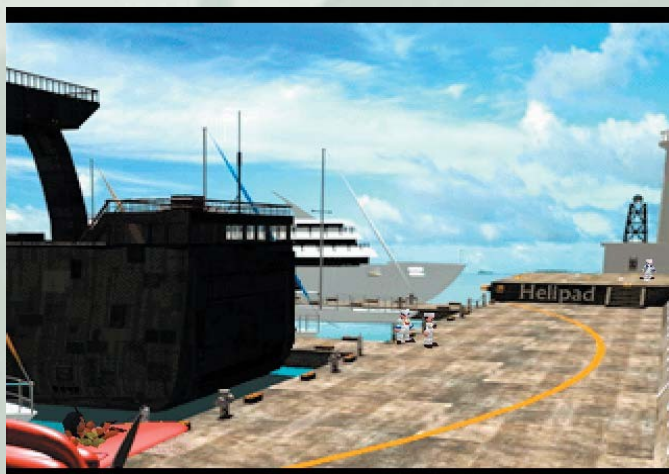




FINAL FANTASY VII

Chapter 12: Barret's silence





The boat finally arrives at the port of Costa del Sol. The small group slipped out of the holds discreetly, without being detected.



Darn, it's hot out there! Finally, I feel much better without this sailor outfit... We'll be able to blend in the crowd here.



It's a shame, I liked Barret's sailor suit. So cute!



What do you mean by... cute?



Hey, why don't you use it as pajamas?



Certainly not! Stop mocking me!



Barret, don't forget that we're not on vacation, we have to find Sephiroth.



Hmph, you're the one wasting time wandering around!



Puff, could we hurry a little. I'm parched with this heat... Plus, my mane is a mess.



I think I'm gonna go for a swim!



Rufus will disembark soon, let's hurry...

The group went to explore the town... After a short while Heidegger and Rufus got out of the ship, their helicopter had just landed...



What a long crossing.



Sephiroth was on board...



...Yes.



I have a feeling Cloud and the others were there too.



...Yes.



And they all escaped. You really messed up everything, my dear Heidegger.



I... I'm ashamed of myself. I apologize.



Is that all you are good for? Apologies? You're no use to me then.



Sir, your helicopter is ready to go!





Get to work. I'm waiting for results.

Rufus got into his helicopter. Heidegger, very angry, threw a few sailors who happened to be in his path into the water... He had the firm intention of taking revenge for this humiliation. Meanwhile, Cloud was visiting the resort...



Hey! Cloud!



M...Mukki?!



Yeah baby! It's great here, you could walk around naked, no one would bat an eye!



Ha ha... Umm, see you later?



Sure. I met an acquaintance of yours, Johnny, from sector 7! He's a little depressed but very nice! Oh, and there's this funny doctor on the beach, he also comes from Midgar. Our destinies cross don't you think?



Johnny? A doctor...? I...I have to find my friends, goodbye Mukki!

Red XIII stopped Cloud on the road...



Hey Cloud, isn't this interesting?



Huh...?



Well, it's not like I'm doing it because I want to, my tail moves on its own.



The sun is getting to your head Red. Come, I'd like to see who that funny doctor is.



A doctor? I'm fine you know...

Barret, Aerith and Tifa were already there...



Oh! Cloud! Look, look!



Hojo...



Go ahead, talk to him!

Hojo was surrounded by three beautiful girls... Cloud approached...



Who...? Oh... It's been a while, Cloud.



Hojo.





We don't always get what we want!



What are you doing here?



It's obvious, I'm getting a tan!



Answer me!



Hmm, we are both pursuing the same goal...



Sephiroth?



Did you see him?



...



Ha ha, I see. Alright, you won't tell?



And Jenova?



I remember a hypothesis... Have you ever had the feeling that something was calling you or that you had to go somewhere?



I will hunt Sephiroth until the end, to defeat him and put an end to all this!



I see... This might be interesting... An ex-SOLDIER... He he he, would you like to be my guinea pig? Oh, come on now, are you going to take out your sword?



Cloud no. If he dies we'll learn nothing!



Ha ha ha! And here is the Ancient!



My name is Aerith, the least you can do is remember my name. Tell me one thing, professor. I know I'm one of the Ancients, my mother told me.



Your mother... Ifalna. How is she?



She is dead.



...I see.



Professor. Is Jenova part of the Ancients? Is Sephiroth an Ancient? Are we blood related?



...The answers lie to the west, yes, to the west...



