

Eh, it was either this or "Final Fantasy SE7EN." I go with my decision. Oh, and I don't know if I'm going to keep writing this or not - it just depends on how much I hate it a month from now. This thing is constantly edited, mostly due to the fact that it, well, sucks ^^.

THE LIBERATION ARMY OF DARKNESS

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"Trapped in time.

Surrounded by Konami.

Low on polygons."

It was, Cloud reflected sourly, not one of his better days.

The first thing that particularly sucked about it was the fact that he was no longer deliciously alone with Tifa inside the romantically bedecked Costa Del Sol villa, with the latter's skimpy outfit rapidly achieving escape velocity. All he could remember was that the doorbell had chimed and a muffled voice had announced, "Landshark!" - coincidentally enough, around the same time his lady companion had excused herself to run to the bathroom. Puzzled and sexually frustrated, he had opened the door - and been promptly dragged through the mysteriously convenient time-warp gleefully lurking outside.

Being chained to a group of griping, 16-bit savages and then dragged through hot, nasty sand struck him as being a distant second.

And now, to double his humiliation, he was being paraded down the main street of an unknown town to ensure that all its inhabitants were given the fair and equal opportunity to pelt him with large chunks of primitive bitmap textures meant to represent cobbles. However, since the town's population seemed to consist only of a dozen or so oddly similar citizens, he wasn't overly concerned about the tiny mob causing any sort of facial-marring injury. One girl, however, had cut in front of the path he was sullenly trudging and decked him smartly with what he could only guess as being a basket studded with nine-inch horseshoe nails dipped in hydrochloric acid. His polygonal head had been sent spinning - the time it took to clear it gave her ample time to slip back into the minuscule crowd, hence obscuring her identity and preventing any spoilers to a minor plot twist occurring later in the story.

The procession came to an abrupt halt inside the walls of an ancient castle and a man whom Cloud assumed to be the king - seeing as he looked nothing like his eerily identical guards -

grimly approached. To his left walked a remarkably bleached-looking woman, and to his right a man in dark armour. Cloud was instantly struck by the air of sophistication and refinement they all seemed to be lacking. (Probably the main character,) Cloud thought to himself, noticing the middle fellow's pale violet hair. (We always get the coolest hair. And that's his romantic interest, and that's his troubled best friend.)

"My name is King Cecil of Baron," the strange 16-bit man suddenly announced very grandly to the prisoners and the to mob of identical townspeople in general. "This is my wife Rosa, and this my friend, Kain."

(Damn, I'm good at this,) Cloud thought smugly. One of the savages he was chained to shouted back angrily, "My name is King Edgar of Figaro, and I demand that you import some decently rendered woman into this town! This is a crying shame! The six odd ones here all look the same - ugly!" The characters nearest him nodded vehemently in agreement - the males did, at any rate. The females looked disgusted.

At his callous retort the town's dancing girl, already upset over the fact that her freewheeling habit of flinging off her clothing in a fit of balletic passion was being unnaturally repressed, burst into tears and fled. She was largely ignored by the crowd, mostly due to the fact that she wasn't scantily clothed at the moment.

Cecil tried to point an accusatory finger but had to settle with spinning around once in place instead. "Be silent, you Final Fantasy throwbacks!"

"THROWBACKS?!" Edgar screeched. "24-bits says our game was better than yours!"

"Ours sold more copies and is widely acknowledged as a cult-classic!!" Cecil howled.

"WE - HAVE - KEYCHAINS!" The king of Figaro struck as best a triumphant pose he could manage while being chained and minimally animated.

The crowd collectively gasped, "GASP!" Cloud rolled his eyes. Cecil reeled back as if struck.

"That tears it! I'll punish you for your insolence and for appearing in our game!" Cecil snapped. While Cloud struggled through the mangled English accentuating the last announcement the violet-haired king tried to gesture to one of his guards. He had to settle with violently hopping up and down instead.

"You there! Throw one of his extras into the Pit of Untimely Death!"

"The Pit, the Pit!!!" the crowd chorused joyfully. The guard hesitated.

"But, sir," he protested meekly. "We don't have a 'Pit of Untimely Death' in Baron Castle...!"

"Oh really?" his king said. Once again he tried to point; once again the maneuver eluded him. "Then what do you call that?"

The guard turned ninety-degrees to the right to face the direction Cecil was in. If he were a Final Fantasy 3 character, he would have blinked in sheer surprise.

"My god!" he exclaimed. "There's a Pit of Untimely Death there!"

