

Final Fantasy VIII Plot Analysis

by falsehead

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This walkthrough was originally written for Final Fantasy VIII on the PSX, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the PC version of the game.

***** FINAL FANTASY VIII - PLOT ANALYSIS *****

PlayStation RPG 1999 UK (PAL)

PLOT ANALYSIS (version 1.0) 27/02/2004

Author - falsehead (Sophie Cheshire). Contact me at falsehead@aol.com
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WARNING: CONTAINS ENTIRE PLOT OF FINAL FANTASY VIII. THIS IS ONE BIG SPOILER SO DON'T READ IT UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED THE GAME, UNLESS YOU DON'T MIND KNOWING WHAT HAPPENS.

***** CONTENTS *****

- 1) INTRODUCTION/REVISION HISTORY
- 2) EVENTS PRIOR TO THE GAME - TIMELINE
- 3) THE STORY OF THE GAME
- 4) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
 - a) Ellone's life
 - b) How did Laguna become President?
 - c) Why does Ultimecia want to Compress Time?
 - d) Is Laguna really Squalls father?
- 5) WHO IS ULTIMECIA? (and other whacky theories!)
 - a) Time Loops and the Predestination Paradox
 - b) So WHO is Ultimecia?
- 6) WHATS IN A NAME?
 - a) Characters
 - b) Guardian Forces
 - c) Monsters, Weapons etc

7) ENCYCLOPEDIA

***** 1) INTRODUCTION *****

INTRODUCTION - Well I couldn't resist it. After the umpteenth email asking me to do this, I have bowed to the wishes of the public and created this Final Fantasy VIII plot FAQ. Although I personally did not find the plot in this game quite as confusing as the one in FFXIII, it still took me a couple of play-throughs to really nail what was going on. Not that I mind, this is actually my favourite Final Fantasy game of the entire series. I can't play it enough!

I have laid it out in a similar fashion to the Final Fantasy VII plot FAQ that has proved so popular. A few clarifications first though.

The timeline of "events prior to the game" obviously includes all the Laguna flashbacks. I am using the moment Squall wakes up after the opening battle as the beginning of the game itself for "the story of the game", just so as that's clear.

Unlike FFXIII, this game does not have such extensive backstories for most of the characters. Only Squall, Rinoa and Laguna are filled out in any depth, therefore the FAQ section where I explain how I came to various decisions regarding the timeline etc is not sub-sectioned by character, and is fairly straight-forward.

The "Who is Ultimecia" section is where I throw the game and what I have concluded in this FAQ open for debate, starting with my ideas about Who Ultimecia and Griever actually are. Submissions on any aspect of the game always welcome as long as they are backed up and persuasively argued!

What's in a Name picks up a popular section in the FFXIII FAQ where as far as possible I try and find the origins of various creatures and characters names. Again submissions to this section are always welcome and credited fully.

Finally, the Encyclopaedia is just the in-game information that you gather during the game that can be found via the menu screens. Many people actually miss this information, so I have represented it here unchanged, as it shows how I justified various things in the pre-game timeline and my explanations of various aspects of the plot.

So it's finally here, and before I begin, a big thank you to all the hundreds of people who responded so positively to my FFXIII FAQ. I hope you enjoy this one as much!

REVISIONS - (27/02/2004).

This is the first version. Timeline, and game story fully done. Looking forward to submissions for the FAQ, new names origins and theories about the plot for the next update!

***** 2) EVENTS PRIOR TO THE GAME - TIMELINE *****

- Prehistory

Legend has it that a being called the "Great Hyne" creates the World and Mankind. Sorceress powers are said to derive from fragments of the Great Hyne, passed down from generation to generation.

- Approx 4000 years ago

Civilisation flourishes first in Centra. As time goes on, mobile shelters leave Centra and end up in Trabria, Galbaldia and Balamb. Monsters fall from the Moon every few hundred years in an event known as the "Lunar Cry". A mysterious Crystal Pillar is discovered and is believed to originate from the Moon and to have some link with the frequency and focal points of the Lunar Cry's.

- 150+ Years Ago

Both Dollet and Esthar also have flourishing Empires at this point in time. For reasons unknown, Centra scientists begin experimenting with the power of the Crystal Pillar, bringing it to the main Centra continent.

- Approx 100 Years ago

A devastating Lunar Cry hits, with Centra as the focal point. It destroys more or less all traces of the civilisation there. A huge crater is left behind in which the Crystal Pillar sinks.

The Dollet Empire gradually collapses, eclipsed by the rapidly growing Galbaldian Empire centred around Deling City.

- Approx 47 years ago.

Laguna Loire born

In Esthar, a monster researcher known as Doctor Odine is looking into the phenomenon of the Lunar Cry and the whereabouts of the Crystal Pillar. Tears Point is constructed as a possible way of controlling or preventing future Lunar Cry's when combined with the Crystal Pillar.

- Approx 20-25 years ago

Esthar has fallen under the rule of a malevolent power hungry sorceress called Adel who is being manipulated by the future Sorceress Ultimecia. The Sorceress War begins as the now powerful Galbadian Empire clash with Esthar forces. At some point Laguna joins the Galbadian Army and teams up with Kiros and Ward. Doctor Odine, fearful of Adel's power begins to secretly research ways of binding and containing Sorceress power.

- 20 years ago

Laguna, Kiros and Ward after fighting (or fleeing!) Esthar soldiers near Deling go for some R & R. Laguna is besotted with a singer at the Galbadia Hotel called Julia. He finally plucks up courage to talk to her and in her room he makes a promise to return to her after finding out she has feelings for him also.

Around this time, Esthar soldiers looking for the next Sorceress to rule Esthar attempt to snatch the young Ellone in Winhill. They fail but kill both her parents. So she is adopted by Raine, the landlady of Winhill's pub.

- 19 years ago

At some point Laguna, Kiros and Ward end up in the Centra Crater, investigating an excavation being undertaken by Esthar forces. Esthar have discovered the Crystal Pillar and are attempting to dig it up and move it by creating a "Box" around it. After being chased around the inside of the structure, Laguna and Co. are trapped on the edge of a cliff. Badly wounded by Elite Esthar fighters they have no choice but to jump for it. Somehow Laguna washes up at the quiet town of Winhill, very badly injured, where the kindly Pub owner Raine takes care of him.

Back in Deling City a saddened Julia releases a song entitled "Eyes on Me" about Laguna and believing him dead or lost, marries a Galbaldian General called Carraway.

The boxed Crystal Pillar, now called the "Lunatic Pandora" is taken to Esthar where Doctor Odine begins studying the crystal pillars relationship to the Tears Point and the Lunar Cry. It's potential as a source of power and as a weapon is not lost on Adel/Ultimecia.

- 18 Years ago

After 6 months of convalescence Laguna is recovered and settled at Winhill. He is deeply fond of both Raine and her adopted daughter Ellone. They in turn love him very much. With the rest of the townsmen off fighting the ongoing Sorceress war, Laguna stays as the town's protector. One day Kiros shows up also recovered from their near-death escapade and tells him Ward also survived and now works at Galbaldia's D-District Prison.

Kiros suggests to Laguna that he might want to travel again and write for the magazine "Timber Maniacs". For now though Laguna is happy with Raine and Ellone and Kiros leaves. Later on that year Laguna and Raine's relationship becomes intimate and Raine falls pregnant (though neither may have been aware of this when Laguna leaves to look for Ellone). However their idyll is disrupted when Esthar soldiers kidnap Ellone. Laguna swears to look for her and bring her home and leaves Winhill.

Unbeknownst to either Laguna or Raine, Ellone possesses great powers, possibly greater than any Sorceress, even though she is not herself a Sorceress. These powers involve the manipulation of Time itself and for this the little girl is marked as a target for Ultimecia who is trying to reach her via whichever Sorceress she can possess.

Most likely using the Sorceress War as an excuse, Galbadia invades Timber and occupies it.

Rinoa is born to Julia Heartilly and General Carraway.

- 17 Years Ago

An eventful year for Laguna begins. He begins to search for Ellone, visiting such places as Balamb and Dollet. At one point early on he arrives at an orphanage run by Edea, but she cannot help him. While travelling around Trabia he has an accident and winds up at Shumi Village for a few months where he befriends a Moomba and inspires the Shumi Tribe with his happy-go-lucky charms.

After leaving he decides to hook up with Kiros and Ward and they narrow their search to trying to find a way into Esthar, although they have to take time out to raise some more Gil, by filming a tacky movie in Trabia Canyon. At some point during Laguna's travels, Raine gives birth to their son, Squall.

At some point Laguna, Kiros and Ward make it into Esthar (possibly captured) where they are put to work in the Lunatic Pandora Research Labs. Ellone is being studied by Doc Odine who begins to design a machine based on Ellone's brain patterns. (Although primitive now, it is this machine, that far in the future will give Ultimecia the ability to reach back through time).

There has been a resistance movement to Adel gaining momentum and Laguna is seen as the perfect man to lead the final coup against her. The resistance help rescue Ellone in return for his help in defeating Adel. Utilising Doctor Odine's research the resistance find a way to bind Adel's powers, seal her up in suspended animation and shoot her into space using the Ragnarok spaceship. The power needed to keep her under control disrupts all radio transmissions on the surface of the planet.

Laguna stays on as President of Esthar and sends Ellone back to Winhill. The borders of the continent are sealed and Esthar is hidden away behind a huge forcefield.

- 16 - 14 years ago

At some point fairly soon after Squall's birth, Raine dies and Squall and Ellone are sent to Edea's orphanage. Zell, Quistis, Irvine, Selphie and Seifer also end up there. Zell is adopted at some point in the next few years as are all the others bar, Seifer and Squall.

- 13 Years Ago

Ultimecia and the grown-up Squall arrive back in the past after Time has uncompressed. They both appear at Matron Edea's orphanage and a dying Ultimecia gives her powers to Matron Edea who does not wish one of the children to acquire them. After explaining about SeeD and Garden to Matron Edea, Squall then departs back into a strange timeless limbo.

Realising she does not have long before she is overtaken by the evil side of Ultimecia, Edea and her husband Cid begin to plan ahead. Cid tours around and manages to get money and support from the likes of Shumi tribesman NORG to set up three military academies based in the old Centra shelters. Construction begins and within a year they are ready.

While the Gardens are being established for the normal SeeDs, Doctor Odine comes sniffing around looking for Ellone. Edea and Cid realise the orphanage is no longer a safe place for her and the Elite White SeeDs are created. The older orphans leave to travel to world on a boat and protect Ellone. Ellone's departure is not explained to Squall, who remains traumatised by the loss of his "sis".

Rinoa's mother Julia dies in a car crash, afterwards Rinoa has a fairly poor relationship with her father, even taking her mother's surname instead of his as she gets older.

- 12 Years Ago

The three Military Gardens open. Here young people can train to be SeeDs and orphans like Squall and Seifer are raised there. Cid controls Balamb Garden directly.

- 11 Years to 1 Year Ago

Zell, Quistis, Seifer and Squall all train as SeeDs at Balamb Garden. Using GF's however makes them forget their shared past. Selphie and Irvine end up at

Trabia and Galbaldia respectively.

