

FINAL FANTASY VII: FOR ALL GAIA'S CHILDREN

Premise & Chapter Drafts

Shademp: My own edits have been entered into this document. The document is thusly a mix between Squall_of_SeeD's original draft, his later edits and my own entries. My (Shademp's) edits are encased in [] symbols.

Link refresher: The secret ending to 'Dirge of Cerberus', the primary scene that necessitates FFG: FGC.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goxjDK10pJ8>

The story of this game will be written and presented in such a way that newcomers to FFG can feel welcome too. However it is not important to introduce everything about the game's lore in the first segment, but instead let some things be "discovered" for the newcomer as they play through the game.

For All Gaia's Children takes place 7 years after Dirge of Cerberus; roughly 10 years after the original game. The game begins in the late summer of [v] - εγλ 0017, in late August or early September.

All loose ends from the Compilation are to be tied up here, albeit in a manner envisioned by fans and not by the FFG creators. The game is written with the intent that no story should follow after it. All canon Compilation titles are to be acknowledged in Final Fantasy VII: For All Gaia's Children.

The game is to be designed in RPG Maker VX Ace, as an SNES-style J-RPG. Cutscene cards will be used for some scenes in the game, breaking away from the normal graphics and instead giving a taste of what the game would look like in quasi-realistic graphics. The art style in these cards will be recognized from the character profiles the player sees in menus and in dialogue boxes. These "cutscenes" are mentioned at times in this summary.

The visualization descriptions about "camera shots" and such have been made without cutscene cards in mind, due to the initial draft freely imagining how a 3D version of the game would look.

Some locations and their present state in the world are not described here because they are not relevant to the plot. Many ideas for NPCs, treasure data and so on have been omitted in this document.

Gameplay elements which are briefly mentioned in this document:

- **Champion System:** New Fighters can equip/attach/link to Champions like Cloud, Tifa, Barret and other seasoned fighters. These give bonuses and teach skills to the new, low-level fighters. This way Cloud and the rest can be involved in the battle system without having to be reset to low levels. Champions are recruited as normal party members (Main Fighters) when specific New Fighters reach high levels (50+).
- **Minigame “Grid Battles”:** Multiple characters are moved about on a grid and achieve Formation Attacks in order to defeat large enemies. This happens at least two times for the BC Turks (to emphasize their team work) and for other groups in the game.
- **Lifestream Alignment (& Mako Springs):** A gauge measures the percentage at which you have made a connection with the Planet. This is achieved via completing sidequests and by stepping on “Mako Springs” which lets you hear the humming cry of the Planet. Achieving 100% Lifestream Alignment unlocks the extra ending segment among other things.
- **Flashback Theatre:** Additional scenes, not forced on the player, which are not important to the main plot but which add depth and emotion to the characters. These scenes take place at any point up to seven years before FAGC. These are unlocked via scripted events, talking to people, interacting with the environment or by learning battle techniques. After all scenes have been collected in one playthrough, they become available from the game’s Start Menu for viewing. Rewatching all the scenes before starting a New Game will provide a richer perspective, for the one with the patience to do so.
- **“Omega Stone” sidequest:** Pieces of the Omega Shell (see Dirge of Cerberus ending) fall from the sky and down to the ground. Collect these all over the world. Find them all and build the best equipment in the game.
- **Database:** Guide, accessed via the menu, to FFVII lore which gains more entries as the story goes on. The database is not necessary to follow the main plot but helps flesh things out and provide more detail.

In the normal battle system you can have a maximum of three party members in a battle at any time. The battle system will focus more on special attacks and limit breaks, with materia being present but sparingly so.

PROLOGUE

[When starting up the game and getting to the “New Game/Load Save” screen, you do not see the game’s title; just like it was in the original FFVII. Instead the game title “Final Fantasy VII: For All Gaia’s Children” shows up either in the intro sequence when starting a new game, or after the “prologue” segment below ends.]

The story would begin one night with the camera above the ocean. Think of it as a reference to the original game's opening -- the stars reflected in the water allude to the starry sky from the beginning of FFXVII. This will also serve as a bookend for the ending in a way that will become clear much later -- so, again, homage to the original, which began with Aerith's face in mako and ended with it as well (though we obviously won't be using that shot again).

【As the images of the ocean and the stars in the sky are shown, the pulsating cry of the planet can be heard. This is both for the sake of theming and as homage to the original opening. Undecided on whether the moon should be spotted in the sky, alongside the remains of the Omega Weapon shell that got stuck in orbit at the end of Dirge of Cerberus.】

Anyway, instead of sweeping across the technological marvel of Midgar, we're going to head over to Cosmo Canyon and settle around the Cosmo Candle. 【Cue transitional cutscene cards, then a fade-in to normal graphics.】

There are people there, including Nanaki and Dinne. Maybe it's just an ordinary summer night. Maybe it's a festival.

Nanaki: "The planet's scream ..."

Dinne: "It has become more frequent of late. And louder ... Is the planet trying to tell us something ...?"

Nanaki: "I do not know. But it frustrates me ... Though we may hear the planet's pulse, we are unable to discern the cause of its distress ..."

::Nanaki looks down::

Dinne: "I know that look. You're thinking about Bugenhagen. Wishing he was still with us."

Nanaki: "Even Grandfather may be unable to perceive what malady now afflicts the planet, yet I would feel better with him here nonetheless. But his spirit has long since returned to the Lifestream ..."

Dinne: "As with all living things. In time, we too shall join him."

Nanaki: "Grandfather ..."

::Nanaki looks up at the observatory::

Nanaki: "...?"

Dinne: "What's wrong?"

Nanaki: "The lights from the machine in the observatory ... They're on."

Dinne: "Perhaps one of the elders left it on?"

Nanaki: "Yes ... Yes, I'm sure that's it. Wait here. I'll see to it."

Of course, he knows and we know that the planetarium only works when someone is standing on it, so somebody is up there.

[You control Nanaki/Red. Close to the cosmo candle, you can step on a Mako Spring which causes the humming sound of the planet to be heard. 1% progress added to Lifestream Alignment bar. You are able to enter the menu and see that Nanaki is a Level 75 character.]

Dinne (as NPC; first time): "What's wrong? You seem anxious."

"Are you concerned about the planet's scream? Don't burden yourself with worry."

"We must seek the voice of the Lifestream, as Bugenhagen would have."

Dinne (as NPC; second time): "Our kind has safeguarded life in this valley for generations, while Bugenhagen preserved and cultivated the knowledge of life."

"Trust in the wisdom he left to us, just as he trusted in you."

Dinne (as NPC; third time): "Hmm ... Can't the machine only be operated while someone is standing on it?"

[A short walk later, the player finds themselves in the observatory.]

Red reaches the observatory and discovers Genesis standing in the shadows, looking at the planetarium.

???: "Be mindful that you don't catch fleas when laying with dogs."

[Genesis is named "???" because newcomers will be unfamiliar with this character.]

Nanaki: "Who's there?"

???: "Remain vigilant, for the world is become as a den of wolves."

Nanaki: "What are you talking about? Who are you?"

???: "Does it not turn your stomach to dwell among such rabble?"

Nanaki/Red is angry now and growls fiercely.

Nanaki: "I said tell me who you are!"

???: "Do forgive my rudeness. I am Genesis. Just another student in the Study of Planet Life. Another who thinks he has it all figured out. Except ... I really do."

Genesis raises his hand and the four Huge Materia float (gathered there in the quest from the original game) down to him.

Genesis: "Old men and ignorant children playing at delusions of wisdom. It's all very comedic, really."

Genesis looks toward Red.

Genesis: "But you are different. You and your mate. There is a place for you, if you want it. A place outside this hall of irony and the judgment that awaits it."

Nanaki: "Stop talking in riddles and tell me what you're doing here! I am Nanaki, the protector of this canyon. If you've come as an enemy to this place, then you are my enemy as well."

Genesis: "I feared as much. I had hoped for more from you, son of Seto."

Nanaki: "...?!"

[Genesis touches the blue-colored Huge Materia.]

Genesis: "Yes, I know who you are. And I know what is coming to these people. You would do well to cast aside your attachments to this lesser species."

Nanaki: "Be quiet! Leave those materia alone, and get out of here! This is your only warning. Don't doubt my word on that."

Genesis: "The materia? Yes, these testaments to man's defilement."

[Genesis: "But it is only fitting that the sins of humanity will aid in their undoing."]

The Huge Materia come closer to Genesis and start circling him.

BIG NOTE: In the original draft Genesis only drew the Bahamut ZERO materia from the blue Huge Materia, then discarded all the Huge Materia. In the new draft, he uses all the Huge Materia for his final plan. He doesn't spawn the Bahamut ZERO materia until shortly later in this scenario.

In the original scenario Genesis also set the planet models on fire, but we are currently not sure how to work that in anymore. Probably skip it. **]**

Nanaki leaps toward Genesis, but Genesis dodges off the side of the platform, his great black wing extending; he backs away toward the exit.

Genesis: "Follow, son of Seto, and bear witness to divine justice."

[He glides out of the observatory. Nanaki pursues him to the level where the entrance to the Gi Cave sits.]

Nanaki is joined by Dinne, but they are unable to stop what's about to unfold.

Nanaki: "Dinne, stay back!"

Dinne: "Nanaki! I knew something was wrong when you didn't return right away. What's going on? Who is that man?"

Nanaki: "He's unstable. Dangerous."

Genesis: "This planet's cries for cleansing have gone ignored far too long, guardians of the valley. It is my duty to see it done -- and yours as well. Join me now in razing this village to the ground or perish with it. The choice is yours."

He blasts open the door and disappears from view; he has presumably gone inside; several Gi Shadows emerge and fly past the two.

Dinne: "What was that?!"

Nanaki: "They're attacking the village!"

Suddenly, a Gi Shadow emerges and comes toward Dinne.

Nanaki: "Look out!"

[Due to Nanaki being a Level 75 character, this is easy and impossible to lose. This battle, and those that follow, are meant to tease the player with the raw power they will amass in time. Even if timed button-inputs are relevant with certain attacks, countless mistakes are allowed here.]

Dinne: "What ... is going on? The spirits of the Gi Tribe have long been at rest. They returned to the planet ten years ago!"

Nanaki: "That apparition was not a spirit of the Gi! It was ... a shadow. A phantom Genesis created to punish us. To punish the village."

Dinne: "But why?!"

Before they can ponder the matter further, another Gi Shadow emerges; Nanaki defeats it as well.

Nanaki: "Dinne, wait here! I will venture into the cave and resolve this matter!"

Dinne: "I'm coming with you!"

Nanaki: "No! Remain here and protect the village. Stop any shadows that get past me!"

Dinne: "But ...!"

Nanaki: "Like my father before me, this is my duty!"

Nanaki rushes into the cave and fights his way to the end. He clears out the remaining Gi Shadows with a blast of Cosmo Memory, then proceeds on to the final area of the cave. Genesis is here, facing the exit.

Nanaki: "Genesis! This ends now!"

【Genesis extracts a red summon materia from the blue Huge Materia.】

Genesis: "Quite right. Come, Bahamut!"

Nanaki: "...!"

Genesis summons Bahamut ZERO.

Genesis: "The time has come. The time is now. The hour of judgment is at hand."

Genesis flies away on the dragon; Nanaki knows what is about to happen and rushes back through the cave to its entrance.

Dinne is here, having dealt with the other Gi Shadows; a few villagers are here too.

Nanaki: "Dinne, get everyone into the caves!"

Dinne: "Why? What --"

Nanaki: "No time to explain! Just go!"

【Nanaki returns to the top of the canyon.】

Bahamut ZERO is flying around the area.

Nanaki: "Genesis! Face me, coward!"

Nanaki battles him to buy time for the villagers; after a few turns, the battle ends and Bahamut begins charging up for a super attack; Nanaki knows the fight is lost and briefly pauses to look back at the burning observatory **【 which may have been set on fire from the battle with Bahamut ZERO 】**.

Nanaki: "I'm sorry, Grandfather ..."

He leaps from the top of the mesa.

【Cutscene cards show Bahamut ZERO charging up a blast in its mouth, then demolishing the observatory and surrounding area with this blast. Genesis smirks and flies away on his new dragon.】

In the rubble near the Cosmo Candle, Nanaki emerges, singed but alive. Dinne and the villagers are assembled.

Nanaki: "Is everyone okay?"

Dinne: "No ... Not everyone ..."

Nanaki: "Genesis ...! We will not forget this! We will not forgive this!"

Dinne: "Nanaki ..."

Nanaki: "We must see to the villagers' well-being for the moment, Dinne. But very soon, we must leave."

Dinne: "Where are we going?"

Nanaki: "To warn the others."

[If the game's title did not appear before, it will do so now.

FINAL FANTASY VII: FOR ALL GAIA'S CHILDREN

Depending on how much we want to emphasize chapters, a card may show up that reads "Chapter 1".]

CHAPTER 1

[Sound of clashing swords. The screen loads and we see Cloud and Denzel in the wastelands, just outside Edge. Denzel is training in self-defense and sword fighting, under Cloud's tutoring. The scene will establish their relationship and newcomers will be exposit that Cloud is an extremely powerful fighter, with experience saving the world.

Some context here has the player try out the battle system. Denzel is a Level 2 or Level 3 character and wields his own sword, called 'The Scavenger Edge'.

The training session ends and the two go back to Edge, to the 7th Heaven bar. Tifa still manages the bar and Cloud's business, Strife Delivery Service, is also still going.

Marlene, now 14 years old, still lives with her surrogate family because Barret is heavy at work with solving the world's energy problems. Marlene is a very active barmaid of 7th Heaven and is appreciated by all. Some customers argue who makes the better drinks: Marlene or Tifa?

Cloud & Tifa have raised Marlene and Denzel for almost 10 years now (Denzel for closer to 9 years). The family session time establishes who these characters are in relation to one another. Denzel sits down with his friend, Rix (see Episode Denzel to learn about Rix), and their exchanges exposit more about the characters and their history. Denzel is too busy to care about cute girls.

Johnny's bar, "Johnny's Heaven" (see, again, Episode Denzel) went into bankruptcy, possibly due to referring too many of his customers to 7th Heaven. He hangs around Tifa's bar a lot and is a pathetic, humorous example of a failed man.

It is worth noting that both Denzel and Johnny lost their parents when Sector 7 in Midgar got destroyed 10 years earlier. If this fact is not brought up in the main plot, it will be mentioned in the Database.

Family and business time is disrupted when the phone rings. It is Shelke.

Shelke informs the party that she is going to meet up with Vincent in Kalm (the two are now a married couple), and then the two of them will go to Edge for a visit. Shelke is going for a detour to the Midgar ruins for some research.

When Denzel hears this he insists on going to the ruins.

Denzel: "If I go now I can help Shelke with her research."

Marlene: "Isn't science stuff a bit too complicated for you Denzel?"

Denzel: "Hey!"

Tifa: "I don't know..."

Cloud: "Don't worry Tifa. Denzel can handle himself."

Tifa: "Alright. But watch your step over there!"

The player controls Denzel and leaves for the eastern Midgar slum ruins. On the way, you encounter the expected enemies: Hedgehog Pies, Whole Eaters (maybe Thiefs, Ghosts, Hell Houses etc). The RPG battle adventure has now truly started.

The normal graphics are quickly switched over to cutscene cards, showing us Denzel who is looking over at the gaping hole in the pizza plate where Sector 7 used to be. Cue quick flashes of Denzel with his parents, the plate collapsing and Denzel's parents symbolically disappearing from the [family photo we saw in ACC](#). Cheesy but effective.

The player then has the option to walk by Aerith's church, where additional brief cutscene cards happen. Denzel stands on a certain spot, which then transitions back to right before he was found by Cloud; Denzel on Cloud's bike; photo of him and his new family; then possibly another photo but closer to the present day to show the visual transition that the 7th heaven family has made in the last 7-8 years. It is possible that entering the church and approaching the Buster Sword can unlock a scene in the Flashback Theatre.

Cutscene cards *might* also show Meteorfall, Cloud fighting Sephiroth above Midgar (though this one we'll probably skip) and Omega Weapon rising to the skies. The final one is especially important because, being that we spoil the newcomer with the end of DoC anyway, we might as well spoil them with a visual of what the Omega Weapon event actually looked like.

After these bits of exposition about Denzel's past, the player reaches the old playground of Sector 6. Climbing up a wall from here, leading to the next field, lets you encounter Shelke. Her body has matured into an adult woman, although she is still relatively short.

Shelke informs Denzel that she is looking for "Omega Stones".

Shelke: "Some time ago, I found an odd-looking rock. It turned out to be a piece from the Omega Weapon shell."

Denzel: "Oh, I see what you mean. That 'shell' has been in the sky for seven years now, but it's much harder to see now than it was back then. Is it falling apart?"

Shelke: "Yes. Not all the pieces burn up when re-entering the atmosphere. They emit a very distinct energy signature and might be used to engineer some interesting--"

Denzel's face profile shows blank stare

Shelke: "... Long story short, I'm interested in finding more of these stones."

Shelke shows him a glowing stone

Shelke: "I speculated that the Midgar ruins are the most likely place to find more, as it was here that the Omega Weapon shell formed seven years ago. When Omega ascended, small bits must have detached from it."

Denzel: "Mind if I help you look?"

Shelke: "Not at all."

Whilst looking for stones (and possibly finding some and fighting off enemies that like collecting the stones), Shelke and Denzel come across Deepground remains. Battle tech and helmets. Denzel stands silent for a moment but Shelke advances.

Denzel: "Don't you mind seeing all this?"

Shelke: "There are no friends or comrades for me to miss. In Deepground, the closest thing to a friend was the one who didn't feel like killing you...at the moment. The only exception to that would have to be the two brothers, Weiss and Nero..."

Denzel: "No, what I mean is... Don't you mind being reminded of your time with Deepground?"

Shelke: "If you fear the past, its shadow will only grow. This place, especially, does not need any more shadows."

Denzel: "Midgar... You know, everyone really does have a connection to this place, one way or another. Even though it's been years since anyone lived here."

Shelke: "A difficult place to forget, especially if you live in Edge. You see the ruins of Midgar every day."

Denzel: "At least it's not all bad. Out of the rubble...some good things have come."

Cutscene cards show Shelke looking over at a Deepground helmet. Just like Denzel had brief Flashback Cards, so do we see Shelke's transition from her Deepground uniform to her present self. Simultaneously, we see Vincent next to her, transforming from his old self to his present self. As this happens the two (Shelke & Vincent) come closer together, signifying their intimate relationship. This complements Shelke's next line, in response to what Denzel just said.

Shelke: "You're right."

The plot finds justification that Denzel follows Shelke to Kalm. When entering the overworld, the player is shown the world map. Cosmo Canyon, Edge, Midgar and Kalm are marked so that newcomers will have a sense of geography.

Shelke brings Denzel to the place in Kalm where she and Vincent are staying. Maybe they are at an inn or they have their own house there.

Vincent no longer has the menacing appearance he used to have. His long hair is now held up in a ponytail, and he wears a suit that gives him a more "distinguished" look. Due to his age, it is, of course, something a bit old fashioned, but if the clothes make the man, it nonetheless signifies a new one.

Shelke Valentine, formerly known as Shelke Rui, works for the WRO and is among the top ranking scientists there. This is probably a good spot to foreshadow Shelke's SND (Synaptic Net Dive) ability, which will become relevant later.

Denzel decides to return back to Edge. Shelke gives Denzel one of the Omega Stones, to keep as a memento. After Shelke has analyzed the remaining Omega Stones, she and Vincent will head off to Edge.

When Denzel leaves Kalm, the game jumps to Reno and Rude's perspective in Edge. This scene, written by Squall_of_SeeD, will have to be shortened down for the final game but it is very important both for character introductions, continuity exposition and thematic elements. Some of the new exposition intended for this scene is not included in the draft below.】

Before getting that scene started, though, here is the current state of affairs of Edge as envisioned for FFXVII:FAGC:

Edge

On a day-to-day basis, Edge runs more or less as it always has -- which is to say, it's still being built. It's still growing, still expanding, and still establishing its identity.

Just as people once moved here to Midgar from elsewhere to find new opportunities, they still come to what is essentially the world's most up and coming city to feel part of the change, find work, be at the forefront of cultural progress, or to simply get lost in urban living.

This means there is always need for construction, and there is still plenty of open waste upon which to build. Many of the most basic raw materials are still easy to come by from the ruins of Midgar, but much of it is either damaged or buried beneath less desirable ruins.

Some entrepreneurs have figured out that they can make their way by providing the more salvageable structural remnants to others. While it might be technically cheaper for a construction company to do their own salvaging, if they have deadlines to meet and competition to beat, they don't have the time or money to log man hours in sifting through demolished areas for the best parts.

Obviously, all this means work for painters (and paint mixers), electricians, plumbers, mortar mixers, architects and engineers.

As any urban city grows, it also becomes important that a centralized form of governance emerge to provide services. This means sewage, parks and recreation, and, of course, police departments, among others. Due to Shin-Ra's many attempts to make amends for its past, and the presence of a rather large number of former employees among Edge's citizenry, Shin-Ra was formally asked to assume governance over the city by public referendum.

No longer a corporate entity, Shin-Ra now tries its hand at running its first legitimate government. Rufus Shinra, however, refuses the position of Mayor, operating instead only under the title of City Manager, with Tseng, Director of the Turks, as Chief Peace Officer.

As an organization, the Turks no longer exist in their former capacity, serving now as peace officers among the many others who have joined their ranks. However, given their seniority and expertise, they are a rank above most in the department, and only answer to Tseng. Despite the offer, all active Turks refused positions as police captains, preferring instead to conduct themselves as detectives in the field.

Despite the formal abandonment of the "Turks" title and a uniform change from black to a soft blue, the name remains in use among many within the department, as well as the public. However, it carries somewhat less negative connotations than in days gone by.

The most immediate takeaway to have this scene establish is that it quickly become apparent that Reno and Rude are now part of some police force.

The camera is facing the sky. The roof of a brick building is just barely in the frame, yielding the sense that you're in an alleyway looking up at the sunny sky.

A zippo lighter is heard clicking open, followed by the sound of it igniting. It clicks shut.

Reno: "Yep."

Rude: "Yep."

The camera shifts downward. We're looking at the two Turks standing over a body laying on its back, abdominal stab wounds apparent. Reno is crouched down close to the man, while Rude is standing upright. Reno's wearing his black uniform from AC(C), while Rude is wearing the Turks' classic blue colors from the OG design (before the Compilation redesign).

Reno: "He's dead."

Rude: "Yep."

Reno: "Yep."

Reno takes a drag off his cigarette (I see him as a smoker, can't help it).

[Reno has never been depicted as a smoker in the Compilation. If we decide to include this part of his character, the point will have to be made that he only took up this habit in recent years. Rude is annoyed that this bad habit has made Reno, "The Fastest of the Turks", slower.]

Rude: "Lacerations to the hands and face. Obvious signs of a struggle."

Reno: "Well, seeing as you're already wearing gloves, partner, why don't you check this guy for ID and/or evidence?"

Rude: "You didn't even bring gloves, did you?"

Reno: "Nope. That's what I bring you along for."

Rude: "Big surprise."

The player now has control of Rude. **[This part will most certainly be omitted because Rude will never be a playable character. Whenever you gain control of a character, it should be possible to enter the menu and see their stats. This can only work for Reno, as he is to be a Lv55 character with his own stats.]**

While standing over the body, you can search the man's pockets. His jacket pocket has matches and cigarettes (Reno: "Cheap brand, but don't mind if I do, thank you"), and there's nothing but a crumpled drink receipt from the club next door (the Wasteland's Edge) in his jeans's side pockets.

Rude can then roll the man over to investigate his back pockets, where we find his wallet. Meanwhile, Reno pulls out a handkerchief and we can look around with him. We find something.

Rude: "We've got his ID."

Reno: "And I'm pretty sure I've got the murder weapon."

Reno holds up a bloody wood shard from a broken pallet that was laying against the building.

Rude: "Hm. Let me get the lab guys down here."

Rude pulls out his phone, dials a number and says, "It's Rude. We need evidence collection and the coroner's office at that address we were called to."

Rude hangs up.

Reno: "So, who is he?"

Rude: "Desmond Wallace. 34 years old."

Neither says anything for a few seconds, while Rude flips through the wallet further, but then Reno mutters, "It's a damn shame."

Rude: "What?"

Reno: "34. Means he was alive 10 years ago. Means he made it through everything that's happened in the past 10 years. The world nearly getting burned to a crisp by a lunatic with a religious mission. Then another psycho who threw a big rock at the planet. Then Geostigma...and Deepground. And this is how he checks out. Stabbed with a piece of broken wood in an alley beside a nightclub. For what?"

Rude: "Not money. Nothing seems to have been taken."

Reno: "Huh. So, it was personal then."

Rude: "Probably."

Reno crouches down by the body again.

Reno: "Well, you poor bastard, the Turks are on the case."

As he straightens back up, Reno's foot bumps the man's hand.

Rude: "Careful. We don't want to lose any evidence he may have under his nails."

Reno: "What's that?"

The man's hand opened when Reno bumped him. Something shiny is now visible there, and the player can retrieve it. It's a hotel card key, with the room number 19D.

Reno: "His room key? Guess we know where to look for evidence next."

Reno rubs his cigarette out against the brick wall. The scene fades out, then fades back in to the two riding in their car across town. Rude's driving, of course.

Reno dials a number on speaker phone. It rings for a moment, then is answered -- by Elena.

Elena: "Hello?"

Reno: "Hey. Need you to check something for us."

Elena: "Really? Right now? You know Tseng and I have to escort the president to his meeting in ... 15 minutes!"

Reno: "Yeah, I know. So, you've got 15 minutes then."

Elena: "Oh, if we've just got time to kill, why didn't you call Tseng?"

Reno: "You crazy? He's got to be at a meeting in 15 minutes. I'm not bothering him."

Elena: "Exactly. So, why are you bothering me?"

Reno: "'Cause I need something checked."

Elena: "And there aren't a lot of other Turks you could call?"

Reno: "You're the only one who's not going to miss a detail."

Unable to resist the compliment, Elena becomes more helpful.

Elena: "Well ... true. So, what do you need? Make it quick."

Reno: "Desmond Wallace. 34 years old. Somebody didn't want him getting any older. Rude and I were called out to the alley behind a club this morning after the owner found the body. I need whatever you can find on this guy that might tell us why someone wanted him to stop breathing. From the looks of things at the scene, somebody had it in for him."

Elena: "Alright. Anything else?"

Reno: "Yeah. The Promised Land hotel. We're headed there now. We need you to call ahead and find out if room 19D was being rented out to the victim. Guy had the key to that room on him."

Elena: "Okay. I'll call you back soon."

Reno: "Thanks. We're blessed to have you."

Elena: "Whatever."

The call ends.

Reno: "Ever get the feeling she doesn't like me?"

Rude: "A better question would be, 'Do you ever think she does?'"

Reno: "What's not to like?"

Rude: "She's a professional. You aren't."

Reno: "Oh, really? Do I ever not get the job done?"

Rude: "I'm just pointing out that only one of you takes pride in all the little details."

Reno: "Can't get too bogged down with those. Starts to become work."

Rude: "Like I said, she's a professional."

Reno: "How long now have I been saying that a professional isn't someone who sacrifices themselves for their job --"

Rude: "'That's just a fool.' Right. I've heard you say it before."

Reno: "Well, it's just as true now as it was any other time you heard me say it."

Rude: "Is that why you never tuck your shirt in? And why you don't even dress like the rest of us these days? The president has wanted us in the uniform from the Turks' old days for six years now."

Reno: "I like this one better."

Rude: "He feels like it puts people more at ease when they see us. Which could be important since we're supposed to be peace officers, you know."

