cute stuffed animals or other fun novelties as prizes, they instead hand out weapons of mass destruction to the holders of winning tickets. It's like something you would expect to find in Iraq, except that there is little to no danger of your chocobo being blown up by a land mine as it races.

But, to make along story short, there's a lot of stuff you can win at the Chocobo Square, but very little of it is stuff exclusive to the place. And a lot of it is probably stuff you will deem worthless. This is good, because you are always given the option of exchanging your prizes for GP, and even the most worthless prize has a very nice GP value. This also makes the Chocobo Square by far the best place in the game to earn GP (which in turn will help you obtain the Gil Plus and Exp. Plus materia, not to mention all of those lovely prizes at the Battle Square). That being said, do keep an eye out for stuff you can earn at the Chocobo Square exclusively. This includes the Enemy Away and Sneak Attack materia. There are also several rare items that can be discovered elsewhere, but the only way to obtain further copies is through chocobo racing. These prizes include the Magic Counter materia, Counter Attack materia, Cat's Bell, Sprint Shoes, Precious Watch, and the Megalixir. If I haven't mentioned your prize anywhere on this list, take the item over the GP at your own risk and discretion.

As I mentioned in another section, it's generally a far better idea to rely on chocobo racing to earn the prizes here than it is to purchase tickets. This is because, with your own chocobo, you're at the very least almost guaranteed to win (I'd really rather not get into it about odds and probabilities past that point). Suffice it to say that there are three different possible prizes for each race, and the prize offered is dependent on the top two placing chocobos. This means that regardless of how you fare, your odds for winning the "rare" prize for each race is still the same ("rare" in this case meaning probably the only item you won't want to chunk in favor of GP, though you'll still likely want to do that half the time, anyways). Another thing I should mention is that everything I listed in the above paragraph will be obtainable only as rare prizes, and on top of that all appear as prizes rarely to begin with (you'll find that the rare prize is usually just an Elixir or a Turbo Ether). So, while the odds of winning a "rare" prize for any given race are 1 in 5, this is also assuming that the rare prize for that race is something you're after. And when you consider how rarely the Sneak Attack materia, for instance, actually shows up as a potential prize, your odds of winning it are actually much lower than you thought. So, I hope you've got some patience about you (or failing that, a Gameshark). At the very least, this may make you feel better about breeding several generations of chocobos that must each be raced countless times through the Chocobo Square.

Oh, yeah, I should make one final note about the prizes here (don't worry, I'll get to racing strategy in a minute). That is that the prizes available will be largely dependent on the racing class you are currently in. Class C, being the worst, offers notably crapy prizes in return. Class B isn't much better than Class C, though I have found it to be for some reason the most reliable place to pick up the Enemy Away materia. Class A is where you start to see the good prizes, like the Sneak Attack and Counter Attack materia, the Cat's Bell, and the Sprint Shoes (with the emphasis on the Sneak Attack materia). Class S, finally, is where you will finally begin to see the Magic Counter, Megalixir, and the Precious Watch. Sneak Attack, Sprint Shoes, and the Cat's Bell all also appear in Class S, as well, and you stand just as good a chance of seeing them here than you did in Class A. You can also find the Enemy Away

materia in both Class S and Class A, though as I mentioned before, Class B seems to be the best place to earn it.

Now for the racing, then. Head on over to speak with Esther, who'll do all the work of registering your chocobo in the races for you. One of the great curiosities of the world is how she magically teleports your chocobo from wherever it happens to currently be to the chocobo track in less than a minute, but it's not like that question is ever going to be answered. Just be thankful that you've got a chocobo that can more or less kick the hell out of the competition at the time. Your chocobo will start out as a C rank chocobo, and will move up to the B ranks after 3 wins in Class C. They will then be promoted to Class A after 3 wins in class B, and finally to Class S after 3 wins in Class A. Let me do my best to put you at ease when I tell you that things will only get easier from this point forward. In short, your original three chocobos will be the most difficult to race, given their inferior speed to what you will eventually breed. While you should still be able to massively slaughter Class C and Class B, it'll take some amount of effort to bring these chocobos from Class A to Class S (and no, don't go expecting to actually win any Class S races with these chocobos). This is one of the reason that I recommended using only "great" chocobos earlier, as I've found that advancement from Class A to Class S is hard enough with the maximum possible speed of 99 for a "great" chocobo. Trying this with anything less makes things needlessly difficult, possibly unachievable.

You should be familiar with the general strategy behind chocobo racing from your little stint at the Desert (mentioned earlier, but I suppose it couldn't hurt to go over it all once again). From the outset of the race, just take off. Race your chocobo until its stamina bar (that bar on the left side of the screen) is almost empty. If you wait until the thing empties entirely, your chocobo will become winded and will race very slowly, so you will want to avoid that. During many of the races, this tactic should be more than enough to cement your win, but there do come the times when you actually have to try to win. You'll recall that holding down the R1 and R2 buttons as you race will slowly refill your stamina as you head down the track (hold them down for the entire race, mind you). While this was a cheap shot earlier, it is more or less a necessitated tactic for winning many races here at the Chocobo Square.

To elaborate on this point further, I must note that the thing your chocobo has running the most in its favor is the fact that you can make it sprint throughout almost the entire race (while the other jockeys, thankfully, do not do this). For this reason, you will be able to easily overcome chocobos faster than you. Also for this reason, the short track is by far to your strategical advantage over the long track. From the outset of the race, just take off (while holding R1 and R2, mind you). If you're up against chocobos that are somewhat faster than yours, you are also going to have to make an effort to move around a bit and break away from the rest of the pack (very important to do). Your stamina bar should be pretty much drained as you make it to the top of the spiraling rainbow staircase (this will vary slightly depending on the speed of your chocobo). If you have yet to break away from the pack at least somewhat by this point, you have little hopes of winning. Anyways, as you continue on, do your best to hold your lead, though your strategy at this point is more or less limited to hugging the curves. The point at which you will want to break away again is as you step onto the log bridge leading into the home stretch (again, this may vary slightly, but not much, depending on the speed of your chocobo). With luck on your side, this should help you to win most any race.

However, there is one final issue that needs to be touched upon: Teioh. Teioh is a black chocobo that will occasionally appear in the race to teach you the meaning of the word humility. Regardless of your chocobo's stats, Teioh's will always be higher, so the only possible way to beat him is through your



Now, for what it's worth, I will try my best to explain how the chocobo breeding system works. If you really don't care to know, and would like a more simplified step-by-step guide, just skip to the paragraph below. I am simply trying to note that the exact route I took is by no means the only way towards the fastest gold chocobo ever, but it is what I have found to be the easiest, at any rate. With a deeper understanding of how the chocobo breeding system works, one may very well discover a faster or more efficient way to breed that monster, in which case, I'd like to hear all about it (see the bottom of this file for contact information). But, without further ado, the breeding system is actually quite simple at its core. What happens is that the offspring of two chocobos will have speed, stamina, and intelligence equal to the calculated average between its mother and father. As I noted earlier, stamina and intelligence are two stats which can be maxed out with your additional chocobo and henceforth should be nothing for you to worry about. Assuming that you didn't, note that the limit for stamina or intelligence stays the same for all of your chocobos. However, the limit for speed is constantly going up, and is dependent on several factors. First and foremost, the "type" or "color" of a chocobo shall impose an ultimate limit as to how fast that chocobo can be bred. After hitting the ceiling for each color, your only hopes of breeding anything any faster than what you have is to breed a new type of chocobo. Secondly, gender is the other issue. I mentioned that each statistic for a newborn chocobo, including speed, will be the result of the averaged values of both its parents. However, this is before feeding, and you'll find that through feeding greens to the newborn chocobo, you should be able to increase its stats to well above those of its parents. How gender factors into this is when statistical differences exist between the parents. In such case, when a chocobo is the same gender as the parent with the higher stats, you should find that there is a greater potential for stat growth within that chocobo. As far as I can tell, this is the complete set of information concerning the chocobo breeding system, but I'm not above saying that there may be several hidden factors which elude me. If you think you know something I don't, by all means contact me. But also be prepared to offer some sort of proof to substantiate your statement (I hear way too much from folks who claim to have bred 250 KPH chocobos, but have absolutely no evidence to back themselves up with).

With that out of the way, lets get on with the breeding. I mentioned earlier that you should begin to consider exactly what it is you're after: a gold chocobo or the fastest gold chocobo ever? Well, it's getting damn near time to make up your mind. Assuming you're going for the fastest gold chocobo ever, you'll be needing a substantially larger amount of gil, a larger supply of Zeio nuts, a lot of patience, and an open mind concerning the practice of inbreeding. In all seriousness, in merely breeding a gold chocobo, the worst you will see is a singular brother-sister mating. In breeding the ultimate gold chocobo, expect a family tree that not only does not fork in any place, but also at times requires curved lines (something that no family tree should possess) and gives me an inexplicable and insatiable desire to watch "Hee-Haw". For added amusement, consider giving them names like, "Bubba, Mary Jo, Bubba, Sue Ann, Bubba, Jo Beth, Bubba, Billy Bob, and Bubba" and pretending that you live in a trailer park in West Virginia. Because in the end, your family tree will end up looking more like a family web, and don't think I'm happy about that. Y'all dad-gum varmints... I'm gonna go rustle me up some vittles now, ya hear?

Oh, and before you go any further, save your game first, and always save before breeding your chocobos. The results of any chocobo breeding are produced at random, and you'll want to be able to reset and try again if you get something you don't want. And before you even try, do realize that this practice is generally frowned upon in real life.

Anyways, with your nuts in your hands, go talk to Chocobo Billy, who has the

morally downtrodden job of helping your chocobos have sex. Select your two "great" chocobos for breeding (I do hope you remember which two were which), and hand him a Carob Nut. The next morning, you'll end up with either a mountain chocobo or a river chocobo. The mountain chocobo is green in color (it's the same one that the Chocobo Sage had), while the river chocobo is a lovely shade of blue.

First and foremost, you'll likely be wanting to reap the benefits of your brand-new chocobo, and believe me, there are benefits. Ask Chocobo Billy about riding the chocobos, and then select which chocobo you'd like to take out of the ranch for a ride. Your tamed chocobos will stay put when you get off of them (no matter where you decide to leave them) and can even ride in the Highwind. To ride a different chocobo, simply ride that chocobo back to the Chocobo Ranch and select another one.

Now, just where can you go with your new chocobo? Well, I guess that's kind of dependent on whatever you just bred. Assuming that you got yourself a mountain chocobo, it's time to head west to the islands of Wutai. Utilizing your chocobo's mountain-crossing powers, you should be able to access a secluded mountain cave on the island's eastern border. Inside, you will find a lost mako cache, and formed within it, the ~Mime materia. Also, as added bonuses, your mountain chocobo will open up sections IV.C. and V.K. of the FAQ to you. However, if on the other hand you found yourself with a river chocobo, then it's back to Mideel with ya! Navigate the shallows to the far eastern edge of the rocky archipelago towards yet another of those mako caches. Inside this one, you will discover the mighty ~Quadra Magic materia.

With that out of the way, it's time to head back to the basics. You'll want to feed your newborn chocobo in accordance to the feeding instructions I gave in section IX.B. of the FAQ, and then its off to train the chocobo at the Gold Saucer, which you can read more about back in section IX.C. of the FAQ. Unlike the parents, you'll discover that it should be fairly easy for the new chocobo to advance to Class S.

Now, it's time to breed another chocobo. However, you'll learn from Chocobo Billy that it's a bad idea to mate chocobos that have either recently mated or just been born (because pedophilia apparently is taboo in a field where incest runs rampant). At any rate, you'll need to fight about 10 random battles for a recently-mated chocobo to go at it again, while you're looking at more like 20 random battles for a newborn to mature to the point of being able to reproduce. And when you look at it one way... that's not a horribly long time. Scary. You'll want to mate your original two chocobos to produce something that is the opposite color and gender of your original offspring (so if you originally had a blue female, you'll be wanting a green male). Again, a Carob Nut should be used for this task.

Now, take your new chocobo as a result of that union, and ride around to wherever it might take you (Mideel for the river chocobo, various places for the mountain chocobo). And then feed and train it in a similar fashion. Then, go out and fight some more random battles to await the next generation.

For your third generation of chocobos, it's time to go black. Breed your river and mountain chocobo together to achieve this. Do note that if you do not plan on breeding any further than just a regular gold chocobo, then the black chocobo you produce here should be of the opposite gender as your "wonderful" chocobo. If not, then you may wish to breed a black chocobo of the same gender as your "wonderful" chocobo.

Anyways, your black chocobo should have a shiny black coat, as well as a significant speed boost over your second generation. The black chocobo combines

the powers of both the river and the mountain chocobo, and will allow you to access another lost mako cache located near Costa Del Sol. Inside this one, you'll find the questionable HP <-> MP materia. But, aside from that, feed it and send that little bastard to the race track. Not only should making it to the S Class be a breeze with your new black chocobo, but you should also find it much easier to beat Teioh, as well. However, even though making it to the S Class should have achieved a new level of ease, your black chocobo may still find actually racing in it to be beyond its capacity.

What you do now is going to be dependent on your future plans. To immediately obtain the gold chocobo, breed your black chocobo with the wonderful chocobo (using a Zeio Nut), and be done with it right there (and skip to the paragraph below to see exactly what you can do with said gold chocobo). But if you'd like to work towards a super-fast chocobo, then you may very well want to start with the black chocobo generations. My personal recommendation is to breed your original black chocobo with one of its parents to produce a black chocobo of the opposite gender as your original black chocobo. In doing this, a Zeio Nut should be utilized. Then, breed your two black chocobos, and aim to produce a chocobo of the same gender as the second black chocobo you produced. Again, use a Zeio Nut. If you've been properly feeding and training your chocobos up to this point (something I really assume you'd be doing if you were going for the ultimate black chocobo, anyways), your third black chocobo should have reached, or at the very least closely neared the maximum speed allotment for a black chocobo, which is 149 KPH. Then, you should breed your third black chocobo with the "wonderful" chocobo to produce a Gold Chocobo. However, due to the limited capabilities of the "wonderful" chocobo, don't go expecting completely amazing results... yet. Your first gold chocobo should be of the opposite gender as your third black chocobo.

Now the proud owner of a gold chocobo, I suppose the first thing you're probably going to want to do is head out to retrieve the infamous ~Knights of the Round materia. You can find it on a tiny, remote island surrounded entirely by mountains located north and a little bit east of the "Goblin Islands" (you know, the place where you found all those Zeio Nuts?) This island is so tiny that it doesn't appear on the map, so a little recon work is in order. Anyways, head onto the island and invade the mako cache there to retrieve the most powerful materia in the game (well, except Master Summon, I suppose).

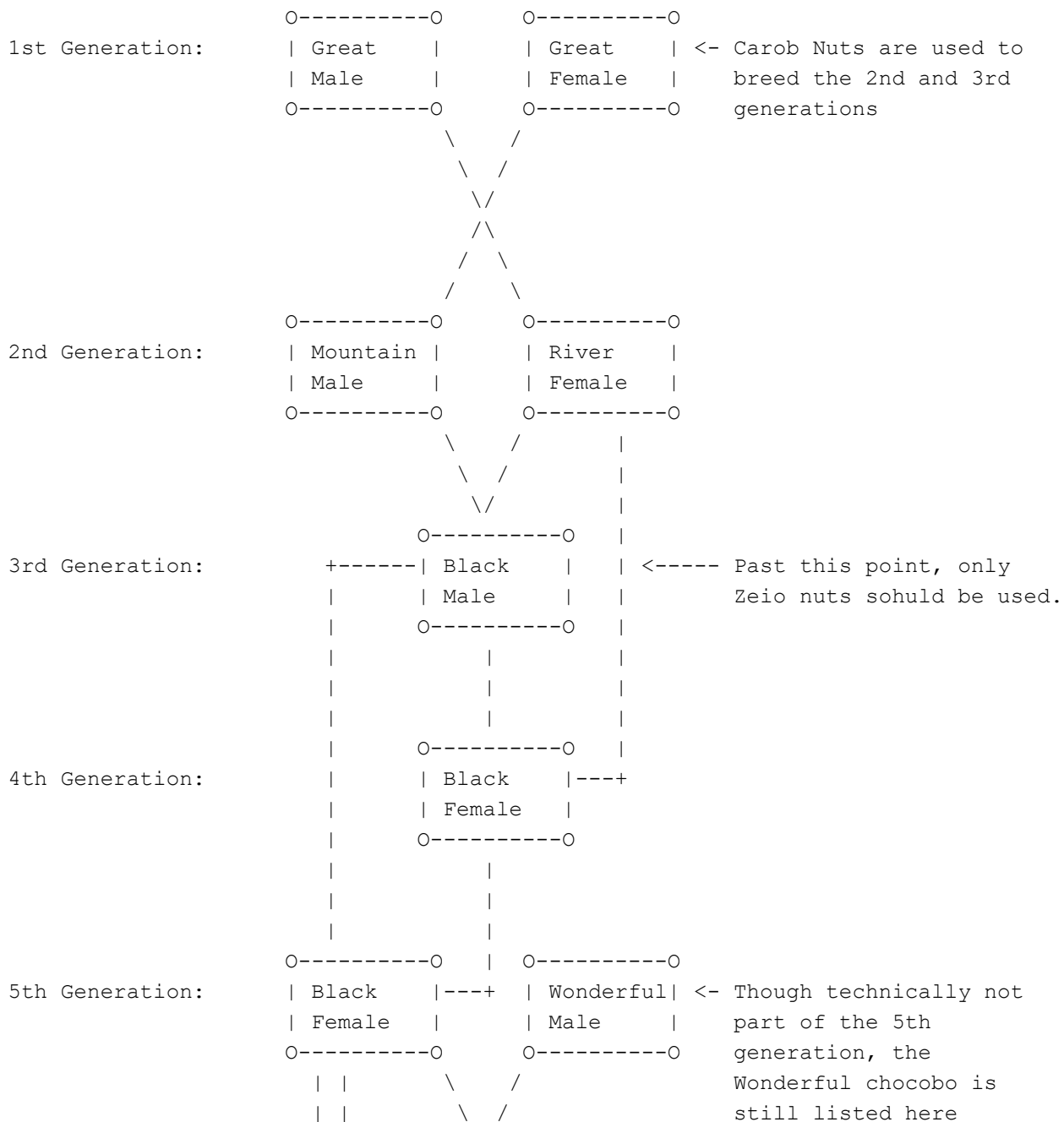
The other thing you'll want to do with your gold chocobo (besides feeding it, I suppose) is take it to the Gold Saucer and trounce the competition. With this, you should easily be able to rack up wins in the S Class, and if you do not plan on breeding any further, now is the time to do that. However, if you have future plans, why not hold off until you have your ultimate gold chocobo before having your fun in the S Class? I mean, you could just as easily have decimated the competition there with your third black chocobo, so be patient, and wait just a little longer... it's time to do some more breeding.

Back at the Chocobo Ranch, prepare to breed your ultimate gold chocobo. Again, there are several paths to take, but assuming that you've been sticking with my plan up to this point, here's what you do: breed your gold chocobo with your third black chocobo (using, of course, a Zeio Nut). You will likely have to reload several times before you get what you want out of this, which is a gold offspring who's gender is the same of that of the gold parent. You should find that of the four possible outcomes, this is the rarest. That's because this is the best possible outcome, and you'll see that the resulting chocobo should be a speed demon, to say the least. Feed and train your speed demon, and then mate it with its black parent (yes, your black choco is really getting around at this point). Again, use a Zeio Nut, but this time, you'll be wanting a gold chocobo whose gender is the same as that of the gold parent. While you'll find that the resulting chocobo here isn't quite as fast as its gold



parent, it does allow you access to the final gateway. That is to breed your third gold chocobo with its gold parent to produce a fourth gold chocobo who's gender should be the same as that of the faster parent (the faster parent being the second gold chocobo). If you did exactly as I have transcribed, then the resulting gold chocobo should be more or less the "ultimate" gold chocobo, having reached its speed cap of 176 KPH. And damn, can that little bastard tear up the track. Teioh, inexplicably, is still faster. And at this point, Teioh should actually start to becoming more of a pain in the ass to face again (I mean, he just flies once he breaks about 190 or so), so do be careful about racing him. On the other hand, it's fun to take a nap while you wait for all of the other racers to finish (especially in Class C... damn!)

As I mentioned earlier, the route which I took to the ultimate gold chocobo may very well not be the most efficient one available, but it's the best I have to offer. And if you're hard-up for a quick solution that doesn't involve any of that laborious reading (see above), then feel free to follow my example via this handy chart. Yes, I admit that the only reason I typed this up is because I thought it was the funniest thing I had ever seen before in my life, but that's not the point. The point is this: a family tree should not look like this. And if yours does, then you probably live in West Virginia. So without further ado:





Welcome to Fort Condor, home of the condor! A giant condor rests atop a mako reactor, and the Shinra wants that condor outta there. Raging environmentalists have rallied to the cause, defending the reactor and the condor at all costs, via hiring mercenaries to fight off the Shinra troops. And yes, the supply of mercenaries is virtually endless. More than that, they all seem to converge here. It's a wonder that Cloud has never heard of this place up until now, actually.

On the top floor of the shack at Fort Condor is a guy wearing a headband (henceforth referred to as "Headband Guy") and staring wistfully out of a large window. Talk to him, and he will ask for your assistance in fighting off the Shinra. He has an unnecessarily complicated and misleading way of describing exactly what he plans to do with your money (as do any people that want to solicit your money), not to mention a barrage of confusing menu options. Y'know, this is sounding way too much like a bad infomercial...

First of all, the cost of any and all troops hired, as you might have already guessed, comes directly out of your pocket. This means a couple of things, first of all. For starters, you are not allowed to participate unless you currently possess at least 4,000 gil, though you'll probably want to bring a long a bit more than that (and a hell of a lot more than that for the later battles). Secondly, you should really ignore any and all attempts Headband Guy makes to take your money. You see, Fort Condor has its own money supply, which depletes by 3,000 every time you skip a battle (see section X.D. for a listing of all the battles). Aside from that, Fort Condor's money supply really has no use. And no matter how frequently Headband Guy tells you about Fort Condor's lack of money (which you'll find that he does rather habitually), all it should take for you to tell him to piss off is that fact that even if Fort Condor runs out of money entirely, no negative consequences are suffered, either by you or by them.

To summarize things, the battles of Fort Condor are simulated strategy games in which you hire troops and place them along a mountain path. Enemies attempt to make their way up the path towards the shack at the top of the mountain. Your goal is to defeat all of the enemies, and prevent them from reaching the top. If an enemy makes it to the top, you will have to fight a relatively easy boss creature. Win, and the battle continues. Lose, and you're screwed. Also note that any subsequent enemy that makes it to the shack following your boss fight will also spell trouble.

Finally, do take note of the control instructions, above all else. They are fairly simple, as you might expect. You click on a troop to view its stats (current HP/max HP), and its command options, which are usually limited to "attack" and "move to". Choose one, and then you are to select a target or destination. And then the troop begins its journey. When said troop reaches its destination or target, it will report back to you. Pressing the confirm button again zooms in on the troop so that you may issue further orders. Pressing the cancel button will continue you along your path. Note that hitting the cancel button helps to speed the game up if the order you had issued was an order to attack something, as your troops will automatically do battle with whatever gets near it. Do keep an eye on your soldiers, however, as they are very suicidal and will battle to the death if not forcefully removed from battle by you, the commander. Also take note of your ability to increase the speed of the simulation (the current speed of which will be indicated along the side of the screen). Note, however, that even at the fastest setting, the simulation is still painfully slow.

Oh, and your incentive to keep your troops alive throughout these battles is



Shooters, despite being the weakest and most fragile offensive unit, can prove to be some of the most useful. This is because of their ability to make ranged attacks. While the ranged attacks alone are not much to speak of, and will more than likely end up getting your Shooter killed, they make an excellent combination with the melee attacks of your front-line troops, combining for heavy damage. And while the stationary units all prove to have attacks more powerful and/or wide-ranged than those of the Shooter, do note that the Shooter does boast mobility, something that cannot be said for any of the stationary units. This means that you can move them from front to front, and also whisk them away from danger if need be. Furthermore, Shooters are excellent at shooting down those pesky Wyvern. However, as I've said before, Shooters make horrible front-line fighters, and will quickly get themselves killed if attempting to play that role. This will hold especially true should they come face to face with a Beast, who can destroy them in a few seconds flat. Their usefulness is also accompanied by a higher price, as well, standing at 520 gil each.

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Repairers are not units that are trained to attack, and actually make worse fighters than the Shooters do. Their forte is the ability to heal wounded units, and thus it is always a good idea to have a few Repairers hanging around near your front-line troops (especially seeing as the only possible way for your troops to heal themselves are through Repairers). Just make sure to keep your Repairer out of the line of fire, lest you have a dead Repairer on your hands. I also guess it should go without saying that you are probably wise in pulling a damaged troop back behind the front lines as opposed to sending your Repairer in to heal the unit. It's just as well, seeing as a troop cannot fight whilst being repaired. A final note to make is that you need to not only keep an eye on the HP of any dwindling unit so that you can pull it out of the battle before it dies, but also should have another troop or so to keep said enemy at bay while your other troop is busy retreating. In conclusion, Repairers can go far in keeping your front lines healthy and your wallet full, but only if you know how to use them properly. They cost 480 gil each.

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Workers are an odd unit in several ways. They are weaker fighters than the Shooter, and are just as easily killed as they are. Their method of fighting is also unusual. What they do is plant a bomb anywhere along the mountain path, and then retreat. Whenever an enemy comes into contact with that bomb, it explodes, hitting a fairly large radius for a decent amount of damage. The real disadvantage of the Worker is that they require a substantial amount of effort, planning, and strategy to use with any kind of decent results, far more so than any other unit. For starters, Workers are only allowed to set one bomb at a time each, so you must wisely plan the placement of their bombs. Secondly, their bombs don't really do that much more damage than the attacks of a stationary unit, meaning that the only true advantage of the Worker is their mobility. At the very least, at 400 gil each, they are very cost-efficient.

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Stoners are a stationary unit that constantly lob stones in a certain direction. Stationary units assault the enemy with a barrage of powerful attacks, but are offset by the fact that once they are placed, they ain't movin'. For best results, they should be placed directly behind your front lines, and should be guarded at all costs (stationary units are very easy to kill should an enemy reach them). But, referring to the Stone as a unit in



that you'd actually like to keep a little bit of that money in your pocket, here're some battle strategies to keep your troops safe and your wallet full.

First and foremost, let us remember the old adage, "know thine enemy". There are four different creatures you may battle. None of them in any way really resemble Shinra troops, which actually indicates that Shinra cares so little about winning this place back, that they in turn are sending hired goons to storm Fort Condor. Regardless, first, we have the >Barbarian. The Barbarian is the weakest of the enemies present, both in terms of attack power and HP, but makes up for this during the later battles by presenting their ability to attack from a distance (much like your Shooter). Defenders make quick work of them, while Attackers will either be eaten alive or severely damaged by them. The >Wyvern is a bit stronger than the Barbarian and has a bit more HP, but overall is not much more difficult to kill. The advantage possessed by the Wyvern, however, is the ability to fly over obstacles, making it very maneuverable. Shooters will find themselves at an advantage against Wyverns (though, as always, it is best that they attack from afar), but on that same token, Defenders will fall prey to the attacks of a Wyvern fairly easily. >Beasts are stronger than Wyverns, and have considerably more HP. Then again, they have no special abilities to speak of, either. The Attacker will have an easier time killing Beasts than it will with anything else, but keep your Shooters very far away from Beasts, lest they kick your Shooter's asses hardcore (also note that the Beast takes less damage from a Shooter's arrows, meaning that you'll probably only want to aim for Beasts if there is no alternative).

Lastly, we have the >Commander, which more or less is a boss-type creature, hence my dedication of an entire paragraph to it. There is only one Commander per battle, and it will be the last enemy to arrive on screen. It has quite a bit of HP, and is terribly powerful. No troops are at an advantage against the commander, but conversely, the Commander also has no weaknesses. If it is prudent to do so, the best way to deal with the Commander is purely with projectile units. Granted, this may take more time, but it also helps to keep your troops safe from the extremely powerful attacks of the Commander (you'll find that it doesn't take very long for a commander to off one of your soldiers). If you are going to make a rush on the Commander, however, the best way to do so is to gang up on him (and also to have any projectile unit handy back those soldiers up). Sending in your soldiers one by one will ultimately leave you with a huge pile of dead soldiers. In sending in several, one or two may die, but the damage inflicted by the rest of them should accumulate very quickly, and you shall emerge victorious.