At some point Ultimecia takes full control of Edea and she disappears only to resurface in Galbaldia where she starts manipulating the President into further aggressive behaviour.

- 1 Year Ago to Now

Rinoa, seeking a way to hurt her Galbadian General father joins a resistance movement based in Timber fighting against the Galbadian army. That summer she spends time with Seifer, who is full of passion about fighting for a cause and staying loyal to a friend.

With Galbadian aggression increasing and Edea clearly behind it, Ellone realises she is in danger once again and returns to Balamb Garden for sanctuary...

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***** 3) THE STORY OF THE GAME *****
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Seifer and Squall are duelling with their gunblades and both manage to scar each others faces in the process. Squall is knocked out and comes to in the infirmary. Still groggy he sees Ellone through the window, although he does not recall who she is. After a mild scolding from Dr. Kadowski, Instructor Quistis Trepe comes to collect him and take him to the classroom. After a short lecture, she informs Squall she will accompany him on his SeeD field exam which he missed due to his injury. Squall collects his two new GFs, Quezecotl and Shiva then leaves. On the way he bumps into Selphie who is there on an exchange from Trabia Garden. Neither remember each other. After taking her on a tour and exchanging some words with Seifer, Rajin and Fujin, Squall meets Quistis at the front gate of Balamb Garden. After making their way to the Fire Cavern and battling the GF Ifrit, who joins them. They return to Garden and are then given a new mission by Headmaster Cid.

Squall, along with Seifer and Zell are to go along with other students to the town of Dollet. There they are to fight the forces of Galbadia who have occupied the town. After travelling to Balamb town they all board a ship and cross the ocean to Dollet. After battling some Galbadian forces, Squall, Seifer and Zell are told to wait at the Town Square. Seifer gets bored and runs off up to the communications tower. At the top, Squall and Zell meet Selphie again and she introduces herself properly. The three then head up to the top of the tower where two bumbling Galbadian Soldiers (Wedge and Biggs) are trying to get the communications equipment working. After battling them for a short time, they are swept away and replaced by the monstrous Elvoret. After gaining a new GF (Siren) from it, the three defeat it and Seifer reappears. They leave, but after they are gone, Wedge and Biggs send a huge mechanical spider after them.

Squall, Selphie and Zell flee back to the boat battling X-ATM092 as they go. Although it can self-repair they manage to disable it and reach the boat within the time limit. They arrive back at Balamb only to find that Seifer has taken the car back ahead of them. They have to walk back to Garden where Cid welcomes them back. After Cid has chewed Seifer out for his behaviour, they assemble upstairs to hear the exam results. Squall, Zell, Selphie and another student called Nida have all passed and are now SeeDs. Seifer failed, but applauds them anyway. Squall returns to his dorm room and changes for the graduation ball.

Squall is not enjoying himself at the ball, until the beautiful Rinoa approaches him for a dance. She whirls him across the floor and soon his

clumsy movements are as graceful as hers. She then disappears back into the crowd, but before Squall can go after her, Quistis asks him to meet her in the Training Centre. After changing, Squall goes and meets her at the back of the Centre. Quistis tries to explain how she fears she will be sacked over her not keeping control over Seifer. Squall's mind is on other things. As they leave they see Ellone being menaced by some monsters. After fighting them off, two White SeeDs take her away. Squall finds her familiar, but still cannot recall who she is.

The next morning, Cid gives Squall, Zell and Selphie a new mission. They are to go to Timber and help an underground resistance movement called the Forest Owls kidnap the President of Galbadia. They leave for Balamb, fighting and gaining the new GF Diablos on the way. Once at Balamb they catch the train to Timber. The journey begins uneventfully, then suddenly all three of them become dizzy, then pass out...

... some twenty years in the past, they experiences a scene from the life of Laguna, Kiros and Ward, three Galbadian soldiers. They join them while they are retreating from a battle. The three of them escape to Deling City where they go to Laguna's favourite bar, to watch his favourite singer - Julia. After his feeble attempts to approach her fail, Julia takes the initiative and Laguna goes to her room. They talk about their dreams for the future and then the dream fades...

... Squall, Selphie and Zell awaken aboard the train to Timber all baffled that they have experienced the same dream. They then arrive at Timber where they make contact with the Forest Owls. They board another train, which turns out to be the Owls HQ. There they are introduced to Zone, Watts and Rinoa Heartilly who is the leader of the Owls. After a briefing they set about capturing the train compartment that will be carrying the President. This is done by running their train alongside the Presidents train and uncoupling the carriages, then coupling them to the Forest Owls train. After this rather complex manoeuvre has been carried out, Rinoa goes into the Presidents carriage to confront him. Unfortunately he is a double, and after battle commences, he morphs into a mutant zombie. After killing it, they all return to the Owls HQ, there Rinoa shows Squall their contract from Cid. The SeeDs are to stay with the Forest Owls until Timber is free of Galbadian occupation. They see President Deling making a speech at the Timber TV station and Rinoa decides to kidnap him from there.

Once back in Timber they make for the TV station. Once up there, they are amazed to see Seifer rush on screen and grab the President, with Quistis also present. They rush in and in the confusion Zell lets slip they all belong to Balamb Garden. President Deling shouts that revenge will be exacted upon Balamb Garden if he is harmed. Squall is also surprised to see that Seifer and Rinoa are acquainted. Suddenly, Sorceress Edea appears. She brings events to a halt and takes Seifer away with her. They rest of them leave the building to find the Owls train has been destroyed and that the resistance is not welcome. Rinoa asks Squall to take her to a safe place, so they hide out in the local pub with a sympathetic landlady. Watts and Zone are still lurking about in Timber and arrange tickets to get Squall and co out of Timber and over to Galbadia garden. They take the train as far as they can then get out and walk. While going through a mountain pass, Squall, Zell and Quistis feel dizzy and pass out into another dream...

...They are back inside Laguna, Kiros and Ward. This time the intrepid threesome have been sent to explore an excavation at Centra. It appears that this is the point in time that Esthar had discovered the Crystal Pillar and were constructing the box around it to create the Lunatic Pandora. Laguna, Kiros and Ward find themselves lost inside it, and have to battle their way

through a maze of tunnels and stairways, while being attacked constantly by Esthar Soldiers. They finally make it out, but have nowhere else to run when they come out at the top of a huge cliff. Badly wounded by the soldiers, they have no choice but to jump. The dream fades...

...Squall and his friends wake up. Still bewildered, they make their way out of the forest and over to Galbadia Garden. After arriving there, Quistis goes on ahead. The rest of them are soon summoned for a conference. Quistis has discovered that Seifer will take the sole blame for the debacle at Timber, Balamb Garden will be safe from reprisal. But Seifer will be executed for his actions. After this sombre news, they meet Rajin and Fujin. They bring new orders from Cid, which they have given to the Head of Galbadia Garden to pass on to them. When they hear about Seifer they vow to go and save him and leave to track him down. At the entrance to the Garden, the Headmaster Martine introduces a new member of the team, a handsome young sharp-shooter called Irvine Kinneas. He has joined because the next mission is to assassinate the Sorceress! You then all board a train to Deling City, where Irvine explains the pressures of being a sharpshooter, while throwing out a few passes as the ladies on the team.

Once in Deling City, they catch a Bus to Caraways Mansion, but are blocked from going in. Much to Squalls annoyance, they must prove their worthiness by going to the nearby Tomb of the Unknown King and finding evidence of a missing student. So off they go. They find the students ID number fairly quickly, but decide to explore the maze of passages further. This soon brings them into conflict with the Brothers, whom they defeat and gain as valuable GF allies. They then leave and return to Deling City where they are now granted entrance to see General Caraway.

Inside the Mansion, Squall talks to Rinoa and discovers that Caraway is Rinoa's father. She is not overjoyed to be there. Caraway then appears and tells them Edea has been behind the aggressive behaviour of President Deling and Galbadia. Caraway is unhappy about this and has hired the SeeDs to assassinate her. Edea will be having a parade through Deling City later that night. They are to split into teams, one to trap Edea at the Gateway, the other to fire the killing shot. Squall and Irvine leave to take up their position. After they leave, Rinoa returns with an Odine Bangle she thinks she can use to bind Edea's power. Quistis however laughs it off (maybe some jealousy over Squall here) and her, Zell and Selphie leave for the gateway. Rinoa slumps down miserably alone.

After the Gateway team take up their post, Caraway shows Squall and Irvine where to wait then returns to the mansion. Meanwhile Quistis regrets her mean words to Rinoa and returns to the mansion. However Rinoa has left and Quistis, Zell and Selphie get locked inside by Caraway who thought Rinoa was in there. Luckily they find a secret passage out and make their way through the maze of sewers as the parade kicks off above. Luckily they make it back to the Gateway in time.

As they are racing about in the sewers, more drama is unfolding above them. Rinoa climbs up to where Edea is. Edea fixes the bangle on Rinoa which makes her subdued. Then Edea rants for a bit about how stupid the revellers at the parade are and kills President Deling, declaring herself ruler of Galbadia. She then sets two Iguion creatures on Rinoa. Irvine and Squall decide to go and help her. They arrive up there in time to kill the creatures, gain a new GF (Carbuncle) from them and save a very grateful Rinoa. Edea has gone to join the parade, so Squall, Rinoa and Irvine hunker down in the clocktower ready to complete the mission.

Quistis team now back in place, they work the mechanism of the gateway to trap

Edea's vehicle. Seifer is there as well, right by Edea's side, much to the surprise of Squall and Rinoa. With Edea trapped, and after a moment of doubt, Irvine fires the perfect shot. But Edea repels the shot with magic. So Squall leaps down and drives over to confront them himself. First he alone takes on Seifer and strikes him down easily. Then his friends catch up and join Squall for a battle against Edea. Although her power is strong, she seems to be holding something back and they hack away with out seeming to harm her much. After a while she lets fly with a bolt of ice that pierces Squall through the chest. As he fall backwards, everything goes black...

... back with Laguna, and now it is the point in his life that he was acting as the protector of Winhill. He plays with Ellone who is about three or four at this point in time and goes to talk with Raine, who he is obviously fond of and who is fond of him. Then Kiros appears and they both catch up with what has happened since they escaped Centra over six or so months ago. Ward also escaped with his life, but lost his voice. He works at the D-District prison in Galbadia. Laguna is discovers that Julia released her song, but got married to someone else. While they walk around Winhill, Kiros and Laguna fight monsters and discuss the future. Kiros suggests Laguna might like to write for Timber Maniacs, but Laguna is intent on staying with Raine and Ellone. His devotion seems to be reciprocated when he and Kiros overhear Ellone and Raine discussing how much they care about Laguna. After giving his report on the days monster hunt, Laguna goes for a rest...