Reactor 27... Corel...



...Alright, please leaving me alone now...



Do you know this place Barret?



...Yes.



Let's go, there's not a minute to lose!

They set off on their way, leaving Hojo to relax. Barret remained strangely silent during the journey... They arrived at the foot of Mount Corel. On a small path, a voice called for help...



What was that?



Over there! There is a someone on the ground, he seems injured!



H...help me...!



It looks serious...



There was a guy over there, he was wearing a black coat...



Let me heal you...



I just wanted to warn him that it was dangerous out there, he violently pushed me out of his way, I fell...



Sephiroth...



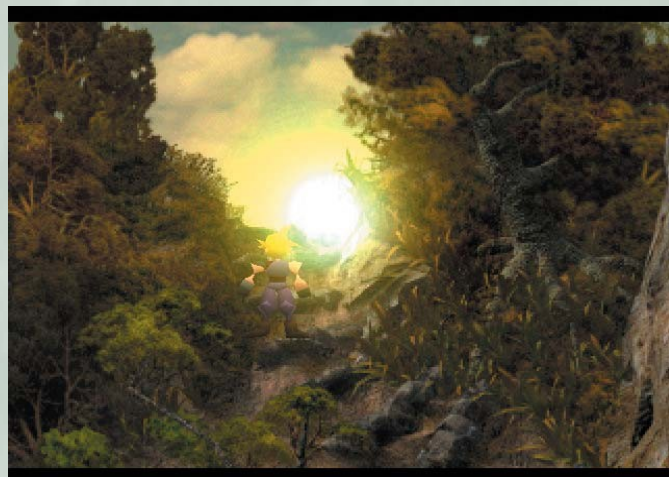
...Mmph...



Barret, what is it?



...Nothing. Let's move on. We are almost at North Corel.



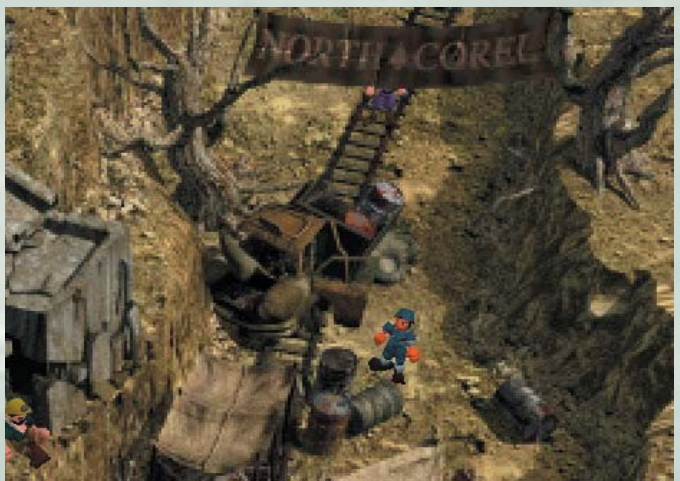
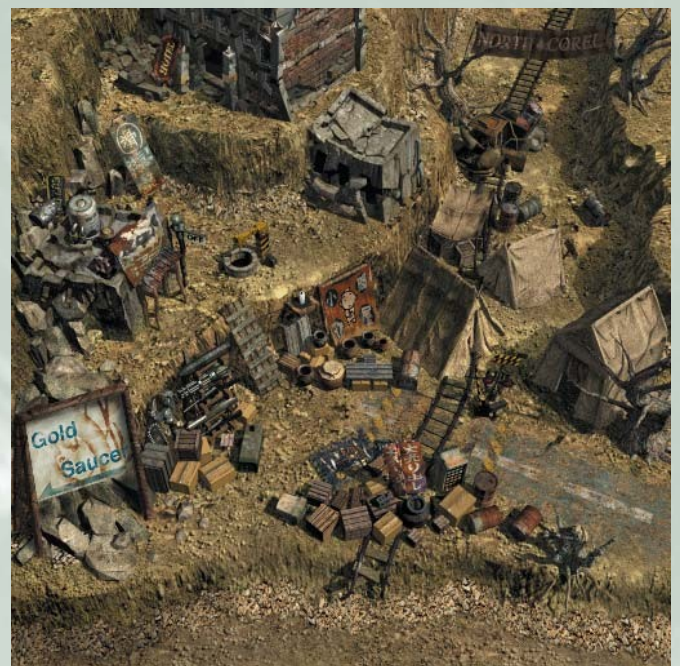
They passed by Reactor 27 which, embedded in these mountains, looked like a giant parasite. Barret looked at the whole region with contempt...