With that out of the way, I suppose the first thing you should be aware of is that Headband Guy rarely, if ever, knows what he is talking about. His advice seems random at best, and you'd be wise to assess the situation yourself before amassing your army. Take advantage of the fact that troops can be bought on the spot, which means that you need not waste your money on extraneous troops. Another thing to consider that the ideal offense is to rush down the mountain towards the enemy rather than letting them come to you. This helps, more than anything, to give you the drop on them and prevent them from overwhelming your forces. However, you should note that troops cannot be placed beyond an invisible line, which exists just in front of the one troop of yours that has advanced the farthest down the mountain. Ergo, the farther you advance, the farther ahead you may place troops. Taking all of this into consideration, might I suggest beginning to fight with a handful of all-purpose troops, advancing down the mountain, and then placing more troops as needed? By all-purpose units, I generally refer to Fighters (who are useful in any given situation) and also perhaps an Attacker (to allow a quick advancement of your main line, and quicker placement of your troops farther down the mountain). This allows for optimal placement of stationary units, as well as allowing you to survey the prevalence of enemy types present, thus allowing you to make in





note that all of the Battles of Fort Condor and their respective prizes are all lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. That being said, without further ado, I give you the Battles of Fort Condor:

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Battle #1 can be fought as soon as your party reaches Fort Condor, but before resting in the elderly woman's house at Junon. The prize is Red XIII's Magic Comb. If an enemy reaches the cabin, you will do battle with the commander, and your prize shall be a Vagyrisk Claw. All in all, this is the one battle that you, above all else, may want to fight. Even if you are not interested in any of the other prizes here at Fort Condor (which is a safe assumption for several players, at any rate), the Magic Comb is the one prize that still might be worth your time. It will also help later in the game (when you are forced to do battle at Fort Condor) to have at least a little experience under your belt.

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Battle #2 can be fought after resting in the elderly woman's house at Junon, but before going to the beach with Priscilla. The prize is a Peace Ring. If an enemy reaches the cabin, you will do battle with the commander, and your prize shall be a Vagyrisk Claw.

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Battle #3 can be fought after getting into the water with Mr. Dolphin, but before jumping onto the high voltage tower. The prize is an Ether, though the game calls it a Tincture for some reason. If an enemy reaches the cabin, you will do battle with the commander, and your prize shall be a Vagyrisk Claw. Note that if you skip Battle #3, you cannot collect the prize. Rather, the game will just jump straight from Battle #2 to Battle #4. Also note that the Fire Catapult becomes available for the first time during this battle.

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Battle #4 can be fought after acquiring the Buggy, but before traveling to Cosmo Canyon. The prize is a Megalixir. If an enemy reaches the cabin, you will do battle with the commander, and your prize shall be a Vagyrisk Claw.

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Battle #5 can be fought after leaving Cosmo Canyon, but before going to Rocket Town. The prize for this battle is nonexistent, despite what the game might say. On another note, the Tri-Stoner for the first time will become available during this battle.

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Battle #6 can be fought after getting the Tiny Bronco, but before getting the Keystone. The prize for this battle, like that of Battle #5, is nonexistent.

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Battle #7 can be fought after getting the Keystone, but before traveling to the Temple of the Ancients. The prize is Yuffie's Super Ball. This means that if you have been staying completely on top of the battles of Fort Condor up until this point, you will receive for your troubles a weapon equivalent

to others you will find inside the Temple of the Ancients. Also, due to crappy/nonexistent prizes in the following battles, this is probably the last battle you'll be interested in fighting for awhile.

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Battle #8 can be fought after completing the Temple of the Ancients, but before going to the Forgotten City. The prize is three Turbo Ethers.

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Battle #9 can be fought after completing the Forgotten City, but before going to the Crater. The prize is three Turbo Ethers.

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Battle #10 cannot be fought. It takes place during the week following the Reunion, and your team will be unable to attend.

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Battle #11 also cannot be fought. For the same reasons as Battle #10.

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Battle #12 can't be fought, either. See above.

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Battle #13 is another wasted battle. Sad.

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Battle #14 is the last of the five battles your team will miss out on.

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Battle #15 can be fought after completing the Crater, but before going to Mideel. There is no prize, and Headband Guy is no longer making any sense when he talks to you. How very sad.

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Battle #16, like Battle #10 - Battle #14, is unplayable due to your team being busy with other matters while it is taking place.

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Battle #17 is the final battle of Fort Condor, and is mandatory. You will be required to fight this battle as a direct result of the plot, but thankfully, it shouldn't be too difficult. This is your last hurrah, however, and there are several prizes riding on the line. They include the Phoenix materia, as well as the Huge Materia. Furthermore, if an enemy reaches the cabin, you will do battle with the commander, who will yield the Imperial Guard when defeated. However, if you suffer defeat at the hands of Commander Grand Horn (that's the guy you fight if an enemy makes it all the way to the cabin) at Fort Condor, not only are you denied Phoenix and the Huge Materia as a result of losing the battle, but you are also banned from Fort Condor forever. This means that you will be henceforth unable to purchase additional All materia, as well.



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### Big Brawl

- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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### Big Shot

- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Another generic level-one limit break is Barret's Big Shot. As if getting shot with Barret's gun wasn't bad enough, you'll see that what will hurt someone considerably more is a big blast of whatever the hell he's shooting at you. As a matter of fact, it'll hurt about three times as badly as a normal attack does. And since Barret's second limit break, Mindblow, is a niche attack, Big Shot is usually the level one limit break of choice.

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### Blade Beam

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----Up to four enemies

In a shameless rip-off of Zelda, Cloud fires a beam out of his sword that will hit the main target of the attack for about three times the amount of damage dealt by a normal attack. And then, the fallout from the attack strikes all of the other enemies on the field for a negligible amount of damage, roughly equal to about half the damage done by a regular attack. This means that, mathematically speaking, to make using Blade Beam preferable over Cloud's second level two limit break, Climhazard, there should be at least three other creatures on the field besides your target. However, if you are targeting something that you know would be killed outright by a direct hit from Blade Beam (making Climhazard unnecessary overkill), and there is at least one other creature on the field that would suffer the effects of Blade Beam fallout, by all means go for it.

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### Blood Fang

- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Limit Level/Level #--- Lv. 2/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive & healing
- \* Affects-----One enemy & caster

While one might expect the sequel to Sled Fang to be more powerful than the original, do remember the old adage: "all sequels suck". Blood Fang is really no exception, as it deals only a little more damage than that of a normal attack. It makes up for this by offering you Red XIII an MP boost equal roughly to 1/4 of a regular attack. He is also given an identical HP boost, but it is negligible at best. In conclusion, Blood Fang should take preference over Stardust Ray only if you need the MP, and you would be wise to acquire Stardust Ray in a timely fashion, as you likely do not want to be stuck with Blood Fang as your only available limit break.

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#### Bloodfest

- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies\*

Bloodfest is what you'd expect from Yuffie after being injected with toxic amounts of Mountain Dew and speed. She more or less just goes apecrap on the opposition and starts slashing away at everything she sees, totaling ten attacks against random opponents within a timeframe of about two or three seconds. The bad news is that the attacks are fairly weak, each hitting for a little more than half the damage of a normal attack. Still, due to the cumulative effects of Bloodfest, this should be the attack of choice versus one or possibly two opponents. Any more than that, and you're better off sticking with Landscaper.

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#### Boost Jump

- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Three times as powerful as a normal attack. Where have we seen this before? Hint: Braver, Big Shot, Sled Fang, Greased Lightning. The only difference is that Cid's second level one limit break, Dynamite, will usually take preference to Boost Jump. Boost Jump is still more effective against a lone attacker, but for most cases, you're probably going to go with Dynamite.

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#### Braver

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

This is the standard level-one limit break. It's a strong attack that will do about three times the damage of a normal attack to whatever Cloud decides to bury that huge-ass sword of his into. But, despite what you may have heard from various sources, Cloud's second limit break, Cross-Slash, tops Braver both in terms of damage dealt and added effects. Yeah, I'm talking to you, Brady Games Strategy Guides! Choke on that, you incorrect, misleading bastards!

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### Breath of the Earth

- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/1st
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Affects-----All allies

Aeris's first level two limit break really loses something from level one. Breath of the Earth will cure any status ailment currently afflicting anyone in your party (with the exception of death), and can be slightly useful in a pinch if necessitated. But, sadly, this is something that is achievable through so many other means, the least of which is just waiting for the battle to end. Furthermore, is you are the kind of person that likes to take advantage of Aeris's weak strength and powerful limit breaks by putting her in a state of fury, this limit break can even prove to be counter-productive. And unless there is some kind of status ailment which you have no other means to cure and is just completely holding your team back, you're pretty much going to want to opt for Aeris's kick-ass second level two limit break, Fury Brand (which you are advised to obtain ASAP after earning Breath of Earth.)

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### Catastrophe

- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 4/Ultimate
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Catastrophe is the third of the doomsday limit breaks. And granted, it does not produce quite the global devastation that you'll see with Omnislash or Highwind, there's still not going to be enough of your enemy left to scrape up with a spatula once Catastrophe has run its course. Again, the only thing you'll see living through this limit break is Ruby or Emerald WEAPON, though with Barret at lower levels you may see that Catastrophe will only bring the final boss within an inch of its life as opposed to murdering it outright.

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### Chaos

- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 4/Ultimate
- \* Type-----Special
- \* Affects-----Caster

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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### Clear Tranquil

- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/2nd
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Affects-----All allies

This is Yuffie's version of Aeris's Healing Wind limit break, and offers a nice healing boost if you happen to be in need. Unlike Aeris, however, Yuffie actually has an offensive limit break to fall back on if you are not in any need of healing, but it's very nice to have around if you do be requiring some. Like Healing Wind, Clear Tranquil produces effects somewhat stronger than those of a Cure-all spell, but not as powerful as a Cure 2-all spell. Do note that due to the fact that Yuffie's magical capabilities aren't quite up there with Aeris's, the effects of Clear Tranquil won't pan out to be as effective as those of Healing Wind, but still quite effective, nevertheless.

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#### Climhazard

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Upping the stakes in limit break power, Cloud gives one very unlucky target an uppercut... with his sword. Climhazard deals about four times the damage that a normal attack would, and is the level two limit break of choice versus a lone attacker. Against two or more, you're going to have to use your better judgment, or perhaps just refer to my commentary on the Blade Beam limit break for more information.

---

#### Cosmo Memory

- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 4/Ultimate
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Cross Slash

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Cloud's second limit break does about three times the damage of a normal attack to an enemy with a series of long, painful slashes. And when I say "about", I mean there's a small margin of error in the calculations. And if you wanna get nitpicky, it does a bit more damage than Braver. Nothing serious, but it is stronger overall. But in addition to just the extra damage dealt, there's also a chance that with Cross-Slash, you'll paralyze your opponent. Paralysis isn't one of those status ailments that effects a large number of the enemy population, but is more or less a death sentence to anyone who gets stricken by it. But since Cross Slash is the stronger attack, anyways, just use it all the time and accept anything that gets paralyzed by it (if not killed outright) as a bonus.

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## Death Gigas

- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/1st\*
- \* Type-----Special
- \* Affects-----Caster

Feed my Frankenstein! Vincent's level two transformation is a shameless rip-off of everyone's beast assembled from random body parts dug up out of graves from all over that became a staple in every monster story and cartoon for eons untold. The most noticeable thing about the Death Gigas transformation is the significantly larger HP boost you will receive than you did with Galian Beast. With Death Gigas, expect Vincent's HP supply to double. Frankenste... er, Death Giags will attack with wither Gigadunk or Livewire. Gigadunk looks kind of like Vincent is trying to play basketball using an enemy's head as the hoop. This powerful attack should deal about three times the damage of a normal attack. Livewire, on the other hand, is much more than a sexy Superman villainess now. It's also a lightning-based magical attack that should more or less lay waste to the competition at the time, as its power is a bit stronger than that of Beast Flare (which in turn was a bit stronger than Beta). For the further purposes of comparison, Livewire is about twice as powerful to another comparable enemy skill, Trine. Aside from this, Death Gigas shares the useful applications as well as the obvious drawbacks as his original transformation, Galian Beast. Refer to my comments on the Galian Beast limit break for more information, but there is a final point I must stress. And that is that you'll notice that fewer enemies tend to be resistant or immune to lightning-based attacks as they were to fire-based attacks. Ergo, Death Gigas in the end proves to be that much more useful than Galian Beast.

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## Dice

- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st\*
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Dolphin Blow

- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

The makers of the game should have exercised far more caution than they did in using a word such as "blow" in conjunction with any attack possessed by Tifa. Whether this was a thoughtless error, a hilarious mistranslation, or a deliberate jab at the horny teenage boys whom Tifa was meant to appeal to, Dolphin Blow more than likely is an attack far different than the one you perverts are conjuring up in your minds right now (which probably wouldn't be



appropriate for a Teen-rated game, anyways).

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the (further) commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Doom of the Living

- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies\*

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Dragon

- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive & healing
- \* Affects-----One enemy & caster

Cid's Dragon limit break is identical to Red XIII's Blood Fang. He summons a Dragon to attack an enemy, which really doesn't do much more damage than a regular attack would. Cid then gains HP and MP roughly equivalent to about 1/4 the damage dealt by a normal attack. And unless Cid needs the MP boost, you're likely going to stick with Hyper Jump. Do note that unlike Blood Fang, this is the second level two limit break, meaning that Cid isn't stuck with just one crapy level two limit break while he waits on the good one. A nice touch, if you ask me.

---

#### Dragon Dive

- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Dynamite

- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Cid produces from unknown origins a stick of dynamite. Then, lighting it

with his cigarette (you know Cid, I'm no medical expert, but perhaps maybe you shouldn't be smoking in the middle of a Goddamned battle), he launches it into the enemy fray, hitting every enemy in sight with a force roughly equal to about twice the damage dealt by one of his regular attacks. Dynamite is a limit break which is actually on par with a few of the level two limit breaks, but seeing as by the point in the game you get Cid, most of your characters will probably have already learned said level two limit breaks, the only real advantage of Dynamite is that it is a level one limit break and thus will be used quicker and more often than a level two limit break would. Dynamite is the level one limit break of choice unless there is only one enemy present on the battlefield, in which case you should go with Boost Jump, instead.

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#### Earth Rave

- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Final Heaven

- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 4/Ultimate
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Finishing Touch

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Fury Brand

- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Affects-----All allies except Caster

Aeris sacrifices her own limit break to completely fill the limit gauges of her two companions (even if one or both of them are dead). In the stead of an actual offensive limit break, this is the best Aeris has to offer, and you couldn't ask for more. Because, in essence, Aeris offers two limit breaks for the price of one in this manner (to get the most value out of Fury Brand, you'll want to use it when your teammates' limit bars are more or less depleted). To make things even more interesting, Fury Brand is only a level two limit break, but can be used to fill the limit meter of someone who is set at a higher level, giving you more bang for your buck. But then again, I suppose, if you're using level three limit breaks at this point in the game, you're kicking ten tons of ass anyways. At any rate, the point I must stress is that Fury Brand is the obvious choice in a level two limit break unless there is some condition afflicting your team that is just so horribly detrimental that it has to be taken care of with the Breath of the Earth (but even then, you might first see if you have anything in your inventory or command list that would accomplish the same job without wasting Aeris's limit break).

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#### Galian Beast

- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st\*
- \* Type-----Special
- \* Affects-----Caster

With Galian Beast, Vincent transforms into this... um, beast thing. He'll get about a 33% HP boost from the transformation, and will attack with Berserk Dance and Beast Flare. Berserk Dance is about 1.5 times as powerful as one of Vincent's normal attacks, while Beast Flare should be somewhat recognizable to fans of the kick-ass enemy skill Beta. The only difference between Beast Flare and Beta is that Beast Flare is a bit more powerful. The disadvantage, besides losing control of Vincent, is that Beast Flare is, like Beta, a fire-based attack. And don't think that Vincent is going to catch on after his fiftieth failed attempt to cast Beast Flare on something that happens to be immune to or, worse yet, absorbs fire-based attacks. What this means, is that you need to exercise common sense when using Galian Beast. So long as you do, though, not only does it become a powerful set of attacks at your disposal, but it's also a good clutch attack to fall back on, as the transformation will also increase Vincent's durability by a large margin, because with it, he gets an HP boost, HP restoration, and he will simply revert back to normal if defeated in this form.

---

#### Gauntlet

- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies\*

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Greased Lightning

- \* Used By-----Yuffie

- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Y'know... when an attack is called "Greased Lightning", you expect something from it. Flair. Flashiness. A show. With Greased Lightning, however, you get none of that. Yuffie just runs up and slashes someone with her weapon (which, might I add, is a questionable method of attack for someone who is wielding a projectile weapon). As for the attack itself, it is about three times as powerful as a normal attack. Yuffie's second limit break, Clear Tranquil, should take preference over this limit break should you in any way need it's healing powers. If not, then rip away with Greased Lightning.

-----

#### Great Gospel

- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 4/Ultimate
- \* Type-----Defensive & healing
- \* Affects-----All allies

If you thought there was no way Planet Protector and Pulse of Life could be topped... think again. Because Great Gospel gives you the best of both worlds, conveying the benefits of both of Aeris's level three limit breaks. This effectively eliminates the problems presented by having to choose only one of the two, but with it crops up another problem: level four limit breaks are slow. And especially so early in the game (you'll recall from my commentary on Planet Protector that Aeris's higher level limit breaks must be obtained early on to be of any use at all), it's going to take a Goddamned eternity for her limit meter to fill up. If you're going to have Aeris set on limit level four, might I suggest keeping her in a state of fury? Anyways, there's the small matter of actually getting a hold of the Great Gospel manual, as well, but it's not horribly difficult to do, and is detailed in section V.C. of the FAQ.

-----

#### Grenade Bomb

- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Barret launches a grenade at the opposition, hitting each enemy for approximately twice the damage of a normal attack. Grenade Bomb is effective against large groups of opponents, but it just sort of loses something when you "waste" it on only one or two opponents. However, due to the limited use you'll get out of Barret's second level-two limit break, Hammerblow, Grenade Bomb will usually be Barret's level-two limit break of choice.

-----

#### Hammerblow

- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Indirect offense
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Hammerblow isn't so much of a painful attack as it is a way to remove a creature from their current solar system. Barret more or less knocks something into the air, and if the attack works, it never comes back. This attack amazingly enough does no direct damage, making it for all practical purposes an instant-death attack. Hammerblow has two things going against it in that respect. One is that many enemies are immune to the effects of instant death attacks. The other is that you have so many other ways to induce instant death attacks without invoking a limit break (e.g., Odin or Destruct/Added Effect). For these reasons alone, even if you are squaring off against a lone attacker, you may still find yourself reaching to use Grenade Bomb, anyways. Against larger groups, however, it's much less of a question that Grenade Bomb will prove more useful, unless there's just one enemy in the group that is just really pissing you off.

---

#### Healing Wind

- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Affects-----All allies

Aeris's first limit break heals rather than hurts. It will restore quite a bit of HP for everyone in the party (generally a bit more than a Cure-all spell will, but not as much as a Cure 2-all spell), and is usually a welcome reprieve whenever you get the chance to use it. If you are really not in need of the healing, Aeris's second level one limit break, Seal Evil, may be preferable, but only if you're sure that not only is it going to work, but also if it is even necessary.

---

#### Hellmasker

- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st\*
- \* Type-----Special
- \* Affects-----Caster

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Highwind

- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 4/Ultimate
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Another one of the doomsday limit breaks is Cid's Highwind, in which he summons the Highwind to bomb the opposition to high hell. And bomb the enemy, it does, completely wasting anything that once stood on the other side of the screen (unless that something happens to be Ruby or Emerald WEAPON). All in all, Omnislash is probably a bit more powerful than Highwind, but that's something that unless we develop super slo-mo replay, we may never know for sure. Rather, just think about it this way: there's not very much difference

between the 99th and 100th degrees of complete overkill. Anyways, Highwind can be yours if you just look hard enough at the Gelnika, a side quest which is further discussed in section IV.D. of the FAQ.

---

#### Howling Moon

- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Affects-----Caster

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Hyper Jump

- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Obviously unaffected by the rigors of smoker's hack, Cid effortlessly leaps several yards into the air, and comes barreling down on the enemy, striking the entire opposition with an blast three times as powerful as a regular attack. And the most amazing part is that no matter how much Cid is jostled about in midair, the cigarette never leaves his lips... absolutely amazing. Anyways, this is definitely one of the more powerful level two limit breaks available (though it loses something against a lone attacker as opposed to two or more enemies), and is actually the level two limit break of choice for Cid unless he is badly in need of MP, in which case you may decide to go with Dragon instead.

---

#### Landscaper

- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

You'll take back any comment you ever made about Yuffie being weak and frail after you witness her Landscaper attack. With this, she strikes the ground with such a force as to cause a massive earthquake to envelop the entire opposition (and just in case you were curious, this is marked as physical damage as opposed earth-based damage, meaning that even enemies immune to the effects of earth-based attacks will be still affected by the Landscaper... ouch!) Expect Landscaper to deal damage roughly equivalent to twice the damage of a normal attack, making Landscaper Yuffie's level two limit break of choice against any group of three or larger.

---

#### Lunatic High

- \* Used By-----Red XIII

- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/2nd
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Affects-----All allies

Lunatic High is generally a Haste-all spell for your team. During long battles, such as the fight with Jenova-BIRTH, this limit break is quite a handy maneuver. During shorter battles, however, it is generally not worth the effort, and you're probably better off sticking with Sled Fang. Either way, you shouldn't ever have to use this again once you pick up the Time materia and/or Big Guard.

-----

#### Meteodrive

- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

While being pile-driven by Tifa has recently been voted the number one sexual fantasy among high school teenagers, do keep in mind that it is also quite painful to the victim. Keeping in step with the progressive increase in strength, you'll find that Meteodrive is a bit more damaging than Waterkick, and makes Tifa's ultimate combo up to this point favorably comparable to any of the other level two limit breaks... assuming, of course, you get your yeahs. If you can score a yeah with Waterkick, you should have no problem at all doing the same for Meteodrive. A second miss slot is added before the cluster of two yeahs, but this is meant to psyche you out more than anything and should have no effect whatsoever on your yeahing.

-----

#### Meteor Strike

- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

-----

#### Meteorain

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies\*

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

-----

#### Mindblow

- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Indirect offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Mindblow is an attempt to deplete the target creature's MP. Granted, this can be a useful attack when you're going up against anything whose magic is a real threat to you (the Midgar Zolom comes to mind), but Mindblow has a few drawbacks, mind you. First and foremost, it's really only going to prove useful against something with enough HP that you can't just kill it outright, anyways. And you'll find that most of those enemies tend to be, you guessed it, boss creatures. Boss creatures, as you might have guessed, are immune to the effects of Mindblow. Needless to say, Mindblow's useful applications are few and far between, and you're advised to stick with Big Shot in most instances.

---

### Omnislash

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 4/Ultimate
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Oh, eat it you ass! Big Daddy Cloud's gonna slice yo' ass up! Other than that, there's really not much you can say about an attack that is nothing more than pure and complete overkill, so let's just put it this way: use Omnislash on anything that you really don't like and watch it die a quick and painful death. The only things in this game capable of withstanding Omnislash are Emerald and Ruby WEAPON, and they're just Goddamn ridiculous, anyways. The Omnislash manual can be obtained at the Speed Square at the Gold Saucer for the generous price of 32,000 BP, and is worth every penny.

---

### Planet Protector

- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Affects-----All allies

Level three is where Aeris's limit breaks tend to reach an almost ridiculous point, and generally tend to make people say, "huh? What the hell? It does what!? It makes me invincible!?" Yup, you read that right. Planet Protector renders your party completely immune to damage of any sort for a brief timeframe, during which you are free to attack your enemies with impunity. Of course, it does prevent your HP from changing at all, meaning that you will be unable to heal yourself at the time, but it is a minor setback, nonetheless. If you find that one of your characters is hinging on the brink of death while under the care of Planet Protector, you can either quickly eliminate the enemy threat while you are still invincible, or keep someone's turn active to quickly heal said character as soon as the invincibility wears off. If you can at all help it, you'll probably want to go with Planet Protector over Pulse of Life, but if your party is really hurting, then definitely opt for the latter (unless you're just positive that you'll have enough time to wipe out the enemy using Planet Protector). But all in all, both Planet Protector and Pulse of Life are very good attacks with only one major drawback: they almost aren't worth the trouble they are to get. At a time in the game when most of your other



characters are using level one and level two limit breaks, it's a huge pain in the ass to move up to level three. And worse than that, the effects of these great limit breaks are very short lived, as they will cease being available to you about halfway through the game (for more information, refer to section III.E. of the walkthrough).

---

#### Pulse of Life

- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/2nd
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Affects-----All allies

Pulse of Life is Aeris's second kick-ass level three limit break which has all of the pros and cons of Planet Protector. Except that rather than making you invincible, Pulse of Life will completely refresh your party. This means revival for the dead, a full supply of HP and MP, and a slate clean and devoid of status ailments. This makes Pulse of Life a great comeback attack, but you still might want to go with Planet Protector if you're sure it'll be enough for you to eliminate the enemy threat. Again, a great limit break, but refer to my commentary on Planet Protector for a quick rundown of the serious drawbacks involved with Aeris's level three limit breaks. On another note, if you've already acquired Pulse of Life... what's to stop you from going all the way and just going straight for Great Gospel?

---

#### Satellite Beam

- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 3/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Seal Evil

- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/2nd
- \* Type-----Indirect offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Aeris inflicts the Stop and Silence conditions upon the entire opposition. This combination can prove to be highly useful at specific times, and at the very least nifty at others. The downside is that this is the only really offensive level one limit break Aeris has, and it really doesn't do any direct damage. Plus, it is somewhat limited as to who and what will be affected by it, not to even mention that it's kind of pointless to use if the battle is about to be over, anyways.

---

#### Sled Fang

- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/1st
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Sled Fang is like a normal attack, only about three times as powerful. Sound familiar? It is kind of cool to watch, though. Red XIII rips through an enemy. And when I say "rips", I mean it. He frickin runs right through them. But on a serious note, Red XIII's second limit break, Lunatic High, is a good choice over this if you're fighting a prolonged battle. However, if either the battle you're fighting is soon to be over, or if you've already nabbed the Time materia, you'll probably want to stick with Sled Fang.

---

#### Slots

- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/1st\*
- \* Type-----????
- \* Affects-----????

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Somersault

- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 1/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----One enemy

For her second hit, Tifa proceeds to kick the crap out of her target, which may or may not be the thing she was originally attacking. While Beat Rush was the weakest of all the level-one limit breaks, things change with the addition of Somersault. While neither Beat Rush nor Somersault alone is as powerful as a standard level one limit break (though you'll find that Somersault is a tad bit more powerful than Beat Rush), you'll find that the two of them used in tandem make for one of the most powerful level-one limit breaks available, bested only potentially by Cid's Dynamite. Somersault, however, also introduces you to the concept of the miss, placing one before and after the yeahs on the Somersault slot. However, with three back to back yeahs still available, it shouldn't be too difficult to score maximum damage with Tifa's Somersault.

---

#### Stardust Ray

- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Limit Level/Level #---Lv. 2/2nd
- \* Type-----Direct offensive
- \* Affects-----All enemies\*

Red XIII lets loose with 10 shooting stars, each of which will descend upon random targets, each striking for a little more than half the damage Red XIII would deal with a regular attack. The effects are cumulative, making this a



\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None  
\* Location-----Rocket Town

Unlike previous Final Fantasies, where defensive magic was something you know you never used (come on, admit it), protective magic is indeed an almost necessary venture in Final Fantasy VII. The glaring downside to the Barrier materia is the existence of the Big Guard enemy skill, which becomes available before the Barrier materia does, and offers the effects of every spell offered by the Barrier materia except for Reflect, and a Haste-all spell in addition to that. As an additional whammy, you can equip the E. Skill materia without the severe statistical drawbacks of the Barrier materia. For this reason, the Barrier, M-Barrier, and Wall spells offered by the Barrier materia are almost entirely unnecessary, leaving the Reflect spell as Barrier's only offering. Reflect is somewhat of a drastic spell to cast, and given the AP requirement needed to unlock it, will take quite some time and effort to unlock. There are times in which having a Reflect spell may prove useful, but those times are few and far between. There actually is one more potential use for the Barrier materia, and that is to serve to re-apply Barrier or M-Barrier in the event that Big Guard wears off (as through this method, you can re-apply either at a fraction of the cost). It's just that not only are you going to have to get yourself into a fight so long that Big Guard actually has time to wear off, this is also going to have to be a fight were Barrier or M-Barrier alone will do the trick (as opposed to both at the same time). In either instance, Barrier is a materia that is only truly functional when attached to All.

