

= Characters of Final Fantasy VIII =

Square 's 1999 best @-@ selling role @-@ playing video game Final Fantasy VIII deals with an elite group of mercenaries called " SeeD " , as well as soldiers , rebels , and political leaders of various nations and cities . Thirteen weeks after its release , Final Fantasy VIII had earned more than US \$ 50 million in sales , making it the fastest selling Final Fantasy title . Final Fantasy VIII has shipped 8 @.@ 15 million units worldwide as of March 2003 . Additionally , Final Fantasy VIII was voted the 22nd @-@ best game of all time by readers of the Japanese magazine Famitsu . The game 's characters were created by Tetsuya Nomura , and are the first in the series to be realistically proportioned in a consistent manner . This graphical shift , as well as the cast in general , has received generally positive reviews from gaming magazines and websites .

The six main playable characters in Final Fantasy VIII are Squall Leonhart , a loner who keeps his focus on duty ; Rinoa Heartilly , a passionate young woman who follows her heart in all situations ; Quistis Trepe , an instructor with a serious , patient attitude ; Zell Dincht , a martial artist with a passion for hot dogs ; Selphie Tilmitt , a cheerful girl who loves trains and flies the airship Ragnarok ; and Irvine Kinneas , a marksman and consummate ladies ' man . Playable supporting characters include Laguna Loire , Kiro's Seagill , and Ward Zabac , who appear in " flashback " sequences ; and antagonists Seifer Almasy and Edea Kramer . Other characters such as the main villain Ultimecia make appearances throughout the story ; their significance and backstories are revealed as the game progresses .

= = Cast creation and influences = =

Scenario writer Kazushige Nojima stresses the dynamic of players ' relationships with the main character in Final Fantasy games ; thus , he puts significant thought into how that relationship will develop . With Final Fantasy VII , protagonist Cloud Strife 's reserved nature led Nojima to include scenarios in which the player can select Cloud 's responses to certain situations and dialogue . With Final Fantasy VIII , which also features a reserved lead protagonist in Squall , Nojima wanted to give players actual insight into what the protagonist is thinking , even while other characters remain uninformed : this led to the inner dialogues Squall has through the game .

Character designer Tetsuya Nomura , while exchanging e @-@ mails with director Yoshinori Kitase during the period between the development of Final Fantasy VII and Final Fantasy VIII , suggested that the game should have a " school days " feel . Because Nojima already had a story in mind in which the main characters were the same age , the idea worked . Thus , they created the concept of military academies , called " Gardens " , in which students would train to become " SeeD " mercenaries . Nojima also planned for the two playable parties featured in the game ? Squall 's present day group and Laguna Loire 's group of twenty years in the past ? to highly contrast with one another . Laguna 's group consists of characters in their late twenties and have a lot of combat experience . They are also close friends who have fought together for a long time and trust one another . On the other hand , Squall 's party is young and inexperienced , and Squall himself does not initially understand the value of friendship .

Kitase expressed a desire to give the game a foreign atmosphere (" foreign " being in relation to Japan) ; his objective with the environment was to create a largely European setting . The first character Nomura designed specifically for use in Final Fantasy VIII was Squall , initially giving him longer hair and a more feminine appearance . However , Yoshinori Kitase did not feel that this design worked and asked Nomura to shorten his hair and make him look more masculine , which led to the design seen in @-@ game . When designing Cloud Strife , Nomura gave him distinctly spiky , bright blonde hair to emphasize his role as that game 's protagonist . With Squall , Nomura wanted to try a unique angle to establish his role , giving him the characteristic gunblade scar across the bridge of his nose . A complete history was not yet conceived , so Nomura left the explanation for Squall 's scar to Nojima . Squall 's design was flourished by a fur lining along the collar of his jacket , included for the purpose of challenging the game 's full motion video designers . This is but one example of the demands he has consistently extended to the programmers of the Final Fantasy

series as technology has advanced .

" Guardian Forces " , creatures who are brought into battle to attack enemies or support the party , are the version of summons appearing in Final Fantasy VIII . Nomura felt they should be unique beings , without clothes or other human @-@ like concepts . This was problematic , as he did not want them to " become the actual monsters " , so he took great care in their design . Ramuh ? an old wizard from earlier Final Fantasy games ? was replaced ; other human @-@ like designs were re @-@ imagined nude and with creature @-@ like elements . Nomura , also the director of the Guardian Force animation sequences , wanted to create a greater impact than the summons of Final Fantasy VII . Leviathan was created as a test and included in a game demo . Garnering a positive reaction from players , Nomura decided to create the remaining sequences in a similar fashion .

In a Famitsu Weekly interview with Kitase , Nomura , and Yuusuke Naoi , the team agreed that Final Fantasy VIII reflects Nomura 's preferred technique , as opposed to Final Fantasy VII , which featured characters that " weren 't really his style " . The team also decided to use realistically proportioned characters . The higher level of full motion video technology would have otherwise created an inconsistency between the in @-@ game graphics and the higher definition full motion video graphics . Additionally , Kitase explained that the main logo of the game ? Squall and Rinoa embracing ? was inspired by the team 's efforts to express emotion through body language .