Reno's quiet for a moment.

Reno: "... I like this one better."

Rude: "The really nagging question about the whole thing is why, if you care so little about the details, does it matter?"

Reno: "What can I say, I'm a mysterious guy. Chicks dig that."

Rude: "Elena doesn't."

Reno: "Chicks who matter."

Rude: "One of these days, I'm going to get a real answer out of you about this."

Reno: "Until then, partner, the only question I'm interested in is what you want for lunch. I didn't eat breakfast and I'm starving."

Silence.

Rude: "... A burger, I guess. You?"

Reno: "Sounds good. Tell 'em not to forget cheese on mine this time, though."

The phone rings. Reno answers it. Elena. She's on speaker phone again.

Reno: "Speak to me, oracle."

Elena: "Guys, I have the information you wanted. Nothing stands out about the deceased. He's never been arrested -- or at least not in the past 10 years. Meteor really screwed things up for us. I hate working with incomplete records ..."

Rude: "Elena ..."

Elena: "Sorry. Anyway, while that may not help you, I think this might. I called the hotel and spoke with the manager. She said that room 19D is being rented to a Miles Sinclair, not Desmond Wallace. And get this: She said her receptionist told her that when this Miles Sinclair came in late last night, he had to purchase a new key to his room. He'd lost his."

Rude and Reno exchange looks.

Rude: "Let's get to work."

{Interrupting here for a second. You'll probably pick up on a number of references to in-jokes or Turk quotes. We've got Reno's famous quote from Wutai about being a professional, as well as "Let's get to work" (Rude said it in Wutai and in Episode 3 of Before Crisis).

We've also got Rude referring to the Turks' blue uniform as what they wore in "the old days," which is somewhat tongue-in-cheek because it could be referring to the original character designs the Turks had in the OG, or it could be referring to a uniform from the earliest days of the organization, before the Compilation retconned the uniform from the days of the OG to this boring, black crap.

Finally, we've got some references to "Pulp Fiction" in here with the car ride and a burger with cheese. Given the commonplace theory that the Turks were inspired by "Pulp Fiction" (there's even a Vincent in there), it seems totally appropriate.}

Fade out. Fade in outside room 19D at the Promised Land hotel.

Our two favorite Turks approach the door.

Reno: "Think he'll try to run?"

Rude: "Not if he knows what's good for him."

Reno: "So, shall we kick this door on down and make our move?"

Rude: "You just want to kick it down."

Reno: "You know me."

Rude: "We're going to handle this like professionals. How many times do we have to go over this? We'll knock, announce who we are, give him 10 seconds to answer the door, then we go in."

Reno: "We could do all that after kicking the door."

Rude: "Reno --"

Reno: "We're going to have to anyway."

Rude: "Reno --"

Reno: "Dammit. Fine."

Rude: "10 seconds."

Reno: "I heard you. Just get on with it."

Rude gives the door a stern police knock.

Voice from within: "Y-yes? Can I help you?"

Rude: "Miles Sinclair?"

Miles: "Yes ..."

Rude: "We're with the Investigations Sector of the General Affairs Department at Shin-Ra. We need to ask you some questions."

Reno: "We're the Turks, yo. Open up."

Rude: "Reno --"

Miles: "Just a moment, please. Just one moment ..."

Reno: "He's gonna run."

Rude: "Let's just wait and see."

Reno: "I'm telling you, he's gonna. He knows he lost his key, and now we're here? He's going to bail and we'll have to work up a sweat catching him."

Rude: "You know, the world may not need you at the top of your game the way it once did, but if you're going to smoke, don't whine about getting out of breath."

Reno: "I have to relax somehow."

Rude: "Since when have you had trouble relaxing? Anyway, we follow procedure for a reason."

Reno: "You know, there was a time the only procedure was, 'Get the job done.' What happened to that?"

Rude: "Shin-Ra almost got the planet killed."

Reno: "A fair point, partner, but I'm going to be right about this guy."

Rude: "What makes you so sure?"

Reno: "Well, for one thing, he left more than enough incriminating evidence at the scene, so running is really all he's got going for him. For another, there's really no other reason for the Turks to show up on

your doorstep; or at least you don't want there to be. And third, it's been way past 10 seconds since he said he was gonna open the door. Now, may I?"

Rude: "Do it."

Reno yells and kicks down the door. He and Rude rush in and sweep the room. Reno runs to an open window and looks out.

Reno: "He's going down the fire escape! I'm going after him. Take the stairs, we'll cut him off at ground level!"

Now begins a chase sequence in which the player controls Reno. Think something like the chase scene from "Uncharted 3."

Reno: "Freeze!"

Guy doesn't.

Reno: "Why is it always with the damn running!"

I see this being some fun parkour shit. After a certain point, the player will chase him to the fire escape of another building. Reno will begin to follow him up and shout to Rude, who's a bit behind.

Reno: "I'll stay on him! You go up through the building on the stairs in case he tries to go back down!"

Rude: "Why is it always with the damn stairs!"

At the top of the building, Reno will see Miles heading for the edge of the building, his intent to jump to another. He's made a mistake, though. They've come to the plaza in Edge where the Meteor monument is. There's really nowhere left to run.

Reno: "Let's try this again: Freeze! You've got nowhere to go. Don't even try making a break for the stairs. Even if you got by me, my partner would be in your face in two seconds."

Miles: "I can't believe this."

Reno: "Believe it. We're the Turks."

Miles: "Not that. Just...this. My life has come down to this. Why?"

Reno: "Because you killed a guy."

Miles: "It-it wasn't like that. I didn't plan to do it. It just happened. You don't understand."

Reno: "Listen, man. I'm hardly in a good place to judge anybody else for murder, but ... I don't know, something about civilized society and crap like that. It's just not okay, alright?"

Miles: "I wish I could take it back."

Reno: "Yeah. I know."

Silence for a moment.

Reno: "Why'd you do it?"

Miles: "[laughs] I don't know. I used to be friends with Desmond. We were best friends. Until Meteor. Even after Meteor. We were going to build new lives for ourselves in the ruins. And somewhere along the way, I lost Lucy to him. I don't know why, but he took her from me."

Reno: "Lucy?"

Miles: "My girlfriend. I couldn't stand to look at either of them after that, but I was afraid to try making it on my own. So we stuck together. And I hated them. I loved her, but I hated her too. And then she got the stigma. She hated herself too, I think. She said it was her punishment for what they did to me."

Miles begins to cry. The door to the stairwell begins to emit a thud. Rude can be heard grunting as he slams against it.

Rude: "Reno!"

Miles: "I left after she died. I made a new life for myself. A decent life. Started a business in Kalm. That's why I was here in town. To meet with some people about ... It doesn't matter now. Nothing matters now. I saw him at that club, talking to a girl. It made me so angry. I never got over what happened. I never got past Lucy. Why should he? I told him to meet me outside. I don't even remember what I said to him when he came out there. I just remember hitting him and him hitting me back. I think I fell on some wood. Then I grabbed a piece of it that broke under me. And ..."

Reno: "And you stabbed him ..."

Rude: "Reno, are you out there?!"

Miles: "Why did I make it this far? Why did I live through Meteor and the stigma and the attack on Kalm? Just to die here ..."

Reno: "Wait, what are you talking about?"

Miles begins to step backward toward the edge of the building. Reno begins moving toward him.

Miles: "I should have died 10 years ago."

He lets himself go over the edge. Reno gets there too late to grab him. He just looks over the edge in stunned silence for several seconds. Rude shoulders his way through the door to the stairwell a few seconds later, out of breath. He runs up to Reno.

Rude: "Somebody had a chain on that damn door. Where is he? Did we lose him?"

Rude then looks over the edge too.

Rude: "Oh."

Reno: "Yeah. We lost him."

Rude: "What the hell happened?"

Reno pulls out one of Desmond's cigarettes and strikes one of his matches across the edge of the building to light it. He lights his smoke and begins walking toward the stairs.

Reno: "Just a damn shame."

[The perspective switches back to Denzel, who is on the overworld just outside Kalm. Shortly after entering 7th Heaven in Edge, the main plot continues. Barret arrives, much to Marlene's joy.]

When they get alone, Barret reveals to Cloud he has a surprise for everyone, especially Marlene -- he's bought the place next door to the bar and will be staying for good. He's decided that enough progress has been made with discovering oil that things can be left to Shera and her people from now on.

Cloud is pleased to hear this and says Marlene will be ecstatic. Barret's mood darkens a little. When Cloud questions him on it, Barret reveals that he thinks maybe he hasn't been there enough for Marlene over the years and that it's too late to try being a proper father to her now.

Cloud tells him this is silly and mentions that Marlene is always telling people how proud she is of her dad, because even though he's not there with her as much as she would like, he's "out there making a better world for all of us to live in."

Barret becomes happier at this and thanks Cloud.

Meanwhile, Reeve and several WRO bigwigs are meeting with Rufus Shinra and several representatives of the new Shin-Ra. They're having a meeting in Edge (where Shin-Ra is located; the WRO is headquartered in Junon) to discuss a partnership. Veld (who was shown to be friends with Reeve in BC) has been working with him since the events of Case of Shin-Ra (he'd said in that story he was going to Junon to meet with Reeve), and is steadfastly against any partnership between Shin-Ra and the WRO. He doesn't trust Rufus and believes that it would lead to a return to the ways of his father, pointing out that he even has someone like Palmer on his board now.

[The "Nibelheim Memorial", set up by Rufus Shinra, is briefly mentioned but it won't be explained until later in the game.

Reeve: "Times and people are different. Shin-Ra has stood for its crimes and done nothing but try to repair the damage and give compensation for the people who suffered. Remember the Nibelheim Memorial?"

Veld: "You have my utmost respect Commissioner Reeve, but you're letting an old PR stunt cloud your mind."

Perspective shifts to Vincent and Shelke, either initially catching up with them in Kalm or on their way to Edge. Suddenly, Genesis appears.]

He demands that Shelke either go with him or reveal the location of Dr. Lucrecia Crescent. Obviously, Vincent wouldn't be okay with either of these things without a proper explanation, and Genesis would dismissively tell him that he has no say given that the current situation is his fault.

A fight ensues and Vincent is knocked back. Genesis flies away with Shelke as his captive.

[Now the real action is going down. The attack on Edge begins. Btw Vincent should call Cloud, or somebody else, on the situation. Even though Vincent is a slightly more social, open guy these days, Cloud is very surprised to receive a call from Vincent. Maybe Vincent is even able to spot from his location that a huge pack of monsters are running towards Edge, many which have already entered the city.

Vincent (on the phone): "This can't be a coincidence. Genesis must be looking to attack everyone at the organization meeting. I can't reach Reeve on his cell; he must have shut it off. Cloud, get to that meeting and protect Reeve! I'll get to Edge as fast as I can."

We now move to the attack on Edge from Denzel's point of view, with Cloud hanging up the phone. Monsters begin ferociously attacking the people of Edge. Cloud, Tifa and Barret explode into action.

This scenario is not written in detail, but it sounds reasonable that Cloud would tell Denzel and Marlene to stay behind in the bar. They stay behind for a minute or so before deciding to disobey and help the town.

Denzel: "Last time Edge was attacked I was too young to do anything. Now, when I can finally do something, I'm not going to just sit around!"

They find the first monsters outside the very door of 7th Heaven. One possible scenario, among others, is for Denzel to rescue Rix from a monster.

Rix: "Okay, I'll stop complaining about you training too much."

Marlene's weapon of choice is a small armlet/shield (built by the same craftsman who designed Barret's arm) that can transform between a compact crossbow and a round cutting tool. She uses restorative materia. The arrows she fires cause status effects with high success rate. Marlene's job class is essentially that of Botanist.

Soon enough they end up in the same area as Cloud, Tifa and Barret. Somebody comments that these monster types are acting unusually feral, at which point a Genesis Shadow fiend appears. Recall the shadow enemies that the Avatar form of Genesis could spawn in Crisis Core:

<http://i.imgur.com/dACYR.jpg>

These will be recurring enemies throughout the game, although they will not make up the majority of monster encounters. Not overusing them should help draw fewer parallels with the Heartless of Kingdom Hearts.

Cloud notices their similarity to Genesis, perhaps triggered by a brief recollection of one of the many memories he absorbed from Zack. After defeating a shadow, the group notices that many of the monsters start running away. It turns out that these Genesis Shadows are controlling/influencing the monsters so the key to stopping this onslaught is to find all the shadow enemies and beat them.

Tifa: "Cloud, hurry and get to Reeve! We can handle the small fry over here."

At some point, you enter a battle using Denzel, Marlene and Tifa/Barret (either of these two) in your party. With a high-level (Champion) member in your party, a high-HP enemy is quickly disposed of by one attack from Tifa/Barret. A citizen cries for help and the Champion member has to leave the battle, but he/she tells Denzel/Marlene to call if they need help. This *might* be a preview of the Champion system, in which Denzel or Marlene will equip a Champion member to learn skills and gain battle bonuses. In later parts of the game, the New Fighter can perform combo-attacks with the equipped Champion.

This Champion system preview might be postponed to later because after the Edge scenario there will be some time before you can equip a Champion again. For the sake of keeping battles refreshing, we may still choose to introduce the Champion concept here.

The perspective jumps back to the meeting between the WRO and Shin-Ra. Reeve, to the shock of many people attending, announces that Rufus is now the new Deputy Commissioner of the World Regeneration Organization. This means that Rufus's position of power is just beneath Reeve (whose title is that of "Commissioner" of the WRO).

Before Reeve is allowed to explain this decision and its implications further, everybody in the meeting is informed about the attack on Edge. Reeve would issue a battalion of automated Cait Siths to fight them off alongside Rufus's troops.

This is when the first Grid Battle starts.

NPC: "But Commissioner, I thought you could only control one of those at a time."

Reeve: "It is certainly difficult controlling more than one, but I've learned that it's manageable if you see the unit as a whole rather than as separate pieces."

You move about the Cait Siths on a grid and the point is to defeat a large enemy by doing a Formation Attack. Place your Cait Siths on the right spots, before they all fall from the enemy's attacks, in order to achieve this Formation Attack. Three Grid Battles happen here; the first two against normal monsters, the final one against a Genesis Shadow. After this, all the Cait Siths are defeated by a single swipe from Weiss's sword.】

Weiss looks much the same as before, though he now carries a giant scar across his chest. Perhaps he wears an open white kimono as well, just to add a little more variety.

Weiss breaks into the meeting and begins to slaughter or injure all those there. He only lightly wounds Veld, Tseng and Elena on his way to his actual target. He then takes aim at Rufus, intending to gun him down.

Reeve puts himself in the line of fire to protect Rufus and is severely wounded while the former Shin-Ra president suffers only a grazing to his shoulder.

【Weiss is about to finish them off when Cloud suddenly propels himself through the room's window like a missile. Cloud's and Weiss's swords only clash, but Weiss is still knocked back through the building's walls all the way to the outside. Cloud pursues Weiss to ground level, where they spar for a few moments before Vincent arrives.

Vincent: "Weiss! Where is Shelke?"

Weiss: "The old man doesn't even have the decency to ask how I've been! But no further time to chat. There is much to be done!"

Weiss summons Bahamut ZERO and flies away on its back. Cloud's cellphone rings again. It is Cid Highwind. He is rambling that Nanaki and Dinne just arrived in Rocket Town and that this red-clad madman just ruined Cosmo Canyon.

Cloud: "Genesis..."

Cid: "What?!"

Cloud: "Genesis kidnapped Shelke. Edge was attacked by monsters. Weiss is still alive. He almost killed everyone at the board meeting--"

Cid: "ㄖ%&! DID THE WHOLE WORLD DECIDE TO GO INSANE IN A MATTER OF MINUTES?! I'm coming over with my airship right now!"

Black fade out. The part that follows is largely unwritten. A lot of people have to meet, assessments be made, exposition given and so on before we can resume the gameplay from Denzel's perspective.

One scene we may have in the interim features Weiss arriving in the Banora Underground to regroup with Genesis.

Weiss kneels in front of Genesis.

Weiss: "Brother... Rufus still lives. Reeve was heavily injured, but I could not confirm the kill. I will take your punishment."

Genesis: "Do the fools know of our plans?"

Weiss: "No."

Genesis: "Do you have the materia?"

Weiss: "Yes."

Genesis: "... Then there is no need for me to scar you a second time. Rise, my brother. Come. I have brought your old acquaintance."

We then see Shelke strapped into a SND terminal.

Reeve is hospitalized and comatose. Rufus – other than a single shoulder wound – is unharmed. The status of the WRO and Shin-Ra needs to be assessed.

With Commissioner Reeve unconscious and in critical condition, Deputy Commissioner Rufus is now acting as the leader of both Shin-Ra and the WRO, despite Veld's opposition. Veld doesn't trust Rufus not to harm the unconscious Reeve, so Veld (and other WRO people who are still suspicious of Rufus) takes Reeve to an undisclosed location. The player will have been made aware by this point that Veld is no longer on good terms with Rufus and the Turks.

Tseng: "Chief!"

Veld: "Old habits die hard. You won't stop calling me that, even after all these years."

Tseng: "Why are you leaving? The WRO, the Turks...everyone must meet to figure out our next move."

Veld: "I'm not waiting another second. Reeve is in a coma. He is extremely vulnerable."

Tseng: "....."

Veld: "Don't tell me you can't see it in his eyes, Tseng. Rufus burns for power and this is just the moment he's been waiting for."

Tseng: "....."

Veld: "I will move Reeve to an undisclosed location and keep him there until he wakes up. I can't allow Rufus to ensure that his new position of power becomes permanent."

Tseng: "You tell me all this, despite the fact that I am under Rufus's command."

Veld: "Because a part of me hopes that you will join me. Or at the very least act as my eyes and ears while I retreat."

For an extended period, we won't be seeing Veld again.

Where the other Turks were this entire time and why they weren't around for the board meeting has to be explained (perhaps they were just returning from investigating the attack on Cosmo in secret?). Knowing that this is no time to care about old quarrels or tension, Cloud and Rufus share what information they have on Genesis. If not sooner, this may be the first time a newcomer hears about Zack Fair, due to Zack's history with Genesis.

In the meeting, it is revealed that Genesis Shadow fiends have spawned around the world, all at the same time. Their presence is riling up other monsters, making ground travel very dangerous. Unfortunately, there are only two aircrafts in Edge currently: the Shera and one of Rufus Shinra's helicopters. Weiss destroyed the other helicopters in the attack on Edge in a strategic move to make Shin-Ra less mobile. Weiss didn't account for the one in use by the BC Turks.

Genesis's base 10 years prior was Banora, but he has had multiple bases over the years, and so sending people to any of them risks wasting time.

Barret: "Cloud, why the hell didn't you ever tell us about this Genesis dude?!"

Cloud: "I didn't think he was a threat anymore. When Zack defeated him 10 years ago, all of Genesis's insane desires appeared to have been fulfilled."

Rufus: "He even declined the offer to join Deepground. It truly seemed he had become merely a lethargic shell."

Rufus then receives intelligence that Condor Village (formerly Fort Condor) and its old mako reactor was just attacked by Weiss, and that a summon materia was stolen. Rufus deduces that Genesis is collecting summon materia for some nefarious purpose. He calls Cissnei (and the other BC Turks) to travel to Wutai where the Leviathan materia is kept. They will use the only remaining helicopter in Edge to get there.

Dinne interrupts, revealing that Yuffie is a friend and that she wants to accompany the BC Turks to Wutai. Rufus agrees to this.

Rufus makes the assessment that not much more can be done until the broken helicopters are fixed, unless Cid wants to lend out his airship. Cid is not keen on that idea and will only allow his old friends on board. (At this point, Cid has not arrived yet, but maybe he -- plus Nanaki and Dinne -- will be present via a video call?)

Aside from Rufus's conclusion that Genesis is going to Wutai, Vincent already knows that Genesis is looking for Lucrecia. Due to Shelke's connection with Lucrecia in Dirge of Cerberus, she knows where Lucrecia is. Genesis will extract that information and travel to Lucrecia's Cave.

They want to save Shelke, but without knowing where Genesis has taken her, all they can do is fly off to the cave. Cid arrives shortly after on the Shera.

Somebody questions why Nanaki didn't just call them after the attack on Cosmo Canyon, to which he explains that his phone was destroyed in the blast by Bahamut ZERO. Nobody else in Cosmo Canyon had a cell phone.

The teams are thusly split like this --

To Wutai: BC Turks & Dinne

To Lucrecia's Cave: Cloud, Tifa, Nanaki, Vincent, Cid. This team is hereby referred to as "**Team Cloud**".

Barret stays behind to look after Marlene and Denzel. Johnny accepted to take care of the bar while Tifa is gone, but this can be revealed via optional text.】

Denzel and Marlene have been present for all the discussion between former-AVALANCHE, Shin-Ra and the WRO that's been going on, but haven't been acknowledged as anyone capable of assisting in the chaos that has engulfed the planet. Denzel is frustrated by this.

With only Barret left behind to look after things otherwise, he has no interest in staying in a room with Rufus and the Turks. He tells Denzel and Marlene that he's taking them home before storming out.

【Cloud tells Denzel to "hold down the fort" while he's gone. Team Cloud takes off. Their story will resume later. The player has control over Denzel for a very short time, then the game jumps to Shelke's perspective.】

SHELKE'S PERSPECTIVE

【Shelke and Weiss are sitting in their respective SND terminals. We are next to the tree in the Banora Underground, familiar from the end of Crisis Core. Veterans will recognize this. Shelke is obviously restrained to her chair.】

Genesis removes the helmet from over Shelke's head; she gasps; having her mind invaded has left her exhausted.

Genesis: "Well done, brother. The final thread finds their way into the great tale's weaving."

Weiss: "We know now where to find Dr. Crescent. Shall we begin?"

Genesis: "Indeed. With all haste, I will make for Nibelheim while you acquire the remaining materia. The day of judgment is not far off now."

Weiss: "Am I free to have fun with this from here on out?"

Genesis: "You have served the goddess well this day, brother. Indulge yourself."

Weiss turns to Shelke.

Weiss: "And so, Shelke, we have no further need of you."

Weiss pulls back his sword, as if readying to execute her; he swings it, but stops just shy of her neck.

Weiss: "However... death will not come that easy for you. You thought yourself above the rest of us, didn't you, Shelke? Becoming part of the surface world. Deepground was a den to monsters, but you -- you were meant for better things, weren't you? Keep your life, Transparent."

He shoves the helmet back onto her head.

Weiss: "Remain here and watch as the world you embraced becomes the world you rejected. Once you have seen enough that you plead for forgiveness, begging for it all to end, I will grant you release from your wretched existence."

[The two villains leave. Shelke ponders to herself what she can possibly do. The terminals here are of a closed system; not connected to the worldwide network, nor does it give her access to any other machinery such as phones. She can access the Lifestream, but all she can do is watch the world, not contact it. Just like Weiss intended... Then it hits her. The Omega Stones. If she can project herself through the Lifestream, and into the Omega Stone carried by Denzel, she should be able to emit a distress call. Weiss did not anticipate this. The Omega Stones, with their spiritual ability to process information, are different from machines or phones, yet similar.

Shelke begins this spiritual SND. This begins a minigame where Shelke's projection navigates through the subterranean Lifestream flow. She can find the location beneath Edge and project a signal from there. During her journey, she fights to maintain concentration, not losing her projection nor getting lost in the maze. To her surprise, she begins to sense a malevolent will. It manifests in dark tendrils and dark clouds attacking her. Some battles might ensue here, but the main task for the player is to avoid and outrun the darkness.

The player reaches the end of the stage.

Shelke: "This is it..."

Shelke's projection makes one last dash and the screen fades to white.]

TEAM DENZEL SCENARIO: PART 1

[Denzel is in his room. Suddenly, his Omega Stone begins to shine. Shelke's image projects from it and she utters the word 'Banora', revealing her location. The projection fades and the stone shatters. Denzel quickly runs to inform Barret, assuming that they'll be making the journey to Banora together. Instead, Barret tells Shin-Ra to clean up their mess and handle it, so it is decided for Reno and Rude to be sent to Banora.

Denzel is frustrated; torn between the choice of following orders or disobeying.

NOTE: The following dialogue between Denzel and Reno that now follows, written by Squall_of_SeeD, was envisioned under a slightly different scenario where Denzel and the Turks did not know for certain if Shelke was in Banora, so slight bits in the exchange and overall atmosphere may need to be changed. Or it might work fine as it is.]

Walking down to Edge's main plaza, Denzel sees volunteers and work crews still working to clear the area of debris from the battles. Reno is standing in front of the Midgar memorial, overseeing things and having a smoke.

Reno is looking up at the monument and hasn't taken any notice of Denzel while the work goes on around them.

Reno: "Well, at least we don't have to rebuild this thing again."

He notices Denzel standing a few feet away.

Reno: "Oh, hey, you're that kid. Cloud's kid, right?"

Denzel: "... Something like that, I guess."

Reno turns and extends his hand.

Reno: "Reno of the Turks, at your service."

Denzel hesitates a moment, then shakes Reno's hand.

Denzel: "Denzel. I thought you guys weren't supposed to use that word anymore, though. 'The Turks.'"

Reno: "Eh, no civilians're looking."

Denzel: "I'm a civilian."

Reno: "I guess. But you're part of the great and illustrious inner circle of Jenova War heroes, aren't ya?"

Denzel: "News to them. How are things going out here?"

Reno: "Not bad. All the injured have been attended to. Area's pretty much picked up. Good thing too. My partner and I should hopefully be heading out soon."

Denzel: "You guys are going to Banora, right?"

Reno: "Look at you gathering intelligence on us before we've even left. You might have the makings of a Turk yourself."

Denzel: "... Why haven't you left yet?"

Reno: "We're waiting on our helicopter to get repaired. All but one of them got sabotaged during the battle, and it's on its way to Wutai right now."

Denzel: "Couldn't you go by boat?"

Reno: "Well, yeah, we could, but we'd have to get to a port first. With those shadow things popping up everywhere and the normal critters stirred up because of 'em, going by ground isn't the best idea."

Denzel (to himself): "(This is taking too long.)"

Reno: "Say what now?"

Denzel: "Huh? Nothing. Just thinking out loud."

Reno: "Well, anyway, things are quiet here right now, but hold down the fort for us, eh? Just in case."

Denzel: "... Hmph. 'Hold down the fort.' You don't have to pretend to take me seriously, you know."

Reno: "Huh?"

Denzel: "... Nothing. Sorry."

Reno: "It's cool. And hey, I caught a glimpse of you in that fight. I know that if stuff goes down you'll be one of the guys we can count on to get things done. Cloud did a good job there."

Denzel: "... Thanks. Good luck on your mission."

Reno: "Yeah, you too."

Denzel starts to leave, then stops and turns back.

Denzel: "Hey. Have you been doing this a long time? Being 'Not-a-Turk'?"

Reno: "Yeah. Most of my life now. Pretty much all I've ever done. Why?"

Denzel: "Have you ever not followed an order?"

Reno: (laughs) "Oh, yeah. You could say that."

Denzel: "Was it the right thing to do?"

Reno is quiet for a moment, then takes on a more serious tone.

Reno: "It absolutely was."

Denzel: "So it's okay sometimes?"

Reno: "It depends."

Denzel: "On?"

Reno: "Most orders you probably should follow. But there are times ... your gut tells you something different. When you feel really strongly about something and just know somehow there's a right choice and a wrong choice. If you don't listen to that, then 'just following orders' can be the biggest mistake you ever make."

A pause.

Denzel: "Alright. Thanks."

Reno: "Why did you ask?"

Denzel: "Just gathering intelligence. Good luck again."

[Denzel has made up his mind. He will go to Banora himself. The Turks aren't acting fast enough. When Denzel starts dragging out the Hardy Daytona, he is discovered by Marlene.]

