

"Every story has a beginning.
This is the start of yours."

Auron
FINAL FANTASY X

The first **Final Fantasy** title appeared on American shores in 1990, long after rescuing its Japanese creators from impending bankruptcy and virtual obscurity. Its unique blend of traditional Western mythology and science fiction had an almost immediate impact on game players the world over, going on to become one of the cornerstones of the fledgling console RPG genre. Since its inception, the **Final Fantasy** series has become one of the best-selling — and most influential — role-playing sagas of all time, spanning no less than thirteen official titles on seven platforms and countless spin-offs, including two animated series and full-length CG movies. The **Final Fantasy RPG** is both an homage to these titles and an attempt to bring their spirit and feel to the gaming table.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The **Third Edition Core Rulebook** is the foundation of the **FFRPG**. How you approach the information within will depend on both your roleplaying experience and your familiarity with the **Final Fantasy** games.

If you are a **Final Fantasy** fan getting into roleplaying for the first time, you'll soon be right at home here. Tabletop roleplaying games have entertained people around the world for more than three decades; with this book, some dice, friends, paper, and a little imagination, you'll have everything you need to follow in the footsteps of Locke, Tidus and Zidane, traveling strange lands, discovering legendary weapons and ancient magics, and battling against evil in every shape and form.

While prior roleplaying experience is generally a plus with games like this, the **Core Rulebook** explicitly assumes that you are playing for the first time. Because of this, you'll find detailed examples and explanations throughout. The second half of this introduction in particular contains a rundown of what roleplaying entails and how to go about playing a tabletop RPG.

If you are new to the **Final Fantasy** games, don't fret. No 'insider' knowledge is required to use and enjoy the contents of this book. In fact, the first portion of this introduction is specifically designed as a crash course for this much-loved series, keeping you up to speed with the series veterans. In the space of the next few pages, you'll find capsule summaries for the fifteen most important **Final Fantasy**

games as well as a primer on the content and feel that's common to them. This is supplemented by the rest of the book, which offers plenty of descriptive detail for the creatures, professions, and races of the series.

If you have experience with role-playing games, the **FFRPG** should be a relatively straightforward read. Like many other rulebooks, the rules of the **FFRPG** will be introduced in small segments over the course of this book with the ultimate intent of preparing the readers for their own adventures in the **Final Fantasy** universe.

Finally, if you played the **First** or **Second Editions**, be prepared to rediscover the **FFRPG** in its entirety. The **Third Edition** is a tighter, neater, more comprehensive piece of work than its predecessors, eliminating unclear rules while dramatically increasing the range of options available to both GMs and PCs.

In order to help your understanding of the **FFRPG's** ruleset, all important terms and formulas in this book are marked in **boldface** the first time they are used. In addition, key system terms — such as Job, Speed, Weapon, Attack Action, and Task Check — will be consistently capitalized to head off potential confusion.

! Clarifications and Examples

Because of the game's complexity, the main text will occasionally be broken up by clarifications and examples, distinguished by boxes like this one. Examples will have a question mark (?) in the upper left corner; clarifications an exclamation mark (!).

Some rules presented in this rulebook are **Optional Rules** — these will always be clearly denoted as such in the game text itself when they occur. Optional Rules are given largely for the benefit of Gamemasters as an alternative to existing rules; whether or not these are implemented is down to individual preference.

CONTENTS AND ORGANISATION

Beyond this introduction, the **Core Rulebook** is divided into ten chapters and five appendices, each covering one aspect of the **FFRPG** in detail.

Chapter 1 introduces the mechanics used by the **Final Fantasy RPG**. Almost all information in here is built upon in later chapters, and should be considered essential to anyone interested in playing the game.

Chapter 2 outlines the character creation process in step-by-step fashion, offering a logical starting point for players to begin their exploration of the rest of the rulebook. It also covers character advancement, as well as details on how to create an experienced starting character.

Chapter 3 gives an overview of several **Final Fantasy** races, discussing physiology and culture as well as offering concrete roleplaying notes and naming advice for those interested in exploring the possibilities offered by non-human characters.

Chapter 4 introduces the professions of the **FFRPG**, their powers and talents.

Chapter 5 describes the Skills of the **Final Fantasy RPG**, including their applications and limitations.

Chapter 6 concerns itself with equipment. It contains full Weapon, Armor, Accessory, and Item listings, and delves into stores and currency within the **Final Fantasy** universe.

Chapter 7 delves into combat and all things associated with it; include damage, dying, unusual conditions, and unexpected occurrences

Chapter 8 covers Magic in **Final Fantasy**, and holds all major Spell lists used by the Black, White, Red, Blue, and Time Mages.

Chapter 9 covers the adventuring life, including rest and recovery, travel, navigating towns, and overcoming challenges.

Chapter 10 is devoted solely to the GM. Amongst other things, it contains essential advice for first-time GMs, expanded rules for campaign play, and a number of helpful tools for making new races, equipment, and traps.

Appendix I serves as a supplement to the Skill listings first presented in **Chapter 5**, and covers a wide variety of Technical Skills and their applications.

Appendix II houses do-it-yourself rules for monster creation, guiding GMs through the process of creating fearsome foes for their players to challenge in mortal combat.

Appendix III covers the vagaries of Summon magic, including the powerful beasts Summoners call their allies.

Appendix IV offers suggestions and mechanics for emphasizing the **FFRPG**'s storytelling aspects.

Appendix V is a collection of sheets designed for both GM and player usage.

Finally, the last few pages of the **Core Rulebook** are devoted to an index. All important terms, names and concepts within the book itself are located there for easy reference.

GAME COVERAGE

The **Core Rulebook** contains material converted from each of the twelve 'core' **Final Fantasy** games and their sequels, plus **Final Fantasy Tactics**, **Final Fantasy Tactics Advance**, and **Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles**. Rather than emulate any one particular game in the series, the rules presented here try to find a common ground between them by mixing and matching elements from each major release. The Summoning rules presented in **Appendix III**, for instance, are directly based on the 'persistent' Summoning first seen in **Final Fantasy X**, while the fire-and-forget Summoning from earlier games is presented as a separate ability.

This design philosophy means that some games are going to be more difficult to emulate than others. The basic rules don't contain any provisions for changing Jobs in the style of **Final Fantasy III** and **V**, or the option of open-ended character development of the kind

offered by **Final Fantasy X**'s Sphere Grid or **XII**'s License Board. Game-specific conversion rules may surface at a future date to accommodate GMs interested in recreating one particular e-game.