= = Creatures and races = =

The world of Final Fantasy VIII is predominantly occupied by humans . Another prominent race is the " Shumi " , a small tribe of creatures with yellow skin and large arms . The tribe lives in an underground village on the Trabian continent . The Shumi frown upon showing off their large hands ; NORG , the owner of Balamb Garden , was exiled from the tribe for his ostentation . All Shumi undergo a biological metamorphosis at some point in their lives ; a qualified Shumi will become an Elder while another may become a mute " Moomba " . Moombas are covered in red fur , which the Shumi attribute to " the passionate ingenuity in their hearts " . Additionally , Moombas have appeared in several Final Fantasy spin @-@ offs , including Chocobo World and Chocobo Racing .

Chocobos ? large galliform birds common throughout the Final Fantasy series ? are featured in the game . In this title , Chocobos are generally undomesticated and can be found in various forests throughout the world . Each forest has a minigame where the player must corral baby Chocobos to locate the mother . If the player catches a bird , a baby Chocobo (a Chicobo) named Boko will follow the player around . Boko has his own game called Chocobo World that can be downloaded from the PlayStation disc onto a PocketStation game unit . Series composer Nobuo Uematsu created two Chocobo themes for Final Fantasy VIII : " Mods de Chocobo " and " Odeka de Chocobo " .

Final Fantasy VIII also features an array of common real world creatures , such as cats and dogs . The game also includes numerous monsters , many of which have appeared earlier in the series . Popular recurring monsters include Adamantoise , Behemoth , Bomb , Cactuar , Iron Giant , Malboro , and Tonberry .

= = Playable characters = =

= = = Squall Leonhart = = =

Squall Leonhart (????? ? ?????? , Suk?ru Reonh?to) is the main protagonist of Final Fantasy VIII . He is a young student at Balamb Garden who was identifiable by the scar on his face that a fellow student , Seifer , inflicted . He rarely speaks and has the reputation of being a lone wolf . As Squall 's story unfolds , he becomes fascinated with and falls in love with Rinoa , despite never outwardly expressing such until the ending . Squall is characterized by forlorn memories of standing out in the rain at the orphanage where he grew up , wondering where " Sis " went . Squall 's weapon is a

gunblade , a sword that uses components of a revolver to send vibrations through the blade when triggered . His Limit Break is a series of sword strikes called Renzokuken .

= = = Rinoa Heartilly = = =

Rinoa Heartilly (??? ? ?????? , Rinoa H?tir?) is the primary female protagonist of Final Fantasy VIII . She is the 17 @-@ year @-@ old daughter of General Caraway , a high @-@ ranking officer in the Galbadian army , and Julia Heartilly , a successful pianist and singer . Rinoa is a member of the Forest Owls , a resistance faction seeking to liberate the small nation of Timber from Galbadian occupation . When Squall and his party of SeeD help the resistance movement fight Galbadia , Rinoa decides to stay with them ; as a result she ends up falling in love with Squall . She has black hair with brown highlights and dark eyes . Outspoken , spirited , emotional , and honest with her feelings , she speaks her mind without reservation . Because of her ambition , she can often be stubborn . The year before the game begins , she dated with Squall 's long @-@ standing rival Seifer Almsy .

Rinoa first meets Squall at the SeeD inauguration ball at Balamb Garden . During the dance , she manages to charm the usually antisocial Squall into dancing with her . Her purpose for visiting the Garden is revealed when the Forest Owls hire Squall , Zell Dincht , and Selphie Tilmitt as mercenaries . Later , Rinoa is possessed by Ultimecia when she loses her influence over Sorceress Edea , which causes Rinoa to fall into a coma @-@ like state . Consequently , Squall tries desperately to revive her , eventually traveling to the country of Esthar . However , Ultimecia manages to use Rinoa to release Sorceress Adel from her orbital prison . After Rinoa 's use expires , Ultimecia possesses Adel and leaves Rinoa to die in space . Squall rescues her , and the two attempt to share a personal moment on the Ragnarok spaceship while the game 's theme song , " Eyes On Me " , plays in the background . During the game 's ending , she reunites with Squall , and kisses him for the first time on the Balamb Garden balcony .

In battle , she uses a weapon called a " Blaster Edge " , which consists of an arm holster and a projectile that returns like a boomerang . In her Combine Limit Break , she attacks in unison with her dog , Angelo . When Rinoa gains Sorceress powers , she acquires a second Limit Break , Angel Wing , which increases her spell @-@ casting ability , along with rendering her in a state of " magic " berserk for the remainder of the battle .

Character artist Tetsuya Nomura found Rinoa the hardest character to design in Final Fantasy VIII . Nomura emphasized that he tried to avoid letting the possibilities presented by the recent advancements in full motion video technology become the entire focus , believing that these innovations might tempt developers to make their female characters " too beautiful " and focus more on physical appearance than personality . With this in mind , Nomura tried to make her " cute , not gorgeous " . To further emphasize this , he wrote a list of vocabulary traits and physical habits for Rinoa 's character that he felt conveyed this idea , and sent them to Kazushige Nojima along with the character 's design .

