

SPRING / SUMMER 2018

# TIMBER MANIACS FINAL FANTASY FORUMS

MOGAZINE

ISSUE #1

## CULTURE DIG

Can you dig it?! The  
Cetra examined.

**KUPOCON**  
Inside scoop interview  
with Alex Maine

**KEIRA WELCH**  
**FFF FC LAMIA SERVER:**  
Unending Coil of  
Bahamut (Ultimate)  
SCH Clear!

## XENFORO 2

FORUM SOFTWARE UPDATE!

## MYTHOLOGY MANUAL

## CARBUNCLE

Reflect on the history of Final  
Fantasy's gemstone-crested  
companion!

## EMPIRES IN FINAL FANTASY

Linnaete discusses the  
most crucial, burning  
issues of our day.

9999 GIL



MADE IN TIMBER

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Cover image: Laguna Loire artwork from Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy by Tetsuya Nomura.

# THE BIRTH OF THE MANIACS

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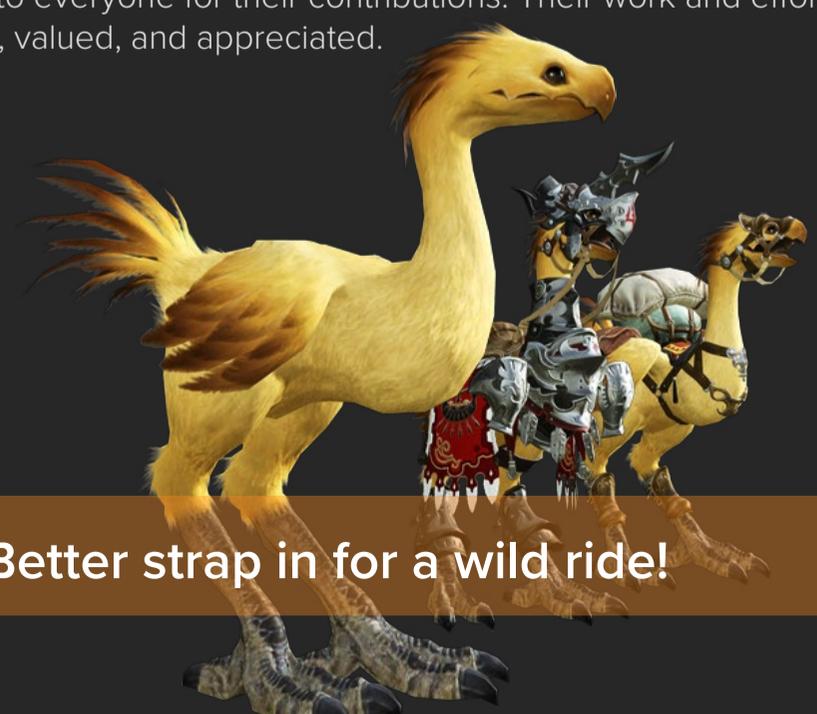
## INTRODUCING FFF'S MOGAZINE

Welcome to the first issue of Final Fantasy Forums' very own **free** digital magazine!

We aspire for this project to be a good chance for us to discuss the Final Fantasy franchise, to reminisce and explain our forum's unique culture to outsiders, and to promote the hard work of our members and staff on Final Fantasy Forums. Through this magazine, we hope to reach out to many Final Fantasy fans out there and hopefully build rapport in the process. The focus will be Final Fantasy topics and hopefully through the collaborative work with others, we can contribute more to the wider FF community out there.

After reading this magazine, we hope that all will have a greater understanding of what 'FFF' is all about by highlighting our passion for the franchise, and how mad yet welcoming we all are as a community.

A huge thanks to everyone for their contributions. Their work and efforts are recognized, valued, and appreciated.



Better strap in for a wild ride!

# ESTHAR, WE HAVE A PROBLEM.

## PLANNING THE MAGAZINE

In a fateful Discord chat session on 12th February, 2018, FFF staff discussed possible new projects to breathe new life into the forum. During this conversation Dionysos idly suggested that we could create a digital magazine. Some people were a little confused and did not know exactly what Dionysos had in mind, but Paddy McGee saw what was meant and kindly helped to articulate the idea.

With enough staff interest in the idea to justify taking it further, Dionysos made a thread in the Staff HQ and immediately got to work on brainstorming ideas for content. Many of the pages which have ended up in the final product (such as artist pages, promoted content, and a page for FFF memories) had their origin in the first post of this thread.

After much feedback and embellishment by Mitsuki, Paddy McGee, and Tia, by February 18th Dionysos had started producing very rough concept drafts of content...

This was purely intended to help illustrate the idea to other staff members, and was never intended to represent the finished magazine.

“This could be one of the best collaborative efforts of FFF history, without a doubt, and making it a consistent end product would be the most exciting and maybe **heart attack inducing endeavours ever.**” (Galadín, March 7th, 2018)

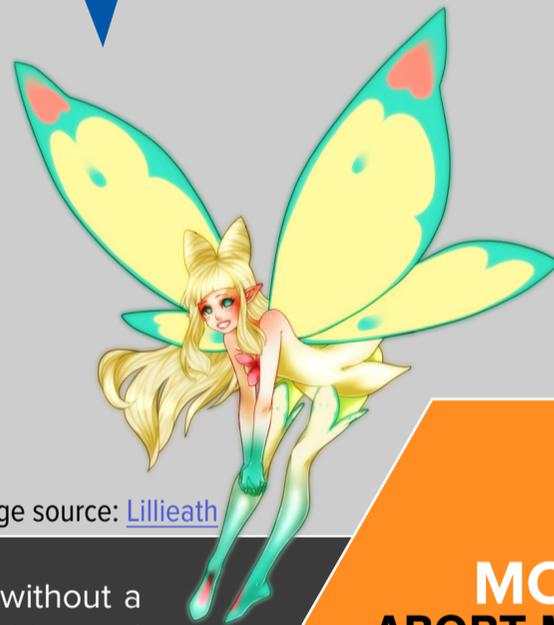


Not only were the dimensions off, but it also became clear that we needed someone with a more experienced artistic vision who could design good quality visual content for the magazine. **Please be excited and continue reading...**

## YOU DAN GOOFED!

EOS:

**DAN, YOU PLUM!**



Eos image source: [Lillieath](#)

**MOG:  
ABORT MISSION!**

**MOG:  
ABORT MISSION!**

**MOG:  
ABORT MISSION!**

## ARE WE REALLY DOING THIS..?

Mitsuki (cautiously) stepped in armed with a healthy combination of Adobe PhotoShop, Illustrator, and InDesign (albeit with no prior experience), and so equipped started to produce drafts such as this cover art.

Meanwhile, Dionysos started contacting various members to check if they would be interested either in providing content, or to consent to their work being showcased in FFF's magazine. He also started to write new articles, and adapted and expanded existing forum threads into magazine articles.

Things were finally taking shape, and what started out as a throwaway remark finally turned into a viable project.

## THE DAY WE FAILED TO LAUNCH ON OUR PLANNED DATE.

"It was an ambitious project from the start, and I guess we didn't give ourselves enough time to digest the concept before embarking fully on the idea. But we're very happy with what we have accomplished so far."  
(Dan, 2018)



## CHOOSING OUR NAME

All magazines need names catchy enough to draw people in and stick in the mind.

Staff first started throwing names at each other casually and hoped that one would stick. In a way, this is what happened with Timber Maniacs, but we were never set on that name from the outset.

Our earliest suggestion was the simple and obvious 'FFF Magazine' (and this largely remained our working title for easy reference even though we knew it wasn't going to be adorning our pages). This evolved into 'Mogazine' because a Final Fantasy magazine clearly needs a moogle pun!

# DANIMANIACS

## Mitsuki created a song for the proposed 'Danimaniacs'...

After this, Mitsuki began to research magazines within the Final Fantasy universe from which we can take inspiration. Timber Maniacs, Al Bhed Primers, Turtle Paradise were the results of her search. We toyed with mixing various names together, thus forming Turtle Maniacs, Turtle Primers, Danimal's Paradise, among others.

At one point Mitsuki even argued for calling the magazine 'Danimaniacs' (after Dionysos / Dan in combination with Amblin Entertainment's Animaniacs and the Timber Maniacs name)...

It's time for Danimaniacs!  
And we're crazy to the max!  
So just sit and grab that mag  
Drink your tea or grab your frappe  
It's Danimaniacs!

Come join Final Fantasy Forums  
And the Editorial Staff  
Just for fun we write  
About ourselves until we laugh  
Wait who's doing all the writing?  
Not Mits, for she is nuts  
But Dan and Linnaete  
What's up their sleeves?  
And now they have a plot.

It's Danimaniacs!  
Timmy's cute and Adri's whack  
Tyler cops all the flak  
While Fil laughs like a maniac  
We're Danimaniacs!

...AND MIC DROP. MOG CRINGE.

# YAKKO, WAKKO, AND THEIR SISTER, DOT.



The players were so preoccupied with whether or not they could, they didn't stop to think if they should.

Left to right: Mitsuki, Linnaete, and Ross.



TIMBER MANIACS OFFICE (FFVIII)

At a loss for a name, we decided to let our members choose the name using the democratic method through a poll. When we eventually announced that the magazine project was underway to the wider forum (on March 3rd), we created a poll to determine what members thought our name should be. Timber Maniacs was the clear winner.

We like it. Timber Maniacs is the publishing company in Final Fantasy VIII, based in the town of Timber, which publishes a number of popular magazines. Players remember the magazines in the game are collectable items throughout the world, and because Laguna Loire worked as a journalist for the company.

The neatly name fits, but also because we are actually **'maniacs'** of a sort at FFF...

# OUR FUTURE

## T I M B E R M A N I A C S

---

**We like to be realistic.** Designing a magazine takes a long time, and a lot of effort. We were never going to be able to produce a monthly magazine since we are all voluntarily writing, designing, and compiling this magazine.

This is a 100% free digital magazine. We do not make a profit from this magazine, nor do we intend to. Unlike our namesake in FFVIII, we are not a publishing company, and cannot work full-time on this project. We have therefore decided that a seasonal schedule of issue releases would be more sensible.

We invite you to read our work, and also to bear in mind that you should see this first issue of our magazine as an experi-

ment where we are practicing our stride. If all goes well with this issue and Mitsuki does not have a meltdown, we hope to release further issues on a seasonal basis (two issues per year: **Spring / Summer** and **Autumn / Winter**).

The green light for this magazine would be feedback from anyone who takes the time to read our magazine. If we know that people are enjoying it, we shall endeavour to follow our plans through as soon as the victory fanfare ceases.

## SERIES ARTICLES

On top of regular game reviews, member recipes, and a puzzle page, there shall be some recurring sections in each issue which will run as part of a series.

- ‘Culture Dig’ articles will deal with different ancient cultures within the Final Fantasy universe per issue.
- A ‘Mythology Manual’ article adapted from Dionysos’ series on the forum shall also be regularly featured in each issue.
- ‘FFF Mascots’ will deal with a different original FFF character each issue, detailing their origins and uses in various FFF-run doodle games.
- Our ‘Fashion Critic’ series takes a light-hearted but critical look at some of Final Fantasy’s wackiest designs.
- Our ‘Time Compression’ series will scratch your nostalgia itch by examining a different moment of FFF history per issue.

Additionally, we will feature different promoted content per issue (artwork, music, and other projects), alongside a variety of one-off articles on an endless range of Final Fantasy topics.

### COLLABORATE WITH FFF:

If you would like your projects featured, or you would like to write an article for us, please contact us! We love to hear from Final Fantasy fans from all walks of life.

Email: [ffforumsdotnet@gmail.com](mailto:ffforumsdotnet@gmail.com)

# XENFORO 2

## MAJOR FORUM SOFTWARE UPDATE!



**Final Fantasy Forums** has transferred to a new forum software, XenForo 2! Ever since FFF was created in 2006 the forum had been hosted on vBulletin, but we have just recently taken the ambitious leap of a dragoon by committing to a newer software which is still supporting updates. While not an easy decision to make, we are confident that we can hit the mark and land with our feet securely on the ground.

Belazor, FFF's Technical Admin (Fil from DragonByte Technologies), is currently leading us through this change. DragonByte Technologies has been actively developing mods for XenForo, and since they have provided us with not only their products but also Belazor's valuable time and support on the forum, it only makes sense for FFF to go with XenForo from now. DragonByte Technologies made their own move to XenForo some time before FFF, so Belazor is acting as an experienced navigator of these new seas.

Our Site Owner, Lord Golbez, agreed to the change (which took place on the 28th April) and will continue to provide financial support for the mods and features.

### What is XenForo 2?

"XenForo 2 is one of the most advanced forum software out there, and is truly "next-gen" in terms of speed and functionality. It's designed from the ground up to be mobile friendly, which is very important in today's space.

On the flipside, it's very difficult to make vBulletin mobile friendly, as I'm sure you've experienced across

the site as it is. Along with a refreshed mobile experience, the Articles section will be refreshed with a new look, the Shoutbox will be upgraded with additional functionality, and there will be new options for connecting your FFF profile to your Discord profile. Last, but by no means least, Private Messaging will receive a major overhaul by being able to support multiple participants in a single Conversation - sort of like a "private thread" separate from the rest of the forum." **(Fil / Belazor, Technical Admin of FFF and Programming Director Of DragonByte Technologies)**

### "Do not fret!" (Beatrix, Final Fantasy IX)

It is only natural to find change scary. Moving to XenForo 2 is more than just an upgrade. We've said goodbye to the platform that we've been used to since the forum's inception (vBulletin) and so it is not hyperbolic to say that it has been a radical change for everybody involved. The Admin team have been learning to deal with the alien environment of a new Admin Control Panel completely unlike the one they have spent years getting accustomed to for vBulletin. For instance, did anyone catch Mitsuki break the forum while editing the Xenforo skin? Have no fear, it only lasted for a few seconds, but it will definitely take some getting used to for all staff members and users of FFF alike. People are loving XenForo so far though!

A lot of people might inevitably be nervous about this move in case there are unforeseen complications

down the line, but you should not panic. Together we can tackle this! Belazor carried out many tests before finalising the move, and the forum has been backed up first to guard against the risk of loss.

Likewise, it is the staff's responsibility to ensure that we all adapt nicely, that we are around to answer queries regarding the change and how things work, and also making sure that everybody is kept informed about the situation.

In the long run, the move should provide enhanced stability. We feel that a strong and stable forum should more than compensate for any mishaps that we might encounter along the way.

### What is next?

Now that the upgrade is finalised, staff will be very busy. Our focus is on trying to bring new members to FFF, planning and holding contests (Birthweek is around

the corner!), shopping for skins for our new forum look, and generally getting used to the new system.

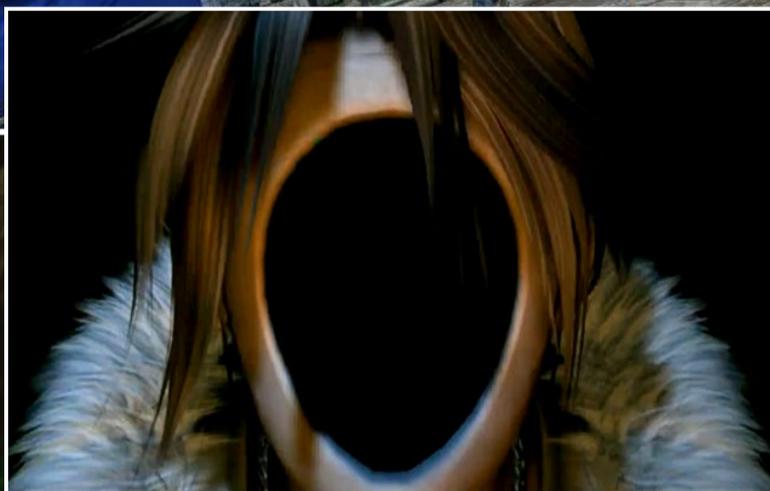
With XenForo 2 in place, this is a great opportunity for Final Fantasy Forums to look updated and modern, and in the future it shall open doors for new features.