You have to follow these tracks, they lead to North Corel.



They continued their journey for several kilometers. An old drawbridge, crumbling paths, dangerous animals, this is what awaits anyone who crosses the Corel Mountains. Barret seemed to know the region like the back of his hand, they had no trouble reaching the North Corel camp....





Barret was immediately called out by one of the residents...



You!... So you... Hey! He is back !

Barret looked blankly at the group.



Wait for me here.

A few meters away, he met the people who were now gathering around him. These people didn't seem very happy to see him...



Look who's here! I didn't think I'd see that one again!



Are these people over there with you? I pity them, marching forward like people condemned to death, Barret!



Look around you! It's your fault Corel has become a pile of garbage! Nothing to say? Have you forgotten what you did here?



...I'm sorry...



Imbecile, you're not even worth it! Come on guys, don't waste your time talking to this weirdo!

The crowd dissipated, Barret returned to the group, head bowed.



You heard them... They say it's my fault this city is... destroyed...



Why didn't you tell us anything?



....



Take your time, we are with you.



We need to find information on Sephiroth...



Maybe we should ask if they saw a man in a black cloak?



Excuse me...



Yes?



I heard your conversation... Listen, I saw a guy walking by with a black cape... He had a big "1" tattooed on his arm... Are tattoos fashionable again?



Where did he go?



I think he took the tram to the Gold Saucer! That cape of his, that was quite the sight!



The Gold Saucer... Follow me.

The group arrived at the tram station...



Barret, why don't you tell us what happened at Corel?



Sorry but...



Come on Barret, we are your friends!



...Corel, my hometown, used to be close by...



What do you mean?



It's no longer there. It was lost four years ago.



How could these people lose an entire town?



...It's my fault... all my fault. My hometown, Corel, was a mining town. Coal was mined there. It was a dusty town, quiet and very poor... A truly small town. One day, I heard about Mako reactors for the first time...

Four years earlier, Corel, at the mayor's office...



Have you all decided what we should do? The only one against it is Dyne...



That's right, do you think I can let you to throw away our coal? Our fathers, and grandfathers before them, risked their lives for this coal.



But listen, Dyne, no one uses coal these days... It's a thing of the past.



He is right. Mayor, people want Mako!



It'll be fine, Dyne. Shinra guarantees your livelihood until the reactor construction work is completed.



Dyne, I don't want my wife, Myrna, to suffer any more...



I know how you feel Barret, I feel the same way too! And despite everything, I refuse to abandon the coal mines!



Dyne... you need to understand.

Four years later, North Corel...



This is how reactor 27 was built. We all thought it would make our lives easier... Soon after, the village was destroyed. This happened while Dyne and I were out of town for a few days. When we came back Corel was reduced to ashes by Shinra troops.



Shinra troops? But why?



There's been an explosion at the reactor, they blamed the people. They said it was the work of a rebel faction.



But... That's horrible!



I have never been able to forgive myself, much less Shinra. I should never have gotten involved in the construction of this reactor.



It wasn't your fault. We have all been duped by Shinra's promises.



That's why... I have so much hatred! They took advantage of me, but on top of that I lost my wife...



I still don't understand why people are mad at you.



...



Hey you! If you want to get on the tram, hurry up!



Yeah! Let's go!



Dyne was my best friend since childhood, a real brother.



I never knew. Why didn't you ever tell me?