In addition to Final Fantasy VIII , Rinoa appears in a PlayStation 2 technology demo recreating the pre @-@ rendered music video cutscene sequence from the game in real @-@ time . She also appears in the 2004 board video game Itadaki Street Special and the 2012 rhythm video game Theatrhythm Final Fantasy , and is set to appear in the puzzle role @-@ playing video game Puzzle & Dragons as part of the Final Fantasy collaboration . Her outfits are available in the video games Gunslinger Stratos 2 and Star Ocean : Till the End of Time , and three of Rinoa 's weapon (the Valkyrie , Cardinal and Shooting Star) are Ultimecia 's exclusive weapons in Dissidia Final Fantasy .

= = = Laguna Loire = = =

Laguna Loire (??? ? ?????? , Raguna Rew?ru) is a man whose past and relation to the main characters are revealed slowly throughout the game . Most of the sequences involving Laguna appear in the form of " dreams " experienced by the primary protagonists . Squall always

experiences these dreams from Laguna 's point of view , although he does not think too highly of Laguna . Laguna attacks with a Machine gun and his Limit Break is Desperado , which involves a swinging rope , a grenade , and a barrage of bullets . During the dream segments , he is a twenty @-@ seven @-@ year @-@ old soldier in the Galbadian army who travels with his companions , Kiros Seagill and Ward Zabac . He is also an aspiring journalist .

During the first two dream segments , Laguna and his team are shown getting lost and visiting the hotel where singer Julia Heartilly , Laguna 's romantic interest , performs . After a scouting mission at Centra , the three soldiers are separated and Laguna is injured . A young woman named Raine nurses him back to health after he is brought to Winhill . He falls in love with and marries her . However , he is drawn away from his new home when a young girl in their care , Ellone , is kidnapped . Laguna tracks her down in Esthar , where he helps liberate the nation from the despotic rule of Sorceress Adel . The people of Esthar elect Laguna as their president and Ellone is sent back to Winhill without him . After Raine dies , her child (whom Ward and Kiros imply to be Squall in a conversation aboard the Ragnarok) and Ellone are sent to an orphanage . Laguna is unable to leave his post to visit her and remains president of Esthar to the present day . Ellone and Laguna are reunited in space , and Laguna helps the party prepare for their fight against Ultimecia .

The concept of two main characters was planned since the beginning of the game 's development . Nomura tried to create a contrast between Laguna 's and Squall 's occupations ; thus , Laguna became a soldier with a light @-@ hearted charisma , and Squall became a reserved mercenary student . The designers intended Laguna to be more similar to the previous protagonists in the series to complement Squall , who is different from previous main characters . Laguna is ranked seventh in Electronic Gaming Monthly 's list of the top ten video game politicians .

Laguna Loire appears in Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy , where he is voiced by Hiroaki Hirata in the Japanese version and Armando Valdes @-@ Kennedy in the English version . He is featured in his youthful Final Fantasy VIII appearance while his older and his Galbadian soldier forms . His costume of a knight is also available as downloadable content . Laguna was also planned to appear in Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep as the head of Mirage Arena .

= = = Seifer Almasy = = =

Seifer Almasy (?????? ? ?????? , Saif? Arumash?) is a classmate and rival of Squall , who can only be controlled by the player during the Dollet sequence . He reappears as a boss later in the game . He acts as a foil to Squall in many respects , having dated Rinoa before she met Squall , and assuming a leadership position among his friends . Like Squall , Seifer wields a gunblade which he calls " Hyperion " . His Limit Break , Fire Cross , allows him to use an attack called No Mercy . He later uses the more powerful techniques Demon Slice and Bloodfest against the player . Seifer has a short temper and is often depicted as a bully who desires attention . He is also fiercely independent and is often punished for his recklessness . He is the leader of Balamb Garden 's disciplinary committee with his friends Fujin and Raijin . After joining Ultimecia , he becomes the leader of the Galbadian army .

During the introduction sequence , Seifer cuts Squall across the left side of his face with his gunblade , leaving a scar . Squall retaliates with a backhand slash that leaves Seifer with a mirrored scar . At the following field exam in Dollet , Seifer acts independently from his teammates Squall and Zell , abandoning them ; consequently , he fails and is not promoted to SeeD . Spurred by dreams of a brighter future , he defects to Sorceress Edea so he could be her " knight " . From his point of view , Squall and the others are " evil " and he recognizes himself as a hero . As Seifer is brainwashed by the sorceress , he alienates himself from his friends . Eventually , Fujin and Raijin abandon him and he is defeated shortly afterward . Following Edea 's defeat , the party confronts Seifer one last time as he now serves Ultimecia , and either they or Gilgamesh defeat him . Seifer escapes , kidnapping Rinoa and bringing her to Adel . At the end of the game , Seifer is seen fishing and having fun with Fujin and Raijin .