You can reach DragonByte Technologies here:

<https://www.dragonbyte-tech.com>

<https://twitter.com/DragonbyteTech>

## ESCAPING THE VOID...



There are multiple reasons for our decision to upgrade our forum software earlier than originally planned. One reason is the concerning discovery of the silent and mysterious disappearance of many beloved threads... We do not understand how so many threads were able to vanish into Ex-Death's Void without any warning, but it was another sign that it was time to move beyond vBulletin into a more stable software.

Belazor managed to find obscure traces of posts belonging to a lost thread, and through this was heroically able to restore it to life. He very quickly created a code to fight back the expansion of the void, and was able to recover all missing threads. These actions only reinforce our confidence in Belazor and demonstrate that the forum is in the capable hands of an expert for the move.

# M Y T H O L O G Y M A N U A L

## The Carbuncle: Reflections of obscurity.\*

By Dionysos

There are many familiar recurring creatures in the *Final Fantasy* universe whose return fans embrace welcomingly. One of these creatures is the Carbuncle. Since its first proper appearance as a boss and summon in *Final Fantasy V* it has popped up numerous times as a helpful ally, usually known for casting the (sometimes) useful Reflect status effect on the player's party, bouncing magic spells back towards the opponents who dared cast them against you. *Final Fantasy XIV* (and similarly *FFXI*) give the creature more attention, and it is gifted to the Arcanist class as a personal pet-companion (aspiring to become *Final Fantasy's* answer to Pikachu). Regardless of the varieties of the Carbuncle's specific role, there are standard identifying characteristics which players have come

to expect. But what exactly is the Carbuncle? Outside of the *Final Fantasy* universe, where has this animal been drawn from? The creature's origins are to be found with 16th Century conquistador adventures in South America, but since then the raw concept of the animal has captured people's imaginations and has undergone considerable embellishment.

### Examining the gemstone: Identifying 'carbuncle'.

The *Final Fantasy* Carbuncle is typically represented as a small blue, green, or teal mammal with a red gemstone either protruding from, or lying flat on, its forehead.



\*Edited and updated from an online article originally posted January 7th 2015 by Dionysos.

This gemstone is the prime attribute, and correctly so. The word *carbuncle* has been applied since antiquity to a number of red gemstones, such as garnet, deriving from the Latin word *carbunculus* ('little coal'). This etymology was due to the perceived resemblance of shiny red gemstones with the glistening embers of burning coal, but sometimes the carbuncle classification was alternatively used to describe black stones such as black marble and obsidian, relating to the sable appearance of extinguished coal. These black carbuncle stones need not be dull as they could be just as reflective, and since ancient or even prehistoric times obsidian and other shiny, polished, dark stones have sometimes been used for mirrors. A carbuncle is also a medical term used since antiquity for a type of large skin abscess which, though not the form of carbuncle related to the creature, is also appropriate since the creature's gemstone sticks out from its forehead as a sort of mineralised ulcer.

## The evolutionary history of Carbuncles.

Whilst most Carbuncles in the *Final Fantasy* universe look the same, it is worth noting that not all versions have been given rodentine or mammalian features. Before *FFV* standardised the Carbuncle's physical appearance for *Final Fantasy*, the creature had one earlier appearance in *FFIII* as a rocky clump with a single eye, serving only as a weak monster in the game's first dungeon. Perhaps the skin abscess was imagined here instead!

Later representations of the Carbuncle have also shown experimentation. *Final Fantasy Tactics*' Carbuncle has a scaly, reptilian appearance, as does an image of Carbuncle produced as concept art for the *Final Fantasy Anthology* release of *FFV*.

These prove to be interesting takes on the creature, but it is no wonder that the cold-blooded and scaly Yoshi-Carbuncle has been a less popular image than the warm, furry, and cuddly image that people now love and associate with the creature.

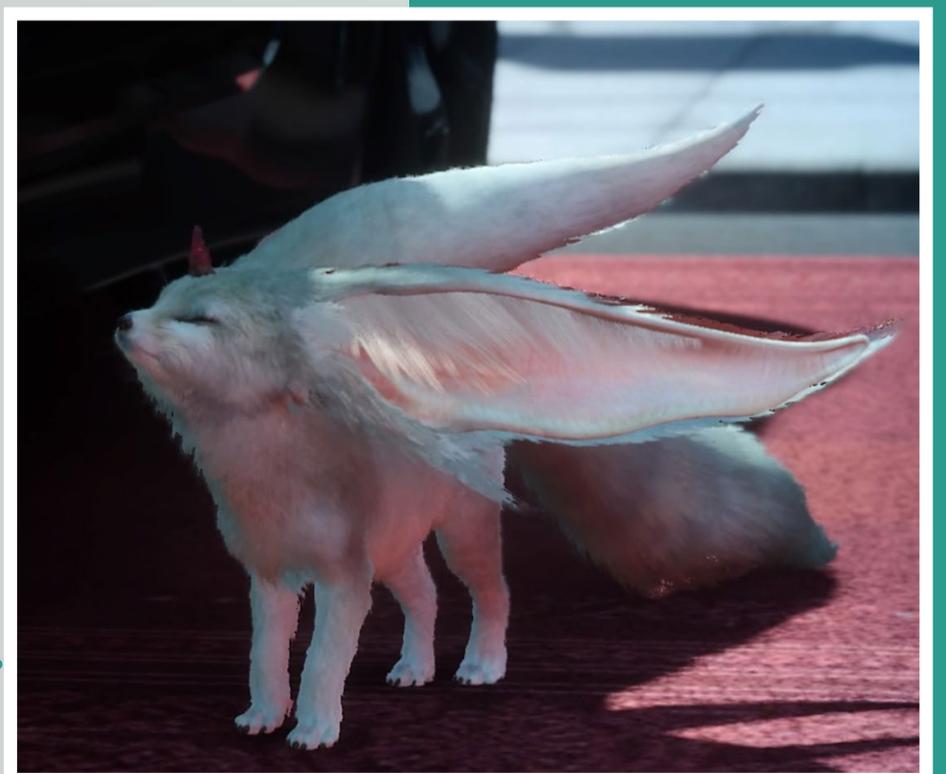
At times, the Final Fantasy Carbuncle might have split or multiple tails and can act as a stand-in for the supernatural kitsune (foxes in Japanese folklore). The *FFXV* depiction of a fennec fox-inspired Carbuncle with a single tail very much epitomizes what has become the 'classic' look of the character: small, furry, cute, and with an attractive gemstone.

This loveable fluffy-cuddliness has also been taken to the other extreme, however, as in the Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles series Carbuncles appear as a sluggish, yeti-like race. Here they do keep the gemstone (although it is now held entwined by the creature's antelopian horns) and they also sport an emerald-coloured coat reminiscent of the more popular design.

FFV Carbuncle - Anthology Artwork



FF Tactics Carbuncle



This appearance, whilst creative as a sort of cryptid amalgam, is also out of keeping with the more traditional small and agile characteristics of the legendary carbuncle animal. They are located in the dream-like realm Mag Mell (deriving from a Celtic concept of heaven). These Carbuncles have been sleeping for thousands of years, and the player must gradually wake them from their slumber. Perhaps their tail's similarity to a Native American 'dreamcatcher' is not coincidental.



## Guardians of dreams.

There certainly is a dreamlike quality to the *Final Fantasy* Carbuncle which *FFXV* develops further, providing us the most complete insight into a Carbuncle in the *Final Fantasy* franchise to date.

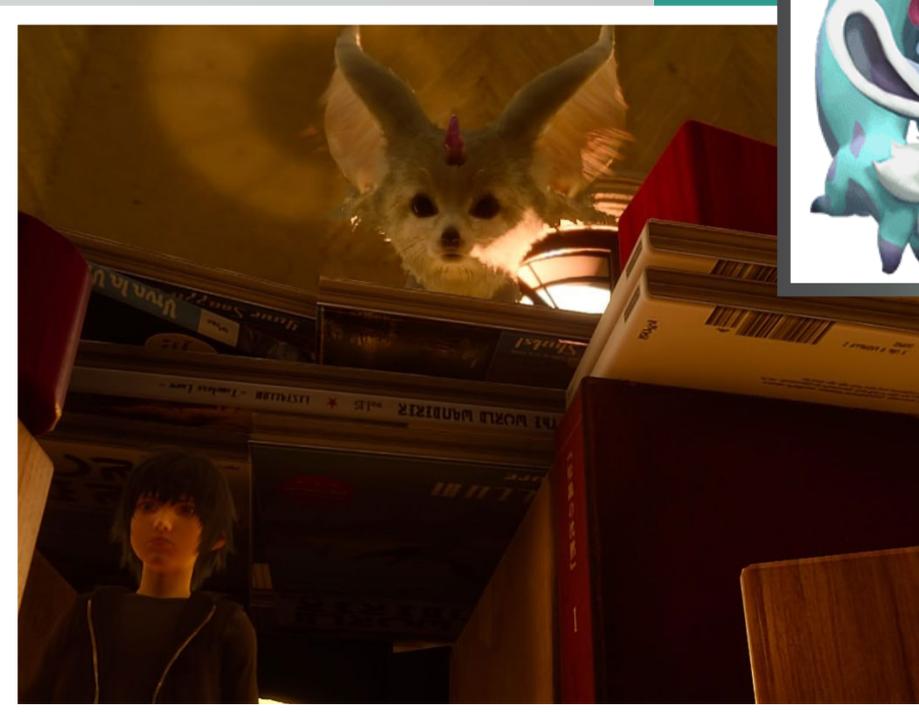
In the *Platinum Demo* and *Brotherhood* anime it is revealed that the Carbuncle is a sort of dream guardian, and a Messenger sent by the gods. After an eight-year-old Noctis sustains injuries from a Marilith demon, he falls into a coma. Noctis' father, King Regis, places a Carbuncle totem (an oneiric charm) next to a sleeping Noctis and in his dreams Carbuncle comes to life and guides him through the dreamscape.

Through this instructive experience, Noctis (and also the player) is able to learn more about fighting, as well as visit various places in the world. The almost Wonderland-esque, dreamlike quality is not lost as one segment of the dream involves a miniaturised Noctis dwarfed by the Carbuncle and surrounding toys and books! It is also revealed that the Carbuncle can text; through texting Carbuncle can articulate words to Noctis in a form that he can understand.

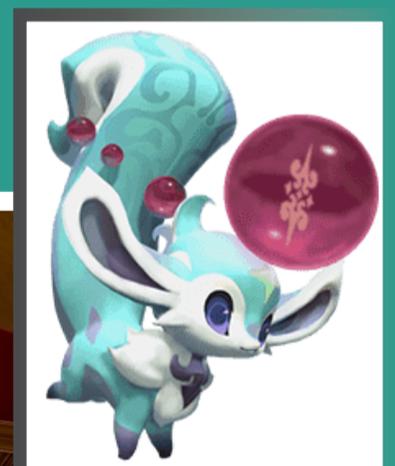
Outside of the dream (and in the main game of *FFXV*), Carbuncle continues to watch over an adult Noctis since he has taken the Carbuncle totem with him on his journey. Players with Easy Mode will oc-

asionally be healed by the magical messenger, but all players will, on occasion, notice that they have been photobombed by the Carbuncle as they flip through Prompto's photographs to reflect on the events of the day.

Curiously, during the Moogles Chocobo Carnival (a special festival held in Altissia which the players could experience through a free DLC) the Carbuncle animal joins Noctis on a happy day off from his royal duties. The animal's presence might suggest that Noctis is dreaming, and at the end of the event the player gains the 'Dream Egg' item... This later 'hatches' into the Master Assassin's robes costume during the next free DLC event (an *Assassin's Creed* crossover). Most definitely a dream!



*World of Final Fantasy* affords the Carbuncle other dreamlike powers; the creature is used to create and project a deceptive illusion (the mysterious 'Masked Woman') in the likeness of the protagonists' sister (Hauyn), prompting the heroes to mistakenly open the dangerous Ultima Gate. This villainous Carbuncle is rare for *Final Fantasy*, but its deceptive and intangible nature can be traced back to its mythological origins.



## Dreamful dalliances of Conquistadors: The mythological origins of Carbuncle.



Pink Fairy Armadillo (*Chlamyphorus truncatus*, originally posted to Flickr by Cliff).

Outside of *Final Fantasy* the carbuncle creature itself was supposed to have been an elusive little animal with a gemstone on its head which the Spanish conquistadors encountered while exploring South America in the 16th Century.

The first reference to creatures referred to as carbuncles appears to be from the Spanish historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés writing in the mid-16th Century. Oviedo mentions a cleric's report during the navigation of the Straits of Magellan that two carbuncle animals were seen glowing at night and causing trouble (*Historia XX:10*). Oviedo himself has difficulty interpreting these creatures, admitting that he knows nothing of them, and instead he refers to 'Old World' lore as a framework for attempting to understand them, citing Isidore of Seville (6th-7th Century).

In Isidore's *Etymologies* (an invaluable etymological encyclopaedia which collects extracts from ancient works) the passage which Oviedo draws a comparison with is that of extracting precious draconite gemstones (a type of carbuncle stone) from the brain of a living dragon (*Etymologies XVI:14*). Such gems could be obtained with care while the dragon slept, and sorcery and herbs could help induce this necessary slumber. This reference has somewhat confused the particular myth of the carbuncle creature as witnessed or imagined in the 'New

World' by mixing it with established medieval and ancient traditions regarding the carbuncle gemstones, but Oviedo, being careful, admits that he can find no tangible information on the reported animal itself.

Slightly later, we get our most complete reference to the carbuncle creature in Martin del Barco Centenera's *Argentina* (1602). Barco Centenera was both priest and poet, and was part of the Spanish conquistador movement in Argentina and Paraguay.

In his rather fanciful description of some of the phenomena which the conquistadors encountered, he describes *El Carbunclo* as a fast moving little animal, with the jewel on its head resembling ignited embers and acting like a mirror (*Argentina Canto III, Verses 21-22*). Barco Centenera claims to have personally witnessed the creature, but had been unable to study its appearance in detail. It is, however, a poem. The physical anatomy of the animal itself is not quite defined here, but the qualities of its mirror-like reflective gemstone which Barco Centenera described remain respected when the creature is adapted for *Final Fantasy*, and given the very appropriate ability to cast Reflect.

### The 'real' carbuncle?

Did Barco Centenera and the Spanish conquistadors really see a creature? Was it purely poetic fantasy, or was there a creature which sparked this description? Following a superficial look into Argentinian fauna, perhaps one candidate for the carbuncle creature could be some type of armadillo: more specifically, the fancifully named pink fairy armadillo (*Chlamyphorus truncatus*).

It may not be too much of a leap to imagine how the reddish-pink epidermal scales on this creature's head and back might look like stone. Add to this Barco Centenera's poetic licence, and any misinterpretation, and we get the carbuncle creature's jewel-head.

The pink fairy armadillo is sometimes nicknamed the 'sand-swimmer' because it is a very fast burrower, and so in a way it does fit with the elusive speed of the carbuncle animal (although if you were to search for this incredible ability on YouTube you would be grossly disappointed to find that perhaps only lazy pink fairies have been captured on video). The scales of the pink fairy, however, are hardly mirror-like in appearance and it might not be sensible to stretch this possibility further than necessary.