---

#### Comet

\* Spells-----Comet, Comet 2 (Lv. 2)  
\* AP-----12,000 (Lv. 2), 60,000 (Lv. 3)  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +2 Mag, -2 Str, +1 MDef, -1 Vit  
\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None  
\* Location-----Hidden at City of the Ancients

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Contain

\* Spells-----Freeze, Break (Lv. 2), Tornado (Lv. 3), Flare (Lv. 4)  
\* AP-----5,000 (Lv. 2), 10,000 (Lv. 3), 15,000 (Lv. 4), 60,000 (Lv. 5)  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Stat Adj.-----+10% MP, -10% HP, +4 Mag, -4 Str, +2 MDef, -2 Vit  
\* Element/Effect---N/A/Para, Petr, Conf  
\* Location-----Hidden at Mideel

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#### Destruct

\* Spells-----De-Barrier, De-Spell (Lv. 2), Death (Lv. 3)

\* AP-----6,000 (Lv. 2), 10,000 (Lv. 3), 45,000 (Lv. 4)  
\* Price-----9,000 Gil  
\* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +2 Mag, -2 Str, +1 MDef, -1 Vit  
\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/Death  
\* Location-----Hidden (it hits you, actually) at Shinra Mansion, Mideel

In addition to hurting really badly when hurled at you at a high velocity, the Destruct materia also makes a damn fine magic materia, to boot. It offers you the "dispel"-type spells, De-Barrier and De-Spell, which can prove useful under certain circumstances. However, the really useful spell on this materia is the third spell, Death. Need we even discuss the usefulness of instant death magic? Then again, at this point in the game, you should probably have also picked up the Odin materia, which serves more or less the same purpose (except that Odin will still work against anything immune to instant death). But, also bear in mind that the Death spell is far more economical than the costly Odin summon, making a Death-all spell definitely something to consider instead. While you can achieve instant death effects with Destruct and Added Effect, do remember that you can get the same effect with Odin. There's really not much difference between the two, but you'll probably want to go with Odin, seeing as not only is it a more useful attack to have on hand, but also that the Odin materia won't lay a Strength penalty on you (and since you obviously appear to be setting up this character as a fighter, I'd suppose that would be important to you). So overall, you may not see yourself reaching for destruction magic too often, but believe me when I say that there are times in the game where you'll be very glad you have this materia on hand.

---

#### Earth

\* Spells-----Quake, Quake 2 (Lv. 2), Quake 3 (Lv. 3)  
\* AP-----6,000 (Lv. 2), 22,000 (Lv. 3), 40,000 (Lv. 4)  
\* Price-----1,500 Gil  
\* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str  
\* Element/Effect---Earth/None  
\* Location-----Kalm, Junon

The Earth materia grants you access to earth spells, which are more or less the most powerful of the elemental spells (not counting Gravity). While earth magic is a bit more powerful than poison magic (and is also actually cheaper, in terms of MP), also bear in mind that earth magic lacks a kick-ass status ailment to accompany its attacks, meaning that wherever applicable, you may want to at least strike first with poison magic instead. Also, like the Poison materia, it takes considerably more AP to level up the Earth materia than it does Lightning, Ice, and/or Fire, meaning that the more potent earth spells surface later on and/or with more invested time and effort. Again on the negative side of things, you'll find that many enemies are immune to earth magic (many more than are immune to poison magic). But I suppose that it should be fairly obvious to you that anything flying through the air isn't really going to be hurt too badly by an earthquake. So as long as you don't try to off any birds or other flying or floating things with earth magic, you should see some good results with the Earth materia.

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#### Exit

\* Spells-----Escape, Remove (Lv. 2)  
\* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 30,000 (Lv. 3)  
\* Price-----10,000 Gil

- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Location-----Rocket Town

You'll receive this materia at a time when random battles are more of a joke than a challenge, and the Exit materia really only helps to carve that fact out in stone. The two spells granted to you by the Exit materia ensure that random battles really never need worry you again. Granted, the first spell (Escape) will end any random battle at the expense of any AP, Gil, or Exp. earned for the fight, and the alternative (Remove) is very costly in terms of MP and takes 10,000 AP to unlock, the Exit materia is still a good trump card to have up your sleeve in case anything ever goes awry during a random battle. Not only are its effects the same regardless of the caster's magic prowess, but the Exit materia's adjustments to your stats are less severe than the other more advanced materia of the time. These factors make Exit a handy materia for spellcasters and non-spellcasters alike. One good reason to hand this to one of your non-spellcasting characters is that you usually should have the MP to cast the spells if need be.

---

### Fire

- \* Spells-----Fire, Fire 2 (Lv. 2), Fire 3 (Lv. 3)
- \* AP-----2,000 (Lv. 2), 18,000 (Lv. 3), 35,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Price-----600 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Fire/None
- \* Location-----Various shops in the world

Another of the basic three magic materia (the other two being Ice and Lightning), the Fire materia grants you access to all of the fire spells. Like the ice and lightning spells, the fire spells are powerful spells throughout most of the game. Also like the Ice and Lightning materia, Fire levels-up pretty fast, giving you quicker access to more powerful magic. If you'd like more than one copy of the Fire materia, go ahead and pick one up whenever you can. If not, note that Red XIII joins your party already equipped with one (that has quite a bit of AP on it, to boot), and that you can easily get by without a Fire materia until you meet up with him.

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### Full Cure

- \* Spells-----Fullcure (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----3,000 (Lv. 2), 100,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.-----+10% MP, -10% HP, +4 Mag, -4 Str, +2 MDef, -2 Vit
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Location-----Hidden at Cosmo Canyon (later)

Full Cure is the always-useful Restore materia souped-up to an almost unhealthy extreme. At a time during the game when Cure-all spells are a virtual mainstay, you may be a bit disappointed to discover Full Cure's incompatibility with the All materia, meaning that the Full Cure spell it offers is for all practical purposes a very expensive, albeit never-ending X-Potion. As for the materia itself, it's a double-edged sword. Sure, it's nice to have around, and can help at times. You also will see a large boost in the wearer's magically-oriented statistics, and the materia can be used with great results to this end. On the other hand, other statistics will suffer greatly for this bonus, and

given Full Cure's incompatibility with All, not to mention the high MP cost of the Full Cure spell, the usefulness of the Full Cure materia is limited more or less to a trump card.

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### Gravity

- \* Spells-----Demi, Demi 2 (Lv. 2), Demi 3 (Lv. 3)
- \* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 40,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Price-----8,000 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +2 Mag, -2 Str, +1 MDef, -1 Vit
- \* Element/Effect---Gravity/None
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Gi Cave, Costa Del Sol (later), Mideel

Gravity is the final elemental attack materia you'll receive, and is the odd ball of the elemental attacks. Gravity magic, as you may or may not know, does damage proportional to an enemies current HP as opposed to being derived from one's Magic Attack stat. As you might expect, this means that gravity magic is going to be far more effective versus enemies with high HP, and generally isn't even worth your time against weaker creatures. While one nice point worthy of mention is that the Gravity materia suffers no damage loss due to using it in conjunction with an All materia, the one glaring disadvantage is that the majority of things you would want to use gravity magic on (namely boss creatures) all tend to possess an immunity to gravity magic. Another disadvantage of the Gravity materia is the fact that there is also an enemy skill available called Laser, whose effects are the same as those of Demi 2. And not only can you equip the E. Skill materia without the noticeably severe stat adjustments of the Gravity materia, but you'll also notice that Laser is much cheaper to use than Demi 2. The one advantage that the Gravity materia does have is, as I've already stated, its compatibility with All (something that the Laser attack does not possess), but you may very well see yourself using Laser of the most part until the days of Demi 3, which is the only Demi spell that offers effects greater than those of Laser.

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### Heal

- \* Spells-----Poisona, Esuna (Lv. 2), Resist (Lv. 3)
- \* AP-----12,000 (Lv. 2), 52,000 (Lv. 3), 60,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Price-----1,500 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Location-----Kalm, Junon, Costa Del Sol, Gongaga

This is another one of those materia which really doesn't even merit me explaining to you why you need one. It should just automatically click in your head that something that grants you spells of protection from status ailments is going to be useful. On the negative end of things, it takes a lot amount of AP to level up, so you're stuck with just the Poisuna spell for quite some time, which kinda does suck. But the spells ultimately offered by this materia (Esuna and Resist) are quite powerful.

---

### Ice

- \* Spells-----Ice, Ice 2 (Lv. 2), Ice 3 (Lv. 3)
- \* AP-----2,000 (Lv. 2), 18,000 (Lv. 3), 35,000 (Lv. 4)

- \* Price-----600 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Ice/None
- \* Location-----Various shops in the world

One of the three basic magic materia, the Ice materia grants you access to all of the ice spells, which are powerful attacks throughout the majority of the game. Another benefit here is that, being one of the three basic magic materia, it levels up quite quickly, granting you fast and easy access to higher-level spells. Cloud begins the game with one, but you can buy additional ones just about anywhere.

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### Lightning

- \* Spells-----Bolt, Bolt 2 (Lv. 2), Bolt 3 (Lv. 3)
- \* AP-----2,000 (Lv. 2), 18,000 (Lv. 3), 35,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Price-----600 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Lightning/None
- \* Location-----Various shops in the world

Take everything I said about the Ice materia and stick it right here instead. Also note that for the first good chunk of the game (Midgar), this is probably the most important of the three basic magic materia, seeing as a lot of enemies there are susceptible to lightning-based attacks.

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### Master Magic

- \* Spells-----All Spells
- \* AP-----N/A
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.-----N/A
- \* Element/Effect---N/A
- \* Location-----From man in Kalm (later), from Huge Materia (green)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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### Mystify

- \* Spells-----Confu, Berserk (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----12,000 (Lv. 2), 25,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----6,000 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/Conf, Bsrk
- \* Location-----Gongaga, Cosmo Canyon

Mystify is a bit of an odd-ball materia in that it offers two very different spells: Confu and Berserk. Both tend to be more potent attacks than, say, Sleep and Silence, but in the flip side of the coin tend to affect less of the population. Combined with Added Effect in one's weapon, Mystify is a mixed bag. On one hand, it will offer you the effects of Berserk right away, and when you are hitting with confusion and berserk in tandem, they can produce some very



nice results against a much more broad range of the population that either spell alone could. Another good reason to do this is that Confu and Berserk are two of the most costly indirectly offensive spells to use in terms of MP. On the other hand, unlike Seal or Transform, this is going to be a combination in which you must focus more heavily on attacking to produce optimum results (as opposed to hitting them once or so to afflict them and then being done with it). As for the attacks themselves, they can prove useful in a pinch, except that not so much is gained by attaching Mystify to an All materia as would be the case with Seal or Transform. The reasons are kinda obvious, as an entire battlefield of confused opponents won't stay that way for too long. If anything, you'd be doing it for the Berserk-all spell.

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## Poison

- \* Spells-----Bio, Bio 2 (Lv. 2), Bio 3 (Lv. 3)
- \* AP-----5,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 38,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Price-----1,500 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Poison/Pois
- \* Location-----Hidden in Shinra H.Q., Kalm, Junon, Costa Del Sol\*

The Poison materia grants you access to the poison spells. For starters, you'll see that these spells are more powerful than the fire, ice, and lightning spells are (albeit far more costly in terms of MP). In addition, the poison spells also have a relatively good chance of inflicting the poison status when they hit (which I guess you should have just assumed, anyways). Now, the downside. First of all, you'll find that it takes more AP to level up the Poison materia than it does with Fire, Ice, or Lightning, meaning that more effort will have to go into unlocking the more potent poison magic. Secondly, you'll find that many enemies possess resistances and/or immunity to poison magic. Luckily for you, it's usually pretty obvious that poison-based attacks are going to have little to no effect on a machine or a pile of toxic sludge, so as long as you employ a little common sense when using this materia, you'll be fine. A final note that must be made about the Poison materia is possible linkage to the Elemental or the Added Effect materia. Note that both the Elemental and Added Effect materia will offer you the ability to attack with or protection from the poison status, but only the Elemental materia will also grant you the same for the poison element. For this reason, you'll probably want to opt for the Elemental materia over Added Effect (if only to leave your Added Effect materia free for use in other venues). Either way, the poison status ailment is a good thing to be fighting with on your side, because not only does it do a considerable amount of damage if cast early on in battle, but also because many of the game's enemies are affected by it.

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## Restore

- \* Spells-----Cure, Cure 2 (Lv. 2), Regen (Lv. 3), Cure 3 (Lv. 4)
- \* AP-----2,500 (Lv. 2), 17,000 (Lv. 3), 24,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Price-----750 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Location-----Various shops in the world

Do I really even need to comment on the necessity of curative spells? You'll find a Restore materia on your first mission, but it's a very good idea to pick up another one or even two at a local shop. For maximum results, you'll likely

be wanting to pair up Restore with an All materia, as well (though later on it also makes an excellent defensive pair with the Magic Counter materia). Like Fire, Ice, and Lightning, Restore materia is sold all over the place. It also levels-up relatively easy, to keep up with your curative needs.

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#### Revive

- \* Spells-----Life, Life 2 (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----45,000 (Lv. 2), 55,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----3,000 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +2 Mag, -2 Str, +1 MDef, -1 Vit
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Location-----Junon, Costa Del Sol

Revival magic is... to put it succinctly, useful. And that's about the biggest understatement since "Hitler wasn't a very nice guy". On a negative note, you are stuck with just the Life spell throughout most of the game due to an insanely high amount of AP required to level it up... You'll also notice that Revive will likely be the first "advanced" magic materia you'll acquire, and that its alterations to your stats tend to be far more severe than those made by the other materia you possess at the time. Keep this in mind whilst distributing your materia. On a final note, though you may be tempted to pair Revive with the Final Attack materia, realize that Phoenix is actually a far better idea.

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#### Seal

- \* Spells-----Sleep, Silence (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----3,000 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/Sleep, Silence
- \* Location-----Junon, Costa Del Sol

Seal will grant you access to the Sleepel and later, the Silence spells. They are useful to an extent, but they are generally among the least debilitating status ailments you can afflict an opponent with. The good news is that this means that it will usually work (except, obviously, versus boss-type creatures). This is a fact that makes Seal a good choice to pair with Added Effect in one's weapon, as you can usually expect to see results from it. And while Sleep and Silence are not the most detrimental of all status ailments, their usefulness is greatly increased when they are applied on an almost constant basis. As an added bonus, using the Seal materia in conjunction with the Added Effect materia will grant you access to the effects of Silence right off the bat, as well. If you are not using Seal with the Added Effect materia, bear in mind that All might be a good choice, as well. As we have already established, Sleep and Silence are among the status afflictions most likely to effect the opposition, making Sleep-all and Silence-all spells more likely to affect everything on-screen, not to mention more useful than single-target castings. On another fun side note, even though it takes a lot of AP to unlock Silence, the Seal materia takes the least AP of any materia available to master.

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#### Shield

- \* Spells-----Shield (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 100,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.-----+10% MP, -10% HP, +4 Mag, -4 Str, +2 MDef, -2 Vit
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Final Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Time

- \* Spells-----Haste, Slow (Lv. 2), Stop (Lv. 3)
- \* AP-----8,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 42,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Price-----6,000 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +2 Mag, -2 Str, +1 MDef, -1 Vit
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/Slow, Stop
- \* Location-----Gongaga, Rocket Town

The selling point of the Time materia is the Haste spell, which can give your party big advantages in long fights. The disadvantage to this, of course, is that the effects of Haste can also be provided by the Big Guard enemy skill. Still, a good Haste-all spell can prove useful in the early game, and the Slow and Stop spells, when utilized properly, can also help to increase your advantage in the speed department. Time has much potential in the field of linkage, also. When used in conjunction with the Added Effect materia (in your weapon, of course), you can see some interesting results. Seeing as the effects of Slow are the most universally effective of any status ailment, you can expect to see results most of the time (albeit not the most detrimental of them all). But in response to that issue, Time will also imbue your weapon with Stop effects. While not as widely effective as the Slow effects, it can really screw your target's world up. In conclusion, Time in conjunction with the Added Effect materia actually provides you with the best of both worlds, in that you can produce some extremely debilitating effects to those who would fall prey to them, but failing that, you should at least have some degree of effect (via Slow) on just about anything you come into contact with. However, before you go attaching Time to Added Effect, first make sure that it could not better serve you with an All materia. Granted, you should have Big Guard at the point you receive the Time materia, but you are at a point in the game where a simple Haste-all spell might very well suffice (and at a fraction of the cost). And there's always other materia you can just as well link to Added Effect, such as Seal, Mystify, or Transform.

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#### Transform

- \* Spells-----Mini, Toad (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----8,000 (Lv. 2), 24,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----5,000 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag, -1 Str
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/Mini, Toad
- \* Location-----Gongaga, Cosmo Canyon, North Corel (later), Mideel

You'll find your first Transform materia at Mt. Corel, but if you don't plan on having more than one, go ahead and sell it. Cait Sith enters the party with one, and he has 7,000 AP already accumulated, meaning that you will have both



even get a chance to tack on the extra hit. Other than that, it's really your call, but I'll provide you with two of my favorite Added Cut combos to just get your mental train of thought rolling. The first is Added Cut with Deathblow, which can completely offset Deathblow's low success rate and even make Deathblow your primary attack command. This can also be useful if your fight command has been replaced with Slash-all or Flash, and you'd like a fallback attack to keep in reserve (this holds especially true for Flash). The second combination is with the Gravity materia, preferably later in the game when you have learned Demi 3. One disadvantage of gravity magic is that it is never going to kill something outright- just weaken it. The Added Cut/Gravity combination makes it entirely possible to wipe a creature out in a single casting of a gravity spell. And if you'd like to see some really cheap ways to use the Added Cut materia, check out section XIX.D. of the FAQ.

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#### Added Effect

- \* AP-----100,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Location---Hidden in the Gi Cave

Similar to the Elemental materia, the Added Effect materia rather imbues your weapon or armor with a specific effect, such as poison, toad, sleep, confuse, et cetera. Several different materia can bestow several different effects in this manner. While this is a great materia to have handy in case you ever find yourself needing to guard against any particular status ailment, you'll likely find yourself more often using Added Effect in an offensive manner. Not only does Added Effect allow you to strike with the benefit of status ailments (and likely striking with several at once, depending on the linked materia), it prevents you from wasting a turn to stop and cast said status spell, not to mention even the MP that you're saving. Furthermore, the status effects of Added Effect are applied on a more constant basis, so little work goes into trying to figure out what is and isn't affected by your chosen ailments. The downside is that when used offensively, Added Materia will not apply itself 100% of the time, but still enough of the time to prove useful. In a manner of speaking, Added Effect is one of the best methods of indirect offense available to you, purely because it allows you to splice it into your direct offense. Sadly, you can't stick an All materia in there somewhere, but later on you sure as bloody hell can toss in a Slash All or Mega All materia to bring your indirect warfare to new heights. Several magic and summon materia are compatible with Added Effect, and are marked as such. Early in the game, you have quite a few materia to choose from, and good choices include Seal, Mystify, Transform, Time, and Odin/Destruct. Poison is not recommended for the reason that it is a better pair with Elemental (see my comments on the Poison materia for further discussion), and Choco/Mog is recommended only as an alternative to the Time materia, which offers the Slow effect in addition to that of Stop. Later in the game, however, nods for the best bang for your buck go to Contain and Hades, both of which offer much larger and much deadlier cocktails than those offered by any of the aforementioned materia. For further discussion as to the applications of certain materia when linked to Added Effect, refer to the commentary on the specific materia themselves. Lastly, a point must be stressed to nab this materia when you have the chance, because it is one of the game's lost-forevers as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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#### All

- \* AP-----1,500 (Lv. 2), 6,000 (Lv. 3), 18,000 (Lv. 4), 35,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Location---Hidden in a variety of places, Fort Condor

The support materia that came to define support materia, All proves to be one of the most useful (and also the most common) materia in the game. You'll find numerous copies scattered about, and believe me when I say you just can't have too many All materia. The All materia is compatible with most magic materia, and allows you to target all enemies or all allies with the spells of that materia. You'll get one "all" casting per spell on that materia per level of the All materia. So, at level two, you'll get two "all" castings of each spell on the attached materia. Another advantage of the All materia that should be mentioned right now is the ease with which it levels up, and is one of the easiest materia in the game to master. This is another good thing, because if you ever find yourself hard-up for cash, you'd be surprised at the pretty penny a mastered All materia can fetch (and you'll have so many of them later on, you can stand to part with just one or two). All's only glaring downside (besides being compatible with only magic materia) is that when you choose to target all, you will suffer an approximate 33% loss in overall power of the spell cast. For this reason, you may choose to toggle the all effects on or off at times (a fact which was explained in section I.B. of the FAQ). You can also use All in the menu screen with curative magic (yet another fact which was explained in section I.B. of the FAQ). On a final note, while there are many copies of the All materia available, as well as the option to even buy them later on, a few of those copies (as well as the ability to buy them, if you are not careful), are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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#### Counter

- \* AP-----40,000 (Lv. 2), 80,000 (Lv. 3), 120,000 (Lv. 4), 200,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Location---Hidden in the Final Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Elemental

- \* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 40,000 (Lv. 3), 80,000 (Lv. 4)
- \* Location---Hidden at Shinra H.Q., Mt. Nibel, & Nibelheim (later)

The usefulness of the Elemental materia is directly proportionate to the thought and effort you put into using it effectively. By taking advantage of the enemy's weak areas or by vastly increasing your own defenses against particular elemental attacks, you can find yourself at a serious advantage over the enemy. As an added bonus, Elemental is a materia that starts out as very useful, and only gets better from there. The offensive bonuses are the same for every level, while the defensive bonuses raise with each level, from halving damage from a particular element, to negating it entirely, and finally to absorbing said damage at the third level of the materia's mastery. To use this materia, simply link it to any materia which bears an elemental property, such as Fire, Ice, Leviathan, etc. And sorry, Kjata is incompatible with Elemental. If you are unsure as to a materia's elemental affiliation, refer to that particular magic or summon materia in this section of the FAQ, and read the listing for "Element/Added Effect". As for the possible uses of the Elemental materia, they are many. Early in the game, it provides good defense versus particular elements, not to mention the only access you will have to attacks of certain elements (namely wind) for quite some time. Later on, should you see the offensive use of Elemental taking a backseat to powerful doomsday attacks,

you'll see that a powered-up Elemental materia, properly used, can vastly increase your survival rate on the battlefield. There are three of these to be found in the game, however two of those three are lost-forevers, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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#### Final Attack

\* AP-----20,000 (Lv. 2), 40,000 (Lv. 3), 80,000 (Lv. 4), 160,000 (Lv. 5)

\* Location---From Dio at the Gold Saucer (Battle Square)

Research on this materia has not yet been fully conducted, but it is worthy of note that it does not cost the wielder and additional MP.

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the (further) commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### HP Absorb

\* AP-----100,000 (Lv. 2)

\* Location---Hidden in Wutai and the Final Cave

HP Absorb works a bit differently than MP Absorb did. With it, you are not so concerned with MP efficiency as you are in doing as much damage as humanly possible to your enemy. Unlike MP Absorb, HP Absorb is compatible with all magic, command, and summon materia (save a few), but you're still going to find the biggest bang for your buck in summon materia (or at least the more powerful magic materia, like Comet and Ultima). Remember, attacks that target all enemies are prime candidates for HP Absorb linkage. HP Absorb absorbs HP equal to the total damage done divided by 10, meaning that if you plan on using this materia, you're going to want to stick it on the most powerful stuff you've got. As with MP Absorb, the one disadvantage is that you cannot take more HP from an enemy than it has, but I really don't see this as being much of a problem at all. On a final note, the first HP Absorb materia is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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#### Magic Counter

\* AP-----40,000 (Lv. 2), 80,000 (Lv. 3), 160,000 (Lv. 4), 300,000 (Lv. 5)

\* Location---Gold Saucer (Chocobo Square)

Research on this materia has not yet been fully conducted, but it is worthy of note that it does not cost the wielder and additional MP.

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#### MP Absorb

\* AP-----100,000 (Lv. 2)

\* Location---Hidden in Wutai

MP Absorb was obviously created by some game programmer who supported overkill attacks, because that is exactly what MP Absorb helps you to do. But not only does it allow you to wantonly cast your doomsday magic, it can actually gain you MP if you play your cards right. For this reason, you may be tempted to pair MP Absorb with a command materia, but bear in mind that the MP taken will be the total damage dealt divided by 100. Total damage. Meaning that the more powerful the attack and the more targets, the more MP you will be raking in. You'll more than likely want to go with a powerful summon (and for some reason, MP Absorb does not appear to be compatible with magic materia... odd) with MP Absorb. You receive MP Absorb from the Wutai side quest (as discussed in section IV.B. of the FAQ). You'll also receive the Leviathan materia from the Wutai side quest, and you'll find that the two make an excellent pair. Leviathan offers excellent damage for the MP cost, and so long as you cast it on a group of at least two or three, you should not be losing much, if any MP at all (and this is early in the game- as your characters levels rise, as will the damage dealt and your MP return). MP Absorb also reduces the cost of nailing a lone attacker with your summon materia, further increasing its (the summon materia's) use in that respect, as well. Anyways, MP Absorb is almost as good as putting a little infinity symbol under one's MP. The only real catch is that you have to use it against a small group or more, and that you cannot take more MP from a creature than it has (usually, this is not a problem, but some enemies do not have MP). You also must have at least the MP supply to cast the attached summon. This is one reason that Leviathan is recommended for the job, as it is the cheapest summon attack which deals damage sufficient to make it a powerful attack clear up until the end of the game. More powerful summon materia will do more damage than Leviathan, but also at exponentially higher MP costs. And you'll find that MP/damage efficiency tends to drop after about Alexander or so.

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#### MP Turbo

- \* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 30,000 (Lv. 3), 60,000 (Lv. 4), 120,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Location---Hidden in the Whirlwind Maze

Attached to a magic materia, MP Turbo will increase the effectiveness of the spells granted by 10% per level of mastery achieved by the MP Turbo materia (up to 50%), but in return will up the MP cost by 10% per level of mastery achieved by the MP Turbo materia.

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the (further) commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Quadra Magic

- \* AP-----40,000 (Lv. 2), 80,000 (Lv. 3), 120,000 (Lv. 4), 200,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Location---Hidden in the Cave South of Wutai

Research on this materia has not yet been fully conducted, but it is worthy of note that it does not cost the wielder and additional MP.

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the (further) commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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make up for his low Strength rating. On a final note, I would also like to mention my other favorite Deathblow combination, which also helps to circumvent the low Attack Percentage issue. This involves linking the Deathblow materia to Added Cut, meaning that no matter what, you will always get a hit in with D. Blow. Actually, with this combination, you can actually switch to using D. Blow as a normal attack full-time. This combo also helps if your normal attack has been replaced by Slash-All or Flash and you'd like a good fallback attack (which should hold especially true in the case of Flash).

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### Double Cut

- \* Commands----2x-Cut, 4x-Cut (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----100,000 (Lv. 2), 150,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Stat Adj.---+2 Dexterity
- \* Location----Hidden in the Gelnika

Double your pleasure, double your fun! Double the amount of ass you kick with the power of the Double Cut materia! With this, your fight command becomes literally twice as effective at no additional cost to you, so it's really a win-win situation. Of any and all materia, this is by far the materia best-suited for your fighting characters, as the cumulative damage it confers against a single target is the best you can accomplish through conventional means. Against multiple targets, Double Cut will not start to be effective until it levels up and confers the powerful 4x-Cut. With the 4x-Cut handy, your fighter will be a powerful force versus multiple targets, and downright deadly against a single target. The only downside is that when Double Cut "evolves" into 4x-Cut, you lose the ability to choose the target for each attack, a fact which would not be so bad if not for the game's highly questionable judgment. Ergo, you still can't count on 4-x Cut to off four enemies, even though each one would easily die in one blow. In short, 4x-Cut is a powerful force against multiple enemies, albeit an unpredictable one (in which case you may instead opt for a more-reliable Slash-all attack), but against a lone enemy, there is no greater attack. On a final note, Double Cut is not compatible with the All materia, nor is it cumulative with the Slash-All materia, just in case you were getting any ideas.