Nomura had originally intended Seifer not only as Squall 's rival , but also as part of the love triangle between him , Squall , and Rinoa . Although this concept was shelved in the final script , Seifer

remains Squall 's rival and his appearance was designed to contrast with Squall 's . They have equivalent but mirrored scars on their faces and their jackets are of opposing color and length . Both characters use gunblades ; Squall 's gunblade is larger and requires two hands , while Seifer 's gunblade is lighter and can be wielded with one hand . A younger version of Seifer makes an appearance in Kingdom Hearts II as a member of the Twilight Town Disciplinary Committee with Fujin and Raijin . Seifer in the virtual Twilight Town is a rival of the main character , Roxas , and at one point mentions that he does not wish to cooperate with destiny . He is voiced by Takehito Koyasu and Will Friedle in the Japanese and English versions , respectively . He is also featured in the rhythm game Theatrhythm Final Fantasy as a subcharacter representing Final Fantasy VIII .

The book " Converging Traditions in the Digital Moving Image : Architectures of Illusion , Images of Truth " discusses that while Seifer is seen as a show @-@ off and a troublemaker , protagonist Squall Leonhart identifies with him . IGN listed Seifer as the 91st best video game villain , stating that he makes for a great rival due to the similarities between him and Squall .

= = = Quistis Trepe = = =

Quistis Trepe (????? ? ????? , Kisutisu Tur?pu) is an eighteen @-@ year @-@ old instructor at Balamb Garden , where Squall , Zell , and Seifer are students . She uses a chain whip in battle , and her Limit Break , Blue Magic , a common ability found throughout the Final Fantasy games , allows her to imitate monsters ' attacks . Early in the game , Quistis is discharged as an instructor because she " [lacks] leadership qualities " . Afterwards , she maintains a more informal relationship with the other characters as a fellow member of SeeD .

As a child , Quistis stayed at an orphanage with most of the main characters . She then lived with foster parents , with whom she never developed any intimacy , before moving to Galbadia Garden at age ten . She became a SeeD at fifteen and an instructor two years later . Quistis initially joins Squall to prepare him for his upcoming field exam . She later takes Squall into her confidence and tells him personally about her demotion . As a result , Squall stops paying attention to her , which leads to Quistis asking if he is paying attention . Squall rudely tells her to go " talk to a wall " , a famous comical line in the game , and not to burden him with her problems . This furthers the player 's perception of Squall 's awkwardness and anti @-@ social tendencies . When Irvine refreshes the main characters ' memories about the orphanage , they remember that Squall 's asocial behavior began when Ellone , an older sister figure to Squall , left the orphanage unexpectedly . As a result of these revelations , Quistis recognizes that her feelings for Squall are more sisterly than romantic . Later , she criticizes Squall when he nearly abandons Rinoa , his romantic interest .

When designing the characters , Nomura had wanted at least one female character to wear a skirt . Quistis was originally supposed to fill this part , but Nomura decided a long skirt worn over pants would look better . The role was eventually passed to Selphie . Nomura was surprised when the writers cast her as a teacher , despite being around the same age as the rest of the group .

= = = Selphie Tilmitt = = =

Selphie Tilmitt (???? ? ?????? , Serufi Tirumitto) is a student at Balamb Garden who recently transferred from Trabia Garden . She is active and energetic , although slightly clumsy . She participates in many extracurricular activities , such as planning the Garden Festival and running the school 's website . She wields nunchaku in battle , and her Limit Break Slot allows the player to cast a random spell numerous times as well as certain magic used exclusively in her limit break . In addition to battle , she pilots the Ragnarok starship .

Selphie first appears when running into Squall while late for class . She asks Squall to show her around because she recently transferred . During the Dollet exam , Selphie joins Squall 's team after Seifer abandons them . She becomes a SeeD with Squall and Zell , and the three are assigned to the same team . When Galbadia launches missiles at Trabia Garden , she reacts with outrage and helps destroy the missile base . Throughout the game , she revisits her childhood closeness with Irvine , who serves as her copilot on the Ragnarok .

Selphie was the second character that Nomura drew , after Squall , intentionally giving her an impractical hairstyle . When he first designed Selphie , Nomura drew her in overalls ; however , he realized that none of the characters would be wearing a skirt . In the end , he gave Selphie a mini @-@ skirt and let Quistis have pants . In the Kingdom Hearts series , Nomura included a younger version of Selphie as a resident of Destiny Islands , and uses a jump rope instead of nunchaku . She is voiced by Mayuko Aoki in the Japanese version , and by Molly Keck in the English version .

= = = Zell Dincht = = =

Zell Dincht (??? ???? , Zeru Din) is a student at Balamb Garden with Squall and Seifer . Seventeen years old , Zell is a martial artist who fits the role of unarmed character , just like Tifa Lockhart did in the previous game , Final Fantasy VII . Zell attacks with punches and kicks , his weapons being gloves , and his Limit Break , Duel , requires the player to input button combinations on the controller to deal damage . Zell is slightly impulsive and overconfident in his own skill ; however , he is loyal to his friends . Seifer gives him the nickname " chicken @-@ wuss " . He also has a passion for hot dogs ; a recurring gag is that they are always sold out by the time he reaches the cafeteria .

Zell lived at the same orphanage as many of the other protagonists ; this is where Seifer first began to bully him . He was later adopted by the Dincht family in the town of Balamb . His motivation for enrolling at Garden is to live up to the memory of his grandfather , a famous soldier .