## Expanding the lore of the carbuncle.

### Shining light on an indigenous myth.

We should never lose sight of the reality that ‘carbuncle’ is the name given to the creature by the Spanish, who were using a (now relatively archaic) term for red gemstones as a noun to describe this species. The very application of this label (bringing with it the associations with carbuncle gemstones in European traditions) may disrupt our potential to uncover more about the creature itself in its native habitat. According to a marginal note beside the text of Barco Centenera, the native Guarani referred to the carbuncle as the *Anagpitan* and described it as a little devil which shines like fire, so there may have been local native folklore regarding the animal which is now obscured.

Examining the wider picture, creatures with glowing gemstones on their foreheads appear amongst several native mythologies of South and Central America. Amongst the Caribs of the Antillean islands was the *alloüebéra* (or Master Boa), a giant snake bejewelled with a red carbuncle stone on its forehead (European knowledge of this creature can be traced to 1658 in Rochefort’s *History of the Carriby-Islands*, Book I:3). European explorers and settlers encountered local traditions such as this, and some of them persisted (or in the example of the Antilles, the legends evolved and may have merged with African folklore when enslaved or escaped Africans in the 18th Century started to interbreed with Caribs and

other peoples). It may therefore also be plausible that the conquistadors of Barco Centenera’s party (in addition to Oviedo’s source slightly earlier) picked up some local legends of small bejewelled animals and reinterpreted them through European eyes, merging them with existing lore on carbuncle gemstones.

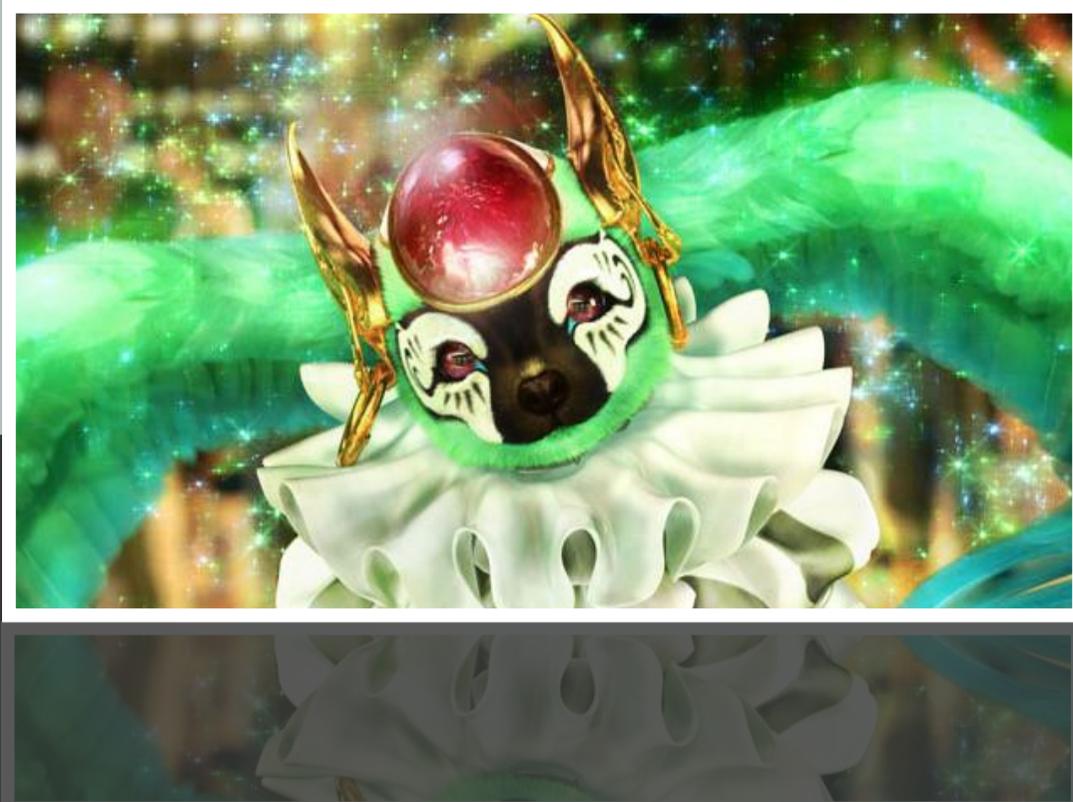
These folkloric traditions might also have their root in the mineralisation of bones through which crystals have formed on the fossilised skulls of extinct animals. If we tentatively imagine, for example, a specimen of *Interatherium* (an extinct Miocene mammal from Argentina) being unearthed with crystals visible on its skull, when interpreted as a deceased member of a living species the creation of the carbuncle myth makes sense. The stories circulating in European literature concerning crystals inside dragon brains may have a similar origin (see Adrienne Mayor’s *The First Fossil Hunters*: 131-135).



Skeleton of *Interatherium excavatus* in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. Photograph by Smokeybjb.

Since finding more information about the carbuncle creature seems to be as elusive as the fabled animal itself, it is not surprising that the myth of the carbuncle appears to have been imaginatively embellished as people have attempted to develop a coherent lore from a minimal amount of detail.

In recent times the carbuncle creature seems to have been popularised by its inclusion in Jorge Luis Borges’ popular *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (1957), which acts as a fairly comprehensive (albeit brief) modern bestiary. This bestiary needs to be taken with a pinch of salt, for some of the mythical monsters listed within it appear to have been made up entirely by Borges himself rather than being genuinely mythical, and some of the sources and medieval manuscripts he cites may unfortunately be of his own invention and cannot be traced. Nevertheless, various fantasy writers and role-playing game-makers (such as *Dungeons and Dragons*) referred to this for inspiration for the monsters that they were to include in their games. Incidentally, when *Dungeons and Dragons* included the carbuncle in its bestiary, it was represented as an armadillo-type creature with a gem on its forehead; other people have toyed with the carbuncle-armadillo idea! It seems plausible that the creators of *Final Fantasy* may have read about the carbuncle creature in a book such as this and decided to create their own adaptation of the animal.



## Cocoon's Carbuncle Conquistador.

As stated previously, most *Final Fantasy* representations of Carbuncle stick to variants of the same standard design. However, *FFXIII*'s Carbuncle is perhaps the most intriguing deviation from the classical *Final Fantasy* image for the creature, whilst still retaining all of its core defining characteristics. Its decorative face resembles the features of a racoon or a red panda, and this to many might be the most noticeable deviation. More interestingly, however, this is the only version of Carbuncle which is clothed, and the clothes could seriously pass for the garbs of a Spanish conquistador!

Considering the routes through which the *Final Fantasy* creators (over various years, on different game projects) will have learned of the creature, and most probably researched it for inspiration for their designs, it seems reasonable to suggest that this is a deliberate design choice to restore the creature to the source of its story.



## Final reflections.

Members of the creative team of *Final Fantasy* over the years have adapted a relatively obscure, fabled creature, but have given it a recurring place within the *Final Fantasy* pantheon of summons all whilst maintaining the key characteristics of the original references to the creature. In doing so *Square Enix* have developed a creature which is at once recognisably distinct (as one of many original mascots for the *Final Fantasy* series), but also at times remains respectful of its origins.

If you have any thoughts about the Carbuncle and its role in the *Final Fantasy* franchise, please contact us and let them be known!



# Empires and Final Fantasy: A Critical Appraisal

Credit: Nils Jorgensen

BY LINNAETE

## Are you being repressed? Come see the violence inherent in the system!

**E**mpires do not exactly receive the best press especially in fantasy genres. There is a natural tendency to establish empires as the go-to main antagonists of choice. It is not difficult to see why empires are so commonly depicted as war-mongering expansionists, typically driven from the top by esteemed, megalomaniacal rulers, demagogues promising untold glory for their people, or cunning pragmatists with a deliberate, determined purpose. *Final Fantasy* is no exception in this regard. As compelling as the tried-and-tested format of pitting an advanced imperial antagonistic force against a heroic band of under-equipped underdogs, these empires seldom enjoy much in the way of substantial depth and nuance. Is it time we start expecting more for a franchise that prides itself in its narratives?

Why are empires so commonly depicted as antagonists? One glance at our real life history may tell us something. Though former imperial powers are certainly not above proudly championing their past glory with scant consideration for the worst drawbacks and long-term, debilitating effects of their an-

cestors' colonial adventures, there is something to be said about how humans like to romanticise rebellion. It is easier to empathise with an individual than with a system. Count how many modern day nation states annually celebrate their independence from the former Spanish Empire. Conventionally, a lot of fantasy works of fiction frame their stories chiefly from the perspective of the more common man or woman. This would be the tale of the underdog warring against an oppressive entity seemingly far greater and more prosperous than they, under a nebulous, easy-to-grasp goal of freedom. Even if the main hero discovers themselves to be some form of Chosen One, the protagonists generally hail from humble backgrounds and rally together as part of a series of herculean efforts to stage meaningful rebellions against tyrannical regimes. *Star Wars* certainly popularised this simplistic duality; *A New Hope* maintained a simple plot structure and neatly established its rival sides into monolithic camps. There is something inspiring, simple and satisfying about a relatively tiny band of heroes overcoming all odds in spite of the sheer size, scale and resources under the Empire's iron fist. Anything greater in scale or might than an empire may as well be a divine antagonist, but that's another trope entirely.



Recurring Final Fantasy duo Biggs and Wedge were named after Luke Skywalker's friends Biggs Darklighter and Wedge Antilles in Star Wars.

Biggs and Wedge banner by Six.



*Final Fantasy* takes many cues from *Star Wars*. This is no secret, especially given the recurring appearances of two characters named Biggs and Wedge. The Dreadnought from *Final Fantasy II* is essentially Saka-guchi's analogue of the first Death Star, right down to the single design flaw that is exploited by the heroes. It stands to reason that the Palamecian Empire from this game itself carries many parallels with the Galactic Empire. Both are depicted as largely monolithic, villainous entities, intent on cementing their hegemony with blood and iron. Any focus is concentrated at the top echelons of power, whereas the lower rank and file as well as civilian population remain largely invisible – their stories untold in favour of faceless hordes of soldiers, each as nondescript as the previous. Both are governed by despots who seem more content to pacify the masses through fear and forceful subjugation than by a multitude of other methods present in real history. Granted, there is a multitude of *Star Wars* novels, TV shows and comics that have made great strides in depicting different perspectives within the Empire, though most are no longer canon with the official timeline. *Final Fantasy* does not have a large collection of alternative material that fleshes out their worlds beyond what is presented in the games. While Square Enix are free to greatly expand on *Final Fantasy XV*'s Niflheim with any further DLC if they so wish, players

spend much of the game barely ever knowing or experiencing it. Characters *talk* about Niflheim, but besides a few minor faces, they are primarily represented by legions of robotic mooks. It is barely any different from the endless Stormtroopers and AT-ATs of both the Empire and the First Order.

While it is true that empires of history had few qualms with conducting executions and mandatory imprisonments with little to no due process, control and compliance were also successfully enacted through pedagogical processes. In other words, control through propaganda. Deft imperial occupiers, if they had total control over a populace, could enact revisionist educational drives to instil the “correct” ideologies into the hearts and minds of those within their sovereignty. This way, successful re-education initiatives would win the tacit and express support of an otherwise oppressed population, which was of greater benefit than to simply pacify their peoples (so potential rebellions would be limited in scope and effectiveness).

“While it is true that empires of history had few qualms with conducting executions and mandatory imprisonments with little to no due process, control and compliance were also successfully enacted through pedagogical processes. In other words, control through propaganda.”

(Linnaete on imperial control over society.)

Niflheim's Magitek Infantry. The expressionless, mechanical faces of these robots block most attempts to empathise with Niflheim.





## The closed society of Cocoon (FFXIII) compares with North Korea.

*Final Fantasy XIII* interestingly comes the closest in exploring this aspect of control over a populace. Though the Sanctum is not formally an empire, its influence on the population is well pronounced. Ordinary citizens of Cocoon are conditioned over generations to be xenophobic to the extreme, not unlike a North Korea. There is one notable moment in the game where your characters are publicly demonised and chased away on the streets by panicking civilians who have been taught to believe that your existence is an abomination. By contrast, I cannot tell you anything substantial about the citizens of *Final Fantasy Type-0*'s Militesi Empire. Taking the time to explore society from below would do wonders for world building. A setting feels far more real and living if a player has a sufficient enough grasp of how the common people (who are not participating in your underdog rebellions) think and feel. How is life for them? Has the state forcibly conditioned them into believing something? What are relations like between people and ethnic groups? Is praise and adulation for a leader sin-

cere or do they live their lives constantly fearing authority and wishing only to claw on to lives of basic sustenance? Has the conquest of previously independent territories actually improved lives albeit at great social costs that have divided communities?

So what can *Final Fantasy* do to make their empires feel more like real places with actual societies and not simply these monolithic lands of pure, totalitarian evil? Let's do what historians do when they examine historical and current day empires or empire-like

regimes. It is no good simply trying to base our understanding of either purely on what their leaders did and espoused. You don't receive the big picture that way. The People's Republic of China would serve as an interesting real life reference point to convey how complex and nuanced such a society on its scale is, but I've just been told by my editors that I have an unfortunate knack of making things too needlessly politically charged for a family magazine...



Let's take a moment to briefly consider a couple of Final Fantasy entries that genuinely do a fair job of allowing the player to explore different sections of society under the same state or city. In *Final Fantasy XII*, the protagonists venture to the heart of the Archadian Empire and find a capital extremely segregated socially and economically. House Solidor may be autocrats at heart, but it would be erroneous

to say that they have not brought and maintained some degree of prosperity, albeit at the cost of other strata of society. To see the swindlers, itinerants and the destitute of Old Archades and comparing and contrasting them to the dazzling skylights and nobles of Archades itself is a delight that I sincerely wish later games in the franchise would replicate and expand upon.



It would also be remiss of me not to mention *Final Fantasy VII* and the many cues it takes from the cyberpunk trope of dystopian corporatism. You can vividly feel the impact of the Shinra Electric Power Company on Midgar, most notably when down in the squalid slums below the plates. One potential of the upcoming *Final Fantasy VII Remake* is the possibility that Midgar can be expanded to tell even more short side stories that heavily explore ordinary perspectives. Perhaps it can even portray Shinra with much-needed extra nuance, to show that there is more to this empire-like megacorporation besides private armies, cruel scientific experimentations, planet destruction and deplorably dropping an entire portion of a plate down on an entire sector below in hopes of exterminating a small band of

eco-terrorists. Sure, they must have shareholders to please, but I highly doubt that none of them are aware of - and uncomfortable with - Shinra's more ethically indefensible practices.



My hope is that Square Enix, whoever may be working on the next instalment of the franchise (if indeed anyone currently is even working on a *Final Fantasy XVI*...), has a creative lead team with the ambition to take the cues from *Final Fantasies VII* and *XII* and go

that extra mile to bring an empire to life. An empire is far more than overpowered despots who are eventually overthrown by plucky underdog heroes. An empire does not have to be inherently cruel. Its leaders are free to have less than noble or humane of goals, but neither does it mean its society should uniformly suffer or obey. An empire is a loose collection of very diverse peoples, cultures and beliefs, united by a common ruler and regime. A future game that wants an empire can do so much more to expand on what it means to have and be an empire.

