Sephiroth (Final Fantasy)

Sephiroth (Japanese : ????? , Hepburn : Sefirosu) is a fictional character in the role @-@ playing video game Final Fantasy VII developed by Square (now Square Enix) , where he is the main villain . Character designer Tetsuya Nomura conceived and designed Sephiroth as an antagonist to and direct physical opposite of the game 's main character , Cloud Strife . The character was portrayed in Japanese by voice actor Toshiyuki Morikawa and in English by both Lance Bass in Kingdom Hearts and George Newbern in all his subsequent appearances .

Sephiroth is revealed in Final Fantasy VII to be the result of an experiment by the megacorporation Shinra , in which they injected him with cells from the extraterrestrial lifeform Jenova when he was still a fetus . Upon discovering this , Sephiroth decides to follow what he believes to be his destiny and take control of the Planet , whilst Cloud and the game 's other protagonists attempt to stop him . Sephiroth 's role in the story , as well as his background , are expanded in the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII . Additionally , he appears as a boss character in the Kingdom Hearts series , and other video games developed by Square . Sephiroth has been well @-@ received within the video game community , and is highly ranked on many lists of the best video game villains and Final Fantasy characters .

Appearances

In Final Fantasy VII

Sephiroth is the main villain in Final Fantasy VII , who first appears after assassinating President Shinra . As revealed over the course of the game , Sephiroth was once the most powerful member of SOLDIER , Shinra 's elite military division , who was celebrated as a heroic veteran of the Shinra @-@ Wutai war . After the war , however , Sephiroth was sent on a mission to the village of Nibelheim , where he discovered that he was the product of a biological experiment that combined a human fetus with tissue from the extraterrestrial lifeform Jenova . Learning that Jenova , who he comes to consider his " mother , " attempted to take control of the Planet 2000 years previously , Sephiroth decides to follow in her footsteps and become a god who would rule over the Planet . He burns down the entire village and kills many , but is assumed dead after a confrontation with Cloud inside a nearby Mako reactor . However , a few years later , Sephiroth appears once again , determined to continue with his mission .

His plan to become a god is based upon his belief that he can merge with the Planet 's Lifestream , taking control of it , and thus the Planet itself . In order to do so , he must summon Meteor , a destructive meteorite entity from outer space that can catastrophically damage the Planet . At this point , the Lifestream will flow to attempt to heal the injury , thus allowing Sephiroth to merge with the exposed Lifestream . Despite appearing multiple times throughout the game , it is revealed that Sephiroth 's physical body is actually sealed in the Northern Crater , and that the manifestations seen by Cloud and his allies were people imbued with Jenova cells taking his form , controlled by the wounded Sephiroth in the Planet core . In the game 's last battle , Sephiroth takes two forms ; Bizarro Sephiroth (???? ? ????? , Rebirth Sephiroth) and Safer Sephiroth (???? ? ????? , Sepher Sephiroth) . After his defeat , Sephiroth reappears in Cloud 's mind , but is once again defeated .

In Compilation of Final Fantasy VII

He makes several cameo appearances in the Final Fantasy VII prequel , Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII , in which he supports Shinra in their battle against the eco @-@ terrorist organization AVALANCHE . The incident at Nibelheim is also featured in the game . The OVA Last Order : Final Fantasy VII also depicts the Nibelheim incident . Sephiroth also appears in Advent Children , a CGI film set two years after Final Fantasy VII . In the film , Kadaj , Loz , and Yazoo , the " Remnants " of Sephiroth , try to reincarnate him . Although Kadaj eventually succeeds , Cloud once again defeats