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### Enemy Skill

- \* Commands----E. Skill
- \* AP-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Hidden in a variety of places

This is one of the most unique materia in the entire game. It doesn't gain AP, but rather you learn attacks from enemies. To "learn" an attack, your character must: be equipped with the E.Skill materia, witness the attack, and survive the attack. You'll find it early in the game (and you'll find a few more copies scattered throughout the land), and you should take this as sort of a sign that if you take the time to learn the attacks, they can be a big help. The attacks are quite powerful and/or useful, but are reigned in somewhat by E. Skill's complete incompatibility with support materia. What I'm trying to say is that the main benefit of the E. Skill materia is that it gives you access to powerful attacks very early in the game, so the earlier you take the time to learn all of the enemy skills, the more you shall benefit from them. There are four E. Skill materia hidden throughout the game, the earliest of which is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. On that note, also

realize that you may not learn an attack made from another E. Skill materia- you must learn it from the enemies themselves. For a listing of the twenty attacks that you may learn via the E. Skill materia, refer to section XVII. of the FAQ. On a final additional note, two of the 20 skills are lost-forevers, ergo only two of the four E. Skill material can actually be mastered.

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#### Manipulate

- \* Commands----Manip
- \* AP-----40,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Cait Sith, Fort Condor (later), Rocket Town (later)

Manipulate more or less gives you full control over a target creature, allowing you to do with them and their attacks as you please. Your control over the enemy will be maintained as long as the enemy is alive or until it takes physical damage. As you might expect, several measures have been taken to ensure that you aren't allowed to win the game through wanton manipulation alone. For starters, like so many of the more crippling status ailments (such as Toad and Mini), many monsters are immune to the effects of Manipulation. Secondly, you'll notice that this isn't the most accurate attack in the world, usually taking a few tries to cement, though the HypnoCrown accessory can help you out in this respect. The meaning of this is that in the time it takes you to win a battle by getting your enemies to kill themselves, you probably could have done the same yourself several turns ago. Manipulate proves most useful against enemies with strong attacks, because not only will it get them off your back, but it lets you turn said attacks back on the enemy, so long as you're not doing them a favor by healing them with it. In addition to just that use, the Manipulate materia makes several enemy skills far easier to learn (see the E. Skill materia for more), and is actually the only way you can learn some of them. Secondly, manipulation will drop an enemy's evasion rate to absolute zero, which is an interesting fact to consider, and very valuable knowledge against one enemy in particular, the Cactuar. On a final note, manipulation is also a long-range attack.

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#### Master Command

- \* Commands----Steal, Throw\*, Mime, Manip, Morph, D Blow, Sense
- \* AP-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----From man in Kalm (later), from Huge Materia (yellow)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Mime

- \* Commands----Mime
- \* AP-----100,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Hidden in the Cave South of Wutai

Mime is a materia with virtually unlimited potential. If you play your cards right, this little bastard alone has the power to bring anything and anyone to ultimate ruin. No, this materia does not turn your enemies into mimes (because that would be too cruel). Rather, the mime command will mimic the last action taken by any member of your party. The lone exception here is that the limit breaks of other characters cannot be mimed (however, you may mime your own limit breaks, given that it was the last action performed by any member of your team). However, do note that the Mime command is absolutely free, and so long as you keep it up, limitless. For example, suppose a member of your party casts Knights of the Round (and we're also going to be assuming that you are fighting one of only two enemies in the game capable of actually surviving said attack). If the next command you use is Mime, then you get a free casting of Knights of the Round. If you want, you may hold off more commands and get yet another casting, and another, and another, ad infinitum. To really see some devastating effects, you can keep mastering this materia to achieve more copies, but that is reaching a point of being borderline (if not entirely) cheating. There is one major point that must be stressed, however, and that is that the Mime materia has one very serious weakness. That weakness is that retaliatory materia (Counter Attack, Magic Counter, and Counter) all count as attacks made by your teammates. Thus, with high-level retaliatory materia equipped, "planning" an attack to Mime is nigh impossible to do. Keep this in mind.

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#### Morph

- \* Commands----Morph
- \* AP-----40,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Hidden in Temple of the Ancients

Morph is somewhat like the Steal materia, only entirely different. Rather than stealing an item from the enemy, you turn said enemy into an item. Morphing generally gives you better merchandise than theft, but it's also much more difficult to do. The morph command produces a very weak attack, and for the morph to be successful, that weak attack must kill the enemy in question. Naturally, it would be to your advantage to have the Sense materia handy when morphing. Other than that, the Morph materia has no other actual uses, so that's about it, then. Next!

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#### Sense

- \* Commands----Sense
- \* AP-----40,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Hidden in the Sector 6 Playground (later), Kalm, Junon

Not the most useful materia in the world, as all it tells you is stuff you can find throughout section III. of the FAQ, though it will give you a direct number on an enemy's maximum and remaining HP. At least once you've used the Sense materia on an enemy, you will be able to view their remaining HP for the remainder of the battle simply by moving your cursor over them (and by pressing the Select button, if the extra information option has been turned off). Of course, the turn it takes to actually use this skill would probably be better spent kicking ass, anyways. The Sense materia is actually best used in conjunction with the Morph materia, as you'll need to get an enemy's HP within a specific frame for morphing. Oh, and as a handy bonus, it is, in fact, compatible with the All materia.

---

## Slash All

- \* Commands----Slash-All, Flash (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----100,000 (Lv. 2), 150,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Hidden in the Ancient Forest

Replaces your normal attack command with "Slash-All", which does 75% the damage of a normal attack to all enemies. I have not yet made it clear if this holds true even if one enemy is on the screen. Still, the advantages and disadvantages should be clear.

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the (further) commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Steal

- \* Commands----Steal, Mug (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----40,000 (Lv. 2), 50,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Stat Adj.---+2 Dexterity
- \* Location----Hidden in the Sector 6 Sewers, Kalm

Steal lets you, well, steal things from your enemies. And you'd be surprised what kind of useful things your enemies carry. Pay close attention to the walkthrough to learn of prime stealing opportunities that will let you acquire powerful equipment far earlier than you would be able to buy it, not to mention free of cost. In that respect, it can make the Throw materia far more useful to your group, especially early in the game when you're hurting for gil the most. Furthermore, this materia comes in inexplicably handy whilst breeding chocobos (refer to section I.X. of the FAQ for more on that matter), and even has a few more uses detailed in section XIX.B. of the FAQ. What more can you ask for from a materia? Well, certainly not much, and for the majority of the game, theft is all you are going to get with it. Later, Steal is upgraded to Mug, which is Steal plus a normal attack, but this is too little far too late given the high AP requirements. Likely far before you up Steal to the necessary 40,000 AP needed for the Mug attack, you'll have already found the Steal as Well materia, which grants you far many more opportunities in the field of armed robbery. On a final note, have you noticed that stealing isn't necessarily evil whenever you do it? Just thought I would point that out to ya.

---

## Throw

- \* Commands----Throw, Coin (Lv. 2)
- \* AP-----45,000 (Lv. 2), 60,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Stat Adj.---+1 Vitality
- \* Location----Yuffie, Fort Condor (later), Rocket Town (later)

Throw grants you actually the single most powerful direct-damage single-target physical attack for the vast majority of the early game. It's just that the only thing that's going to be hurting more than whatever just got a sword jammed up its ass is your pocketbook from being made to purchase surprisingly expensive projectiles. That's the glaring downside- you can't just pick up a

rock off the ground or something and hurl it; you can only throw things that might actually be useful to you. More specifically, you can only throw weapons (and you'd be amazed how much it hurts someone to be hit with a shotgun flung at them at 150 MPH). And, as you may have already figured out, weapons are expensive. However, you can make good use of your Steal materia in order to procure yourself some projectiles. Still, they are somewhat of a limited resource, and you're best sticking to other attacks unless a powerful attack is needed (several boss fights come to mind on this one). Bear in mind that not only do stronger weapons do more damage when thrown, but the damage dealt is also dependent on the Strength of the thrower. Thus, stronger characters make better throwers. To be specific, throwing a weapon at an enemy will do approximately four times the damage that would have been dealt if that character would have instead attacked with it equipped. Also of mention is that when you level the Throw materia up (and don't hold your breath- it takes 45,000 AP), you'll earn the Coin command. It does not replace Throw, but rather it joins it on the menu screen, and the two flash back and forth between each other. The coin command lets you damage your enemies by hurling gil at them (Ebenezer Scrooge may have originated this maneuver). Despite how long it takes you to get it, Coin is really only useful later on when you have gil to burn. It is useful as it gives you something to do with your gil in the late game. Coin is an attack which targets all creatures, so its best used against groups of enemies rather than "wasted" on a single enemy, but given that you may not have any projectiles lying around, and providing that you have the gil to blow, Coin is the preferable attack hands-down. Perhaps the best part is that you are given the opportunity to select how much gil you wish to throw, thus dealing only the damage that needs to be dealt. Coin deals 1 damage for every 10 gil thrown. On a final note, both Throw and Coin, as you may have guessed, are long-range attacks.

---

#### X Item

- \* Commands----X-Item
- \* AP-----250,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Hidden in Midgar (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### X Magic

- \* Commands----X-Magic
- \* AP-----250,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Hidden in the Final Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### X Summon

- \* Commands----X-Summon



Cover materia.

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### Cover

- \* AP-----2,000 (Lv. 2), 10,000 (Lv. 3), 25,000 (Lv. 4), 40,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.---+1 Vitality
- \* Location----Hidden in Sector Five

Cover has its uses, don't get me wrong. It's just that among them is getting whoever wears it killed. Do pay close attention to whomever is chosen to take physical damage for the rest of the team (preferably someone like Barret or Cloud), because their HP will go down faster than the French in World War II. This holds especially the more Cover levels up. This is because for every level, an additional 20% chance of "covering" is added. That is, at level one, the wearer exercises some self-preservation in only defending his or her teammates from physical attacks 20% of the time. Sadly, this is more of a random calculation as opposed to the character defending your teammates when it might actually be useful. However, at mastered level, they will jump in front of any Goddamned attack they can, even if it their protectee doesn't need it, and this is a maneuver which will usually end up getting your brave warrior killed in a hurry if you don't keep an eye on that HP. You can't count on one character equipped with a Cover materia to take all the damage for your party, as Cover only applies to single-target physical attacks. However, on that same note, there are a few subsequent uses for Cover rather than just protection. First, it's an excellent way to quickly build up a characters limit bar (for better results, induce fury). Secondly, you can see some excellent results by loading the same character down with plenty of Counter Attack, Counter, and Magic Counter materia.

---

### Enemy Away

- \* AP-----8,000 (Lv. 2), 50,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.---+1 Luck
- \* Location----Gold Saucer (Chocobo Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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### Enemy Lure

- \* AP-----8,000 (Lv. 2), 50,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----400 BP
- \* Stat Adj.---1 Luck
- \* Location----Gold Saucer (Battle Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Exp. Plus

- \* AP-----60,000 (Lv. 2), 150,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----2,000 GP
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Gold Saucer (Wonder Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Gil Plus

- \* AP-----80,000 (Lv. 2), 150,000 (Lv. 3)
- \* Price-----1,000 GP
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----Gold Saucer (Wonder Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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HP<->MP

- \* AP-----80,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.---Special
- \* Location----Hidden in the Cave West of Costa Del Sol

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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HP Plus

- \* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 30,000 (Lv. 4), 50,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Price-----8,000 Gil
- \* Stat Adj.---+10% - 50% HP (depending on materia's level)
- \* Location----Cosmo Canyon, Mideel

HP Plus boosts the user's max HP. The margin is small at first, (10%), but grows as the materia levels up to an ultimate 50%. You may receive one of these from Heidegger in Junon, but you can buy them once you reach Cosmo Canyon. Each and every person in the party, no matter whom it is, can benefit from one of these. And all in all, you just can't have too many HP Plus materia, as more HP just means better news for you and your team.

---

Long Range

- \* AP-----80,000 (Lv. 2)
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A

\* Location----Hidden in the Mythril Cave

This materia gives the wearer the benefit of using a long-range weapon, no matter what they are currently equipped with. It is a great benefit to any of your close-range fighters on the team, like Cloud, Red XIII, Cid, Tifa, and Barret (when he's equipped with one of his short-range weapons). Yuffie and Vincent, obviously, have their long-range weapons, as does Barret for the most part. Also, Aeris and Cait Sith are both pretty much better suited for magical purposes than they are for fighting, so you probably won't be wanting to hand this to them, anyways. But for anyone who can benefit from it, Long Range is a great materia to have on hand. On the unfortunate side of things, you only find one, and the only way to get more copies of it is to master the one you have (which, respectively, takes quite a bit of time and AP). Oh, well, at least you find it fairly early on in your adventure.

---

#### Luck Plus

\* AP-----15,000 (Lv. 2), 30,000 (Lv. 3), 60,000 (Lv. 4), 100,000 (Lv. 5)  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Stat Adj.---+10% - 50% Luck (depending on materia's level)  
\* Location----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Magic Plus

\* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 30,000 (Lv. 4), 50,000 (Lv. 5)  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Stat Adj.---+10% - 50% Magic (depending on materia's level)  
\* Location----Hidden in the Corral Valley Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Mega All

\* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 50,000 (Lv. 3), 80,000 (Lv. 4), 160,000 (Lv. 5)  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Stat Adj.---N/A  
\* Location----Hidden in the Final Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### MP Plus

\* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 30,000 (Lv. 4), 50,000 (Lv. 5)  
\* Price-----8,000 Gil

- \* Stat Adj.---+10% - 50% MP (depending on materia's level)
- \* Location----Cosmo Canyon, Mideel

Like HP Plus, MP Plus boosts the wearer's MP by a small margin at first (10%), but grows to an ultimate 50% as the materia levels up. This isn't as incredibly useful of a materia as HP Plus is, but it's still quite helpful. Basically, like HP Plus, just about everyone on your team can benefit from extra MP, but this really only applies if said character making use of any abilities that eat up MP. If they aren't for the most part, then MP Plus really isn't going to be that helpful.

---

Pre-Emptive

- \* AP-----8,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 40,000 (Lv. 4), 80,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Price-----1,000 BP
- \* Stat Adj.---+2 Dexterity
- \* Location----Gold Saucer (Battle Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Speed Plus

- \* AP-----15,000 (Lv. 2), 30,000 (Lv. 3), 60,000 (Lv. 4), 100,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Price-----4,000 BP
- \* Stat Adj.---+10% - 50% Dexterity (depending on materia's level)
- \* Location----Gold Saucer (Battle Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Underwater

- \* AP-----N/A
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Stat Adj.---N/A
- \* Location----From man in Kalm (later)

This is an odd materia in many respects. It doesn't level up or take AP, but it does serve an important purpose. For more information, refer to section IV.F. of the FAQ. Also note that seeing as the Underwater materia gains AP, but never really masters, it can be very useful when used in conjunction with Barret's Missing Score weapon.



Elemental materia to create the only wind-based attack you can get for the majority of the game, and one of the few you can get in the entire game. Lastly, it does also possess the Stop property, and may be used in conjunction with the Added Effect materia to that end. However, you should only utilize the Choco/Mog materia in conjunction with Added Effect failing Time, as Time offers not only Stop effects, but those of Slow, as well.

---

#### Hades

- \* AP-----35,000 (Lv. 2), 120,000 (Lv. 3), 150,000 (Lv. 4), 250,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/7 status ailments\*
- \* Stat Adj.-----+15% MP, -10% HP, +4 Mag, +4 MDef
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Gelnika

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Ifrit

- \* AP-----5,000 (Lv. 2), 20,000 (Lv. 3), 35,000 (Lv. 4), 60,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Fire/None
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag
- \* Location-----Hidden on the Shinra Boat

Almost immediately after you pick up the Shiva materia, you'll find the Ifrit materia. Do be warned that rather than coming to you as a function of the plot, you must pick it up yourself. I mention this because Ifrit is one of the game's lost-forevers, mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Aside from that, Ifrit is just like Shiva, only a bit more powerful and fire-based. It is also the second of the four elemental summon materia you'll receive on the next leg of your quest. For more information on the summon attack itself, refer to section XVI. of the FAQ.

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#### Kjata

- \* AP-----22,000 (Lv. 2), 60,000 (Lv. 3), 90,000 (Lv. 4), 120,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Fire, Ice, Lightning, & Earth/None
- \* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +1 Mag, +1 MDef
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Sleeping Forest

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Knights of the Round

- \* AP-----50,000 (Lv. 2), 200,000 (Lv. 3), 300,000 (Lv. 4), 500,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Stat Adj.-----+20% MP, -10% HP, +8 Mag, +8 MDef
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Northeastern Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Leviathan

- \* AP-----18,000 (Lv. 2), 38,000 (Lv. 3), 70,000 (Lv. 4), 100,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Water/None
- \* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +1 Mag, +1 MDef
- \* Location-----From Godo in Wutai

Leviathan sort of goes hand in hand with Odin in a way. You receive them at about the same time, both are "advanced" materia in terms of their stat alterations, and both go far in setting the new standards for powerful attacks. It is also, like Odin, received as the result of an optional but highly-recommended side quest (which would be Wutai, and see section IV.B. of the FAQ for more details on that). In that respect, this materia is also a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. Leviathan does consistent direct damage, something that Odin does not, and is therefore an excellent candidate to accompany the two new support materia you receive from the Wutai side quest: HP Absorb and MP Absorb. HP Absorb is based purely on the damage output of the attached materia, and thus Leviathan, the most powerful materia at the time, is the prime candidate, but is soon overshadowed by more powerful summons. MP Absorb, on the other hand, while still pulling in MP based on the damage dealt, works best on materia that offer good damage for the MP cost. And Leviathan is likely one of the most cost-efficient summon materia available for the damage it does. Add to this the fact that Leviathan is one of the first summon materia whose attacks are powerful enough to be effective, if not deadly clear up until the end of the game (especially given that it is one of the rare water-based attacks in the game- an element to which almost all enemies fall prey), and you have an excellent companion for MP Absorb in Leviathan.

---

#### Master Summon

- \* AP-----N/A
- \* Element/Effect---N/A
- \* Stat Adj.-----N/A
- \* Location-----From man in Kalm (later), from Huge Materia (red)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Neo Bahamut

- \* AP-----30,000 (Lv. 2), 80,000 (Lv. 3), 140,000 (Lv. 4), 200,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None
- \* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +1 Mag, +1 MDef
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Crater

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Odin

- \* AP-----16,000 (Lv. 2), 32,000 (Lv. 3), 65,000 (Lv. 4), 80,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/Death
- \* Stat Adj.-----+5% MP, -5% HP, +1 Mag, +1 MDef
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Safe at Shinra Mansion

Odin comes to you as the result of the game's first side quest, discussed in section IV.A. of the FAQ. Assuming you take up the side quest at the first given opportunity, you will receive a materia that is at the time a major leap past any materia you have received thus far. You should get the gist of that more or less immediately when you see that it is the first "advanced" summon materia in the terms of how much it alters your stats. This is more of a good thing with summon materia, because the only stat you see lowered as a result is HP. Secondly, you get an solid pair of summon attacks which more or less blow everything else you have out of the water. Check it all out in section XVI. of the FAQ, but let's discuss the materia itself for just one more second. Let's talk linkage, for a minute. While possessing no element, Odin does boast the instant death property. Instant death in your weapon is, to put it one way, useful. The downside is, of course, the general ineffectiveness of instant death on the majority of the enemy population. The upside, of course, is that there is truly no status ailment worse than death, so when it works, it helps. In conclusion, Odin is one of the most extreme materia you can combine with Added Effect in your weapon, but hey, it works. I suppose you could use Odin to protect yourself from the effects of instant death, but since very few enemies in the game are known to use such an attack, and you have an E.Skill that does more or less the same thing, it is inadvisable.

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## Phoenix

- \* AP-----28,000 (Lv. 2), 70,000 (Lv. 3), 120,000 (Lv. 4), 180,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Fire/None\*
- \* Stat Adj.-----+10% MP, -10% HP, +2 Mag, +2 MDef
- \* Location-----Fort Condor (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Ramuh

- \* AP-----10,000 (Lv. 2), 25,000 (Lv. 3), 50,000 (Lv. 4) 70,000 (Lv. 5)
- \* Element/Effect---Lightning/None
- \* Stat Adj.-----+2% MP, -2% HP, +1 Mag
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Jockey's Lounge at the Gold Saucer

The third of the four elemental summon materia, Ramuh shows up a bit later after you acquire Ifrit, and like Ifrit is also one of the game's lost-forevers as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. That being said, not much else of any mention here. Another common element means very little in the way of materia linkage, and you can read all about the summon attack itself in section XVI. of the FAQ.

---







Assuming that you are going to be making any use at all of Barret in the next portion of the game, the AM Cannon is a pretty good buy. The large increase in power over Barret's last weapon, the Microlaser, is probably more interesting to you than the extra link ion the materia slots. Assuming Barret is using anything less than the Microlaser, you might also appreciate the return to long-range, as well. On a separate note, the Solid Bazooka is also available at Costa Del Sol, and it does offer superior materia slottage. On the other hand, it is a weaker weapon, meaning that, for Barret at least, you might want to stick with the AM Cannon. But, as with all the notably expensive weapons to be bought at this time in the game, it's only worth your gil if you're going to be using Barret much.

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### Apocalypse

- \* Power/Attack%-----88/110%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/3
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Ancient Forest

There is only one thing about the Apocalypse that should be of any interest to you whatsoever, and that would be the triple materia growth it offers. This makes the Apocalypse an incredibly useful tool for leveling materia up, and for the more daring amongst you, can also be used to help take down Emerald and Ruby WEAPON (to take advantage of the very high AP offered by felling either). You're also at a point in the game where you can use this as a main weapon, and you will still be able to compensate gloriously for the severe lack of materia slottage it poses. But, if you have no materia in severe need of leveling-up along the way, then the Apocalypse is of virtually no use to you or your team, and should take a backseat to the other, more materia-rich weapons of the time.

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### Assault Gun

- \* Power/Attack%-----17/98%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----350 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----From Guard Scorpion at Mako Reactor #1

You'll get this weapon after you kick the Guard Scorpion's ass. It's a better weapon for Barret and also has another materia slot, which helps out because Barret will be using this weapon for quite some time. You can buy the Assault Gun in a few shops in Midgar, but you should never have to.

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### Atomic Scissors

- \* Power/Attack%-----32/99%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----1,400 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short

\* Location-----Junon, Gongaga, stolen from C. Sweeper near Midgar

Sold at Junon, but you can get your hands on a set much earlier by swiping them from a guy called Custom Sweeper just outside Midgar. A kick-ass and powerful weapon for Barret, for quite some time, the only downside is that they are short-range.

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#### Aurora Rod

\* Power/Attack%-----51/110%  
\* Used By-----Aeris  
\* Price-----5,800 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Wutai

At this point in the game, it isn't going to be a question of whether or not you will be using Aeris, because you will be. The Fairy Tale and the Wiser Staff each have their pros and cons, but something that the Aurora Rod has over the both of them is linked slots. And compared to the Fairy Tale in specific, you're only losing two slots for this convenience. Aeris is someone you'll probably be wanting on heavy materia duty at this time in the game (especially given the large number of support materia you likely have garnered by this point), and the double materia growth of the Wiser Staff may be somewhat trivialized by this fact, as well. And truth be told, if you find that Aeris has more linked slots than she needs with the Aurora Rod, there's always the Edincoat armor, which is something you may appreciate on one of your most defenseless characters, anyways.

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#### Battle Trumpet

\* Power/Attack%-----95/95%  
\* Used By-----Cait Sith  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Underwater Reactor at Junon

With the Battle Trumpet, you get one of Cait Sith's most powerful weapons. And depending on exactly what you're upgrading from, that increase in power can be extremely notable. Moreover, you are not sacrificing materia slots, as was the case with the Trumpet Shell. However, you do sacrifice materia growth with the Battle Trumpet. And as we established with the Trumpet Shell, you more than likely are not going to be that interested in making an obvious magician such as Cait Sith a slightly more efficient physical fighter. On a final note, the Battle Trumpet is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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#### Black M-Phone

\* Power/Attack%-----31/104%  
\* Used By-----Cait Sith  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Short

\* Location-----Hidden in the Gi Cave, Junon (later)

The Black M-Phone is the first in a new line of weaponry of double materia growth. These weapons have four unlinked slots, as opposed to the mere three of their predecessors. Granted, there is a small drop in power from the White M-Phone to the Black M-Phone, it is not only a trivial loss, but something you are more than likely not interested in with a character like Cait Sith, anyways. However, the Black M-Phone faces some very stiff competition with the Silver M-Phone, which you will be finding very shortly. Also note that the Black M-Phone is not a lost-forever, but is still mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, so pick it up whilst you can.

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#### Blue M-Phone

\* Power/Attack%-----48/100%  
\* Used By-----Cait Sith  
\* Price-----5,500 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Wutai

And so it comes down to the Blue M-Phone, the Silver M-Phone, and the Black M-Phone. Cait Sith, being one of those characters that takes well to being loaded down with materia, means that at this point you should seriously think against using the comparably slot-bare Black-M-Phone for the growth benefits alone. As for the Blue M-Phone vs. the Silver M-Phone: the Blue M-Phone has linked slots, which are a real asset (it is also far more powerful, but with Cait Sith, it should not be much of an issue). The Silver M-Phone, on the other hand, has three more, albeit unlinked slots. The Silver M-Phone is also free, and should be your consideration by default if you don't plan on making much use of Cait Sith in the next portion of the game. But what it comes down to is your personal materia style. If you find that you could use the linked slots of the Blue M-Phone, go for it. If not, then stick with the Silver M-Phone (or the Black M-Phone, if you really want...)

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#### Boomerang

\* Power/Attack%-----30/101%  
\* Used By-----Yuffie  
\* Price-----1,400 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Junon, Gongaga, stolen from Formula near Junon

This should be familiar. The Boomerang is sold at Junon, but you can get it for free just outside of Junon, actually. Steal it from a creature called Formula. It's the next step up in power for Yuffie.

---

#### Buntline

\* Power/Attack%-----48/124%  
\* Used By-----Vincent  
\* Price-----6,800 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/2

- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in Bone Village, Junon (later)

The Buntline is superior to the other weapons of the time that offer double materia growth for two reasons. The first is that there is no power-drop issues, as exist for a few of the others (though, with a character such as Vincent, I doubt that your primary concern would be his Attack Power, anyways). The second, and most prominent difference is that its slots are linked. So, in switching down from a Shortbarrel, all you're really missing out on is one extra materia slot (and in return are receiving double the materia growth). On the other hand, the Buntline does lack the deadly accuracy of the Sniper CR, so it'll probably be a more difficult decision for you between the two (especially given that both are free).

-----

#### Buster Sword

- \* Power/Attack%-----18/96%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Initially Equipped

This is that big-ass sword that you see Cloud wielding in every picture you've ever seen of him. It's a good weapon, as far as initial weapons go, and serves Cloud well for quite some time. Also, for some strange reason, the game won't let you get rid of this weapon after you've unequipped it...

-----

#### Butterfly Edge

- \* Power/Attack%-----39/100%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----2,800 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Cosmo Canyon

In terms of power, the Butterfly Edge will trump whatever Cloud may be carrying at the time. It is the standard weapon of the time, with four linked slots. Something to note, however, is the fact that the Rune Blade will be available before too long (free of cost, no less), and the only difference between the two weapons is that the Rune Blade's slots are not linked, but conversely offer double materia growth. It comes down to the classic debate of linked slots versus materia growth at this point, and it's more of a personal preference than anything. However, even in opting for the Rune Blade instead, you still may wish to purchase the Butterfly Edge to tide you over until you happen across the Rune Blade.

-----

#### Cannon Ball

- \* Power/Attack%-----23/98%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----950 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1

- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Kalm, Lower Junon

This is one of those weapons that you can buy at Kalm, but is almost entirely unnecessary due to the fact that you can swipe a more powerful pair of Atomic Scissors from an enemy called the Custom Sweeper just outside Midgar.