THE (NOT SO) SPOONY BARD:

# SHAKESPEARE IN FINAL FANTASY

BY DIONYSOS



In commemoration of William Shakespeare's birthday (23rd April) we discuss references in the Final Fantasy franchise to the world's most famous bard. We discover that while some references are committed to the bard (and the collective body of his works), with others Square Enix "hath framed strange fellows".\*

\**Merchant of Venice*: Act I, scene I,

## The Sweet Canary of Alexandria:

*Final Fantasy IX* contains the most sincere allusions to Shakespeare by far. This should be unsurprising considering that the main character, Zidane, is a member of a theatre troupe popular for annually performing the play '*I Want to Be Your Canary*' in Alexandria. The English bard himself even lives in this world through a figure based on and named after him; Lord Avon (the author of '*I Want to Be Your Canary*') points to Shakespeare's hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.



[Artwork of the fake play ticket (from The Art of Final Fantasy IX) offers a rare glimpse into FFXIX's playwright based on Shakespeare.]

The players witness the Tantalus Theatre Troupe perform '*I Want to Be Your Canary*' both during the opening chapter of the game (where the troupe use their performance as a cover for kidnapping Princess Garnet) and during the game's climactic finale. Each time we see different scenes from the play being performed which can give a

more complete picture of the play.

The play's rather humorous title appears to be a nod to *Romeo and Juliet* (Act II, scene ii, line 180) when Juliet likens her love for Romeo to that of a person who never lets their pet bird get too far from their hand, prompting Romeo to respond that he would want to be her bird.

The play's plot does simulate a work which could be authentically Shakespearean; it appears to contain a mixture of plot points from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *King Lear*, in particular. The story revolves around the forbidden love between the hero (Marcus) and heroine (Cornelia). King Leo (Cornelia's father) would rather his daughter marry Prince Schneider and bring peace to rival kingdoms, than a commoner such as Marcus. The plot's tragic dilemma rests with Cornelia deciding whether to elope with Marcus for love, or to marry for her duty to her people and a convenient peace. Her decision to elope is cut short by Marcus' friend-turned-traitor (Blank) who attempts to thwart Cornelia's escape and believes that forcing her to marry Prince Schneider would be best for the kingdoms. Blank is executed for his rash actions by King Leo, but when he insists on forbidding Marcus from marrying Cornelia, Marcus

attempts to strike the king only to find Cornelia tragically stepping between his blade and her father. After Cornelia dies for the love she feels for her father, Marcus commits suicide and the tragedy comes to an end as King Leo grieves.

Through an excellent English localisation by Square Enix, FFXIX's Lord Avon successfully emulates William Shakespeare's archaic language in '*I Want to Be Your Canary*', deliberately utilising words such as "what ho", "hast" and "thy" in order convincingly suggest that the Tantalus Theatre Troupe are performing the work of a famous poet of old in their own universe.

Moreover, Lord Avon's play reveals that Alexandria's poet seems to have mastered the intricate art of wordplay, deviously juggling allusions to multiple concepts in ways that Shakespeare may have approved. The character King Leo manages to be a reference to both Shakespeare's *King Lear* and General Leo Cristophe from FFXVI. Likewise, King Leo's daughter, Cornelia, concurrently recalls Shakespeare's Cordelia (a daughter of *King Lear*) and also the most famous town in the original *Final Fantasy* (Cornelia).

'*I Want to Be Your Canary*' also uses

a clever pun with the line “No cloud, no squall shall hinder us!” (a nod to former lead protagonists Cloud Strife, *FFVII*, and Squall Leonhart, *FFVIII*) which the audience watching from behind the fourth wall of the game would recognise. In the game’s finale ‘Marcus’ (played by a disguised Zidane) cleverly twists the meaning of the word ‘dagger’ when he requests “Bring my beloved Dagger to me!”. This is at once an improvised shift of emphasis to get the attention of Queen Garnet in the audience (who adopts the alias of ‘Dagger’ in the game), while at the same time still belonging in the text of the play as a literal dagger.



These lines are often quoted by fans as a work of creative genius much like Shakespeare’s own words. Combined with the clever character naming, they break the fourth wall through relying on audience familiarity with the metanarrative of *Final Fantasy*, all the while being attributed to ‘Lord Avon’.



[The jester twins of Alexandria’s court antimetabole speech pattern might have received applause from William Shakespeare.]

“If music be the food of love, play on!”\*

\**Twelfth Night*: Act I, scene I, line 1

The music that players hear during Lord Avon’s play is considered, in-universe, part of the performance as a band hired by the Tantalus Troupe is responsible for it. The music selected can be extremely appropriate, demonstrating participation in the Shakespearean tendencies, as one track which plays during the second performance is titled ‘Star-crossed lovers’. This is a clear and explicit quotation of *Romeo and Juliet* (Prologue, line 5-6), where Shakespeare coined this term. Directing our attention to this play is appropriate as there are *Romeo and Juliet* themes in Lord Avon’s play as the young lovers tragically and wastefully die in Tantalus’ rendition.

### All the world’s a game, and all the men and women merely players:

Outside of Lord Avon’s play, some of the actors of the Tantalus Theatre Troupe performing the play are themselves allusions to Shakespeare’s works. Marcus and Cinna are both named after characters in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (both Marcus Brutus and Cinna are conspirators against Caesar, and *FFIX*’s characters do a bit of conspiring themselves in their plot to kidnap Princess Garnet).

The Shakespearean undertones in *FFIX* do not stop with the Tantalus Troupe. The mischievous rat-kid who sneaks up to the rooftops with Vivi to watch Tantalus’ performance of *I Want to Be Your Canary* is named Puck. Puck turns out to be a prince of Burmecia in *FFIX*’s world, but his name alludes to Puck (aka Robin Goodfellow), the impish trickster fairy from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Prince Puck’s playful mannerisms in *FFIX* suit his role. It is also interesting that the character Puck is used to introduce the concept of class-based tier seating in theatrical performances. In Shakespearean theatre the poorest members of the audience would be ‘groundlings’, forced to stand on the ground, while the seats were higher up in the levels and cost more. This is interestingly reversed in Alexandria with nobles getting seats closer to the stage, and poorer people

climbing onto the rooftops to chance a peek. As with Shakespeare plays, a character in *I Want to be Your Canary* directly addresses the audience and acknowledges the poorer rooftop viewers.



*FFIX*’s Queen Brahne appearing as a grotesque caricature of Queen Elizabeth I (who was on the throne during the earlier years of Shakespeare’s life and career) is also no accident, considering that *I Want to be Your Canary* is the mad monarch’s favourite play and the Tantalus Theatre Troupe perform it for her and her daughter. The Queen’s mischievous court jesters, Zorn (German for ‘anger’) and Thorn (as in a ‘thorn’ in the side) provide comic relief but also work in manipulating events in the plot in ways comparable to some of Shakespeare’s jesters (albeit with a sinister and more villainous twist).

“NO CLOUD, NO SQUALL SHALL HINDER US!”

-MARCUS, FFIX

## “Let us assay our plot”\*: FFX’s use of Shakespeare-inspired scenes.

\**All’s Well That Ends Well*: Act III, scene vii, lines

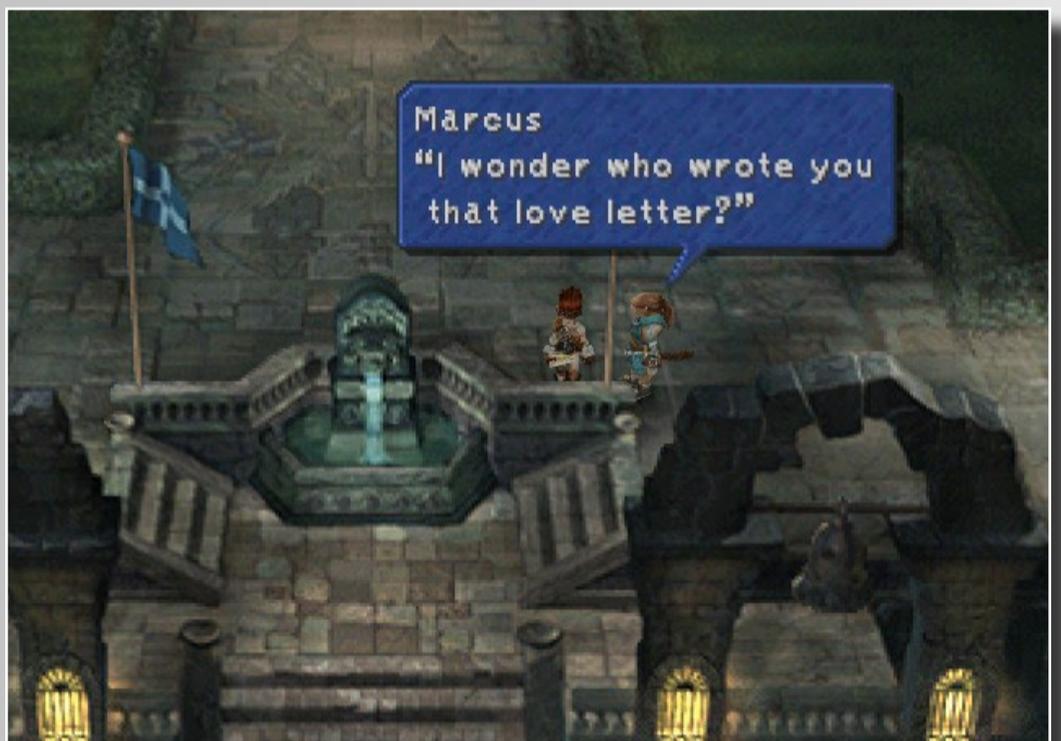
*FFIX* even has a few sub-plots which tease Shakespearean heritage outside of any reference to Lord Avon’s play. At Conde Petie players witness a marriage presented for parody (the likeably shy Vivi marrying food-obsessed and gender-obscure Quina) alongside a more serious match (Zidane and Garnet, who ironically actually possess feelings for each other but are here marrying in order to gain access to a sanctuary). This is rather like the ending of *As You Like It* where the serious (albeit idyllically romanticised) main characters’ marriages are contrasted against the more comedic and brash union of Touchstone and Audrey (*As You Like It*: Act V, scene iv).

The player also witnesses a hilarious love letter mix-up scene in Alexandria as Princess Garnet prepares to become Queen. A lovestruck Eiko writes a love letter intended for Zidane, but when Baku irresponsibly knocks her and leaves her dangling from a balcony, Eiko enlists Baku to deliver the letter on her behalf... Baku inevitably drops the letter as he boards a boat with Steiner; Beatrix (who secretly harbours feelings for Steiner) swiftly encounters the letter as she spies Steiner sailing away and concludes that Steiner had written the letter for her.

A few moments later we discover that Blank had also found the letter, and he and Marcus visit the mentioned meeting point at the docks believing that the letter was addressed to Blank. Taking the letter with him, Blank drops the letter as he runs to hide upon hearing the clanking of an approaching Steiner in the process of doing his guard rounds. Steiner is the next victim to chance upon the letter, believing it to be addressed to him by someone who knew he would be passing by. In comes Beatrix, Steiner’s rival who he is also infatuated with, and he instantly jumps to the conclusion that she must have left the letter for him... As the tension builds to bursting point and the pair are

close to confessing their feelings, their moment is most rudely interrupted by the perfectly ill-timed sneeze of Baku.

This is a well-crafted and hilarious scene, and not unlike love letter scenes in Shakespeare which often lean towards parody, most notably the love letter prank scene of *Twelfth Night* (Act II, scene v: where the pompous servant Malvolio is tricked by a forged love letter into thinking Olivia is in love with him and hilariously wears yellow stockings cross-gartered to impress her). Not only do the characters make fools of themselves on both occasions, but the setting of this scene unfolding near a garden with hedges and a fountain while onlookers witness the scene in mixed horror and delight is similar in both of these comic scenes.



[*FFIX* steers clear of a cross-gartered yellow stocking reference and misses an obvious Tetsuya Nomura joke]

# "There is a world elsewhere"\*: The wider use of Shakespeare in Final Fantasy.

\**Coriolanus*: Act III, scene iii, line 162.

FFIX easily contains the most convincing nods to William Shakespeare, but there are shared ideas in other games which may trace their origin to the bard.

Occasionally enemies have worn the names of Shakespearean characters. Final Fantasy Tactics Advance has a fairy-type enemy appropriately named Titania after the queen of the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The *Final Fantasy* franchise has on occasion quoted lines from Shakespeare in the English translations. In FFX-2 Yuna and Rikku will quote Macbeth's witches

if the player sphere-changes the characters into Black Mages (the Final Fantasy equivalent of a witch) during battle. While changing clothes, Yuna sometimes shouts "Double, double, toil and trouble", while Rikku will say "fire burn and cauldron bubble" (*Macbeth*: Act IV, scene I).

## MACBETH'S WITCHES



## "Thou dost infect my eyes!"\*: Unusual uses of 'Shakespeare'

\*(*Richard III*: Act I, scene ii, 53)

There are then a number of indirect references to Shakespeare in other *Final Fantasy* games which make a little less sense.

In *FFVII* during the Wutai pagoda side-quest Yuffie can fight a number of martial arts masters, each apparently named after a person connected with theatre: Gorkii relates to Maxim Gorky, a 19th-20th Century Russian playwright, writer and political activist; Chekov relates to Anton Chekhov, a 19th Century Russian playwright; Staniv is sometimes tentatively related to Konstantin Stanislavski, a 19th Century Russian theatre director, practitioner and actor. Standing out from the Russian-inspired dojo masters, one opponent which Yuffie must face is a girl called Shake (supposedly named after Shakespeare) and her battle transformation appears to be a penguin-like bird monster...

Despite Shakespeare's coat of arms containing a falcon wielding a spear (though notably not a penguin) there appears to be no correlation and this tenuous association seems to be in name only. This 'reference' is perhaps "much ado about nothing", and 'Shake' merely recycles an existing enemy model.

Curiously, there are two robotic opponents in *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII* which are named after Desdemona (from *Othello*) and Gertrude (from *Hamlet*). Why these names were used for non-sentient automatons is unknown, but both are female characters in Shakespeare plays who get murdered. Do these robots harbour the vengeful souls of these murdered women?

### Epilogue:

William Shakespeare has impacted so much popular culture that it is inevitable that we should find him in Final Fantasy too. He is most at home in FFX where a fair portion of the plot is dedicated to a theatre troupe and their opening and closing acts in the game is a performance of a play by a character directly based on William Shakespeare himself.



GERTRUDE

DESDEMONA

Do you know of more Shakespeare references? Contact us and let us know!

# CULTURE DIG

## C E T R A



BY DIONYSOS AND CALI

**T**reasure hunter and reporter Elenaboko has been studying the Cetra (AKA 'The Ancients' of Gaia, *Final Fantasy VII*). The following account is an English translation of the compiled notes from Elenaboko's native warkish.

### WHO WERE THE CETRA?

The Cetra were a people who populated the planet Gaia until 2,000 years ago when their way of life came to an end after the alien entity known as Jenova devastated them.

Surviving oral tales passed down through Cetran descendants and the Elders at Cosmo Canyon suggest that the Cetra were mostly a nomadic people. The physical evidence might be contradictory to this story; there are two major cultural centres attributed to the Cetra (located in both hemispheres) which suggest that the Cetra did, at least occasionally, build cities and embark on elaborate architectural endeavours as well as having a wide range of movement.

Surviving ruins of a complex settlement in the Northern Continent (known to the Cetra as the Knowlespole) and a vast temple complex in the southern hemisphere are our only physical traces of this culture, but it would be unlikely that these remarkable centres should be isolated incidents of development.