... Zell awakens in a cell along with Rinoa, Selphie and Quistis. He was inside Wards head in the dream and recognises this as D-District prison. Meanwhile Squall awakens in a moving cell which is being taken to the top of the prison. Seifer arrives and taunts him, before getting two Moomba to take him to a torture chamber. Back with Zell and the others, they are visited by Guards who beat up Zell and then take Rinoa away. Back in the torture chamber, Seifer has had Squall hung up and zapped with energy to make him talk about the true meaning of SeeD, ranting and raving about fulfilling his dream of becoming a Sorceress Knight. Back in the cell Selphie find an anti-magic field prevents her healing Zell. Then when a Moomba shows up and is kicked by a guard, they all stand up to the guard and he backs off.

Seifer is still trying to get the secret meaning of SeeD out of Squall, who is genuinely baffled. he then informs Squall that Edea has ordered a missile attack on Balamb and Trabia Gardens and that all SeeDs be hunted down by him. He leaves Squall to be interrogated by others. After Squall talks a load of rubbish to his questioner he is left alone, with just one guard posted. Meanwhile, back in the cell, Quistis and Selphie fake sickness and they overwhelm the Guard who comes in. Now Zell, followed by the Moomba, uses his knowledge of the Prison layout to find the person holding the others weapons. He returns and hands them over o Quistis and Selphie. Wedge and Biggs then appear, rather reluctant to fight. They get beaten up and Zell and the others make their way out. Wedge and Biggs though injured, manage to set of the alarm. Monsters are set free, but the anti-magic barrier is lifted.

At the top, they find Squall and let him free. The Moomba seems to recognise Squall and squeaks "La..gu..na!" when he sees him. They then make their way back down. After fiddling about with the movable cell, they try and escape through the bottom, only to find that the bottom of the prison has been submerged since Ward worked there. So they head back up, only to be pinned down by gunfire. Zell is rescued from death by Squall, but they still seem trapped. The Rinoa reappears with a reluctant Irvine. Prior to this, she had been released and Irvine was taking her back to Deling City, however she "persuaded" to return and help rescue the others. Irvine's gun skills help the others get out from the barrage of bullets and they all run up to the top of the prison. After some confusion, the prison begins to bore into the ground.

When it's all over everyone meets up in the carpark. They commandeer some vehicles and drive off.

Once they are safely in the desert, they all get out and discuss the next move. Missiles are spotted streaking across the sky, and Irvine admits that he heard Trabia garden would be the first target. An angry Selphie volunteers to stop any more missiles being launched and Zell and Quistis decide to go with her. Squall decides to take Rinoa and Irvine back to Balamb Garden to warn them of the impending attack. Selphies team leave by car to the Missile Base, Squalls team hijack a train back to Balamb.

Selphie and her team arrive at the Missile base and disguise themselves as Galbaldian soldiers. They manage to infiltrate the base and after helping shift the missiles they are given access to the missile launch codes. Selphie cannot stop the missiles launching, but is able to set them to go way off course. After being discovered they reveal their true identities and fight off the soldiers in the control room. They then set the base to self destruct. But before they can escape through the front gate they are ambushed by a huge armoured fighting machine. By the time they have disabled it, the gates have locked and they are trapped inside. Unable to escape it seems their fate is to die when the base explodes, but at the last second they manage to get inside the armoured machine and it keeps them safe as the base explodes into an inferno around them. They then try and move the machine, but it cannot be controlled and starts following an eccentric path across the country with the three of them trapped inside.

Meanwhile, Squall, Irvine and Rinoa arrive back at Balamb with the warning that the place is targeted. However the place is in disarray. The garden master has staged a revolt against headmaster Cid. The faculty are now openly against Cid and the students are split between those siding with Cid and those with the faculty. Squall and his team search around each area of the Garden looking for Cid, as they go, they defeat the faculty and give control back piece by piece to those loyal to Cid. Finally they discover he has been hiding in his office. They tell him about the imminent attack, but Cid seems very depressed and worn down. He mentions though that the Garden was constructed on a mobile shelter and hands over a key to the MD level. Xu goes to organise a possible evacuation, and the others go down in the lift. After opening a door in the lift base, they find themselves in an underground level of oil and pipe work. After battling some pustulant oil creatures and searching around they find some rusty machinery, with a bit of a heave they get the machinery working and the Garden rips itself out of the ground and takes off. As it does so the missiles speed towards the garden, then sheer off in all directions at the last moment, exploding harmlessly in the air.

After watching the gardens flight from the observation deck, Xu rushes to tell you the Garden can't actually be steered. Luckily it misses Balamb town and lands in the sea where it carries on floating. Unable to think of anything right now, they all decide to rest. Squall is awakened by Rinoa who asks for a tour of Garden. As Squall shows her about, it's clear that the crisis has calmed and the students and faculty are working as normal. One of the faculty accosts Squall and takes him to see the Garden master who resides in the basement. Down there Irvine joins them and they witness the Master arguing with Cid. The faculty treat Cid roughly and he staggers off to his office. The Masters turns out to be a strange yellow long-fingered thing called NORG sat in a pod. He rants at the three of them and says they must be sacrificed to Edea to appease her he also makes the shocking claim that Edea is Cids wife. He leaves Squall no option but to fight him. Once NORG has been defeated, he cocoons himself. Unsure of what to make of this Squall and his gang find Cid in the infirmary.

In the infirmary Cid tells them about his relationship with Edea, the establishment of SeeD and Garden and that Ellone is in Garden right now. She is not safe anymore and he sends Squall to find her. When he does, she is in the library, and Squall discovers that this young woman is the same Ellone he saw in his dreams of Laguna's life. She admits she has been sending him and his companions into the past to try and change events, as she leaves to meet the White SeeDs who have come to collect her she whispers to Squall that he's her "only hope." After she leaves, Squall resumes the tour around the Garden. Then the Garden half docks, half crashes at a sleepy port town called Fisherman's Horizon. Cid tells Squall to take Quistis and Rinoa and go and apologise to the mayor while they figure out what to do next.

Fisherman's Horizon is an interesting place, set in the middle of the large overseas railway that use to join Esthar to Galbadia its full of pacifists who have left other places to live out a quiet existence. They find Mayor Dobe and his wife Flo and introduce themselves. The mayor says they will be helped in rebuilding Garden and getting it mobile, but violence will not be tolerated. As they leave though there is a ruckus in the town centre, Galbadian soldiers have arrived and are kicking up trouble. Mayor Dobe tries to reason with them, but they beat him up. Squall and team jump to his rescue and beat the soldiers. Then a large armoured vehicle appears, it attacks them, but doesn't seem to be under any kind of control. Squall and team knock it out and into the water and out climb, Selphie, Zell and Quistis (it appears the vehicles erratic journey took them over the sea to FH). Pleased to be united, they return to the base.

Back at the Garden, Irvine decides to put on a bit of a concert. This will help cheer up Selphie who is down after the attack on Trabia and also as a way to get Squall and Rinoa closer. After rehearsing a tune, Rinoa meets Squall that evening and takes him to the FH Sun Panel where the gang play a romantic tune for them. Squall is already a bit overwhelmed after Cid tells him he is in overall command of the battle with Edea yet to come. Rinoa tells him to be more open with them, that they are his friends and trust him, so he should trust them to. Squall finds this all a bit to hard to take in as he still hurts from his abandonment as a child. After a relaxing time, the evening comes to an end.

The next day Xu summons Squall to the control deck. The steering has been fixed and now Squall can command Nida to drive the Garden about. So they leave Fisherman's Horizon. After a trip to some ruins on the Centra continent, where GF's Odin and Tonberry are recruited, they decide to head around back to Balamb to see whats Galbadia are up to. There they are shocked to find Balamb under Galbadian occupation. Zell manages to talk them into the town and after a council of war in his mum's house they do some detective work and find none other than Rajin and Fujin are in command of this force. After a heated battle against them and the acquisition of GF Pandemona from Fujin they demand to know why they have betrayed Garden. Fujin and Rajin claim they don't care about polticis they only follow Seifer, who is carrying out the orders of the Sorceress. Squall understands their loyalty to a friend and lets them leave.

With Balamb town liberated, they return to the bridge of the Garden. Selphie appears and says she would like to visit Trabia. So the Garden is steered up into the snowy north. There they find Trabia garden in ruins and many, many dead. Selphie rushes about finding any friends still alive and visits the dead ones in the graveyard. Some time later they all meet in the basketball court and decide Edea must be stopped. It is then Irvine drops some bombshells. They all begin to recollect that they shared a childhood at an orphanage (except for Rinoa), only Irvine recalls this clearly, and explains about how they were all there together, even Seifer. He then prods them into recalling that Ellone was there to as their older "sis" and biggest shock of all, the kindly matron who cared for them was none other than Edea!

Irvine explains that as Galbadia Garden did not use GF power, he did not forget their shared past. When he met them again recently, he was so bummed they didn't seem to recall each other he said nothing, until he needed to make clear that by killing Edea, they would be killing their old matron. Subdued by this they decided to visit the location of the Orphanage which they remember being on a Cape with a lighthouse. As they leave, Rinoa confesses that she feels left out sometimes, that they are so focused and intense she doesn't know how to keep up. Squall mumbles so not very helpful words of reassurance and then they leave.

As they fly to the Orphanage they see the ominous shape of Galbadia Garden hovering nearby. A battle is now inevitable and Squall takes command. Motorcycle troopers from Galbadia smash their way in and battle takes place in the corridors. While hell breaks loose, Rinoa requests Squalls ring and Zell borrows it for her. As he hands it over there is a tremor as the Gardens collide. Rinoa is knocked over the edge of the deck and left hanging on. Squall tells Zell to deal with it as he has to go and protect the children up in the classrooms. After securing them he gets cornered by a Galbadian paratrooper on a flying frame. They both get knocked out of the Garden fire exit and fight in the air. After knocking the trooper off, Squall manages to steer the frame to where Rinoa is and you both climb down to safety.

With both Gardens resting on the ground and battle still raging around them, Squall and the others infiltrate the bottom of Galbadia garden. Its a dangerous places as the monsters from the training ground have been released. Fujin and rajin are also there, but fed up with all the fighting and wanting the old Seifer back. After working their way through various hallways and locked doors, they acquire keys from sympathetic students and find themselves in the main Hall. After battling GF Cerberus and gaining him as an ally, they head upstairs and met up with Seifer. Looking rather frazzled he declares the SeeDs monsters and attacks them. After he is beaten, Edea steps in again and battle commences.

She fights more viciously this time, but cannot prevent her GF Alexander being taken from her. When the final blow is struck, suddenly everything seems to freeze. Unable to move or speak Squall watches in horror as Rinoa staggers trancelike towards Seifer. She bends down and whispers something to him and he gets up and escapes. Rinoa then collapses and Edea who was slumped over a podium is surrounded by exploding lights. Then the strange freezing field fades and Edea looks up almost confused and sees those in front of her. With joy she greets them all by name and with genuine warmth, as if they were her children. Completely baffled by this, Squall can only think of one thing.. Rinoa, cold and unconscious. They return to Balamb Garden with Edea and Rinoa's comatose body.