---

#### Centclip

- \* Power/Attack%-----58/108%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----14,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 8 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Costa Del Sol (later)

While the Seraph Comb placed Red XIII in an excellent position to wage physical warfare, the Centclip more or less knocks him down to a more magically-oriented role. The Centclip is a much weaker than the Crystal Comb (or the Seraph Comb, even), but it does offer eight materia slots. But, there is bad news. For starters, that's only two more slots than the Crystal Comb offers. Secondly, the slots are all unlinked. And it's not like the Centclip has the advantage of at least being free, though it is a tad bit cheaper than the Crystal Comb. Regardless, if you plan on using Red XIII in the next portion of the game, you'll likely want to opt for the Crystal Comb over the Centclip unless you just really want the additional materia slots and don't mind the serious loss in power and linkage.

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#### Chainsaw

- \* Power/Attack%-----52/100%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----6,300 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Wutai

With Barret, you're probably not getting this for the linked slots, but rather for the increased power. In upgrading from the Enemy Launcher, you get no more or less slots (though you get a bit more linkage), but you do lose the long-range capabilities. But given the vast increase in power, the upgrade is more than likely worth it if you are going to make any use of Barret in the next portion of the game. In the case of the Drill Arm, things are a bit different. The Drill Arm is both as weak as the Enemy Launcher and close-range, and has only double materia growth to redeem itself. You must ask yourself which is more important: attack power or materia growth? However, if Barret is not one of your top priorities in the next portion of the game, then don't bother with the Chainsaw, because it then becomes a question of the Enemy Launcher vs. the Drill Arm, both of which are free.

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#### Conformer

- \* Power/Attack%-----96/112%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Gelnika

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Crystal Comb

- \* Power/Attack%-----76/108%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----17,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Mideel

The Crystal Comb is the first weapon to entirely trump the Seraph Comb, clocking in with stats typical of the other crystalline weapons. It's more powerful than the Seraph Comb, and offers vastly superior materia slottage. There is another weapon available at the time (the Centclip), but since it lacks both linked slots and decent power, you'll likely opt for the Crystal Comb. However, like all the other weapons at this point in the game, the Crystal Comb is very expensive, and only worth the gil if you're going to be using Red XIII much at this point in the game.

---

#### Crystal Cross

- \* Power/Attack%-----74/110%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----18,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Mideel

Yuffie's next step in power is more or less the same as the other crystalline weapons: six linked slots, powerful, and likely to take a backseat to a more materia-rich weapon sold over at Costa Del Sol (the Magic Shiruken). This is, of course, if you decide to buy either.

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#### Crystal Glove

- \* Power/Attack%-----75/115%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----16,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Mideel

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Crystal M-Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----74/110%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----18,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Mideel

There's a fairly good chance that if you're going to be buying a weapon for Cait Sith, you'll want to opt for the Gold M-Phone over the Crystal M-Phone. The advantage of the Gold M-Phone is an additional two linked slots, while the Crystal M-Phone has a higher attack power. But given that Cait Sith is a more magically-oriented character, you'll likely go with the Gold M-Phone.

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Crystal Sword

- \* Power/Attack%-----76/105%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----18,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Mideel

With Cloud, it's never an issue of whether or not he's going to be in the party, 'cause he is. And assuming you were already equipped with the Organics, the additional increase in power, not to mention the extra linked slot, can always be a benefit, especially given that it will be quite some time until you find anything preferable. In the instance you had Cloud equipped with the Enhance Sword, it's the same toss-up question as before, only now you're looking at much stiffer competition in the Crystal Sword, which is far more powerful than the Enhance Sword, and entails superior linkage. Are the extra two materia slots that important to you?

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Death Penalty

- \* Power/Attack%-----99/115%
- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----From Lucrecia at Lucrecia's Cave (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Diamond Knuckle

- \* Power/Attack%-----51/112%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----5,800 Gil



- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Wutai

Whatever it is that you're upgrading from at the time, the Diamond Knuckle is a welcome increase in power. The extra materia slot, for a character like Tifa, anyways, is likely more of a nice little bonus than anything. In terms of power and materia slottage, the Diamond Knuckle trumps both the Platinum Fist and the Tiger Fang. It also comes damn close to matching the doubled strength of the Powersoul, as well. The only weapon to hold anything over the Diamond Knuckle is the Platinum Fist, merely for the double materia growth. But with it, you suffer a vast loss in power. As with so many other weapons, what it comes down to in the end is how much use you plan in making of Tifa in the next portion of the game. If not, then don't bother with the Diamond Knuckle.

---

#### Diamond Pin

- \* Power/Attack%-----33/102%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----1,300 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Junon, Gongaga, stolen from Bagnadrana at Mt. Corel

This is Red XIII's weapon that may be bought at Junon but stolen elsewhere. The catch is that you can't steal one of these babies until a little later (Mt. Corel, to be exact). On the other hand, by the time you reach Junon, you may have stopped by Fort Condor, in which case you may have picked up Red XIII's Magic Comb, which you may actually prefer to the Diamond Pin, anyways (the Magic Comb is actually a more powerful weapon than the Diamond Pin). But if you would really rather have a Diamond Pin, you can probably wait until you make it to Mt. Corel unless you plan on using Red XIII extensively until then.

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#### Dragon Claw

- \* Power/Attack%-----62/114%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----10,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Icicle Inn

Another step up on the ladder for Tifa, offering more power and another materia slot than the Diamond Knuckle. A worthwhile purchase indeed if Tifa will be accompanying the team through the next leg of the journey. If not, then feel free to pass it right on by.

---

#### Dragoon Lance

- \* Power/Attack%-----66/100%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----6,200 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 8 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short

\* Location-----Hidden in the Da-Chao Fire Cave, Junon (later)

If you manage to find it early on (you can nab it as soon as you visit Wutai), the Dragoon Lance is the most powerful weapon of the time. Furthermore, it offers superior materia slottage, though it does fail to provide you with links in those slots. All in all, the Dragoon is a good weapon that is made even better by the fact that you'll receive it for free, and it remains to be a powerful and useful weapon for quite some time afterwards.

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#### Drill Arm

\* Power/Attack%-----37/97%  
\* Used By-----Barret  
\* Price-----3,300 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in Rocket Town, Junon (later)

Barret's second weapon of double materia growth is the Drill Arm. It's main disadvantage is that it is a short-range weapon, whereas the Enemy Launcher (what you likely will have Barret equipped with at the time) is not. Other than that, it suffers the drawbacks of all weapons posing double materia growth (fewer materia slots and less linkage). Then again, with Barret, materia slottage may not be your biggest concern. Given that both weapons are free, it comes down to be a tough call in the end, and it ends up as more of a personal preference than anything.

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#### Enemy Launcher

\* Power/Attack%-----35/100%  
\* Used By-----Barret  
\* Price-----3,300 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Shinra Mansion, Junon (later)

The Enemy Launcher may be a tad bit weaker than the Heavy Vulcan, but at least you don't have to pay for it. You get some nice materia slottage from it, as well. And unless you for some reason have Barret loaded down with support materia (very doubtful), then there's little reason to not switch over to the Enemy Launcher. The true decision will come a bit later, when you are forced to decide between the Enemy Launcher and the Drill Arm (the Drill Arm being Barret's next double materia growth weapon), as both are very useful, and also very free.

-----

#### Enhance Sword

\* Power/Attack%-----43/107%  
\* Used By-----Barret  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 8 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in Gaea's Cliff, Junon (later)

The Enhance Sword shows up a bit late in the game for the full entourage of eight unlinked materia slots to be considered highly useful or even novel. In equipping Cloud with the Enhance Sword, realize that not only are you sacrificing your linked slots, but you are also relegating him to a much more magically-oriented role, what with the severe loss in power resulting from switching down from, say, an Organics. And given that Cloud is the physically strongest character in the game, that's something you'll probably want to think long and hard about. If, for some strange reason, Cloud is currently equipped with something less powerful than the Organics, then the blow to your Attack Power won't be felt nearly as hard, but it's likely that the loss in linkage will.

---

#### Fairy Tale

\* Power/Attack%-----37/103%  
\* Used By-----Aeris  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 7 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----From the Turks at Gongaga

The Fairy Tale is a trendsetting weapon of sorts. At the time you receive it, it will be vastly superior in terms of the materia slots offered. And with such a magically-inclined character as Aeris, the Fairy Tale helps to magnify this strength. The drawback is a lack of links in those slots, however. While this is a blow that shouldn't be felt too heavily at the time, you'll start to feel the effects of it with time should you opt to continue using the Fairy Tale later into your quest. Comparably, in switching up from the Wizard Staff or the Striking Staff, you are losing very little overall from each for what you receive with the Fairy Tale. And even when you later happen upon such weapons as the Wiser Staff and the Prism Staff, you very may well wish to continue using the Fairy Tale.

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#### Flayer

\* Power/Attack%-----100/100%  
\* Used By-----Cid  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 6 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Gold Saucer (Speed Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Force Stealer

\* Power/Attack%-----36/100%  
\* Used By-----Cloud  
\* Price-----2,200 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----From Heidegger at Junon, North Corel

It's a bit more powerful than the Hardedge, but the best part about the Force Stealer is it's double growth rate. The price you pay is that the Force Stealer only has three materia slots (unlinked) as opposed to the Hardedge's four slots (two linked, two unlinked). If you decide to use one, you might make it a point to win it from Heidegger at Junon (see section III.C. of the FAQ for more information), because they may not be purchased until a little later on.

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#### Full Metal Staff

\* Power/Attack%-----22/100%  
\* Used By-----Aeris  
\* Price-----800 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Kalm, Lower Junon

The next step up for Aeris, but really isn't necessary if you swiped her a Striking Staff back in the Train Graveyard. Unfortunately, if you didn't get a Striking Staff, there's no going back, so you might as well buy her a Full Metal Staff, but only if you plan on making much use of her in the next portion of the game.

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#### Gattling Gun

\* Power/Attack%-----14/97%  
\* Used By-----Barret  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Initially Equipped

Barret's initial weapon. Soon replaced by the Assault Gun. Like Cloud's Buster Sword, the game doesn't seem to want to let you get rid of this thing...

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#### God's Hand

\* Power/Attack%-----86/255%  
\* Used By-----Tifa  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----From Carry Armor at Underwater Reactor at Junon

God's Hand is an interesting weapon, to say the least. It's got a lot going for it, including a high degree of power, not to mention deadly accuracy. Materia-wise, it lacks the slots of some of the more advanced weapons, but not to an overly-detrimental point (especially given that this is Tifa we're talking about here, and lack of materia really shouldn't be much of an issue). In fact, given the idiosyncrasies of Tifa's ultimate weapon, Premium Heart, some players actually prefer to use the God's Hand clear up until the end of the game. Given that both are free, it's a tough choice that can really only come down to personal preference. However, until you are ready to make the switch over to the Premium Heart (or before you locate it), you can't go wrong with God's Hand.

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Gold Barrette

- \* Power/Attack%-----50/104%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----6,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Wutai

While the Gold Barrette offers one more materia slot than the Seraph Comb does, not to mention superior linkage, also note that the Seraph Comb is still a much more powerful weapon. Meaning that not only is the Gold Barrette only worth the purchase if you're going to be using Red XIII a lot in the next section of the game, but it's also only worth it if the materia slottage justifies the drop in power from the Seraph Comb.

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Gold M-Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----58/103%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----15,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Costa Del Sol (later)

For all practical purposes, this is a much better buy than the Crystal M-Phone, for reasons that should already be established. Since Cait Sith is a very magically-oriented character, the additional materia slots of the Gold M-Phone should take preference over the power of the Crystal M-Phone. However, as with all other weapons, the Gold M-Phone is only a good buy if you plan on making any use of Cait Sith in the next portion of the game.

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Grand Glove

- \* Power/Attack%-----31/110%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----1,200 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Junon, Gongaga, stolen from Madouge at Mythril Cave

Sold at Junon, stealable far earlier. You can swipe one of these from a guy called Madouge in the Mythril Mines. It's Tifa's next best weapon, and unlike Barret's Atomic Scissors, it isn't plagued by the problem that its range is cut short (all of Tifa's weapons are short range), so there's really little point in not upgrading while you can (I mean, it is free, after all).

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Green M-Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----41/100%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith

- \* Price-----2,400 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Cosmo Canyon

Cait Sith's weapon upgrade available at Cosmo Canyon may be one of the weapons that you might want to neglect to pick up. The Black M-Phone can be found very soon after this, and the Silver M-Phone soon after that. And the only way in which the Green M-Phone is superior to either is that it has linked slots rather than unlinked. Granted, the Green M-Phone offers considerably more power than either of the aforementioned weapons, but Attack Power should not be much of a concern with a character like Cait Sith. To put it shortly, you should only pick this up if you need more materia linkage with Cait Sith, and even then I suggest you reconsider.

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#### Guard Stick

- \* Power/Attack%-----12/99%
- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Initially Equipped

Aeris's crappy bonk branch makes better kindling than it does a weapon. If not for the lone materia slot in it, it would be completely worthless.

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#### Hairpin

- \* Power/Attack%-----57/120%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----6,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in Wutai, Junon (later)

The only long-range weapon available for Red XIII suffers numerous drawbacks. Enough to make you think twice, at least, about equipping this weapon purely for the fact that it is long-range. Granted, it has some power behind it, more so than the Gold Barrette, but it still does not come close to that of the Seraph Comb. Furthermore, the materia slottage is absolutely nil. In short, even though the Hairpin is free, the only thing it has over the Seraph Comb is long-range capabilities. In turn, you lose power and materia slottage.

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#### Hardedge

- \* Power/Attack%-----32/98%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----1,500 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Junon, Gongaga, stolen from SOLDIER 3rd at Shinra H.Q.

Like all the other weapons sold at Junon, it is possible to steal this weapon

elsewhere. Of course, if you didn't take the chance to steal one of these from a SOLDIER 3rd at Shinra H.Q., you really don't have the option of going back, so you might as well buy one if you want one. However, consider first whether or not you'd rather use a Force Stealer.

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#### Hawkeye

\* Power/Attack%-----61/107%  
\* Used By-----Yuffie  
\* Price-----12,000 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Icicle Inn

What can I say here that hasn't been said a million times before? If Yuffie is coming with you on the next leg of the quest, the Hawkeye is a good buy. If not, it isn't.

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#### Heaven's Cloud

\* Power/Attack%-----93/100%  
\* Used By-----Cloud  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 6 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Gelnika

The Heaven's Cloud offers greater power than other weapons of the time at the sacrifice of linked materia slots. If you can work your materia setup around to easily accommodate this, then by all means go for it, as you are really not losing any slots overall. However, if switching over to the Heaven's Cloud would entail a compromise in your materia setup, then the increase in power probably isn't worth the hassle.

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#### Heavy Vulcan

\* Power/Attack%-----39/100%  
\* Used By-----Barret  
\* Price-----2,700  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short Range - Long  
\* Location-----Cosmo Canyon

On one hand, the Heavy Vulcan is superior to both the Atomic Scissors and the W Machine Gun, and can be justified as a preferable upgrade from either, bear in mind that the Enemy Launcher will soon be available. Furthermore, it is free. At the very least, it is something to consider before dropping the coin on the Heavy Vulcan.

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#### HP Shout

\* Power/Attack%-----95/110%

\* Used By-----Cait Sith  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in Shinra H.Q. (floor 64)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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### Javelin

\* Power/Attack%-----62/104%  
\* Used By-----Cid  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in Gaea's Cliff

The Javelin is by far the most superior double-growth weapon in the game. At the time you find it, switching down from even the most sophisticated weapon of the time (the Mast Ax) results in the ultimate loss of only one materia slot. However, there is also the Dragoon Lance, which is a comparable weapon (and, as you also should know, has eight materia slots). Then again, the Dragoon Lance's slots are not linked, as are those of the Javelin. But, when it comes down to it, since both weapons are free, go with whichever you please. If you need the extra slots, stick with the Dragoon Lance. If you want linkage or double growth, go with the Javelin instead. Oh, and on a final note, the Javelin is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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### Kaiser Knuckle

\* Power/Attack%-----44/110%  
\* Used By-----Tifa  
\* Price-----15,000 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 6 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Crater, Junon (later)

The Kaiser Knuckle is a curious weapon you'll discover later on. Power-wise, it is more than likely vastly inferior to whatever Tifa currently has, so that is already an issue. What you get in return are eight materia slots, only two of them linked. However, for such a fighting-oriented character as Tifa, this is a questionable move. Then again, this weapon is free, and if it's not that much worse than what she already has, then why not? But, if she has anything of any power on her at all, then you will likely pass this thing up. Although not a lost-forever, the Kaiser Knuckle is still mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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### Lariat

\* Power/Attack%-----64/120%  
\* Used By-----Vincent  
\* Price-----12,000 Gil



- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Icicle Inn

The Lariat is a step above the Buntline, offering more attack power and two more materia slots, but in turn sacrificing the double materia growth. In addition, the Lariat costs money, while the Buntline was free. If Vincent will be traveling with you, then you may consider investing in the Lariat, or maybe not. If he won't be coming along, then by all means stick with the Buntline.

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#### Leather Glove

- \* Power/Attack%-----13/99%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Initially Equipped

Tifa's initial equipping. It does about as much damage as you can expect a Leather Glove to do. The next better weapon (the Metal Knuckle) comes along soon enough.

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#### Limited Moon

- \* Power/Attack%-----93/114%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----From Bugenhagen at Cosmo Canyon (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Long Barrel Rifle

- \* Power/Attack%-----66/255%
- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Price-----13,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Costa Del Sol (later)

The Long Barrel Rifle is a no-brainer over the Winchester. On one hand, you lose a small bit of power, but in return you gain two more linked slots (which, in Vincent's case, should prove far more valuable). As an added bonus, the Long Barrel Rifle is one of the three deathly-accurate weapons in the game, which, combined with the Deathblow materia, can more than make up for the small loss in power. Of course, the Long Barrel Rifle is only a worthy investment if Vincent will be seeing any use for awhile.

---

### Magic Comb

- \* Power/Attack%-----37/100%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----2,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Fort Condor (1st battle's prize) , Junon (later)

If you decide to stop by Fort Condor (the first time you pass it by), and actually win a fight there, your reward will be the Magic Comb. It has only three unlinked materia slots (as opposed to the two linked and two unlinked slots you'll find later on the Diamond Pin), but it's got a materia growth rate of two. You'll find several other weapons like this (with three unlinked slots and double the growth rate), but if you stop by Fort Condor on your first pass by, the Magic Comb should be the first one you'll find, making Red XIII a valuable asset to have at around this point. And in addition to the additional growth rate, the Magic Comb is also more powerful than the Diamond Pin. And although not a lost-forever, the Magic Comb is still mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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### Magic Shiruken

- \* Power/Attack%-----68/110%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----14,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Costa Del Sol

Compared to the Crystal Cross, the Magic Shiruken offers two more materia slots (albeit unlinked ones) at the expense of just a little bit of power. Since this is Yuffie we're talking about here, then the additional materia slots will likely outweigh the small loss in power. Mind you, this is only a worthy investment if Yuffie will be seeing any immediate action in your party, as some better weapons will be coming your way soon (and free of cost, mind you).

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### Mast Ax

- \* Power/Attack%-----64/99%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----13,000
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Icicle Inn

The problem with the Mast Ax is the ready availability of other, comparable, free weapons. The Dragoon Spear may lack the linked slots, but it does offer more of them in return, as well as power equal to that of the expensive Mast Ax. Furthermore, very soon, the Javelin will become available to you, another powerful weapon, which also will not cost you anything. So unless you are just dying for linked slots, you are advised to save your gil, whether Cid will be in your party or not.

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### Max Ray

- \* Power/Attack%-----97/98%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in Midgar (later)

For all practical purposes, this is Barret's best weapon besides the Missing Score. So, until you're ready to switch over to it, you can't go wrong with the Max Ray. However, the Max Ray is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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### Metal Knuckle

- \* Power/Attack%-----18/102%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----320 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Wall Market

Though Tifa isn't with you when you first have the opportunity to buy this, you'll still want to pick it up, because once you get her back, you can't come back to buy this for a little while. Regardless of whether or not you get it on your first time around, you're still advised to get it before going to Shinra H.Q., because it will be Tifa's best weapon for awhile. It's more powerful than the Leather Glove and also has another materia slot, to boot.

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### Microlaser

- \* Power/Attack%-----63/101%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----12,000
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Icicle Inn

As with all the other weapons at Icicle Inn, the Microlaser is only worth the investment is Barret is coming along with you in the next portion of the game. Not only is it powerful and link-rich, but it's also a nice return to the long-range category, as well.

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### Missing Score

- \* Power/Attack%-----98/108%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in Midgar (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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### Mop

\* Power/Attack%-----68/118%  
\* Used By-----Cid  
\* Price-----3,200 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Junon (later)

You may be surprised that a Goddamn mop is more powerful than several other pointy-bladed alternatives. That being said, this is the last in the line of the powerful weapons with no materia slots that arrives in the game long after those kinds of weapons stopped being of any kind of use to you at all. I blame this on the game programmers' habitual use of crack.

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### Motor Drive

\* Power/Attack%-----27/106%  
\* Used By-----Tifa  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in Costa Del Sol

The Motor Drive is a bit weaker than the Grand Glove, but it does have a materia growth rate of two. Of course, like the other weapons of its kind, it has only three unlinked materia slots as opposed to the four (two linked and two unlinked) on the Grand Glove. Then again, for Tifa, lack of materia slots really shouldn't be too big of a problem.

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### Murasame

\* Power/Attack%-----51/100%  
\* Used By-----Cloud  
\* Price-----6,500 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Wutai

The Murasame is a solid weapon for Cloud at this point in the game. The only comparable weapon would be the Rune Edge, and the only thing it offers is double materia growth (well, that and it's free). But the Murasame offers superior materia slottage, as well as additional power, which, for Cloud, is a little something you can appreciate.

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### Mythril Claw

\* Power/Attack%-----24/106%

\* Used By-----Tifa  
\* Price-----750 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Kalm, Lower Junon

Yet another weapon you can buy at Kalm, except that you can steal the much more powerful Grand Glove from a creature called Madouge in a very short while (at the Mythril Mines, to be exact), so you're probably better off saving your money.

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#### Mythril Clip

\* Power/Attack%-----24/100%  
\* Used By-----Red XIII  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Initially Equipped

Red XIII's initial weapon is probably better than most of what the rest of your party is using at the time (unless Cloud is using a Hardedge or Aeris has a Striking Staff). It will be his best weapon for awhile (a very long while if you don't make it a point to stop by Fort Condor later on).

---

#### Mythril Rod

\* Power/Attack%-----16/100%  
\* Used By-----Aeris  
\* Price-----370  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Wall Market

While outfitting your wizards with better weapons is usually never a high priority in most RPG's, the main selling point of the Mythril Rod is the extra materia slot in it. However, if you can wait for a little bit, realize that you'll soon have the opportunity to steal a much better weapon than this from a certain enemy. Point in case, especially if you pass this weapon up, you should try and make it a point to acquire the Striking Staff from the Eligor creature in the Train Graveyard at Sector Seven.

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#### Mythril Saber

\* Power/Attack%-----23/98%  
\* Used By-----Cloud  
\* Price-----1,000 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Kalm

If you managed to swipe a Hardedge from a SOLDIER 3rd, earlier, there's absolutely no need to purchase this weapon. If not, however, the Mythril Saber will be your first upgrade from the Buster Sword. It's more powerful and has

another materia slot, so is probably worth picking up.

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### Nail Bat

- \* Power/Attack%-----70/100%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients, Junon (later)

Gee..., what can I say? It's a Goddamn bat with a nail in it. The Amish have more sophisticated weaponry than this, which is why it strikes me as odd that a game taking place in the future would offer such an option. Despite what you may think, it's actually quite powerful, but the primitive weapon lacks materia slots, which will make you think twice about using it. It isn't a lost forever, by the way, but is still mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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### Organics

- \* Power/Attack%-----62/103%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----12,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Icicle Inn

Of all the weapons at Icicle Inn, this is the one that you are more than likely going to want to buy, simply because there is no denying the fact that Cloud will be coming along for this leg of the quest. Furthermore, there is really nothing else that can compare to the Organics at this time. The Rune Blade, if anything, is becoming quickly obsolete, and the Murasame is inferior in both power and slottage. Point in case, the Organics is well worth your investment dollar.

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### Oritsuru

- \* Power/Attack%-----90/116%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Da-Chao Fire Cave

An excellent weapon for Yuffie that offers a high degree of power, as well as superb materia slottage. Granted, it is just two linked slots short of, say, the Crystal Cross, but the other advantages of the Oritsuru more than make up for that, especially considering that this weapon is free. It is also the best weapon for Yuffie besides her ultimate weapon, the Conformer. However, I should mention that this weapon is indeed a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, so do be aware of that.

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## Outsider

- \* Power/Attack%-----80/120%
- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Gelnika

The Outsider is a stronger weapon than the Long Barrel Rifle, and all you lose in return is a bit of linkage, as well as the deadly accuracy of the Long Barrel Rifle. For those that use Vincent a lot, it comes down, as always, to personal preference. However, given that the Outsider is free (while the Long Barrel Rifle you actually have to, you know, buy), the answer to this question should be a no-brainer if you don't use Vincent enough to have purchased a Long Barrel Rifle earlier. However, a more challenging question arises with the Supershot ST (depending on which you find first). The Supershot ST offers superior attack power, but fewer materia slots overall (though, all six of its slots are linked). In this case, both weapons are free, and either are a fine choice for Vincent.

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## Parasol

- \* Power/Attack%-----58/118%
- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Gold Saucer (Speed Square)

The Parasol is one in a line of weapons with a high degree of power, but conversely no materia slots to speak of. For Aeris, of all characters, this is a highly questionable weapon, and you are advised to seriously reconsider.

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## Partisan

- \* Power/Attack%-----78/100%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----19,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Mideel

While a solid weapon, you might consider some comparable and more cost-efficient alternatives for Cid, even if you do plan on making any use of him in this leg of the quest. In terms of materia slottage, the Javelin and the Dragoon Spear both stack up nicely, though the Partisan does offer more power overall. As always, it's up to you to decide what is more important. And, of course, if Cid won't be seeing much action in the next portion of your journey, then by all means avoid the purchase.

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## Peacemaker

- \* Power/Attack%-----38/118%

- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Price-----3,500 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in Kalm, Junon (later)

You'll find this weapon a very long time before Vincent ever sets foot in your party. But do hold onto it, because it is a fine alternative to his initial equipping. The Peacemaker offers double materia growth where the Quicksilver does not, and the cost is but one materia slot. Granted, this is a time where other double materia growth weapons have four slots, a notable advantage is the presence of a linked slot in the Peacemaker, which is a good thing. And since the Quicksilver and Peacemaker are identical in terms of power, you don't lose much overall, except again the lone slot. Both weapons are free, so the choice is yours.

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#### Pinwheel

- \* Power/Attack%-----37/104%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----2,600 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Cosmo Canyon

A worthy investment if you plan on using Yuffie in the next portion of the game, though you should be aware of the upcoming (and also free) Twin Viper, which you may consider instead.

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#### Platinum Fist

- \* Power/Attack%-----30/108%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----2,700 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in Nibelheim, Junon (later)

Though it is a small loss in power from the Tiger Fang, the Platinum Fist offers double materia growth in its, albeit unlinked, slots. For Tifa, of all characters, this problem shouldn't be as bad as it could be for other, more magically-oriented characters. Then again, there's the small drop in power to consider, as well. When it comes right down to it, probably the biggest consideration is that the Platinum Fist is free, where the Tiger Fang was not. And if you didn't drop the gil on the Tiger Fang, then there's little reason not to upgrade now. But get it while you can, as although the Platinum Fist is not one of the game's lost-forevers, it is nevertheless mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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#### Plus Barrette

- \* Power/Attack%-----39/104%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----3,500 Gil



- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in Mt. Nibel

The Plus Barrette is another of the double materia growth weapons. The materia slottage (4 unlinked slots) is identical to that of the Seraph Comb, but the power of the Plus Barrette is astoundingly lower than that of the Seraph Comb. Think to yourself if the significant power drop is worth the double materia growth, and also consider the widespread availability of weapons with double materia growth power.