NAMING

The names of the characters, races, equipment, items, and spells listed in this rulebook usually follow the games' official North American translations. Because the quality of these localizations has dramatically improved over the twenty-five years since **Final Fantasy** first arrived in the US, names used in the **FFRPG** tend to favor the newest and most accurate translations. This includes the updated translations given to recent remakes of older titles like **Final Fantasy IV** and **Final Fantasy Tactics**; players who have only experienced the originals may not immediately recognize some of the names used here.

The rationale for this is relatively simple: once a translation changes, it generally becomes the standard for all future games in the series. For example, the old *[x]* 1, 2, 3, 4 sequence of Spells was dropped in favor of *-ra*, *-ga*, and *-ja* suffixes back in '99, 'Gil' replaced 'Gold Pieces' as of **Final Fantasy VII**, and the most recent translations began phasing out 'Soft' for 'Golden Needle,' the original Japanese name. As a result, keeping in the game in line with the most current translations helps to 'future proof' the **FFRPG**.

WHAT IS FINAL FANTASY?

As might be expected from a series with twenty years of history, hundreds of creative personnel, and few direct sequels, **Final Fantasy** is a varied beast. Each game is a universe in its own right, introducing new protagonists, settings and conflicts; on the surface, there seems to be little connection between the traditional fantasy of the earlier titles and the out-and-out science fiction of the later ones, save for the name itself. Looking deeper, however, reveals a number of recurring themes that bind the games together, creating an important common ground.

THE MAGIC OF MYTH

The **Final Fantasy** universe takes its roots from a rich tradition of mythology and popular storytelling. Anybody familiar with the heroic fantasy genre will recognize most of the tropes: legendary swords, mighty warriors, shadowy villains, tales of magic and destiny. This is reflected in the liberal use of cultural references seen throughout the series, ranging from Robin Hood, King Arthur, Excalibur, and the Masamune katana to creatures like goblins, kappa, chimeras, and dragons.

THE CENTER OF ATTENTION

Events in **Final Fantasy** games actively revolve around the party. Major events only happen when they are on the scene, or because they are; if there is change in the world, the players either have a direct hand in it or will deal with the implications themselves. This extends to the larger plot – evil powers will often know the

characters on a first-name basis, and make the party's eradication a personal priority.

As a result, the players' deeds should be epic enough to warrant this kind of attention. Though it isn't necessary for every adventure to have world-shaking consequences, the general thrust of a campaign should see the heroes doing what **Final Fantasy** characters do best: defeating legendary monsters and mages, obtaining fabled weapons, rescuing towns from the clutches of evil, and toppling corrupt empires.

THE HEROES

Adventuring parties in **Final Fantasy** tend to be an eclectic melange of ages, backgrounds, and motivations. While there's plenty of scope for stout, pure-hearted heroes and noble warriors, not all **Final Fantasy** characters are knights in shining armor; there's just as much scope for shaded protagonists like the antisocial loner Squall Leonhart, the thieving, self-obsessed Yuffie Kisaragi, or Shadow, a man willing to sell his killing talents to anyone with the money to match his asking price. What sets these 'darker' characters apart from their adversaries is their conviction; even if they cheat, abuse or betray their comrades in the course of the adventure, when push comes to shove, they can be counted on to do the right thing. Players, too, should be willing to uphold those ideals.

Despite the diversity in groups, there are also a few constants. The leader of the group tends to be younger and less world-wise, aged between 16 and 21. For many games, this is mainly a narrative convenience; as the fresh-faced hero learns about the world around him and begins unraveling ancient legends, so too will the player gradually become acquainted with the game's background and storyline. Several games couple the younger protagonist with an older mentor character, though the mentors tend to spend more time being cantankerous to actually teaching their younger counterparts anything of practical value.

In the earlier games, female party members tended to use magic rather than physical weapons in battle, and though the series has thrown up plenty of she-warriors since then, Summoners, Callers, and White Mages are almost universally women. In later games, female characters tend to be divided into 'cute,' 'sexy,' and 'beautiful' types, depending on appearance and personality; **Final Fantasy VII**, **Final Fantasy VIII**, **Final Fantasy X**, and **Final Fantasy XII** are all examples of this kind of design. If there are any members of ancient near-human races or lost civilizations in the party, chances are high that are they are female as well.

Finally, non-human characters form a distinct minority in the group. In most games, only one member of the party is anything other than human, the notable exception being **Final Fantasy IX**.

ULTIMATE POWER

Anyone coming to **Final Fantasy** from traditional fantasy roleplaying games will quickly notice one thing: the power level is significantly higher. Characters routinely absorb or shrug off damage that would fell an army in real life and amass entire arsenals of ancient artifacts and legendary weapons over the course of their careers. Magic can

be powerful enough to lay waste to entire cities at a time; ancient artifacts and rituals sink continents and reshape the very structure of the planet. **Final Fantasy** is all about thinking larger-than-life while retaining an intimate scale; great deeds are accomplished not by armies, but by small bands of dedicated warriors with a righteous cause and the will to see it through.

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY

The plots of **Final Fantasy** are ultimately about discovery — discoveries about one's self, about the past, about the world, about the people one travels with and the reasons for fighting alongside them. In this sense, a **Final Fantasy** game is like a mystery whose specifics are discovered one piece at a time. Never give your players too much information about the setting or its powers ahead of time — instead, introduce these details one piece at a time.

CULTURE CLASH

Final Fantasy games tend to be the product of many different cultural and genre conventions colliding at once. The first game was heavily influenced by venerable fantasy RPG **Dungeons & Dragons**, but spiked the punch with the addition of robots, time travel, and a dungeon set aboard an orbital space station. Since then, science fiction and fantasy have freely intermingled, albeit in different ways.

Earlier games were set in traditional fantasy worlds where ancient civilizations had achieved tremendous technological sophistication before lapsing into obscurity, resulting in settings sharing Vikings and cryogenic suspension, Paladins and space travel, submarines and magic circles. Later games advanced the technology levels to the Industrial Age, modern day, and even near future without reducing the impact of magic; a high-powered weapon in these worlds could fire laser beams just as easily as highly focused arcane energies.

Japanese popular culture has also played an important role in shaping the series. With more contemporary settings came idol singers, card games, home pages, and high fashion, while the Japanese love of all things cute has resulted in worlds populated with cartoonish, often ridiculous monsters — winged cats, imps in pots, blob-men, knife-wielding fish in monk's robes.

Then there are the miscellaneous sources and inspirations that have been added to the mix over the years: the *Star Wars* films, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, cult series *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, Studio Ghibli's *Nausicaa* — origin of the iconic Chocobos — and even the classic rock act Queen, cited as an inspiration by **Final Fantasy Tactics** director Yasumi Matsuno. In short, when it comes to breaking a **Final Fantasy** game down to its components, it honestly *is* a case of 'everything but the kitchen sink.'