Sephiroth , whose body changes back to Kadaj 's upon his defeat . Sephiroth is also the focus of the On the Way to a Smile novella " Case of the Lifestream ? Black and White " . Set after the end of Final Fantasy VII but prior to the events of Advent Children , the story deals with Aerith and Sephiroth 's journeys through the Lifestream , and Sephiroth 's creation of Geostigma , a disease that infects anyone who came into contact with the tainted Lifestream . He makes a very brief appearance in Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII , a game set one year after Advent Children , in which his biological mother , Lucrecia Crescent discusses the experiments which gave birth to him .
He is one of the main characters in the Final Fantasy VII prequel game Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII , in which he and the protagonist Zack Fair go in the search of two missing SOLDIERs , Genesis Rhapsodos and Angeal Hewley , This game also depicts the Nibelheim incident , where Sephiroth appears as a boss . Executive producer Yoshinori Kitase was pleased with Sephiroth 's role in Crisis Core , feeling that he was given a " much more human side . "

= = = Other appearances = = =

His first appearance outside Final Fantasy VII was as a selectable character in the fighting game Ehrgeiz . A redesigned Sephiroth also appears in the North American and European versions of Kingdom Hearts as an optional boss character in Olympus Coliseum . Lance Bass voiced Sephiroth in this game , while in subsequent titles he was replaced by George Newbern . In the Japanese re @-@ release of the game , Final Mix , an additional scene was added in which Sephiroth fights Cloud , although the result of the fight is not revealed . Sephiroth was not included in the sequel Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories , as director Tetsuya Nomura could not give him a storyline related to Cloud , and he feared negative fan response if Sephiroth did not have a notable role in the story . His third appearance outside Final Fantasy VII is as another optional boss in Kingdom Hearts II , where he is first encountered by the series ' protagonist , Sora , and then Cloud , who is pursuing him . When Sephiroth battles Cloud , both of them disappear , with Sora believing that they went somewhere else to continue their fight . Nomura said that in this game , Sephiroth represents Cloud 's dark side , in contrast to Tifa Lockhart , who represents his light side . Although Sephiroth does not appear in the prequel Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep , he is mentioned as a hero that Zack Fair aspires to be . The staff , however , did not know if they would portray him as a being of darkness as shown in other titles . Sephiroth 's fourth outside appearance is in the Itadaki Street games Special and Portable , where he appears as an unlockable playable character .
Sephiroth was also the representative villain of Final Fantasy VII in Dissidia Final Fantasy . He is featured in his Final Fantasy VII guise , while an alternative outfit features the " Safer Sephiroth " form . His fight against Cloud in the game was based on their fights from Final Fantasy VII and Advent Children . Along with the rest of the Final Fantasy VII figures in Dissidia , Sephiroth appears in the sequel Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy . This game also includes a sightly altered Final Fantasy VII form for Sephiroth , as well as his Kingdom Hearts form . He is featured in the rhythm game Theatrhythm Final Fantasy as an unlockable character , representing Final Fantasy VII . He also appears in the puzzle platformer video game LittleBigPlanet , and its sequel LittleBigPlanet 2 as a character model ; Media Molecule 's Alex Evans felt " honored " that Sephiroth was allowed to appear in the games .

= = Concept and creation = =

Sephiroth was designed by Final Fantasy VII 's character designer Tetsuya Nomura . His name came from the Kabbalah , in which the ten sephirot on the Tree of life represent the ten attributes through which God reveal himself . His character existed from the earliest stages of development , as originally , Nomura thought that the game 's plot would deal exclusively with Cloud Strife pursuing Sephiroth , who was always the game 's main antagonist . Nomura wanted Sephiroth to appear early in the game , and then have the plot dealing with the protagonists following him , so that gamers would not meet the final boss until extremely late in the game . Sephiroth was initially going to be Aeris Gainsborough 's sibling , as indicated by their similar hairstyles . Later , however , he

was changed to Aeris 's past love , whom she would remember upon meeting Cloud . This character was then changed to Zack Fair , however , and Sephiroth ? s prior relationship with Aeris was dropped . In early drafts of the game , Sephiroth 's personality was already brutal and cruel , with a strong willed and calm ego . He was to suffer from Mako addiction , resulting in a semi @-@ conscious state as a result of high level exposure to Mako energy . Sephiroth was also intended to manipulate Cloud into believing that he was a creation of Sephiroth 's will , but this aspect of the story was later abandoned . In another excised scene , when Sephiroth 's physical body is first seen in the Northern Crater , it was to be female .