Zell was designed to look and act like the main character of a shōnen manga (Japanese comic books intended primarily for boys) ; his neighbors in Balamb describe him as a " ' comic @-@ bookish ' type of hero " . He also thinks of himself as Seifer 's rival , despite not being the main character . The inspiration for the tattoo on his face came from an MTV music video that featured a man with a full body tattoo .

Zell 's ultimate weapon is named Ehrgeiz , directly referencing the game of the same name which came out around the same time Final Fantasy VIII did . Also , continuing the similarities to Tifa Lockhart of Final Fantasy VII , Zell 's final limit break is My Final Heaven , while Tifa 's was called just Final Heaven .

= = = Irvine Kinneas = = =

Irvine Kinneas (?????? ? ???? , ?vain Kiniasu) is a student at Galbadia Garden , one of the three mercenary academies in the game . He is one of the Garden 's elite sharpshooters , always carrying his rifle . His Limit Break is Shot , which deals damage and inflicts status effects depending on the type of ammunition . Irvine is depicted as a cowboy , tall and fair @-@ skinned with long brown hair that he wears pulled back in a ponytail . He also enjoys flirting with the female characters , being known as well for his marksmanship as his charm . He acts like a carefree , but misunderstood loner ; however , this is merely a façade to charm women and hide his lack of confidence .

When Sorceress Edea becomes the Galbadian ambassador , Balamb and Galbadia Gardens order Squall 's team to assassinate her ; Irvine is introduced as the sniper for the mission . Moments before the assassination attempt , he explains to Squall that he always chokes under pressure . In spite of his nerves and under intense pressure , he fires an accurate shot , but Edea uses magic to stop the bullet . At Trabia Garden , Irvine reveals that he and most of the other party members had lived in the same orphanage , run by Cid and Edea Kramer . However , the others could not remember this because of their use of Guardian Forces (GF) , magical beings who cause severe long @-@ term memory loss as a side effect . Because Irvine had not used a GF until he joined the party , he is able to remember his past . During the game , Irvine gradually draws closer to Selphie , acting on the feeling he has had since living with her at the orphanage .

With Irvine , Nomura tried to strike a balance between not overshadowing Squall and not becoming too unattractive . He gave Irvine a handsome appearance , but a casual personality , hoping that this would make him less attractive than Squall . Keeping with this idea , Nomura gave him goggles ; however , this idea was abandoned in favor of an American cowboy @-@ like appearance to set

him apart from other goggle @-@ wearing characters in the Final Fantasy series .

= = = Kiros Seagill = = =

Kiros Seagill (??? ? ???? , Kiroshu Sh?geru) is one of Laguna 's comrades in the Galbadian Army . He wields a pair of katar (????) or gauntlet @-@ daggers , with which he repeatedly slices his enemies in his Limit Break , Blood Pain . His weapons ' name is given as " katal " in the English localization of the game . Following the failed mission in Centra , Kiros is separated from Laguna and Ward . He heals quickly and decides to leave the Galbadian army , but soon finds that life without Laguna lacks excitement . His subsequent search for Laguna brings him to Winhill after nearly a year . When Laguna is forced to leave Winhill to find Ellone , Kiros accompanies him , helping him earn money as an amateur actor to fund the expedition . Kiros remains by Laguna 's side throughout his adventures in Esthar , earning a place as Laguna 's advisor when he becomes president . Like Ward , Kiros ' interactions with Laguna are based on the staff 's interactions during development .

= = = Ward Zabac = = =

Ward Zabac (???? ? ???? , W?do Zabakku) is Laguna 's other comrade . An imposing man , he wields a large harpoon in battle ; in his Limit Break , Massive Anchor , he uses it to crush his opponents from above . During the incident at Centra , he loses his voice in a battle with Esthar soldiers . After being separated from Laguna and Kiros , he becomes a janitor at the D @-@ District Prison . When Laguna becomes president of Esthar , Ward joins Kiros as an advisor , directing affairs with gestures and ellipses . Laguna and Kiros can understand what he is saying by his reactions . Like Kiros , Ward 's interactions with Laguna are based on the staff 's interactions during development .

= = = Edea Kramer = = =

Edea Kramer (??? ? ????? , Idea Kureim?) is initially presented as a power @-@ hungry sorceress who seizes control of Galbadia from President Deling . Her motives are unknown , but SeeD is dispatched to assassinate her . Later , it is revealed that Edea is actually the wife of Headmaster Cid , and was known as " Matron " to Squall and the other kids that lived at the orphanage . It is eventually explained that Edea was not acting of her own will , but was possessed by a sorceress from the future named Ultimecia . When Ultimecia 's control is broken , Edea takes the side of the SeeDs in the struggle and joins Squall 's party for a short time . However , she accidentally gives her powers to Rinoa , making her a sorceress . Being a sorceress , Edea attacks with magical bursts of energy and her Limit Break , Ice Strike , consists of a magically conjured icicle , hurled like a javelin . This Limit Break is depicted in a cutscene during Edea 's coronation as head of Galbadia , when she (possessed by Ultimecia) attacks Squall with it .