CONSOLE LOGIC

There's a certain kind of twisted logic to console RPGs in general — and **Final Fantasy** specifically — that is difficult to adjust to at first. Here, after all, is a world where heroes can recover from near-fatal beatings with just eight hours of sleep, where gold coins drop from dead lizards and ten-year-old girls can flatten a thirty-year old man

in plate mail without breaking a sweat. The important thing is not to worry *why* it happens and just accept it does — **Final Fantasy** games run on their own internal logic, and aren't meant to be an accurate simulation of real life.

SUMMONING

Since **Final Fantasy III** first introduced the concept of 'summoning,' drawing powerful supernatural creatures into a battle to unleash devastating magical attacks has become an important concept for the series. Summoned creatures such as Shiva, the Ice Queen and the Wyrming Bahamut have been important plot elements in several games, and act as 'recurring characters' across titles.

RECURRING ELEMENTS

A few setting elements are common to every 'core' **Final Fantasy**, regardless of how far into the future or past it may be set. The first is the presence of flying vehicles, usually the airships that become the party's primary means of transportation later in the game. **Final Fantasy Tactics** is the only game to break this rule, but even it features a final battle in a graveyard of ancient airships, thereby narrowly squeaking by.

The second is the presence of the Chocobo as the primary beast of burden and riding animal — horses only make rare appearances in the games, and are generally used exclusively by monsters and enemy soldiers.

The third is one character named Cid, who usually plies his trade as an engineer or scientist. Cid tends to be older, and acts as a mentor to the party; in some cases, he may even join them in battle. Cid is also intimately tied to airships, and in many cases constructs or designs them himself.

Less-common but important recurring elements include powerful, world-altering Crystals — usually one for each of the four Elements of Fire, Earth, Water, and Wind — and an inseparable pair of characters named Biggs and Wedge stuck doing dirty and unglamorous work. These aside, many of the Spells, races, and monsters in this book are 'iconic' **Final Fantasy** creations at home in any of the actual games.

PG-13

A critical factor to consider is the overall tone of the game. With the exception of the grim **Tactics** universe, almost every **Final Fantasy** game is teen-friendly in terms of content, though titles released after the Nintendo era pushed a little harder on this front than the earlier games. Sex may be alluded to — as with **Final Fantasy VI**'s thinly-veiled prostitutes, the risqué dancers of **Final Fantasy IV**, or the Honeybee Inn in **Final Fantasy VII** — but is never actually seen 'on-screen', regardless of whether it's the actual act or the aftermath. Relationships, where they exist, tend to be a platonic ideal of romantic love; whether they are consummated is generally left to the player's own imagination.

Though death occurs on a massive scale, violence, too, tends to be stylized rather than explicit; no buckets of blood or severed limbs flying through the air every time swords cross. Torture is rarely seen

and generally tame — electric shocks, a few kicks to the gut, improbable and overly-elaborate deathtraps.

Finally, language tends to be relatively mild — the only game with notable swearing is **Final Fantasy VII**, and the bulk of it was censored out for comic effect, resulting in some %#@ \$ing memorable dialog. The end result is a kind of universe permanently stuck in PG-13.

A SINGULAR MENACE

Final Fantasy villains can come in many forms — the slaving monster, the bumbling henchman, the calculating military mind, the alien intelligence, the scheming megalomaniac, the last survivor of a long-dead civilization. Each story has a multitude of foes, but there is always one enemy that rules them all, a final menace to be slain to set things to rights again. Sometimes the last battle will be against an opponent that has dogged the heroes since their adventure began; sometimes, the true mastermind will only show itself at the eleventh hour. Either way, the only way to save the world is to best them in battle and bring the story to an end.

THE HISTORY

Given the prolific rate at which the franchise has multiplied over the years, keeping track of the ever-increasing numbers of releases, remakes, and spinoffs is often difficult, if not outright overwhelming. The next few pages have been given over to a comprehensive history of **Final Fantasy** from its inception onwards, covering major releases and events.

1987

On the verge of bankruptcy, Square — an obscure developer with a string of flops to its name — puts all of its resources into developing a do-or-die title, **Final Fantasy**, for Nintendo's Famicom console. Drawing heavily on fellow developer Enix's **Dragon Quest** and TSR's popular **Dungeons & Dragons** roleplaying game, the title becomes an unexpected success, giving Square a second lease on life and lionizing its creators — producer Hironobu Sakaguchi, composer Nobuo Uematsu, and character designer Yoshitaka Amano, whose ethereal pastel-colored artwork will define the "look" of the series for nearly a decade.

1988

Final Fantasy II is released in Japan. A significant about-face from its predecessor, **II** introduces a complex storyline and better-developed characters as well as new mechanics that eschew Level-based advancement in favor of a more free-form system. Several of the game's more enduring elements — including the hearty avian steeds known as Chocobos and Ultima, the ultimate magic — make their debut here.

1990

Final Fantasy III is released in Japan. A throwback to the original **Final Fantasy**, III's plot is secondary to its mechanics; a class-change system allows the game's faceless protagonists to slip into a wide array of roles and professions to overcome their foes.

With III a hit, work begins on two new **Final Fantasy** titles — **Final Fantasy IV** for the Famicom and **Final Fantasy V** for the Super Famicom, Nintendo's new 16-bit console. Early on in the development process, Square makes the decision to move **Final Fantasy IV** to the Super Famicom, making III the last of the series to appear on the original Famicom.

Final Fantasy is released in the United States, enjoying resounding success. As a result, Square's US subsidiary begins work on an English version of **Final Fantasy II**. A prototype cartridge — subtitled "Dark Shadow of Palakia" — is produced, but the project is eventually scrapped in favor of localizing the newly-released **Final Fantasy IV**.

Final Fantasy Legend is released in the US for Nintendo's handheld Game Boy console. In spite of its title — and director Akitoshi Kawazu, a game designer on **Final Fantasy I** and **II** — the game is not officially part of the **Final Fantasy** series; its original Japanese title, **Makai Toshi SaGa**, is jettisoned for the US market to capitalize on **Final Fantasy**'s name-brand recognition among American gamers.

1991

Final Fantasy IV is released. Its combination of **Final Fantasy II**'s plot-driven gameplay with the more straightforward class-based mechanics of the original game sets the tone for the rest of the series, and will lead many to declare it as one of the best titles in the series.