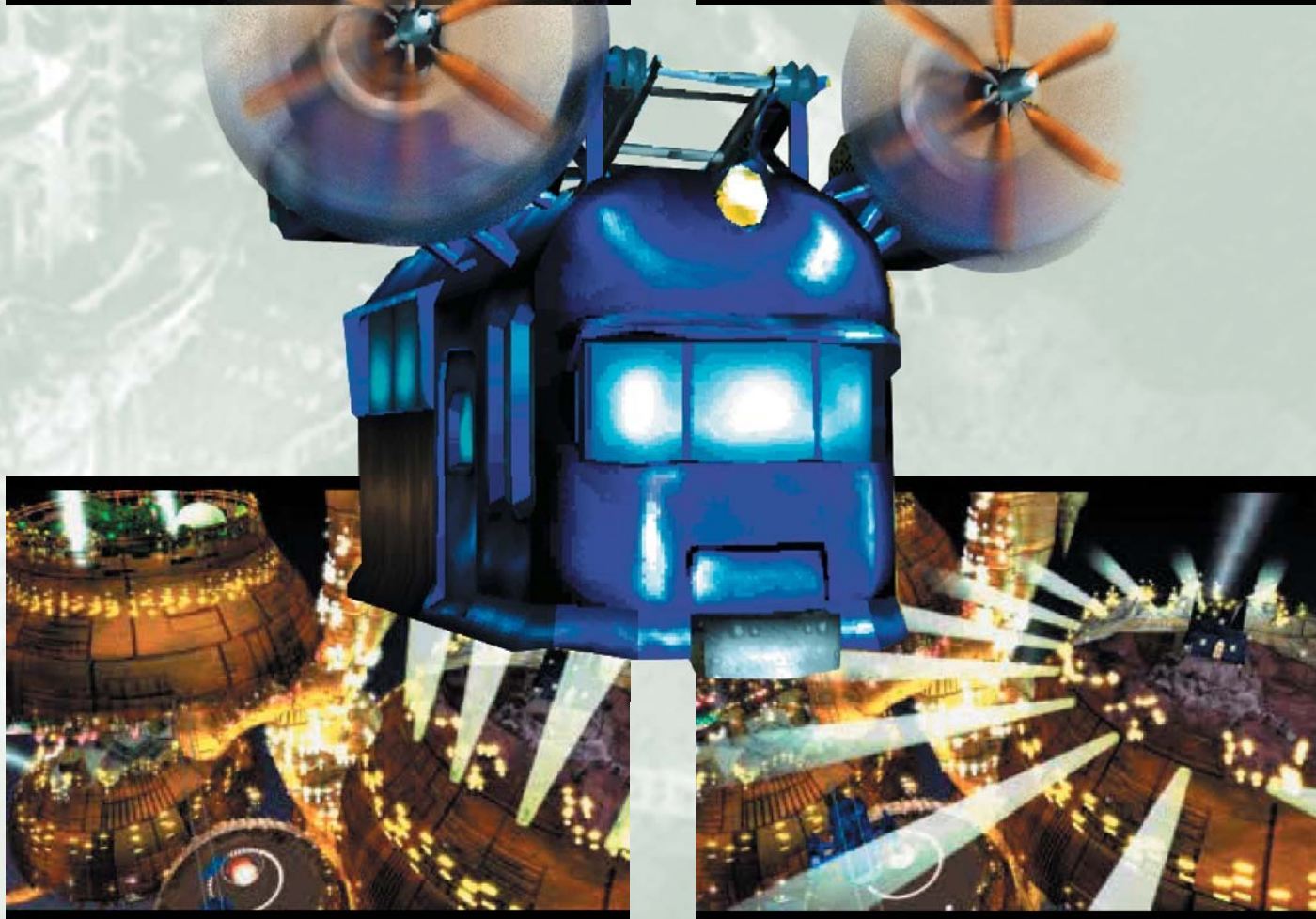
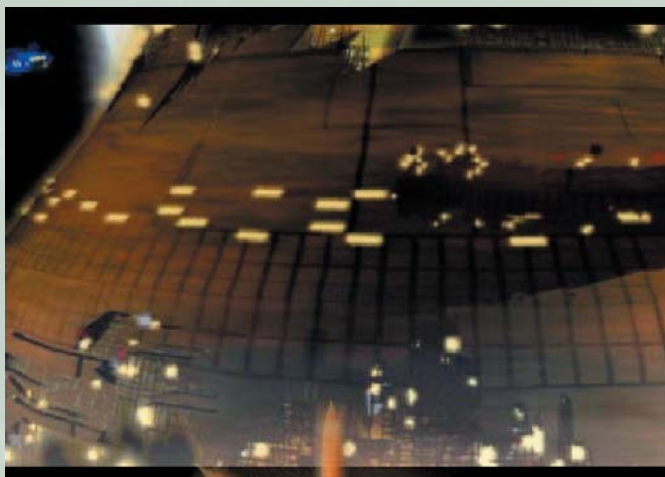