Back in Balamb Gaden, a worried Squall lies on his bed running over the events. Quistis suggests they visit Edea's house where she and Cid now are. Squall firsts stops off to see Rinoa and is saddened by her state. he then goes to Edea's house, which was also their old orphanage, accompanied by Quistis, Zell, Selphie and Irvine. There Cid apologizes for his indecisiveness, explaining how torn he was between destroying Sorceress Edea, but losing his wife for ever, or keeping Sorceress Edea alive in the hope Edea Kramer could be saved but at the risk of the rest of the world being endangered by the Sorceress. Edea explains how she was under the control of Ultemecia all this time and how Ultimecia now intends to resurrect Adel, a former Sorceress who once ruled Esthar. With Edea unsure of why Rinoa is in a coma, it is decided Ellone must be found to help them.

back in Garden, Squall announces that Edea is not the enemy anymore and should

be left alone, Cid will also be staying with her. They all then decide to search for the White SeeD ship. Squall then goes back to see Rinoa and becomes a bit overwhelmed with the strength of his feelings for her. He slumps forward and into another dream...

... Laguna has joined up with Kiros and the mute Ward. To earn some cash to fund the search for Ellone, they are shooting a tacky movie in Trabia Canyon. Unfortunately, a real Ruby Dragon shows up. After a short battle, Laguna and the boys are victorious. The scene fades, but Squall does not regain consciousness right away. He talks mind to mind with Ellone and sees Laguna talking to Edea about Ellone...

.. Then Squall does wake up, and has the idea that Ellone can use her power to take time back to find out what happened to Rinoa after the battle. So he goes to ask Edea at her house and she tells him the ship will most likely be somewhere in a cove around Centra. She hands over a letter that will prove that Squall is trustworthy. Then they head back to Garden and search around Centra until they find the ship. On board they find the two Forest Owls, Zane and Watts aboard, they are very worried to hear about Rinoa. After presenting the letter to the leader of the White SeeDs he explains that Ellone left the ship with some people from Esthar. So that leaves no option but to try and get into Esthar.

Squall is very withdrawn and pretty much only caring about Rinoa by now. As the Garden docks at Fishermans Horizon, he picks up Rinoa and carries her out of Garden on his back. He then begins to trudge the long and lonely railway by himself. As he does so he can only think of how much the short time being with Rinoa has changed him and how much he misses her now he can't hear her speak or laugh. He admits to her that he used a spiky exterior to hide the fact he cares a lot about what people think of him and he is insecure about how he is perceived.

When he arrives at the other end of the railway at the desolate Esthar railway station, he is surprised to find all the others waiting for him. They say of course they would come along to help Rinoa and find Ellone and they are also going to protect Edea, who has also come along to speak to Doctor Odine the expert on Sorceress power. With Edea's powerful magic they make short work of the undead Abaddon at the entrance to the Great Salt Lake. After some searching they uncover a panel seeming suspended in the air. After crawling through, they find a tunnel and a computer terminal which tells them that there is a camouflage system surrounding all of Esthar City. The group carry on until they reach an elevator, with no other choice they board it and start travelling. They then board another outside and the huge and awesome expanse of Esthar City opens up in front of them. The platform docks, but as it does so, Squall feels dizzy and collapses along with two others...

...Laguna is now a prisoner working in the Lunatic Pandora laboratory. After saving an oppressed Moomba, Laguna is approached by a member of the Adel Resistance to be the leader. Laguna then battles a guard while the resistance guy and moomba escape. Then Kiros and Ward show up. They make their way to Odine's lab. he is so busy talking he doesn't notice them and the threesome sneak past. Outside an assistant to Odine talks to Laguna telling him that Odine is holding Ellone inside. So Laguna returns and threatens Odine until he tells him where Ellone is. She is in his lab in Esthar City, so they travel there and Laguna is reunited with the young Ellone who is overjoyed to see him. As Laguna holds her the dream fades...

... Squall wakes up just as a car arrives to collect them. The Presidential Assistant doesn't seem surprised to see them and takes them to the Presidential Palace. Edea tells them she wishes to be rid of the threat of possession by

Ultimecia for ever. Odine claims this will be easy. An impatient Squall demands to see Ellone, Odine spikily says he will arrange it, but he must be allowed to observe Rinoa first (hah!). Squall reluctantly agrees. They are free to explore the City and when ready should go to the Lunar Gate to the east of the City. After looking around the incredible futuristic city, they hire a car and leave the main city area. After stopping off to check out the mysterious Tears Point structure and collecting the Solomons Ring for summoning GF Doomtrain, they drive to the Lunar Gate.

At the Lunar Gate, Squall is told Rinoa needs to be taken up to the Lunar base for further study. Zell wishes to remain as Edea's guard, so Squall choose to take Selphie with him. Squall, Selphie and the unconscious Rinoa are then launched in a pod out into space to the Lunar Base. After they are gone, Angelo seems to be going crazy. They follow her outside and see a huge structure come hovering over. They all rush back to Esthar City. In Odines lab they discuss the fact the Galbadians have salvaged the Pandora and are controlling it. Zell and his team go to investigate and manage to board the Pandora as it passes by a walkway. Exploring inside the crystal interior they don't get very far before being violently expelled out of the top and back into Esthar City. They can only watch as the Pandora heads for Tears Point and Edea mutters something about the Lunar Cry.

Meanwhile Squall, Selphie and Rinoa have arrived at the Lunar Base. After leaving Rinoa in the medical lab, Squall goes to look around. They are shown Adels tomb floating in space with Esthars President himself out there checking the seal on it. In the control room they are shown the monsters that live on the lunar surface. Squall then goes to visit Ellone who is also here. After some warm words, Ellone explains that she can't change the past and save Rinoa, because she doesn't know her. Squall pleads with her to at least try. Before they can leave, the alarms sound.

Rinoa is staggering down the corridor, a strange "phasing" effect surrounds her, she looks like she is existing at several points in time at once. She is unresponsive and when Squall tries to touch her he is firmly repelled. he can only follow her as she goes into the control room and disconnects the first layer of seals on Adels Tomb and disables the station. She then goes to the locker room and puts on a space suit, leaving through the airlock. Squall follows but cannot reach her before the base doors shut. Frustrated her returns, to find Esthar's President evacuating the base. Squall watches in horror as Rinoa floats up to the tomb and begins breaking the last seals. As he makes for an escape pod with Selphie and Ellone a huge wave of monsters fountains up from the surface of the moon and funnels down towards the planet surface, the Lunar Cry has begun. Rinoa is blasted away from the tomb and is returned to her normal self.

Aboard the pod, Squall and Ellone work together to figure out what happened to Rinoa. Squall sees several instances of Rinoa via the others experiences with her. He sees Rinoa persuading Irvine to return to the Desert Prison to rescue them. He sees Zell and Rinoa talking about Zell making a copy of Squalls Griever ring for her to wear. Then finally Ellone finds the moment they defeated Edea. The truth is revealed, Ultimecia jumped from Edea to Ultimecia at the moment of Edea's defeat. Rinoa was a latent Sorceress all the time. And with Adel free, Ultimecia has a new body and Rinoa is floating alone and scared in space. As Squall desperately tries to communicate with her via Ellone, Rinoa is getting colder and her oxygen is going fast. As her last drop is used up, she gasps and closes her eyes. At the brink of death the two rings she is wearing on a chain around her neck float up and Squalls voice seems to reach her. She remembers she has an emergency air supply and fills her suit with oxygen.

Relieved Squall decides to be with her even if it means they die together. He leaves the Pod and leaps out into space. Rinoa tumbles towards him and soon they are holding each other. It seems that this is it for them, but then a miracle happens. One of the abandoned Ragnarok spaceships comes into view. After entering it via an airlock, they determine its safe and they shed their spacesuits. They then discover the ship is being stalked by strange aliens called Prognators. After figuring out they need to be killed in matching pairs and with Rinoa's new Sorceress powers proving very useful they clear out the ship and reach the control room. There they set course for Esthar Airstation.

With nothing else to do they sit back and talk. Squall even after all he has been through has a hard time expressing his love for Rinoa, as she hugs and holds him. He talks about having not known his parents and being an orphan and how Ellone made him feel less alone at the Orphanage. How her disappearance made him feel so insecure and why he kept himself so distant, that he was afraid of getting close only to be hurt again. Rinoa confesses how secure and loved being held by Squall makes her feel even though he can also drive her crazy! As they near Esthar they are hailed by the Airstation, the romantic mood is shattered when the Esthar people seem fearful that Rinoa is on board.

Rinoa withdraws and admits sadly that she is a Sorceress and people will fear her now. She is frightened about what will happen and just wants this moment with Squall to carry on forever and not have to face the future. As the Ragnarok lands Squall finally admits he has fallen for Rinoa in a big way and this has left him feeling for the first time unsure of what to do. He can't let her go can he. Full of turmoil he watches Rinoa being led away, she is to be sealed like Adel was, her power is too great and she is too much of a threat. Rinoa goes to hand back Squall's ring, he rather lamely says she can keep it and they say their goodbyes. He returns to the Ragnarok in a total mess.

Then the others come aboard, Selphie having survived the pods landing. Selphie is pleased to see him alive then demands to know where Rinoa is. Before he can answer the other board and talk excitedly about how Edea gave her power away (to Rinoa it seems) and about the Lunatic Pandora. Squall isn't interested. He then tells them that Rinoa is going to be sealed. The others are shocked and verbally kick his ass for allowing it. Quistis especially yells at him for being a fool. This brings everything into focus, and Squall realises he has been a fool and declares he will rescue her. As he does so the Ragnarok lurches and they take off. An excited Selphie is at the controls and Squall orders her to take them to the Sorceress memorial.

At the memorial, Squall punches his way in with help from the others. The sealing facility is deactivated and Rinoa falls into his arms. As they make their escape, Esthar guards block the way, then a familiar figure appears and allows them to leave. After thanking them all Rinoa asks if they can go to the place where they all grew up at the Orphanage, she wants to be away from people right now. After taking an excursion to Cactuar Island and the mysterious Deep Sea Deposit to add Cactuar, Bahamut and Eden to their allies. They travel back to Edea's house. There Squall and Rinoa talk in a beautiful field of flowers. There Rinoa confesses her fears about being taken over again or becoming evil. Squall says to her that it won't happen, in his mind he decides that even if that did happen, he would stand by her and be her knight, even if she became the whole world's enemy. They make a promise, that if Squall is ever lost, she can find him here in the field of flowers.

Then they are interrupted when the others come to say there has been a radio message from Esthar. Kiros has called them and needs them to return. It's an emergency. As they return Edea reappears and tells them about how she inherited her powers 13 years ago from a Sorceress on the brink of death. To prevent the Sorceress passing them onto any other child. She says this was the start of a

painful time, but that Squall must fight to then end even though it may bring tragedy to others. With these rather puzzling words ringing in his ears, Squall and the others depart for Esthar. On arrival they are greeted by Ward.

Finally they meet President Laguna face-to-face. Squall is a bit incredulous, but also keen to hear what is going on. It appears Adel is in the Lunatic Pandora and Ultimecia has possession of her, but Adel is still not fully revived. Ultimecia's goal is something called Time Compression. She has been seeking Ellone as a means to go into the past, from whence she can begin compressing time from past, present and future so all times exist at once in one unending present. She plans to do this from the future using a machine based on Ellone's brain patterns, but she needs the present day Ellone to stretch it all the way back as far as she needs to. No one knows why she wishes to do this Time Compression. She has been using the Junction Machine Ellone to travel back and possess other Sorceresses, first Edea, then Rinoa, now Adel. But there is a possibility that Adel might gain control in this time and she would be even worse to deal with than Ultimecia, certainly when she revives fully she will want to take revenge on Odine and Laguna for sealing her up 17 years ago.