Edea is one of three character concepts , along with Fujin and Raijin , to have been created before Final Fantasy VIII . Tetsuya Nomura had designed Edea even before the development of Final Fantasy VII , based on the style of Yoshitaka Amano , who was the character illustrator of Final Fantasy VI and previous games . In Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy , Edea 's design is used as an alternate costume of Ultimecia 's .

= = Other characters = =

= = = Adel = = =

Adel (??? , Aderu) is a sorceress from Esthar who initiated the Sorceress War some years ago before the start of the game . As the ruler of Esthar , she ordered her soldiers to abduct every girl to

find a suitable successor for her powers , including the young Ellone . During the Esthar revolution , Laguna and Dr. Odine devised an artifact to cancel the sorceress power , and placed her in suspended animation in outer space . In the present , after Edea is released from Ultimecia 's control , Ultimecia possesses the new sorceress , Rinoa , and commands her to free Adel , so she can become Ultimecia 's new and more powerful vessel . Adel is successfully freed , so Rinoa is discarded as a host . However , in order to defeat Ultimecia , Dr. Odine plans for Ultimecia to once again possess Rinoa . Eventually , Squall 's party defeats Adel when she tries to absorb Rinoa at the Lunatic Pandora , thus Adel 's powers transfer to Rinoa , Ultimecia possesses her again , and using Ellone 's powers , they start " Time Compression " , which leads to the final battle .

= = = Cid Kramer = = =

Cid Kramer (??? ???? , Shido Kureim?) is the headmaster of Balamb Garden . After the failed assassination attempt on Edea , the Garden Master , NORG , attempts to seize power from Cid and reconcile with Edea . This sparks an internal conflict , in which the students and personnel side with either Cid or NORG . However , Squall and Xu quell the conflict and return Cid to power . Afterward , Cid aggressively confronts NORG , who started the conflict over financial issues . Cid is the husband of Sorceress Edea , with whom he ran an orphanage and founded the SeeD organization . They are estranged for most of the game , however , because they lead opposing factions until Ultimecia releases her magical possession of Edea .

Because most Final Fantasy titles include a character named " Cid " , Nomura wanted to design someone with differences from the past Cids in the series . He gave this version of Cid the appearance and personality of an older , benevolent character who would watch over Squall 's party and offer them advice and motivation . Nojima decided that this type of good @-@ natured character would work best as the headmaster of Balamb Garden .

= = = Ellone = = =

Ellone (????? , Eru?ne) is a mysterious girl and the missing " Sis " of Squall 's past . She has the ability to send a person 's consciousness back in time and into the body of another , so they can experience the actions of that person . She uses this talent to send Squall 's party into Laguna 's past adventures , hoping that they would alter the past ; however , she eventually realizes that her abilities can only view history , not alter it . Ultimecia needs this power to achieve " Time Compression " , so she uses Edea and the Galbadian military to find her .

Ellone is an important character in the story , tying the relationships between some of the characters , and being the primary objective of Ultimecia . However , Ellone 's importance is mostly told in the flashbacks , and explained gradually . After Ellone 's parents were killed by Esthar soldiers , under orders of sorceress Adel , she lived with Raine in the small Winhill village , where she also developed a close relationship with her adoptive uncle , Laguna . These peaceful times lasted until she was finally captured by Esthar . Then , Laguna travelled to Esthar to rescue her , at the same time he participated in Esthar 's rebellion to overthrow Adel . After Adel 's incarceration in space , Laguna having to remain in Esthar as president , and then Raine 's death , Ellone moved to Cid and Edea 's orphanage , where she became an older sister figure to Squall and the other orphans , and eventually she also followed Cid to Balamb Garden . Early in the game , Squall 's party finds Ellone in the library of Balamb Garden , but the characters don 't have further interactions . It is later explained that the " Guardian Forces " (GF) which the SeeDs use in battle cause memory loss , thus explaining why Squall doesn 't remember Ellone , Edea and his past in the orphanage .

= = = Fujin = = =

Fujin (?? , F?jin) is a young woman with pale skin , short silver hair and an eye patch . She is a member of Balamb Garden 's disciplinary committee with Seifer and Raijin ; the three of them form a

close " posse " , even when Seifer leaves Garden . Fujin prefers to speak in terse sentences , often with only a single word , such as " RAGE ! " and " LIES ! " (in the Japanese version she only spoke in Kanji) . However , near the end of the game , she explains to Squall that she will temporarily break ties with Seifer because of his recent behavior . In battle , Fujin wields a chakram and uses wind @-@ based magic . She shares her name with the Japanese god of wind , F?jin .

Fujin and Raijin were to appear in Final Fantasy VII ; however , the designers excluded them due to their similarity to the Turks . In Kingdom Hearts II , a younger version of Fujin , named " Fuu " (??) , appears as a member of Seifer 's gang . She is voiced by Rio Natsuki in the Japanese version and by Jillian Bowen in the English version .