Marlene: "Where you off to?"

Denzel: "Um, for a walk?"

Marlene: "Mmhmm. With Cloud's bike and a backpack full of ... what exactly? Extra walking shoes?"

Denzel: "**sigh* Marlene... I'm going to Banora."

Marlene: "I'm going to take a wild guess here that no one else knows about this, huh?"

Denzel: "You always have been good at picking up on the subtle things."

Marlene: "Very funny, smart aleck. Didn't Cloud ask you to look after things here?"

Denzel: "Pretty sure your dad's got that covered. Speaking of which, you should go spend a little more time with him. You don't get to see him enough as it is. I'll be back. You take care of things here, alright? Especially yourself."

Denzel starts to walk away.

Marlene: "Denzel, wait!"

Denzel: "Marlene, Shelke's being held prisoner and we know where she is! Sure, this is supposed to be safer than going after that Genesis guy, but what if it isn't? What if those Turk guys need help? How can I do nothing? Nothing for them or for Shelke? We've known her since we were little kids. We've eaten at her house. She's given us presents on our birthdays."

Marlene: "I understand. And I feel the same way. You don't have to convince me."

Denzel: "Oh. Well then. That was a lot easier than I thought it was going to be."

Marlene: "But! I'm going with you."

Denzel: "Like hell you are!"

Marlene: "And why not?"

Denzel: "Because ... !"

Marlene: "If you say 'It might be dangerous,' I'm going to shoot you in the face with a Sleep bolt. And then you won't be able to go anywhere. If it's not too dangerous for you, it's not too dangerous for me, so -- I'm going. End of story. Glad we could agree on that."

Denzel: "... Dammit."

Marlene: "Besides, Tifa told me to keep you out of trouble."

Denzel: "... Dammit!"

【The player leaves Edge and travels east. At some point, perhaps when reaching the Chocobo Farm, the game quickly cuts back to Edge where a furious Barret is asking Rufus and the Turks where Denzel and Marlene are, assuming they were recruited for the Banora mission. Reno reveals that he may have said "something" to accidentally spur Denzel into his choice to leave.

Rude (facepalming): "What did you do?"

Barret storms out. Rufus then orders for Reno to clean up this mess he 'caused', so they will ensue ground travel immediately instead of waiting for helicopter repairs.

Back to Chocobo Farm. Denzel rents a stable and parks the Hardy Daytona. The Chocobo Farm is nowadays the center for Chocobo Racing as well, after the Gold Saucer literally fell to ruins when the Lifestream erupted during Meteorfall.

Denzel's plan is to travel over the marshes to the Mythril Mines. The journey should be somewhat safe, he thinks, seeing as the Midgar Zoloms have been extinct for some time.

The following section is largely unwritten. Reno, Rude and Barret will catch up to Denzel and Marlene.】
Of course all three adults will want the kids to go back home. While Barret might be able to tell Marlene what to do, he can't get Denzel to listen. Just as obviously, he'll be very impolite toward the Turks; Reno especially.

【The exact script is not yet decided, nor is it clear if chocobos will be hired for the journey across the marshes or if some boat specifically for the marshes will be used. Denzel and Marlene proceed over the marshes without giving the Turks a chance to stop them.

When almost at the end of the marshes, Denzel and Marlene are attacked by a Shadow Midgar Zolom, similar to the shadows of the Gi Tribe that Genesis conjured earlier. If not before, Barret catches up here and assists them against the unexpected boss. If chocobos are used, they will be devoured by the 'Shadow Zolom'.

The beast is even more ferocious than its organic counterpart from years ago, so the team is unable to slay it (it will be an optional boss to come back to later). The team reaches the end of the marshes and run into the mines. The entrance is shut behind them, as the Shadow Zolom hits the mountain wall, causing a cave-in.

The Mythril Mines will be a deeper dungeon than it was in the original game. The normal exit is blocked, so Team Denzel has to descend further into the mines before ascending to a different exit. The Mythril

Mines are normally active in this day and age, but the team deduces that the shadow fiends caused the workers to run away. Both Barret and Reno are now equippable Champions.】

At one point in the mines, Barret's lingering resentment towards Reno will cause him to say something like, "You think anything you've done since makes up for all the ones you killed when you dropped the plate on Sector 7?!" -- and Denzel, who had liked Reno, will realize that this is the man who killed his parents.

【Before Reno is given time to respond, Denzel pushes Reno into a wall and holds his sword against Reno's neck.】

At this point, Barret will realize he went too far since he now has a kid ready to kill. Rude will make a move to disarm Denzel, but Reno will tell him to stop. Reno himself is making no effort to thwart Denzel's wrath.

Reno: "Well, kid. Do what you gotta do."

【Denzel: "My mother..."

Reno: "Kid, listen --"

Denzel: "SHUT UP! HER NAME WAS CHLOE! MY FATHER'S NAME WAS ABEL!"

Reno: "..."

Denzel: "I want you to think about their names...when I kill you."】

Barret: "Denzel, stop! This isn't how it's supposed to be. You're too young to have a man's blood on your hands."

Denzel: "I am so damn tired of that bullshit! Cloud was younger than me when he joined the military. The same age as me when he killed Sephiroth the first time. He's trained me. I helped fight off those bastards who attacked the city. But you all act like I can't do anything!"

Reno: "More like you shouldn't have to, kid."

Denzel: "I told you to shut up!"

Barret: "No, he's right. It isn't your place to clean up the messes we adults make."

Denzel: "You can be damn sure it's my place to avenge my parents then. Did you know a few years ago Reeve offered me the chance to kill him? He admitted to me that Shin-Ra did it, let me think he was partly to blame. When he must have known this asshole was the one responsible all along. Just like you did, Barret."

Barret: "We all knew who did it, but who's really responsible?"

Denzel: "'We all knew'? Cloud and Tifa too?! How can you guys have known he was responsible all these years and never done anything about it?!"

Barret: "Dammit, Denzel, I messed up! Where does the blame stop for something like this?! With him for pressing a button?! The president for giving the order?! Reeve for not being able to talk him out of it?! How about us for getting there too late?! For being the reason the damn thing came down in the first place?!"

[Denzel plot direction: The No.1 reactor incident.

We may want to change the dialogue here by Barret because we don't want him to come off as stupid. In this game we are going on the assumption that Denzel doesn't know Cloud, Tifa and Barret made up the AVALANCHE group that blew up Mako Reactor No. 1. So Barret saying "For being the reason the damn thing came down in the first place" seems like a very stupid reveal/hint. But let's use that for the moment as a transition to all this.]

Denzel: "'Being the reason'? What do you mean?"

Reno: "Oh, so they never told you? Your precious heroes blew up Mako Reactor No.1 in Midgar. What I did was wrong -- I won't fight that charge -- but what about all the people who died when Bullet over here wanted to play hero?"

Denzel: "Cloud...too?"

The line below is a mildly edited version of something Squall_of_SeeD wrote.

Reno: "Barret, do you think you've made up for Sector 7 yet either? For blowing up reactors 1 and 5, and pushing President Shinra into a crazy, desperate move like crushing a whole city? Do you really think you've been forgiven for that yet?"

Silence.

Reno: "Kid, I won't stop you from taking revenge. Seriously, do what you gotta do. If I gotta die, though, I'm not going to stand here and take crap from this hypocrite."

Barret: "Can't believe I'm about to agree with this punk again, but he's right. When I think about how many people might want revenge on me ... or even Cloud and Tifa ... The blame just never stops, Denzel."

Denzel: "I think it does. Right here."

Rude speaks at length in a rare moment, demonstrating his wisdom.

Rude: "Reeve understood, but he knew you weren't ready to. He still felt responsible enough, though, and was willing to die if it helped you feel better about it. It's the same reason Cloud and Tifa blamed themselves and wanted to make it up to you by giving you back what you lost. And just like Reeve, they didn't want you growing up like the rest of us -- with gunpowder and blood on your hands instead of a future you deserved."

Denzel: "I don't know what to think. Or how to feel. I had let go of the hate when the one to blame was just Shin-Ra. Just a faceless company run by people who are mostly dead now. But Reno, you're not dead. And you have a face. I hear what you guys are saying, but that doesn't change the fact that the man on

the other end of this blade was the last one in the chain of events leading to my parents' deaths. The only one who needed to do anything differently. Nothing changes that. Nothing can."

Silence again.

Reno: "No. Nothing can. And I won't try to talk you out of it. No matter how many people can share the blame, I'll still be the one who made it happen, and you will still have the right to avenge your family."

Rude: "Reno!"

Reno: "Let it go, partner. I took everything away from him. Least I can do is give something back."

Marlene puts her hand on Denzel's arm. "Denzel, please don't," she asks. He turns to her.

Denzel: "Marlene, please tell me I wasn't the only one in the dark. Please tell me you didn't know this stuff too."

Marlene: "Not all of it ... I knew my dad had done things he wasn't proud of in the fight with Shin-Ra. Cloud and Tifa too. I knew they regretted so much ... People they killed. People they couldn't save ..."

She trails off.

Marlene: "..."

Denzel: "Are you okay?"

Marlene: "Listen, please stop. Doing this won't make anything better."

Denzel: "You know what he did to me!"

Marlene: "And you don't know what he did to me. I won't pretend to know what you're feeling right now, but if he really is the one who crushed Sector 7, then he took away some people who were like family to me too ... I can't even remember their faces now, but I'll never forget their names ..."

Barret: "... Biggs ... Jessie ... Wedge ..."

Reno: "... I'm sorry ..."

Denzel: "..."

Denzel looks her in the eyes for a long moment, saying nothing. Finally ...

Denzel (still looking at her): "You will give me something back, Reno."

Denzel turns back to him.

Denzel: "You took away my old family. You're going to swear to me you'll help me protect my new one."

He puts an arm around Marlene as he says this and there is quiet.

Denzel: "Will you swear it?"

Reno: "... Yeah. For as long as it takes."

Denzel backs off. The group exits the Mythril Mines.

[Denzel's frustration is now caused by multiple factors. Not only was he kept from knowing who killed his parents, but his hero, Cloud, is suddenly revealed to not be such a perfect hero. Denzel felt privileged all these years to hear so much about Cloud's life, but now it turns out Cloud wasn't as open as Denzel thought.]

By the time they exit the mines, Barret should have acknowledged that the kids are more capable than he thought, and not protest any further their going to Banora.

TEAM CLOUD SCENARIO: PART 1

[Team Cloud, again, consists of Cloud, Tifa, Vincent, Nanaki and Cid.

The player is shown the trek Cid's airship makes from Edge to Lucrecia's Cave. The newcomer is more familiarized with the overworld this way. The option might exist to control Cloud, whilst on the airship, and talk to the other characters on deck for fun interaction and exposition. If this slows down the game too much, though, it should be omitted.

If there is any exposition we definitely need right now, it's about Lucrecia's role in the creation of Sephiroth and how she never even got to hold her son.

Team Cloud arrives at Lucrecia's Cave, knowing that Genesis should come here too sooner or later. Vincent, at the very least, enters the cave. He hasn't been here since the ending of DoC, seven years prior.]

Suddenly, Vincent realizes that the stagnant mako in the cave (the same substance that gave birth to Chaos) is bubbling and moving into Lucrecia's crystal.

[Sensing some vague, uneasy signals from Lucrecia, Vincent gets closer. Suddenly her arm breaks out from the crystal and rips the Protomateria from Vincent's chest.

An explosion of dark energy causes the cave to partially fall in, with Lucrecia's crystal and Vincent being buried beneath the rocks. Cloud and the rest manage to dig him out Vincent, but he is in a very weak state.

Outside, they spot that Genesis flies past on Bahamut ZERO, chasing something in the distance. They see Genesis is flying in the direction of Mt. Nibel.

Cid's airship can't land on the mountain area, so they have to descend near the Nibelheim Monument. Here, quick exposition is provided about the monument.

During Deepground's attack on the world, Nibelheim arguably suffered the worst of all. While Vincent was fighting them inside Shinra Manor, the whole of Nibelheim's inhabitants were taken or slaughtered outright, leaving the village a ghost town.

After Deepground, Rufus acknowledged the sins committed in this village (from those that spawned Sephiroth to the many other things), and vowed that none of it shall never happen again.】

I like to imagine the memorial he leaves being this: At the old water tower that stood in the center of town is a marker that reads "May the nightmares of our fathers rest, the dreams of our children awake."

【Interacting with the monument unlocks the Flashback Theatre segment, "Sins of our Fathers," which takes place in Early [v] – εγλ 0011.

The player controls Cloud up the mountain and to the Nibel reactor. I imagine lots of jumping occurring here to move from one mountain ledge to the next. Make sure to find the hidden Mako Springs now (and possibly treasure) or else it won't be available until much later. Team Cloud enters the Nibel Reactor.

Well inside the reactor, they are shocked at what they see. A pale Lucrecia, with green slit eyes, is staring down Genesis. To the shock of Team Cloud, however, Lucrecia now has a Chaos wing on her right side. She looks zombified and barely able to stand.

Genesis's dialogue reveals that she is now the combination of Chaos and the final vestiges of Sephiroth. (The single right Chaos Wing is an expression of Sephiroth's black right wing, only his vestiges are not powerful enough to manifest even the black feathers.) Lucrecia/Sephiroth is only able to expel grunts, being unable to form words. 】

Genesis explains "for the benefit of these fools in attendance" that when Vincent destroyed Omega and released Chaos back to the planet, it returned to the waterfall cave where Grimoire had originally discovered it. This was a horrible turn of chance, as the last vestiges of Sephiroth's will had retreated there when he was defeated over Midgar in AC(C).

Thanks to the stagnant mako that accumulates there, Sephiroth had lay dormant, hidden from the pure Lifestream. When Chaos returned to the stagnant pool, Sephiroth's will attempted to co-op it and grow more powerful. Still not yet able to fully possess his mother's body, where the last remains of Jenova reside (all the rest have been destroyed or their hosts purified in Aerith's church), he had needed one final piece to complete the puzzle: the Protomateria. It needed to come closer so that he could assume full control over Chaos's power.

Now, he was free and would head back into the Lifestream to play out his plans from before once again.

The track "Those Chosen by the Planet" takes on a chilling new meaning in light of Sephiroth having become Chaos and Genesis being the planet's new avatar (my take on the name of the Genesis Avatar boss).

【Genesis: "I know your mind, pitiful monster. Your aim is to roam the Lifestream with your newfound power and to rebuild yourself once more. Haha! How blind you have become, in your time of exile! There is nothing left for a new Reunion."

Sephiroth growls slightly.

Genesis: "The knowledge that cured Geostigma and which destroys the perversion of Jenova... It is knowledge possessed by the Goddess, in turn granted to me, her chosen emissary! The Lifestream can never again be a haven for your kind. With the Goddess guiding me, I have done her work and destroyed all the remains of Jenova. There will never again be a Reunion!"

Sephiroth begins trembling.

Genesis: "All that's left now..."

Genesis lifts his rapier, pointing at Sephiroth.

Genesis: "...is you! The mindless creature that doesn't even deserve to be called 'Sephiroth'. With the Light of the Goddess, I will summon your ultimate end!"

Sephiroth growls loudly and transforms into Bizarro Chaos.

(Note: The manifestation of this knowledge/power from the Lifestream that Genesis has been using across the globe to erase Jenova cells is to roam the world covered in a mist which erases Jenova cells. This will probably not be mentioned in this scene, but is instead explained in the Flashback Theatre and in other optional text involving the WRO and possibly Shin-Ra investigating the mysterious mist. It may also be that Barret encountered it during his travels, but was none the wiser to its cause.)

Epic battle against Bizarro Chaos ensues, with Genesis as a guest party member. Genesis needs time to charge the 'Light of the Goddess', so the point when controlling Cloud (and whoever else is present) is to keep the party alive long enough for Genesis to eradicate the final Sephiroth remnants.

We assume that the Protomateria rolls out of Bizarro Chaos when defeated. Vincent or another party member picks it up. When the blinding flash from Genesis's "Light of the Goddess" clears, left behind is a kneeling Lucrecia.

Genesis: "It is done."

Lucrecia begins shaking.

Lucrecia: "...My son..."

Vincent: "...?!"

Lucrecia: "...He called for me...my dear child...he called for his mother... I... I finally got to hold him..."

Vincent moves close to Lucrecia, but she shoves him away as she gets to her feet, still barely able to walk.

Lucrecia: "But...he hugged me too tight...I couldn't breathe... Ah...ahaha...AHAHAHAHAHA!"

In shock at Lucrecia's expression, Vincent takes another step back.

Genesis: "I shall let you know the mercy of the Goddess..."

Fire begins charging in Genesis's hand. Lucrecia turns toward him.

Genesis: "...by purging you from all sin."

Lucrecia: "Ah ... At last."

She opens her arms wide and smiles.

Vincent: "!!!"

Genesis's Fire projectiles approach faster than Vincent can react, and Lucrecia is engulfed in flames. Cue a drawn-out burning sequence in which Lucrecia's body then falls into the mako pool.

Genesis: "You have now paid for your crimes. Join the Lifestream as a cleansed soul."

The angry response from the party is yet unwritten. Vincent should demand to know where Shelke is. Perhaps Genesis doesn't say anything in response to whatever response Team Cloud has.】

Genesis summons Bahamut ZERO once again. It fires upon the reactor in the same way it did Cosmo Canyon, destroying it just as Team Cloud gets away.

【Not sure what to do next, the team decides to head for Cosmo Canyon to check in on the situation there.

INTERMEDIATE ELFE SCENARIO (possibly scrap)

Elfe -- daughter of Veld. Former AVALANCHE leader. I wish to change the game to her perspective, but at present I see no foreshadowing or transition to make this change in perspective seem natural.

She is one of the New Fighters, around Level 20-30. Due to the lengthy sections using only Champion members, I desire a segment where you actually control a New Fighter and level up a bit. Elfe would make a trek from Gongaga to Cosmo Canyon, so this would provide some chance to use her in battle while traversing the overworld. Elfe's battle style is that of a Samurai.

Elfe's past between the original game and now:

While often spending time with her father, she goes on many self-reflective journeys. She questions the actions of AVALANCHE and her role as its leader. How much suffering did she cause in the name of the planet? Was there another way? She feels unworthy for having used the Study of Planet Life as an excuse for killing countless soldiers, and goes to Cosmo Canyon as a sort of self-punishing atonement.

She becomes close with the Elders, and eventually Nanaki and Dinne. Her contemplative aura naturally draws the philosophical Cosmo Canyon people to her, which is somewhat painful due to the guilt and unworthiness she feels. Evolving Elfe in battle with Nanaki equipped as a Champion might unlock some of her Flashback Theatre scenes.

This segment where you control Elfe might begin in Gongaga, as she wakes up at an inn there. This would provide an excuse to familiarize the newcomer to this location and to see how the village of Gongaga has become more restored over the years.

Elfe gets to Cosmo Canyon sometime after Genesis's attack on the village, after Nanaki and Dinne have run off to Rocket Town. She is unaware of the attack on Edge. Veld has not called his daughter because he does not want to worry her.

Elfe is informed by the villagers about what happened and helps clean up the mess. Shortly, Elfe and the Elders gather around the Cosmo Candle.

Elder A: "...This is a sign. We have been blessed for so long from outside threats. The Geostigma never struck here. We were even spared the cruelty of Deepground. But in truth, not even Cosmo Canyon is safe."

Elder B: "Which means that not even all our knowledge of the planet is safe. We can't let this new awareness pass without meaning."

Elder A: "We have been foolish to ignore the outside world for so long. We may not have neglected visitors, but we have kept too isolated."

Elfe: "Please don't be hard on yourself. You have all done important work here. Studying the stars, listening to the planet... Be proud of the task you've all worked so hard on."

Elder B: "It is like Elder Bugenhagen used to say, though. Looking up* or down too much can make you lose perspective. It is time we looked forward. I will leave Cosmo Canyon. I will share my knowledge with the world, and at the same time gain wisdom from the world."

**Adaptation of when Bugenhagen said to Nanaki that looking up too much can make you lose perspective.*

Elder A: "I was about to say the same thing. In whatever way, this red-clad menace is another twisted fool who uses the Study of Planet Life as an excuse for evil deeds. I can't allow such arrogance. I will share the ways of peace as I embark on this journey. No more violence."

I picture then that Nanaki and the team who just witnessed the end of Lucrecia inside the Nibel reactor arrive at Cosmo Canyon. Elfe gets informed of the current situation, and she expresses her honor in finally getting to meet Nanaki's friends.

Recognizing Cosmo Canyon as a second home, Elfe gathers the determination to join Nanaki and his friends.

Elfe: "I may not be worthy to wield a sword, but the people of Cosmo Canyon never meant any harm on anyone. Genesis's crimes are too great to ignore. He must be stopped. I humbly request that you let me join in your pursuit of him."

The team accepts her, recognizing that a friend of Nanaki is their friend too. At the same time, the Elders prepare to leave the canyon. This event is highly relevant to the Lifestream Alignment sidequests. Elders will now begin appearing all across the world, sharing their wisdom and knowledge. The simple act of talking to them or doing related sidequests will add the percentage count to the Lifestream Alignment gauge.

Extra: Squall_of_SeeD suggested Team Cloud and the elders talk about recent events, using this as a platform to foreshadow the suspicions about the planet's malevolence. Will include in scenario somehow.

While still in Cosmo Canyon, you can see a discussion between an Elder and his granddaughter. The granddaughter decides to go with him on this journey. They will later appear at the "Glacier Research Site" on the Northern Continent.

While Team Cloud is at the Cosmo Candle, Cid receives a call from Yuffie. Wutai was just attacked!]

YUFFIE SCENARIO: PART 1

Time backtracks a little. [A subtitle "Sometime earlier..." should appear on screen.] We'll see what happened over in Wutai.

Shortly after Dirge of Cerberus, the last remnants of Deepground tried to take over here and Godo was killed fighting them off. Yuffie now leads Wutai with the other Wusheng as her advisors.

When Wutai is attacked by Weiss and his monsters the same day Edge is attacked, the main town of Wutai is swept into chaos. As the village burns, the Wusheng battle Weiss at the pagoda. [The oldest Wusheng, Gorkii, is killed by Weiss.]

On the top level of the pagoda, Yuffie fights Weiss over the Leviathan materia, but she is defeated. Weiss collapses the ceiling on her after wearing her down, and then claims the materia.

Just then, Genesis appears and Weiss hands Leviathan off to him. Yuffie is still watching as Genesis pulls another, smaller materia out and says that it's finally time. Yuffie instantly recognizes the small materia by its green luminance: the White Materia.

Genesis turns to Yuffie and tells her not to despair, for it is more appropriate that Wutai die strong and proud than in the manner awaiting the rest of the world.

He then summons the Phoenix, having acquired this materia as well. Genesis and Weiss depart as the bird of fire descends on the pagoda.

Yuffie is saved at the last possible moment by Cissnei and Dinne, who pull her out of the rubble and leap free just as the Phoenix crashes into the pagoda and destroys it. They're greeted at ground level by the rest of the Before Crisis Turks. [Bad blood between Wutai and Shin-Ra will be explored due to Turk presence. This makes an explorable connection between Yuffie and Cissnei.]

At ground level --

Cissnei: "That was a close call, Lady Yuffie."

Dinne: "Are you alright?!"

Yuffie: "What are you doing here?"

Cissnei: "Rufus figured out that Weiss and Genesis were gathering powerful summon materia. He thought it would only be a matter of time before they came for Leviathan, so he sent us. But we got here too late, I'm sorry to say."

Yuffie: "I mean why are Shin-Ra lapdogs on Wutai soil?"

Cissnei: "Excuse me?"

Yuffie: "You aren't welcome here."

Dinne: "Yuffie, what's gotten into you?"

Yuffie: "Look at this village! This is Shin-Ra's fault! Weiss did this! Weiss! From Deepground! From Shin-Ra! It's always Shin-Ra!"

Rod: "... So, yeah, you're welcome for the rescue and stuff."

Legend: "We came all the way here for this?"

Gun: "Quiet. All of you. Lady Yuffie, we mean you and your country no harm."

Cissnei: "We are only here to do what we can to assist you."

Dinne: "Yuffie, they just want to help."

Yuffie: "Wutai doesn't need Shin-Ra's help. It never did."

Yuffie walks away and looks in despair at her burning village.

Yuffie: "Besides, I think we have bigger worries than just a few summon materia now."

The "bigger worries" she's referring to is Holy.

TEAM DENZEL SCENARIO PART 2

[Team Denzel exit the Mythril Mines. The direction here is still uncertain. Should the team go to Junon for a boat to Banora? Or should they go to Condor Village and ask around if there's a harbor more nearby than Junon?

Denzel: "That smoke...it's coming from Fort Condor."

Reno: "They were attacked, after all. Nothing unexpected. Well, a little surprising that smoke is still rising from it maybe."

Denzel: "We have to hurry. They might need our help."

Barret: "Denzel, I know how you feel but don't forget our main rescue mission. We need to get to Banora and find Shelke. To do that, we need to take a ship from Junon."

Denzel: "Ugh..."

Marlene: "The people of Fort Condor know this area well, right? Maybe they know of a harbor closer from here than Junon."

Denzel: "Yes! Someone might help us get to Banora even quicker!"

Rude: "The risk is worth it if we don't linger. Precious time could be earned."

Denzel: "No time to waste. Let's go."

Both Junon and Condor Village, formerly Fort Condor, are worthy places to visit and learn about.

Whatever the decision, here follows a summary of the current state of Condor Village and Junon:

Condor Village

War veterans and researchers settled a permanent home here. The condor that was born here ten years ago returns a few times each year, where it settles on top of the mako reactor. For this reason the reactor has not been dismantled, even though it hasn't been online for many years. Many scientists hope to one day place a tracker on the condor so they can find out about its global movements.】

Junon

Where Edge is a city of fast times and constant change, Junon has an established atmosphere and a more relaxed pace despite being the world's second largest city.

Junon carries a sense of tradition generally unexpected of its population. This may be due to the recent revitalization of its former fishing industry, as well as the WRO's permanent military presence here since the loss of its headquarters during the Crisis Years. [The Crisis Years refers to the Jenova War, Geostigma and Deepground.]

The city was also among those to suffer most the effects of Deepground's war on the surface. With some 1200 citizens lost, that difficult time still resonates with many here on a personal level. As well, the citizens remain fundamentally united in honoring the memory of those taken. Wreaths continue to hang from the city's lamp posts, and are replaced when necessary.

Junon has also come to be home for those who wish to walk to a quieter beat than Edge's daily grind without sacrificing that "big city feel." Among younger migrants to have made their place here in recent years, a common phrase is, "Go to Edge to work all day and party all night. Go to Junon to fish all day and party all night."

Having already maintained a strong hand in operations here since the beginning of the reconstruction period after Meteorfall, the city has been officially governed by the WRO ever since they relocated here some seven years ago. As when Shin-Ra was in power, it is once again a common sight to see soldiers out on patrol or taking in the city's night life when off duty.

[You can find out here, too, that Priscilla died years ago from the Geostigma. Priscilla is an NPC that had a small role in the original game.

Whether from Junon or a harbor just south of Condor Village, Team Denzel takes a boat to Banora. The option exists to visit Mideel, but it is not part of the main story.

Team Denzel enters the Banora Underground. Reno and Rude are familiar with this area because they surveyed it years ago in search of Genesis's whereabouts after the Deepground War.

On their way to Shelke's location, their way is stopped by a Shadow Behemoth. This beast is extremely ferocious, even for our Champions. Barret and Rude stay behind fighting the Shadow Behemoth, while Denzel, Marlene and Reno take the long hidden route through the Cage of Binding. Reno's memory of the place helps somewhat in navigating to where Shelke is. This action is in line with Reno's promise to protect those Denzel cares about.