### CETRAN SOCIETY AND COLLAPSE

The Cetra had a symbiotic relationship with their planet, which they treated with great respect and reverence as a living organism. The Cetra travelled the length and breadth of the planet, cultivating it and healing it whenever the planet was injured. Being more spiritually and psychically aware than modern humans, the Cetra had the ability to commune with the Planet, listening to its 'cry' in order to locate any injuries.

The most devastating of all injuries sustained by the planet became the undoing of the Cetra. The 'Calamity from the Skies' (as the Cetra called Jenova), crashed into the northern regions 2,000 years ago, leaving a great wound on the Planet: the North Crater.

Out of the crater came Jenova, appearing to the Cetra in the form of their deceased relatives in order to trick them and kill them. Many Cetra became infected and turned into monsters. Although the Cetra eventually managed to kill Jenova and dump its corpse into a chasm, the survivors of the Northern Cetra were forced to abandon their homes.

The Knowlespole region was once very fertile and appears to have been the preferred habitation for the Cetra until the Planet redirected the flow of the Lifestream to heal the crater created by Jenova, depriving the region of its vitality and creating the cold climes that the region knows today.

### WHAT DID THE CETRA LOOK LIKE?

Our evidence for how the Cetra looked and what they wore is meagre and stems from three very different sources:

- Figures (predominantly male) carved on the walls of the 'Temple of the Ancients'
- Mysterious sage-like ghosts which guarded the 'Temple of the Ancients' following the collapse of the Cetra\*
- Ifalna, a descendent of the Cetra (and her daughter, the late Aerith Gainsborough)

\*The stories of ghostly sages suggest that some Cetra gained the ability to transfer their consciousness into spiritual masses (or create ghosts of themselves) for the purpose of relaying information and guarding secrets...



Elenaboko speculated whether the Cetra may have looked like this.



## THE PROMISED LAND

Oral traditions attest to a belief among Cetra in a 'Promised Land', a mythical location of immense bliss believed to be abundantly fertile (it was the promise of unlimited Mako deposits which attracted the Shinra Electric Power Company to this legend's potential 2,000 years after the Cetra). The Cetra believed it was their destiny to return to 'The Promised Land'.

Countless explorers have since sought out a tangible, visitable location for 'The Promised Land', but some Cosmo Canyon Elders now believe that the myth is actually an interpretation of the Lifestream (where the souls of all the deceased flow and continue to nourish life on the planet).



Elenaboko's artistic impression of the Forgotten Capital during the Cetra's heyday.



## THE FORGOTTEN CAPITAL

The surviving ruins of a Cetran city in the 'Knowlespole' is nicknamed the 'Forgotten Capital' today. The modern name is appropriate as the Cetra clearly possessed a great understanding of the world and a way of living in unison with the planet that modern people have since forgotten. It had also remained largely hidden from the modern world behind the cloak of the Sleeping Forest.

The entire city appears to be built on top of a dried coral reef (the Corel Valley). Aquatic elements are effortlessly incorporated into the very design of the city, with the preserved shells of gigantic prehistoric sea molluscs being adapted into homes and civic buildings. Some other surviving buildings had been built by the Cetra using stone and mudbrick, which suggests that the city may have had many other buildings in its prime.

Those that survive are in remarkable condition, with furniture and artifacts remaining in situ as the Cetra had left them following the 'Calamity'.

In addition to likely being the capital of the Cetran civilisation, the 'Forgotten Capital' appears to have been a key pilgrimage site for the Cetra, possessing several altars. Could the capital have been a symbolic earthly representation of 'The Promised Land' itself?

### WHAT LIES BENEATH?

Below the main temple, a spiral stairway of glasslike crystal leads to an enormous basement area in the form of a large underwater dome. The stairs lead to a building which looks curiously like a fantasy castle trapped in crystal prison. It is completely unlike any other Cetran building known to date.

Nothing is known about this strange aspect of Cetran culture, other than that the area appeared to house an ancient altar for praying and communicating with the Planet.

# THE TEMPLE OF THE ANCIENTS

The second major Cetran site is known to us as the 'Temple of the Ancients'. Poking out of a deep jungle, the step pyramid of this late-Cetran temple may have been built after Jenova had already begun to devastate the northern Knowlespole regions.

Unlike the 'Forgotten Capital', the 'Temple of the Ancients' is no longer in good condition having unfortunately imploded in recent years leaving virtually no trace (there now remains a large, square crater in its place).

Thankfully, **photographs** of the monuments (including leaked Shinra files and photographs taken by AVALANCHE) survive from which we can reconstruct the temple in its heyday.

The primary function of the temple appears to have been to house the 'Black Materia' (a devastating weapon of mass destruction which could summon a meteor to injure the planet), and thereby preventing the wrong hands from ever using it. The temple once had obstacles in

the form of a labyrinthine maze, a boulder dispensing device, and a moving wall possessed by a demon.

The Cetra were right to be cautious; when Sephiroth used this weapon in recent years he very nearly destroyed the planet. Its opposite, the 'White Materia', allowed the most direct and clear communication with the Planet, and through the summoning of 'Holy' magic enabled the Planet to protect itself and the balance of life.

By its nature it is unlikely that Cetran citizens ever lived in the 'Temple of the Ancients', aside from possibly housing refugees nearby. It was likely manned by Cetra priests and elders, and after their demise it was guarded by their spiritual essences or ghosts (although they lost the ability of intelligible speech).



**Black materia**, a devastating weapon of mass destruction which could summon a meteor to injure the planet. (Logo by Mitsuki)

The Cetra were right to be cautious; when **Sephiroth** used this weapon in recent years he very nearly destroyed the planet.

**CETRAN ART:**

The 'Temple of the Ancients' once housed brilliantly preserved examples of Cetran art, the recent destruction of which has been one of the greatest losses of our age.

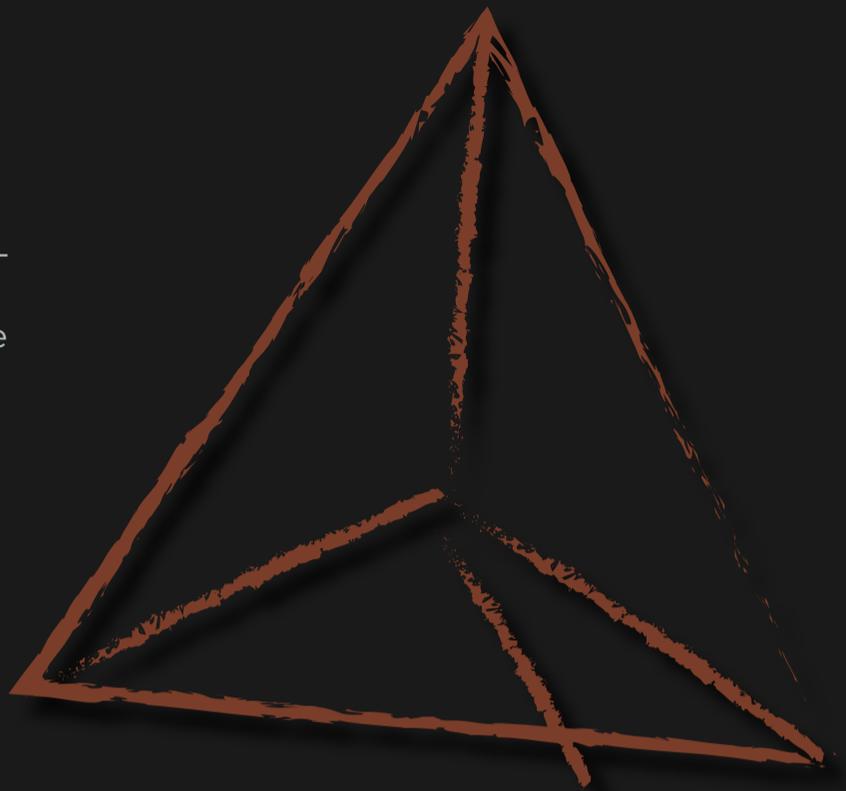
Perhaps the most important piece of art was in the 'Mural Room'. The mural, filling the walls of the entire room, contained a rare depiction of Cetran people and showed the devastating consequences of summoning 'Meteor' with the 'Black Materia'. Are these figures regular people, or are they Cetran priests and rulers? We may never know, but their head-dresses suggest rank.

In the entrance chamber to the temple there stood a stone-sculpted head or mask above the altar and elevator. The identity of the figure is unknown, but the presence above the altar suggests a cultic nature for the item, perhaps a representation of a god (speculatively, it could even be a personification of the Planet itself).

There was a remarkable carved wall-figure of a theropod dinosaur in a chamber below the gigantic clock mechanism. It is unclear if there were surviving dinosaurs in the jungles near the temple, or if the drawing is based on fossil evidence.

The survival of dinosaur-like vlakorados into modern times in the North might presume that the Cetra had some familiarity with dinosaurs in the Knowlespole. The significance of the dinosaur imagery in the Cetran temple further south is unknown, although an earlier use of the 'Black Materia' might explain the near-extinction of dinosaurs on Gaia, and the Cetra might have included this as a cautionary tale!

Other extinct prehistoric animals may also have shared the planet with the Cetra; intimidatingly enormous skulls and skeletons of giant saber-toothed tigers have been



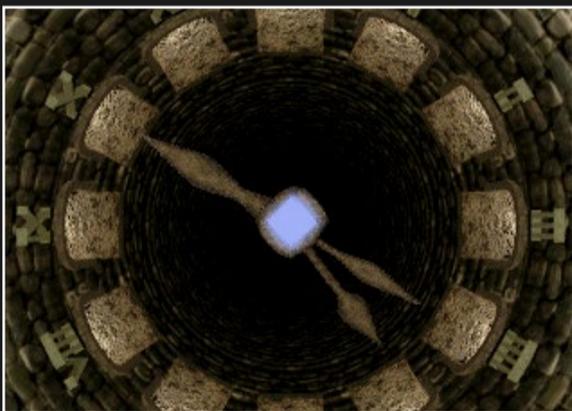
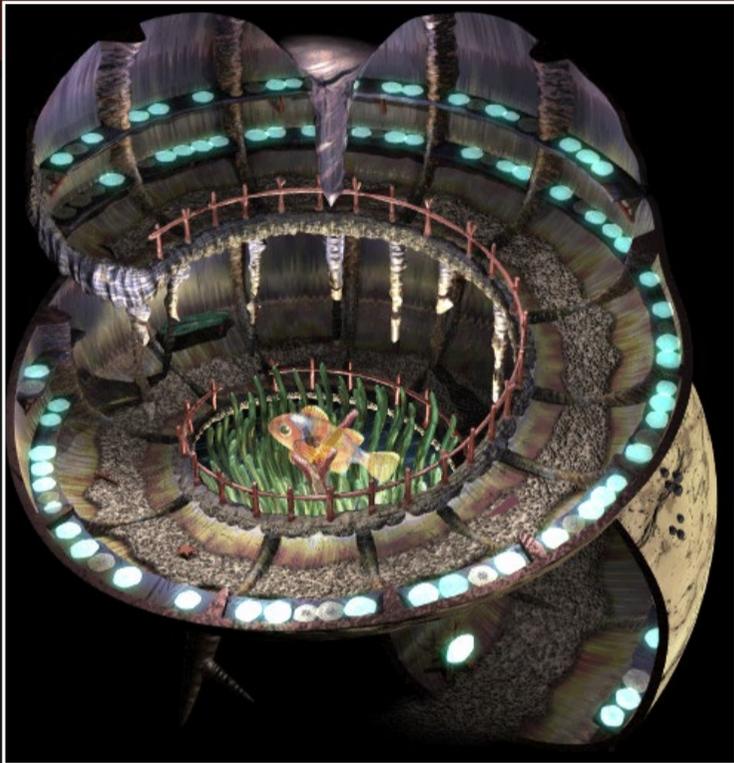
unearthed near the Sleeping Forest in the ancient Knowlespole region (the Cetran artifact known as the Lunar Harp was discovered in the same layer, suggesting contemporaneity).



# TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS

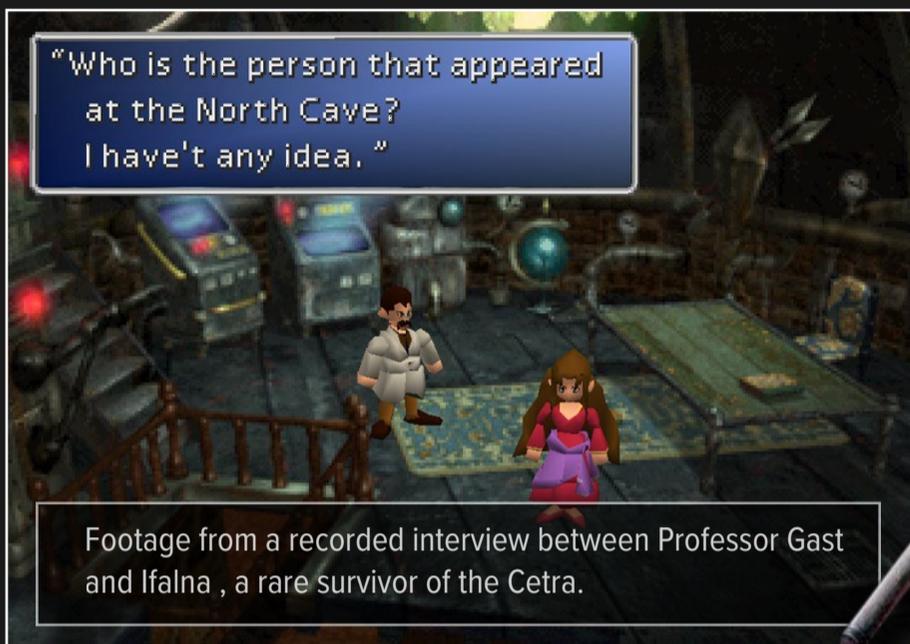


In contrast to what one might expect from a culture which lived in harmony with the planet, the Cetra were technologically advanced in ways that modern humans are only recently catching up with. Some incredible examples of Cetran technology are still operational after laying dormant for 2,000 years. Here are some of their incredible inventions:



- **Materia.** The Cetra are credited with first discovering how to concentrate life energy (what we now call 'mako') to create materia and summon magical spells.
- **Communication crystals.** Within several buildings of the 'Forgotten Capital' there are glowing crystals and when you interact with them they flash and emit sounds recorded by the Cetra. It is unknown what words the Cetra say in these messages. Could these be recorded messages on Cetran telephones? These may be similar (or might even trace their origin) to Spiran spheres.
- **Projectors.** In the 'Forgotten Capital' there is a large chamber with a crystal in the centre on which recorded images are projected onto a waterfall (once activated by placing a special key into an intricate musical box mechanism). Was this an ancient cinema? A similar use of water for storing information was found in the 'Temple of the Ancients' where a well of knowledge could show images of past events to people gazing into its reflective pool.
- **Holograms.** In the main temple in the 'Forgotten Capital' a clever hologram of a giant fish hovers above the entrance to the altar. This fish imitates life so perfectly that it is unknown if it is a ghostly projection, or entirely artificial.
- **Phasing through solid matter.** In the 'Temple of the Ancients' the entrance platform activated by using the Keystone device is remarkable. When used, the platform's material changes its properties and allows the user to phase through it into the labyrinth.
- **Clocks.** While the gigantic clock mechanism of the 'Temple of the Ancients' was more symbolic than functional (indicating the approaching doom of anyone wishing to use the 'Black Materia', perhaps), its existence implies a knowledge of time pieces. AVA-LANCHE reported that this device was even installed with a talking 'time guardian' automaton.
- **Writing.** The Cetra used an ideographic or logographic writing system with unusual symbols. Some rare texts containing the script survive, but despite the efforts of the Cosmo Canyon elders, the Cetran language remains undeciphered.