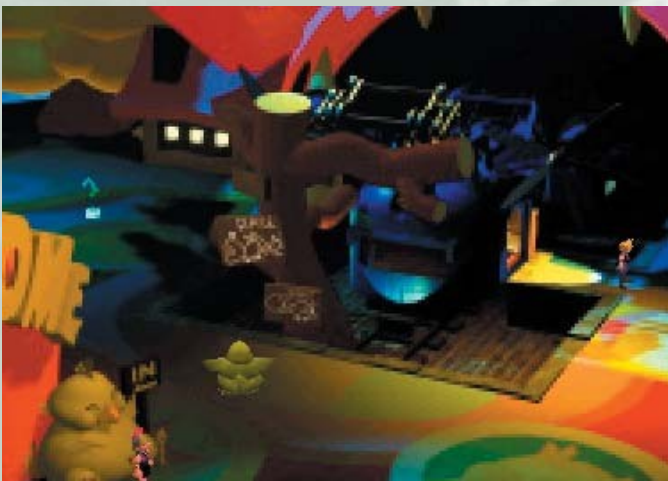
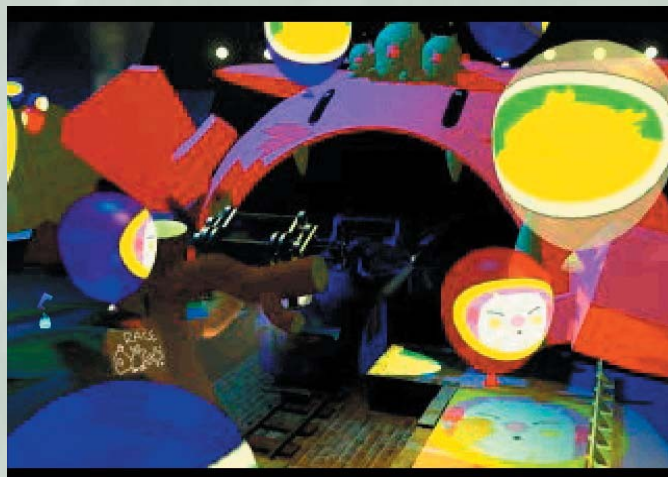
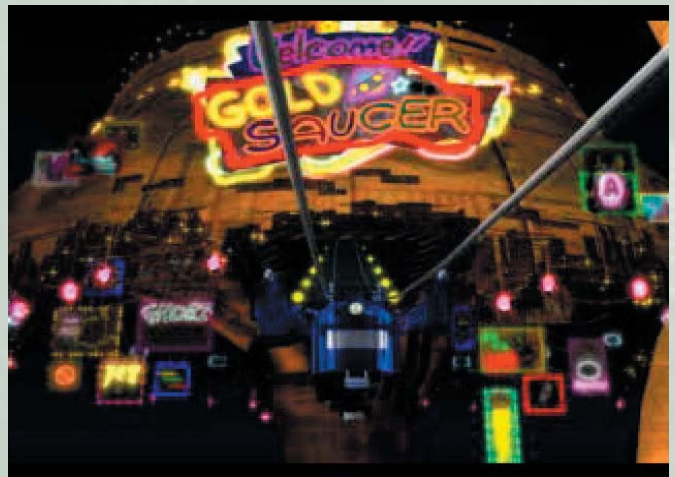
...



We better get going!







The Gold Saucer is an amusement park built on a giant tree that grew in the Corel Desert. The tram arrived at the station. The group was greeted by a young hostess next to whom a man dressed as a chocobo was jumping around and squeaking. Fairground music mixed with crowd noise echoed throughout the park.



Welcome to Gold Saucer! You are together? It's 3000 gil for a group pass.



Um... Actually...



Also we have a great promotion if you'd like!



Oh yeah? What is it?



For 30,000 gil, you can get a lifetime pass!



The group reluctantly decided to pay the 3000 gil, everyone had to empty the bottom of their pockets...



Thanks! Once you leave, your tickets will no longer be valid! Here at Gold Saucer, we pay in GP. Think of GP as the currency of the Gold Saucer. It can only be exchanged at the Wonder Square and Chocobo Races. Have fun!

They entered the first room...



Wow! Let's enjoy ourselves a little! I know it's not the right time for this but, Barret, please try to have fun!



...I don't want to have fun, leave me alone!



Really ? It's a shame... I'm going!



Are you letting Aerith go? Come on, Barret, don't be so grumpy! Let's go play a little!



Go ahead, play! ...And fool around! Don't forget that we have a mission, damn it!

Barret, enraged, picked a random direction and took off, leaving the group behind.



He'll be okay soon, let's let him calm down.



There is something strange in his story...



Leave him alone. Come, let's visit the park!



Sephiroth may be around, stay on your guard.