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#### Powersoul

- \* Power/Attack%-----28/106%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----4,200 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden at Mt. Nibel, Junon (later)

The Powersoul is a curious weapon, with all of the materia disadvantages of the double materia growth weapons at the time (four unlinked slots, rather than the linked ones, weak attack power). Only, it does not offer double materia growth. The advantage of the weapon is that it strikes for double damage when Tifa's HP is critically low, but that's only as useful as long as you can keep Tifa in that state (which isn't the brightest idea in the world, mind you). At double power, it hits harder than, say the Tiger Fang would, but is this worth it to you? Granted, the Powersoul is free, where the Tiger Fang is not, but bear in mind that the Platinum Fist is also free, and that it at least offers double materia growth for your trouble.

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#### Premium Heart

- \* Power/Attack%-----99/112%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in Wall Market (later)

Tifa's ultimate weapon is the Premium Heart. As with all of the game's ultimate weapons, the Premium Heart is both the most powerful weapon available for Tifa, complete with a full entourage of linked materia slots, albeit with no potential for growth. Also, as with the other ultimate weapons, the Premium Heart has a power up factor. The strength of the Premium Heart is directly related to how full Tifa's limit bar is. This can be a bad thing at first, as when her bar is empty, the attack power of the Premium Heart is virtually nil. This fact alone makes some players prefer the God's Hand over the Premium Heart. However, the Premium Heart does gain power very quickly, and about one third of the way up the limit bar, its power will break even (meaning that from there on up, it just keeps getting more and more powerful). One good thing is that this always assures maximum power for Tifa's limit breaks. But, again, be prepared for a quick and severe power drop immediately following. Refer to section V.J. of the FAQ for details on locating Tifa's Premium Heart.

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Princess Guard

- \* Power/Attack%-----52/111%
- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients

For all practical purposes, this is Aeris's ultimate weapon. Granted, it lacks several qualities of the rest of the game's ultimate weapons, but it still possesses a "power up" factor, like the rest of them do. The attack power of this weapon will go up if one or both of Aeris's teammates have fallen in battle. Somehow, I don't think that's going to interest you nearly as much as the most excellent materia slottage provided by the Princess Guard (and yes, it does offer growth, as well). Point in case, this is the best weapon for Aeris, hands-down. This is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, but that really doesn't matter, actually.

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Prism Staff

- \* Power/Attack%-----40/105%
- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Price-----2,600 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Cosmo Canyon

With Aeris, attack power is probably not going to be your primary consideration. Rather, you will likely be more interested in materia slottage. And the problem here is that the Fairy Tale (a free weapon that you already have) offers seven of those. Granted, with the Prism Staff, you would be getting linkage, you would be sacrificing slottage. And, well, it costs you money, too. The choice is up to you, but if you're not going to be using Aeris, then the choice is pretty simple: don't buy it.

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Quicksilver

- \* Power/Attack%-----38/110%
- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Price-----1,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Initially Equipped, Junon (later)

Vincent's initial equipping, though when you find him there's a good chance you have already also located the Peacemaker. The Peacemaker is equal in power to the Quicksilver, and has only one less materia slot. And you gain double the materia growth for the switch, so it's definitely something to consider.

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Ragnarok

- \* Power/Attack%-----97/105%

- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----From Proud Clod in Midgar (later)

The Ragnarok is the most effective weapon available to Cloud besides his ultimate weapon, ironically named Ultima Weapon. While the materia slottage is neither an improvement nor a step down from the Crystal Sword, the power is a nice bonus. Also note that the Ragnarok is superior to the Heaven's Cloud in terms of power, as well, so there's no sense in not upgrading from it, either.

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#### Razor Ring

- \* Power/Attack%-----49/105%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----6,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Wutai

There isn't much that can be said about the Razor Ring except that it is a worthy purchase if Yuffie will be with you in the next portion of your journey. If not, feel free to pass it right up.

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#### Red M-Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----60/100%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----11,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Icicle Inn

While the Red M-Phone offers far more power than the Silver M-Phone, its materia slottage is still inferior. And given that Cait Sith is a magic-user, not a fighter, this should be your biggest consideration. A close second would be that the Silver M-Phone is free, while the Red M-Phone is not.

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#### Rising Sun

- \* Power/Attack%-----68/108%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Stolen from Diamond WEAPON

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Rocket Punch

- \* Power/Attack%-----62/110%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----3,200 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients, Junon (later)

Another in the line of very powerful, yet materia-barren weapons, Barret is one of the few characters you might actually consider giving up the materia for in favor of more power. Then again, it is a short-range weapon, which is another problem you're going to have to deal with. Oh, well. It's not a lost-forever, but is mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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## Rune Blade

- \* Power/Attack%-----40/108%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----3,800 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in Mt. Nibel, Junon (later)

You know the drill here. The Rune Blade offers double the materia growth at the expense of your weapon's linkage. As always, the choice is entirely up to you.

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## Scimitar

- \* Power/Attack%-----86/102%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/3
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Underwater Reactor at Junon

Cid's Scimitar is one of only two weapons in the game that offer triple materia growth. While a powerful weapon, you do pay the price in materia slots, with only two linked slots available. While it is nice to have linked slots on a triple growth weapon, the Scimitar isn't much of a practical weapon by any means. Of course, when it comes to leveling-up, you'll be damn glad you have it. You should also note that the Scimitar is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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## Seraph Comb

- \* Power/Attack%-----68/110%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----From Seto at Cosmo Canyon

Red XIII receives this at the end of the Gi Cave mission, and the power offered by this weapon is beyond substantial. It is so powerful, in fact, that it makes Red XIII the strongest character in the game for quite some time, and is actually even more powerful than the next few weapons that come after it (meaning that you may stick with the Seraph Comb for quite some time). The only price you pay for the power of the Seraph Comb is the lack of linked slots, which leans Red XIII further into the "fighter" direction. I suppose another would be that the weapons that are trumped by the Seraph Comb will eventually have five and even six materia slots...

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#### Shortbarrel

\* Power/Attack%-----51/118%  
\* Used By-----Vincent  
\* Price-----6,400 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Wutai

Compared to the Sniper CR, the Shortbarrel poses an extra materia slot and a tad bit more power over it, but in return the deadly accuracy is sacrificed. It's a bit easier to justify the move up from the Peacemaker, given the materia slottage, but at least the Peacemaker offers the double materia growth and all. The Shortbarrel also costs money, while the Sniper CR, Peacemaker, and Quicksilver, are all free (and, well, I guess the Shotgun if you have one). If Vincent will be coming with you, then you might consider buying this, but only if the extra materia slot(s) is something you need. If he's not, then by all means stick with what you have.

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#### Shotgun

\* Power/Attack%-----48/112%  
\* Used By-----Vincent  
\* Price-----3,100 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Rocket Town

The Shotgun is like the Sniper CR, only a tad bit more powerful and nowhere near as accurate. It's up to you to decide which is more important. But do remember: the Shotgun costs gil, while the Sniper CR (and the Peacemaker/Quicksilver) is free. Oh, and the Shotgun is also a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. fo the FAQ.

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#### Silver Barrette

\* Power/Attack%-----40/110%  
\* Used By-----Red XIII  
\* Price-----2,500  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Cosmo Canyon

You might consider buying the Silver Barrette purely for your trip through

the Gi Cave (a trip in which you are forced to take along Red XIII), but you'll likely end up selling it afterwards. That's because that at the end of said mission, you will acquire the Seraph Comb, which is a substantially more powerful weapon than the Silver Barrette, and one that you should strongly consider using.

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#### Silver M-Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----28/106%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----3,300 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 8 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Shinra Mansion, Junon (later)

The Silver M-Phone offers superior materia slottage for Cait Sith, albeit unlinked. The power of this weapon is very low, but for Cait Sith, that shouldn't be much of an issue. Then again, the lack of linked slots may become an issue, especially later on, and is more than likely what will finally convince you to upgrade. But for the time being, this thing is free, so why not go for it? It's either this, the double materia growth of the Black M-Phone, or the linked slots and slight power of the Green M-Phone. The Black M-Phone and Silver M-Phone have the edge in this equation because both are free, mind you.

---

#### Silver Rifle

- \* Power/Attack%-----62/120%
- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Price-----3,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients, Junon (later)

Yet another powerful, yet materia-barren weapon. Again, for a character like Vincent, it would be a questionable decision to opt for the Silver Rifle, especially given his other options. Not a lost-forever, but still mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

---

#### Slash Lance

- \* Power/Attack%-----56/98%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----6,500 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Wutai

Before dropping your gil on the Slash Lance, take note of the Dragoon Spear, which is actually more powerful, and has more materia slottage. Granted, the slottage is not linked, but it's a small price to pay. As always, cost is another consideration, and if Cid isn't going to see any action soon, then the decision is already made: don't buy this.

---

Sniper CR

- \* Power/Attack%-----42/255%
- \* Used By-----Vincent
- \* Price-----3,300 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in Mt. Nibel, Junon (later)

An interesting choice over the Peacemaker or Quicksilver is the Sniper CR. Its power is about the same, and the materia slottage is only a bit better. What it does have is deadly accuracy, which can be used excellently in conjunction with the Deathblow materia. And given that all three of these weapons are free, the choice is by all means yours to make.

---

Solid Bazooka

- \* Power/Attack%-----61/100%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----16,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Costa Del Sol (later)

The Solid Bazooka offers more materia slottage than the AM Cannon, however it is also a weaker weapon overall. And given that this is Barret we're talking about here, you should take that heavily into consideration. Then again, this, like the AM Cannon, is only a good buy if you will actually be using Barret.

---

Spear

- \* Power/Attack%-----44/97%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----1,200 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Initially Equipped, Junon (later)

Cid's initial equipping. Serves you well until something better comes along.

---

Spring Gun Clip

- \* Power/Attack%-----87/100%
- \* Used By-----Red XIII
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Ancient Forest

For all practical purposes, this is Red XIII's best weapon before his ultimate weapon, Limited Moon. It is like the Crystal Comb, only more powerful. And free, to boot.

---

### Starlight Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----88/102%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in Midgar (later)

The best weapon for Cait Sith besides his ultimate weapon, the HP Shout. And all the HP Shout has over the Starlight Phone is a tad bit more power (and in return, you'd be losing your materia growth), and with Cait Sith, power shouldn't be much of an issue, anyways. So all in all, this is a damn good weapon, but you should also take note that it is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, so be mindful to pick it up when you can.

---

### Striking Staff

- \* Power/Attack%-----32/100%
- \* Used By-----Aeris
- \* Price-----1,300 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Junon, Gongaga, stolen from Eligor at Train Graveyard

Sold at Junon, but you can steal it very much earlier in the game. All the way back in the Train Graveyard, to be exact. This early on, it will be a huge boost to Aeris's offense, giving her a decent physical attack in addition to her magical capabilities. If you missed stealing this, you may consider buying a Striking Staff in Junon if you plan on using Aeris much in the next portion of the game. But please take note that you'll soon discover the Wizard Staff, which you may decide to use rather than the Striking Staff.

---

### Super Ball

- \* Power/Attack%-----68/120%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----3,000 gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Fort Condor (7th battle's prize) , Junon (later)

Another of the weapons that offer great power at the expense of any and all materia slots is Yuffie's Super Ball. The glaring downside, aside from the obvious, is that the Super Ball is a complete and total pain in the ass to get (refer to section X. of the FAQ for more information), and is furthermore a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ. However, if you went to the trouble of getting it, and furthermore find it useful, then by all means, you earned it.

---

### Supershot ST



\* Power/Attack%-----97/120%  
\* Used By-----Vincent  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Ancient Forest

Vincent's most powerful weapon besides his ultimate weapon, the Death Penalty, itself, also bears a total of six linked materia slots, which is about par with other weapons of the time. However, there are two other weapons that factor into the decision. The first would be the Long Barrel Rifle. The Long Barrel Rifle, if you purchased it, has the vastly superior materia linkage, as well as the ultimate in accuracy. However, you would have to very much exploit that accuracy (via the Deathblow materia) in order to make up for the very large difference in power between the two weapons. Then again, raw power is all the Supershot ST has over the Long Barrel Rifle. Then again, you may not have purchased the Long Barrel Rifle, and the decision is made. However, there is also a weapon known as the Outsider, which poses the same materia slottage as the Long Barrel Rifle, albeit at the sacrifice of a bit of linkage. And although the Outsider does not have the accuracy of the Long Barrel Rifle, it is more powerful. In the end, you really can't go wrong with either the Supershot ST or the Outsider, and both make fine weapons overall. As always, the decision is yours.

---

#### Tiger Fang

\* Power/Attack%-----38/110%  
\* Used By-----Tifa  
\* Price-----2,500 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Cosmo Canyon

A worthy buy for those planning to make use of Tifa in the next portion of the game is the standard four-link weapon of the day. However, even if you are interested in using Tifa, also take note of the soon-arriving Platinum Fist, which unlike the Tiger Fang is free. Then again, it's all a matter of personal preference, in the end.

---

#### Trident

\* Power/Attack%-----60/105%  
\* Used By-----Cid  
\* Price-----7,500 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 6 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients, Junon (later)

The Trident, interestingly enough, is trumped entirely by the Dragoon Lance, which you can find earlier. Assuming that you didn't find it, the Trident is a good contender with Cid's current weapon of the time (the Slash Lance), though it again all comes down to personal preference. On an entirely separate note, the Trident is not a lost-forever, but is mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

---

## Trumpet Shell

- \* Power/Attack%-----68/118%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients, Junon (later)

Yet another powerful weapon that in turn offers no materia slottage for the dollar. Of all characters, Cait Sith may very well be the character you'd be least inclined to hand such a weapon to, given his definite magical affiliation, as well as the availability of the Silver M-Phone. Not a lost-forever, but nevertheless is mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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## Twin Viper

- \* Power/Attack%-----36/108%
- \* Used By-----Yuffie
- \* Price-----3,200 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Shinra Mansion , Junon (later)

The Twin Viper, like several other similar weapons of the time, offers double the materia growth at the expense of linked slots. The good news is that unlike some of the other weapons, there is no loss in power from the Pinwheel. Then again, there's still the links, so it's not entirely win-win. If you chose not to buy the Pinwheel, then the Twin Viper is damn near a shoe-in.

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## Ultima Weapon

- \* Power/Attack%-----100/110%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----From Ultima WEAPON (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Venus Gospel

- \* Power/Attack%-----97/103%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---8 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----From old man at Rocket Town (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this

in a future update. Thank you.

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### Viper Halberd

- \* Power/Attack%-----58/102%
- \* Used By-----Cid
- \* Price-----7,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Corral Valley Cave, Junon (later)

Double the materia growth at the expense of links slots poses a few problems in Cid's case. The first, of course, is the Dragoon Spear, a weapon which is superior in terms of materia slottage and power (though it has the same linkage issues). It is also available far earlier than the Viper Halberd, which brings me to my second point: the Viper Halberd arrives somewhat late and is sooner obsolete than other similar weapons. It can still be useful, however.

---

### W Machine Gun

- \* Power/Attack%-----30/100%
- \* Used By-----Barret
- \* Price-----2,000 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Long
- \* Location-----Hidden in Mt. Corel, Junon (later)

You should be familiar with this type of weapon by now. Instead of the four materia slots offered by the Atomic Scissors (two linked and two unlinked), the W Machine Gun has only three unlinked slots. However, its materia growth rate is two. In addition to that, the W Machine Gun is also a long-range weapon (as opposed to the Atomic Scissors, which isn't). The W Machine Gun is a bit weaker than the Atomic Scissors, but not by much. The only real downside is the lack of materia slots; and for Barret, that really shouldn't be much of a problem, anyways. While this weapon is not a lost-forever, it is still mentioned in section I.F of the FAQ.

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### White M-Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----35/102%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----2,300 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/2
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in Gongaga, Junon (later)

The last in the line of weapons with a double growth rate, but only three unlinked slots. It comes along not too long after you meet Cait Sith, but is almost immediately replaced by the Black M-Phone.

---

### Winchester

\* Power/Attack%-----73/120%  
\* Used By-----Vincent  
\* Price-----18,000 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Mideel

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Wind Slash

\* Power/Attack%-----30/103%  
\* Used By-----Yuffie  
\* Price-----2,000 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Long  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Shinra Boat, Junon (later)

Attack-wise, this is no different than the Boomerang. The difference is that the Wind Slash has a materia growth rate of two. The downside is that instead of the four materia slots on the Boomerang (two linked and two unlinked), you only get three unlinked slots with the Wind Slash. Another thing to watch out for, however, is that the Wind Slash, although not lost-forever, is still mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

---

#### Wiser Staff

\* Power/Attack%-----33/100%  
\* Used By-----Aeris  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----From Gi Nattack in the Gi Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Wizard Staff

\* Power/Attack%-----28/100%  
\* Used By-----Aeris  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 3 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Range-----Short  
\* Location-----Hidden in Mt. Corel

Yet another weapon which offers a double materia growth rate, but only three unlinked slots as opposed to the four (two linked, two unlinked) offered by the other weapons available at the time. With a character like Aeris, you really won't be that concerned with the small downgrade in power from switching from using a Striking Staff to this, but the lack of linked materia slots may pose

some cause for concern. Another cause for concern is that this is also one of the game's lost-forevers, discussed in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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Work Glove

- \* Power/Attack%-----68/114%
- \* Used By-----Tifa
- \* Price-----2,200 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/0
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients, Junon (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Yellow M-Phone

- \* Power/Attack%-----36/100%
- \* Used By-----Cait Sith
- \* Price-----500 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----Initially Equipped, Junon (later)

Cait Sith's initial equipping is on par with the other weapons purchasable at Junon. It is useful to a very short extent, however, as the White M-Phone, Green M-Phone, Black M-Phone, and Silver M-Phone soon become available in almost rapid succession.

-----

Yoshiyuki

- \* Power/Attack%-----56/100%
- \* Used By-----Cloud
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate---0 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Range-----Short
- \* Location-----From old man at Rocket Town

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---27/3%/8/0%  
\* Price-----800 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----2 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Kalm, stolen from Moth Slasher at Shinra H.Q.

A big step up from the Mythril Bangle, both in terms of protection, plus you get another materia slot. You can buy them at Costa Del Sol, but can also steal them much earlier in the game from the Moth Slasher at Shinra H.Q.. If you steal them at Shinra H.Q., expect to get extensive use out of them for the next good portion of the game. However, by the time you reach Costa Del Sol, the Shinra Beta (a piece of armor which you may have found earlier) will trump it. If, however, you failed to earlier procure any Shinra Betas, the Carbon Bangle is still definitely something to consider at this point in the game.

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#### Chocobracelet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---35/10%/38/10%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----From Ester at Gold Saucer (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Crystal Bangle

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---70/8%/45/1%  
\* Price-----4,800 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Mideel

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Diamond Bracelet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---57/6%/37/0%  
\* Price-----3,200 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Bone Village

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#### Dragon Armlet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---58/3%/0/7%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1

\* Location-----From Red Dragon at the Temple of the Ancients

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#### Edincoat

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---50/0%/33/0%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 8 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----From Palmer at Rocket Town

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Escort Guard

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---62/5%/55/0%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Hidden in the Gelnika

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#### Fire Armlet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---72/8%/52/3%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Hidden in Gaea's Cliff

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Four Slots

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---12/0%/10/0%  
\* Price-----1,300  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Hidden in Shinra H.Q. (floor 63), Costa Del Sol

You can find this at Shinra H.Q., and you can buy them at Costa Del Sol. They are defensively inferior to the Carbon Bangle (actually, they're defensively inferior to the Titan Bangle...) The only redeeming point about this armor is that it has four materia slots, and that fact even will be negated by the Shinra Beta (available later). If you reach Costa Del Sol and earlier failed to get any Shinra Betas, you should still think twice before buying one



of these, considering first the Carbon Bangle and Platinum Bangle. And even then, you should stop to consider that if the character you hand this to is using a weapon that offers double materia growth, you'll be reducing that character to fighting with no linked materia slots. So, you may decide to use the one you find at Shinra H.Q. for awhile (though if you pick up Carbon Bangles while you're there, you'll likely opt to use those instead), but that's about it for the Four Slots. Lastly, the Four Slots is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ.

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#### Gigas Armlet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---59/0%/0/0%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----4 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/0  
\* Location-----From Demon's Gate at Temple of the Ancients, stolen\*

The Gigas Armlet is a bit superior to the armor of the time, with a bit more defense and another materia slot, but the drawback is a lack of growth in those slots. Another consideration is that the Edincoat and Dragon Armlet are both available (or soon to be available) and make good, if not wholly superior alternatives. The availability of the Diamond Bracelet soon afterwards also obsoletes the Gigas Armlet for good. \*Subsequent copies can actually be stolen from a creature called Gigas at the Crater (and in this respect are a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, because there is only one point during the game in which you will be able to battle the Gigas), but there is little point in doing so, given the armor you'll likely have by that point.

---

#### Gold Armlet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---46/4%/22/0%  
\* Price-----2,000 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----4 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Rocket Town, stolen from Dragon at Mt. Nibel

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Imperial Guard

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---82/0%/74/0%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----From Fort Condor, hidden in the Final Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Iron Bangle

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---10/0%/2/0%

\* Price-----160 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 1 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Sector Seven Slums

A step up from the Bronze Bangle, but not by much. You get a tad bit more protection and a materia slot. You'll probably want to upgrade for the latter. Technically, this is a lost-forever, as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, but why in the hell would you ever want any more?

---

#### Minerva Band

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---60/8%/57/0%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Stolen from Elena at Midgar (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Mystile

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---65/50%/72/60%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Hidden in Midgar (later) and the Final Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Mythril Armlet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---18/3%/6/0%  
\* Price-----350 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----2 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Wall Market

These are a defensive step up from the Titan Bangle, and the materia slots are also linked. However, a short while after you have the opportunity to buy Mythril Armlets, you'll have the chance to steal Carbon Bangles, an even better piece of armor. Anyways, if you decide to buy the Mythril Armlet, realize that Tifa is about to rejoin you, so you may want to get her one, too. Also note that if you haven't and/or you're not going to buy Aeris a Mythril Rod, she will benefit the most from a Mythril Armlet, not only from the offensive boost, but also due to the linked materia slots.

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#### Platinum Bangle

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---20/0%/12/0%  
\* Price-----1,800 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/2

\* Location-----Costa Del Sol, Junon (later)

You can pick up the Platinum Bangle once you reach Costa Del Sol. It offers good protection, but that's not its selling point. It is the first piece of armor you'll find that offers double materia growth (though, to that end, it only gives you two unlinked slots). It's a nice buy, if not for the materia growth alone, but there's one thing you should consider first. By this time, some or most of your characters will have found weapons that offer double materia growth, and you may already be using them. Note that these weapons also do not have any linked slots, and if you give any character using such a weapon a Platinum Bangle, that character will not have any linked materia slots, which can lead to problems. Another note is that the weapons which have double materia growth at this point in the game have three slots, while the Platinum Bangle has only two. Thus, the weapons that offer double materia growth give you more bang for the buck, so to speak. On a final note, please realize that if you picked up any Shinra Betas earlier, the switch from them to a Platinum Bangle would drop your materia slottage by two (whereas switching to a weapon that doubles your materia growth would result in only one lost materia slot).

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#### Precious Watch

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---35/10%/38/10%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Gold Saucer (Chocobo Square), From Ester (later)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Rune Armlet

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---43/5%/24/0%  
\* Price-----3,700 Gil  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 4 (Unlinked)/2  
\* Location-----Bone Village

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Shinra Alpha

\* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---77/0%/34/0%  
\* Price-----N/A  
\* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----6 (Linked), 0 (Unlinked)/1  
\* Location-----Stolen from U. MP at Underwater Reactor at Junon

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Shinra Beta

- \* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---30/0%/0/0%
- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Location-----Stolen from Marine at the Shinra Boat

While on the Shinra Boat, you will likely want to take the time to stop and pilfer some of these from the local Marines on board, especially because they are among the game's lost-forevers as mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ, and this will be the only chance you have to get some. The Shinra Beta has the best materia slottage of any armor until you reach Cosmo Canyon, and also offers solid Defense to your characters. The only downside with the Shinra Beta is that solid Defense is all you'll get, as the Evade, Magic Defense, and Magic Evade stats conferred by this piece of armor are all nil. This's an excellent piece of armor for the whole team, though you may opt to pick up one or more Platinum Bangles instead.

---

## Silver Armlet

- \* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---34/4%/14/0%
- \* Price-----1,300 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----2 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Location-----From Dyne at Desert Prison, Cosmo Canyon

Depending on what you're upgrading from, the Silver Armlet will likely place differently on your list of priorities. Assuming you're wearing the Shinra Beta, the Silver Armlet isn't much of an upgrade at all. Granted you get some magical defense, but that's about it. However, those wearing Carbon Bangles are probably much more apt to upgrade due to the additional materia slot. Lastly, for those wearing Platinum Bangles... it's a toss-up. In this instance, however, bear in mind that you are soon in the game about to hit a new wave of weapons with double materia growth (such weapons will now all have four unlinked slots).

---

## Titan Bangle

- \* Def./Def. %/M. Def./M. Def. %---14/2%/4/0%
- \* Price-----280 Gil
- \* Materia Slots/Growth Rate-----0 (Linked), 2 (Unlinked)/1
- \* Location-----From Air Buster at Reactor #5, Sector 5, Wall Market

You'll get one of these when you destroy the Air Buster, and they can also be bought at Sector Five. They're a nice boost to your defense and give you a second materia slot. However, very shortly, you will have the opportunity to buy the even better Mythril Armlet, which you may or may not decide to buy. On one hand, Mythril Armlet offers better defense and linked materia slots, but on the other hand, not too long after you can buy them, you'll have to opportunity to steal even better armor. It's up to you. If you decide to save your money and buy the Titan Bangle, nab one at Sector Five (and you may also want to get a second one for Tifa, who will soon re-join you). If not, then wait for the Mythril Armlet.

---

## Warrior Bangle



---

Bolt Ring

- \* Price-----8,000 Gil
- \* Location---Mideel

Another in the line of accessories that absorb certain elemental attacks is the bolt ring which absorbs, you guessed it, lightning-based attacks. However, unlike the Fire Ring and Water Bracelet, you can't find these anywhere- you must buy them. And, as we have established, there aren't too many enemies whose attacks rely so much on lightning magic that would compel you to go out and buy one. Furthermore, even if you wanted to, realize that you have an Elemental materia that can pretty much accomplish the same thing.

---

Cat's Bell

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Location---Gold Saucer (Chocobo Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Champion Belt

- \* Price-----16,000 BP
- \* Location---Gold Saucer (Battle Square)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Choco Feather

- \* Price-----10,000 Gil
- \* Location---From Dio\*, Wutai

A +10 bonus to one's Dexterity is a nice bonus, but one that may be offset by two factors. One is that you do not have access to it until later on (when a +10 bonus isn't quite what it used to be in the early game). Two, is that the only one you can get without paying for (the one from Dio), is a one-time shot and very hard to acquire, and buying them is quite expensive.

---

Circlet

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Location---Stolen from Snow at Great Glacier

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this

in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Earrings

- \* Price-----7,500 Gil
- \* Location---Rocket Town

A +10 bonus to your Magic stat is a very nice benefit, much like the Power Wrist offers +10 to one's strength, except that it's likely that your Magic stat probably sees a lot more use overall, and will more benefit from the boost. There are only a few disadvantages here. One is that these cannot be found anywhere and must be bought. Secondly is that by the time you do buy them, you're reaching a point where a +10 stat bonus isn't all that it used to be. Lastly, when you compile the bonus that you're getting from your materia (I hope I'm correct in assuming that whomever is wearing this accessory has a lot of magic materia equipped), the bonus becomes more negligible. On the positive side of things, however, this is the only accessory that is known to enhance your Magic stat, and may be worth picking up on those grounds alone (though keep in mind that the Magic Plus materia will be far more effective not too much later on).

---

#### Fairy Ring

- \* Price-----3,500 Gil
- \* Location---Hidden in the Gi Cave, Mideel

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Fire Ring

- \* Price-----8,000 Gil
- \* Location---Hidden in Costa Del Sol, Mideel

You'll find this baby underneath Costa Del Sol, and its ability to absorb all fire-based attacks is offset by the fact that it is only useful against a select few enemies. And come the time you are able to actually buy them, chances are you've got at least one Elemental materia to at least it's second level, so buying one would just be redundant. However, the Fire Ring serves a very important purpose in that it will help you learn the Beta skill from the Midgar Zolom early in the game.