Denzel, Marlene and Reno fight powerful foes of their own on the way, and eventually find their way to Shelke. The big Shadow Behemoth, now weakened by Barret and Rude, is attacked from behind by Denzel, Reno and Marlene, and thusly defeated.

Before falling unconscious, Shelke senses that something terrible has happened.

Perspective shifts to Team Cloud.]

TEAM CLOUD SCENARIO PART 2

Back with Cloud's team, they've learned from Yuffie what went down in Wutai, and that Yuffie believes Genesis may have been headed for the City of the Ancients since he had the White Materia. That is where the team heads now, courtesy of Cid and his airship The Shera.

They offer to come pick her up and help out in Wutai, but she says the Turks are helping out and that they should hurry in case time is short.

[Team Cloud, now with Elfe added to the team, flies off to the Forgotten City. I am not sure who you should be controlling here. Elfe or Cloud? Whose perspective is most important? Maybe Elfe's perspective as somebody who doesn't understand all that is going on?

Just like before, we might have the option of interaction onboard Cid's airship during the trek from Cosmo Canyon to the Forgotten City, or we might omit this to improve pacing since we'll be spending a lot of time with Team Cloud anyway. The Forgotten City is a place that should have a multiple number of Mako Springs.

Cloud knows that when Aerith prayed for Holy, she needed that altar where she died. Genesis must be going there as well. The team looks for an entrance into what I like to call "the white realm" (inspired from field file names in the original game).

Entrance to the "White Realm" in the original game was this field: <http://i.imgur.com/blJFE.png>

But this entrance will be sealed off in FGC. Instead, they have to open up a gate to the white realm here: <http://i.imgur.com/ZwTNI.png>

Here are FMVs from the OG to remind you of the scrying pool and the music box: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GQyeCfWgLk>

There should be some challenge with activating the scrying pool and opening the gate to the white realm. Maybe the key to the music box is broken so Team Cloud has to play the right tune themselves. I am not sure.

Once they hit the right tones, they are able to open a gate into the white realm. They don't end up immediately at the altar, but instead have to solve puzzles on two (three at maximum) platforms before getting to the altar area. The puzzles should have the theme of sound, water and stones being arranged properly. Giant energy walls separate the platforms and these are disabled by solving the puzzles. On the final platform you enter another portal, which leads you to the altar area, where both Genesis and Weiss are.]

They'll confront Genesis and Weiss at the water altar. [The four Huge Materia, five summon materia and the White Materia are present.] This is when they will learn the full truth of the planet's animosity toward humanity: Genesis is the planet's avatar, and Holy was originally going to take care of humans after it was

done with Meteor. It was only because of Aerith's influence through the Lifestream that this was prevented and both Holy and Meteor stopped.

The spell has remained active all these years (thus, the green glow of the White Materia), but unable to carry out the planet's intent because when Aerith guided the Lifestream into the sky above Midgar, it carried with it her wish to protect everyone -- thus, altering the nature of the spell she cast and preventing it from ever targeting people.

Genesis figured out, however, that if she could alter the spell, then perhaps he could too.

Remembering Zirconiade, wherein the power of five materia went into one summon, he has assembled five summon materia corresponding to the unifying elements of fire (Phoenix), water (Leviathan), earth (Titan), air (Ramuh), and space/time (Bahamut ZERO). Together, they will receive the power of Holy and become new Weapons, the only beings Genesis recognizes as brethren. Weiss is also recognized as such due to his playing host to Omega.

Genesis also explains that the planet awoke him, its final Weapon, when Omega was destroyed. Not only had the planet's lifeboat to starting anew been wrecked, but the possibility of a new crisis emerged when Chaos returned to the planet and Sephiroth got hold of it.

Genesis's directive was to eliminate Jenova once and for all, as well as cleanse the planet of the human infection. It has taken him this long to act because the former objective had to be accomplished prior to the latter, for fear of Sephiroth coming out of hiding and infecting the Lifestream at its largest swell.

Sephiroth remained hidden in Lucrecia's cave, beyond the sight of the scrying pool in the ancient city, which has been the source of much of Genesis's knowledge.

As Sephiroth's remaining energy could not be located, Genesis set about eliminating all remaining traces of Jenova cells in order to prevent his resurrection in a new body.

[Again, Genesis circled the world in a mist which cleansed all Jenova cells in all possible corners. Weiss roamed the world and planted the Shadow Fiends, which laid dormant until the will of Genesis and Weiss awoke them.]

Genesis waited to act in the open until he knew he could accomplish all his goals in a matter of days, hoping to avoid his enemies until he could eliminate them all.

After determining that Lucrecia must have been unable to die and was, thus, hidden somewhere as the only remaining potential host for Sephiroth, he sought out Shelke, knowing -- thanks to Weiss -- that she has a connection to Lucrecia.

With all the pieces in place, he set out to quickly eliminate Sephiroth, gather the materia he needed, and accomplish his overall goal of planet restoration.

The plan explained (though certainly in a more compressed form than seen above), he begins the process of communing with the planet and transferring Holy's power to the summons. Weiss defends Genesis against Team Cloud during this time, and they are unable to prevent the transfer.

[Alongside Weiss will be a 'Judgment Shadow', with some angelic elements in its design for symbolic value. Or only the Judgment Shadow is fought, while Weiss and Genesis spend their energy performing the transfer.

Although Genesis already has tons of expository dialogue, I think it might be worth it to work in Sephiroth's unused text (from the OG) and give it to Genesis instead, in a form adapted for the game's context of course.

From Unused Text Part 8:

Sephiroth:

During the time when the Ancients prospered, there existed beings that were brought up bathed in the light of abundant Mako.

They were pure creatures of natural shape.

Several types remain even now.

Some of these beings sealed their life energy within materia, altering their lives forever.

Aerith:

The summon materia...

Sephiroth:

Correct. Such a clever girl. The creatures who protect this temple have lived long, relics from the age of the Ancients.

They belong to this planet even more than you do.

Heh heh heh... Keep that in mind.

"They belong to this planet even more than you do" would work well for Genesis, although possibly changed to have him say **"even more than *any of us*".]**

Before their horrified eyes, Bahamut ZERO becomes Shinryu, Ramuh becomes Raiden, Titan becomes Kronos, Leviathan becomes Ogopogo, and Phoenix becomes Giga Phoenix. All the Huge Materia are used up in the process of creating these Summon Weapons.

These new summons take flight and depart in a manner reminiscent of the Weapon awakening in the OG. Only Shinryu lingers and -- repeating the Bahamut Sin visual once again -- unleashes a blast that decimates the City of the Ancients, and which AVALANCHE just barely escapes.

[I feel icky about repeating the Bahamut Sin visual, as we already did that in Cosmo Canyon and the Nibel Reactor. Not sure what other scenario we should play out then to make the white realm permanently inaccessible. The spell casting will have exhausted Genesis to the point of, or close to, fainting. Weiss grabs Genesis and both escape.]

END OF CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 2

TEAM CLOUD SCENARIO PART 3

[Rather than immediately fighting the party who has escaped from the Forgotten City, Shinryu flies past them to Cid's airship, which the creature then blasts. With mostly the engine damaged, there is no way for it to lift from the ground. Cid has a plan however: They must go to the "Glacier Research Site".

I picture that before setting off on their journey, Vincent receives a call from Shelke. He is relieved to hear that she is alright and that she was saved by Team Denzel. The player should notice now that Vincent has been suffering more from Shelke's kidnapping than he has let on.

Cid: "FINALLY! Some good news."

There might also be a more detailed exchange between Team Cloud and Team Denzel, although most of it implied and not seen on screen.

YUFFIE SCENARIO PART 2

Yuffie, Dinne and the BC Turks defend Wutai against Ogopogo in a Grid Battle.】

Cissnei: "We all have your back. It's what we came for."

Yuffie: "I told you before. Wutai doesn't need your help."

Shotgun: "Well, that's just too damn bad."

Cissnei: "You're getting it anyway."

【When "defeated", Ogopogo departs into the ocean. It will return in the next chapter as an optional boss.】

Yuffie (to Cissnei): "Damn you."

Legend: "She's getting better at saying thanks."

Yuffie: "No. Damn you because ... you do handle that shuriken pretty well."

TEAM DENZEL SCENARIO PART 3

【Shelke reveals that she saw the new Summon Weapons emerge from the Forgotten City. She knows that Giga Phoenix is headed for Condor Village. They must go there immediately and protect the villagers. The player has a lot of room for exploration, but the scenario can end quickly by immediately going to Condor Village. When entering, the perspective shifts to Team Cloud.

TEAM CLOUD SCENARIO PART 4

After the events in the original game, the northern continent has begun warming up. For some unknown reason, the planet is no longer trying to heal its wound at the Northern Crater. The crater has not been this calm since before Jenova crashed here, 2000 years ago.

Planet healing often makes the surrounding area colder. With that process no longer active in the crater, snow is melting away and even the icicles in Icicle Inn are melting.

Holzoff, the wandering Glacier hermit, noticed strange shapes inside a melting glacier. Understanding this was not something made by nature, he contacted WRO scientists about the matter. The WRO now has a research base there, "The Glacier Research Site". By melting the ice they soon figured out that it was an ancient aircraft inside the glacier.

The exact location of the Glacier Site has not been decided, but the player won't control Team Cloud on their way there. The player ends up immediately at the Glacier Site.

Cid Highwind speaks about the ancient tech. Sometime after Meteorfall, he and Reeve found ruins filled with these ancient engines that draw their power from an unknown energy. This is how Cid was able to form his airship armada in Dirge of Cerberus so quickly.

Many ships and their engines were destroyed though. Without the knowledge to reproduce the engines, this meant an ever increasing difficulty with allowing fast travel. Oil findings have compensated a lot as far as fuel goes, but with mako no longer in use, it is rare to see airships flying around. The ancient engine blasted by Shinryu was the last of its kind. Their only hope now is that the aircraft inside the glacier still works.

At the Glacier Site, we see the researchers who have been struggling with finding a way inside the aircraft. They say that it is unlike anything they've seen before. It is way more advanced than any of the ancient aircraft they have found before.

Somehow, maybe Cid, is able to activate an opening into the ship. It registers him as a friend, which has been a common thing when he has encountered this ancient technology.

The person well-versed in FFVII canon already realizes that what we have here is a ship from the FFX world of Spira, as FFX takes place in the same universe as FFVII only a number of millennia earlier. Involving this part of canon in-game is very risqué though for the game's atmosphere, so the name "Spira" will not appear in FFVII: FGC.

The main characters will definitely discuss the fact that this does not look like Cetra-type technology. The idea that this is an alien spaceship will have to be brought up as well. Perhaps by activating old "sphere records" they will find that the "aliens" looked just like humans.

How far to go from here is uncertain too. One character might deduce that they are the descendants of these aliens, thus commenting "No wonder the planet hates us. We may not even be from around here." This type of theming is what the Glacier Site is intended for so it has to be included one way or the other.

Other ideas, like possibly hinting that Cid has strong Al Bhed blood, are still up for debate and consideration.

The ship continues to register Cid as a 'valid user'. Fully activated, the ice around the ancient aircraft (which so far does not have a name) melts and it triumphantly lifts off. Team Cloud must now fly to Condor Village, with haste.

TEAM DENZEL SCENARIO PART 4

In Condor Village, Team Denzel help defend the people against the Summon Weapon 'Giga Phoenix'. Possibly a Grid Battle takes place here, using the war veterans present at the old fort, against Giga Phoenix.

After this a normal battle happens where Denzel, Marlene, Shelke fight the giant fire bird. At first they appear to be winning, but then the Giga Phoenix retaliates and all hope looks lost.

But then luck strikes.

The condor, born here 10 years prior, returns and greatly harms the Giga Phoenix who has impeded on its home territory. Think LOTR – The Eagles Are Coming:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuPHF7_eWYk

The condor is knocked back, Team Denzel resumes battle against the Giga Phoenix and finally kills it. It drops a strong Fire-based materia.

Team Cloud now arrives outside of Condor Village on the 'new' ancient airship. With Team Cloud and Team Denzel united, the following scenario will be called 'Team Airship' even though free exploration of the world is not immediately given.】

TEAM AIRSHIP

[NOTES: This part of Chapter 2 is largely unwritten and many points remain uncertain. Will Rude leave Reno and go back to Shin-Ra or will he stay with Reno? How long will Yuffie and the BC Turks be kept in Wutai?

One of the primary concerns is that Rufus Shinra and Veld both become too invisible in this section. The hope is that segments where Rufus Shinra organizes efforts against the Summon Weapons can be added. It is possible that the helicopters are repaired just after the defeat of Giga Phoenix, so that may be relevant to such scenarios.

We do not have any ideas for Veld until the very end of this chapter. Because of how many holes there are in this chapter, we also leave open other possibilities such as an extra appearance by Genesis and maybe even a battle with him. Alright, enough with the development notes here.

Vincent and Shelke reunite through a long and silent embrace. No words are needed. The reunion between Denzel, Cloud and Tifa is not so heartfelt.】

Denzel: "Why didn't you guys ever tell me the truth about Reno and Sector 7?"

Cloud and Tifa look at each other. They're both quiet for a moment.

Tifa: "I'm sorry we kept it from you. We just thought it would be best for you not to know. Best for you that you not have to worry about it."

Denzel: "Because you thought it wasn't my place to worry about it."

Cloud: "And it still isn't."

Denzel: "Barret and the Turks said your reason was something like that, but I had to hear it from you guys. I can't believe this! You had no right to decide for me. How would it not be my place to know who killed my parents?! You had no right at all!"

[Denzel will not be able to equip Cloud or Tifa as Champions at this point in the game, due to this quarrel.

The full party is now this:

New Fighters -> Denzel, Marlene, Shelke, Elfe.

Champions -> Cloud, Tifa, Barret, Nanaki, Vincent, Reno (and Cid?).

A huge expansion in other words, and so limitations will have to be decided on which Champions each New Fighter can equip.

The hope here is to open up the world for free exploration by the player. The decision to do this depends on whether the game mechanics can reasonably allow it. Depends on how random encounters work on the overworld, the risk of having too many sidequests and towns available etc.

One example of a sidequest when at least the Glacier Research Site has become available again:

The Cosmo Canyon elder and his granddaughter, familiar from before, will now be at the site. A romance will blossom between the girl and one of the scientists there. Giving the scientist the courage to confess his feelings to the girl will increase the percentage count in the Lifestream Alignment bar, as this represents a growing peaceful unity between nature and science.

Word comes to Cid about an attack on Rocket Town. Maybe **Raiden** or **Shinryu** launched the attack. In Rocket Town the player learns that Shera has been suffering the last few years as an effect from the Geostigma. Although she was cured from the sickness, it had already damaged her internal organs. Much like Shalua (Shelke's sister), some of Shelke's internal organs have been replaced by machinery.

Returning to the topic of free exploration, the current purpose in the story is to fly around and defend the world from the Summon Weapons. Not impossible that tasks to fend off Shadow Fiends and Shadow mini-bosses around the world will be important.

It is planned to fight Shinryu, probably above Gongaga, to temporarily ward it off. The ancient airship actually comes equipped with laser cannons, which will become part of a minigame where Shinryu's armor is blasted off.

After Shinryu has been warded off, a scene should happen between Denzel and Tifa.

Denzel will be sitting on a bench. Maybe in the airship, maybe somewhere else. Tifa walks up from behind and sits next to Denzel. Had it been Cloud, Denzel would have just walked away. But he feels slightly less anger with Tifa so he doesn't leave.

Uncomfortable silence.

Tifa and Denzel start talking. Here is what I've imagined thus far for the scene.

Denzel: "Did Cloud send you?"

Tifa: "No. But if he was better with words, he probably would have."

Denzel: "..."

Tifa: "We're both proud of you, you know. I can hardly believe that the little boy has grown into such a strong young man."

A pause.

Tifa: "In a way I would have liked it if you didn't grow up so fast. You wouldn't have to be fighting so hard, like you're doing now. You could be safe back in Edge, while we grownups deal with these disasters."

Denzel: "You just want to protect me, right?"

Tifa: "Is that so odd?"

Denzel: "I just don't like it when I'm treated like some kid. I thought you had more respect for me than that."

More (undecided) dialogue here, probably about "parents/adults" having feelings too, which transitions to the final segment below.

Denzel: "I just...need a little more time."

Tifa: "Is it ok if I tell Cloud that?"

Denzel: "...Sure."

Tifa gets up and starts walking away.

Denzel: "Tifa."

Tifa stops.

Denzel: "...Thank you."

Tifa walks away.

Tifa possibly becomes an equippable Champion for Denzel after this point.

The perspective finally returns to Veld in the undisclosed location. He has been keeping Reeve safe, but now finds Reeve missing. He realizes that his people betrayed him and have now taken Reeve to Rufus.

After Shinryu and possibly Raiden have been temporarily defeated, next in line will be **Kronos** in the Corel Desert, where the ruins of the Gold Saucer lie.】

When the team initially arrives, there should be some commentary like this --

Elfe: "Corel Prison ... In days gone by, nowhere but Shin-Ra could you have found a more wretched hive of scum and villainy."

Tifa: "You never visited Wall Market, did you?"

This will set up an ironic contrast, as well as foreshadow the comedic relief to follow (players of the OG will remember the famous Wall Market segment as one of the game's more lighthearted areas despite its depravity in the game world).

【When the Lifestream erupted ten years prior, the lower levels of Gold Saucer and much of Corel Prison sank into a sinkhole. This will not sound farfetched when you remember that episode 21 of Before Crisis shows us caverns beneath the Corel Desert. To the surprise of the prisoners, Dio and Joe rescued the criminals who almost died when buried alive. After this, the criminals turned good and helpful to Dio. The Gold Saucer continued to run (the parts that were not beneath sand) for a few more years, but eventually toppled over which caused the monsters of the Battle Square to be released into the desert. For the moment these monsters are feasting on the Land Worms both on and beneath the desert sands, but Dio

knows that if he doesn't eradicate these unnaturally strong monsters soon they will spread throughout the world and cause harm. Thusly Dio takes it as his responsibility to eliminate the monsters.】

In this task they would make use of surviving chocobos from the Chocobo Square, headed up by Teioh's rider, Chocobo Joe.

Chocobo Joe is a Zorro-type character. For cheesy comedic effect, Joe finds himself enamored of Elfe. He finds a Desert Rose; one that you win in the original game by defeating Ruby Weapon.

Picture him walking up to Elfe (maybe while still on his Chocobo). Sniffing the rose, he says "This Desert Rose blooms only once every 1000 years." He turns to the lady and hands the rose to her.

"The rarest of roses, for the rarest of beauties." Cue something like [Zorro's theme](#).

You might also imagine such Flamenco tunes as [this](#) or [this](#).

Elfe is simultaneously confused and embarrassed. These are the kind of elements to expect of the generally lighthearted and comedic area that is the GOLDEN Desert (emphasis Dio's).

【Another character present here will be the fan-favorite Mukki, as for this title we make it so he and Dio are best buddies. Despite both being old, especially Mukki, they fight with high spirits and happy hearts. Their relationship is inspired from the two muscled men in Full Metal Alchemist.

<http://i.imgur.com/kV8ncbZ.png>

Their introductory scene may even have the player seeing Mukki and Dio comedically take down a Behemoth together. Imagine something like this: When getting close to the heart of the desert, the giant horned monster emerges from the sand! Battle ensues.

After the gameplay battle, the party gets knocked off balance. The situation looks dire. Then, almost as if out of nowhere, Dio comes to the rescue! He wrestles and holds back the monster, holding onto its horns. For a moment he has the upper hand, but the monster quickly starts pushing him down.

Dio then screams "MUKKI!!!!". In a pompous fashion (ideally enhanced by epic camera angles), Mukki appears. Our old friend has a few grey hairs but he is even bulkier than last we saw him.

Together they manage to lift the monster by its very horns and smash it into the ground, defeating it.

Indeed, this is where the Full Metal Alchemist inspired stuff comes into play. After this finishing move, the two celebrate and do some victory poses.

They both recognize Cloud and start exuberantly hugging him, much to Denzel's surprise and Cloud's discomfort.

Denzel: "You really didn't tell me everything, did you?"

Corel Desert is essentially the wacky, happy place to balance out the despair that is omnipresent both before and after this point. The juxtaposition in atmosphere between the Corel Desert now and the despairing atmosphere it had in the OG is also meant to be refreshing.

Dio is a ridiculously optimistic, motivated guy. He speaks of the Corel Desert as the "Golden Desert", where the dreams of the Gold Saucer still live on.

Kronos rips open the desert as he/it surfaces, making many monsters rise from the underground tunnels/caves. The party fends off the monsters. A grid battle takes place against Kronos, where the pieces are Dio, Mukki, Chocobo Joe and one or more chocobos.

After this, Cloud/Denzel and the rest take down Kronos, and defeat it permanently.

The Corel Desert (or the "Golden Desert") is now the place where you can always return for more Grid Battles. The toughest Grid Battles are here, with great rewards from clearing them all.

Think of something somewhat like FFX's Monster Arena for this area, only with Grid Battles.

After Kronos has been defeated, the conflict between Cloud and Denzel finds its resolution. Denzel accepts Cloud's past and understands that what matters is trying your best to help the world and those around you. Not much else can be done. (It is possible that this resolution may be moved a little further back, perhaps even placed in Gongaga.)

Denzel also decides now to let Reno off the hook. Reno no longer has to protect Denzel's family. He is free to return to Shin-Ra if he wishes. Denzel punctuates this by saying "It's my job to look out for my family."

After the battle, there should also be an exchange like this between Elfe and Marlene --

Marlene: "What's wrong?"

Elfe: "I am shamed."

Marlene: "What for?"

Elfe: "These criminals can claim more dignity than can I. More absolution from ... from their sins."

Marlene: "Elfe ..."

Elfe: "... Forgive me, Marlene. I do not mean to trouble you with my past."

Marlene suddenly notices Cloud, who had been standing nearby. He is looking at her pointedly. Noticing that something has Marlene's attention, Elfe looks at him now as well.

Marlene turns back to Elfe.

Marlene: "Have you tried?"

Elfe: "What?"

Marlene: "Your sins being forgiven ... Have you tried ... trying?"

Elfe: "... No. I suppose not."

Marlene: "I've heard it's a good place to start."

She looks back at Cloud and smiles. Cloud smiles, nods and walks off.

Elfe: "Thank you, Marlene. You've given me much to think about."

To finish the scene up with more of the lightheartedness we've come to expect from the area, from off the side of the screen Cloud left, we see a dialogue window pop up for Denzel.

Denzel: "Hey, Cloud. There's something I should probably mention."

On screen --

Marlene: "What are friends for? We get two shoulders so we have an extra one for somebody to cry on."

Elfe: "You are a good friend, Marlene."

Off screen --

Cloud: "Wait, you left my motorcycle parked WHERE?!"

[For a short segment, the player can roam the world freely (more or less), enjoying Denzel learning abilities from Cloud, etc. A trigger, still unknown, will make the story progress. The player will be made aware that they better save and be prepared before triggering the huge events to follow.

Elfe will be contacted by her father, Veld, who convinces her to go Junon and meet with him.]

THE GREAT JUNON BATTLE

In this draft it may seem there has not been a lot of attention on Genesis, and indeed he will not have shown up for a long time by now. It might be brought up that Rufus has WRO soldiers check out Banora to see if Genesis returns to this base, but they came up with nothing.

As for what's been going on with Genesis during this time, he's kind of snapped. He had expected the new Summon Weapons to lay waste to humanity. He never foresaw them being defended against this successfully.

Though only two (Giga Phoenix and Kronos) have actually died, all that have appeared publicly have met resistance they were unable to overcome at the time.

For Genesis's years of planning behind his crusade to be so unexpectedly thwarted is unthinkable. He will now resort to measures far more desperate than he would have ever considered before.

In this chapter's closing scenario, an unnatural thunderstorm will descend upon Junon followed by lightning striking buildings. The lightning strikes disable the defensive systems of the city. Monsters [and Shadow Fiends] will soon begin showing up, sending the populace into a panic.

As the media begins to cover the situation, Genesis will make his presence known and deliver a speech, Weiss at his side.

Genesis: "I address all my fellow inhabitants of the world. I am Genesis, and I speak on behalf of this very sick, suffering planet.

For 10 years, the human virus has called the day Meteor descended on Midgar the 'chosen day' without any understanding of what was truly decided.

What the planet chose for humanity was amercement. Expiation in blood. Propitiation by extermination. Through a whimsy of fate, this judgment was forestalled.

All the while, humanity's infection has grown, defying the planet's will and threatening that life which gave us life. Defiling in ever greater obscenity the gift it shared with our traitorous kind.

But no longer.

I have come to provide the panacea for this wailing world beneath our feet.

Today, the planet will be spared from its sickness. Healing will begin. We are as a cancerous tumor, and I come to you now as a scalpel in the hands of a merciful surgeon.

By the death of our species, the goddess shall once again prosper. Hold close those you cherish as you await your place in the reaping. The hour of redemption has fallen at last -- and I offer you this comfort: It shall be swift.

Rejoice, for the world is soon to be reborn."

[My own opinion is that "cancerous tumor" does not fit the FFVII presentation, as "cancer" has never been mentioned in the official FFVII manuscripts. Some of the difficult words should also be switched, but aside from this I have no major complaints.]

The WRO troops there will fight back, of course, but be in clear need of backup. Over in Edge, Reeve is watching TV from his hospital bed, where it's being reported that Rufus is organizing a counter assault and intends to lead it. As Reeve is watching, Rufus will enter his room. Reeve doesn't seem particularly caught off guard.

Rufus: "You aren't surprised to see me."

Reeve: "Well, arranging a military counter offensive does leave one plenty of time for paying hospital visits. Honestly, I was expecting either Tseng or yourself all afternoon."

Rufus: "Tseng has already left for Junon. He was supposed to come here, actually. I must confess that I have no idea what his intention is."

Reeve: "I must confess that I'm glad it was you who showed up."

They're both quiet for a moment.

Reeve: "How's the shoulder?"

Rufus: "Better than your chest, I expect."

Reeve: "Good enough to lead an army into battle?"

Rufus: "I guess we'll know pretty soon."

Reeve: "**sigh* I wish I could be there. It doesn't feel right to be laying here when we're once again in danger of losing the world we worked so hard to rebuild."

Rufus: "You don't need to worry about the world."

Reeve: "Oh, I know it's in good hands, actually."

Rufus: "Do you?"

Reeve: "I do."

They're quiet again.

Rufus: "Ever since Meteor, I have had two goals. One was the restoration of the world. The other was the resurrection of the company. Not with mako energy, of course. I would like to think we all learned our lesson about that, even if the planet doesn't think so. I genuinely felt regret over what my company did to the world, and I always intended to make amends. However, I can't deny that I always wanted to be someone important again. Every bit as much as I wanted to heal the world. Some days, maybe more."

Reeve: "I know you did. Funding the WRO in its early days is proof enough of both your intentions."

Rufus: "You knew?"

Reeve: "Oh, not from the start. But it didn't take long to figure out. There were maybe five people in the whole world who could have provided that kind of capital. To provide the additional money needed to get us back on our feet after Deepground, though? Maybe three. I knew for sure it was you, though, when you destroyed Nibelheim and confessed Shin-Ra's crimes."

Rufus: "A PR move, Reeve."

Reeve laughs.

Reeve: "I've been told it was that very thing often enough by Veld. He looks at you and sees your father."

Rufus: "You don't?"

Reeve: "'Keep on rockin' in Midgar.' 'May the nightmares of our fathers rest, the dreams of our children awake.' Wouldn't have gotten something like that out of him even in a PR move."