Come on Cloud! I'd like to forget about everything and have a little fun for a little while! I'm gonna check the Event Square!



I'd rather go to Wonder Square to see if Barret is okay.



Well, go ahead if you want! Red, are you coming with me?



Hmm... yes...



Cloud, I'll go with you. I also wonder how Barret is doing.



Whatever....

Cloud and Aerith arrived at Wonder Square. A strange creature called out to them...



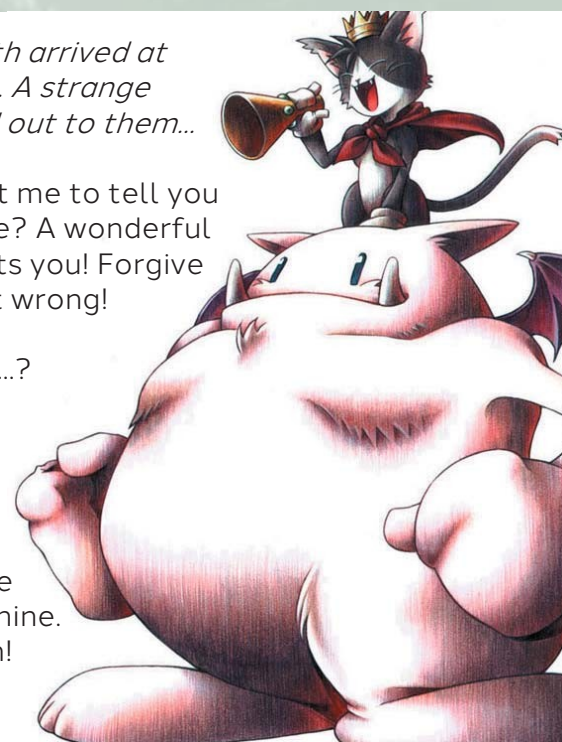
Hey you! Let me to tell you your fortune? A wonderful future awaits you! Forgive me if I get it wrong!

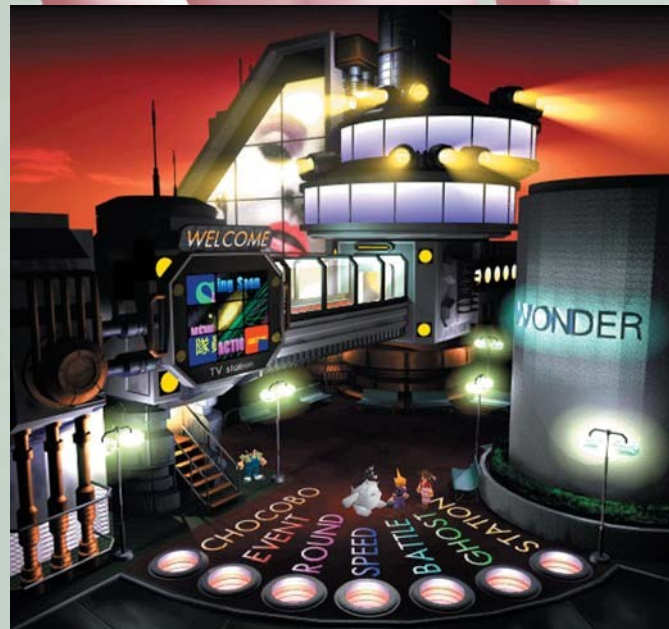


What in the...?



Oh, sorry, I didn't introduce myself... I'm a fortune telling machine. I'm Cait Sith!





So you can only read the future?



You're kidding? I can find objects, people, anything you want!



Can you tell us where a man called Sephiroth is?



Sephiroth? Alright! ...Hmm, focus... Ordinary luck, it will be a big fortune!



...?



Um... Believe in others' will and something good will happen... after the summer...?



...I'm not convinced.



Wait, let me try again, focus...



Never mind.



Don't be so bold! Your lucky color is... blue?



Alright, that's it, leave us alone...



Wait, wait, give me one more chance! Focus... There you go! Here, read this!

He handed her a random piece of paper...



What the...?



What?



"What you seek will be yours, but you will lose something dear." What does it mean?



I...I don't really know, it's my first day here actually... Well, shall we...?



What are you talking about?



My job! Until I find out what it means, I won't be at peace. I'm going with you!



But...



I'm coming with you whatever you'll say!



Please Cloooud, he's so cute!



H...huh What...!? Well... anyway... It's not like I have a choice with you guys.