Their curiosity piqued, the crowd turned in unison to see whatever it was Cecil and the guard were looking at. To their astonishment they discovered that they had completely overlooked a very large and cavernous hole lined with sharp metal spikes standing placidly in the castle's courtyard. They turned back to Cecil in mute appeal for an explanation.

"Place your trust in Square to Make The Impossible Happen By Screwing With The Plot," Cecil told them with alarming serenity. The crowd "oohed" and "ahhed" its approval.

Cloud, to his credit, said absolutely nothing. Satisfied by the appearance of the elusive, death-dealing torture chamber, the guard pushed forward one of the more ordinary-looking of the Final Fantasy 3 characters who, coincidentally enough, was named Wedge.

Wedge sighed as he was led to the edge of the Pit. His last thought as he was rudely shoved into oblivion was, 'oh no, not again.' It is often surmised that our knowledge of the Final Fantasy universe would be greatly increased if we were to fully understand the significance of those words. But we don't, so sucks to be us.

The crowd eagerly waited for spurting blood and other such nastiness to erupt from the bowels of the Pit upon Wedge's inevitable demise. They were instead greeted with awkward, edited silence, and memory of Nintendo's stringent "no gore for the American kiddies" rule slowly began to seep into their awareness'. They cheered loudly anyway.

Cecil, encouraged by their applause, grinned foolishly and began to search for another victim amidst the now-humbled Final Fantasy 3 characters. His eyes almost immediately fell upon Cloud's conspicuously polygon figure.

"Holy FUDGE!" he shouted gleefully. "It's a Final Fantasy SEVEN character!"

Cloud blinked as two dozen pairs of unfriendly eyes, including those of the FF 3 characters, were trained on him.

"Glorioski, you're right!" Locke agreed. "Hey, those are the guys that pushed us out of the Number One position. They stole our fame and acclaim!"

"Their merchandise is more sought after than ours!" Celes yowled.

"THEY'RE A PLAYSTATION GAME!" Edgar roared.

The largely Nintendo-affiliated crowd booed and hissed. Several angry exclamations of 'traitor!!' drifted to where Cloud was standing, as well as several suggestions as to where he could shove his non-cartridge format. Inevitably, it was replaced with the monotonous chanting of "The Pit

The Pit The Pit!" The manacles around Cloud's wrists were unlocked by the guard, which was a Good Thing - the fact that he was being herded towards the gaping maw of the Pit of Untimely Death was, undeniably, a Bad One.

"Waitaminute!" he shouted desperately, then furiously. "What the heck do you motherfudgers think you're doing?" He suddenly paused and was impatiently jabbed in his implied kidneys by the point of a 16-bit spear.

"Motherfudger?! he repeated, incredulously.

Cecil nodded in a manner that somehow managed to exude an air of smug satisfaction. "You traveled back in time to a game made BEFORE swearing was allowed in Square," he explained. "Suitable precautions are being taken to keep a lid on your potty-mouth."

"FUCHU!" Cloud screamed at him. "You sock-sucking son of a witch! Shrew you and the horse you came in on!!"

Cecil ignored him and tried to wave his hand nonchalantly at the guard. "Toss him in!" he announced grandly. The guard would have grinned if he were animated to, and casually jabbed Cloud once in the back. Cloud impressively overreacted to the prod and, after a moment of precarious Teetering and Flailing at the edge of the Pit, did an altogether stunning forward-flip-with-a-half-twist into it.

He landed hard on his back in a pool of Cloudy water. While an ordinary man would have been severely incapacitated by the fall (which was by no means laughable), Cloud sprung to his feet with nary a flinch and began to warily survey his new surroundings. Far above, at the lip of the Pit, he could faintly hear the jeering of the crowd. Inside the Pit, however, it was forbiddingly silent, save for the annoyingly redundant sound effect of a frog chirping, played on a repeated loop. The cavernous walls of the Pit were textured with poorly rendered moss and algae, and a fine (yet not truly transparent) mist wafted just a foot over the water.

Cloud splashed his way over to the wall and examined a chain that ran up from the water to the rim of the Pit above. He gave it a yank and it held.

"Surely this will hold my weight," he said aloud, as most video game characters, unable to keep their thoughts silent, are inclined to. "Boy, these guys really are stupid-"

The rest of his oration was broken off by a horrifying shriek. Cloud turned around in place just in time to receive a well-aimed boot to the head. He staggered back (if a twelve-foot fall wouldn't cause irreparable damage, violently propelled footwear would hardly phase him) and glared at his attacker, who was crouching in the water several feet away.