---

#### Fury Ring

- \* Price-----5,000 Gil
- \* Location---Gongaga

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Headband

- \* Price-----3,000 Gil
- \* Location---Junon, Gongaga

This is a magic Headband that causes insomnia, so the wearer cannot be put to sleep during a battle. Much like the Star Pendant, this thing's usefulness is limited by the fact that not many enemies are going to use attacks that put you to sleep. Of course, that statement goes double for the Headband, seeing as poison is at least the most common status ailment you're liable to come across. Sleep is nearly non-existent. Combine this with the fact that these cannot be found- only bought, and you have an accessory that likely isn't going to see any use in your party.

---

Hypno Crown

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Location---Hidden in the Corral Valley Cave

This nifty little accessory will help to increase one's rate of manipulation. While it will not make manipulation a 100% deal, it will still help to make it easier. More or less, this accessory is as useful to you as the manipulation skill is. The more you use it, the more useful this thing will be. Right when you find it, there won't be many other useful accessories around for it to compete against. Later on, however, many other highly-useful accessories entering the picture may be enough for you to consider busting the Hypno Crown down to a part-time accessory (as it is still useful to learn the occasional E. Skill and such). However, one of the best things is that the Hypno Crown is free, and getting it is no skin off of your back at all (unlike the maliciously costly Sneak Glove), so you might as well go ahead and pick it up when you can.

---

Ice Ring

- \* Price-----8,000
- \* Location---From Chechov at Wutai, Mideel

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Jem Ring

- \* Price-----7,500
- \* Location---From the Scorpion at Mt. Nibel, Mideel

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Peace Ring



\* Price-----N/A

\* Location---From RAPPS at Wutai, Fort Condor (2nd battle's prize)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Power Wrist

\* Price-----7,500 Gil

\* Location---From Bottomswell at Junon, Rocket Town

The Power Wrist confers a +10 bonus to a character's Strength, and will result in a nicely noticeable increase in a character's damage output. It also helps to offset or completely destroy any Strength penalties incurred by the wearer's materia. Any character acting as a fighter early on would benefit from wearing the one you get from killing Bottomswell. However, by the time you are able to purchase them, the high price combined with the continually lessening effect of a +10 bonus make you think twice about purchasing additional copies.

---

#### Protect Vest

\* Price-----3,500 Gil

\* Location---From Rufus at Shinra H.Q., Rocket Town, from Dio\*

More or less, see every comment I make about the Talisman, except that the Protect Vest applies to one's Vitality rather than their Spirit. Also, the one you can possibly win from Dio later on in the game more than likely comes too late to be of much use, and is very difficult to win (not to mention that you only get one shot at it).

---

#### Reflect Ring

\* Price-----N/A

\* Location---From Jenova-DEATH at the Crater

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Ribbon

\* Price-----N/A

\* Location---Hidden in the Temple of the Ancients

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Safety Bit

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Location---Hidden in the Great Glacier

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Silver Glasses

- \* Price-----3,000
- \* Location---Junon, Gongaga

This falls into the exact same boat as the Headband, except that it will protect versus darkness rather than sleep.

---

Sneak Glove

- \* Price-----129,000 Gil
- \* Location---Wall Market (later)

Yeah, you read the price right. 129,000 gil. For that price, you're probably expecting a steak dinner following sex with Sarah Michelle Gellar on a bed made out of winning lottery tickets, but what you instead get is an accessory that will increase your chance to steal things (with the Steal materia). Granted it doesn't make stealing a 100% deal, but it can definitely be of assistance in the latter half of the game if and when you're trying to bump up your inventory by stealing lots of rare items from enemies (see section XIX.B. for more details). Also, to get it, you're going to have to get back to Wall Market, a feat which is further detailed in section V.J. of the FAQ. So, in a nutshell, once you've got the money, and you want it, by all means it's a good buy... just keep it away from Yuffie.

---

Star Pendant

- \* Price-----4,000 Gil
- \* Location---Hidden in Shinra H.Q., from Motor Ball, Gongaga

The Star Pendant will protect the wearer from becoming poisoned. When you find it at the 63rd floor of Shinra H.Q. (refer to section V.B. for details), there is one battle in which it will come in handy. And as if that wasn't enough, you'll earn a second one from Motor Ball after kicking its ass. But in the long run, so few enemies use attacks that poison you that you likely will opt to equip your characters with other, more beneficial accessories than this, even from the get-go (such as the Protect Vest and Talisman, which will at least constantly be benefiting you). Buying extras is generally a poor idea, given that you get two for free, and can more or less create a third with the Elemental or Added Effect materia.

---

Talisman

\* Price-----4,000 Gil

\* Location---From H0512 at Shinra H.Q., Gongaga, Rocket Town

This will confer a nice +10 bonus to one's Spirit, resulting in an increase in magical defense. Like the Protect Vest, this is a nice bonus to one of your character's defenses early on, but the +10 bonus soon becomes negligible, and you may find yourself wearing the one you have simply for a lack of anything better to wear.

---

#### Tetra Elemental

\* Price-----N/A

\* Location---Hidden in the Final Cave

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Tough Ring

\* Price-----N/A

\* Location---Stolen from Reno in Midgar (later)

If you have the foresight to steal this from Reno later on in the game, you are rewarded with an accessory that confers a whopping +50 bonus to both your Vitality and Spirit ratings. The only disadvantage is that so late in the game, even such a large defensive bonus is rather negligible as compared to the other means you have of keeping yourself healthy. Also note that the Tough Ring is an inadvisable accessory for any character you intend on being a damage magnet (in order to quickly build up their limit meter), and that something like the Ribbon would be preferable for such a character, as it protects them from stuff that could really mess up their day while allowing for a healthy damage intake. But for anyone in need of the protection, the Tough Ring shines brightly. There's two of them to be found, and those two are lost-forevers (mentioned in section I.F. of the FAQ).

---

#### Water Bracelet

\* Price-----N/A

\* Location---Hidden in Corral Valley

Basically, this is the Fire Ring all over again. Except that instead of absorbing fire attacks, the Water Bracelet protects you from water-based attacks (which are far more uncommon than fire-based attacks, as you might know). And also, rather than helping you learn Beta, the Water Bracelet will make its wearer completely invincible during the boss fight that will come very shortly after you acquire it.

---

#### White Cape

\* Price-----5,000

\* Location---From Jenova-BIRTH at Shinra Boat, Gongaga, Mideel



in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Antidote

- \* Price-----80 Gil
- \* Affects--- One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Bird Wing

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Bolt Plume

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Cornucopia

- \* Price-----150 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Dazers

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Deadly Waste

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Dragon Fang

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Dragon Scales

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Dream Powder

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Earth Drum

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Echo Screen

- \* Price-----100 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this

section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Elixir

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Ether

- \* Price-----1,500 Gil, 20 GP
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Eye Drop

- \* Price-----50 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Fire Fang

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Fire Veil

- \* Price-----800 Gil
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Ghost Hand

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Graviball

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Grenade

- \* Price-----80 Gil
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Guard Source

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Hero Drink

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Hi-Potion

- \* Price-----300 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally



I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Holy Touch

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Hyper

- \* Price-----100 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Ice Crystal

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Impaler

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

#### Ink

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

---

Light Barrier

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All allies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Loco Weed

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Luck Source

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Magic Source

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Maiden's Kiss

- \* Price-----150 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Megalixir

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All allies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Mind Source

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Molotov

- \* Price-----400 Gil
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### M-Tentacles

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Mute Mask

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Phoenix Down

- \* Price-----300 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Potion

- \* Price-----50 Gil, 1 GP
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Power Source

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Remedy

- \* Price-----1,000 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Right Arm

- \* Price-----500 BP
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Save Crystal

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---N/A

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Shrapnel

- \* Price-----N/A

\* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Shrivel

\* Price-----N/A

\* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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S-Mine

\* Price-----1,000 Gil

\* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Smoke Bomb

\* Price-----N/A

\* Affects---All allies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Soft

\* Price-----150 Gil

\* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Speed Drink

\* Price-----N/A

\* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Speed Source

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Spider Web

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Stardust

- \* Price-----8,000 BP
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Swift Bolt

- \* Price-----800 Gil
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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T/S Bomb

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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Tent

- \* Price-----500 Gil
- \* Affects---All allies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Tranquilizer

- \* Price-----100 Gil
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Turbo Ether

- \* Price-----100 GP
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Vaccine

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Vagyrisk Claw

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Vampire Fang

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---One enemy

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this

in a future update. Thank you.

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#### War Gong

- \* Price-----N/A
- \* Affects---All enemies

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### X-Potion

- \* Price-----80 GP
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Worthless Items

These are the items that really make you question the mental state of the makers of this game. Or maybe they were meant as a practical joke- I don't know. The point is that all of the following items are, like a Pauly Shore movie, completely worthless:

- \* Fight Diary
  - \* Masamune Blade
  - \* Super Sweeper
  - \* Tissue
- 

#### Limit Breaks

Each character's ultimate limit break is obtained in the form of an item, and may be used to teach said character their ultimate limit break when they have learned all of their other limit breaks. For references as to where to locate each ultimate limit break, refer to section XI. of the FAQ. The following are the items of the same name used to teach the characters their ultimate limit breaks:

- \* All Creation
  - \* Catastrophe
  - \* Chaos
  - \* Cosmo Memory
  - \* Final Heaven
  - \* Great Gospel
  - \* Highwind
  - \* Omnislash
-



## Nuts & Greens

Nuts and greens are items used in the process of chocobo capture, breeding, and feeding. These will all be mentioned in section IX. of the FAQ:

- \* Gysahl Greens
- \* Krakka Greens
- \* Tantal Greens
- \* Pahsana Greens
- \* Cureil Greens
- \* Mimett Greens
- \* Reagan Greens
- \* Sylkis Greens
- \* Pipio Nut
- \* Luchile Nut
- \* Saraha Nut
- \* Lasan Nut
- \* Pram Nut
- \* Porov Nut
- \* Carob Nut
- \* Zeio Nut

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## Quest Items

Lastly, the following is a list, in attempted chronological order, of items that are relevant to the plot. Most are key items, but some are not. Either way, the following items have no use besides being quest items, and their uses are all mentioned at the appropriate times:

- \* Pharmacy Coupons
- \* Cotton Dress
- \* Silk Dress
- \* Satin Dress
- \* Dyed Wig
- \* Wig
- \* Blonde Wig
- \* Disinfectant
- \* Deodorant
- \* Digestive
- \* Cologne
- \* Flower Cologne
- \* Sexy Cologne
- \* Glass Tiara
- \* Ruby Tiara
- \* Diamond Tiara
- \* Member's Card
- \* Lingerie
- \* Bikini Briefs
- \* Battery (3)
- \* Keycard 60
- \* Keycard 62
- \* Keycard 65
- \* Midgar Parts
- \* Keycard 66
- \* Keycard 68



## Berserk

- \* MP-----28
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Mystify (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Berserk is just a nice way of saying "pissed off", you know. And for by far the most expensive indirectly offensive spell you can cast, you'd expect something a bit more powerful I suppose than causing something to go into a rage and start attacking you. Berserk's true use is to deny enemies the use of special attacks that might otherwise be aiding them without resorting to using Toad, which as we all know don't always work. Berserk doesn't always work, either, but generally tends to effect more of the enemy population than some of the more severe status ailments.

---

## Bio

- \* MP-----8
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Poison (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Bio is a spell which is a bit more powerful than the Bolt, Ice, or Fire spells, an advantage which will be heavily-felt in the early game. It also has the benefit, as do all poison-based attacks, of possibly poisoning its target, which can inflict more damage over time, making Bio a great spell to use against boss-type creatures. The downside is that, especially early in the game, you need to be careful about who you use this on, because many things happen to be immune to the effects of poison-based attacks. However, wherever applicable, Bio is a choice attack over Bolt, Ice, or Fire, though you'll also see yourself paying twice the MP in return.

---

## Bio 2

- \* MP-----36
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Poison (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

While the original Bio spell was noticeably more powerful than Bolt, Ice, and Fire were, you don't really see the same from Bio 2. Sure, Bio 2 is more powerful than Bolt 2, Ice 2, and Fire 2, but not by a very large or considerable margin at all, and you'll find yourself viewing all four spells more or less as equals. Bio 2 still has the advantage of being able to poison its target, however, meaning that its still going to be a good attack to pull out first against boss-type creatures. Do bear in mind, however, that Bio 2 stands out as noticeably more costly than the other second level spells, however.

---

## Bio 3

- \* MP-----80
- \* Type-----Direct Offense

- \* Materia---Poison (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Bio 3, unlike Bio 2, is again noticeably more powerful than Bolt 3, Ice 3, or Fire 3. However, when you are dealing with very large numbers, the percentages tend to be much smaller. While Bolt 3, Ice 3, and Fire 3 all did about three times the damage of their respective second level spells, Bio 3 deals about three and a half times as much as a Bolt 2, Ice 2, or Fire 2 spell. And seeing as Quake 3 isn't that much more powerful than Bio 3, Bio 3 stands out that much more (as always, offering you the chance to poison your opponent). The downside? This is an expensive spell, man.

---

#### Bolt

- \* MP-----4
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Lightning (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

One of the three basic element attack spells, Bolt will serve you well early in the game. Early on, you'll see that Bolt, Ice, and Fire tend to do considerably more damage than a physical attack, and are therefore preferable attacks wherever applicable, though you also don't want to be running your MP into the ground as you do so. However, the basic attack spells quickly lose power as you advance into the game, as you acquire more powerful spells, attacks, and weapons. This holds especially true for weapons, and you'll see that maybe a third of the way into the game, most of your characters will be doing about as much damage with their physical attacks as they would be with Bolt, Ice, or Fire. At this point, these spells may still prove useful in a pinch versus an enemy who is perhaps weak against its effects and can be quickly finished off. But for the most part, the heyday of these spells will have long since passed, and it's time to graduate to Ice 2, Fire 2, and Bolt 2.

---

#### Bolt 2

- \* MP-----22
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Lightning (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Expect roughly two and a half times the potency of the regular Bolt spell with Bolt 2. Bolt 2 is good for piling on the damage early on, but you should also be wary of the high MP cost it will run you, as well. For most non-boss-battle cases, you'll probably want to stick with the original. You'll only want to step to using Bolt 2 full-time when the original is no longer powerful enough to be useful, which should be about a third of the way through the game. However, what held true for the original Bolt spell also holds true for Bolt 2, and as more powerful attacks and weapons surface, Bolt 2 will quickly begin to lose power, dropping to no more powerful than a normal attack about two thirds of the way through the game. If by that time you have yet to unlock the third generation of spells, you should strongly consider doing so to remain on top of your game.

---

#### Bolt 3

- \* MP-----52
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Lightning (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Bolt 3 strikes with the destructive force three times more powerful than Bolt 2, at a relatively respectable casting cost given the damage it does (though against groups of enemies, Beta and Aqualung prove to be cheaper and equally powerful). Unlike the second level spells, Bolt 3, Ice 3, and Fire 3 will likely be all be welcome attacks at the point in the game you happen to receive them (unless you spend a lot of time leveling up). At the time, Bolt 3 should stand as one of the most powerful attacks at your team's disposal, and is more or less only obsoleted once your team stumbles upon the really kick-ass attack materia, like Ultima and Contain.

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#### Break

- \* MP-----86
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Contain (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy

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#### Comet

- \* MP-----70
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Comet (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy

Deals non-elemental damage roughly equivalent to 1.25 times the strength of a Fire 3/Ice 3/Bolt 3 spell.

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#### Comet 2

- \* MP-----110
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Comet (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---All enemies

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## Confu

- \* MP-----18
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Mystify (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Confusion is a pretty painful status ailment to strike something with, as it can cause the enemy opposition to turn on itself. What this status ailment really lacks, however, is lasting power, and it is dispelled whenever the afflicted creature takes physical damage (something that is very likely to happen in the event it is confused). Repeated castings can be a pain, especially given the high MP cost. And if you're going to be doing something like that, you're just far better off putting the Mystify materia with Added Effect in your weapon and being done with it. That being said, for maximum results, Confu works best on an enemy wielding powerful attacks, preferably magical in nature (as these will not dispel their affliction). This may not kill off the opposition, but will at least not only get them off of your back, but do some good damage in the process. Confu works some of the time, and sometimes it doesn't, so using it is in itself a gamble at times, but at least it is generally more effective than, say, Toad or Mini are.

---

## Cure

- \* MP-----5
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Materia---Restore (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

Cure restores a nice amount of HP to the target character(s). Against certain enemies, it is also an offensive spell (which does far more damage than Bolt, Ice, or Fire, by the way). But 99% of the time, expect to be healing yourself with this widely-useful spell of... erm, healing. As with Bolt, Ice, and Fire, Cure's usefulness will taper off about a third of the way or so into the game when you'll find that it will no longer be restoring enough HP to be useful. However, Cure is still the most economical of the Cure spells, making it the Cure spell of choice to restore your HP via the menu screen. It just won't be seeing any more battle action, is all.

---

## Cure 2

- \* MP-----24
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Materia---Restore (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

Cure 2 isn't a vast improvement over the original (as was the case with Bolt 2, Ice 2, and Fire 2), standing as only about one and two thirds as effective as Cure was. At five times the cost. This means that you'll only want to be using Cure 2 during battle once you start to need the extra restoration it grants you. As mentioned above, this begins at around a third of the way into the game. Cure 2 serves you well for awhile, but Cure 3 is a long way off, and Regen alone cannot sustain you at around two thirds of the way through the game when you begin to need the healing powers of a Cure 3 spell.

---

### Cure 3

- \* MP-----64
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Materia---Restore (Lv. 4)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

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### De-Barrier

- \* MP-----12
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Destruct (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

From using them on yourself, you may have learned of the various defensive benefits of Barrier and M-Barrier. Wouldn't it really suck if the enemy used Barrier and M-Barrier? Well, a few of them do, and that's where De-Barrier comes in: it tears down any and all barrier-type spells affecting the target. However, very few enemies are known to do this, and fewer still can't be just killed within a matter of rounds, so don't expect to be using this spell too often. It's just that you'll be glad it's there when you need it.

---

### De-Spell

- \* MP-----20
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Destruct (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

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### Death

- \* MP-----30
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Destruct (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

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### Demi

- \* MP-----14

- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Gravity (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

The Demi spell has a lot going against it. First and foremost, at the time you get it, you will also have access to the more powerful Laser enemy skill, which is equal in power to Demi 2. Standing nearly equal in MP cost, the only advantage Demi has is its compatibility with an All materia (which thankfully does not have any power-lessening effect on gravity magic). However, its effects are quite minimal, reducing an enemy's HP to a mere 75%. And when you have other attacks that can do considerably more damage at more or less the same cost, casting Demi is a very questionable move. And even later in the game, there are not any enemies whose HP maxes reach levels so high as to make Demi equal in power to Demi 2.

---

#### Demi 2

- \* MP-----33
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Gravity (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

As with Demi, Demi 2 has one glaring weakness: Laser. Laser is the same attack as Demi 2, but half as costly. Granted, Demi 2 does have All capabilities, and is therefore preferable in that case, and may actually prove useful in that respect alone. Moreover, Demi 2 actually becomes more useful later on, as you'll recall that no single attack can exceed 9,999 points of damage, putting sort of a "ceiling" on the more powerful Demi spells. In the event that a Demi 3 spell would go too far past that ceiling to be efficient, a Demi 2 spell may prove almost as damaging for a fraction of the cost. But then again, Laser may prove even cheaper when applicable...

---

#### Demi 3

- \* MP-----48
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Gravity (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

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#### Escape

- \* MP-----16
- \* Type-----Miscellaneous
- \* Materia---Exit (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---All allies

Escape is your trump card to escape the heat of any battle that gets too tough for you to handle. Unless the battle in question is a boss battle, Escape will always work, bringing the battle to an end and removing you from danger, at an affordable MP cost, as well. And all you really stand to lose is the



potential experience, gil, and AP, and quite possibly some pride, as well. And unless you really desire the experience, gil, AP, or pride from the battle in question, opt for the much-cheaper Escape spell rather than the costly Remove spell that comes a bit later in the life of the Exit materia. Then again, if you've got the MP to burn, I suppose it couldn't hurt.

---

#### Esuna

- \* MP-----15
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Materia---Heal (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

Esuna? Wasn't she that elf from the 7th Saga? Well, in Final Fantasy VII, Esuna is your heal-all spell, which will cure any status ailment that afflicts you.

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#### Fire

- \* MP-----4
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Fire (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

One of the three basic element attack spells, Fire will serve you well early in the game. Early on, you'll see that Bolt, Ice, and Fire tend to do considerably more damage than a physical attack, and are therefore preferable attacks wherever applicable, though you also don't want to be running your MP into the ground as you do so. However, the basic attack spells quickly lose power as you advance into the game, as you acquire more powerful spells, attacks, and weapons. This holds especially true for weapons, and you'll see that maybe a third of the way into the game, most of your characters will be doing about as much damage with their physical attacks as they would be with Bolt, Ice, or Fire. At this point, these spells may still prove useful in a pinch versus an enemy who is perhaps weak against its effects and can be quickly finished off. But for the most part, the heyday of these spells will have long since passed, and it's time to graduate to Ice 2, Fire 2, and Bolt 2.

---

#### Fire 2

- \* MP-----22
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Fire (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Expect roughly two and a half times the potency of the regular Fire spell with Fire 2. Fire 2 is good for piling on the damage early on, but you should also be wary of the high MP cost it will run you, as well. For most non-boss-battle cases, you'll probably want to stick with the original. You'll only want to step to using Fire 2 full-time when the original is no longer powerful enough

to be useful, which should be about a third of the way through the game. However, what held true for the original Fire spell also holds true for Fire 2, and as more powerful attacks and weapons surface, Fire 2 will quickly begin to lose power, dropping to no more powerful than a normal attack about two thirds of the way through the game. If by that time you have yet to unlock the third generation of spells, you should strongly consider doing so to remain on top of your game.

---

### Fire 3

- \* MP-----52
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Fire (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Fire 3 strikes with the destructive force three times more powerful than Bolt 2, at a relatively respectable casting cost given the damage it does (though against groups of enemies, Beta and Aqualung prove to be cheaper and equally powerful). Unlike the second level spells, Bolt 3, Ice 3, and Fire 3 will likely be all be welcome attacks at the point in the game you happen to receive them (unless you spend a lot of time leveling up). At the time, Fire 3 should stand as one of the most powerful attacks at your team's disposal, and is more or less only obsoleted once your team stumbles upon the really kick-ass attack materia, like Ultima and Contain.

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### Freeze

- \* MP-----82
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Contain (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy

Deals ice-based damage equivalent to approximately 1.5 times the strength of the Ice 3 spell.

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### Flare

- \* MP-----100
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Contain (Lv. 4)
- \* Affects---One enemy

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### Full Cure

- \* MP-----99
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Materia---Fullcure (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

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### Haste

- \* MP-----18
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Materia---Time (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

Haste will speed up the affected character, making their time bars fill up faster. As you might expect, this generally isn't worth it during most battles. But during any prolonged battle, a Haste-all spell can give your team a serious edge in the speed department, and over time can add up to several extra turns. It will not wear off unless a character dies, in which case you might want to remember to re-cast it. The effects of Haste can also be compounded via a Slow spell. As for the Haste spell itself, it can be useful during the early game, but note that you will also be able to acquire the Big Guard enemy skill at around the same time. Big Guard also conveys the effects of a Haste-all spell (in addition to a Wall-all spell), meaning that at a certain point in time, you'll probably want to graduate to using Big Guard over Haste.

---

### Ice

- \* MP-----4
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Ice (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

One of the three basic element attack spells, Ice will serve you well early in the game. Early on, you'll see that Bolt, Ice, and Fire tend to do considerably more damage than a physical attack, and are therefore preferable attacks wherever applicable, though you also don't want to be running your MP into the ground as you do so. However, the basic attack spells quickly lose power as you advance into the game, as you acquire more powerful spells, attacks, and weapons. This holds especially true for weapons, and you'll see that maybe a third of the way into the game, most of your characters will be doing about as much damage with their physical attacks as they would be with Bolt, Ice, or Fire. At this point, these spells may still prove useful in a pinch versus an enemy who is perhaps weak against its effects and can be quickly finished off. But for the most part, the heyday of these spells will have long since passed, and it's time to graduate to Ice 2, Fire 2, and Bolt 2.

---

### Ice 2

- \* MP-----22
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Ice (Lv. 2)

\* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Expect roughly two and a half times the potency of the regular Ice spell with Ice 2. Ice 2 is good for piling on the damage early on, but you should also be wary of the high MP cost it will run you, as well. For most non-boss-battle cases, you'll probably want to stick with the original. You'll only want to step to using Ice 2 full-time when the original is no longer powerful enough to be useful, which should be about a third of the way through the game. However, what held true for the original Ice spell also holds true for Ice 2, and as more powerful attacks and weapons surface, Ice 2 will quickly begin to lose power, dropping to no more powerful than a normal attack about two thirds of the way through the game. If by that time you have yet to unlock the third generation of spells, you should strongly consider doing so to remain on top of your game.

---

### Ice 3

\* MP-----52  
\* Type-----Direct Offense  
\* Materia---Ice (Lv. 3)  
\* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Ice 3 strikes with the destructive force three times more powerful than Bolt 2, at a relatively respectable casting cost given the damage it does (though against groups of enemies, Beta and Aqualung prove to be cheaper and equally powerful). Unlike the second level spells, Bolt 3, Ice 3, and Fire 3 will likely be all be welcome attacks at the point in the game you happen to receive them (unless you spend a lot of time leveling up). At the time, Ice 3 should stand as one of the most powerful attacks at your team's disposal, and is more or less only obsoleted once your team stumbles upon the really kick-ass attack materia, like Ultima and Contain.

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### Life

\* MP-----34  
\* Type-----Healing  
\* Materia---Revive (Lv. 1)  
\* Affects---One ally

The ability to bring something back from the dead isn't as rare as you might think in a video game, and that's exactly what you can expect from the Life spell. Just as when using a Phoenix Down, resurrection is really all you can expect from this spell, and if you're doing this in the middle of a battle, you'd better be prepared to heal said character back up with the quickness else you'll be back to reviving that same character again and again. In either circumstance, you'll want to take into consideration beforehand that the Life spell and the Phoenix Down both produce the same effects, and then consider which of your two resources you can afford to expend at the time.

---

### Life 2

\* MP-----100  
\* Type-----Healing  
\* Materia---Revive (Lv. 2)  
\* Affects---One ally

Life 2 will revive an ally to full life, with none of that nasty business about your characters dying shortly after being revived in the middle of a battle (well, unless you just really suck at this game). However, if you are not in the middle of a battle, you'll always want to go with the original Life spell, as it is far more economical than the costly Life 2 spell. The only other disadvantage is the high amount of AP needed to earn it, meaning you'll be stuck with just the original Life spell throughout most of the game.

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#### M-Barrier

- \* MP-----24
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Materia---Barrier (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

The Yin to Barrier's Yang is M-Barrier, which halves all incoming magical damage. Like Barrier, it will last until it wears off or is dispelled with a De-Barrier spell. As you should know, magical attacks are generally less common amongst the opposition than physical attacks, but are almost always more devastating, which makes a M-Barrier a Godsend at times, while at others Barrier will usually do the trick. But M-Barrier, like Barrier, suffers from the existence of Big Guard spell, which offers the effects of M-Barrier, plus those of Barrier and Haste. An M-Barrier-all spell really only proves useful in one of two (admittedly rare) circumstances. The first would be against any enemy that has magic powerful enough to necessitate an M-Barrier, but you for some reason aren't interested in a Haste-all spell to accompany it (unlikely). The second, and more feasible scenario, is that you find the effects of Big Guard fading, and you'd like to re-apply your M-Barrier at a fraction of the cost. Just make sure that you are in a situation where you will not be placing yourself at risk by losing the effects of Barrier.

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#### Mini

- \* MP-----10
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Transform (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

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#### Poisuna

- \* MP-----3
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Materia---Heal (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

The first spell given to you by the Heal materia will cure you only from the effects of poison. On one hand, it is very cheap to cast. On the other, poison does tend to wear off after a battle is over, and there's also the lingering odds during any prolonged battle that you just may fall prey to the poison once

again, anyways. In the case you can prevent long-term damage loss due to the effects of poison, cast Poisuna. Also, it is useful as a last-ditch effort to save the life of a character nearly dead from the effects of poison. But forgoing either of these instances, it's not really worth the bother to cast.