Eager to capitalize on **Final Fantasy**'s US fanbase, Square rushes a US version — retitled **Final Fantasy II** to avoid confusing consumers — into production, releasing it a mere four months after its Japanese counterpart. More than a straight port, **Final Fantasy II** features several notable changes, including a toned-down difficulty level and the removal of a significant amount of content deemed unsuitable for US audiences. The game's translation, though poor, provides a generation of gamers with one of its most resounding catchphrases: *"YOU SPOONY BARD!"*

Seiken Densetsu: Final Fantasy Gaiden is released in Japan for the Game Boy. Originally entitled **Gemma Knights**, the game is more action-oriented than its "big brothers"; only a handful of elements — including the iconic Moogles and Chocobos — and its overall graphical style identify it as part of the series. Despite being developed by a largely inexperienced team, **Seiken Densetsu** is successful enough to spawn a series of sequels; the **Final Fantasy** elements are phased out from the second game onwards. The US release follows in November of the same year under the title **Final Fantasy Adventure**.

The Game Boy title **SaGa II: Hihou Densetsu** is released as **Final Fantasy Legend II** in the US.

1992

Final Fantasy V is released in Japan. A throwback to **Final Fantasy III**, its expansive class change system, high difficulty level, and low-key plot are deemed 'inaccessible' to the average American gamer, resulting in it being passed over for US release. The game is the last to be directed by series creator Hironobu Sakaguchi.

Final Fantasy: Mystic Quest is released in the US. Developed entirely with an American audience in mind, the game is widely seen as one of Square's most notorious misfires. The elementary gameplay and non-existent storyline compares poorly to the recently-released **Final Fantasy II** and leads to widespread contempt for the title in later years.

1993

Mystic Quest is released in Japan under the title **Final Fantasy USA: Mystic Quest**.

The Game Boy title **SaGa III: Jikuu no Hasha** is released as **Final Fantasy Legend III** in the US.

1994

Final Fantasy VI is released. By now, the debut of a new **Final Fantasy** title has become something of a cultural event; in Japan, hordes of eager gamers line up outside of stores on release day, hoping to be the first to snap up a copy. A bleak, epic game, VI's graphical opulence and expansive scope drive it to critical and commercial success. With Hironobu Sakaguchi only peripherally involved in the title's development, directorial duties on VI are shared by Yoshinori Kitase — who had previously worked on **Seiken Densetsu** — and **Final Fantasy IV**'s battle director, Hiroyuki Ito.

A heavily Anglicized US version is released under the title **Final Fantasy III** later the same year, once again toning down or outright removing "objectionable" content in the game. In subsequent years, these changes will come under significant fire from die-hard series fans.

Final Fantasy: Legend of the Crystals, an animated sequel to **Final Fantasy V**, is released in Japan. Despite the presence of acclaimed director Rintaro — who had previously worked on the animated version of Enix's **Dragon Quest — Legend of the Crystals** meets a muted reception from series fans.

1995

Square begins development on **Final Fantasy Tactics** for the Super Famicom. Inspired by tactical role-playing games like **Ogre Battle** and **Fire Emblem**, **Tactics** places the player in charge of an entire

army, developing a fighting force over the course of many battles. As the project progresses, the increasingly tangential connections to the **Final Fantasy** series eventually lead to the game being repositioned as a wholly original title, **Bahamut Lagoon**.

A second **Final Fantasy Tactics** will later enter development under the direction of Yasumi Matsuno, creator of **Ogre Battle**, after the latter defects from developer Quest to Square.

Plans are drawn up to release a US version of **Final Fantasy V**. Provisionally entitled **Final Fantasy Extreme**, Square intends to promote the game as intended for "more experienced gamers," but cancels development partway through the project.

Square unveils an interactive technical demo featuring **Final Fantasy VI** characters at the ACM SIGGRAPH convention. At the time, the demo is widely assumed to be a "dry run" for an eventual **Final Fantasy 64** on Nintendo's 64-bit Super Famicom successor.

1996

Ending nearly a decade of collaboration with Nintendo, Square announces that **Final Fantasy VII** will be released exclusively on Sony's next-generation Playstation console after the ambitious game proves impossible to realize on Nintendo's cartridge-based Nintendo 64.

1997

Final Fantasy VII is released with an extensive promotional blitz emphasizing its then-stunning pre-rendered graphics. The gambit works, enticing even gamers who traditionally shun roleplaying games; over the next two years, **Final Fantasy VII** will go on to sell more than 8 million copies, nearly four times the number shifted by its predecessor.

Notable for a gritty near-future scenario and adult themes, **VII** also features a new character designer, Tetsuya Nomura, whose work defines much of the future 'look' of the series. On the production front, Yoshinori Kitase once again acts as director.

The US release — later brought to Japan under the title **Final Fantasy VII International** — adds new content, including two "challenge" bosses, Ruby Weapon and Emerald Weapon. However, Sony's sub-par translation reduces the intricate plot to nigh-on incoherence. Among the many pieces of mangled dialogue is the widely-quoted line, *"This guy are sick."*

The game's success drives a wedge between Square and Nintendo, resulting in Square abandoning Nintendo's platforms outright.

Final Fantasy Tactics is released for the Playstation to widespread critical acclaim. As with **Final Fantasy VII**, **Final Fantasy Tactics** is localized by Sony rather than Square, resulting in a plethora of grammatical, spelling, and translation errors. The game's tutorial section in particular suffers from this; as a result, the nonsensical advice given by in-game tutor Bordam Daravon becomes the stuff of dark legend among series fans.

Square begins working with developers Top Dog to bring a US version of **Final Fantasy V** to Windows PCs. The project falls apart well before release as a result of communication issues between the two parties.

Square Pictures is established in Honolulu, Hawaii. US\$130 million is spent building the company's state-of-the-art studio and production facilities with the intention of establishing an animated film division within the company. An international team begins work on what will eventually become **Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within**.

1998

A Windows PC port of **Final Fantasy VII** is released.

1999

Final Fantasy VIII is released on the Playstation. Intended as an antidote to the dark, gloomy **VII**, **VIII**'s stripped-down gameplay and personalized narrative make it one of the most controversial titles in the series, but also one of the most successful; in the US, the game claims sales of more than US\$50 million in the first three weeks of its release.

Square begins releasing Playstation ports of the Super Famicom-era **Final Fantasy** games. In Japan, the **Final Fantasy Collection** contains **Final Fantasy IV**, **V**, and **VI**; the US release, the **Fantasy Anthology** bundles **Final Fantasy V** and **VI** together. All games are virtually unchanged from their original Super Famicom outings, but have pre-rendered cinematics to bring them in line with the later Playstation releases. **V**, seeing an official Stateside release for the first time, is saddled with a sub-par translation; fan reaction to the "lost" **Final Fantasy** is mixed at best.

2000

Final Fantasy IX becomes the last "official" **Final Fantasy** to see a release on the original Playstation. Developed concurrently with **VIII**, **IX** is a very different beast from its predecessor, trading heavily on fan nostalgia with frequent references to previous games in both visuals and spirit. Character art once again comes courtesy of Yoshitaka Amano; in-game, characters sport a cartoonish, stylized look deliberately at odds with the more realistic design of **Final Fantasy VIII**.