# THE LEGACY OF THE CETRA



The late Aerith Gainsborough, Ifalna's daughter, was the last known true Cetra. Her sacrifice saved the Planet and ensured that life can continue.

No matter how harmonious, all civilisations are impermanent; this is the main lesson that we can take from the Cetra. Yet the legacy of the Cetra is still felt by the inhabitants of Gaia to this day.

Oral stories of the Cetra being nomadic might conflict with the physical evidence of complex civilisations, but both aspects of the Cetra are correct from a certain point of view. The Cetra did travel and heal and cultivate the planet, but they did also build structures and population centres.

It is widely believed that the earliest modern humans were once Cetra who had chosen to sever their special bond with the Planet. After the collapse of their civilisation due to the invasion of the alien Jenova, the few Cetra who survived dispersed and largely interbred with

the modern humans which came to dominate the planet. In a sense, the Planet was saved from Jenova at the cost of the Cetra.

In recent times, the greedy Shinra Electric Power Company nearly destroyed the world in their manipulation of the Planet, and by their genetic manipulation of alien Jenova cells in their misinterpretation of Cetran history. This is a mistake the Cetra would not have made.

The humans of the modern age have mostly lost their spiritual connection with the Planet, but their true spiritual successors are found in Cosmo Canyon. A great debt is owed to the Cosmo Canyon Elders for rediscovering the Earth's Cry, materia creation, and of preserving much of Cetran oral history. They preserve and honour the real legacy of the Cetra.



**In a sense, the Planet was saved from Jenova at the cost of the Cetra.**



# KUPOCON

## WHAT IT IS, WHAT'S BEEN, AND WHAT'S COMING.

### What is KupoCon?

KupoCon is a fan-made Final Fantasy event unlike anything else out there. The brainchild of Lead Organizer Alex Maine, KupoCon is an unofficial *Final Fantasy* fan gathering rather than a convention in a conventional sense. While you will definitely see artist and fan merchandise stalls, magnificent cosplayers, and special guests, KupoCon otherwise remains self-aware that it is more of a *Final Fantasy* themed party than a standard convention... And this works wonderfully!

Final Fantasy Forums has been affiliated with KupoCon since June 2016 and has promoted the event heavily both within and outside the forum. Several FFF members have attended events (plus members of the wider FFF diaspora). All can thoroughly recommend KupoCon as the ultimate *Final Fantasy* fan experience.

### Quests and Activities.

The KupoCon team never fail to provide enjoyable and inclusive activities (or quests) which are contrary to anything you will ever experience at a convention. People are drawn together as every attendee is encouraged to participate in a number of brilliantly batty activities. Quests can be event specific but have included replicating Cloud's infamous squat exercise scene, chocobo ranch events involving balloon races, 'Yevon Yoga', and an event which lets you throw frogs at Quina Quen! Where else can you ever do that without raising eyebrows?

KupoCon is over so it is time to go home, right? Not if you have an **evening celebration** ticket or pass! Alcohol is served, so these are adult only events (dependant on local laws for the legal age for serving alcohol) but this is where things are allowed to get crazier than a Hildibrand

Manderville-hosted dog show... People sometimes quiz, party, and conga to 'Calling for Rain' from *Kingsglaive*. At the upcoming Pomathon event in Birmingham, September 2018 'Calling for Rain' is to be performed live by N.Eo Liu, and there is to be a masquerade evening ball, complete with Venetian-style chocobo masks. Premium ticket holders (Ramuh and Knights of the Round) shall receive a ticket with which they can choose their colour mask.

Several people travel in groups at KupoCon, but many people attend on their own too. If you are like Squall and are a bit on the shy side, do not feel overwhelmed by the large crowds.

While the quests are nuttier than a moogles storehouse, nobody is ever forced to embarrass themselves if they are nervous and do not wish to participate (you are allowed to bypass them entirely and free roam instead). Observing other people is still a great deal of fun, and you will find that many people do admirably overcome their inhibitions to participate amongst friendly folk who share their fervour for the universe of *Final Fantasy*: such is the magic of KupoCon.



Pomathon artwork

## MEET THE STARS

KupoCon has already hosted an impressive number of special guests so far: real stars of Final Fantasy. KupoCon hosts panels involving Final Fantasy cast and community guests where they give insightful accounts of their experiences with the franchise.

### Final Fantasy stars at past events have included:

- **Susan Calloway:** singer-songwriter and musician known for various songs for Final Fantasy XIV and Distant Worlds performances.
- **Ray Chase:** voice actor of Noctis Lucis Caelum, Final Fantasy XV, and Edgar Figaro, World of Final Fantasy.
- **Jon Campling:** likeness of King Regis and motion capture of King Regis and Ardyn Izunia, Kingsglaive.
- **Liam Mulvey:** voice, likeness, and motion capture of Libertus Ostium, Kingsglaive, Final Fantasy XV: Comrades, and motion capture for Clarus Amicitia, Kingsglaive.
- **Adam Croasdell:** voice actor of Ignis Scientia, Final Fantasy XV.
- **Will Bowden:** motion capture and voice of Pruvia Colpus, and motion capture of Pelnah Khara, Kingsglaive.
- **Julia McIlvaine:** assorted voices in Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII.

### TriPom Cards.

TriPom cards (based on *Final Fantasy VIII's* Triple Triad) containing outstanding artwork by Wavechan are a hugely popular fixture of KupoCon events. Some cards are generously given for free upon entry and upon your completion of various tasks outlined in the Quest Log, and they can also be traded at the events. This effectively inspires interaction with fellow attendees, giving you something to work towards throughout the day, without ever becoming too much of a distraction from everything else.

Feeling competitive? For those who decide to spend more time with TriPom cards than others, there are sometimes TriPom Tournaments held at KupoCon events.

There are currently two generations of KupoCon cards in circulation totalling 108 cards, with a 3rd generation upcoming (due to be revealed in early June). As with all collectible card games, some cards are rarer than others, with a few being special cards produced for a particular event, and some cards are 'Limit Break' variants, whereas the newest variants are shiny, foil cards.

For the collectors, there are many people willing to swap or sell cards online in the KupoCon Facebook community, but there are sometimes also options to buy 'KupoKrates' containing entire generation sets. Currently you can buy a deck box to hold your cards, but KupoCon are working on a TriPom card folder with sleeves as an alternative.

### Loot and purchases.

With TriPom cards and some other handouts (such as T-shirts and the delightful Quest Log), KupoCon can be wallet-friendly. The higher tier your ticket is, the more loot you will receive upon entry to the event. Outside of the cost of your ticket you will find that you do not need to spend any further to have a good time.

That said, there are artist and merchandise stalls hosted at each event, and some of the fan-made goods that you will find on sale are great value. You might find yourself buying artwork prints, badges, plushies or knitted figures, and more.



A selection of Dan's tripom cards.

"KupoCon [is] also enjoyable for the impromptu moments. Before the Quina Quen activity started, Quina had noticed a Cup Noodle cosplayer, ran towards them to eat them, and then was chased in return by said cosplayer to the other side of the room. It looked like Quina was having a nightmare where food fights back. It was an excellent, unscripted, self-contained little episode which helped highlight to me that KupoCon was something very special."

(FFF Admin Dionysos, after he attended Mind the Pom in London, 2017)

## TAKE NOTE

KupoCon have given FFF members special discounts due to our affiliation. Simply use the code 'FFF' while purchasing a KupoCon ticket and you shall get **11% off** your purchase.

An amazing part of KupoCon is that Final Fantasy stars are not confined to a desk. While there are signing opportunities at allocated parts of the day, the special guests have also been known to mingle with the fans, even participating in the crazier moments of the evening celebrations (the conga-line has become a popular part of the events for attendees and guests alike)! Their patience and willingness to interact with their fans is commendable.

### This is the Promised Land we have been searching for!

KupoCon has grown from strength to strength over the past year and a bit of hosting events. Since its debut in 2017, KupoCon already has 5 events under its belt. Every event hosted so far has proved to be a huge success, and a monumental amount of fun for everybody involved. All Final Fantasy fans need to seriously consider letting KupoCon into their lives.

We at Final Fantasy Forums strongly believe that KupoCon should be the place of pilgrimage for all Final Fantasy fans.

KupoCon is our Promised Land!

For more information on KupoCon, please head over to their website at [www.kupocon.com](http://www.kupocon.com)

Follow them on social media for regular updates:

 <https://www.facebook.com/kupoconEN>

 [kupocon.com/kupocast](http://kupocon.com/kupocast)

 <https://twitter.com/KupoConEN>

## MEET THE STARS

### Community hosts, panelists and guests at past events:

- **Nerdstrodamus:** ran the first two seasons of KupoCon's news channel KupoCast and did a great job at motivational crowd warming and hosting panels at KupoCon events. They have recently taken a step back to figure out Nerdstrodamus' future, but still very much hold KupoCon in their hearts.
- **ConQuest:** cosplay entertainers who help host events and perform shows. At KupoCon they have helped by running some of the activities.
- **Azzavhar:** popular Twitch TV Variety Games Broadcaster, leader of the Azzavhar Army, and manager of KupoCon's Free Company on FFXIV, '[Knights of the Pom](#)' (Phoenix server).
- **M. J. Gallagher:** author of popular fan novelisations of *Final Fantasy VII*. He is willing to sign printed paperback copies of his novels, sometimes brings some along with him, and at *Pomingham Palace* he did a book reading. Gallagher is also producing an exclusive novella for KupoCon (launching at Pomathon in Birmingham in September and based on FFVII's Nibelheim incident) in collaboration with Crimson Sun and A. J. Hateley.
- **MrHappy1227:** partnered Twitch Broadcaster and YouTuber.
- **Fusionx:** Content and Podcast Producer for <http://GamerEscape.com>
- **Among others!**

## Past Events:

**The Big Pom:** US event held on January 29, 2017.  
**Location:** Robert Treat Hotel, Newark, NJ.

**Mind the Pom:** UK event held on March 25, 2017.  
**Location:** Royal National Hotel, London, United Kingdom.

**Pomtario:** Canadian event held on December 3, 2017.  
**Location:** Hilton Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**Pomingham Palace:** UK event held on February 3, 2018.  
**Location:** Royal National Hotel, London, United Kingdom.

**Pomtropolis:** Canadian event held on April 21, 2018.  
**Location:** Pinnacle Hotel, Vancouver, Canada.

## Upcoming Events:

**Pomathon:** UK event set for September 8, 2018.  
**Location:** Birmingham Conference and Events Centre, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

**SOLD OUT**

**Pom Saucer:** Canadian event set for December 2, 2018.  
**Location:** Hilton Toronto, Ontario, Canada.  
**Tickets go on sale May 30th (10am EDT).**

**The Bigger Pom:** US event set for June 29, 2019.  
**Location:** Robert Treat Hotel, Newark, New Jersey.  
Tickets announcements in due course.

**The Wee Pom:** Scottish event set for January 26th, 2019.  
**Location:** Hilton, Glasgow, Scotland.  
Tickets go on sale June 27th (6pm GMT).

Alex Maine (Lead Organizer of KupoCon) kindly allowed us to ask him a few short questions about KupoCon. Here is our exclusive interview.

# Interview

## with the King Mog of KupoCon

**“The recent presentations of the Warrior of Light awards (these are people who embody the spirit of KupoCon) has been very emotionally moving and rewarding.” (Alex Maine, 2018)**

### How would you best describe KupoCon in a few words?

KupoCon is a Final Fantasy fan event produced for fans, by fans. An intimate, immersive experience for all ages and all friends of the Final Fantasy series.

### What gave you the idea to start KupoCon in the first place?

Several years back I was writing Final Fantasy articles for a website. They had hosted a number of local gatherings in England and I felt there was an opportunity to do something on a much larger scale. When the option of a collaboration was declined, I spent several weeks working on a concept

for the project. I posted an article explaining my intent and it blew up. We had thousands of shares in one day. The fans went crazy. Following on from that I reached out to SE for their blessing and have not looked back since.

### We appreciate that a tremendous amount of effort goes into organizing KupoCon. Do you have a methodical routine of stages you go through for planning each event?

It all begins with a location. We pick out locations based on geography, population and sometimes we try make them coincide with another event that would suit, such as Distant Worlds or the Kingdom Hearts world tour. The next step is the venue. This is usually one of the most challenging. If we can't find the venue we want, we

usually move on from the idea. We've abandoned many locations based on unsuitable venue proposals.

We've produced 5 of these events now, so we're pretty good at getting things done. The first stage is the build up to tickets opening. After that it is pretty plain sailing until we get to about 60 days prior. That is when the deliveries begin and things get a little chaotic. I'd be lost without my checklists. I typically work on KupoCon for a few hours a day. Not a day goes by when I'm not planning. In fact, I recently had surgery and I was working on KupoCon events the same day... It's hard work, but a joy all the same.

**What sort of doors have opened as a result of running KupoCon? Do you ever get special insider information from Square Enix?**

So many new friends. Running KupoCon has certainly been a positive experience. I've got to meet a lot of people. I also get to talk to a lot of people involved with the series. I'm on first name terms with many a VA now which helps when it comes to finding guests. Unfortunately it's usually conflicting schedules that causes the issues.

While we don't get info directly from SE, we have been lucky to have the inside track on numerous things which has allowed us to stay one step ahead of the game. Unfortunately I can't be specific but certain information came to us that really helped with the planning on Pomtar-io in Toronto last December and also had a big play on our next event there too. There are several NDAs in play, so I can't expand on that.

**What has been the most memorable interaction or happening(s) during any of the KupoCon events?**

That is a tough one. Personally one of the most memorable for me was the night before KupoCon in NJ. I was invited back stage of Distant Worlds to meet with Arnie and Nobuo. I also had a chat with one of the SE executives who had flown in from Japan for the concert. KupoCon itself has many memorable moments. The recent presentations of the Warrior of Light awards (these are people who embody the spirit of KupoCon) has been very emotionally moving and rewarding. The final moments of a KupoCon are always mind blowing. I really was moved at the closing of Toronto. I think it was exhaustion! I don't think I can pick one moment, sorry!



**What would you say seems to be the most popular activity at KupoCon so far?**

Collecting TriPom is a huge hit at KupoCon. I don't think the majority play at the event, but attendees love collecting them. Even I'm addicted. Aside from that, probably the quests that attendees complete to earn more loot. The quest log has been a big part of KupoCon from the beginning. It's VERY Final Fantasy.

**Are there any activities which you have considered running at a KupoCon event but have so far been unable to?**

Yes, but I'm not telling you what they are because we'll do them in the future. Nice try!

**Is there a general location (country or continent) where you would really like to run a KupoCon event if it became possible?**

Australia. In fact, we are already laying the groundwork for one in 2020. After that... perhaps mainland Europe.

**You might not be in a position to answer this, but would you ever consider hosting a KupoCon in the West Coast of the USA, such as California?**

Absolutely. Many of the locations we

pick come down to logistics. We'll see how Vancouver, BC goes and if the west coast doesn't cause us too many problems logistically, I'm open to looking at a west coast event in the future. I know the demand is there.

**You've successfully included a clever 'Pom' pun in the names of every KupoCon event so far... Do you ever worry that you will run out of puns?**

Quite the opposite. We have more pom-puns than we have events...

**We know that the response to KupoCon has been overwhelmingly positive. Has the event's success matched or exceeded your original vision?**

Very much exceeded. I thought it might have been a one off event, but I put everything I had to give into the event. I was beside myself when our return to London sold out in 23 hours.