Sephiroth has long platinum hair and bright cyan eyes with cat @-@ like pupils , and is depicted in a black coat decorated with metallic pauldrons . Since appearing as Safer Sephiroth in the final battle of the game , Sephiroth has had a single black wing on his back , referencing his theme music " One Winged Angel " . When Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII was released , the staff stated that the reason the wing was black was to suggest evil . Nomura has stated that Sephiroth was made to be a complete contrast to the game 's main protagonist , Cloud , who was originally designed to have slicked @-@ back , black hair with no spikes . His weapon , the " Masamune " , which has been featured in numerous Final Fantasy titles , is an elongated nodachi that he learned to use during his days in SOLDIER . The Masamune is named after the famous Japanese swordsmith Goro Nyudo Masamune , whose blades are considered national treasures in Japan today .

Director Yoshinori Kitase believes Sephiroth 's role in Final Fantasy VII to be one of the main reasons why the game became so popular . Nomura has called Sephiroth " the ultimate antagonist in the Final Fantasy VII saga . There can 't be anyone else , " and regards him as an enemy from a previous generation , in contrast to his " Remnants " who appear in Final Fantasy VII : Advent Children .

For Advent Children , the film sequel to Final Fantasy VII , script writer Kazushige Nojima thought that the film 's plot would be less entertaining without Sephiroth . His revival in the film was introduced in the early stages of development , but the official decision as to how to bring him back was not reached until later . Nomura originally planned to have him appear from the start , but as it took the staff two years to develop his design , the idea of his presence throughout the film was scrapped , and it was decided instead to have him only appear on screen for a short time . Sephiroth was designed for the film in such a way so as to emphasize his other @-@ worldliness , such as the fact that he never blinks or is seen breathing , and his voice remains always monotone and calm . In the film , the staff stated that his strength had considerably increased , to the point that he had " ascended to a new level of existence . " Despite initially encountering problems as to who would voice him , Nomura said that once Toshiyuki Morikawa auditioned for the role , they knew they had their actor . Morikawa was instructed by the staff to speak all of Sephiroth 's dialogue as if he felt superior to every other character in the film . The voice director and Morikawa agreed to make Sephiroth 's voice sound calm to the point that he believes he cannot lose to Cloud , suggesting to Morikawa that he may reappear at some point in the future .

= = Musical themes = =

In Final Fantasy VII , Sephiroth is the focus of three pieces of music written by series composer Nobuo Uematsu . His primary theme is " Those Chosen by the Planet " (??????? , Hoshi ni Erabareshi Mono) , a piece utilizing bells , low drums , and a deep chorus , which accompanies Sephiroth 's appearances throughout the game . In the final battle , " Birth of a God " (???? , Kami no Tanj?) plays while the player combats Sephiroth 's first form , " Bizarro Sephiroth " (also known as " Reverse Sephiroth ") . The most well @-@ known piece is " One @-@ Winged Angel " (?????? , Katayoku no Tenshi , lit . " An Angel With a Wing on One Side ") which is played during the final confrontation with Sephiroth . It contains Latin lyrics taken from sections of the Carmina Burana . In an interview featured on G4 's Game Makers (formerly Icons) , Uematsu revealed that this piece was designed to be a fusion of the musical styles of Russian composer Igor Stravinsky and rock musician Jimi Hendrix . The song revolves around his character , as this was what Uematsu was thinking about when writing it . Two official covers have been done of this song . The first is a

different orchestration found in Kingdom Hearts , the second is found in Advent Children , which plays throughout the battle between Cloud and Sephiroth , and features the progressive metal stylings of Nobuo Uematsu 's former band The Black Mages , as well as orchestral elements and new lyrics . There is also a fourth version titled " Vengeance on the World " that plays in Crisis Core .