Despite — or perhaps because of — the game's nods to its roots, **IX** is the least successful Playstation **Final Fantasy** by far. A Windows port is announced, but never materializes.

A remake of the original **Final Fantasy** is released for Bandai's Wonderswan Color, an obscure Japanese handheld with minimal share in a market dominated by Nintendo. Though gameplay is largely unchanged, the remake features retooled graphics — bringing it up to 16-bit era standards — and a modestly improved storyline.

A Windows PC port of **Final Fantasy VIII** is released.

2001

The release of **Final Fantasy X** marks the series's transition to Sony's Playstation 2 — and the beginning of a new era, as Yoshinori Kitase takes over as producer and longtime composer Nobuo Uematsu shares composing duties with newcomers Junya Nakano and Masashi Hamauzu. The PS2's improved processing power significantly closes the gap between in-game visuals and the pre-rendered cinematics that are now a series staple. Most notably, the game's environments — static 3D renders throughout the Playstation years — are finally generated entirely in real-time. Other innovations include a streamlined battle system, open-ended character development, and extensive voice acting; critically acclaimed, the title also proves to be a commercial smash, selling nearly two million copies within four days of its Japanese release.

The full-length CG science fiction movie **Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within** is released in theaters. Though opulently animated, **Spirits** is a critical and commercial dud, posting a US\$120 million loss. The fallout from the movie's failure spells the end for Square Pictures; the company shuts down after releasing just one more project, the **Matrix** short **Final Flight of the Osiris**.

The animated series **Final Fantasy Unlimited** begins airing in Japan. A collaboration between Square and animation studio GONZO, **Unlimited** tells the story of two young children brought to a fantastic world in search of their parents. Crude animation, simplistic plot, and minimal connection to the **Final Fantasy** games do little to endear it to viewers; tepid ratings force the show's cancellation after only 25 episodes.

Square follows its **Final Fantasy I** remake with a Wonderswan Color port of **Final Fantasy II**, featuring enhanced graphics and an improved advancement system.

Final Fantasy Chronicles is released in the US, bundling **Final Fantasy IV** and **Chrono Trigger** — another classic Square RPG from the Super Famicom era — together in a single boxed set. As with **Anthology**, both titles are spruced up with new cinematics. **Final Fantasy IV** is graced with a fresh translation; mindful of the game's historic status, the translators are nonetheless careful to keep key lines from the original intact, most notably the infamous "*SPOONY BARD*."

2002

Final Fantasy XI, the first massively multiplayer online game set in the **Final Fantasy** universe, debuts on Playstation 2 and PC in Japan. The game's mechanics are inspired by the highly successful online game **EverQuest**, a game obsessively played by XI's development team. Though unit sales pale in comparison to its traditional counterparts, it accumulates 500,000 paying subscribers, making it among the more successful entries in the massively multiplayer

genre.

Final Fantasy Origins is released, bundling the Wonderswan upgrades of **Final Fantasy I** and **II** onto a single Playstation CD. As with **Chronicles** and **Anthology**, **Origins** features additional pre-rendered cinematics not found in previous — or subsequent — releases.

A port of **Final Fantasy IV** becomes the third and last **Final Fantasy** release for the Wonderswan Color.

2003

Square merges with former arch-rival Enix, forming a new conglomerate known as Square Enix.

Final Fantasy X-2, the first direct sequel to a **Final Fantasy** game in Square Enix's history, is released for the Playstation 2. Reusing the original's engine and graphical assets, **X-2**'s light-hearted tone and female protagonists garner mixed responses from fans. Nonetheless, the game goes on to sell 2 million copies in Japan and a further 1 million in the US.

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles is released for the Nintendo GameCube, marking the start of a reconciliation with Nintendo. A lightweight action RPG for up to four players incorporating the Game Boy Advance as a gameplay aid, **Crystal Chronicles** has more in common with original **Final Fantasy** spin-off **Seiken Densetsu** than the weighty "main" games.

Final Fantasy Tactics Advance is released for the Game Boy Advance. Though it shares the mechanics of its predecessor, **TA**'s whimsical plot — heavily inspired by cult fantasy novel *The Neverending Story* — is a disappointment to **Tactics** devotees. The game achieves respectable success, selling more than 500,000 copies in Japan in less than two months.

Final Fantasy XI is released in the US bundled with the game's first expansion pack, **Rise of the Zilart**.

Bandai halts manufacturing of its Wonderswan handhelds, leading Square Enix to cancel its intended remake of **Final Fantasy III**. The project is later revived for Nintendo's DS handheld.

2004

Final Fantasy VII: Before Crisis, a prequel to **Final Fantasy VII**, is released in Japan. The game's plot — told via "episodes" released to mobile phones on a monthly basis — casts players as members of the Turks, the elite security force of the villainous Shinra Power Company. **Before Crisis** — first in a series of **Final Fantasy VII** spinoffs collectively known as "Compilation of Final Fantasy VII" — quickly grows to become one of the most successful mobile titles ever.

Chains of Promathia, **Final Fantasy XI**'s second expansion pack, is released, adding several new areas to the world of Vana'diel.

Final Fantasy: Dawn of Souls, a port of **Origins** for Nintendo's Game Boy Advance, is released. Both games are enhanced to sport additional content: four "bonus" dungeons in **Final Fantasy I** and an additional mini-adventure in **Final Fantasy II**.

2005

After a successful debut at the Venice Film Festival, the full-length CG feature **Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children** sees limited theatrical release in Japan. Square Enix's first venture in computer animation since the demise of Square Pictures, **Advent Children** is a direct sequel to **Final Fantasy VII** featuring many of the same key creative personnel. The subsequent DVD/UMD release of the movie is a resounding success, selling 700,000 units in the space of a single month. The DVD edition includes an additional animated short, "Last Order."

Final Fantasy IV Advance, a port of **Final Fantasy IV** for the Game Boy Advance, is released. As with previous GBA releases, **FFIVA** sports bonus content — in this case, two new dungeons and the ability to change party members for the final confrontation.

2006

Dirge of Cerberus, the third **Final Fantasy VII** spinoff, is released on the PS2 to middling reviews. A run-and-gun shooter starring the mysterious Vincent Valentine, **Dirge** follows the events of **Advent Children** and is the last game in the **Final Fantasy VII** timeline.

Treasures of Aht Urhgan, the third **Final Fantasy XI** expansion, is released. Beyond adding several new areas to the game world, **Treasures** also introduces three new Jobs: the Blue Mage, the Corsair, and the Puppet Master.