Rufus: "Maybe I'm just better at it. I've gone back and forth in my mind so much over the years. On more than one occasion, I thought about using the fact that I was funding your organization to seize control of it."

Reeve: "Yet you never did."

Rufus: "You were doing a good job. My purposes were served just fine by leaving it in your hands. I've merely done what I had to, as I always have, and took advantage of how gullible people are."

Reeve: "But there was one thing you did not expect. You may not want to admit it to yourself, but I started seeing it over the years more and more as you spoke to people."

Rufus: "....."

Reeve: "You were used to enjoying control via the method of fear. But you never expected to like it when you saw more and more eyes glisten with hope as your words reached them. You never anticipated to like it when the people actually started loving you."

Rufus: "This is too naive even for you."

Reeve: "Rufus, you're not as good a liar as you think. Maybe that's why you enjoyed the opportunity to finally be honest with the people. Regardless, you don't have time for this deflection. Let's be frank with one another: You aren't your father."

Rufus: "Reeve, Tseng was supposed to take advantage of the chaos of this moment and kill you. I'm here because he isn't."

Reeve: "And as I said before, I'm glad it was you who showed up."

Rufus: "So a different man whose life you saved can take yours?"

Reeve: "So I can see that I was right about who can bring the people of the planet together -- that I was right to believe in Rufus Shinra."

A small handgun slips down Rufus's sleeve to his hand. He raises it and just silently stares at Reeve.

We'll need to cut over to Cloud and co. making their way to the battlefield by airship. I don't really have much dialogue in mind for this, but it seems a necessary scene to include what with all the jumping around. I do think a comment or two might be in order to emphasize the gravity of the situation -- something like "Shin-Ra and the WRO's forces took a big enough hit during the attack on Edge. Even with Rufus bringing in backup, Junon will be lost. We have to hurry!"

Speaking of jumping around, we'll now need to jump over to Veld and Elfe in Junon.

Elfe is gearing up her sword and whatever other equipment she might have. Veld is preparing a sniper rifle. He and his daughter are having a conversation --

Elfe: "I still wish I could change your mind."

Veld: "Any chance I could change yours about going down there with that sword?"

Elfe: "Of course not."

Veld: "Then you should know my mind is made up. You must get that stubborn streak somewhere, after all."

Elfe: "I just want to know what the right decision is. What you're planning would change the world."

Veld: "Yes, but it will change it for the better. It has to be done."

Elfe: "I'm not so sure of that, father. Right now, the world needs someone to follow. Someone capable. There's a war going on out there. People are losing their lives. We need a leader."

Veld: "And there will be one. If it falls to you, the world will be in those capable hands. You've been a leader before."

Elfe: "I was a figurehead. A puppet! I wouldn't know how to lead a group of schoolchildren. Shears was our military leader in the field ..."

There's a pause between both.

Elfe: "I really wish he was here now."

Veld: "I'm sorry, Felicia. I know you miss him, but he gave his life to ensure that you could live yours. And I know he would be confident that you can do whatever is necessary now. He believed in you like I do."

Elfe: "I guess the question I don't have an answer for is what I believe in. I'll be the first to admit that I haven't always had the best judgment when it comes to picking a good leader to follow, but this just seems ..."

Veld: "Like what?"

Elfe: "Like something I would have done when I was 'leading' AVALANCHE. And that really didn't end too well."

Veld will set his rifle down and place his hands on her shoulders.

Veld: "Felicia, you've never made a mistake that you were entirely guilty of. The blame has always been on myself for failing you or on that madman Fuhito for manipulating you. Or President Shinra for creating a world in which such atrocities were as common as chocobos."

Elfe: "It always comes back to him, doesn't it?"

Veld: "That's what I mean to prevent."

Elfe: "You know that Reeve believes in him."

Veld: "Reeve is a fool with a good heart. Determined to see the good in everyone. He would give Sephiroth himself a second chance. He's not the best judge of character; just look at who he used to work for."

Elfe: "Apparently he was right about those terrorists who took up AVALANCHE's name. And more importantly, he was right about Shelke."

Veld: "Why is that important?"

Elfe: "Shelke was raised to be a weapon. A tool in the hands of others, serving the purposes of others and fulfilling their ambitions. She didn't get to be a child. When Reeve met her, she had more in common with those monsters down there than a normal person. Just like me."

Veld: "Don't be ridiculous!"

Elfe: "I need to be able to believe in someone like that. She came out of Shin-Ra's deepest, darkest hell with her soul intact. And if she can do that, why can't any child of Shin-Ra?"

Veld has no answer.

Elfe: "Just promise me one thing."

Veld: "Name it."

Elfe: "That regardless of what any of us are about to do, you believe there will be more hope for the world after today ... more hope for all of us ... than there is right now."

Veld: "That hope and you are all that have kept me going these past ten years."

He kisses her forehead. She smiles.

Elfe: "I think I know what I believe now."

Veld: "What's that?"

Elfe: "That the only side worth picking is that of people who need someone to protect them. That's all I really care about."

Veld smiles.

Veld: "Didn't I tell you there was a good leader in you?"

She hugs him.

Elfe: "Goodbye, father."

Veld: "Good journey, Felicia. A brighter tomorrow is waiting for you."

Elfe leaves. Veld readies his gun.

We cut away now to Genesis and Weiss standing on a rooftop. Their eyes turn toward a fleet of incoming helicopters. Genesis grins.

Genesis: "The son of the serpent comes bearing his fangs at last."

From the air, the choppers begin providing air support to the ground troops. After a few moments of this, Genesis will speak up again.

Genesis: "You think to bring deliverance from on high, serpent son? Today, the hell you've always glided above opens its maw to welcome you."

Lightning begins striking the area rapidly, sending the choppers into tailspins. Some are damaged, some simply suffer system failures. In any case, all go down, including Rufus's chopper.

As he, Elena and their surviving escort crawl from the wreckage of their chopper, monsters begin moving in.

Genesis (still observing): "Today, you are just another soldier on the field."

Rufus has his shotgun and a sword he lifted from one of the dead troops. Elena has two pistols. They're a little banged up, but Rufus is still calm. The monsters lunge for them.

Rufus: "Elena, you know what to do."

As Rufus, Elena and their few companions begin fighting their way through the monsters, Rufus comes into view through a sniper scope. It's Veld.

Before he can take the shot, a voice cuts in from behind him. "Stop." Veld turns. Tseng is pointing a gun at his old mentor.

Veld: "Well, well. I shouldn't be surprised. After all, I taught you everything I know."

Tseng doesn't say anything.

Veld: "I'm guessing Reeve is dead by now."

Tseng: "That was the plan."

Veld: "So where does that leave us?"

Tseng: "Just tell me one thing."

Veld chuckles.

Veld: "It looks like you didn't learn everything I taught you after all -- never make conversation with your target when you've got the drop on them."

Veld turns, takes aim at Rufus again, and fires. The bullet streaks toward Rufus. So caught up in battle is he that he never knew it was coming.

Tseng fires twice at the former Turks director, trying to prevent the shot. His bullets bounce off a Shield materia protecting Veld.

Just as the bullet Veld fired at Rufus would have connected, a sword blade deflects it. Veld's daughter saved him. Without slowing down, Elfe launches herself at a large beast (perhaps a Behemoth or Vlakorados) and takes it down.

Elfe: "Looked like you could use a hand."

Rufus: "Not going to turn it down."

[Elfe: "You sure can handle that sword well, though."

Rufus: "You tend to learn fencing when you're born into high society."

They resume the battle.]

Back with Tseng and Veld, the older man is exasperated.

Veld: "Felicia, why did you do that? I may not get another chance."

[Intermediate line by Tseng has been cut.]

Veld: "Do whatever is necessary to get the job done. That's the way of the Turks, isn't it?"

Tseng: "But is the job necessary? Felicia doesn't seem convinced."

Veld: "She's chosen the path of protecting everyone. Even if exceptions need to be made. Just like Reeve. There always should be a leader like that ... but that also requires people like us to do those dirty, necessary jobs good leaders can't bring themselves to do. Regrettable jobs that will always haunt us -- like the one I must do now."

Veld turns quickly and fires with a pistol he'd been concealing. Tseng evades and returns fire.

What follows is a battle where the player must control Tseng as he tries to defeat his old teacher.

[I am skeptical about this segment, as Tseng is not a playable character and this is not fitting for a Grid Battle. If it is to be a minigame, it needs to be quick and easy to understand.]

Tseng's bullets fail to bring down Veld's Shield, but after surviving for a while, the battle is interrupted by a voice being broadcast all over Junon via the city's emergency broadcast system. It's Reeve.

Reeve: "Stop! Everyone, stop now!"

Veld: "Reeve?"

Reeve: "There is something that needs to be said before this goes any further!"

Out on the rooftops, Genesis raises his hand and the monster army calms. On a rooftop across from him, [our New Fighters and Champions have] arrived. [Cloud, Tifa, Denzel, Marlene, Barret, Nanaki, Yuffie, Shelke, Vincent, Reno and Rude.] Dinne is also with them now -- as well as a Cait Sith (complete with giant moogles) that Reeve is controlling.

Down in the streets, the BC Turks have assembled within sight of Rufus, Elena and Elfe's position. A swarm of monsters lay between them.

WRO troops all stand at attention. They are clearly outnumbered and afraid.

Cait Sith holds a megaphone through which he seems to be speaking, with Reeve's voice projecting throughout the city as he does so.

Reeve: "My name is Reeve Tuesti. For the past decade, I have led an effort to revitalize the planet to its state from before the days of mako energy, and to establish lasting peace between men, between nations, and between our world and those who live upon it. That effort was known as the World Regeneration Organization. It has not been an effort wasted. In those ten years, lives have been protected. Homes built and defended. And true character revealed."

Cait Sith looks at Rufus as he says that last part.

Reeve: "Mankind's newest adversary has said that this is a day to rejoice. And he is correct. He has said that this a day for new hope. This is also correct. And he has said that this is a day of renewal. That is also true.

But what awaits is a different beginning than he expects. Allow me now the honor of introducing you to the leader of that fresh start. Mankind's rebirth begins with Rufus Shinra."

Cait Sith tosses his megaphone down to Rufus. He catches it.

Rufus: "What am I supposed to do with this?"

Reeve: "Speak to your people. Today you become someone important again."

Rufus looks around, seeing all eyes upon him for the first time in a long time. The words come to him in pauses.

Rufus: "People of the planet ... I am Rufus Shinra. I was once your president and I guided us all to ruin. I am sorry."

He pauses again, but finds himself. The words come to him now without effort and flow as water.

Rufus: "We yet again face attack from one of the Shin-Ra Company's mistakes. Except this time I'm by your side and will bleed beside you. If you will have me again, I will lead from among you, not rule from above you. And I will stand beside you on this or any other battlefield. For too long, your destinies have been decided by others. You've been left watching the sky for the answer to your fate or awaiting word on your television screen. I say no more.

Open your doors. Stand with me. Let me stand with you. Let us shout with one voice. Together we can throw off the shackles of the past and live as a new people. We will show this planet we are worthy of it -- that we are worthy to be here. Let's make this planet hear us."

Rufus lowers the megaphone. There is silence. Across Junon, doors suddenly begin opening. Citizens come out armed with whatever they have at hand -- guns, knives, frying pans. They stand in the streets waiting for a word.

Rufus whispers "Thank you."

Reno shouts "To the president!" and hell is unleashed.

Before he is set upon, Genesis says "Raiden, strike." A lightning bolt crashes into the street halfway between Rufus and the BC Turks. Raiden is now there. He begins unleashing lightning bolts through the streets.

Most of [the playable characters and Champions] ends up dispersed into the streets to face monsters (Cait Sith should probably get destroyed by Genesis fairly early into the battle), but Cloud stays on Genesis while Vincent and Shelke stay on Weiss.

Tseng looks at Veld.

Tseng: "Rufus let Reeve live. I knew he would do it."

Veld: "Before you ask, all that's changed is that I need to act faster. The need for action is greater. Circumstance is all that has changed. Not what I believe."

Tseng: "So be it. I believe in Rufus Shinra."

Their fight resumes. The player must now defeat Veld, first by bringing down his Shield and then by depleting his HP. Perhaps the Shield spell goes up and down throughout the battle. [Again, this all depends on if a decent minigame can be invented.]

Afterward, Veld sits against a wall, bleeding. Dying. Tseng approaches, dropping his gun to the floor, the will for fighting taken out of him as well. He crouches down by Veld's side.

Veld: "Tse ... Tseng. Felicia ..."

Tseng: "Don't worry. No matter who takes the world stage, and no matter what tomorrow looks like, I will see to her safety."

Veld: "Thank you."

Tseng hesitates for a moment, then reaches down and grips Veld's hand. The two sit in silence for a moment.

Veld: "There was something you wanted to ask me before. What was it?"

Tseng: "It doesn't matter."

Veld: "Ask it. You won't get another chance."

Tseng: "... Do you distrust Rufus on his own merits or because he reminds you too easily of the things you did for his father?"

Veld chuckles.

Veld: "Hard to answer that question. It's hard enough to live with the knowledge of the atrocities I committed. And unbearable to remember that I gave an order I believed had killed my own wife and daughter." [This reference to the Kalm incident shown in Before Crisis will have been referenced earlier in the obligatory script, so to not confuse those unfamiliar with Before Crisis.]

Tseng nods.

Veld: "But you know what the ultimate shame in the matter really is? All of the terrible things I did for Rufus's father, all the orders I gave that ended the life of someone's child -- none of those mattered to me

until I thought Felicia was one of my victims. Until that moment, I couldn't see how wrong I'd been. I kept right on working for him anyway. Once it mattered how I chose to live, the reason it mattered was gone."

Tseng: "What about now?"

Veld: "Now, you must pick up where I left off. Complete the mission I couldn't. Safeguard the future in whatever way seems appropriate to you. Create a safe place for the people you care about."

Tseng: "I will. And Rufus will. I wish you could have seen it sooner. I wish you could have been convinced. You and the planet both. People can learn from the mistakes of the past, director. Not every man becomes his father. Only some of us do that."

Tseng grips Veld's hand with both of his own now.

Veld: "Look after your sister ..."

With that, Veld's eyes close, his head tilts down, and he speaks no more.

Tseng kneels by him quietly and hangs his head.

Meanwhile, Genesis and Cloud battle. They will have some conversation relating to Genesis's past with Zack, as Cloud has been experiencing Zack's memories of him. For the time being, Cloud hopes to save Genesis as Zack tried to do. When he tells Genesis this, the former 1st Class replies, "I WAS saved."

Weiss taunts Shelke that she would have never been a Tsviet if not for her SND ability -- and even then, she was redundant because Weiss possessed the same ability. She was useful only because Weiss had to deal with President Shinra's virus failsafe that would kill him if he revolted.

He also remarks that Vincent is much slower than before. "No Chaos to save you this time."

Vincent responds, "You were more intimidating with Hojo's voice."

Rufus, Elfe, Elena and the BC Turks take on Raiden.

[Grid Battle: Turks, Elfe and Rufus versus Raiden.]

Despite a vicious, grueling battle -- they actually end up overcoming him through teamwork, as with Zirconiade ten years before. I like to picture Rufus standing on top of him and finishing him off with a shotgun blast through a large missing chunk of armor (maybe a bomb from the Legendary Turk blew it open).

Genesis sees Raiden fall and realizes that the monster army is being overcome as well. He did not anticipate the citizenry standing together like this and tells Weiss that they must proceed with "the final solution." He then adds, "Ah, and make sure Shinra dies."

[For a later part we need Weiss to be severely injured. One idea I had was for Shelke to infect Weiss with a virus that halts his healing, but this might be too convoluted to execute.]

Weiss injures Vincent and dangles him from the edge of a building, unconscious. He tells Shelke to come after him if she wants, or to save her husband. He then hurls Vincent toward the sea. Shelke goes after Vincent.

There is briefly cheering all around with the Turks, as they celebrate their victory over Raiden.

[Enter cutscene mode. Many cutscene cards will flash by in the following segment.]

The Legendary Turk smirks, holds up one of his bombs and gloats: "Now let's find those punks Genesis and Weiss ... and put some of these right up their asses!"

No sooner than the words have fallen from his lips than one of Weiss's swords slides out of the Turk's chest. He is quickly lifted over Weiss's head and flung away, all in one motion. Weiss laughs.

Before anyone can even react to what has just happened, the bomb the Legendary Turk was holding has fallen from the hand of his cast away body and into the waiting hand of Weiss.

Weiss throws the bomb in the direction of Two Guns (Male) and Knife (Female). He then shoots it right as it reaches Two Guns (Male), detonating it and launching the Turk through the air. His body crashes through the window of a parked car, his clothes still smoldering.

Knife (Female) had leaped away from the explosion just as the bomb detonated, but was still caught in its shockwave -- which lands her right on Weiss's waiting, outstretched sword. He then spins around to face the other Turks, flinging her body off the blade as he does so.

Shotgun takes several blasts at him as he approaches, but he effortlessly dodges them before slicing her weapon in half, causing it to explode in her hands.

Next, Weiss leaps around behind Nunchaku (Male), seizes the Turk's weapon, wraps it around his neck, and breaks it in one swift jerking motion.

Elfe and Katana (Male) both leap into the fray, attacking Weiss sword to sword. Within seconds, Weiss has defeated both, knocking Elfe to the ground, slicing Katana (Male)'s sword in half, and then cutting him open with an x-slash of both swords across his torso. Katana (Male) falls to the ground.

Noticing a cut on his arm, Weiss laughs. Elfe is getting back up, a trickle of blood on her sword. Weiss kicks her through a car.

Martial Arts (Male) rushes Weiss, but simply ends up skewered and hanging in the air as Weiss fires the rifle mechanism on his sword through the dying Turk twice.

Weiss then turns and fires rapidly with both rifles at Martial Arts (Female), who goes down without a fight.

Cissnei yells out as she leaps in for the kill, her anger and disbelief apparent. Weiss easily blocks her attacks before putting her on the ground. He moves in to finish her off. Rod (Male) runs in to attack but is stopped by a simple backhand that knocks him out.

Weiss gloats above Cissnei as he brings his sword down to kill her. Just as she turns her head, there is a clang. **[One of Weiss's swords flies away from his hand. He now only has one sword left.]**

Cissnei (seeing the blade of the Scavenger Edge in front of her): "Zack?"

Denzel: "That's enough."

Weiss: "Don't get in over your head, boy. A host of the world's best-trained killers lay bloodied and broken at my feet. What have you got?"

Denzel: "Being really pissed off."

A battle between Denzel and Weiss follows -- and Denzel actually holds his own. Witnessing horror like the fall of Sector 7 all over again has brought out his spirit energy, as happened with Cloud 15 years earlier in the Mt. Nibel mako reactor when he beat Sephiroth. The kid is operating on a sustained Limit Break.

[The battle here involves making sure that you execute Denzel's techniques to perfection. Story-wise, he is only able to hold his own due to Weiss previously being injured and now having only one sword.]

Weiss finds himself on the ground and Denzel standing over him. He decides to resort to fighting dirty. He raises his sword, points at Marlene, and pulls the trigger. She falls to the ground, clutching her shoulder. He then slashes his sword in her direction, emitting a blade of energy that cuts through a tall metal structure near her (I'm thinking either a tower for the power lines or a mechanism for lift cars between Junon's levels).

Denzel shouts Marlene's name and is left open to attack by Weiss, who swoops in behind him and shoves his remaining sword through Denzel's leg (or lower back?) before kicking him into the path of the same buckling tower that's now coming down on Marlene.

Seeing what's about to happen, Reno whispers "Not again." His spirit energy bursting into a Limit Break, he screams "Not this time!" and rushes toward Marlene, who is closest to the falling tower.

Reno tosses her out of the way and throws himself into the falling tower. His adrenaline and spirit energy allow him to miraculously slow it down.

Over his shoulder, Barret is checking on Marlene. Reno looks back at him and yells "Help me!" Barret doesn't hesitate and rushes to his side, throwing his back into the tower, trying to tilt it away from the direction that would let it crush them and Denzel. "Papa!" Marlene shouts.

Rude comes running to them, but Reno says, "Get the kid! Get the kid!" Rude begins to protest and Reno interrupts him. "Just get the kid, dammit!"

Rude does as asked and makes a run for Denzel.

Noticing their predicament, Cloud knocks Genesis away from him and dashes toward Barret and Reno. Genesis recovers quickly and blindsides him with a blast of magic. Before Cloud can get up, Genesis walks up beside him, lifts a machine gun from a dead soldier, and raises it.

Genesis: "Elegant as magic is, sometimes the most simple ways are the most effective."

Cloud: "Genesis, no!"

Genesis fires the gun into both Barret and Reno. A choked gasp momentarily comes over everyone in the area. There's a moment where time seems to stop and the air hangs still. Then, entropy takes over.

Barret takes the worst of the gunfire, but the strength in both men instantly wanes. Rude has just gotten Denzel out of the path of danger when the tower begins coming down without any force of resistance to slow it. [With a low voice Barret utters Marlene's name one last time.

"Marlene ..."]

The tower crashes to the ground on top of Barret and Reno. They're lost from sight.

Cloud is in shock. He simply lays motionless, staring at the pile of rubble.

Genesis throws the gun on the ground.

Genesis: "Don't blame yourself for this one. It is simply the planet's judgment And it is coming to all of --"

Genesis catches sight of Cloud's eyes now, which are burning a bright green, his teeth grit with vice-like ferocity. Cloud screams as he rises to his feet and swings his sword, spirit energy pooling off of it and washing over Genesis.

The red-clad man screams in agony as his wing burns down to a stump and sections of his body are charred. Genesis is flung far away by the force of the blast, but Cloud is right there on top of him.

Genesis is panicked now and barely dodges Cloud's next attack, which is meant to bisect him.

Cloud stays on him, intent to kill him. Genesis manages to stay less than a second ahead of each attack, finally landing a counterattack that slows Cloud just long enough for Genesis to reach an elevator shaft leading down to sea level. As he descends, Genesis fires up into the shaft, destroying the whole structure and preventing Cloud from following.

Looking up, Genesis sits on the floor of the descending platform, his body broken and his hopes to avoid taking final desperate measures shattered.

Genesis: "... Farewell, brother."

While all of this is happening, Weiss resumes his attack on the Turks, his focus back to getting to Rufus. Tseng has arrived. He stands beside Rufus and both take several shots at Weiss, but are knocked harshly to the ground by another energy slash that cuts into the street in front of them and blows a gas line.

Elena and her sister, Gun (Female), both unload their guns at Weiss. The first shot just manages to catch him across his cheek. The rest he dodges, then returns fire with both barrels. Both women fall with various wounds.

Weiss moves with such speed that he seems to have nearly teleported. He stands over Elena, laughs, and then brings his sword down in a swing meant for her. Her sister rolls over on top of her and takes the slash across her back.

Weiss moves away toward Rufus now.

As she dies, Gun (Female) tells Elena, "You're a better Turk than I ever was."

Rufus is crawling toward his shotgun. Tseng is still unconscious. Before Rufus can grab hold of his gun, Weiss's foot comes down on the barrel. Rufus looks up at him, bloodied but defiant.

Weiss kicks him, slamming him into a car. Rufus lays against it, groaning and coughing. He screams as a deafening snap is heard. Weiss stands over him again, his foot having splintered Rufus's right ankle.

Rufus produces his small handgun from earlier in the hospital room. Weiss laughs, pulls back his remaining sword, and shoves it through Rufus's right shoulder, causing him to drop the gun. He then lifts Rufus up on the blade and holds him at eye level.

Weiss: "Any final words from the devil's son?"

Rufus: "Yeah. Just these two: you lose."

Weiss suddenly becomes aware of someone behind him. He failed to notice before, but Shotgun survived her ordeal. With one arm mangled and the other working, she raises Rufus's shotgun, sticks the barrel in Weiss's mouth.

With a single shot, Weiss goes down, dropping Rufus as he falls. [Cuts scene card shows this happen in silhouette.]

There's a moment now where the Turks are simply trying to move. Tseng has awakened and is getting to his feet with Cissnei's assistance. Rod (Male) and Elfe are helping Elena limp over, a gun still in her hand. Shotgun is trying to help Rufus, who is half-crawling toward Weiss's face, from which there is a sickening gurgling sound.

Rufus places his gun against Weiss's head (unseen, outside the edge of the frame). Elena points hers at his head as well.

Rufus: "Elena, fire at will."

The player then hits a command key as many times as they want in a five second period, each hit firing a shot. The gurgling stops. Weiss is dead.

After a brief silence, Rufus says "Reno" and begins trying to get onto his feet and reach his old friend.

He stumbles on his broken ankle and groans in agony while Tseng and Cissnei try to steady him. Elena is moving a little better, but Rod (Male) and Elfe each keep an arm under her. Shotgun is fine other than her arm.

Rufus asks that Weiss's sword be pulled from his shoulder, which Tseng refuses.

Tseng: "You'll bleed to death, sir."

Rufus: "Just get me to Reno then."

Tseng: "You shouldn't try to move."

Rufus: "Tseng, get me to Reno!"

The group makes their way over, where Rude and the former AVALANCHE have already uncovered the fallen. Reno is still alive, but Barret is already gone.

Shelke is arriving with an injured Vincent, and Cloud returns. All are somber.

Marlene is kneeling by her father's body, holding his hand but her face rigid. Cloud and Tifa put their arms around her.

Rude was first to Reno, of course.

Rude: "Hang on, partner! Hang on! You're going to make it!"

Reno laughs weakly.

Reno: "No, partner. I'm not."

Rude takes off his sunglasses and looks intently at his friend.

Rude: "Reno, look at me. You're going to be fine. Just hang on!"

Rude turns and shouts for medics.

Reno: "Stop, Rude. Let them work on saving somebody who still needs saving."

Rude: "Reno ..."

Rude grips his hand.

Reno: "... You know, I should have died ten years ago. It's okay."

Rude: "Don't talk like that."

Reno: "Is the truth. Maybe while evacuating Midgar. Maybe half a dozen times since. This feels like a pretty good way to go, though. I'm alright with this."

Rude: "Please don't."

Reno: "Would you listen? It's alright. I want this. For the first time since Sector 7, I actually like myself. Be happy for me."

Rude's expression hardens. He swallows, grips Reno's hand tighter, and says, "Thank you for being my partner ... and my friend ... all these years."

Reno: "Back atcha."

Reno looks at Rufus.

Reno: "What's this? They used to say you don't bleed OR cry."

Rufus laughs.

Rufus: "Yeah, I have a reputation to live up to. Come on. Don't ruin it for me."

Reno: "Sorry, boss. Did what had to be done. And the Turks do whatever it takes, right?"

Reno looks at Tseng and gives him a smile and a thumb's up. Tseng returns both, the sadness clear on his face.

Rufus gets his composure and smiles.

Rufus: "Understood. Good work."

Reno looks at Elena now.

Reno: "Been a pleasure, rookie. You were a great Turk. Keep up the good work."

Racked with so many sorrows, all she can muster is, "Thanks."

Reno looks at Shotgun, Cissnei and Rod (Male).

Reno: "Same to you guys. Keep these amateurs in line."

Denzel walks into Reno's view now. They just look at each other for a moment.

[Reno: "Oh, I must have forgotten. I didn't have a promise left to keep, did I?"

Denzel smiles.]

Reno: "How'd I do, kid? Did I finally do good?"

Denzel sheds a tear.

Denzel: "Yeah. You were great."

Reno smiles and closes his eyes.

Reno: "Cool."

As Reno slips away, everyone can only look around them at the wrecked city.