Cultural impact

Merchandise

Sephiroth has served as basis for several types of merchandise . These include the " Extra Knights " action figures first published by Bandai in Japan in 1997 . A different model was released as part of the Play Arts collection , following the release of Advent Children . At the 2008 San Diego Comic @-@ Con International , Kanji Tashiro , Square Enix 's manager of merchandise , said that this figure was one of their best @-@ selling items . With the release of the movie Sephiroth was also included in a series of promotional material , primarily consisting of posters . Kotobukiya has included the character in numerous merchandise , including a series of cold casts based on his appearance in both the original game and the film sequel . As a result of promotional campaigns organized in Japan by Square Enix and Coca @-@ Cola , a version of Sephiroth drawn in a super deformed style was featured in the first two volumes of a promotional collection .
Products not connected to the release of the games or film have also been produced . These include a figuren as part of the Final Fantasy Trading Arts Vol . 1 series , a set as part of the Square Minimum Collection alongside Cloud , and a rare figure of " Safer Sephiroth " as part of the Final Fantasy Creatures series (Chromium) . " Reverse Sephiroth " was also released as a normal figure in volume 2 . A figure based on his appearances in the Kingdom Hearts games was released in the second series of the Play Arts Kingdom Hearts sub @-@ line . Some replica weapon companies have produced replicas of Sephiroth 's sword , the Masamune , as a 6 @-@ foot @-@ long (1 @.@ 8 m) katana with a stainless steel unsharpened blade . Other types of merchandise includes collectible cards , keychains , lighters , phonecards and plush toys .

Reception

On multiple occasions , numerous gaming magazines have chosen Sephiroth as one of the best villains from both the Final Fantasy series in specific and in all of video games in general . GameSpy placed him eighth in their 2014 list of top villains in games , commenting on how difficult it is to defeat him in Final Fantasy VII . In 2005 , Sephiroth was the winner in a GameFAQs character battle involving only villains . IGN listed him at number two in its 2006 list of most memorable villains , as well as the fourth top video game villain . He has been named the number one villain in an episode of G4 's Filter . PC World placed him second in their 2008 list of most diabolical video game villains of all time . That same year , Sephiroth was listed at the top of IGN 's list of Final Fantasy VII top characters , with Dave Smith calling him the " heavyweight champion of Final Fantasy villains , " and praising his appearance and backstory . He would take the same spot in the list of top 25 Final Fantasy characters by the same site . In IGN 's Final Fantasy reader 's choice , also written by Smith , Sephiroth was placed fourth , with commentary focusing on his activities in the game 's plot . In a retrospective on Final Fantasy antagonists , GamesRadar listed Sephiroth as their top pick , citing his developed motives and acts of evil . GamesRadar also put Sephiroth in their 2013 list of the best villains in video game history at number six .
In 2007 , Sephiroth was named the 14th best character of all time in Dengeki PlayStation 's retrospective awards feature about the original PlayStation . UGO.com placed Sephiroth 25th on their 2009 list of top Japanese RPG characters , calling him " one of the most visually striking villains of all time " while praising how different he is from previous Final Fantasy villains . In 2010 , Famitsu readers voted Sephiroth as the 21st most popular video game character . Sephiroth was also

featured alongside Cloud in ScrewAttack 's list of top " coolest " characters , although they preferred Cloud . In the Guinness World Records Gamer 's Edition from 2011 , he was voted as the 32nd best video game character of all time . In 2011 , Empire ranked him as the 13th greatest video game character , calling him " just insanely cool " and adding " Cloud may be the hero but the real star of FFVII was undoubtedly its dashing villain , Sephiroth " . Complex had him ranked as the 35th " coolest " video game villain ever in 2012 , as well as the seventh " most badass " video game character and the third greatest Final Fantasy character of all time in 2013 .