After nearly 5 years of development and countless delays, **Final Fantasy XII** finally sees release. With **Final Fantasy Tactics** director Yasumi Matsuno at the helm, **XII** takes the series into new waters on many fronts. Exploration and combat are merged into a seamless whole, while the story's political machinations drastically expand the traditionally intimate scope of previous **Final Fantasy** games. The *Weekly Famitsu*, Japan's most respected video game periodical, awards the game a landmark 40 out of 40, making it only the sixth game in *Famitsu's* history to receive this distinction.

At the 2006 Electronic Entertainment Expo, Square Enix announces **Final Fantasy XIII: Nova Fabula Crystallis** as a multi-pronged project covering multiple games united by a single shared setting. The first **Nova Fabula Crystallis** projects announced to the public are two Playstation 3 games, **Final Fantasy XIII** and **Final Fantasy Versus XIII**, a mobile game, **Final Fantasy Agito XIII**, and an unnamed Nintendo DS title.

The Nintendo DS version of **Final Fantasy III** is released to general critical acclaim. In Japan, the game sells more than 500,000 units in its first two days of release. Though largely a faithful remake of the

original, the new **Final Fantasy III** is fully polygonal and adds distinct personalities to the game's formerly-anonymous heroes.

Final Fantasy V Advance, the Game Boy Advance remake of **Final Fantasy V**, is released. In addition to a new 'Sealed Dungeon,' the title features four additional Jobs.

2007

The **Final Fantasy** franchise celebrates its 20th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, Square Enix releases new ports of **Final Fantasy I** and **II** on the Playstation Portable handheld, incorporating the FMVs from the **Origins** release as well as additional content for both games.

Final Fantasy VI Advance, the Game Boy Advance remake of **Final Fantasy VI**, is released in the US. The bonus content this time includes one new dungeon and a number of Espers taken from **Final Fantasy VIII**. In addition, the updated translation undoes much of the censorship present in the original American release, offering players a far more faithful experience.

Revenant Wings, a direct sequel to **Final Fantasy XII**, is released on the Nintendo DS. Starring a motley assortment of major and minor characters from the original, **Revenant Wings** uses its predecessor's basic gameplay as the foundation for a real-time strategy game.

Crisis Core, the fourth **Final Fantasy VII** spinoff, is released on the PSP. A fast-paced action RPG acting as an effective prequel to its parent game, **Crisis Core** nets both excellent reviews and outstanding sales.

Final Fantasy Tactics: The Lion War is released on the Playstation Portable. An enhanced port of the original Playstation game, **Lion War** features two new Jobs, a multiplayer mode, and a guest appearance by **Final Fantasy XII's** Balthier.

Final Fantasy Tactics A2 is released on the Nintendo DS. As the name implies, the game is a semi-direct sequel to **Final Fantasy Tactics Advance**, featuring a new cast of characters who have been brought into Ivalice through the power of the Gran Grimoire.

Wings of the Goddess, the fourth **Final Fantasy XI** expansion pack, is released. **Wings** once again increases the size of Vana'diel and adds two new Jobs to the available roster: Dancer and Scholar.

Square Enix releases a fully polygonal remake of **Final Fantasy IV**, incorporating subplots and elements cut from the original Super Famicom version as well as extensive voice acting.

A sequel to **Final Fantasy IV**, entitled **Another Moon**, is put into development for mobile platforms. Picking up almost two decades after the original, **Another Moon** follows the adventures of Cecil, Rosa, and their son.

Square Enix revisits the **Crystal Chronicles** series by releasing **Ring of Fates** for the Nintendo DS. This game is a prequel taking place

during the Golden age of the world.

2008

The **Crystal Chronicles** series continues with **My Life as a King** released via the WiiWare service of the Nintendo Wii. This game is the first true sequel of **Crystal Chronicles**, and in a change of pace, focuses on creating a new kingdom.

THE GAMES

While most of the **FFRPG**'s intended audience is assumed to have played at least one or more of the games in the series, not everyone is familiar with the older and more obscure title. What follows are spoiler-free summaries for every standalone game referenced in this rulebook.

Final Fantasy

Shrouded in darkness, the world begins a slow and terrible rot in the dying light of the four Crystals — crops wither and die, fierce waves ravage the oceans, and monsters spread across the sickening land. Now, the only hope lies in the ancient legend of the Light Warriors, passed down over millennia in the lore of Dragon, Elf and Human alike:

When the world is in darkness, four warriors will come...

Final Fantasy II

The gates of the underworld have been thrown open and the armies of Hell roam freely once more, unleashed by the ruthless ambitions of Emperor Palamecia. At his behest, monsters sweep across the land, indiscriminately razing towns, murdering and enslaving their citizens; any stirring of resistance is crushed without mercy. But even Palamecia's combined armies cannot extinguish all hope; braving traitors and demons, a small band of heroes under the leadership of Princess Hilda of Fynn prepares to strike back against a seemingly-invincible foe...

Final Fantasy III

For many years, the inhabitants of Ur lived in the shelter of the Wind Crystal's light, drawing on its blessings to protect them from the predations of roaming monsters. Then the tremors struck and the idyll shattered in an instant as the earth opened, swallowing the Crystal whole. For a young villager caught in the cataclysm, that fateful earthquake is only the beginning — entrusted with the Wind Crystal's powers, he must now prepare to embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

Final Fantasy IV

Flight. A distant dream for most; a strategic weapon of devastating proportions for the Kingdom of Baron, whose elite Red Wing air force is unmatched the world over. In more peaceful times, the Red Wings were respected and admired in equal measure; now, this formerly-honorable fighting force has become an aerial plague, bombing and looting on the orders of an increasingly-erratic monarch who covets sole possession of the world's four Crystals. Disturbed by King Baron's warlike ambitions, a band of heroes takes a stand against the kingdom's armies — only to discover Baron's motivations run deeper than they could have ever suspected.

Final Fantasy V

Through arcane machinery devised by the reclusive genius Cid Previa, the kingdoms of Walz, Karnak, and Tycoon enjoy unparalleled peace and prosperity. Yet the mystic Crystals, source of their good fortune, grow weaker by the day. When Tycoon's Wind Crystal shatters, a young princess joins forces with a mismatched group of travelers, racing to rescue the remaining Crystals before their power is extinguished for good.

Final Fantasy Mystic Quest

Acting on orders from the sinister Dark King, four beasts steal the Crystals of the elements, sealing up the great Focus Tower and plunging four great lands into chaos. Now, all hope now rests with one young warrior, chosen by prophecy to reclaim the Crystals and save the world from darkness.

Final Fantasy VI

The War of the Magi drove a once-proud civilization into extinction; in the aftermath, magic seemingly vanished from the face of the earth. One thousand years later, humanity has nearly succeeded in rebuilding itself; steam and the power of machinery once again stand at their command.