= = = Raijin = = =

Raijin (?? , R?jin) is a member of Balamb Garden 's disciplinary committee with Seifer and Fujin ; the three form a close " posse " , as he calls it . He has a habit of ending his sentences with " ya know " (??? , mon 'yo , in the Japanese version) . Like Fujin , he supports Seifer when he betrays SeeD and Garden to side with Edea . Near the end of the game , he stands by Fujin 's plea to the party to help save Seifer from himself . In the ending FMV , he celebrates catching a large fish until Fujin kicks him into the water . In battle , Raijin uses thunder @-@ based magic and a b? staff with large weights on either end . He shares his name with the Japanese god of thunder , Raijin .

Raijin and Fujin were to appear in Final Fantasy VII ; however , the designers decided against it due to their similarity to the Turks . In Kingdom Hearts II , a younger version of Raijin , named " Rai " (??) , appears as a member of Seifer 's gang . He is voiced by Kazuya Nakai in the Japanese version , and by Brandon Adams in the English version .

= = = Ultimecia = = =

Ultimecia (??????? , Arutimishia) is the main antagonist of Final Fantasy VIII . Because she operates through the body of a possessed Edea to gain control of Galbadia , Ultimecia 's existence is revealed only after possessing Rinoa to release Sorceress Adel from her orbital prison to take as a new host . A sorceress from the future , Ultimecia is capable of reaching her consciousness into the distant past via a special " Junction Machine " to possess other sorceresses . She seeks to achieve " Time Compression " , which would cause all eras to merge ; this would extinguish all life but her own as she becomes an omnipresent goddess . This would give her power on a par to Hyne the Great , who , according to the background had created the world .

In fact , Squall and the heroes do help Ultimecia start Time Compression , but they do so to confront her in her own time . After Squall and his party defeat Sorceress Adel , Adel transfers her power to Rinoa , then Ultimecia possesses Rinoa again , and Ellone uses her power to send their consciousness to the past , at which point Ultimecia starts Time Compression . At that moment , the heroes are able to travel to Ultimecia 's distant future and defeat her . After the final battle , the defeated Ultimecia transfers her powers to Edea .

Ultimecia is the villainess representing Final Fantasy VIII in Dissidia : Final Fantasy and Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy , where she is voiced by Atsuko Tanaka (Japanese) and Tasia Valenza (English) .

= = = Minor characters = = =

= = = Biggs and Wedge = = =

Biggs and Wedge are members of the Galbadian Army . Biggs is a major and Wedge is a lieutenant . After the main characters defeat the duo at Dollet , they are demoted in rank to lieutenant and private respectively . The protagonists encounter them again at the D @-@ District Prison . A third meeting at the Lunatic Pandora does not result in conflict ; instead , they quit the Galbadian army .

They continue the Final Fantasy tradition of including two minor characters with the names " Biggs " and " Wedge . "

===== General Fury Caraway =====

General Fury Caraway is a member of the Galbadian military who advises the main characters on their mission to assassinate Sorceress Edea . When Laguna left Galbadia , Caraway comforted Julia ; eventually , they married and had a child , Rinoa . Caraway and Rinoa have a problematic relationship ; he attempts to prevent her from participating in the assassination attempt . However , he later arranges her freedom from the D @-@ District Prison .

===== Vinzer Deling =====

Vinzer Deling is the President of Galbadia . He appoints Sorceress Edea as a supposed " peace ambassador " to resolve Galbadia 's political problems with other nations . His body double is defeated by SeeD and the Forest Owls resistance group . Edea kills him during her welcoming ceremony at Deling City and seizes power in Galbadia .

===== Mayor Dobe and Flo =====

Mayor Dobe is the leader of Fishermans Horizon , a town in the middle of a transoceanic highway between the continents of Galbadia and Esthar . He and his wife , Flo , detest violence and oppose the Garden 's presence in their territory . Squall and his party save the Mayor from certain death when the Galbadian army invades the town .

===== Forest Owls =====

The Forest Owls are a small resistance faction that oppose the Galbadian occupation of Timber , a town in the eastern part of the continent . A man named Zone is the leader , and Rinoa and Watts are members . Most people of Timber are affiliated with a resistance group , although the Forest Owls are the only active ones .

===== Julia Heartilly =====

Julia Heartilly (????? ? ??????? , Juria H?tir?) is a pianist at a Galbadian hotel frequented by Laguna during his days as a soldier . After being secretly admired by Laguna for some time , Julia introduces herself , as depicted in one of the flashback sequences . Julia reveals to Laguna her dream of writing her own songs and becoming a singer . Laguna is shipped out on new orders the following day and the ensuing circumstances prevent him from returning . Julia eventually marries Galbadian military officer General Caraway and has a daughter , Rinoa . She also finds success with her song " Eyes On Me " , which is also the game 's theme song . She is killed several years before the start of the game in a car accident . Julia is the only character in the game with an explicit character theme , named " Julia " , which is a piano arrangement of Eyes On Me .

===== Raine =====

Raine (??? , Rein) , later Raine Loire (??? ? ?????? , Rein Rew?ru) , is Laguna 's second love depicted in the flashbacks . She finds him injured at the bottom of a cliff and brings him to her hometown of Winhill to recover . She is irked at first by Laguna 's bad habits and reluctance to express himself outright , but the two grow close and marry . After Laguna becomes President of Esthar , his duties thwart his efforts to return to Winhill . Raine dies after giving birth to a child , who , along with Ellone , is taken away to Edea 's orphanage . It is strongly implied by Ward and Kiros , as well as by gaming writers and fans , that Squall is their child .