[Reno's death scene has taken place in sprite graphics. The game camera moves over to where Marlene is kneeling beside her dead father, and during this motion the scene fades to black. The game enters cutscene mode and we see Marlene next to her father. One hand still holding her father's (robotic?) hand, she leans over him. Lifting his head up with her other hand, their foreheads touch. Close-up shot. The art is very silhouette-based at this point, with Marlene in particular being little more than a dark shape next to her dead father.

With this close-up, we then transition to a white space where we see young Marlene (OG or Advent Children) holding her father's hand while they walk off in the distance. No animation frames necessary; just have the image zoom off. Although the rest of the game won't have voice acting, a few notes of giggling laughter from younger Marlene can be heard here. This is by default dramatic not only from a cinematic point of view, but fans of symbolism might see the point here in that not only has Barret died, but Marlene's childhood has died with him.

The scene fades back to reality. Still in cutscene mode, a few frames has the perspective gradually move away and reveal the destruction and death around the characters.]
They've won, but it doesn't feel much like victory.

END OF CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 3

[Junon, days after the Great Battle. We continue from Denzel's POV.]

We settle in on a medical station in Junon. Denzel is helping out in whatever way he can.

He comes across a small boy sitting on a cot. The child is bandaged up pretty good. And also crying. Denzel gets down at eye level with him.

Denzel: "Hey there. I'm Denzel. What's your name?"

Child: "E-Ethan."

Denzel: "What's wrong, Ethan?"

Ethan: "I miss my mom and dad."

Denzel: "Where are they?"

Ethan: "Gone."

Denzel: "Gone where?"

Ethan: "I don't know. [The Promised Land,] I hope. A big, purple monster came into our house the other day. It knocked down the front of the house, and the wall fell on me. And then the monster tried to get me. I was so scared. Its teeth were so big and it looked so mean.

[What followed here in Squall_of_SeeD's draft was a very graphic description by the boy about how the monster partially devoured his father, crushed him and then impaled his mother, who still managed to stab the monster to death. I still hold that the way this was written does not fit the FFVII style of presenting

things, but some shock value should still be left in there to show just how much this boy has lived through.】

After it was over, my mother was looking at me too. She was smiling. I don't know why she was smiling. I wasn't. I was just really sad because I knew she was going to die too.

She held out her hand to me and I grabbed it. Then she said 'You're okay' and I felt her arm try to fall down. And she wasn't looking at me anymore. She was looking at the ground. Still pressed against the wall by that monster's horn."

Denzel doesn't know what to say. He just keeps a firm hold on the boy's shoulder.

Ethan: "I feel so stupid and useless."

That brings Denzel out of his silent state.

Denzel: "Why?"

Ethan: "I was too scared to do anything. Too scared to help mom and dad, and too scared to even go anywhere after mom died. I didn't know what to do. I just sat there holding her hand for a really long time until some grownups came and found us like that."

Denzel: "That doesn't make you stupid or useless, Ethan. I would have ... I did the same thing when my parents died."

Ethan: "But I didn't even help them! I didn't even find someone to help them. I was too scared to do anything. Mom and dad weren't even a little bit afraid of the monster. They didn't freeze up like I did."

Denzel: "I think they were actually very scared of the monster. Maybe even more afraid than you."

Ethan: "Then how did they do all that?"

【Denzel's thoughts are presented in a transparent dialogue box.

Denzel: "Cloud... Tifa..."

This lets us know that he is thinking about the brave things Cloud and Tifa have done, both now and in the past. Flashbacking to events like those that took place in ACC would be too specific. If we still decide to include such flashbacks, they should appear as very brief cutscene cards.】

Denzel: "Because they were scared it would get you. And that's what gave them the strength to fight it and win."

Denzel points at Ethan.

Denzel: "You did. You provided the power to beat that thing. You did that."

Ethan: "I don't understand. I didn't help them fight."

Denzel: "It wasn't your job to. There's something a friend of my dad once told me: 'The job of children is to bring out the strength in us adults.' I don't think I ever understood what he meant until now. Thank you, Ethan. Thank you. You're not useless at all. You've just taught me a lot."

From behind him, a voice addresses Denzel.

Cissnei: "Up for learning a little more?"

Denzel turns.

Denzel: "Who --? Oh, hey. I know you. You're that Turk."

Cissnei: "Yeah. That Turk who owes you a lot."

Denzel: "Cissnei, right? Were you looking for me?"

Cissnei: "Yes. Rufus and Reeve are holding a meeting. You're invited."

[The point here was then brought up by Cissnei that Marlene is missing. Denzel isn't too worried, which might make sense as he has a "brother's trust" and not the "parental worry" that Cloud and Tifa might have. In the original draft, Cloud and Tifa appeared late for the meeting, saying that they didn't find Marlene yet.

Drawing from personal experience (as a son, not as a parent, of course) with parents worrying and looking for their kids, I don't see Cloud and Tifa showing up at the meeting until they have found Marlene. Thoughts like "Has she been attacked/kidnapped" or "Has she taken her own life" will be constantly running through their heads. No matter how sane Marlene has proven to be in the past, they will worry that Barret's death will have made her snap.

The finding of Marlene was an event placed after the meeting, but I feel it would fit the pacing better if Marlene's plot was picked up very shortly after Chapter 3 begins. I suggest that there should in fact be a short point when you control Marlene, as she walks alone. After this, the meeting might take place, the way I see it at least.

The scene between Denzel and Cissnei is meant to continue, with them wandering the streets of Junon and talking about Cloud and Zack. This is important because a connection indeed has to be made between them. They will find common ground in both of them being orphans, like the boy Denzel just met.

Cissnei will reveal that before Zack died, she was about to reveal her "real" name to him. She never got that chance, and she now says that she might one day reveal it to Denzel instead.

Marlene's POV

You control Marlene in the lower Junon village, the centre of the town's fishing community. When you enter the menu, you can see that Marlene's MP stat is at zero. You are denied from using ethers to replenish her MP. This temporary mechanic reinforces her depression.

She reaches an area close to the shore and pulls out a piece of paper. From behind her, Elfe approaches. Marlene and Elfe had good chemistry during their trips around the world before the Great Junon Battle, so this interaction after the battle follows up on that. By the end, Elfe may be seen almost as an older sister by Marlene.]

Elfe: "Everybody is worried about you."

No reply from Marlene.

Elfe: "What's that you have there?"

Marlene: "It's a property deed. It was in his pocket when he died. For the past ten years, my dad hadn't been able to live with me for more than a few weeks at a time. He was off discovering oil fields and looking for ways to help us survive without relying on mako. Anyway, he had bought the place next door to where I live in Edge. He was finally going to stay. We were going to be a whole family again. He was planning to surprise me after all the fighting was over."

[The tragedy really sinks in here, as Marlene now knows what could have been. In S_o_S's original draft, Marlene and Elfe now discuss the matter of hatred. Marlene is angry with the unfairness of life and how the very planet itself seems to hate humanity.]

Marlene: "Are you angry too?"

Elfe: "About?"

Marlene: "Your father. Are you mad that he is dead? Are you mad at the person who killed him? That the planet wants to kill us and caused all this?"

Elfe: "I don't think I'm angry. I'm just so lost. It is hard for me to look at Tseng right now, knowing that he killed my father. But I can't hate him. I know why he did what he did. And I know it's hurting him just as much as it hurts me.

I still think I would want to be mad, though, if not for your brother."

Marlene: "Denzel? Why him?"

Elfe: "Well, because he had every right to hate Reno. Every right. There wasn't a single person who would have held it against him if he had killed Reno himself, but instead, Denzel felt sad for this man who had murdered his parents.

If he can do that, then I can get over myself too."

Marlene: "That only answers my question about Tseng. What about the planet?"

Elfe: "I should be angry with the planet, yes. But I'm not too surprised either. I think I always felt like it wanted us gone. I fought so hard against Shinra to help the planet once, but then an old colleague of mine betrayed me and tried using a summon whose only purpose was to kill everyone in the world. He and Genesis would have gotten along really well, I think.

Anyway, that man who betrayed me said he was acting on behalf of the planet, and I guess he was on to something after all. Why would there even be a summon like that if the planet was on our side?"

[Elfe mentions to Marlene how she has had many conversations with the elders about this matter of whether the planet hates humanity or not.

Elfe: "But at the same time, the dead of the people who once roamed the planet are part of the great Lifestream. Do they hate us as well? Even if the planet as a whole is angry at mankind, all the people who recently died certainly do not hate humanity. I suppose...we can hope that before all this is over, their voices and ours can be heard by the planet. I have spent much time listening to the cries of the planet, but I'm starting to think it is time that the planet listened to us in turn."

Marlene: "It's still unfair. We aren't Cetra. We can't speak to the planet. It shouldn't judge us like this."

Elfe: "Maybe we, or those who come after us, will find a way. Until then, I will not accept the burden being placed on humanity alone."

A silent moment.

Elfe: "In the same light, I advise you not to carry the burden of your father's death alone. I know what it is to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. ...I still do that sometimes. But thanks to Nanaki and his friends... and you... I've learned that I'm not alone."

Marlene: "...It's just that...I promised my dad I'd be strong. That I'd keep the family together. I'm afraid that the next time I face Cloud, Tifa and Denzel... I might start crying. If I can't hold back the tears...I will have failed my dad. I'm just so scared of that happening..."

Marlene hides her face.

Elfe: "You can cry next to me if you like. Don't worry. I won't tell anyone."

In sprite graphics we see Marlene embracing Elfe.

The Junon Meeting

The perspective now shifts elsewhere. Maybe to the meeting room. I am not sure what to do with the inevitable scene of Cloud and Tifa meeting up with Marlene and Elfe, or where Denzel and Cissnei meeting up with the rest fits into these scenarios.

For the moment, let us assume that the 7th Heaven family has been reunited and that they, along with Elfe and Cissnei, arrive simultaneously at the meeting.

Many people are present, even before the aforementioned individuals have arrived, and the player has to be given a chance to absorb who all is here.

The people already present:

- Reeve
- Rufus (in a wheelchair)
- The remaining Turks: Elena, Tseng, Rude, Rod and Shotgun. Shotgun has one arm in a sling. Cissnei has not arrived yet.
- Nanaki, Dinne, Yuffie, Vincent, Shelke and Cid.

There might be some interaction going on here, and inevitably somebody will wonder where the rest of the attendants are.】

Shelke: "They were looking for Marlene. I have spoken with them, however, and they should be arriving momentarily."

Reeve: "Excellent."

Cid: "With Cloud, you kinda have to tell yourself that late is better than never."

【Shortly after, Cloud, Tifa, Marlene, Denzel, Elfe and Cissnei arrive. Geez, how will all the sprite characters fit in one room?!】

Yuffie: "Well, look who's here."

Reeve: "Ah, Denzel! Welcome!"

Cid: "The bane of Weiss the Immaculate is here!"

Yuffie: "I kind of think shotgun shells are the biggest pain in his ass at this point. Or bullets. Or maybe just ammo in general."

Cid: "Either way, if we'd had a soldier like this with us about six years ago, he'd have been the scourge of Deepground."

Cid places a hand on Denzel's shoulder.

Cid: "Would have gotten things wrapped up in a jiffy. Probably could have just sent him in and sat back with some cold ones."

Vincent: "I suppose you would prefer I sit things out next time?"

Cid: "Not complaining about your performance, Vince. Just saying ... the kid's got a lotta heart."

Reeve: "Fortunately, that virtue permeates all in this room."

Reeve approaches Denzel and reaches out to shake his hand.

Reeve: "So good to see you again."

Denzel takes it and shakes with him.

Denzel: "Same to you, commissioner. I'm glad to see you well. Er, better than you were. You know what I mean."

Reeve chuckles.

Reeve: "Yes. Quite. I'm relieved myself. Though I must say that it shames me to see you taking to the battlefield to fix the mistakes of my generation."

Denzel: "You have no reason to be ashamed. I'm here because I choose to be. And few people have done as much to improve the world as you, sir. Our problems will get taken care of -- don't you worry."

Rufus: "Your confidence in our situation is refreshing. There is far too much doubting in this room."

Cid: "Our 'situation,' as you put it ... 'Mr. President' ... stinks to high heaven. In case you missed the details."

[After some shenanigans and fun character interaction, the serious part of the meeting/briefing begins.]

Yuffie: "So ... how about that stuff we were going to discuss?"

Reeve: "Right. Well, over the past two days, we've been running as much reconnaissance as possible on Genesis's activities in the underwater reactor.

It's been difficult being that we have no means to monitor the situation other than manned voyages into the sea, which Cid and Yuffie have been conducting in his submarine, while --"

Rufus: "I wish to note that it still says 'Shin-Ra' on the side of that sub. Captain Highwind, consider it a rental."

Cid: "I left the name because it makes me piss myself laughing every time I look at it. And I figure we're even after your old man took the Highwind and you came for the Bronco."

[The Underwater Reactor has been reactivated, no doubt by Genesis. In his desperation, Genesis aims to do a thing similar to what Sephiroth did: absorb the Lifestream and become an even stronger entity.]

Cloud: "But why would he do that?"

Denzel: "Yeah, I thought he hated everything from mako reactors to microwaves. Now he's doing the same thing he hates Shin-Ra for?"

Vincent: "He's desperate now. The Summon Weapons failed, despite his years of careful planning. His attempt to crush Shin-Ra and the WRO fell apart. His mission is all that matters, and he will justify to himself anything he has to in order to achieve that goal."

[In passing, Cid and Yuffie then mention something they saw a few days ago while cleaning up the death and destruction in the city. Cue flashback scene. At the location where Weiss's body is being taken, they suddenly hear Genesis's voice.]

Genesis: "Come, my brother. I will not allow you to rest so selfishly. Even in the absence of body, your soul may still exalt the goddess. Bear witness alongside me -- to the birth of a world without sin."

[They then saw Weiss's spirit form being dragged down into the ocean. End of flashback scene.]

The placement of this scene is a bit troublesome, but it needs to be mentioned somewhere.

Reeve then reveals that a mysterious energy is emanating from the reactor. It messes with any tech that comes near it, causing it to either malfunction or act unpredictably.

A few days ago, Reeve sent a Cait Sith down the ruined elevator shaft Genesis escaped through, but soon after lost all contact with it.

He then sent a small WRO reconnaissance team down, who were able to report that the glass tunnel that leads to the underwater reactor has been destroyed and flooded.

The last thing he heard from the reconnaissance team was that the security robots down there had also been reactivated and that they were acting extremely hostile. They even acted "life-like" it seemed. The WRO team got pinned down by the security robots and nothing has been heard from them since.

After looking through some of the old files from Shin-Ra HQ, the Turks found that this mysterious energy had been encountered before. Over 15 years ago, a subterranean system of tunnels near the Northern Crater was discovered. It was named the "Cave of Wonders," but there wasn't much wonder about it. Shin-Ra, Wutai and even Genesis sent their forces down there.

Machines began exhibiting biological behavior and dead soldiers were reanimated as powerful foes. Monsters were acting extremely ferocious and were much more powerful than normal. Only Zack made it all the way to the bottom of the tunnels and reached the source of the mysterious energy. The report ends there, though, and they've been unable to learn what Zack found down there.

[Note by S_o_S: We avoid stating outright that Zack battled Minerva and defeated her, as revealing this would diminish Minerva somewhat. We excuse this by saying that the mission reports are incomplete due to Meteorfall. Cloud has not absorbed these memories from Zack, as far as he knows.]

For those who don't remember, the "Cave of Wonders" and the above described events were a series of optional missions in Crisis Core.

See the Minerva battle here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pcWrt1bbg>]

What's worse is that this mysterious energy has also reanimated Sapphire Weapon, the powerful creature that attacked Junon ten years prior. It is not the same as before though.

Cables stretch from the reactor to Sapphire Weapon; it is held reanimated by spirit energy supported from the reactor. Decayed parts of its body have been replaced with machine parts, along with the addition of a robotic head that replaces the organic head that got blown off ten years ago.

Fortunately, this Mecha Sapphire can't move any further than the length of the cables it is connected to.

Reeve: "We can't approach with submarines at the risk of the subs malfunctioning on their way to the reactor. Even if we could, we would still have to eliminate the threat of 'Mecha Sapphire' in our way."

The party agrees that no matter what, they need to get to Genesis and stop him. The first step is to find a way to neutralize the effect of the unknown energy.

Squall_of_SeeD has written a way for this to happen, but at present we do not know *how* the party figures it out. The key to cancelling out the unknown energy is to counter it with "stagnant lifestream". They are able to create a shield of stagnant lifestream by using a "Stagnant Materia".

In the original draft, the party encountered Nero (another of the Tsviets from Deepground) by chance near Lucrecia's Cave. How they end up here in the present draft, I am not sure.

The cave had not completely crumbled back when Lucrecia/Sephiroth broke free, so there is still a cave to explore here. We could assume for the moment that they believe this "Stagnant Materia" can be found in that cave thanks to Vincent and/or Shelke's knowledge of and familiarity with Chaos and Lucrecia.

Rufus mentions that they are already preparing for a submarine mission. Accordingly, they have salvaged the red submarine that Cloud's team destroyed ten years earlier.

[Some of the lines below have been reworked from Squall_of_SeeD's original draft.]

Rufus: "It will take a couple of days to repair the submarine. With the world's best living engineer on our side, I am convinced it will run even better than before."

Cid: "I'd like to have a word with this 'best living engineer' of yours. I want to inspect the sub myself before anybody else boards that thing."

Rufus: "Feel free to talk to her about it. I'm sure your wife will be able to assure you of the vessel's safety."

Cid: "..... Wait. You got Shera in on this?!"

Rufus: "Of course. As I said, there is no engineer on the planet more qualified. Shin-Ra employed her for a reason when trying to achieve a space launch."

Cid: "You sonofabitch! Do you know how weak she's been since Geostigma?!"

Rufus: "She was under no obligation to take the job. But with her help, I am convinced we will have what it takes to destroy the giant monster that guards the reactor."

Reeve: "It's really the best option available to us, Cid."

Cloud: "You approve?"

Reeve: "I do."

[Rufus: "Shera is also set on improving the functionality and firepower of the submarine that Captain Highwind 'borrowed'."

Cid: "Hmph."

The "Airship Team" decides to leave for Lucrecia's Cave. Again, the plot will have to be reworked to make sense of this.

The plot will have also made it clear that Cissnei wants to take a break from being a Turk, so she decides to follow the Airship Team. She joins your party as a Lv50 playable "New Fighter". Cissnei acts surprised at Yuffie not objecting to the Turk tagging along.

The Airship Team thusly consists of --

New Fighters: Denzel, Marlene, Shelke, Elfe and Cissnei.

Champions: Cloud, Tifa, Nanaki, Yuffie, Vincent and Cid.

The remaining Turks stay behind in Junon to continue with the restoration of Junon and the protection of its people.

If not before, the player is now finally allowed to explore the world via Cid's airship with complete freedom. There are a number of optional events and battles to be included in this final chapter, but I am not sure how many should be available only after the Stagnant Materia has been acquired.

For now, I reserve the presentation of these alternate events for after acquiring this defense against the Unknown/Mysterious Energy.

At some point after the Airship Team enters Lucrecia's Cave --]

Shelke: "In all likelihood, this site was once sacred to the Cetra. Dr. Grimoire Valentine discovered the Protomateria and the tablet with their scripture related to Chaos here. He theorized that the planet had created the Protomateria to control Chaos and prevent it awakening Omega. Perhaps the Cetra also had a process to purify Lifestream that had stagnated, so as to prevent Chaos's birth as well."

Nanaki: "But after Jenova arrived ..."

Tifa: "They weren't around to take care of it."

Cissnei: "So, how will we collect this substance safely? It can be dangerous to humans, can it not?"

Vincent: "Yes, very. It killed my father. He became infected with it during his research. The conflict of the pure Lifestream and stagnant substance within his body caused it to rapidly deteriorate. Essentially, he suffered the fate that was awaiting Genesis before the goddess saved him."

Suddenly, Vincent grunts and drops to one knee. Shelke comes to him.

Shelke: "What's wrong?!"

Vincent: "There's someone ... here ..."

The stagnant spring begins bubbling violently.

Cloud: "Vincent! What's going on?!"

Something begins rising from the pool. Denzel readies his sword.

Denzel: "Cloud! We have a visitor."

The form of the arrival slowly becomes clearer as it walks toward them.

Yuffie: "It can't be ..."

Shelke: "... Nero."

Nero: "... Val ... en ... tine ... Vince ... ent ... Val ... en ... tine ..."

Cid: "You've gotta be kiddin' me."

Nero: "... soul wrought ... of terra corrupt ..."

Nero is only a few feet from Vincent now.

Vincent: "Nero! Stop!"

Nero halts. He looks like a wraith in agony, as when his spirit arose following Vincent's battle with Weiss in the No. 0 mako reactor. He sways side to side like a zombie as he stands still. Everyone is silent. Nero stands motionless for a long moment, with exception to his swaying.

Shelke: "Nero?"

Nero: "... Shelke ... why ... are you ... here ...?"

Vincent: "Nero, what's going on? Why are YOU here?"

Nero: "I ... I ... have always been here ... Ever since ... we died ... my brother and I ... My dear brother, Weiss ..."

Vincent: "For more than six years?"

Nero: "I ... cannot say ... how long it has been ... Time ... no longer ... makes sense ... to me ... Time ... and space ..."

Vincent: "Why, Nero? What's happened to you all this time? Why aren't you in the Lifestream?"

Nero: "The Life ... stream ... would not ... keep me ... I was shoved out ... The planet ... did not ... want me ... My brother ... I have not seen him ... in so long ... For an eternity ... I tried to move ... but couldn't ... A greater will ... than mine ... kept me ... paralyzed ... But recently ... I was able ... to walk again ... and I have searched ... constantly ... for my brother ... Whenever I wander ... far ... I get lost ... and ... forget ... where I go ... But I remember ... feeling afraid ... before ending up ... back here ..."

Vincent: "Nero, will you help us?"

Nero: "Help ... you ...?"

Vincent: "We need a materia created from stagnant Lifestream. We're going to use it to save humanity from extinction. We need your help, Nero."

Nero: "Why ... should I ...?"

Denzel: "Is saving the human race not enough of a reason?"

Nero: "I ... detest ... humanity ... The only ... person ... who ... was ever ... kind ... to me ... who ... ever ... told me ... I belonged ... who ... ever ... loved me ... was ... my brother ..."

Cid: "Then how about this? If you help us, you'll piss off the planet."

Nero: "Not ... good ... enough ..."

Tifa: "Maybe we should just go, Vincent. He's not going to help us."

Vincent: "Wait! Nero --"

Nero: "... I hate ... all ... humans ..."

Elfe: "He's going to attack!"

Nero: "... including ..."

Cloud: "Everyone, get close to Vincent!"

Nero: "... you...!"

Nero suddenly screams and engulfs the party in his darkness. Proximity to Vincent allows them some protection, and they fight Nero within his personal dimension -- though he hardly seems focused on actually fighting them. After the battle, they find themselves back at the stagnant pool.

Vincent: "Nero, listen to me. If you will help us now, and wait for my call within your private dimension, I will guide you to your brother. I know where he is. If you create the Stagnant Materia for us, we can take you to him."

[He knows that Weiss is with Genesis, due to the event Cid and Yuffie described where Weiss's spirit form was dragged down into the sea.]

Nero sways side to side in silence for a moment.

Nero: "... Can I ... trust you ...?"

Vincent: "What do you believe?"

Nero is quiet again and continues swaying.

At last --

Nero: "Very well ... What ... do you ... need ... this materia ... to do ...?"

Cloud whispers to Vincent.

Cloud: "Can WE trust HIM?"

Vincent: "When it comes to his brother, absolutely."

Vincent turns to Nero.

Vincent: "We need it to be able to create a shield of stagnant spirit energy large enough to enclose a military submarine."

Nero then begins channeling stagnant mako into his hands. After a long moment, he holds out his hand to Vincent, a dark-colored materia now resting there.

Nero: "... Here ..."

Vincent: "Thank you, Nero."

Nero: "Just ... be sure ... you call me ..."

Vincent: "You just be sure to listen."

Nero vanishes in a dark cloud.

[The Key Item "Stagnant Materia" is added to your inventory.]

Denzel: "Good job, Vince."

Vincent: "Let's hope it makes the difference."

Tifa: "I have a question, though. We're still going to need a power source for the materia since the planet won't be providing it, won't we?"

Yuffie: "Yeah, where are we going to get the energy to power it?"

Cloud: "One of us will do it -- just like Sephiroth did with Meteor."

Yuffie: "But who?"

Cloud: "Me."

Tifa: "What?"

Cloud: "I have enough spirit energy to spare flowing through my body. I should be able to do this. What do you think, Vincent?"

Vincent: "That was my thought as well."

Shelke: "Don't worry, Tifa. It may tire him, but he should be fine."

[Player resumes control and boards the airship.]

Optional Quests

Defeating Shinryu

This powerful Summon Weapon is still roaming the world. You can encounter it while flying on the overworld, presumably in the same manner as you fought Ultima Weapon in the original game.

When encountering it, you will first attack it in the minigame where you shoot Shinryu using the laser weapons from Cid's airship. When this part is completed, you can then decide to engage Shinryu in normal combat or let it fly away.

Performing well in the "Laser Minigame" earns you Shinryu Plates, so if you desire a large number of these, it is wise to decline normal battle and simply do the laser minigame over and over.

In normal combat, Shinryu is a very powerful enemy, using powerful blasts coupled with attacks like Demi. I think he should be **at least** a Lv70 foe.

When finally depleting Shinryu's HP, a story event takes place where Cloud and Denzel work together to bring down the giant dragon. They engage Shinryu in battle together and manage to perform a powerful combo move.

I am leaning towards this being a powerful move that is unlocked when Denzel is of a very high level, but even if you haven't learned it yet, this story event allows you a glimpse of the attack. (Like Omnislash in the Original Game can be "previewed" in the final battle even if you haven't learned it yet.) Placeholder name: "Twin Omnislash".

This event is meant to seal the deal for the player that playing as Denzel was worth all this time and effort. Some will here recall the event in Advent Children when Cloud defeated Bahamut Sin. The defeat of Shinryu is meant to be something akin to that, except here Denzel is present to help with the slaying.

“Defeating Ogopogo,” a.k.a. “Yuffie’s Arc”

Exact conditions for beginning this sidequest, if any, are undecided. Although it involves Yuffie to a great extent, it might feel too impersonal to have this sidequest available when she isn’t unlocked yet. On the other hand, she isn’t unlocked as a main fighter until Cissnei reaches Lv80, and postponing the sidequest that far may be too ridiculous. Especially since it would necessitate the dungeon here to be even more difficult than the “final dungeon” on your way to Genesis.】

Once in Wutai, they find a village (not the main village?) devastated. Yuffie is wrought with grief that she wasn't there in time to stop it.

At the main village, they speak with the remaining Wusheng and learn that Godo had spoken of a "last resort" for Wutai leaders to call upon in the event of a crisis beyond management. "The true source of Wutai's strength," he had called it. "Power far above Leviathan."

Godo had said that this great source of strength lay within the Da Chao mountain, and that every Wutai leader had to make the journey at some point. The Wusheng reveal that Godo made the trip right before he surrendered to Shin-Ra at the end of the Wutai War.

[

The Shrine of Leviathan

The insides of Da-Chao look as though they were [carved by the serpent Water God Leviathan](#) himself.

Inspired by this, I propose that a deeper subterranean shrine can be entered via the mountain. It might be so deep that you can even reach an underground lake that is connected to the ocean. (This might be a potential place for a normal battle against Ogopogo.)

The shrine is devoted to Leviathan, ergo the name, and is a sacred place that only the most holy and highly ranked citizens of Wutai have ever been allowed to enter.