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### Quake

- \* MP-----6
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Earth (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Quake is a more powerful spell than Bio, which in turn was more powerful than Fire, Ice, or Bolt. And for the extra power you get, you really don't find yourself paying much more MP in return (it's actually cheaper to cast than Bio is). It does have the disadvantage to Bio in that Bio also may poison whatever hits it, but assuming that you're going up against something that can be killed outright by the more-powerful Quake spell, by all means go for it. It's also useful in the instance that whatever you're fighting is already poisoned. The only drawback is the prevalence of creatures immune to the effects of earth magic.

---

### Quake 2

- \* MP-----28
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Earth (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

While Quake 2 is noticeably more powerful than Fire 2, Bolt 2, Ice 2, and Bio 2, it's not more powerful by quite the large margin that the original Quake spell stood out with. That being said, the only thing that really holds this spell back (besides its lack of poisoning capabilities, I suppose) is again the many enemies immune to its effects, because it is still a powerful spell regardless.

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### Quake 3

- \* MP-----68
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Earth (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Quake 3, like Quake 2, is more powerful than the equivalent Bio spell, but again not by much. You save a bit of MP for going with Quake 3 over Bio 3, but again lose the ability to poison your opponent. Quake 3 is of course still preferable when the elemental issue pops up, however.

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### Reflect

- \* MP-----30
- \* Type-----Defensive

- \* Materia---Barrier (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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#### Regen

- \* MP-----30
- \* Type-----Healing
- \* Materia---Restore (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

Regen wasn't the most helpful spell in Final Fantasy VI. That's because it restored maybe a few HP every eon or so. Such is not the case with Final Fantasy VII, and Regen has been granted excessive power. When a character goes into Regen status, their HP will just keep scrolling upwards... and it doesn't stop. It just keeps going up until Regen wears off! However, you are advised not to use Regen as a sole source of healing your characters. If you have a character that is hurting, do not hesitate to hit them with a good dose of Cure 2 or Cure 3. Because even with Regen, any enemy attack counts as immediate damage. For instance, a character with 300 HP has Regen cast on them, and their HP starts scrolling up. At around 750 HP or so (and believe me, on the battlefield, that will take seemingly forever), the character is stricken for 1,000 points of damage. The Regen does not keep scrolling up as the damage goes down. The character takes all 1,000 points of damage immediately and dies. So the point is this: Regen is an excellent supplement to directly curative magic, and can even prevent you from having to use it for the most part when it (Regen) is cast on healthy characters. However, Regen is by no means a substitute for directly curative magic.

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#### Remove

- \* MP-----99
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Exit (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---All enemies

Remove, like Escape, will immediately end any non-boss battle. But, unlike Escape, Remove is not a cowardly endeavor. Remove instead banishes your enemies to some unknown dimension of hell, pain, torture, and Pauly Shore movies. This wins you the battle, earning you all of the experience, gil, and AP for that fight. It's a nice trump card to pull out, because it will put an end to any non-boss fight, and is almost flawless in that respect. It's just that it's also expensive, and there's no way to get around it with MP Absorb, either. Besides the fact that most normal battles are something that you and your team can scoff at, you'd have to assume that to even be using the Exit materia, you'd have to be in some kind of a jam to begin with. In such case, it probably wouldn't be too much of a sacrifice to just go with Escape instead and forfeit the experience, gil, and AP from the fight. But in either the event that you really want that experience, gil, and/or AP, or if you have just found some way to eliminate the issue of the high MP cost, then it really wouldn't hurt to go with Remove, instead.

---

## Resist

- \* MP-----120
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Materia---Heal (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One ally (All compatible)

Resist doesn't just prevent you from getting afflicted with negative status ailments- it prevents changing of your status entirely. This can both prevent good status ailments from getting in, and bad ones from going away, so exercise caution when using this spell.

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the (further) commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Shield

- \* MP-----180
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Materia---Shield (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One ally

I apologize for the inconvenience, but the commentary for this section/subsection/list item is unavailable at this time. Please look for this in a future update. Thank you.

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## Silence

- \* MP-----24
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Seal (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Silence is the magical equivalent of "shut the hell up", and has been around in RPG's for quite some time. For those of you who don't know, the silence condition prevents its target from using any ability that uses MP, and is thus only really effective against enemies who would be in some way incapacitated when separated from its magical attacks. Like Sleepel, this isn't the most devastating attack you can bust out with, but on that same token, it's usually going to work for you. The only downside is that it's somewhat pricey, so choose your targets wisely.

---

## Sleep

- \* MP-----8
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Seal (Lv. 1)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

Sleepy, sleepy... This spell induces an enemy to fall asleep by filling their heads with the sounds of John Tesh music. For starters, it's a rather cost-efficient spell to use, and secondly, it will usually effect whatever you



cast it on. While not the most detrimental status effect, it still succeeds in getting something off of your ass for the time being, and is dispelled whenever the creature takes damage of any sort.

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#### Slow

- \* MP-----20
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Time (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

The best thing that the Slow spell has going for it is that just about everyone and their mothers will fall prey to its effects. While slowing your opponents down is admittedly not the most damaging thing you could be doing to them, keep in mind that it can be a real asset during prolonged fights. You see, the Slow spell is best used in conjunction with the effects of Haste. After making your characters faster, why not cement your lead in the speed department by putting the slowdown on your opposition? And that, my friend, is the true benefit of the Slow spell. As you might have already guessed, the Slow spell is most definitely not worth the time or MP to cast during most normal fights, however, so you'll be wanting to keep this one in reserve.

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#### Stop

- \* MP-----34
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Time (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

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#### Toad

- \* MP-----14
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Materia---Transform (Lv. 2)
- \* Affects---One enemy (All compatible)

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#### Tornado

- \* MP-----90
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Materia---Contain (Lv. 3)
- \* Affects---One enemy

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3/Bolt 3 spell to all opponents.

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Bahamut

\* MP-----100  
\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None

Does approximately 1.5 times the damage of a Fire 3/Ice 3/Bolt 3 spell to all opponents, which is about 4.5 times the damage of a Fire 2/Ice 2/Bolt 2 spell. Leviathan, conversely, only does damage equivalent to 3.5 times the strength of a Fire 2/Ice 2/Bolt 2 spell.

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Bahamut ZERO

\* MP-----180  
\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None

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Choco/Mog

\* MP-----14  
\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental\*/None\*

The Choco/Mog materia grants you a summon attack called Deathblow, in which the enemy will be assaulted by a bunch of chocobo-riding mogs, who launch themselves at the enemy to create a deadly impact, much like a kamikaze soldier, only more painful and comical. There is also a 1 in 16 chance that the Fat Chocobo attack will be substituted for Deathblow. The Fat Chocobo is just what it sounds like: a fat-ass chocobo falls out of the sky and crushes your opponents underneath the weight of its enormous ass. Again, this is rather comical, if not slightly disgusting. Fat Chocobo is a more powerful attack than Deathblow, but it's not something that you should count on. On the positive side of things, these attacks are powerful enough to completely kill or at least severely damage just about any regular enemy you'll encounter earlier on, and the MP cost as compared to the other summons in the game is very low. For the purposes of comparison, it is almost twice as powerful as the Fire, Ice, or Bolt spells, meaning you get pretty good damage for the value. On the negative side of things, however, this is the weakest summon in the game, and it will begin to show its age before long. But still, if not just for the MP cost alone, it will remain a nice attack to have for awhile. \*On an interesting side note, the Choco/Mog materia possesses both the wind and stop properties, but the attacks themselves appear to bear only that of stop, and only occasionally, at that.

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Hades

- \* MP-----150
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/7 status ailments\*

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Kjata

- \* MP-----110
- \* Element/Effect---Fire, Ice, Lightning, Earth/None

Kjata's Tetra Elemental attack is a tad bit more powerful than that of Bahamut, but with the added advantage of doing massively heavy damage against anything that is weak to fire, ice, lightning, or earth-based attacks (the target need only be weak versus one of the four in order to incur maximum damage, making for a very broad range of vulnerable enemies). And the best part of all is that all resistances to any of these elements is entirely ignored, making Tetra Elemental a surprisingly effective and powerful attack that no team should be without.

---

Knights of the Round

- \* MP-----250
- \* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None

Sometimes, killing your enemies just isn't enough. You want them more than dead. That's where Knights of the Round comes in. It should take no more than 3 of these guys to end the life of just about anything you come into contact with, but that's not enough. Ultimate End subjects your opposition to all 13 of them. It's kind of like those old Mach-3 commercials, actually. You know, with the three blades that each had separate jobs? You see, the first knight appears on the battlefield and kills everything there. The second knight then kills anything foolish enough not to be killed by the first knight. The third knight kills everything again for good measure. The fourth knight kicks the corpses around a little bit and compiles them into a large mound in the middle of the battlefield. The fifth knight sets fire to the mound and performs a strange, ritualistic naked dance around them. The sixth knight roasts some marshmallows over the fire and laughs heartily at the fifth knight. The seventh knight stares blankly at the burning bodies as he pokes and prods at them with a stick. The eighth and ninth knights begin a game of soccer using the disembodied head of one of the flaming corpses as a ball. The tenth knight douses the fire and repeatedly stomps up and down on the charred remains of your enemies. The eleventh knight scrapes up what is left with a spatula and tosses it into a trash can. The twelfth knight tosses the trash can into a compactor, reducing it to a small cube. The thirteenth knight defecates on the cube.

---

Ifrit

- \* MP-----34

\* Element/Effect---Fire/None

Ifrit springs forth from the ground and gives your enemies a little taste of the flame with his Hellfire attack. But, as with Shiva, at the time when you receive the Ifrit materia, the Hellfire attack is completely unnecessary overkill, as the Choco/Mog materia will function equally well at a fraction of the cost. And later on, you'll see that Beta and Aqualung attacks prove far more powerful and equally cost-efficient. Hellfire is a bit stronger than Shiva's Diamond Dust, but duffers greatly from the fact that it is a fire-based attack, and that the also fire-based Beta is superior to Ifrit's Hellfire in every way.

---

#### Leviathan

\* MP-----78

\* Element/Effect---Water/None

Leviathan shows the true destructive force of water with his Tidal Wave attack. Like Odin, Leviathan goes far in establishing itself as the powerful overkill attack of the day. Truth be told, Odin's Gunge Lance is actually a more powerful attack than Tidal Wave (Tidal Wave doing only three and a half times the damage of Bolt 2, Ice 2, or Fire 2 as opposed to Gunge Lance's 4x), but the benefit of Leviathan is that it always does direct damage, something which Odin does not. And since you're dealing with creatures at the time that will fall in one hit from Tidal Wave, anyways, why not just go for the guaranteed kill as opposed to the slightly risky Steel Bladed Sword of Odin? Alas, the true benefit of Tidal Wave may not rest with that, but in the recently-acquired MP Absorb and HP Absorb materia... In doing direct damage, Leviathan has the edge over Odin in being excellently compatible with both of them. This helps, because the disadvantage posed by Leviathan early on is the high MP cost for the times. However, with MP Absorb at your side, this need not be an issue. For further discussion on the issue, refer to section XII.E. of the FAQ under the listing for the Leviathan materia.

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#### Neo Bahamut

\* MP-----140

\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/None

Neo Bahamut's Giga Flare is a very flashy and cinematic attack in which the land your enemies are standing on is lifted dramatically in the air, all the while your enemies stand and politely await their inevitable demise. Neo Bahamut flies over and, after a bit of posing, charges up an attack and wastes the entire floating chunk of land, and likely the enemies along with it. He is also polite enough to replace his 50'x50' divot before disappearing. The attack, while impressive-looking, actually falls flat on its face. It does non-elemental damage roughly equivalent to 2 times that of a Fire 3/Ice 3/Bolt 3 spell. Basically, it's identical in strength to Alexander, but lacking in the holy property (which no enemy possesses a resistance to, mind you) and also more expensive in terms of MP. Alexander trumps Neo Bahamut in every way.

---

#### Odin

\* MP-----80

\* Element/Effect---Non-Elemental/Death

Odin is one of only two summon materia (the other Being Choco/Mog) which has not one, but two different attacks. However, unlike Choco/Mog, these attacks are used based on the enemies' defenses, rather than at random. The first, and most common attack is Steel Bladed Sword, in which the full moon rises and the badass Odin appears on a horse in the distance against said full moon. He then charges onto the battlefield and minces your enemies in an instant-death attack. However, unlike the Odin of previous Final Fantasies, this Odin seems to know when an instant-death attack just isn't going to work, in which case he brings out the Gunge Lance. Still atop his steed, and standing only a few feet away from the enemy which politely awaits impalement, Odin performs a questionable maneuver by launching his spear straight into the sky. So high, in fact, that it causes atmospheric disturbances on the way up. And wouldn't you know it, it comes crashing back down directly onto the opposition, doing some seriously major damage to them. And when I say serious damage, I mean that this will be the first summon to dethrone Beta as the baddest-ass attack you have. While Beta stood about two and a half times as powerful as a Fire 2, Ice 2, or Bolt 2 spell, you can expect Odin's Gunge Lance to deal four times that amount. Or, to compare Odin to the next-best summon, Titan, you'll find that Gunge Lance stands about two and a half times as powerful as Titan's Anger of the Land attack. However, there are a few downsides. The first, as you might have already guessed, is the severe MP cost. The second would be that Steel-Bladed Sword is the attack you will most commonly see, and being an instant-death attack, there's always that chance of one or two in a group of enemies somehow evading the blade, which can be annoying. At the very least, Gunge Lance's damage is solid and dependable, and is an excellent card to play during many of the game's boss fights. And reliability aside, Steel-Bladed Sword remains a very useful instant death attack clear up until when you acquire the Death spell on the Destruct materia and are able to create a much more cost-efficient Death-all spell.

---

Phoenix

\* MP-----180

\* Element/Effect---Fire/None\*

Casts Life 2 on the party, and deals fire-based damage equivalent to the strength of the Fire 3 spell to all enemies.

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Ramuh

\* MP-----40

\* Element/Effect---Lightning/None

A massive mountain sprouts from the ground, atop which old man Ramuh wastes the competition with his massive Judgment Bolt. The Ramuh materia surfaces a bit later than Shiva and Ifrit, at about a time in the game when you are likely starting to use these powerful attacks more commonly. Judgment Bolt is more powerful than Ifrit's Hellfire, and the attack on a whole actually about one and a half times as powerful as a standard Bolt 2 spell. However, as with Shiva and Ifrit, Beta and Aqualung are actually this time around not only more cost-







- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Morlboro (outside Gaea's Cliff, Final Cave)
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Well, this is just a Tic-Tacs commercial waiting to happen.

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#### Beta

- \* MP-----35
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Midgar Zolom (near Chocobo Ranch)
- \* Affects-----All enemies

From the first time Beta has had its way with your ass, you'll come to fear and respect this very kick-ass spell. It is a fire-based magic attack that targets and screws over every enemy on screen, and is the coolest attack that ever was. Once Beta is working on your side, you'll never really need to fear harassment by anyone again. At the point in the game you can earn Beta, it actually has the power to kill most normal enemies twice, and is overkill to an almost comical extreme. It is actually even more ungodly powerful than the summons you'll have at the time (Shiva, Ifrit, Ramuh). Note that the casting cost for Beta and its summon equivalent, Ifrit, is nearly identical, so the much more powerful Beta is an attack preferable to it. But as with the summons, Beta takes its toll with a high MP cost, which poses some restrictions on the use you'll get out of it early on. Still, this is a great attack to nail an entire battlefield of enemies, and also to quickly lay waste to any boss-type creature that dares displease you. And while no longer being overkill, Beta will still prove a powerful and useful attack well into the latter half of the game. For the purposes of comparison, Beta is two and a half times as powerful as any of the basic 2nd level magic spells (Fire 2, Ice 2, and Bolt 2), and further proves its strength by being an attack which targets all enemies and is therefore not held back by the damage lost to an All materia. This means that Beta is preferable over spells such as Bolt 3, Ice 3, and Fire 3 against groups of enemies, given the high casting cost of those spells and the damage lost to an All materia anyways, but stick with the third-level spells against lone attackers (unless you're sure Beta will get the job done, that is). On a final note, Beta also has a water-based counterpart named Aqualung, which eliminates any elemental issues that may arise, as well.

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#### Big Guard

- \* MP-----56
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Learned From---Beach Plug (beaches of the Western Continent)
- \* Affects-----All allies

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## Chocobuckle

- \* MP-----3
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Chocobo (various locations)
- \* Affects-----One enemy

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## Death Force

- \* MP-----3
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Learned From---Adamantaimai (near Wutai)
- \* Affects-----One ally

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## Death Sentence

- \* MP-----10
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Learned From---Sneaky Step (Gi Cave), Boundfat (Sleeping Forest)
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Death Sentence is an instant death spell with only one real drawback: the timer. In the sixty seconds it takes for the spell to work, one would think that the battle and the next four could be long over with. And, of course, there are naturally those who are immune to the effects of instant death (which is quite a long list to begin with). Furthermore, if you're really interested in inflicting instant death, there are much better ways to go about it.

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## Dragon Force

- \* MP-----19
- \* Type-----Defensive
- \* Learned From---Dark Dragon (Final Cave)
- \* Affects-----One Ally

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## Flame Thrower

- \* MP-----10
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Ark Dragon (Mythril Mine)

\* Affects-----One enemy

Flame Thrower is stronger than the Fire spell, though not quite as powerful as Fire 2. So, think of it as Fire 1.5, so to speak. On the negative side of things, Flame Thrower cannot be made to target all enemies (like Fire or Fire 2), but on the other hand, it is a cost-efficient and powerful attack to unleash on a lone attacker, especially early on in the game. However, as Fire, Ice, and Bolt start to become ineffective attacks, you'll see that Flame Thrower will soon follow.

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#### Frog Song

\* MP-----5  
\* Type-----Indirect Offense  
\* Learned From---Touch Me (forests near Gongaga)  
\* Affects-----One enemy

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#### Goblin Punch

\* MP-----0  
\* Type-----Direct Offense  
\* Learned From---Goblin (Goblin Isle)  
\* Affects-----One enemy

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#### L4 Suicide

\* MP-----10  
\* Type-----Indirect Offense  
\* Learned From---Mu (near Chocobo Ranch)  
\* Affects-----All enemies

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#### L5 Death

\* MP-----22  
\* Type-----Indirect Offense  
\* Learned From---Parasite (Final Cave)  
\* Affects-----All enemies

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in a future update. Thank you.

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### Laser

- \* MP-----16
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Death Claw (Desert Prison), Dark Dragon (Final Cave)
- \* Affects-----One enemy

This attack will halve the remaining HP of its target, and as such, is classified as a gravity-based attack. Its effects are actually identical to the Demi 2 spell, which is interesting Laser spell can become available before you even pick up the Gravity materia. It's also a lot cheaper than Demi 2. It's only setback is that you can't attach an All materia to E. Skill, but that shouldn't be much of a drawback. Aside from that, however, it does suffer the drawbacks of all gravity-based spells in that many enemies are immune to its effects, especially boss-type creatures, and that it will not inflict more than 9,999 damage. Still, this is one of the most damaging attacks you can whip out in the early game against creatures that will be affected by it (the Midgar Zolom comes to mind), and in such case there is only one such monster, you'll want to stick with the cheaper and more effective Laser rather than Demi or even Demi 2.

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### Magic Breath

- \* MP-----75
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Stilve (Gaea's Cliff), Parasite (Final Cave)
- \* Affects-----All enemies

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### Magic Hammer

- \* MP-----3
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Learned From---Razor Weed (near Wutai)
- \* Affects-----One enemy

Magic Hammer will drain 100 MP from a target creature and add it to the caster's MP. This spell has two major uses. The first is as a means of increasing the caster's MP by an albeit minor amount, but at a cheap cost. This is most useful if you are in need of a small MP boost and don't want to waste an Ether or Elixir (or if you don't have an Ether or Elixir). The other use is to deplete an enemy's MP supply. This usually isn't the best route to go, because for starters, you have Silence, and also bear in mind that you're going to have to Magic Hammer some enemies (who will usually be the enemies in question) more than once to get rid of all of their MP... time you could have been using to kill them. That being said, in the event you encounter an enemy that happens to be immune to the effects of silence, Magic Hammer is the next best way to shut them up (besides actually killing them, that is).

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### Matra Magic

- \* MP-----8
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Custom Sweeper (near Midgar)
- \* Affects-----All enemies

Matra Magic is a non-elemental magic attack that will target all enemies and will do about as much damage as a Fire, Ice, or Bolt spell. It is useful in that it will likely be the first attack you'll receive that will target all opponents without the aid of an All materia. As you may recall, the drawback of the All materia is that for each subsequent target, the potency will be slightly lessened. Such is not the case with Matra Magic, making it especially useful versus large groups. As always, you'll get the most use out of this attack if you get it early on, because its use will begin to taper off with the Fire, Ice, and Bolt spells (about halfway through the game or so).

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### Pandora's Box

- \* MP-----110
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Dragon Zombie (Final Cave)
- \* Affects-----All enemies

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### Roulette

- \* MP-----6
- \* Type-----Indirect Offense
- \* Learned From---Death Dealer (Final Cave)
- \* Affects-----One target

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### Shadow Flare

- \* MP-----100
- \* Type-----Direct Offense
- \* Learned From---Ultimate WEAPON (later), Dragon Zombie (Final Cave)
- \* Affects-----One enemy

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This is a nifty little bonus when it happens, but it's really nothing you can count on (unless you can somehow manipulate your character's HP maxes to exactly 7,777). Basically, when any attack or curative spell renders a character's HP at exactly 7,777, they fly into a mad frenzy and start tearing crap up... Suffice it to say that nothing is this game short of Emerald and Ruby WEAPON is capable of withstanding a 7777 salvo. Of course, after the battle is over, the character's current HP is reduced to 1 to prevent you from carrying this over to another battle (meaning you should probably heal that character or watch him or her die fairly quickly in the next battle). Statistically, this is an extremely rare occurrence, and due to the required HP, will only happen later in the game, anyways. As I said before, it's nothing you can count on, and will probably never happen when you want it to, but it's kind neat when it does happen.

Well, OK, I may be a bit off on that one. If you really want to abuse the system, try and keep a few things in mind. First of all, any enemy in the toad or mini condition deals only one damage, right? Secondly, Potions and Hi-Potions both heal a set amount of damage. In order to prepare for a difficult battle (Emerald and Ruby WEAPON come to mind...), you can get a character's HP to any number below 7777 that ends in the digits 77. Before said battle, use Potions and Hi-Potions in the menu screen to raise the number to 7777. Voila! When you get into your next battle, your character will kick ass! On a final note, for those who plan on using this trick to off Emerald and Ruby WEAPON: both can withstand the full attacking force of all Lucky 7's, so you'll still want to be prepared.

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Not really a trick, per se, but the following is a list of places where you can score a virtually unlimited amount of highly useful rare items. Please note that there are indeed a few other places to find some of these, but for the purposes of being concise and also convenience, I have listed the easiest/cheapest ways:

X-Potions can be stolen from the Bandit and Bull Motor creatures in the Corel Desert Prison. However, as you should be aware, the Bandit is capable of stealing things from you, as well. So you should try to either first neutralize him (with Sleepel or such), or just focus your efforts on the Bull Motor, instead. Later on, you'll meet a creature named Spiral (near Mideel) from whom you can also steal X-Potions. You can also morph the Mall Dancer, found at the Sleeping Forest and at the Forgotten City. X-Potions can be won from a wide variety of enemies after battle (the best area for this is around Wutai), but this method is generally the least reliable way to go.



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Turbo Ethers can be stolen from a very wide variety of enemies. Early on, you can acquire them from such foes as the Search Crown (at Mt. Corel), the Land Worm (in the Corel Desert), and the Judge (at the Shinra Mansion). Later on, you can steal them from Poodlers (at the Gelnika, mentioned in section IV.D. of the FAQ), Armored Golems (in the Final Cave), and Death Dealers (also in the Final Cave). Lastly, a section of the Final Cave (which is mentioned as a level-up spot in section VI.B.) contains Movers. Not only can you steal Turbo Ethers from Movers, but if you spend much time leveling-up here, you'll also probably win a crapload of them, as well.

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Elixirs can be acquired by morphing the Vlakrodos creature (near Icicle Inn). Later on, you may also steal them from Master Tonberry (at the Final Cave) and also from Gighees (also at the Final Cave). If you plan on doing lots of leveling up at the place mentioned in section VI.B. of the FAQ, you'd be wise to have a healthy supply of Elixirs on hand.

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Ribbons can be acquired from Master Tonberry (in the Final Cave), as well. Only this time, you're going to have to morph his ass. And worse yet, Sense doesn't work on him. However, the Demi spell is a good way to find out where his HP is at (you'll recall he absorbs Gravity magic, so stick to the regular Demi if you're gonnd do that).

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Tetra Elementals can be acquired from a creature called Cactuar on a remote island south of Cosmo Canyon. You can morph the Cactuar into a Tetra Elemental, but you're first going to have to find a way to get past its insanely high evasion rate. Might I recommend the Manipulate materia?

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Guard Sources are actually the easiest stat-enhancing items to acquire more of. As early in the game as you acquire the Morph materia, you can morph a creature called Bagnadrana (at Mt. Corel) into one. Later on, your options expand further, when you'll also be able to Morph the Spiral (near Mideel), Unknown 2 (at the Gelnika, mentioned in section IV.D. of the FAQ), and Armored Golem (at the Final Cave), as well.

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Power Sources, like Guard Sources, are somewhat easy to come by. As soon as you get the Morph materia, you can find the Screamer (at Mt. Nibel) or the Heavy Tank (at the Gongaga Reactor) and morph either of them into one. A little later, however, you'll also be able to do the same to the Unknown (at the Gelnika, mentioned in section IV.D. of the FAQ).

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Speed Sources can be acquired by morphing Poodlers (at the Gelnika, mentioned in section IV.D. of the FAQ).

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This is version 1.1 of the FAQ. The response to my unconfirmed rumors section has just been incredible, and most of them were immediately addressed by my readers, so much thanks to you all. There's still a few left up there, so if anyone has any information, please let me know. Anyways, some assorted scattered information, some fixed typos, and a lotta censoring (sorry, Ceej) went into this update, so y'all enjoy until the next update.

Of course, this guide would not have been possible without the help of many, many, people. First and foremost, I would like to thank Colin Moriarty, Brian P. Sulpher, Zoopsoul & Val, Dan Gordon, and last but not least, Atom Edge for all of their help, love, and support that kept me going along the way. You guys believed in me, you helped me out every step of the way, and I am extremely grateful to you guys.

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Also, I'd like to take a moment and extend a special thanks to all of my readers who have written in with their suggestions and comments. Not only do your praise and kind words warm my heart and make me feel that my hard work has paid off, but often your comments and suggetions go to make this a better FAQ, and the results are both noticeable and appreciated. Specifically, I'd like to thank: Super\_M\_Girl, Patrick Babineau, Timothy Courchene, Fredyuk, Matthew Benedict, Siniroth X, Matt Elder, A. Nugyen, Corey Wingate, Paul Calotta, Will Weaver, Shadow411, U T, Lynn Halley, Magma Mario, Ty B, Eric Budensiek, Micro Mike, Justin Shauer, MPQ4747, David Vickerman, Frazer Richardson, Tony Provencal, Charlene, JSalgado, Kevin Duffy, Phil Armstead, Raul, and Starrise. A special thanks goes out to Sinenomine, as well.

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My name is Chad Steele (AKA "BTB"). Those wishing to reach me may do so via E-Mail, at [BTB\\_Enterprises@Ev1.net](mailto:BTB_Enterprises@Ev1.net), on AIM (screen name: Billy T Bum), or by telepathy. Feel free to write me with praise, comments, suggestions, gripes, insults, death-threats, and marriage proposals. On second thought, the marriage proposals might (will) piss my fiancée' off. Death threats are still ok, though.

Oh, yeah? That whole legal thing? I encourage the spreading around of my guide, so long as I get credit for it and you don't change it in any way. And if you want to host it on your site, I'm all for it. Just please let me know first. Failiure to inform me that you will be taking my guide is grounds for an ass-kicking, so save my foot the hassle and inconvenience of kicking your ass and take heed of my advice. Thank you.

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Anyways, that's all, my friends. So until next time:

"Good luck and good gaming!" -Klaravoyia

Written by BTB, circa 2003

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