**KUPO OUT!**

We thank Alex for taking time out of his busy schedule to answer our questions. We're very happy with his insights, and we're very excited for what KupoCon is offering in the future!



➔ Set greenyxi sphere.  
Set 2nd opinion sphere.  
Return to FFF Sphere Theater.

Featuring greenyxi and 2nd Opinion

# SPHERE THEATER

greenyxi



Greeny and Seymour's baby from 2017's Moogle Murder Mystery event.

Spring has been the perfect time to show off a very special person who identifies as a vegetable. FFF moderator Richard / Greeny (also known as Sprout on the forums) is also a YouTuber who specialises in 'Let's Play' (LP) videos. The young Welshman regularly plants his LP videos on the fertile ground of FFF.

"It gives me the chance to play games while showing off what I'm not awful at. Not great, but not awful."

(Greeny, 2018)

## FOR ALL MEDIA PURPOSES

### A potted history:

LP'ing means a great deal to Greeny since it gave him a major hobby after leaving university and helped him become much more comfortable with public speaking and socialising. This hobby gives Greeny a chance to continue playing the games he loves (and others he does not!), while also sharing his passion with the public. We've enjoyed watching him blossom!

Dressed with a Hauppauge capture card, Turtle Beach headset, Audacity, and recently spruced up with Sony Vegas Pro Edit 14 software, Greeny is more than ready to open bud and face the sun. You can check out how [The Green Vlogs](#) on YouTube.

### What sprouts from Greeny?

Greeny plays video games related to a diverse variety of franchises and genres; he is currently making his 66th full LP series (Grandia on the PSX). Being a Final Fantasy fan, Greeny has naturally played a good number of FF games, which garnered much attention from FFF members.

Greeny's very first LP was Final Fantasy IX (starting on 15th January 2012), and he recently embarked on a 'Let's Replay' of that same game using the PS4 remastered edition. The FF LP series he is most proud of, however, is his playthrough of the PS4 remastered version of Final Fantasy X, which proved popular.



It's not all about LP'ing for Greeny. Occasionally he produces vlogs where he shows his face, talks to the camera to give updates and his opinions, and sometimes unboxes items.

### The life-cycle of an LP:

The conditions determining the length of a series depends upon the genre of the game. An RPG usually takes Greeny a few months even with daily uploads (and sometimes around 50 videos). Some games (such as Sonic and Flower) are intentionally shorter series which offer Greeny a fun respite from his more ambitious projects (though even these can sap a lot of time with editing).

Since Greeny faithfully tends to his LP games and sees them through to completion, 99% of his LP's have borne fruit. On only one occasion has Greeny abandoned a project entirely, which stemmed from his Nintendo 64 controller breaking during an LP of Bomberman 64; he decided it was probably fate that he should deadhead that one...

### Watch him grow:

As the menacing Hilltop Cow watches Greeny from afar, you too can subscribe to his channel and watch him play from a safe distance...

Subscribe, follow, and find him here:

 [youtube.com/user/greenyxi/](https://www.youtube.com/user/greenyxi/)  
 [twitter.com/greenyxi](https://twitter.com/greenyxi)



2nd Opinion is a channel run by FFF member ZaXo Ken'Ichi. He makes video game focused reviews and editorials, with the goal of exploring topics from both a technical and artistic perspective. The hope is that 2nd Opinion's work will foster civil, enlightening discussions that can help further the medium.

### The range of Opinions:

2nd Opinion has produced content covering a wide range of games from reviewing classics (such as Croc: Legend of the Gobbos and Klonoa: Door to Phantomile) to more recent releases (such as Yooka-Laylee, Paladins and The Witcher 3). His videos vary in length from short, jokey, or morally persuasive videos, to the in-depth analysis of his reviews.

In one effective short video his Minecraft character eats a Tide Pod and dies. This is immediately followed by the warning maxim "In real life you don't respawn" as the Final Fantasy VII game over music (Nobuo Uematsu's Continue) plays in the background. Simple, playful, and yet effectively getting the message across that the dangerous and ridiculous trend of the '[Tide Pod Challenge](#)' can have fatal consequences.

## 2nd Opinion



### A 2nd Opinion on Final Fantasy:

Occasionally 2nd Opinion uploads Final Fantasy and Kingdom Hearts content. Most notably he has posted review videos for FFXII and FFXV. 2nd Opinion has recently been attempting a 'no encounters' run of the PS4 port of Final Fantasy VII concurrently with a normal run.

Through this FFVII challenge he is showcasing his attempts at boss fights in each run of the game to demonstrate how the experience points generated by random battles are not necessary to beat the bosses in the game. With a 'no encounters' run, ZaXo only gains experience from the battles he is forced to fight, and yet by keeping his MP ready for casting Cure he is still able to survive and defeat bosses. This is showing that the easier, regular playthrough is

not at all necessary and doesn't offer many strategic advantages; holding back and just being careful works just as well. He hopes that showing this will highlight the weaknesses in this game (and other much loved JRPGs) so to encourage discussions about how games in this genre can improve in the future.

Tune in and see how he does!

### Subscribe to 2nd Opinion:

 [2nd Opinion](https://www.youtube.com/2ndOpinion)  
 [twitter.com/True2ndOpinion](https://twitter.com/True2ndOpinion)

# MELODIES OF LIFE

Please seek out Duhemsounds today if you want to hear high-quality Final Fantasy covers. His goal is to reach 1500+ covers!



## FEATURING DUHEMSOUNDS

Duhemsounds is a member of FFF who has posted regular updates on his ongoing musical projects.

### BIOGRAPHY:

Duhemsounds is a creative artist living in Menton on the French Riviera, and loves doing covers of video game music. Being very influenced by the universe of Final Fantasy, The Legend of Zelda, Super Mario, Pokémon, Donkey Kong and many more video games, it is his ambition to revisit the tracks of your childhood.

"Giving a beautiful rendition, creating full new ambiances while being respectful of the original tracks is the way I like to make my video games covers."

- Duhemsounds

### DUHEMSOUNDS ON FINAL FANTASY:

Duhemsounds has regularly posted his Final Fantasy covers on FFF since January 2017.

So far he has released 15 Final Fantasy covers. They are kept together on a playlist at: [Final Fantasy Music Covers Collection](#)

We particularly love that Duhemsounds often selects tracks which are not always the most obvious or common tracks to cover (such as: 'Unrequited Love', FFIIX; 'Strago's Theme', FFVI; 'Castle Damcyan', FFIV). There are also, of course, Duhemsounds covers of more famous FF tracks (such as: 'The Place I'll Return to Someday', FFIIX; 'Prelude', FFIV; 'Love Grows', FFVIII). All of them have very clear sounds, and a beautiful mix of instruments and styles.

On some tracks, a clever use of sound effects in the background (such as bird whistles, gentle waves, etc) help add colour and atmosphere to songs that we already love as Final Fantasy fans, giving them a relaxing quality.

The newest track, 'Terra' (FFIX), was released on April 29th. It captures the melancholic sadness of a dying world, yet gradually injects an enchantingly soothing magic which almost invites the listener to imagine the planet Terra in its heyday.

One of the most recent tracks, 'Epitaph' (FFVI), is a particularly brilliantly executed piece which accurately captures the emotion Setzer experiences when recalling Daryl's death. In one part of the track it appears to invite you into Daryl's Tomb, as it seamlessly weaves an appropriately chilling and mysterious section with a gentle, tune-ful howling of the wind and jangling chains, before returning to the melody at the heart of this story.

If you are interested and want to hear for yourselves, check out his [Youtube Channel](#)

Be sure to follow and subscribe as Duhemsounds sometimes uploads some bonus content on social media.

### Social Media links:

[facebook.com/Duhemsounds](#)  
[instagram.com/duhemsounds](#)  
[twitter.com/duhemsounds](#)

Twitter is fed daily with news and interactions with other artists/followers.

People can also find Duhemsounds on:  
[Spotify](#)  
[Deezer](#)

### Facebook schedule:

Sundays: an artistic chronicle with new releases.  
Wednesdays: Video Games / Music chronicle about tracks and their game contexts.

### Instagram schedule:

Mondays: teasers of the next releases.  
Thursdays: 'Throwback Thursday'

Duhemsounds eagerly announces the 'Star Series': a new project using different techniques which will become part of his schedule, launching June 10th. Stay tuned on Facebook and Twitter for further details.

LOGO PROPERTY OF DUHEMSOUNDS

# FINAL FANTASY VI

## Esper



PIXEL MIXERS

# FINAL FANTASY VI

## SUPER SANITY



PIXEL MIXERS

# FINAL FANTASY VI

## World's Requiem

PIXEL MIXERS

## PIXEL MIXERS

**Pixel Mixers** is a community of musicians who make free video game music tribute albums, releasing albums covering tracks from a wide variety of video game franchises, including a number of Final Fantasy cover albums over the past 2 years. They have now released their latest achievement: *World's Requiem* (a Final Fantasy VI cover album).

### Hashel

The creator of Pixel Mixers, Hashel (known as Hashel05 on Final Fantasy Forums) is a Belgium-based video game music guitar cover musician, and also the Project Director of Pixel Mixers. Hashel has kept us informed about various musical projects over the years, including the work of the Pixel Mixers community.

### World's Requiem:

The latest project from the Pixel Mixers community is 'World's Requiem': a free Final Fantasy VI Tribute Triple-Album.

A truly monumental endeavour, it took 9 months for Pixel Mixers to produce this album; it is clear to all who listen to it that Pixel Mixers gave birth to a masterpiece. A myriad of talented musicians

have pooled their efforts into producing excellent covers of *Final Fantasy VI* tracks. Not just a hand full, in fact, but all of the songs from Nobuo Uematsu's beloved Original Soundtrack of the game, all rearranged and reinterpreted by 71 Pixel Mixers musicians! This totals 58 tracks (over three discs), and a play-length of 3 hours and 25 minutes!

We find that impressive! This ambitious project has been divided into three separate discs (named 'Esper', 'Super Sanity', and 'World's Requiem'), and each are represented by incredible artwork by Mind Waker. Rather than strictly following the order of the Original Soundtrack of FFVI, Pixel Mixers decided to order their tracks into narrative arcs, thus telling more of a story.

With so many different musicians involved, there is a wide variety of musical styles represented on this album: orchestral, acoustic, jazz, metal, EDM, with a number of interesting vocal arrangements granting a fresh new voice to classic tracks.

Please check out Pixel Mixers today and give World's Requiem a listen. Download it for free at their [website](https://pixel-mixers.com).

### Social Media links:

Website: <https://pixel-mixers.com>

Reddit: <https://www.reddit.com/r/VGCovers>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PixelMixers>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/Pixel\\_Mixers](https://twitter.com/Pixel_Mixers)

Discord: <https://discord.gg/2YmK66G>

Previous Albums: [Pixel Mixers Album List](#)

Download  
their albums  
for FREE!



PROMOTED  
CONTENT

A GRAPHIC NOVEL BY ROKO ZAPER

If you want to get your medieval-fantasy fix and are interested in the medium of graphic novels, treat yourselves to Roko Zaper's *Lost Dreams of the Unicorn*. Artist and author, Roko (who goes by the username redcloud9 on FFF) has been kind to share his work with the forum, as well as offering some insights into the project.

### What is *Lost Dreams of the Unicorn*?

*Lost Dreams of the Unicorn* is an epic story centred on two youths (Gali and Serena) and a legendary unicorn. Mysterious entities known as 'dark stars' are plaguing the land. Their origins are obscure, but some believe that they represent mankind's divine punishment. Meanwhile, a unicorn regularly appears in Princess Serena's strange dreams in her bed atop Ardia Tower. The creature appears to be driving her forward, but to where remains shrouded in the enigma typical of fleeting visions. When dark stars attack Gali's home (the Kingdom of Sana), he flees with his brother to seek aid at Ardia. After Gali and Serena's fated meeting, their ensuing adventures and discoveries seem set to change their world.

After years in the planning, and a highly successful Kickstarter campaign, Roko Zaper is proud to be releasing *Lost Dreams of the Unicorn* as a graphic novel in digital editions. This is planned to be a continued saga.

### **NEW RELEASE - Volume 1: Children of the Winged One**

The newly released first volume concerns the protagonists Gali and Serena as their paths converge at Ardia Tower, from whence they search for a mysterious alchemist (Cazimir) who may have some answers about the mysterious dark stars and how to stop them.

Volume 1 contains 40 hand drawn pages in colour, as well as a rather excellent medieval-style map of Roko's created fantasy world.





### A Source of the Dream: Roko's Inspiration

“To say Final Fantasy was inspiration for my work is an understatement. To those who fell in love with the series it was much more than a game or a source of inspiration. It was a way of looking at the world and imagining that something wonderful, brave and sacred existed out there. I remember going through tough periods in my life and finding everything I desired and aspired to in Final Fantasy. Scouring the Final Fantasy 7 guide in high school, buying magazine covers overseas just to get a better look at a blurry image of Dalmasca.

What particularly had an impact on my work was the characters of Final Fantasy. I think more than anything, the main characters always had their hearts in the right place - there were a source of reference for me without even realizing it. Would I be defined by my weaknesses and fears or aspire to well...get the girl and save the world?

Final Fantasy always set the bar very high morally speaking and for me it was not just a matter of looking at these characters as archetypal heroes in an imaginary world. They were blueprints for things I could realize and aspire to. I believe I tried to create such characters in Lost Dreams of the Unicorn, flawed individuals who carry within them the hope that people can be better and do more.”

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**“To say Final Fantasy was inspiration for my work is an understatement.”**

(Roko Zaper, 2018)

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## What do we think at FFF?

We love the classic Final Fantasy feel of the story with its combination of medieval-fantasy and classical mythology with the twist of a cosmic threat.

Roko's beautiful artwork is at once reminiscent of the work of famed Final Fantasy artist Yoshitaka Amano, while also not being a derivative copy of Amano as the art remains distinctive and memorable in its own right with Roko Zaper's own unique style.

These art panels effortlessly carry the story, using visual means to set the scene as much as possible, giving the reader the space to emotionally connect with Roko's compelling story by successfully avoiding the pitfalls of being an overwritten graphic novel.

FFF eagerly awaits Volume 2!