However the only way to kill Ultimecia will be by allowing Time Compression to take place. As her body lies in the future, the only way Squall and his team can reach her is if Time is Compressed. So the plan is to kill Adel before she awakens inside the Pandora. Then allow Ultimecia to possess Rinoa. Ellone then sends Rinoa/Ultimecia back to the past inside another Sorceress, possibly Adel or Edea so Ultimecia can start the Time Compression. Then Ellone brings them back, Rinoa returns to the present and Ultimecia to the future and all times will begin to crush down into one. Squall and his team will start to move through the time compressed world until they reach Ultimecia, where they must kill her. To survive in that world, they need to think about a place they all can believe in, a place of love and friendship, they should all arrive in that place together.

They then board the Ragnarok and fly into the Lunatic Pandora. They first encounter Biggs and Wedge, who stage a mini-mutiny and decide to abandon their duties. They then face Fujin and Rajin and battle them. After that they battle the Mobile Type 8 robot and defeat that too, making their way slowly to the centre of the structure. Finally they confront Seifer and Fujin and Rajin who have hold of Ellone. Then suddenly Fujin and Rajin let her go. Fujin then explains to a shocked Seifer that this is not what they wanted, that Seifer has been manipulated and what he is doing is plain wrong and they see Squall as the only way to save them and Seifer himself now. They then leave. Seifer is more manic than ever and rants on about being a revolutionary, someone who needs to do a big thing. With no option, Squall and the others go into battle with him.

Suddenly the GF Odin appears and attacks Seifer with Zantusken, to the horror of everyone watching, Seifer reverses his attack and Odin is split into. Squall and the others must carry on the fight. Then as they wear Seifer down, a strange red robed figure with four swords appears. Gilgamesh strikes down Seifer himself and then leaves through a dimensional rip. After this dramatic turn of events has played out, Seifer makes a last desperate grab for Rinoa and thrusts her towards Adel.

Squall and the others find themselves going into battle with Adel who has Rinoa attached to her and is draining the life out for her. Carefully they manage to kill Adel without harming Rinoa and Rinoa is freed. Ellone and Laguna arrive and the plan is put into action. As soon as Rinoa is returned to the present, Ellone and Laguna leave, with Laguna reminding them to hold onto their feelings of love and friendship.

Suddenly they are falling through the air, images of the recent past are reflected on distorted bubbles round them and a discordant version of the ballroom music from the graduation ball echoes around them. As they fall through water, Rinoa worries she will not exist, but Squall reassures her he will be thinking hard about her. Then Squall and the others find themselves in a room bathed in a strange white light. It is the room Edea had at the Presidential Palace at Deling City. As they walk forwards, Edea rises and spins, splitting into multiple images. She then turns into an odd red robed Sorceress. Squall and the others are thrown into a series of battles against these beings. They are weak and after a few hits spin around laughing manically and disappear only to be replaced by another.

Most disturbingly they fight in familiar locations; Winhill, Balamb Garden, Trabia Snowfields, but the landscapes are melting and distorting before their eyes. Walls puddle into floors, buildings twist and run into each other, the sky and the ground begin to merge. At the end of this horrific experience they face the final Sorceress, a dreadful wormlike dragon. After defeating that one they finally come to rest in a more stable place. The place they all felt most love and friendship, the Orphanage. As they walk to the beach, the oddly twisted bodies of future SeeDs lie dead on the ground. Suddenly the beach changes before their eyes and a huge castle rises up. A large chain joins the beach to the main Castle. It is there that Ultimecia reigns and there that she must be defeated.

On the way up the chain, three mysterious gates appear. Squall decides to investigate and discovers they can travel to locations across the planet. It seems that the monsters have survived in Time Compressed world and also the Chocobo's. However all the cities and towns are surrounded by a strange white miasma and cannot be entered. Squall and the others are delighted to find that the Ragnarok and those aboard from Balamb Garden have also made it unscathed. After seeing the destruction wrought on the world they return via another gate to the huge chain and continue up the chain and into the forbidding lair of Ultimecia.

Inside they are dismayed to find that the power of the place has sealed all their battle powers. The only way they can unlock their abilities is to find all the monsters who are preventing them from using everything at their disposal. As they explore the huge gothic castle they gradually recover all their fighting and support abilities, while taking on beasts such as the corrupted GF Tiamat, the robotic Trauma and the repulsive Gargantua. After some long hard fights they work their way up to the top of the castle and to the final confrontation.

Ultimecia is not happy to see them. She rains down curses and threats upon them, saying that she will send them to another dimension and make them her slaves forever. She then picks three of them to battle her and they are launched into the first fight. In her first form Ultimecia looks pretty normal, after they hurt her enough she summons her powerful GF, Griever. The huge winged lionlike beast attacks viciously, but is not powerful enough to defeat Squall and his companions. Ultimecia then merges with Griever to form a monstrous hybrid. When this tactic fails and Griever lies dead, Ultimecia transforms for a final time into a huge many armed, winged demon. She rants at them as she throws her most powerful magics at them but this still not enough and finally the killing blow is struck.

As she disappears in an explosion of light, Squall and his companions find themselves in a white void. They all begin to concentrate on the time and place they want to return to. As they begin to fade, Squall finds himself alone in a black void. Confused Squall then sees himself as a young boy, then matron Edea appears and he is back at the Orphanage, but at the wrong point in time. This

is thirteen years ago. Edea addresses him, then a dying Ultimecia appears. Squall goes to strike her down, but Edea stops him. Ultimecia wails that she cannot disappear now. Edea takes Ultimecia's powers and Ultimecia finally fades away. Edea explains that she had to do it, to prevent Ultimecia giving the powers to one of the children and to allow her to die in peace. Edea then questions Squall about who he is. Squall admits he is the young boy, only from the future. Edea then tells him he does not belong in this time and must go.

The Orphanage, Edea and young Squall all fade away and Squall is back in the void. He calls out to his friends and to Rinoa to help him find his way. He finds himself trudging across a cracked drought ridden mud desert. Tired he finally collapses only to find himself staring over the edge into space, then he realises he is now on a small island of dry mud, floating in space. As he despairs, images of the past rush around him. Then Rinoa is running, the sky is thunderous and dark, she calls out almost in tears. Squall is on the verge of giving up, as he goes to collapse, a white feather falls, he catches it. The dark sky clears and Rinoa is in the field of flowers, so is Squall but is he still alive...

... of course he is. As Balamb Garden takes flight once again, it passes over Balamb Town. Rajin and Fujin watch Seifer trying to catch a fish. As The Garden passes overhead, Seifer looks up and smiles, finally at peace with himself. Then the Garden heads past Winhill. There Laguna is standing at Raines grave remembering when he and Raine were together and he gave her a ring. As he comes back to the present, he sees Kiros and Ward on the hilltop and Ellone rushes down to embrace him. They both look up as the Garden flies overhead and smile. On board, Selphie is filming the party going on to celebrate the victory. We see that Irvine, Zell and Quistis also got back safely. Out on the balcony, Rinoa and Squall are standing together. Rinoa points up at a shooting star and Squall looks as well, then they embrace and kiss long and passionately as Balamb Garden travels into the sunset.

THE END

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***** 4) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *****
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I've dealt in depth with the two question I had about Ultimecia's identity and how the Time Loop the game revolves around gets started in depth in the next section. This section contains a few frequently asked questions that I could think of, I am sure it will expand with contributions from readers in future updates.

Q: Who is Ellone and what happened to her in the game?

A: Ellone is never really satisfactorily explained in the game. She has tremendous power, but is NOT a sorceress, which is why Ultimecia doesn't seem to be able to possess her. Her parentage is unknown, she as raised by Raine as an orphan. Ellone's full history is recounted by Laguna when you get to question him on various subjects in Esthar:

Laguna: When Ellone was about two there was a massive hunt for girls in Esthar. Esthar soldiers came to Winhill and Elle's parents resisted. They were killed on the spot. The massive hunt was to find the successor for Esthar's ruler, Sorceress Adel. Ellone was raised by Raine who lived next door and I came to know her. Then there was another massive hunt for a successor in Esthar again, Elle was taken away even though I was there. It's the most painful episode of my life. So I rescued her [from Esthar] and sent her back to Winhill. Shortly

after that, Raine died and Ellone was sent straight to an orphanage.

Squall: Why didn't you go back to Winhill with her?

Laguna: I wanted to! But I had my reasons. I found out about this afterwards, but.. the reason why Ellone had to leave the orphanage was because of her special power. Doc Odine wanted to do research on Ellone's special power. he looked for her everywhere. The owners of the orphanage were Edea and Cid Kramer. You know them better than I do. The Kramers took Elle out of the orphanage to protect her. They prepared a big ship to accommodate her...After a while the ship turned into another orphanage and Elle looked after all the kids...She was on that ship for ten years."

The explanation for Ellone's ability to take people back through time is never forthcoming and her parents are never mentioned apart from Laguna's comment that they were killed. It's seems that she remains a pawn in the politics of this planet, condemned by her power to forever be on the run and in hiding. Sad really.

Q: How does Laguna end up Esthar's President?

A: This can be missed if you don't spend some time talking to Laguna once you meet him in Esthar. But he gives a full account and a flashback of how the feat of sealing Adel was achieved.

Squall: What I don't understand is.. Why are you the President?

Laguna: I only set out to rescue Ellone, but of course that wasn't the end of the story. It's a country ruled by Adel with the ingenious but inhumane Odine. Both of them were interested in Ellone. We couldn't just pack up and leave..

FLASHBACK - Sealing Facility

Odine: Adel will be angry. My research will be kaput!

Laguna: Odine only thought about his research. But while researching under Adel's orders he was still making many inventions.. A device to seal magic. Maybe Adel can be defeated. I owed a big favour to the Adel resistance who helped me rescue Ellone. I spoke with my comrades. Two issues came up. First stopping the crystal pillar from calling the monsters from the moon and destroying everything like what happened in Centra. Second, freeing Esthar from Adel's hands. We planned and planned. based on my brilliant ideas of course. Back in the Lunatic Pandora Research Facility there is only one goal. Following Odine's instructions we operated the Crystal Pillar. We set course and stop point in the ocean... That was easy, but we were found out. So we gathered for a final battle to lure Adel. Adel appeared as expected [at the sealing facility].

Adel: What is going on?

Laguna (disguised): We hunted down the culprit who moved the Crystal Pillar.

Adel: Where?

Laguna: Inside there. Ellone's been taken hostage. (I knew she would go in right away if I mentioned Ellone)

Adel: You thought I would fall for that trick?

Laguna: (Adel realised Ellone was a hologram, but it was too late.) Yeah.. Of course... My plans.. are always.. perfect [Knocks Adel down]. Kiros! Ward! Now!! [Adel is trapped and sealed] Haha! Piece of cake.