===== Martine =====

Martine is the head of Galbadia Garden . His superior , Balamb Garden 's master NORG , orders him to use SeeD members to carry out the assassination plot against Sorceress Edea . When Squall and his team travel to Galbadia Garden after fleeing Timber , Martine orders them to carry out the mission . He hopes that using Balamb Garden 's SeeDs would deflect responsibility for the plot onto NORG . His actions trigger the conflict within Balamb Garden when Garden Master NORG tries to kill Headmaster Cid to appease Sorceress Edea after the mission fails . Afterward , the Galbadian military seizes Galbadia Garden and Martine flees to the pacifist city of Fishermans Horizon .

===== NORG =====

NORG is an exiled Shumi who lent Cid the money to build and develop the Garden and took the position of Garden Master upon its completion . NORG is more concerned about the revenue acquired by SeeD as a mercenary organization rather than its noble duty of opposing the Sorceress ; he is considered a " black sheep " of the Shumi tribe . After hearing about a failed assassination attempt on Sorceress Edea , NORG begins to distrust Headmaster Cid and tries to seize control of Balamb Garden , causing a conflict between factions loyal to NORG and Cid . Feigning loyalty to the Sorceress , he attempts to kill the SeeDs who carried out the failed assassination . After he is defeated in battle , he enters a cocoon @-@ like state . Shumis from the Shumi village later appear at the site of his defeat . They appear to have removed him from his cocoon by cracking it open . They also apologize for NORG 's behaviour .

===== Dr. Odine =====

Dr. Odine is a scientist and magic researcher from Esthar . He discovered the GFs and junctioning and engineered a machine that mimics Ellone 's power . Seventeen years before the game , he developed the necessary technology to allow Laguna to entomb Adel . As a researcher of the Lunatic Pandora , he also helps to prevent it from reaching Tears ' Point and initiating a Lunar Cry . Odine also plays a role in the plot to destroy Ultimecia , explaining how to survive time compression .

===== Minor SeeD members =====

Several other SeeD members assist Squall 's party . Dr. Kadowaki is the Balamb Garden doctor who tends to Squall 's wounds after his fight with Seifer in the opening sequence . She also helps Headmaster Cid after his confrontation with NORG . Nida (another Star Wars reference , along with Biggs and Wedge) is a student at Balamb Garden who passes the SeeD exam along with Squall . He pilots Balamb Garden after it becomes a mobile base . Lastly , Xu is a high @-@ ranking SeeD who helps Squall during the Dollet mission and the Garden civil war between NORG and Cid . She is friends with Quistis and a member of Squall 's staff once he becomes the leader of Balamb Garden .

== Merchandise ==

The characters of Final Fantasy VIII have spawned action figures , jewellery and other goods in their likeness . In 1999 , action figure lineups were distributed in Japan by Bandai , Kotobukiya , Banpresto , and Coca @-@ Cola . Bandai also released them to Europe and Australasia the same year . In 2004 , action figures of Squall , Rinoa and Selphie were distributed in North America by Diamond Comics . Posters of individual characters or a collage of characters are available on many fan websites , including Final Fantasy Spirit . Other products available include mouse pads , keychains , and pens depicting individual characters or sets of characters .

== Reception ==

The characters of Final Fantasy VIII have received praise by reviewers . The Gaming Age reviewer was originally concerned with the shift to consistently realistically proportioned characters , but he ultimately found them more appealing . Moreover , the review stated that the character designs and graphical quality allowed the characters to " convey emotions much more dramatically " . Game Revolution cited similar praise , agreeing that the change " really makes the graphics impressive " . Jeff Lundigran of IGN commented that the " low @-@ polygon characters of Final Fantasy VII are gone , replaced with sometimes surprisingly realistic high @-@ polygon models that only look better the closer they get " . GameSpot agreed with the transition , claiming that " involving , personal , and emotional stories are far more believable when they come from , well , people , not short , bizarrely shaped cartoon characters " .

The cast itself has received criticism from reviews . Lundigran criticized the manner in which romantic interactions play out , stating that " considering that the love story is so integral to everything that happens ? not to mention forming the central image of the box art ? it 's incomprehensible why no one says ' I love you ' to anyone , ever " . With Squall , he felt that " FFXVIII does break one cardinal rule : when your story is character centered , you 'd better center it on a character the audience can care about . Squall , unfortunately , just doesn 't fit the bill " . However , GameSpot felt that Final Fantasy VIII shifts the story from the " epic " concepts of Final Fantasy VII to the " personal " , in that " the characters and their relationships are all extremely believable and complex ; moreover , the core romance holds up even under the most pessimistic scrutiny " . A later editorial by IGN 's Ryan Clements echoed this sentiment , appreciating that Squall and Rinoa 's single kiss during the finale serves " one of the player 's main rewards for hours of dedication " . Although the reviewer at Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine acknowledged possible fears over a romantic storyline , he stated that " it 's only later in the game , once you are really attached to all the distinct and complex characters , that the more emotional themes are gradually introduced " .