Traps will be fire-based, just like the fires in the cave as we see it in the OG, but there should also be water-based puzzles mixed into it. I see this as being one of the more intricate dungeons in the game, coupled with very strong monster encounters. Suitable spot for Magic Pots, me thinks.】

They reach the end of the journey and find only a mirror with a note from Godo to Yuffie. It says something like:

"My dearest daughter, Yuffie --

If you are reading this, you are now the leader of our great nation. You also find yourself facing a challenge that you believe to be beyond your own ability to compensate for. I assure you, that is not the case.

In believing this to be so, you are believing that Wutai lacks the strength to meet this challenge. For YOU are Wutai. The nation can only be as strong as its leader, as all have put their faith in you to guide them as they once put their faith in me. Let me remind you: the people of Wutai are strong. Thus, its leader is strong. And, therefore, Wutai as a nation is strong.

Our beautiful nation has faced every challenge to come its way, and come out the other side triumphant. Even where this meant surrender, it has not meant defeat, for our people have endured. Often the greatest act of valor in a leader is to swallow their pride for the good of those depending on them. Shame may come with this, but a different sort of pride should as well: the pride of defending Wutai's true strength.

That strength is its people. That strength is you. You, my daughter, are the source of Wutai's power. Sharper than our finest blades. Brighter than any materia. Stronger than Leviathan's greatest waves.

Having made this journey here on your own, you have become the leader Wutai needs you to be. You will triumph. Wutai will endure.

With all my love and pride,
Your father, Godo"

Yuffie is taken aback by her father's faith in her, and feels that she has disappointed him one last time since she didn't make the journey through Da Chao alone. Despite the others' attempts to reassure her that this is not the case, she cannot be consoled.

Upon exiting the mountain, the party finds Ogopogo has come to attack the main village again. They fight him and send him fleeing.

Cissnei: "Dammit! It's getting away again!"
Yuffie: "No, it sure as hell isn't!"

As the serpentine Summon Weapon takes flight to escape, Yuffie runs after it along a cliffside that runs parallel to its flight path. Despite her remarkable speed, however, the former summon deity of Wutai is pulling away from her.

Suddenly, Nanaki appears along Yuffie's side, keeping pace with her.

Nanaki: "Yuffie, jump on!"

Yuffie: "No! I have to finish this myself!"

Nanaki: "And you will! Just let me get you in a position to do it!"

Yuffie: "Leviathan belonged to Wutai! It's Wutai's place to handle this!"

Nanaki: "Remember, Yuffie, we are more than just your friends! More than your family! We are allies to Wutai that it has earned by virtue of YOUR character! Now, jump on!"

Yuffie relents. She jumps on Nanaki's back and wraps her arms around his neck as he bursts into his top speed. He gains on the Summon Weapon quickly, and -- just as the cliff path runs out -- gets close enough for Yuffie to make the leap onto Ogopogo's back.

Yuffie begins hacking away at the creature as it contorts through the air, trying to throw her off. She hangs on as it darts and veers, finally coming back around to Da Chao.

Here, Yuffie jumps to the mountain and takes on the evolved Leviathan one final time, at last destroying it. I like to imagine her finishing it off with a blast of All Creation in a sequence that looks like when Big O defeated the Eel Megadeus:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TidD9pxmoYk#t=275>

All Creation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFBQG8tTBxM>

[Additional idea by Squall_of_SeeD: After she has gotten the wyrm to come back around to the top of Da Chao, Cissnei could yell out to Yuffie to catch as she slings her own weapon up to Yuffie.

For this final one-on-one battle with Ogopogo, Yuffie could wield both shurikens. It would be pretty badass, and maybe justify causing extra damage since she's fighting solo.]

Afterward, Yuffie stands silently above Wutai, looking down upon it calmly. She's joined a moment later by Nanaki.

Nanaki: "Well done, Yuffie Kisaragi, lady lord of Wutai."

Yuffie: "Thanks, Red."

Nanaki: "Thank you as well."

Yuffie: "What for?"

Nanaki: "In part for letting me help you. But also because you and your father reminded me of something important. I am Nanaki, son of Seto, guardian of the valley. But I am also Red XIII, lab specimen ... and your friend.

I may have failed to save Cosmo Canyon, but I only become a failure if I'm not there for the ones I care about when they need me."

Yuffie smiles.

Yuffie: "You're starting to sound like Bugenhagen."

Nanaki: "That's too kind of you. I'm nowhere near his wisdom yet."

Yuffie: "It means you're getting old."

The two laugh.

Cissnei arrives and walks over to Yuffie, who hands Cissnei's shuriken back to her, thus further tying the weapon into their arc -- this passing of the weapon back into Cissnei's hands being symbolic of Cissnei being welcome in Wutai, and evoking a sense that it is in the hands it belongs.

Yuffie looks out over Wutai once again and sees her people assembled below, cheering over her display of valor. She raises her shuriken in triumph and thinks, "I don't know if you can hear me, dad, but I hope you know that I still miss you. Wutai still misses you. But rest well knowing it's as strong as it's ever been."

Yuffie's new triumphant theme (think "Frog's Theme" from Chrono Trigger) plays as the visual of her standing here calls back to the CG image of her from the original game: <http://i.imgur.com/0dbrC.jpg>

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The Other Quests

We have covered the two "epic" quests above, but many adventures still remain. It is only now that you may fulfill every task related to Lifestream Alignment, collecting Omega Stones and so on.

Another not-yet-defined sidequest will involve interacting with one of Zangan's students who is NOT Tifa. Due to Zangan having had 128 students all over the world, this should at least be marginally explored.

Another "quest" allows you to talk to the Mayor of New Corel (the new place where the Corel villagers have settled) and inform him about the death of Barret Wallace. The Mayor promises that they will build a statue in Barret's honor.

We resume the main story by returning to Junon and reporting to Reeve that the Stagnant Materia has been acquired.

Preparing for the Final Battles

We hear that Shera has completed work on improving the silver sub, but she is still working on the red one. (Slow and meticulous as ever, isn't she?) Immediately after this, WRO soldiers report to Reeve that security cameras from the underground passages of Junon have revealed something sinister.

Security robots, affected by the mysterious energy, are making their way up the corridors and elevator shafts. They also think the lost reconnaissance team was spotted, only they looked more like monsters now than humans.

Cloud and the rest are worried. They may be able to stop a second invasion for some time, but how many more foes can Genesis spawn from his location? They have to stop Genesis now. No time to wait for the red submarine to be finished.

NOTES BY SHADEMP: Here is where I have omitted the biggest number of scenes that S_o_S wrote. The present scenario does not in my mind fit well for a lot of intermediate scenes, although we definitely need these scenes to establish where the characters are right now and where some of them *will* be if they survive this battle.

NOTES BY S_o_S: I'm uncomfortable presenting this document to anyone without reintroducing at least some of these scenes into this summary. In my mind, they are absolutely vital to an appreciation of the endgame developments and the story as a whole.

For some of these, Shademp's summary of the scenario will suffice since we had agreed that revisions for those segments would prove necessary anyway. For others, I am placing the entire scripted segment I had envisioned back in.

Nanaki & Dinne's Scenario: Transition to dusk. The sun is setting. Red XIII sits on top of the spot where the mako cannon would have been attached, looking off toward the sea. He's joined a moment later by Dinne.

Dinne: "Hey there, you."

Red: "Hi."

Dinne takes a seat beside him.

Dinne: "You're avoiding me."

Red: "Am not."

Dinne: "And you're a terrible liar. What's going on?"

Red: "You're not going to like it."

Dinne: "But at least you'll be talking to me. Tell me what's bothering you."

Red: "... I don't want you coming with us tomorrow."

Dinne: "What?!"

Red: "Told you."

Dinne: "Explain yourself. Now."

Red: "You're angry."

Dinne: "You better believe it. Your only chance to save yourself is to start talking fast."

Red: "I ... I just ... I'm afraid."

Dinne: "What? Of the planet?"

Red's expression becomes stern.

Red: "No. Not of the planet. The planet has much to answer for."

Dinne: "Then what?"

Red: "I just want to keep you somewhere safe. After all these years, I'm still a coward when it comes to thoughts of losing you."

Dinne's anger fades.

Dinne: "Oh. Nanaki ... That's sweet."

Red: "Sure."

Dinne: "Are you embarrassed?"

Red: "... No."

Dinne: "You really are bad at lying."

Red: "Will you just stay here with Reeve and the others?"

Dinne: "No. I don't see why I should."

Red: "They may need you up here if the Turks fail in their mission."

Dinne: "There's something more to it than that. What aren't you telling me?"

Red: "... I won't be at my best down there if I'm worried about you the entire time."

Dinne: "And you won't be worried about me if I'm up here?"

Red: "Of course I will!"

Dinne: "Then what's the difference?"

Red is quiet for a moment.

Red: "The difference is ... when I can at least think you're far from harm, I can be the warrior Seto was. I can see myself doing what he did. I can take on the Gi Tribe and not give in to their poisonous arrows until the last of them falls. Because I know you're safe back in the valley. When you're in danger, I can still be strong, but I'm doing nothing but panicking. I turn back into that child who was too scared to make any choice at all for fear of making the wrong one.

I can't make you stay. The choice is yours. But please, let me be that great warrior."

Dinne is silent for a long moment.

Red: "You're angry."

Dinne: "No. No, I'm not. I understand."

Red: "... And?"

Dinne: "And that's it. I'll stay here tomorrow."

Red: "Really?"

Dinne: "Yes. But you had better come back, or I'm going to be very unhappy. I don't like the idea of being the last of our kind. Now stop talking about it before I find a reason to get angry again."

Red: "Shutting up."

The two sit and watch the sun set.

Denzel's Scenario: S_o_S wrote a scene where Reeve invites Denzel to join the WRO. We definitely need that, but I picture a different culmination to that scenario than what Squall_of_SeeD did. Instead of immediately joining the WRO, I think Denzel will want to live a few more years in Edge with his family. He feels an obligation to be there for Marlene; after losing her father, she should not immediately have to say "goodbye" to her brother.

Denzel is also now beyond the stage where he wants to help people simply by fighting. He now recognizes the importance of just "being there for your family", especially since such precious time is short and may never come again. This decision by Denzel shows his development and acts as juxtaposition against his attitude at the end of "Episode Denzel"/"Case of Denzel".]

In any case, this segment should end with the 7th Heaven Family having a happy moment together, possibly preceded by a peaceful conversation between just Cloud and Tifa.

Scene between Rufus and Cloud: That night, Cloud is sitting on a dock down at the harbor, feeding bread to Mr. Dolphin. The waves can be heard calmly lapping. Rufus pulls up in his wheelchair. Neither was expecting to see the other. Mr. Dolphin swims away.

Cloud: "Had to scare him away, didn't you?"

Rufus: "... Were you just feeding a dolphin?"

Cloud: "Yeah. His name is Mr. Dolphin."

Rufus: "... How creative."

Cloud: "I didn't name it. A little girl who used to live here did. Geostigma killed her."

Rufus: "Oh. Sorry."

Awkward silence.

Rufus: "So, you're up late."

Cloud: "Came down here to clear my head."

Rufus: "I came down here for the same reason."

Cloud: "This dock's taken. Go somewhere else."

Rufus: "I guess Cid isn't the only one. You're still not my biggest supporter either, I see."

Cloud: "I really hope that doesn't surprise you."

Rufus: "It doesn't. It might have been ten years ago, but I did do something hard to forgive."

Cloud: "Try impossible. You were going to execute two of the people I cared about most ... for what reason again?"

Rufus: "You know why. I'm sure you were told."

Cloud: "I'd like to hear it from you directly."

Rufus: "I thought you wanted me to go somewhere else."

Cloud: "Just answer my question. I'm not in the mood for what passes for a sense of humor with you."

Rufus: "As you wish. The direct truth: I wanted to give the people someone to blame for Meteor. Appease them. Let them feel that they had been avenged. In case we couldn't stop Sephiroth."

Cloud: "By sacrificing innocent people? That kind of thinking makes sense to you?"

Rufus: "It did at the time."

Cloud: "Dock's taken. Get lost."

Rufus: "You know what, Cloud? Just be quiet and listen for a moment.

After all this with Genesis is over, after we've won -- and we WILL win -- do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to be burying ten people who have worn the uniform of the Turks.

With the exception of one of those ten -- who, by the way, still spent the last few minutes of his life trying to put a bullet through my head -- they all once held me captive. I will still be laying them all to rest."

Cloud: "....."

Rufus: "While you were losing five years of your life to Hojo, I was their hostage for three. They used me as a shield to protect themselves from my father's wrath. Not that I much blame them.

Shortly before the Turks locked me up and threw away the key, I had ordered the original AVALANCHE -- Elfe's group -- to kill them. The Turks had discovered my role as AVALANCHE's informant within Shin-Ra, and my plan to usurp control. They were quite a loose end, and I tried having it tied up. Fortunately, AVALANCHE betrayed me and our lives took a different course.

In the mix of all we've done to and for each other, the Turks and I became a family. As much of one as I've ever had anyway. Now, I won't try leading you to believe that I care as deeply for all of them as I do for a few -- some I knew better than others, some I've known for longer than others, some I've been through more with -- but there is a point I want you to take away from this.

Of those nine we've lost who held me hostage, one of them was Reno. And somewhere between ordering his execution, being his prisoner and watching him take his last breath, he became the only person I've ever cried for."

Cloud: "..... So what am I supposed to be taking from this?"

Rufus: "I made a mistake, Cloud, and I'm sorry. I won't call myself one of the 'good guys,' but I have come to realize power for the sake of power is pointless."

Cloud: "....."

Rufus: "And I want you to know something else: I don't know how long you plan on living, and I don't expect that we'll ever share a holiday dinner we aren't both dragged to at gunpoint, but if Reno can go from that one extreme for me to the other in ten years, then I would like to think that maybe by the time you and I are interred to the ground as old men, whoever gets left behind can at least feel a little twinge at the other's passing.

Do you think that's something we could do?"

Cloud takes a long moment to respond. Rufus sighs and starts to leave.

Cloud: "When Marlene and Denzel set off on their own to go to Banora, you sent Reno and Rude after them, didn't you?"

Rufus doesn't say anything.

Cloud: "I don't know that I could ever think of you as family ... but thank you."

Cloud extends his hand to Rufus. Rufus turns, hesitates, then accepts it. They sit in silence for a moment, listening to the water. Mr. Dolphin returns.

Cloud: "... You wanna feed it?"

Rufus: "..... Sure."

Cloud tosses some more bread into the water, then hands the bag to Rufus.

Scene between Cid and Tseng:

That same night, Tseng and Elena have a conversation in which he continues to hold her at arm's length, feigning obliviousness to her heavy hints about her feelings. She leaves in frustration.

Unbeknownst to either, Cid happened to be nearby. Having experienced Shera's devotion, as well as her impending mortality, he walks over to Tseng. The light from his cigarette providing most of the illumination, they have the following conversation --

Tseng: "Who's there? Ah, Captain Highwind."

Cid: "Sheriff."

Tseng: "I hope the evening finds you well."

Cid: "Good as it can, I suppose."

Tseng: "Are you up so late because you are anxious about the battle ahead?"

Cid: "Nothing like that. Just needed a smoke. Shera was asleep. Figured I'd step out for a bit."

Tseng: "I see. Well, I shall leave you to it then. Rest well. I expect we will need all the energy we can get."

Cid: "Hold on a sec, sheriff."

Tseng: "Yes? What would you like to discuss?"

Cid: "My wife."

Tseng: "I beg your pardon?"

Cid: "My wife. Shera."

As Cid begins saying this next bit, he lights another cigarette and walks away.

Cid: "I've been takin' care of her for almost the past ten years, but the truth is, she's been takin' care of me a lot longer than that. Not every man gets a chance to know that kind of love from a woman. And those who do don't get to have it forever. Whatever problems a man's got -- with himself, with his world or with anything in it -- seems like it would be pretty stupid not to accept what she's trying to give. Don't you think?"

Tseng is left standing in the dark by himself.

Scene between Rufus and Reeve:

Reeve enters the meeting room from earlier, where Rufus is waiting, looking out the window.

Rufus: "So, everything is in order then?"

Reeve: "Everyone is aware of their role down to the last soldier."

Rufus: "Now all we can do is wait ..."

Reeve: "Getting impatient? That doesn't sound much like Rufus Shinra."

Rufus: "It's this waiting without taking action myself that I find unsavory."

Reeve smiles.

Reeve: "Even with all we have lost in recent days, there are still so many willing to stand and defend this city. Though the troops hardly expected that defense wouldn't be part of our strategy."

Rufus: "I bet they didn't."

Reeve: "I must admit, when you first suggested not defending Junon should the enemy make it to the surface, I was caught off guard myself."

Rufus: "I have the utmost confidence in the Turks to halt the enemy's advance until the Underwater Reactor can be penetrated. Should they reach us, however, it will almost certainly mean Cloud and the others have failed. If that's the case, Genesis won't be far behind his minions, and this city will undoubtedly be lost given the power he should wield by then. Defense would be a fool's errand."

Reeve: "I agree."

Rufus: "Preparing for evacuation is the only option in defense of hope."

Reeve: "I don't know what surprised Lady Yuffie more -- Rufus Shinra asking PERMISSION for a diaspora from this continent to take refuge in the mountains of her homeland ... or that she agreed without hesitation."

Rufus: "My gratitude to Wutai at this moment is ... difficult to put into words. Difficult for me to even understand, if I'm being honest. Despite every reason to say no, Yuffie agreed. Our people will have a chance even should this day be lost. To regroup, to recover strength and to strike back. They will carry on."

Reeve: "I still have one question. What will be YOUR role in all of this? You say 'they' as though you won't be with them."

Rufus: "I will be doing what I do best. Running my mouth and stalling for time while you carry out the evacuation."

Reeve: "... Rufus, if anyone is staying it should be me. I'm of the generation who left this mess to the next. And beyond that, battle is not unknown to me. I led the WRO. You can't really expect me to leave?"

Rufus: "Consider it an order. It's precisely because you led the WRO that I expect you to do so again should it come to this."

Reeve: "And I expect you to lead."

Rufus: "Don't make me start disappointing you now. My mind is made up. Whatever burdensome ailments may have come to plague my heart, I am still me. I will not run."

Reeve: "... No changing your mind, is there?"

Rufus: "You should know."

Reeve: "All this planning for a worst case scenario ... Haven't you've been saying that we'll win?"

Rufus: "I fully believe humanity will prevail. Safeguarding that possibility is my mission -- the only mission -- today."

Reeve chuckles.

Rufus: "What's funny?"

Reeve: "You've come a long way, Rufus Shinra."

Rufus: "If you say so."

Reeve: "You don't think so?"

Rufus: "... I really don't know. I can't even remember where I started any more."

Reeve: "That's a good thing. It gets easier, trust me."

Rufus: "Thank you."

Reeve: "For what?"

Rufus: "I guess even you have decent judgment once in a while ... Mr. President."

Reeve: "Got us mixed up, have you?"

Rufus: "You heard me. Whichever way this plays out today, tomorrow we follow your lead."

Reeve: "What do you mean?"

Rufus: "I know how to make ready for ruin. I can lead us into the maw of disaster. Beyond that, though,

Reeve?"

Reeve: "Rufus ..."

Rufus: "Don't get me wrong. I fully intend to take my rightful place someday. But for now ... I think I have a few more things to learn."

Reeve: "... As you wish."

Rufus smiles.

Rufus: "Maybe I'll do you proud when the time comes."

Reeve: "Rufus, you already have."

[Moving ahead into the final scenarios, the Turks, except for Cissnei, are deployed to deal with the underground threat and prevent the monsters/robots from reaching the city. Near the entrance to the underground passages, Rude and Rod are standing next to one another.]

Neither is saying anything. Finally, Rod speaks up.

Rod: "How are you doing?"

Rude: "With?"

Rod: "With ... all that's happened."

Rude: "Fine."

Rod: "Are you really?"

Rude: "Yes."

Rod: "... Okay."

They're quiet again. Finally ...

Rod: "I don't really believe you."

Rude: "Why?"

Rod: "You worked together every day for almost 20 years. You can't just be okay."

Rude doesn't speak.

Rod: "Are you even listening to me?"

Rude: "Yes."

Rod: "Goddammit, Rude, is that all I'm going to get? One-word responses?"

Rude: "Maybe."

Rod: "I'm sorry I brought it up, okay?"

After a few seconds' silence --

Rude: "... Talking about it won't change it. He'll still be gone. I would just rather not discuss it. Thank you, though."

Rod: "I'm sorry I can't do anything to help."

Rude: "What part of not wanting to discuss it was unclear?"

Rod: "Damn. Fine. I'm sorry I can't be him and say the wrong thing at the right time and it somehow be the right thing. I can't be him. God knows I tried to be, but I can't."

They're both silent for a while again.

Rude pulls out a telescoping rod from his pocket and hands it over to Rod.

Rude: "Here."

Rod: "What's this?"

Rude: "It was Reno's. It's yours now."

Rod: "... Are you serious?"

Rude: "Yes."

Rod: "You're okay with giving this to me? You're really sure?"

Rude: "Yes."

Rod: "Are we back to the one-word responses?"

Rude: "Yes."

Rod just looks at Rude in admiration for a moment.

Rod: "... Thanks."

Rude: "Welcome."

Rod: "I will find a way to make you talk more, though."

Rude: "If you're going to be Reno, lose the damn tie. Satisfied now?"

[Rod: "...Nevermind."]

The Turks (Tseng, Rude, Elena, Rod and Shotgun) prepare to battle.

Tseng: "Nobody dies today. That's an order."

Rude: "We hear you."

[The serious moment is then interrupted by the appearance of a Cait Sith robot. Cue comedic music.]

Rod: "Hey, look. Commissioner Reeve is here to help us out too."

He approaches the robot, which launches at him ferociously. While the robot is in mid-air, Shotgun fires it back onto the ground.

Shotgun: "You idiot! If you're going to be that careless I'll kill you myself!"

Rod is embarrassed.

Rod: "Oh, um... Sorry."

The Cait Sith robot rises again.

Rod: "Looks like even this robot isn't going down easy."**]**

He draws Reno's weapon.

Rod: "Alright, Reno. Let's do this!"

We begin to see security robots and the reanimated WRO soldiers appearing as the Turks charge at their foes. The screen transitions to the submarine scenario, with "Team Airship" in the silver submarine.

Cid, along with Cloud (who is there to power the Stagnant Materia), get ready to blast Mecha Sapphire (or rather, the cables connected to it) to smithereens. A minigame starts that is very similar to the one where you blast Shinryu with lasers. The point here is to avoid Mecha Sapphire's projectiles, and wait for the opportunity to blast the cables.

Right when you appear to be winning, though, a blast from Sapphire scrapes the submarine and they temporarily lose control over the sub. With all hope seemingly lost as the vessel begins taking on water and Mecha Sapphire prepares another energy shot, Shera arrives in the completed red submarine.

Shera: "Better late than never! Right, Cid?"

Like a badass, she then fires the final missiles that sever the cables providing Mecha Sapphire with the energy it needs to live. Mecha Sapphire twitches for a while but then falls to the ocean floor. The main obstacle has been defeated. You can now enter the dock in the Underwater Reactor.

Both the red and the silver sub will be docked in the Underwater Reactor, however the silver sub can't go back out due to the damage it sustained. The player now brings the collection of New Fighters and Champions to the inside of the Underwater Reactor.

Given the importance of the Stagnant Materia in combating the effects of the mysterious energy, the possibility exists of adding a gameplay element in the following dungeon where your MP is gradually depleted as you walk. This sounds like a potentially annoying mechanic, but we will keep it in mind for when the dungeon is designed. Though the only thing here that may not logically work anyway due to the unknown energy's influence would be Shelke's beam sabres, so we may just ignore the Stagnant Materia altogether once you dock.

THE FINAL DUNGEON & SHOWDOWN

After docking the submarine inside the Underwater Reactor, the team discovers that the place is whirling with spirit energy. What looks like a portal is their only way to proceed. This is the entrance to "The Seven Realms".

The Seven Realms

This dungeon is meant to act as a bookend for the game's theming about the planet's history and its emotions. Each level will present the history of the planet. It might do this with wall paintings and creepy

narration supplied by the telepathic voice of Genesis (who is there to taunt them). Here is what each level is meant to represent.

First Level: Spirans (called 'The Others' in game) arrive and settle. The planet is uneasy but still at some peace. The planet's love for the Cetra is expressed.

Second Level: Jenova arrives, Cetra die and many flee underground, in time losing touch with the planet.

Third Level: The emptiness and loneliness of 2000 years of silence, as humans no longer speak with the planet.

Fourth Level: Shin-Ra begins extracting mako energy. Resentment builds and builds on the planet's side.

Fifth Level: "The Crisis Years". The planet grows ever more fatigued due to the energy lost stopping Meteor, to Sephiroth's Negative Lifestream and then during the averted awakening of Omega.

Sixth Level: Genesis's role in the schemes of the planet is depicted.

Seventh Level: The final floor, where you face Genesis and his final forms.

I chose seven levels to correspond to the "Seven Layers of Heaven". It's also appropriate given the title of FFVII.

Many Shadow Fiends, with single wings like Genesis, will be battled here along with projections of monsters that represent the history of the planet.

At one early point in the dungeon, the team will comment that Genesis is using a mako reactor, contrary to his dogma.]

Tifa: "Who do you think you are?! You're using a mako reactor right now yourself!"

Genesis: "I do what I must to fulfill the goddess's will. If my own soul be forfeit, so be it."

[The Seven Realms will also be populated by vengeful Cetra spirits. A few might be fought in mini-boss battles. These Cetra are intended to be of a "Time Mage" type, in contrast to the "Black Mage" type that you visited in the Ancients' temple in the original game.

Due to the high concentration of spirit energy here, Shelke is able to perform SNDs (Synaptic Net Dives) without the aid of a machine. This way, you can find treasure by using her to solve puzzles that involve her "astral form" teleporting to normally inaccessible spots. This is done by walking up to and touching Lifestream tendrils.

The Second Realm is probably a good place to battle one of the vengeful Cetra spirits who died in the fight against Jenova. It resents the others, Cetra and Spirans alike, who left the struggle and hid underground.

The Third Realm will be largely empty, having the team walk through a black space from left to right, as they hear the silencing of human voices. This is the sound of the Cetra dying out. As this happens, the planet's painful cry is heard more, in contrast to its normal "humming".

When the team reaches the Fourth Realm, which could be called "the Dawn of Shinra Level", they enter a manifestation of a mako reactor's interior. A boss battle ensues.

In this realm, Marlene and Elfe get separated from the main group, and battle one or more Time Mage Cetra spirits.

After much frustration, Marlene demands an answer from the spirits as to why the planet wants to kill humanity. The spirits then begin creating projections, showing them a variety of humanity's sins.】

The Cetra also show the two of them visions of Shin-Ra's numerous atrocities, including Deepground.

While within the vision of Deepground --

Elfe: "Deepground ... it really was hell."

Marlene: "How could Shelke have survived in a place like this ...?"

Suddenly, Shelke's astral form appears with them.

Shelke: "The less said the better. To survive among monsters for so long, you must become one. "

Shelke aims to lead the other two women back to the larger group, but their way is blocked by Genesis himself -- or an astral projection of him at least. His wing is still severed, making him look like a fallen angel.

Genesis: "There will be no escape for you from this place, wayward daughters of the planet. You shall return to the Lifestream you have betrayed."

Monsters surround Marlene and Elfe. The Cetra spirits look on from above.

Marlene: "YOU! YOU GO TO HELL!"

Marlene attacks Genesis, only for her attack to phase through.

Elfe: "Genesis, you're such a pathetic coward!"

Genesis: "I have nothing to prove to you traitors, nor is your anger so righteous as you believe. I simply serve the planet's will."

Shelke: "Or at least your twisted perception of it."