But mastery of technology is not enough for those obsessed with the lure of forbidden power. Already, the Empire Gestahl has perfected the art of Magitek, a fearsome synthesis of sorcerous energy and iron spearheading an agenda of subjugation and conquest. Countless cities have fallen to the Imperial armies; command of true magic would mean nothing short of world domination for the dictator. The chance discovery of an Esper in colliery of Narshe now threatens to make Gestahl's plans for a revival of magic a reality — can another cataclysm be far off?

Final Fantasy VII

Mako: clean, efficient and seemingly limitless, it is nothing less than the ultimate power source. With its mako monopoly, the sinister Shinra Power Corporation is unchallenged master of the known

world; its reactors loom over every city and nation, supplying energy to the farthest reaches of the globe. But there is a darker side to the mako bonanza, a secret carefully covered up by the company: the so-called 'free energy' is nothing less than the Planet's life force, siphoned off bit by bit to meet the daily needs of Shinra's loyal subscribers.

Standing in the path of Shinra is the organization AVALANCHE, a small but dedicated group of eco-warriors determined to shut down Shinra's life-draining reactors at any cost. Little do they realize that the corporation is the least of the Planet's worries...

Final Fantasy Tactics

The Fifty Year War left the once-proud realm of Ivalice nigh-on bankrupt, crippled by famine, poverty and popular discontent — yet her troubles are only beginning. Overshadowed by religious corruption and popular resentment towards the aristocratic families, menaced by criminals and mercenaries, the waning health of King Omdolia leaves only one question for commoner and noble alike: who will inherit the throne of Ivalice?

History will come to call the ensuing struggle for succession the Lion War. Those who have discovered the true events behind those pitched battles and palace intrigues, however, know it by another name entirely: the Zodiac Brave Story.

Final Fantasy VIII

The sorceresses had been a scourge throughout history; as sole wielders of the power of magic, their reign of terror was unequaled, their names a byword for wanton cruelty and destruction.

With the last Sorceress War at an end, their once-feared power has become common property; para-Magic and the enigmatic Guardian Forces have brought spellcasting to the masses. In this new world order, the young mercenaries of SeeD stand head and shoulders above the rest, masters of both mystic energies and fighting arts. When the power-hungry Galbadian dictatorship launches a bid for total domination, however, these hired swords find themselves saddled with a role their training never could have prepared them for — world savior

Final Fantasy IX

An extended peace has brought both wealth and security to the three great nations of Gaia — a situation ripe for the plucking by those unscrupulous enough to exploit it. For the thieves of the Tantalus Troupe, kidnapping the young heir to the Kingdom of Alexandria seems like the coup of a lifetime. But when the abduction goes awry, an inexorable chain of events is set into motion; one that will thrust the members of Tantalus into the thick of a battle to reshape the world as they know it.

Final Fantasy X

One thousand years ago, civilization on Spira had reached its

undisputed pinnacle. Then came Sin, a monstrous scourge from beyond the known world, laying all to waste in its wake. Today, the tribes of Spira live in fear, besieged by the countless offspring of that ancient menace; technology, once commonplace, is the province of the brave few who risk Sin's wrath to use it. Yet hope — and courage — survive. In the midst of the desolation, seven travelers set off on a journey across the breadth of Spira, searching for the power which may yet free their world...

Final Fantasy XI

In the 863rd Year of the Crystal, darkness came to Vana'diel...

Supported by an army of inhuman allies, the Shadow Lord rampaged across the world, razing and plundering all in his path. Uniting in the face of destruction at the eleventh hour, the races of Vana'diel waged a long and bloody campaign against the forces of darkness, eventually driving the invaders back into the wilderness. Twenty years have passed since that great conflict, and the nations of San D'Oria, Bastok, Windurst and Jeuno enjoy a hard-won peace. In the darkness, however, evil gathers once again; soon, a new generation of heroes must take up the sword to protect everything they hold dear.

Final Fantasy Tactics Advance

Long ago, before the Great Flood, legends told of a land named Kiltia, a realm where sorcery reigned supreme and legendary warriors battled one another for dominance in an unending war between good and evil. For the children of sleepy St. Ivalice, these tales offer a welcome escape from the mundanity of everyday life — until a fragment of that ancient civilization suddenly resurfaces, turning idle fantasies into deadly reality. Trapped in a fantastic, troubled realm by the mysterious Gran Grimoire and dogged by the draconian Judges, young Marche Radieu now struggles to find his way home in a world both utterly alien and strangely familiar.

Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles

Enveloped by poisonous miasma and besieged by monsters, a world huddles in the protective light of the crystals, the thin cocoons of magical energy that separate villages and towns from certain death. But the protective power of the crystals is far from unlimited; unless regularly purified with myrrh, the water of life, they gradually begin to lose their luster, succumbing to the deadly miasma around them. Every year, settlements around the world mount their desperate expeditions into venom-choked wilderness; led by the strongest and bravest they can muster, their objective is as desperate as it is clear: secure the myrrh, or die trying.

Final Fantasy XII

Though ages may pass on Ivalice, one thing remains constant in this world: warfare. In an age where airships choke the skies and magic

stones are the foundation of civilization, Damalsca is a kingdom in turmoil; its king dead at a traitor's hands, its citizenry chafing under the rule of the power-hungry Archadian Empire and its enigmatic Judges. Into this troubled realm steps a small band of heroes, thrown together by circumstance to challenge the Empire — and themselves.

Final Fantasy XIII

For many years, the flying city of Cocoon has lived in isolation, sheltered by machine sentinels and an autocratic government bent on preserving the status quo at any cost. But now outside forces have invaded Cocoon, leaving its citizens face to face with the thing they have learned to fear most: Pulse, the world beyond.

THE BASICS OF ROLEPLAYING

At first glance, roleplaying can look like a daunting hobby, thick with seemingly arcane rules and specialized vocabulary that borders on the impenetrable. Reduce it to its foundations, however, and roleplaying is nothing more than a structured form of play-acting, a collaborative storytelling process involving several participants. Many people have summed the process of roleplaying up as a slightly more elaborate “let's pretend,” and that description cuts close to the truth — roleplaying merely adds the rules and restrictions needed prevent things from getting out of hand, as well as a designated ‘moderator’ to enforce them: the Gamemaster.

THE GAMEMASTER

Traditionally, your passport to **Final Fantasy** comes in the form of a cartridge, CD-ROM, or DVD. In the **FFRPG**, however, it is the **Gamemaster (GM)** who unspools the epic saga, acting as both referee and storyteller. As a storyteller it is their responsibility to create the quests and storylines the players become embroiled in, take on the roles of **Non-Player Characters (NPCs)** — the people and monsters the adventurers encounter in their travels — and act as the players' eyes and ears within the game, describing the scenery and situations. As a referee, the GM enforces the rules, sets out the challenges, and keeps the players on task to ensure each session runs as smoothly as possible.