To his immense shock it was Yuffie, who, judging from her torn clothing and pockmarked face, was obviously enjoying the later stages of decomposition. Either that or she had just hit puberty and was currently engaged in those awkward acne-ridden teenage years.

"Yuffie?!" he exclaimed incredulously. "What the heck are you doing HERE?!"

She shrugged. "Cameo appearance," she replied, and gave him A Pointed Look. "But surely YOU know all about THOSE, right CLOUD?" He coughed, suddenly embarrassed.

She grinned and launched herself towards him as he stumbled for a way to both justify his appearance and berate hers. After hurling into a series of back-flips that would make any gymnast shudder, she landed in front of him and kicked him Squarely in the groin. Cloud doubled over like a hinge in a gesture of great physical pain, conveniently putting himself in an excellent position for her to draw back and gleefully deck him one across his chin, which she naturally did. Cloud flew over backwards, his body tracing a splendid parabola in the air, and hit the far wall before sliding into the water.

"Fudge you," he gurgled after a moment. "You always did kiss me off!!"

Zombie-Yuffie, already in the act of rushing forward to further spoil his boyish good looks, froze. "KISS me off?!" she screeched. "What the HECK are you talking about?"

"They won't let us swear in this game-world," he replied, slowly standing and working out the non-existent kinks in his back. "Go ahead, try it."

Yuffie did, and blinked in surprise. "Hey!" she said, impressed. "That's neat - I wonder-"

What Yuffie wondered was soon rendered irrelevant, for Cloud, having recovered from her initial attack, leaped gallantly forward to grab a fist-full of her hair in each hand and head-butted her fiercely across the bridge of her nose.

"ARRRRRRRGH!!!!" the zombie-ninja screamed, reeling back and clutching at her face. "YOUR STUPID FUDGING HAIR POKED ONE OF MY FUDGING EYES OUT, YOU FUDGING ARSEHOLE!!!!" She began to stagger and thrash blindly around the inside of the Pit.

Cloud jumped back out of the reach of her flailing arms and was surprised to hear a shout from above him. Looking up, he saw that Edgar was leaning far out over the edge of the Pit and was watching the scene with interest.

"Hey!" Edgar shouted. "She really kicked the snot out of you, eh?"

Cloud ignored him. "Shut up and throw me something rusty and jagged!" From the corner of his eye he could see that a furious, and recovering, Yuffie was assuming a position that promised much pain.

"LIKE, RIGHT NOW!!!" Cloud screamed as she hurled a fistful of square objects in his direction. He dodged to one side as they sliced through the air he had previously been occupying and embedded themselves deeply into the wall. Propelled by morbid curiosity, he examined one that had stuck into the rock closest to him, and the smoky aura of untamed Evil it excreted made him shudder involuntarily.

"Wow," he remarked, swallowing a mouthful of bile. "AOL really WILL mail those disks everywhere."

Yuffie screamed, "SCREEEEEEEEAM!" at him and charged forward, obviously intended to do life-altering damage. He winced-

-and something was falling from above, spinning in its flight like some great bird; end over end over end-

"Oh yeah," he heard Edgar suddenly shout. "You're, like, supposed to *catch* that. Sorry."

With a skill born of desperation and Square's innate need to tamper, Cloud crouched and leapt mightily into the air; he made a wild grab for the heavy object before its momentum carried it into the water. And caught it. And nearly severed his own hand at the wrist.

"Oh, sorry again," Edgar added, his voice drifting from above. "I already turned it on too. My bad."

Cloud stared at the foreign object in his hands and grinned toothily. It was a very large, very rusty, and very infectious looking chainsaw. He laughed maniacally and raised it above his head in a vaguely He-Man reminiscent manner - it smoked and gave a feral roar in a thoroughly ego-pleasing manner.

"TIME TO BECOME TWINS!!" he shrieked, and swung it even as Yuffie pounced. The blade carved a wide horizontal arc. The engine snarled. Two halves of ninja went hurtling off into space, and there were two very satisfying splashes.

"Dang, shoot, fudge," Yuffie's upper half remarked as it sank into the water.

And Cloud, chainsaw in hand, turned and climbed out of the pit.

TO BE CONTINUED.....OBVIOUSLY.

DISCLAIMER: All characters © Square. Army of Darkness © uhh, some company I can't remember. Fudge. Better look that one up. This version property of moi, Lex. Deepest apologies to Douglas Adams. No rights reserved, but cold drinks occasionally served.