Genesis: "You doubt the will of the planet, Shelke of Deepground?"

Shelke: "I doubt YOU, Genesis. You are no savior. You are simply a zealot -- a child who can look only to others for direction."

Genesis outstretches his hand.

Genesis: "Silence!"

Shelke screams and her astral form falls to its knees.

Elfe: "Shelke!"

Marlene: "What are you doing to her?!"

Genesis: "Shelke has the ability to access thoughts and memories. In this circumstance, she has used it to gain entry to the river of memory comprising the planet itself -- and the planet is not happy with you interlopers."

Marlene: "Stop it, Genesis! I'm so sick of listening to you! You babble on and on about how humanity is so unworthy, but the miserable souls stuck in this place couldn't even give me a good reason for humankind as a whole to be wiped out. They just showed us a bunch of things that Shin-Ra did in the past."

Genesis: "Are the greatest examples of humanity's wrongdoing not convincing enough? Is Shin-Ra so entrenched in your minds as a faceless concept as to be considered separate from the human condition? A nameless entity? An idea without personage?

Understand this: Shin-Ra is not the exception to the misdeeds of humans. They are the sample group. The representative. The microcosm reflecting the macro."

Genesis looks up at the Cetra spirits.

Genesis: "Show them."

Visions now flash of various horrible things done by regular people. Murder, thievery, misery all caused by normal people upon other normal people. Included, however, are such simple events as people making use of mako engines and creating materia.

The visions end.

Genesis: "Has it become clear to you?"

Marlene begins laughing.

Genesis: "I would know what you find humorous about all of this before your soul is cleansed."

Marlene stops laughing.

Marlene: "^^%\$# you."

[In the original scenario, Cloud and the rest had a way to hear what was going on with Marlene. Not sure how to work that in, here. Perhaps via Shelke. This is why Cid and Denzel have lines further down.]

Genesis: "Pardon?"

Marlene: "You ... and this planet ... you have no idea how hard it is for us. How hard it is for ordinary people to live. And I don't mean surviving a crisis like Meteor or a psychopath like you bringing an army of monsters into a city.

I just mean day-to-day life. I mean delivering a package from Kalm to Corel, and dealing with the creatures out there on the road. Or ... or drilling oil up out of the ground so that we can STOP believing we have a need to rely on your precious Lifestream.

My father worked so hard for this ungrateful planet. It doesn't understand or even care. Neither do you. When was the last time you waited tables all day, washed dishes between serving, and reminded the guys who have had too much to drink that you will remove any hand they touch you with? Care to answer that for me? Could you live like we do? That goes for all of you."

She looks up at the Cetra spirits.

Marlene: "When did you ever have it so hard? Yeah, Jenova ruined everything for you, but up until that point, when was it so bad on you? You may not have gotten a happily ever after, but it was happy for a long while, wasn't it? The planet saw to your needs, didn't it? If you needed some food to grow, you just waved your hands and the ground started popping up vegetables, right?

It's not that easy for us! We have dug and scraped out a life for ourselves after Meteor. We have earned our right to live. Humans saved this planet from Sephiroth, pulled together to climb out of the ruins he left us with, and EARNED our survival. And after all of that, you and this planet think you're in a position to judge US? Well, don't be too damn surprised if we judge YOU too!"

Marlene looks down.

Marlene: "You've come up pretty short on your end too, planet! You've been a really crappy parent! What's your excuse?! We're all just trying to figure this out, aren't we? We're all just doing the best we can! And if that's not good enough for you --"

Marlene points at Genesis.

Marlene: "-- then ^%\$# you --"

She points at the Cetra.

Marlene: "-- ^%\$# you --"

She points at the ground.

Marlene: "-- and ^%\$# you."

Elsewhere --

Denzel: "Wow. Go Marlene."

Cid: "That is definitely Barret's kid."

Back with the others --

Genesis is quiet. For once, Elfe looks completely taken aback and just stands in place, her sword not even at the ready.

Genesis: "Let judgment fall where it may."

The monsters surrounding Elfe and Marlene lunge for them. Before they can strike, however, they're blasted aside by Comet spells.

Genesis looks up in disbelief.

Genesis: "WHAT?!"

The Cetra spirits have turned on Genesis. They're attacking his creatures.

Marlene and Elfe watch, frozen in shock.

The team looks on in awe as tendrils of Lifestream arise from the vision of a large mako pool near them, grabbing monsters out of the air and destroying them. Other Lifestream tendrils arise, however, and begin to entangle the ones that are helping our protagonists.

Genesis's projection appears on the surface of the Lifestream pool and walks toward Marlene, addressing her.

Genesis: "You ... You have perverted these once noble spirits. Tainted their souls. They must now be cleansed as would be any other wretched traitor's spirit energy. The opportunity to maintain individual consciousness within the Lifestream will be denied to them. They must be diluted and purified. All because of you -- you who are anathema to the divine!"

Genesis walks right up to Marlene.

Genesis: "For your action you must be punished. Farewell, my wayward sibling."

Marlene: "You're a monster."

Genesis: "Aren't we all?"

Suddenly, Shelke's projection zips over between Marlene and Genesis.

Shelke: "Sorry -- this will sting pretty bad."

She shoves one hand into Marlene's head and the other into Genesis's. Both Marlene and Genesis recoil with a scream.

Elfe: "Shelke! What did you do?!"

Marlene recovers.

Marlene: "It's okay! She may have just saved us."

Shelke: "I gave Genesis a firsthand taste of what Marlene's feeling."

Genesis: "Such poisonous thoughts!!"

Genesis's projection disappears.

Shelke: "Now is your chance!"

[Elfe and Marlene are able to get back to the main group.]

Shelke: "Are you alright, Marlene? Please forgive me for the drastic step I took."

Marlene: "No need to be sorry. It's fine. It worked. And it helped us. I got a look inside Genesis's mind.

[My mind is a bit overwhelmed though. Give me a moment to piece it all together.]"

Cid: "Well, three cheers for Shelke. Good work, little red."

[The team journeys onward to the Fifth Realm. At the beginning of this realm is a mural showing the underground tree from Banora, still with the giant red orb on top.

Reminder: At the end of Crisis Core, Genesis absorbs energy via a large red orb to cure himself of his degradation. The idea is that it was via this that he summoned Minerva and became "the Planet's Avatar".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dg62BLj9TYM#t=71>

Players of FFXVII:FGC will have seen this tree when they visited Banora in Chapter 1, but without the red orb on top. Marlene begins explaining what we see, based on the information she gleaned from Genesis's mind.]

Marlene: "The goddess originated as a summon materia, like Bahamut or any of the rest. But unlike them, she wasn't a living creature that chose to become a summon, and she isn't made from the memories of humans who passed down legends about her. She's ... the planet's own hurt and anger. All of it, from the beginning of its life. And there's been an awful lot of it. That's why that materia in Banora was so big."

Cid: "Are you feeling sorry for it?"

Marlene: "Not one bit."

Shelke: "So, in other words, the planet's pain took on form from the accumulation of its own experiences over the course of the past 2,000 years."

Marlene: "Yes. But I think most of it happened pretty recently. In the last 50 years or so."

Cloud: "Since Shin-Ra started building mako reactors."

Marlene: "That's what I think. The planet has ... so much hate. It really looks at us the way it looks at Jenova."

[The journey continues. Murals show us the summoning of Zirconiade, which happened at the end of Before Crisis (a few months before the original game). A creature starts emerging from the mural. Cissnei mutters, "Oh no, not this again..."

A boss battle ensues with a manifestation of Zirconiade. The battle music played is a remix of BC's "Desperate Crisis".

After this, further murals are seen showcasing the appearance of Jade Weapon after Zirconiade's defeat, and how it was defeated by the BC Turks. The murals then continue on to show Meteorfall (OG), Geostigma (Advent Children) and Deepground's war on the surface world, culminating in Hojo's

fragments possessing Weiss and Vincent destroying Omega (Dirge of Cerberus). All the events that cause Minerva's hatred have been summarized. We now leave the "*Crisis Years Realm*".

When transitioning from the Fifth to the Sixth level, a brief scene happens showing the Turks' struggle in the Junon underground. They are being overwhelmed by the incoming security robots and reanimated WRO team.

This is to remind the player of what is going on elsewhere and to add a sense of urgency to the mission. Tseng and Elena have a tender moment where they confess their feelings to one another, albeit in a discreet way.

Elena: "Tseng, I know this isn't the time, and I know you don't feel the same way, but ..."

Tseng: "I do, Elena. I do feel the same. Forgive me for taking so long to say it."

They clasp hands, overlooking that they're about to be attacked. Another Turk jumps in and saves them. "Are you going to hold hands or are you going to fight?!"

The Sixth Realm depicts Genesis's "divine role" in removing the vestiges of Jenova. We are reminded of the mist he used and Weiss's role in planting Shadow Fiends. It also shows us the future that Genesis intended to create, a 'Promised Land' free from humanity.

His shining Avatar form, like the one Zack battled at the end of Crisis Core, is also briefly seen in the vision here.

While in the Sixth Realm, you can enter an optional room where you see Weiss's spiritual form floating inside a pillar of energy. Here you can trigger a scene between Weiss and Nero.】

Nero appears and steps toward Weiss.

Nero: "... Weiss ... at last ... I've found you ... brother ..."

Weiss remains motionless.

Nero: "... Weiss ...? Do you ... not ... know me ...?"

Nero again steps toward Weiss.

Nero: "... Do you not ... recognize ... your beloved ... brother ...?"

Nero sobs and falls to his knees. Suddenly, Weiss falls to his knees as well.

Weiss: "... Nero ..."

Nero: "... Weiss ...!"

The two embrace and rise into the air -- their conflicting pure Lifestream and stagnant Lifestream overlaying on one another until both of them vanish in a dazzling sight.

Nanaki: "What ... happened to them?"

Shelke: "They neutralized one another."

Vincent: "No. They found peace. "

【This event adds one percent to the Lifestream Alignment bar.

After a save point and a note that pretty much tells the player "*This is the point of no return*," you enter the Seventh Realm and confront Genesis face to face.

It is initially a room with murals, statues and paintings that evoke imagery of LOVELESS. Genesis's Avatar form is seen again here -- but then it all shatters and is replaced with the real/actual Underwater Reactor location. This is a visual cue to let the player know that the various realms which had existed between dimensions are now gone.】

Where Genesis's Avatar form had been is now a furnace into which the Lifestream is pouring. Genesis is within.

【He is lamenting.

Genesis: "Goddess... Why can I no longer hear your voice?"]

Cloud shouts out to him.

Cloud: "Genesis! This ends now."

Genesis emerges from the top of the furnace even as Lifestream continues pouring into him.

Genesis: "...Indeed. All conflict shall come to rest along with our species -- YOUR species -- as life begins anew. The time has come. The time is now."

Tifa: "You're absorbing the Lifestream. This is exactly what Sephiroth wanted to do."

Genesis points his sword at her.

Genesis: "Silence your forked tongue! I do the work of divinity!"

Cloud: "If she's so divine, why doesn't your goddess just do it herself?"

Genesis: "For that blasphemous utterance, your soul shall have to be cleansed in the manner of Lucrecia Crescent."

Genesis raises his hand as a flame gathers around it.

Tifa: "You've become everything you hated. Even if we can't stop you, there's no great moral victory waiting for you."

Denzel: "Basically, you're just pathetic. Now, how about you just let us put you down like the rabid dog you've become?"

Genesis: "If you think yourself fit to oppose the goddess, be my guest. Damnation will be your reward."

Denzel: "Can't wait."

Cloud: "Your hypocrisy isn't even the most ironic part of all this, Genesis. 'When the war of the beasts brings about the world's end/The goddess descends from the sky/Wings of light and dark spread afar/She guides us to bliss, her gift everlasting.'

We're a long way from the sky down here, don't you think? Are you writing your own chapters now?"

Genesis: "I've already received the Gift of the Goddess. LOVELESS is complete."

Cloud: "So, where's your goddess?"

Genesis: "You shall soon see."

Genesis throws the fireball toward Cloud. The not-really-ex-SOLDIER easily deflects it as Genesis raises his sword and powerful winds kick up. Genesis begins to glow. He transforms into his Weapon form as Genesis Avatar.

【His giant wing retains the damage from his human form, and his armor features numerous large cracks -- even his divine form shows decay. This ties in with his earlier line where he laments about no longer hearing the Goddess. The cracks in his armor are pulsating with green mako energy, due to the flow from the reactor.

(Refresher on the official art for Genesis Avatar: <http://i.imgur.com/o634M.jpg>)

The battle against the corrupted form of Genesis Avatar begins.

Because Genesis is siphoning the mako energy from the reactor, he is under a constant Regen effect. The damage inflicted upon him ultimately has no effect.

As the party realizes the despair of the situation, Genesis Avatar begins charging an intense Spirit Beam. In the instant that it fires, Cloud rushes forward and protects the party with a shield generated from the Stagnant Materia.

Willed further and further, the shield becomes a battering ram that hurts Genesis Avatar and temporarily cuts him off from the siphoning process.

Cloud: "I understand now! We can use the Stagnant Materia barrier to defeat him!"

To win the battle, you must keep Cloud alive or else Genesis Avatar will heal again. Cloud also charges a powerful attack to make Genesis completely corrupt with stagnant Lifestream energy.】

As Cloud finally releases the spell, Genesis lets his sword return to its normal size and hurls it at Cloud -- piercing and shattering the Stagnant Materia. Energy from the materia crackles through the air and follows the spell Cloud cast, which connects with Genesis Avatar, permanently ending his Regen status and providing the player the opportunity to inflict lasting damage.

【The party can now defeat Genesis Avatar. Once beaten, he reverts to his normal form. The party believes the battle is over. Some victorious dialogue happens, which then transitions to the following.】

While everyone else has been talking, Vincent has been slumped over, propping himself up on some machinery. Shelke now notices.

Shelke: "What's wrong?"

Vincent: "Something ... something isn't right. I can feel it."

Genesis: "GODDESS, PLEASE!"

Denzel: "He's completely lost it."

Dark energy begins rising from Genesis's body. He starts chuckling.

Vincent: "No ..."

Genesis: "Where did you get that materia?"

He continues to laugh to himself. Vincent draws his gun.

Genesis: "Could it be that it came from ..."

Vincent: "Kill him! Kill him right now!"

Genesis: "... Chaos's dwelling?"

Genesis grins.

[An explanation is called for: When the Stagnant Materia was made in Lucrecia's Cave, the spirit of Chaos accidentally got encased in it as well. When the Stagnant Materia was destroyed, Chaos jumped to Genesis.]

Vincent raises his gun and begins firing at Genesis. His eyes have become yellow, his skin turned white, he has grown fangs, and he now lets out a long, beastly growl. He's not fazed by Vincent's attack.

Genesis: "GODDESS, I SHALL PAVE THE ROAD TO YOUR ARRIVAL WITH THE BLOOD OF YOUR ENEMIES!"

What's left of Genesis's wing suddenly explodes in a burst of feathers, replaced by a bat-like wing. In the same instant, another grows out of his other side. Genesis has become Chaos.

He holds out his hand, to which his sword flies. He then raises the weapon and lets out another ferocious growl. Energy flies off him in all directions, blowing holes in the reactor walls (an establishing shot might be called for here), and the sea begins pouring in.

[Having everybody utter their lines here may be too time-consuming. Perhaps different party members will speak depending on the party configuration, just like before the final battles in the original game.

S_o_S would prefer all the lines be said, like before the final battles in FFVI.]

Elfe: "One last showdown for the planet. Father, be with me. I may always question the tomorrow I should believe in, but I know I want there to be one ... and that I want to be there to see it.

Yuffie: "You can take materia away. You can take Leviathan. Hell, you could even take our weapons. You would still be outmatched by Yuffie Kisaragi! For the glory of Wutai!"

Nanaki: "And the people of the Canyon! When the valley was shattered, it was not destroyed. It germinated the world over, and I am still its guardian. I am the whole planet's protector!"

Vincent: "Heh. Older than anyone here and I still can't believe how much can happen in 10 years. My time really has only just begun. Chaos, it's time you slept for good."

Shelke: "We have far too much to live for now. A lifetime, whether short or long, is all we get. No matter the past, there are so many reasons to keep going waiting to be found. And we will."

Cissnei: "I wasted so much time keeping everyone at arm's length. I'm done with being afraid. Of living and dying ... and everything in between. I am not dying down here unfulfilled!"

Cid: "Well, this battle cry worked once before -- 'Let's mosey!'"

Denzel: "..... And I've got nothing that would top most of that. Marlene, you got anything?"

Marlene: "There may be no world of happily ever after ... but I'll fight for a world where people can live happily ever after 'until.' That's the world where I want everyone to live!"

Denzel: "I definitely can't top that, but I'll second it. For a world where everyone can have a family like mine!"

Tifa: "I could say a lot ... About how proud I am of my kids ..."

Cloud: "And how honored I am to know all of you ..."

Tifa: "But those are things shown more by living them than saying them."

Cloud: "The important things take more than words."

【Marlene: "Come, planet! Hear OUR cry!"】

Battle with Genesis's final form, "Revelation."

After the epic battle, Genesis sits propped up on his knees, a catatonic look on his face. Cinders rise off him. His sword has now broken in half.

Genesis: "Goddess ... why have you forsaken me?"

Genesis: "Goddess, if my body be an affront to you, then allow me to serve thee as a spirit."

He raises his sword (the part of the blade with the hilt still connected to it) and shoves it through his own heart.

The team looks on, horrified.

Genesis: "Even if the morrow is barren of promises/Nothing shall forestall my return/To become the dew that quenches the land/To spare the sands, the seas, the skies/I offer thee this silent sacrifice."

He slumps forward, dead.

【There is a moment of silence.】

Cid: "Well ... the punk's down for the count, and with the ocean rolling in, these machines should start shorting out soon. Our job's done, people. Let's get outta here."

【Suddenly, a bright light rises from Genesis's body as it dissipates. The light flies into the furnace behind him, from which a brighter light begins emanating and increasing in intensity.】

Cloud: "That light! It's the same as..."

Tifa: "...the Light of the Goddess..."

Marlene: "She's ... she's taking form in there!"

Denzel: "Come again?!"

Marlene: "He summoned her!"

Cid: "The place is flooding too fast to stay here and deal with it! We need to get out of here!"

Cloud: "What's going to happen?!"

Marlene: "I think Cid's theory about the reactor shorting out is about to go out the window. She's probably going to hijack the siphoning process, whether the machines stay on or not."

Tifa: "Like Omega did seven years ago?"

Marlene: "Exactly."

Yuffie: "Let's start that getting out of here then!"

Cid: "To the docks! Double time!"

The party makes their way to the sub and starts boarding. Shera is waiting for them.

Shera: "Cid! The sub took a hit from one of those lasers a few minutes ago. It's going to take on water."

Cid: "Shit!"

Elfe: "Will it prevent us reaching the surface?"

Cid: "Maybe not. If we go fast enough, we might make it. We have to at least try. We definitely won't make it if we don't. Move it, people! Get your asses in gear!"

Cloud hangs back while the others get on.

Cid: "Come on, let's get the hell out of here! I may have been happy to risk dying without air in space, but I am not drowning in this shithole!"

Yuffie: "Suffocation is suffocation, right? Does it really matter much where asphyxiation happens?"

Cid: "It does to this old pilot. Move your boney ass!"

Tifa: "Cloud ... what are you waiting for?"

Cloud: "Somebody has to stay."

Tifa: "What? Why?!"

Cloud: "Because, if Marlene's right -- and I think she's going to be -- then that goddess of Genesis's will be after us in no time. And I doubt we're going to be so lucky that she drowns. The sub's going to be a sitting duck. Somebody has to keep her busy."

Denzel: "Cloud ..."

Marlene: "You can't ..."

Cloud: "I have to."

Denzel and Cloud just look at one another and say nothing. After a short but long moment --

Denzel: "Yeah ... he does. Come on, guys. Let's go."

Tifa stares at Cloud, trying to fight the tears and worry.

Cid pops up out the sub.

Cid: "What the hell are you guys doing?! Last boat's leaving! Let's go!"

Denzel: "Cloud is staying behind. Is the sub ready?"

Cid: "What the hell?! What for?"

Denzel: "To cover us. Cid, the sub?"

Cid: "Yeah, it's ready ..."

Denzel: "Cool. Can you bring me one of those oxygen masks real quick?"

Cid: "One sec."

Denzel: "Thanks."

Marlene runs up to Cloud and hugs him, burying her face in his chest. He puts his arm around her.

[Marlene: "Come back safe, ok? You have a family waiting for you."]

Cloud: "I will."

He kisses her on the forehead and she runs to the sub.

Tifa: "Cloud, don't you die on me. We have a lot to do together still. A lot."

Cloud: "Don't worry. You're not getting rid of me that easily."

They embrace for another long moment, then Tifa makes her way to the sub as well.

Denzel's standing by the hatch. As Tifa goes down, Denzel holds up the oxygen mask he requested from Cid.

Denzel: "Cloud! Use this!"

He throws it to him. Cloud catches it.

Denzel: "I figure it will give you a fighting chance at least."

Cloud nods. "Thank you."

Denzel: "Good luck old man. See you soon."

Cloud: "You too."

Denzel goes down in the sub and closes the hatch behind him.

Cid: "Alright, people, hold onto your drawers and try not to shit in them!"

Cid launches the sub. Cloud stands on the dock watching them go. Once they're out of sight, he turns his attention back to the furnace room. The reactor is still filling with water. The furnace is glowing so brightly now that the metal can't even be seen.

Cloud: "Let's see what you can do."

The furnace explodes in a shower of light and green energy, further destroying the surroundings and exposing them to the sea. Minerva has emerged, the Lifestream still feeding into her. Cloud dashes toward her.

Outside, the sub has gotten clear of the reactor, but as it begins to surface, the water it's taking on becomes too much. The sub begins sinking.

Cid: "Goddammit! Fuck! Another minute and we would have made it!"

Nanaki: "Cid, is there anything we can do now?"

Cid: "Unless you think you can make it to the surface from here without drowning or the sudden shift in pressure killing you? Not a goddamn thing!"

Yuffie: "So this is really it ...?"

Cid leans forward, his hands on his head.

Cid: "We're not going to make it. I'm sorry, you guys. I tried."

Shera puts her arms around his neck. He grips one of her hands.

Meanwhile, Cloud is attacking Minerva. His attacks are having no effect. The reactor has come apart at this point and their battle has fully carried out into the sea itself. From within the sub, the team is watching.

Shelke: "Vincent, I ... you know ..."

Vincent: "I do. I've always known. And I feel the same."

They hold on to one another.

Nanaki: "Dinne ... at least there may still be a chance that you'll be alright ..."

Cissnei is quiet for a moment.

Cissnei: "Denzel, I want to tell you now, before it's too late. My name is --"

Denzel: "Tell me when we know we're going to make it. Because we will, alright? We're going to get through this."

Cid: "Unless you can turn the Lifestream against itself, Denny, that don't seem too likely."

Suddenly, Marlene has a realization.

Marlene: "... Of course!"

Yuffie: "What?"

Marlene: "We still have a chance. Shelke, can you do that SND thing and take me in with you?"

Shelke: "Yes. There are two terminals on this sub."

Marlene: "Good work, Shera! Well, let's get started! We've got to hurry!"

Cloud continues hacking away at Minerva to no avail. She's not even bothered with attacking him yet. She's just allowing him to wear himself down.

Suddenly, she lunges her staff forward and into Cloud's shoulder. He screams out.

Lifestream tendrils wrap around him and pull him in close to her helmeted face. Suddenly, more Lifestream tendrils come up out of the ocean floor.

One large Lifestream tendril rises from beneath the sub and begins carrying it toward the surface, while others surround and entangle Minerva.

Somewhere up above, Mr. Dolphin takes notice and begins swimming down toward the reactor.

Cid: "What the hell is happening?"

Marlene: "All the people who have died recently ... they still have a say in what the planet does ... And I don't think it asked them for their input yet."

[Minerva observes the Lifestream tendrils that approach her. She lets Cloud slide off of her staff, as she is distracted by the will that is approaching her. Like in the original game's ending, the Lifestream is making a stand, but now against Minerva.

Cloud observes in awe, standing on one knee, as this event unfolds around him. Close-up on Minerva as she is engulfed with the will of the recently deceased. Everything becomes white as the background music reaches a loud crescendo.

We briefly transition to the Turks in the Junon underground, where the security robots they battle suddenly fall to the ground. The Shadow Fiends vaporize.

Tseng: "... They did it."

The final scenes now play. The first scenes are depicted via cutscene cards. The submarine is on land, but on its side.]

The silhouettes of the team can be made out walking away from the wreckage. Next is shown a shot of Tifa excitedly pointing something out to the others. Then we see a shot of Cloud breaking the surface of the ocean, hanging onto Mr. Dolphin while holding onto his oxygen mask.

Finally, we see a shot of Cloud embracing his family in the shallows as the others look on from the shoreline. This cutscene card carries with it the following caption: "Sorry I'm late."

[ENDING ACT

This is when a mix between cutscene cards and sprite graphics showing us the world and its people after an undetermined passage of time. Among many others, we see:

- The continued family life at 7th Heaven.
- Dio, Mukki and Chocobo Joe in the Corel Desert.
- The newly built Barret statue in New Corel.
- The loving couple at the Glacier Research Site.
- Nanaki, Elfe and Dinne in Cosmo Canyon.
- The continued lives of the Turks, as well as Rufus.
- Cid and Shera standing next to one another. The airship 'The Shera' is being repaired. The player will remember here that Shera (the wife) doesn't have long left to live, thus adding a bittersweet element here.
- Denzel dating a girl in Edge (or Kalm). Yes, he cares about girls now!

- Yuffie Kisaragi in Wutai. Cissnei might be here, as -- according to Squall_of_SeeD -- she has now left the Turks.
- Vincent and Shelke, together and happy.
- Marlene visiting Barret's grave in the Midgar ruins. Next to Barret's grave lies Reno's grave. Them being next to each other represents the peace established between them in death.
- Many more places and NPCs.

The exact order of these events is not yet determined. If some NPC events/sidequests have not been completed, you will simply be treated to a black-and-white shot of an area (similar to what is done at the end of FFVI).

In the case that you have achieved 100% Lifestream Alignment, an extra scene is unlocked at the end of this montage. It shows us Minerva, either in a black void or an "outer-space-like" background. We hear the planet's humming.】

Minerva lets her staff fall aside, then her shield, her armor, and finally her helmet. She then smiles and dissipates into Lifestream. The hate-filled summon is no more. The planet is at peace.

We set up our final piece of the ending with the famous "500 Years Later" scene, which is shown at the end of the OG and at the beginning of Advent Children. In the case of FFVII: FAGC, this scene is "490 Years Later".

[Note by S_o_S: It is recommended (requested?) that readers of this document listen to this song while considering the remainder of the plot draft --

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pSEZc7zKMyM>

This piece was of vital inspiration to me in the conception and writing of FFVII:FAGC, and always accompanies the epilogue when I envision it.】

The shot begins with Nanaki already at the top of the mountain. He turns to his offspring, nods, then turns back and starts jumping down the mountain, on his way to the ruins of Midgar.

The cutscene cards show us moving our way down to Midgar, through its overgrown ruins, past Aerith's church (Red and the cubs make a brief stop to pay their respects) and to the Sector 6 playground where we saw Reno and Barret's graves 490 years earlier. The place is filled with graves now. Some players will understand the implication: Our protagonists have been laid to rest together generations ago.

A short stretch away we see a memorial sign. We see it up close in the final cutscene card. It reads:

**To all those souls once lost here
And those since entrusted to this ground
May we meet again in the Promised Land**

With this, the story of Final Fantasy VII is finally over.

THE END