Laguna: Adel was careless. She may be a sorceress but after all, she was human. We succeeded but couldn't keep such a dangerous Sorceress around as a trophy. We had to do something. So we decided to send her far, far away. Some place very far.. Into outer space. [Three Ragnarok ships tow her into space]... A fierce debate ensued about who should govern the country after Adel was gone. I wasn't paying attention while they made me up to be this hero of the revolution and I ended up being President. Odine made a lot of noise about wanting to do research on Ellone. It was a mistake to send Ellone alone back to Raine. If only I had gone to Winhill with Elle. I would have been able to see Raine one last time. Raine was dead. Ellone was missing. My job kept me busy. I was left thinking about this and that and before I knew it, all this time had passed."

So Laguna was pushed into the Presidency after defeating Adel. I can't help but feel if he had REALLY wanted to leave and go back to Winhill he would have. Did he know Raine was pregnant? Was he scared of commitment? First Julia, then Raine suffer from him bolting when things look like getting serious (and in the company of men only as well). I personally think Laguna is gay, which explains a lot about his character and behaviour, but I shall leave that for another time...

Q: Why does Ultimecia want to compress time?

A: Goodness knows! Doc Odine mentions it when he talks about defeating her and merely dismisses it!

Odine: There is only one way to defeat Ultimecia. You must kill her in ze future. There iz nothing we can do unless we go to ze future. There is no way to jump to ze future under normal circumstances. But there iz still a way! It iz because Sorceress Ultimecia plans to compress time. Compressing time with magic... Vat good will it do for ze sorceress to compress time? There may be many reasons, but it doesn't matter. Let's just figure out vat Ultimecia iz up to. In order for Ultimecia to exist in this time, she must take over ze body of a sorceress from ze present. But ze machine must have a limit. Ultimecia probably needs to go back further in time to achieve time compression. Only Ellone can take her back further into ze past. Zat iz why she iz desperately seeking her.

So it's the most important thing in the game (bar the love story) and that's the only reason we get: "Vat good will it do for ze sorceress to compress time? There may be many reasons, but it doesn't matter."

Well gee thanks Square. Even when you take on Ultimecia at the end she doesn't really make a lot of sense. This is what set me thinking about her identity and I have covered that in the "Theories" section of the FAQ.

Q: Is Laguna really Squalls father?

A: Although it's never stated explicitly, plenty of clues are given to Squall's parentage. We know Raine has a child soon after Laguna left as Ellone tells us as much.

Ellone: When I was kidnapped, Uncle Laguna went on a journey to find me... But because he did, Uncle Laguna wasn't able to be by Raine's side when she died. Raine wanted to show Laguna her new born baby... Raine kept calling out for Laguna. So no matter what, I wanted Laguna to stay in the village...But it didn't work.

Then when you pilot the Ragnarok to the Lunatic Pandora before fighting Adel, you can talk to Laguna, Kiros and Ward on-board.

Laguna: Let's talk when it's all done. I have a lot to tell you. Well if you don't want to hear it, I'll understand.

Kiros: You look very much like your mother.

Ward: "....."

Kiros: Ward says "Good job you don't look like your father".

Finally when the Moomba who accompanies Zell around D-District Prison sees Squall, he jumps up and down, pointing and saying "La..gu..na!" excitedly.

That seems pretty conclusive to me!

More questions answered when I get sent them, so get writing!

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***** 5) WHO IS ULTIMECIA? (And Other Whacky Theories! *****
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This is my forum for trying to tease out some of the deeper concepts thrown up by Final Fantasy VIII's reliance on time travel and destiny to move the story a long. Frankly some of you may find all this talk of temporal physics and quantum realities a turn off, but in my own little way I am trying to work my way through some aspects that have puzzled me and also to posit my outrageous theory of who Ultimecia might be.

a) TIME LOOPS and the PREDESTINATION PARADOX

Before I tackle the issue of Ultimecia's identity, its time to examine the theoretical basis of the plot. Perhaps the most mind-bending fact about Final Fantasy VIII, is that the plot revolves around a time loop. That is the end of the events, set the beginning of the events in motion, to cause the end event that will start the whole thing off etc.

The main problem with Time loops is how do they get started? It's the old, "what came first, the chicken or the egg? Ultimecia sets the events in motion that will allow her to manoeuvre events in her past (i.e., using Edea, then Rinoa when Edea is freed) she inevitably sets her in motion the events that bring about her downfall, as only through her downfall can she begin the

process.

The same paradox results in our heroes never being able to truly prevent Ultimecia from coming into being. The "happy ending" implies Ultimecia's threat is now over, but in fact it can never be over for them. Ultimecia's reign is only at an end in the future, for Squall and the others; her coming to be is inevitable. For only by allowing Ultimecia compress time can they throw her back into the past and cause the establishment of SeeD and Garden.

This is why Ellone and Laguna allow Ultimecia to achieve Time Compression, only by doing so can they bring SeeD and Garden into being. Some people have openly questioned why the risk of allowing Time Compression was done, well if our heroes had found a way to stop Ultimecia without Time Compressing, then SeeD and Garden don't exist anymore! And if they didn't exist, then they couldn't have brought about the events that prevented them coming into existence, so they must still exist!

Basically it's the old, if you travel back in time and kill your grandfather, you would cease to exist in the future, so would be unable to travel back in time and kill your grandfather!

So we're are back to the first question, how the hell does all this get started?

When you start dealing with concepts such as time travel, you're teetering on the edge of some very complex concepts. For example, current Quantum Theory posits that it IS in fact possible to go back in time and kill your own grandfather and still exist to do so. The key to this is parallel universes. The idea being that our homicidal time traveller starts off in Universe 1, he travels back into time and kills his poor grandfather. This creates Universe 2 which runs parallel to Universe 1. When our time traveller returns to his time in his time machine he returns to Universe 2, here his grandfather is dead and he has no descendents, our murderer is a man out of time now. In Universe 1, the grandfather still lives to eventually have the murderous grandson be born and come after him.

So this probably implies at least two parallel universes in Final Fantasy VIII. One in which perhaps quite a different sequence of events unfolds, which allow Ultimecia to compress time. At the end of which some catastrophe throws Ultimecia back in time and in her attempts to bring about Time Compression again starts a new time loop in a new universe. So she still exists in her first universe/timeline to kick off events, but is then trapped in the second universe/timeline always sowing the "SeeDs" of her own future destruction in the past! When we play the game, we could be viewing the first time the loop runs its course or the millionth!

b) SO WHO IS ULTIMECIA?

My theory is that Ultimecia is actually.. Rinoa!

Now before you all start throwing things, there is no concrete proof of this, it's pure speculation on my part. Part of the problem with Ultimecia is she is such a nebulous threat, and no real clues are given to her identity. There is an argument that she may not even be one single Sorceress but herself and amalgam of Sorceress past. When she is trying to take over Adel, Odine worries that Adel might actually become the driving personality and the implication is that Ultimecia in the body of a powerful Sorceress might retain the personality of that Sorceress (unlike when she took over Edea, who was subsumed).

There are many odd aspects to Rinoa. We are told Sorceresses get their potential powers at age five (then it seems they have to inherit full powers from a dying Sorceress). Julia, her mother dies in a car crash when Rinoa is five. In the time-loop universe, this is also the year that Ultimecia arrives back in the past. Rinoa speaks openly of passing her powers on and what will happen. Perhaps in our first universe, a place where Rinoa never met Squall as SeeD did not exist, Rinoa is much more embittered by the loss of her mother and poor relationship with her father. (She may even have lost both parents in this Universe and ended up at the Orphanage, explaining why Ultimecia appears there in the past as when travelling through time, all are told to concentrate on one places, a special place. Also though remember Rinoa and Squall make the Orphanage the place they will meet each other if they ever get lost, so she could have that attachment to the place as well).

Perhaps she came to the attention of the Esthar Soldiers searching for an heir for Adel to pass her powers onto, with Ellone left to be experimented on for her time control powers that Doc Odine is interested in. In this universe, events may unfold so that Rinoa ends up inheriting powers from Adel and possibly becomes a nasty piece of work. Possibly then the resistance to Adel manages to carry over and capture and seal Rinoa instead.

After many, many years. Possibly thousands, something happens to release Rinoa, who is probably by now, pretty narked off and possibly insane. She calls herself Ultimecia and in a spectacular act of revenge she decides to wipeout all living things that ever existed. Using the now perfected "Junction Machine Ellone" she reaches back into the past and uses the young Ellone to allow her to compress time. Now the universe splits. In universe 1, Time Compression is achieved, but something goes wrong and Time Decompresses violently and possibly remembering her mother, remerges back in the past at an Orphanage IN UNIVERSE 2. a new Universe in which the events of Universe 1 haven't taken place yet. There the Sorceress in potentia (Edea), receives her powers and Rinoa/Ultimecia is gone. She can't go back in time in Universe 1 as this would negate the events that brought her there!

Now Ultimecia doesn't exist yet in this Universe, she only exists as a potential future. This flux of time is what allows people to know of her as a Sorceress from the past. Note how NO ONE in the game can actually explain HOW they know Ultimecia is from the future or indeed why the hell she wants to Compress Time.

Edea, probably privy now to some of Ultimecia's plans to bring herself back into being sets up SeeD with her husband as normal. The plot unfolds as the game, except when it comes the battle in the Lunatic Pandora. Time Compression does not take place as Ultimecia does not exist in the future to bring it about. Adel is killed and Rinoa and Squall live happily ever after.

Except they don't, Rinoa becomes corrupted by the powers she inherited from Ultimecia/herself. Squall devoted to her, becomes her Sorceress Knight. Rinoa begins to use her power and the advanced science of Esthar to change the world and the people in it. Eventually using "Junction machine Ellone" to reach back into her past and use herself to Compress time. Imagine her surprise when in her Castle, Squall, and herself arrive to destroy her!

The reason being is that in Universe 2, events are now changed as Ultimecia/Rinoa now DOES exist in the future. With Ultimecia defeated, both her and Squall travel back in time and into the past of Universe 2. Here once again Edea inherits Ultimecia's powers. However in Universe 2, Squall never escapes the limbo he finds himself trapped in. An embittered Rinoa, with her Ultimecia inherited powers decides far in the future to once again, Compress

Time in an effort to bring him back and perhaps she does bring him back although in keeping with the changes wrought on her by all the temporal shenanigans, Squall returns to her in a much altered form...

Then once again Squall and her younger self arrive from the past and defeat her, sending her back into the past to initiate the events using her future self that now exists.

The third universe is the one "we" the viewer experience when Squall arrives back safely from the limbo. And he and Rinoa live happily ever after. Except they don't, Rinoa becomes corrupted by the powers she inherited from Ultimecia/herself. Squall devoted to her, becomes her Sorceress Knight. Rinoa begins to use her power and the advanced science of Esthar to change the world and the people in it. Eventually using "Junction machine Ellone" to reach back into her past and use herself to Compress time so she can enjoy an eternal "present" with Squall.