 A reader 's choice poll organized by GameSpot placed Sephiroth as the best boss of all time , as he received five times more votes than Bowser , who finished in second place ; most of the comments noted the difficulty of the final fight against Sephiroth , as well as its distinctive elements when compared to other games . In 2005 , Electronic Gaming Monthly listed him as number one in their list of top video game bosses . Game Informer ranked the " top @-@ notch " fight against Sephiroth in Final Fantasy VII at third place on their 2008 list of top boss battles . PlayStation Official Magazine included him on their 2012 list of ten best boss fights ever , commenting that " after potentially 100 hours of chasing the murdering swine , you finally catch up with Cloud ? s nemesis Sephiroth , and it ? s one of the most epic battles in PlayStation history . "

 The scene in which Sephiroth kills Aerith during Final Fantasy VII has also prompted much commentary . For example , when comparing him with Cloud , ScrewAttack noted that with this scene , Sephiroth was established as " the biggest bastard . " GamesRadar simply called him " the biggest cock blocker in the gaming world , " as writer Shane Patterson found Aerith 's character to be appealing , and due to the fact Sephiroth killed her , players were unable to use her anymore . Also referring to the scene as a shocking moment , GameSpot suggested that the FMV sequence of Sephiroth appearing in front of the Nibelheim fire " might be one of the most recognizable cutscenes ever to grace video games . " GamesRadar 's article " Non @-@ playable characters we wish were playable " featured Sephiroth as a character that they wished would have been playable in Final Fantasy VII so they " could relive skewering Aerith like an annoyingly dainty , needlessly chaste salmon over and over . " IGN put Sephiroth in the 2009 articles " Big Boss of the Day " and " Baddie Brawl " , with the latter comparing him with Liquid Snake from Metal Gear Solid . Lisa Foiles of The Escapist included Sephiroth on her 2014 list of top five katana wielders .

 However , some game editors have criticized Sephiroth 's character . For example , IGN 's Smith has stated that " Sephiroth was certainly a good @-@ looking fellow , but his motivations were about as clear as mud . " When comparing Sephiroth with the Final Fantasy VI villain , Kefka Palazzo , GamesRadar commented that he " seems as interesting as a dead accountant painted brown . " 1UP.com took a humorous approach to Sephiroth 's several appearances after apparent deaths and in other games , ranking him third in their " They Is Risen " feature , which covered the ten most notorious video game resurrections . The publication noted that if the character continued to be used , Square Enix would eventually " run out of ways to remix One @-@ Winged Angel . " GameSpy editor Ryan Scott called Sephiroth the " King of Overrated Characters " during GameSpy 's villain feature for Dissidia Final Fantasy , arguing that gamers were impressed by him only because of his design and by how he killed Aerith during Final Fantasy VII . On the other hand , AnimeFringe called him " the most notorious villain in the entire Final Fantasy series " and " quintessential bish?nen in the eyes of many fans -- male and female , " comparing him with Kefka and praising his complexity .

 Critics have also commented on Sephiroth 's role in other games . In relation to Crisis Core , IGN AU stated that " even Sephiroth gets his moments in the sun , " praising the depth in his backstory , which would later make his boss battle more entertaining . IGN UK agreed , stating that his character was granted " a more human dimension " and enjoying some of the events from before his transformation into a villain . His boss battle was also shown in 1UP.com 's " 25 More of the Most Badass Boss Fights Ever " in which the staff praised how the original battle from Final Fantasy VII was expanded in the title . A feature published by GamerHelp included Sephiroth 's Kingdom Hearts 's fight in a feature titled " The Hardest Bosses of All Time " , noting that regardless of the player 's skill " walking away from this match unscathed " is not possible , to the point of saying that the fight was more difficult than the entirety of Final Fantasy VII . AnimeFringe stated that only advanced

gamers would be able to defeat Kingdom Hearts 's Sephiroth because the player has no backup and that his " devastating attacks can kill in seconds . " In 2013 , Complex ranked Sephiroth in Kingdom Hearts and Kingdom Hearts II as respectively the seventh and fifth hardest boss fights in video games ; in addition , Safer Sephiroth from Final Fantasy VII placed 12th .