Both responsibilities take patience and dedication. For first-time GMs, the challenges posed by the job can be daunting even at the best of times. With this in mind, **Chapter 10** is filled with advice and ideas for Gamemasters of all stripes; regardless of actual experience, any GM can benefit from the information it contains.

THE PLAYERS

Players in the **FFRPG** step into the shoes of a character with a unique background, personality, skills and powers. These protagonists are known as the **Player Characters (PC)**, and ultimately shape the story by virtue of their actions and decisions. There are some crucial differences between video game and

tabletop play, however; each player generally only controls one character, rather than an entire party. As a result, most adventures will see several players cooperating with each other under the GM's guidance, trying to attain a common goal or objective.

Secondly, though some GMs may prefer to give their players pre-designed characters, the vast majority of PCs are created by the players themselves; appearance, history and profession are all left to the individual imagination. **Chapter 2** guides players through the process of assembling a character, and offers a starting place from which to explore the rest of this book.

PLAYING THE GAME

The GM will typically begin a session by placing the characters in a situation (“*You are standing at the gates of Castle Corneria...*”) to which the players then react via their characters (“*Food the White Mage is going to walk up to the gates and ask the guards for permission to pass.*”) in whatever manner they deem appropriate. The GM then tells the players the outcome of their actions (“*They look at you suspiciously and tell you that nobody is allowed on the castle grounds.*”), allowing the players to make new decisions (“*Food'll draw his staff and glare threateningly.*”) based on the outcome. Should a situation arise where the characters' physical or mental capabilities are challenged (“*The guards draw their swords and attack!*”), said challenge uses dice to determine success or failure. The dice add a random element to the game which represents the vagaries of fate, and offers a basis for task resolution which avoids the usual pitfalls (“*Food kills the guard with his staff.*” “*No, he doesn't.*” “*Yes, he does.*”) found in these kinds of narrative exercises.

As a taster, the example below gives a more detailed idea of what a typical session entails. Don't worry if some of the procedures involved seem to be unclear or confusing — **Chapter 1** introduces the basic rules of the **FFRPG** in detail, inclusive of everything referred to in this example.

? An FFRPG Session (1)

We join a game already in progress; this particular group consists of the GM, Rodger; the Engineer Hiro, played by Rob, the Dark Knight Haze, played by M, and the Dancer Mint, played by Blair. Over the course of several games, this motley group has found common ground in battling the machinations of the mysterious villain Deathstight, whose henchmen are in the process of raising crystalline monoliths across the world. Supported by a loose alliance of towns and kingdoms, they have begun assembling the components needed to reactivate the ancient airship Excelsior, and now need only the Skystone capable of raising the vessel into the skies.

The trail leads them to a mountain cavern known as the Wind Cave...

Rodger (GM): The initial ascent is everything Cid promised, and worse; the mountainside along the trail is littered with fissures, cracks and openings where the wind gushes forth in regular blasts, shooting a hail of rocks at anything in the vicinity. Unsurprisingly, the entire area is craggy and desolate; whatever vegetation might have once grown here has since been stripped away by the frequent gales. Even the pock-marked rock looks wind-blown, curving outwards here and there as if worn away over the course of many years.

Rob (Hiro): If you ask me, our best course of action is just to avoid the fissures altogether. I don't really feel like getting smacked around by rocks before we even get to the cave.

Blair (Mint): Fine by me. We're a little short on healing, anyway.

M (Haze): All right, Rodger. We're breaking out the climbing gear and scaling our own path where the wind is at its weakest — somewhere nice and far away from the worst of those cracks.

Rodger: Let's see some rolls.

Rob: *(rolling)* 24.

Blair: *(rolling)* 30.

M: *(rolling)* 42.

Rodger: The ropes creak as you begin to make your way up the rock face, taking advantage of the infrequent ledges to duck and avoid the periodic blasts of rock debris as they clatter down the mountainside. The ascent takes a little over fifteen minutes; by the time you haul yourselves over the final cliff and onto the cave entrance, you're pleasantly winded but thankfully injury-free.

Rob: "Well, that could have been worse."

Blair: Mint groans. "Too much exercise before teatime... Shouldn't have had that extra parfait."

M: What are we looking at, then?

Rodger: The opening into the Wind Cave is just large enough to admit a single human, a narrow passage that quickly disappears into murk and gloom. Worn carvings along the rock hint at ancient history with just the slightest tinge of Things Best Left Untouched; a few of the glyphs look vaguely familiar, and far from welcoming.

M: "Last chance to turn back."

Rob: Hiro adjusts his ammo belts. "Not happening. Keep your weapons where you can reach 'em — I've got a bad feeling about this one."

ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

There are two basic ways to play the FFRPG — as a one-off **adventure**, or as a long-term **campaign**. Adventures offer a quick and easy starting point for newcomers, generally following the characters over one or more play sessions as they try to fulfill an objective set by the GM. Depending on the circumstances, this can range from rescuing a captive princess to sabotaging a monolithic war machine bent on destroying the heroes' hometown; goals the heroes have at least some direct stake in, even if their interests may only be financial or moral. When said objective has been fulfilled, the adventure ends, and the heroes can claim their — undoubtedly hard-earned — rewards.

A campaign, on the other hand, is a large-scale narrative tracking the characters over an ongoing series of concurrent adventures. Where adventures are clear-cut, in campaigns the characters' long-term objectives may be nebulous and ever-shifting as friends turn to foes and the hitherto-ultimate evil is revealed as nothing more than a stepping-stone to an even more sinister foe. As might be expected, the **Final Fantasy** games are classic examples of play in campaign mode, using a strong storyline to tie together dozens of smaller adventures and sub-quests.

As with most GM-related concerns, more detailed advice on running the FFRPG in both of these formats can be found in **Chapter 9**.

CHAPTER GLOSSARY

Like most role-playing systems, the FFRPG has its own terminology. To help speed up the learning process, every chapter ends with a glossary recapping the most important terms and concepts introduced over the course of that chapter. A full glossary and index will be provided at the end of the book.

Adventure. One-off quests or series of events with a fixed goal.

Campaign. A continuous narrative built up from interlinking adventures.

Gamemaster (GM). 'Leader' of the game. Sets challenges and details the world.

Non-Player Character (NPC). Any character whose actions are controlled by the GM rather than the players.

Optional Rule. Rules designed to be used at a GM's discretion.

Player Character (PC). Any character whose actions are controlled by one of the players.