This is my basic theory then, that in the first Universe, Rinoa/Ultimecia in a completely separate series of events bring about time compression and she is kicked over into universe 2. This allows SeeD to exist in the first version of Universe 2, even though at that point, Ultimecia has not compressed time. After past events are changed several times in this universe by the unfolding future ones, the final time loop is set up in Universe 2 with Rinoa/Ultimecia attempting to either bring back the lost Squall or seeking to prolong her existence with him. This plays over and over as it must do, created as it is from actions in the future, brought about by results those actions had on the past.

Well, after all that you probably think, "WHAT?". Like I said it's only speculation, but Ultimecia's reasons are never really explained in the game. Yet when I replayed the game, one line of Rinoa's really chilled me.

Esthar Airstation: Rinoa? The sorceress!? She's on the ship!?

Squall: (So... It's true? Rinoa is a sorceress?)

Rinoa: I've... become a sorceress. I can't stay with you anymore, Squall.

Esthar Airstation: Respond, Ragnarok!

Rinoa: I don't want the future. I want the present to stand still. I just want to stay here with you...

Squall: (Rinoa...)

Esthar Airstation: Respond, Ragnarok!

Rinoa: Nobody would want to be around me anymore...

Esthar Airstation: The sorceress will be seized upon arrival. Be sure to follow the crews instructions.

Rinoa: I'm... scared.

Esthar Airstation: Squall, do you copy? Is the sorceress listening, too?

Squall breaks off contact with the Esthar Airstation.

Rinoa: I'm scared, Squall.

Squall goes to Rinoa.

Rinoa: I don't wanna go back.

Look at that line: "I don't want the future. I want the present to stand still". If that doesn't sound like a reason for Time Compression I don't know what does!

Later on Squall vows to be her knight, even if she fears she may turn bad. He will not destroy her even if she does, he will stand by her. So it is easy to imagine them becoming corrupted in the future. Her love for him provides motivation to compress time in both scenarios, either lost in limbo or safely back.

Rinoa: What'll become of me?

Squall: Don't worry about it. There've been many good sorceress. Edea was one. You can be like her.

Rinoa: But Edea's still... I can't guarantee anything, either, if Ultimecia possesses me again... You saw me. She controlled me in outerspace and made me break Adel's seal. What might happen next time? What will I end up doing? Will I end up fighting everyone? ...Scary thought, isn't it?

Squall: (Rinoa.....) (Even if you end up as the world's enemy.) (I'll...)
(I'll be your knight.)

Rinoa: If I fall under Ultimecia's control again... SeeD will come kill me, right? And the leader of SeeD is you, Squall... Squall's sword will pierce my heart..... I guess it's ok if it's you, Squall. Nobody else. Squall, if that ever happens...

Squall: That's enough! I'll never do anything like that. The sorceress I'm after is not you, Rinoa. My enemy is the sorceress from the future...
Ultimecia.

Rinoa: Ultimecia lives in the future and possesses me. She uses my body as her extension in this world. How will you save me?

Squall: I'll come up with something... There's gotta be a way.

Rinoa:

Being a Rinoa fan, I don't think she is intrinsically evil. She is somebody who due to the enormous stresses and strains caused by time alteration and her own powers has probably developed into a monstrous being with only a trace of Rinoas essence left.

For this reason I not only believe Ultimecia to be the future incarnation of Rinoa, I also believe her GF Griever to be Squall! Is it too much postulate that as she changes her own appearance in the future so she makes Squall into a being of greater power, fit for the Ultimate Sorceress? Or retrieves him from limbo, the power of her mind calling him forth in that form? The emphasis given to the Griever ring seems to imply this (in my deranged mind at least!). We are never told how GF's come about, but the process in FFX seems to be likely (both games are notably for giving Summons beasts more personality and

flexibility) where a person becomes an Aeon and can be called upon. The merging of Ultimecia and Griever seems very reminiscent of the Sin/Aeon merger in FFX as well.

If you don't buy the idea that Ultimecia is Rinoa, the two-universe theory still stands as a valid way of kicking off the whole sequence of events. With Ultimecia compressing time for reasons known only to the fevered brains of the developers. This simplifies the events a bit (!).

- Ultimecia compresses time in Universe 1 and it goes wrong
- Ultimecia arrives back in Universe 2 and possesses Edea
- Initially Ultimecia does not exist in the future of Universe 2
- She plans to bring herself into being by passing herself from Sorceress to Sorceress
- Edea is able to see her future plans before being wholly taken over
- SeeD is set up as normal
- With no Ultimecia in this future, no time compression is planned
- Instead Ultimecia subtly passes herself along through the generations with SeeDs always combating, but never destroying her
- In the far future she finally exists and using Ellone reaches into the past. This changes some aspects of the past with the plot unfolding as we see it, now Ultimecia is known of in the future.
- Time Compresses, Squall etc kill her in the future. She returns to the past and kickstarts the timeloop. Now she exists both in the past AND future in this Universe and that's the game we play!

Well, anyway. That's my explanation of the underlying plot and whom I think Ultimecia is. Remember as soon as you throw Time Travel into anything you are flying off in the realms of the unprovable. Temporal and Quantum theory fascinate me and it's probably the reason this game is my favourite and not only does it have a beautiful love story at its heart, delve deeper and it's got a great "techno-babble" plot to!

Feel free to agree or disagree. Any interesting comments on these three aspects of the game are welcome and further discussions of other perceived grey areas or plot holes are always something I want to read.

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***** 6) WHAT'S IN A NAME? *****
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One of the most popular sections of my FFVII guide returns here, all submissions and additions very welcome and fully credited!

1) CHARACTERS

Unlike Final Fantasy VII, Final Fantasy VIII's characters do not appear to have names that have symbolic meanings. About the only character with a "meaningful" name that I can discern is Squall - meaning a stormy shower, after his somewhat churned up emotional state. However, I noticed that some of the names do seem to be derived from French and Germanic sources, but my unfamiliarity with those languages meant I couldn't make much headway seeing if they have other meanings. So anyone who does know more about this, perhaps you can confirm if these names means something in other languages or if they are just plain, ordinary names.

One pair whose name I am convinced means something are FUJIN and RAJIN. In fact an episode of Star Trek: Enterprise aired recently with the title RAJIN, so if anyone can explain these that would be cool!

Cid is latest in a long line of Cids, men who play a pivotal role in Final Fantasy games since the second outing.

Finally, for now, you can't miss bumbling Biggs and Wedge. They first appeared in Final Fantasy VI as the soldiers who get toasted at the start by Tritoch. Then in FFXIII as two members of AVALANCHE. Here they are two unlucky Galbadian Soldiers. Later on they remerge as members of the theatre/thief company in FFXIII and as Blitzball players in FFXIII. Most avid Star Wars fans will know they are named after two X-Wing Pilots in the original Star Wars movie (I refuse to call it Star Wars IV: A New Hope!).

2) GUARDIAN FORCES

Luckily for all us spotters of extra-textual references, the Guardian Forces provide a rich source of mythical plundering.

a) QUEZACOTL - This is based upon the Aztec God of the same name. Quezacotl was a Thunder God and was said to resemble a flying snake! So a pretty good representation. Interestingly there is a real South American bird called the quetzal which is a green-gold colour and has very long tail feathers.

b) SHIVA - Hindu God of destruction. Actually a male. Shiva as depicted in the FF series looks more like Kali. However, there is supposedly a Celtic female goddess called Shiva, which she may be based on. In some Final Fantasy's she has quite a Celtic appearance (chunky jewellery, skimpy clothes)

c) IFRIT - Everyone favourite firey helper (well he's MY fave, I even have a posable model of him on top of my TV!). An Ifrit is a djinn or fire spirit of Indian origin. These are actually depicted as more humanlike than Ifrit is in FFXVIII and onwards, where his doglike qualities become more enhanced. FFXVII's depiction of Ifrit as basically a horned man is probably the most accurate.

d) SIREN - Hails from Greek Mythology. The Sirens were beautiful women who lived on an island and whose beautiful music and singing lured sailors into a gruesome death. Cropped up in Jason and the Argonauts, but most famously in The Odyssey.

e) BROTHERS - Minotaur is another refugee from Greek Myth. The offspring of a human woman and a bull sent by a vengeful Poseidon, he lived in a maze where he ate people sacrificed to him. Theseus killed him. Sacred seems a little more obscure, but possible relates to the idea of cows/bull being held sacred in some Indian religions (Sacred Cow).

f) DIABLOS - Fairly obviously based on traditional western concepts of Demons. The name derives from the word Diabolic.

g) CARBUNCLE - A word with several meanings. The most relevant being that a Carbuncle is a mythical self-luminous gem and also a real life, fiery red precious stone. Hence the attack name "Ruby Light".

h) LEVIATHAN - A huge sea dwelling creature of popular mythology, also present in the Bible. Also Leviathan, actually pronounced "Leevyathan" in Hebrew, is the Hebrew word for Whale

i) PANDEMONA - Derives from the word "pandemonium", which means a noisy, tumultuous uproar, which pretty much describes the blasting wind attack! Also Pandemonium was the capital of Hell in Milton's book "Paradise Lost", which

could explain Pandemonas weird and freakish appearance.

j) CERBERUS - Another one from Greek myth, Cerberus was the three-headed dog that guards the gates to Hades, the Underworld. Encountered by Heracles (Hercules), who tames him, but returns him to Hades after running out of things for him to do.

k) ALEXANDER - His armoured appearances is reminiscent of legendary (and real) hero Alexander the Great. But his Holy powers probably refer to the Alexander who was an angel and one of the bravest of the Seraphim. His name literally means "helper of man."

l) DOOMTRAIN - Not a mythical creature but one of four that appear to have been drawn from the Final Fantasy series own "myths". In Final Fantasy VI there is a sequence set on a train, which is taking people to the afterlife. When you battle it, it has a face and uses an attack that causes several status ailments. If Doomtrain is not based on this then I shall eat my hat.

m) BAHAMUT - Bahamut is the king of dragons, the mightiest dragon that ever existed, Bahamut appears in other story's as well, but not as a dragon. in the occult he is also seen as king of dragons and lord of the earth as Satan and as one of the adopted children of Lucifer. In some myths he is also a big Fish.

o) CACTUAR - Another drawn from the Final Fantasy series, the Cactuars have been around for a while first as Cactrots in FFVI and then onwards as Cactuars.

p) TONBERRY - The third from the Final Fantasy series, These shuffling foes first turned up as "Master Pugs" in FFVI, then as Master Tonberry in FFVII. After that, just plain Tonberry. Although purplish in colour on their first two outings, the knife, lamp and Karma/Everyone's Grudge attacks remain constant.

q) EDEN - An interesting one here and permit me some speculation. In keeping with the time travelling elements of the game Eden in my mind is actually a sort of manifestation of Balamb Garden from the future. The "Garden" of Eden is the most familiar usage of the word and I can't believe the connection is not deliberate!

r) BOKO - A baby Chocobo and also a Final Fantasy character is his own right. Boko is the name of the main characters Chocobo in Final Fantasy V and also the hapless star of the "Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon" games.

s) PHOENIX - The Phoenix is in several mythologies. Egypt where he is a child/creation of Amon Ra (sun god) Greek mythology where he was the bird of Prometheus, long before the gods existed, he was alone from the time Prometheus got captured. In the occult he appears as the guardian of the earth, and lord of fire. Also as one of the children of Lucifer, but he betrayed him to guard the earth. The Phoenix is most famous as a bird, which must die in flames so it can be reborn from an egg.

t) ODIN - King of the Norse Gods and also the god of war. His six-legged (actually eight-legged in the original myth) horse is known as Slepnir.

u) GILGAMESH - An ancient Mesopotamian king and ruler of the city of Uruk. Gilgamesh really did exist, although he wasn't generally noted for having five arms!

3) MONSTERS, WEAPONS etc

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- a) COCKATRICE - Also known as a basilisk. Appears in ancient middle eastern myths. It is said that if a snake steals a chickens egg and hatches it, it will result in this hybrid. A basilisk could turn people to stone with its stare, but could be killed by weasels, who were immune.
 - b) WENDIGO - Wendigo is the Canadian name for a creature that appears in several countries mythologies. The wendigo stalks solitary travellers driving them mad with fear until the victim dies of fright or exhaustion trying to escape.
 - c) GRENDEL - Grendel was a monster who lived in a Danish lake. A hero called Beowulf killed him and also Grendels mum when she turned up seeking revenge.
 - d) ADAMANTOISE/ADAMANTINE - Adamant was a name ancient peoples gave to hard unbreakable substances, and also to imaginary rocks with fabulous properties. The Adamantoise is a Tortoise with an Adamantine shell (and has also appeared in several other Final Fantasy games).
 - e) MARLBORO - another regular in latter day Final Fantasy games, this obnoxious plant can only be named after the brand of cigarettes - Marlboro, as it spews out the kind of cacky breath only regular smokers have =P
 - e) ABADON - Abaddon is mentioned in Milton's "Paradise Lost", refers to Hell. Derives from Hebrew word "abad" meaning "to be lost"
 - f) IMP - A little devil or childish spirit. Appears in many mythologies.
 - g) BEHEMOTH - A large animal mentioned in the bible (Job 40:15). Not actually specified what type of animal it is, but has come to refer to anything of an overlarge nature.
 - h) CHIMERA - Appeared in Greek myth. A large creature with a lions head, goat body and serpents tail. It was killed by the hero Bellerophon riding the winded horse Pegasus.
 - i) SPHINX - Sphinxes (woman's head, lions body) appear in several mythologies. The most famous one is the one outwitted by Oedipus when he solved her riddle about the Ages of Man.
 - j) IRVINES GUNS - Valient, Ulysses, Bismarck and Exeter are all the names of warships. Also, Quistis's whip "Save The Queen" shows up as a weapon in FF9. Zells "Ergheiz" gauntlet also recalls the Square/Namco game "Erghiez - God Bless the Ring".
 - k) ZELLS LIMIT BREAKS - Zells limit breaks are familiar to fans of Final Fantasy 7. Meteor Strike, Dolphin Blow and Final Heaven were all attacks learned by Tifa. Meteor Barret could also be a tribute to Barret Wallace, everyone fave Mr.T impersonator.

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***** 6) ENCYCLOPEDIA *****

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As you progress through the game you collect information that can be viewed in the Information section of the menu. This is basically an alphabetical list of that info, which I have used to help me construct the pre-game timeline and justify some of my arguments.

ADELS TOMB - A high tech device intended for weakening and confining a Sorceress' power. Shot into the moons orbit after going through a special sealing process. Used to confine Sorceress Adel. This is the main cause of radio interference on the planet.

BALAMB - A country on the worlds smallest continent. Known for its temperate climate and warm people. Balamb Garden adds a school town feel to this country.

CENTRA CIVILISATION - A civilisation existed in Centra 4000 years ago. These Centra people emigrated to other continents and founded the Dollet Empire to the west and Esthar to the east. Centra was destroyed 80 years ago by the Lunar Cry.

CENTRA SHELTER - Ancient Centra people spread around the world after Centra was destroyed by the Lunar Cry. people used mobile Centra shelters to move around the world. many ruined shelters are found around the world.

CRYSTAL PILLAR - A crystal that causes the Lunar Cry by producing a strong energy field between the planet and the moon. It's believed to have originated in the moon. The crystal pillar responds to a specific location on the planet and sends a strong directional signal. More research is required to analyse this process in detail.

DEEP SEA DEPOSIT - Marine research islands last excavation site. Believed to be an ocean floor ruin. there is a note saying: 4127 Travel by underwater tower.

DEEP SEA RESEARCH CENTRE - A manmade mobile island for marine life research. Disappeared mysteriously after much wandering. Since facility members are still alive it is assumed to be concealed intentionally.

3015 Found a strange energy field
4141 Call this place deep sea deposit
4242 Seal off deep sea deposit

DOCTOR ODINE - Started as a monster researcher. Discovered Guardian Forces (GF) with the cooperation of a Sorceress became the first Sorceress researcher. Analysed Sorceress magic and created a method enabling a regular human being to use para-magic. Balamb Garden uses the principle of para-magic, combining it with GF's power

DOLLET - A small country on the eastern coast of Galbadia (formerly Dollet). Remnants of an ancient empire.

ESTHAR (1) - Founded by people who emigrated to a continent east of Centra around the same time the Dollet Empire was founded. The mild climate and temperament of the people soon gave way to scientific advancement.

ESTHAR (2) - Started the Sorceress War and fought against the world under Adel's rule. Their Sorceress and scientific powers proved a worldwide threat. After abruptly declaring an end to the war, Esthar closed its borders and has kept its silence ever since.

ESTHAR (3) - Governed by President Laguna and his aides. Due to their concern over Dr. Odines inventions having a negative effect on the state of world security, they closed off their country for 17 years.

EYES ON ME - Julia Heartilly's song. Julia married the Galbadia General Carraway after releasing "Eyes On Me". Gave birth to a girl one year later. Julia died in a car crash at age 28 right before her daughter turned 5.

FISHERMANS HORIZON - A station located in the centre of the Horizon Bridge. It's now a haven for expatriates who refused to have their skills exploited by the government.

GALBADIA - Ruled under the military dictatorship of President Vinzer Deling. This country continues to expand it's territory. Countless invasions of other countries are attempted but most are deterred by SeeD. Deling City is its capital.

GARDEN - Balamb Garden was founded 12 years ago, followed by Galbadia and Trabia Gardens. Each Garden has an administrator called Master and a Head Master. Balamb Garden's headmaster Cid was the founder of Garden.

GREAT HYNE - Creator of mankind and believed to be the first Sorceress. Calling a sorceress the Great Hyne's descendent shows great respect.

HORIZON BRIDGE - A railway that connected the east and west continents. Completed about the time war broke out, it was only in use a short time. Since then it has been derelict.

LUNAR CRY - Refers to monsters falling from the moon. Completely destroyed the cities of Centra. Occurs when monsters reach saturation point on the moon. It's believed that there are forces on the planet that cause this phenomenon. This phenomenon has occurred many times in history and will reoccur in the future.

LUNATIC PANDORA - An enclosure for the crystal pillar made by Esthar. 3 miles tall and 1.5 miles wide, the enormous enclosure boasts a high-tech facility. It floats by causing a reaction with the crystal pillar and ground energy field. A stone from the moon is sealed inside. It was probably built to cause the Lunar Cry through artificial means.

MONSTERS - Creatures on the moon. Monsters fall to earth at regular intervals. This phenomenon is called the Lunar Cry. The monsters bred on the planet since the last Lunar Cry make up those roaming the planet at this time. the Lunar Cry phenomena also transformed some animals into monsters.

ODINE ITEMS - A device to restrain sorceress power. Dr. Odine was afraid of Sorceress Adel's powers and created it. It looks like beautiful jewellery.

RADIO INTERFERENCE (1) - A phenomenon beginning with Esthar's silence 17 years ago. Almost all radio communication facilities were shut down because of noise across all frequencies. However short transmissions are still possible. believed to have some relation to the moon, but details are unknown.

RADIO INTERFERENCE (2) - Most countries now communicate through the use of HD cables running underground. However many of these cables are cut off by monsters or in battle. many countries are left without means to communicate with each other.

SeeD (1) - Balamb Garden's Mercenary Force. Students of 15 and older can participate in written and field exams. They must pass both to become SeeD. SeeD members are paid by Garden according to their rank. In the Garden their status is no different from that of the other students.

SeeD (2) - SeeD conducts missions around the world. Most missions involve battle support and undercover work. SeeD is in high demand by groups requiring a small force of undercover specialists. Commissions made through such dispatches are an important part of Balamb Gardens income.

SeeD (3) - SeeD battle operations are noted for their skilful use of paramagic. Balamb Garden researches the use of GF in conjunction with paramagic.

SORCERESS - The legend goes that the Great Hyne created people. The Sorceresses were given a fragment of Hynes own power. It's hard to determine how many Sorceresses exist today, for many keep their powers concealed. However, it is believed that they avoid spreading their power to thin.

SORCERESS POWER AND EMBODIMENT - Sorceress power has been passed throughout history by the process of embodiment. Any person who has the capacity to embody the great sorceress power is a candidate.

SPACESHIP RAGNAROK - Based on an ancient Centra legend of the dragon ship, Esthar's finest scientific technology was used to build it. Esthar's flagship until it was used to send Adels Tomb into space.

TEARS POINT - Lunar Cry's point of origin determined by Esthar scientists. A security box restraining the power of the crystal pillar and ground energy field is set up. It is sealed to prevent the Crystal Pillar from entering the area.

TIMBER - A city located south of Dollet in the forest area. It was an independent country before neighbouring country invaded 18 years ago. There are numerous resistance groups fighting for independence to this day.

TIMBER MANIACS - A magazine representing the people voice. It was popular among aspiring young journalists. Shut down after Galbadia deemed the publication dangerous.

TIME COMPRESSION - A complete mystery. Various states of present are believed to become compressed. Sorceress power from many generations may cross over to give one sorceress great strength. No one knows what effect this may have on regular human beings.

TRABIA - A country on the northern continent. Due to the harsh climate, Moombas and the Shumi Tribe are the only occupants. Trabia Garden students and faculty also reside here.

TRUTH ABOUT GARDEN - A haven for orphans founded by Sorceress Edea and Head Master Cid. Named for their wish to raise the seeds of the future in their garden.

WHITE SeeD - Orphans formerly in the care of Sorceress Edea. They often travel on their ship and are veiled in secrecy.

WINHILL - A small town outside of Galbadia. It is actually a small village. Sorceress Adel ordered attacks on this village several times.

Feel free to email me about any aspect of this guide, any contributions you would like to make will be fully credited if used and are more than welcome. Please inform me of any errors, typos etc so I can rectify them immediately My email is falsehead@aol.com

(Blatant plug: check out my games website at www.kungfuhamster.cjb.net for loads of info on Martial Arts, Beat 'em Ups, Kung Fu Movies and Pokemon!)

Please also check out another great site for next generation gaming news and reviews <http://www.thunderbolt.be>

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***** THE END *****
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