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Want to see more? You can find Roko Zaper's work at:

Website: [www.zaperart.com](http://www.zaperart.com)

[f facebook.com/LDOTU/](https://www.facebook.com/LDOTU/)

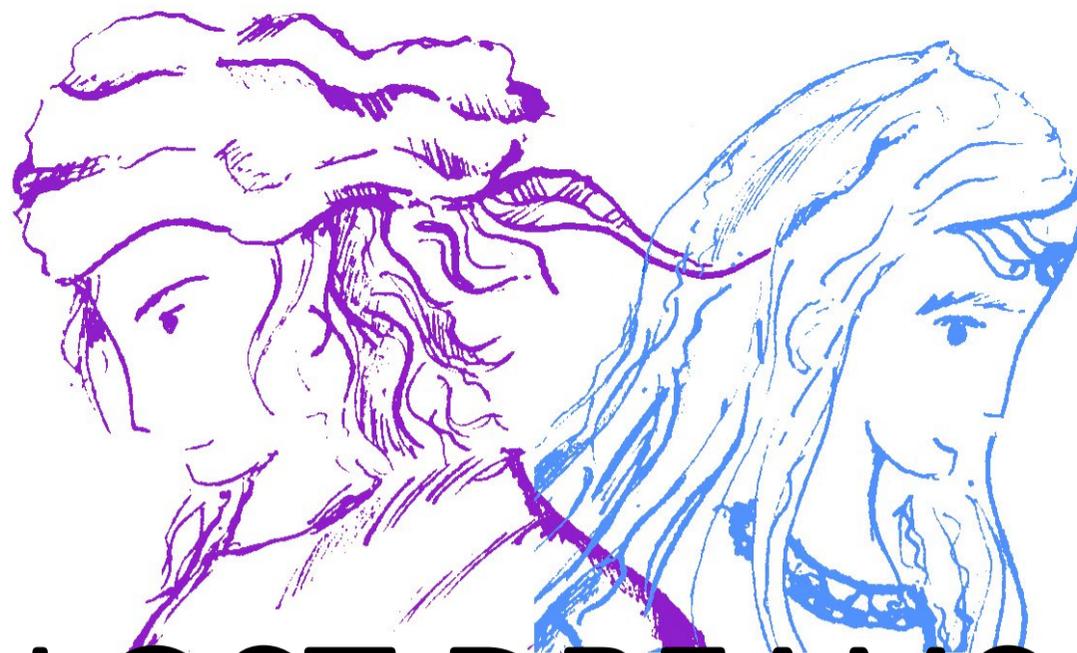
Member profile link - [redcloud9](#)

**PURCHASE VOLUME ONE**



You are able to buy the digital version of volume 1 of Lost Dreams of the Unicorn (\$10 AU) through his website using PayPal:

<https://www.zaperart.com/volume-one>



# LOST DREAMS OF THE UNICORN

**COMING SOON TO FFF'S MOGSHOP!**

Here at Final Fantasy Forums we like to support our members in every possible way. Promotions, displaying their works, even ways to arrange a unique setup that will hopefully help build some attention. In this case, members will have the option to purchase Volume 1 using one of the FFF currency systems - Gold Points (GP)!

Due to the recent forum upgrade to XenForo 2 the Final Fantasy Forums MogShop is currently down for updates. Shortly after the shop feature is reinstalled you shall be able to purchase a digital copy of Roko Zaper's 'Lost Dreams of the Unicorn' (Volume 1)!

Once you buy a copy through our MogShop system we shall arrange to purchase a copy to send to you digitally!

# RELM'S GALLERY

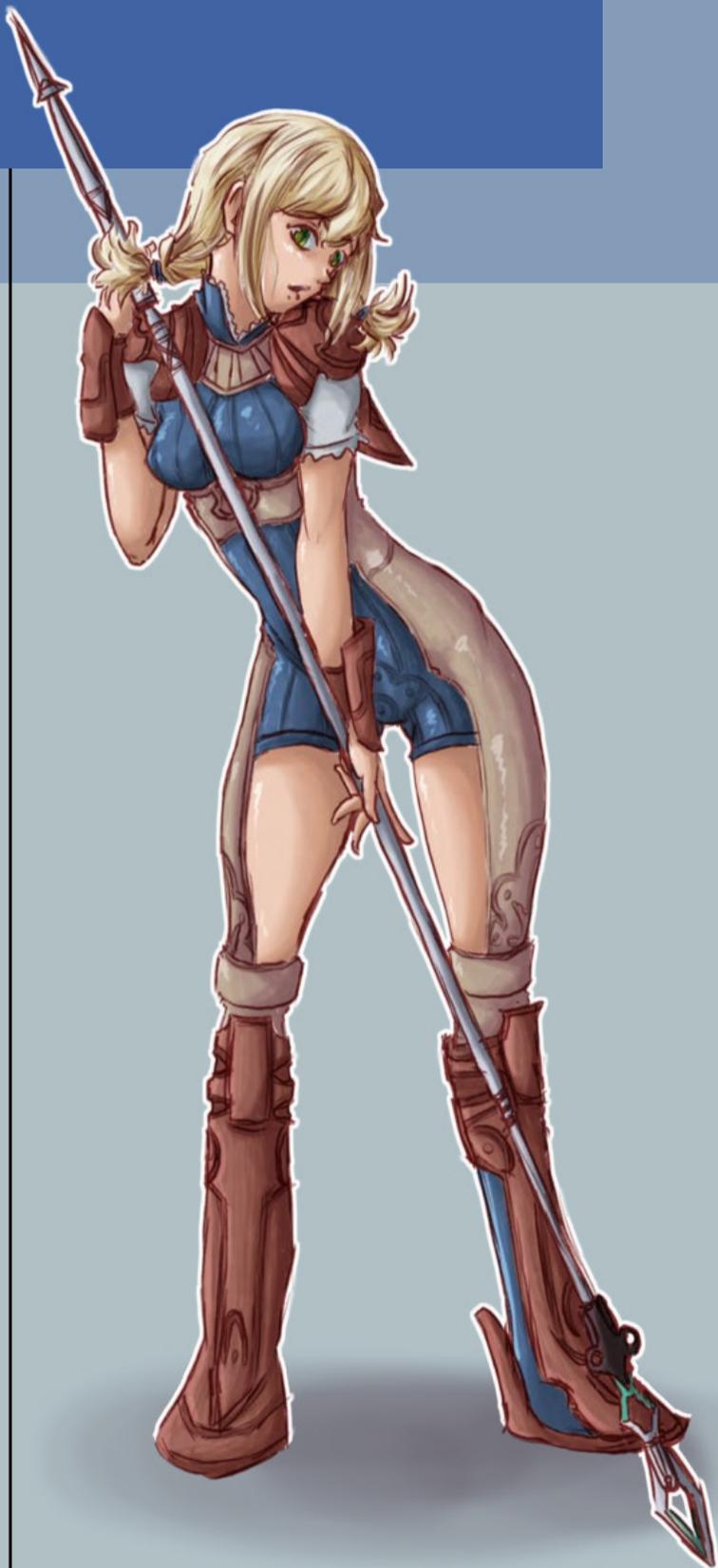


PAISSA TEA  
BY SHIVAS

WHERE THE WORKS OF OUR ARTISTS  
**COME TO LIFE**

ZaXo is an artist who primarily works in the manga style. He has been drawing all his life, but started learning proper techniques in earnest and honing his skills about ten years ago.

ZaXo uses a digital medium with an ancient Cintiq 12WX pen tablet, and an equally aged copy of Photoshop Elements 6.



# ZaXo Ken'Ichi



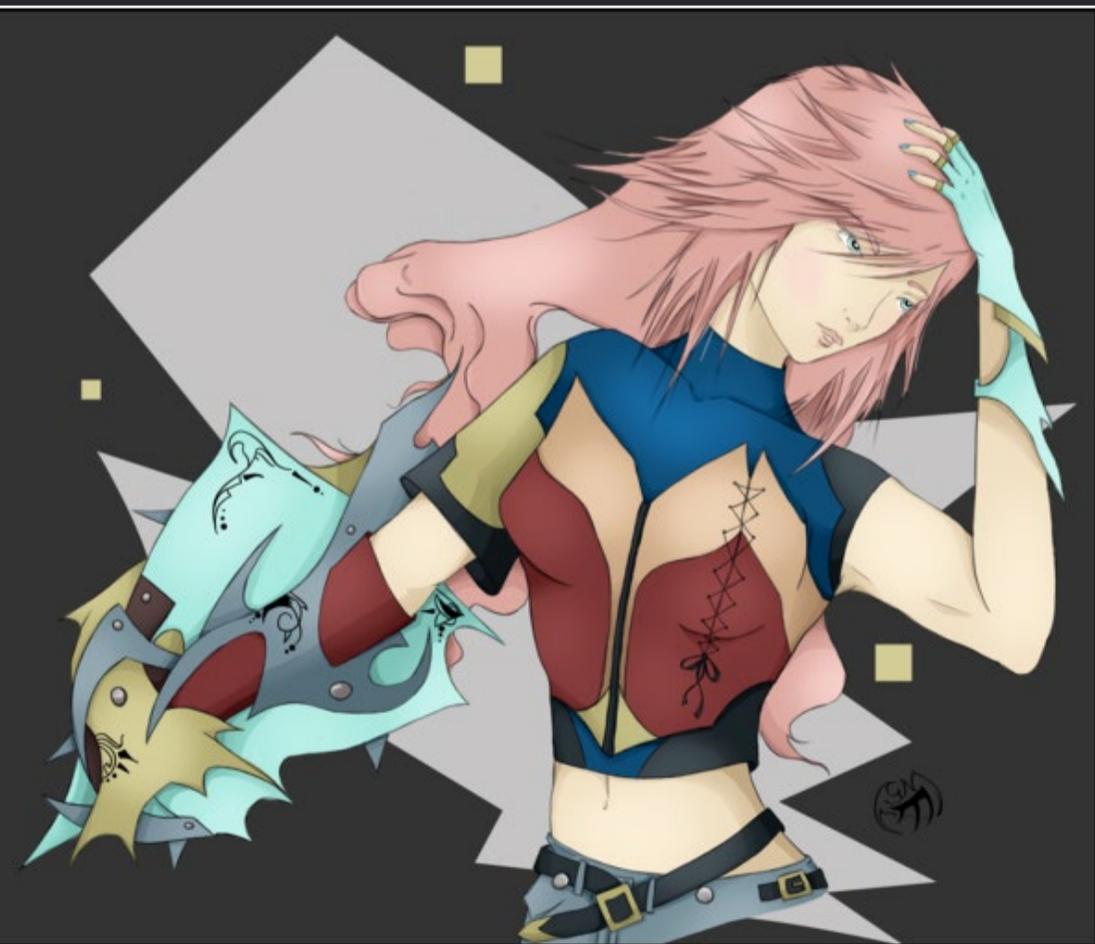
**2014  
Halloween  
Art Contest**  
.....  
Winning entry by:  
Galadín

Galadín is a training graphic designer with a keen interest in illustration. She's been drawing for as long as she can remember and feels most content when creating a new painting of one of her ubiquitous original characters or a Final Fantasy inspired fan art. The Final Fantasy series has played a major supportive role in her work, both thematically and through the soundtracks accompanying her in the background as she attempts her various artistic journeys. It has been an adventure for her for sure!

Galadín uses a combination of traditional tools (Faber-Castell sketch pencils, BIC Cristal Ballpoint black pens, and Uni-ball Signo gel ink pens) and digital tools (Wacom Intuos Photo Pen and Touch, Photoshop CS6, and ArtRage Studio Pro 3).

# Galadín

artist information



“I prefer to start most works using traditional sketch tools as it helps me focus on the draftsmanship of the piece rather than get distracted with the flash and gloss of digital programs - that stanza of fun comes later! After I spend about half a life-time nailing down the various elements and composition I'll scan in the final sketch and begin applying the glamour to it in Photoshop. It takes me forever and a day to churn out a final piece as I am not the most proficient or prolific artist under the sun and I get way too caught up in details...

I have been attempting digital art since my mother got me a Bamboo Pen & Touch for Christmas back in 2012. Having said this, much of my time has been spent learning how to draw better rather than on the ins and outs of painting in Photoshop. It has been an uphill struggle, particularly with my love/hate relationship with anatomy, but I cannot deny that the feeling after finishing a digital painting makes it all worthwhile.” **(Galadín, 2018)**

# THE FOUR FEARSOME FIENDS OF FFF

EXCLUSIVE ARTWORK OF THE ISSUE

## Linnaete artist information:

Over recent years on the website, Linnaete carved out an infamous name for herself as FFF's caricaturist. From satirical depictions of forum members' Final Fantasy XIV avatars interacting with one another to one member's intimate encounter with sheep, Linnaete has both delighted and appalled other forum users alike. Unfortunately as this is still a family magazine, we cannot show you the sheep caricature piece.

In an age of digital art, Linnaete has remained a traditionalist, preferring the comfort of pencils and paper as opposed to the stylus and tablet. "There's a certain therapeutic joy in sticking to the basics," she emphasises, "I find digital art too taxing, stressful and fiddly. With an ordinary paper artbook, I feel in complete control, more able to naturally control every line and stroke. And also because I have way more pencils than I know what to do with."

## Four Fiends:

It is well known that the minions of Lord Golbez are some of the most deranged creatures in the universe. No, we aren't talking about the FFIV villain and *his* Four Fiends. We mean the far more sinister FFF Site Owner and his Admin team!

Linnaete / Liv has kindly sketched 'The Four Fearsome Fiends of FFF' exclusively for the FFF Magazine!\*

**Rubicante (Tiacante):** Tia / Ilyena takes on the mantle of the Fiend of Fire. Being the most honourable of the Four Fiends, she'll make sure you are at full health before roasting you until you squeal for mercy.

**Scarmiglione (Shumaglione):** Tyler / Shu, known for farming memes, becomes the hideous zombie Fiend of Earth. "Sssoo who woke me from my ssssleep? My ssskin was nearly mummified!"

**Barbariccia (Mitsuriccia):** Mitsuki whirls into view as the tempestuous temptress, the Fiend of Wind. Don't get too close to her or she will spin you right round!

**Cagnazzo (Danazzo):** Dan / Dionysos has merged with FFF mascot Timmy the Turtle into the Fiend of Water. If his awkward smile doesn't petrify you, his creepy eyes will throw waves of horror at you.

\*Beautifully coloured by Six / Kira.



# KEIRA WELCH: LEGEND OF LAMIA



## Unending Coil of Bahamut (Ultimate) SCH Clear!



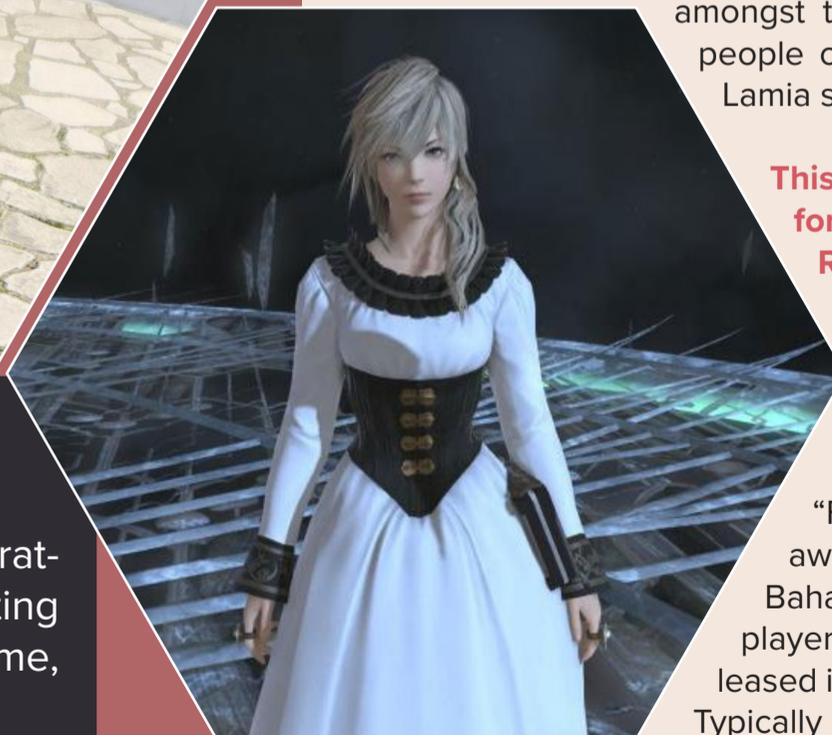
IMAGE CREDIT: SHIVAS

GLAMOUR!

It is time to fetch a hammer and chisel and to carve a block of marble into a magnificent statue of **Keira Welch**: a heroine of our times.

Why? On 24th April 2018 **Ross** (Keira Welch's real world handler) cleared Unending Coil of Bahamut (Ultimate) SCH. Ross' Keira Welch, a Tribunus in the [Final Fantasy Forums Free Company \(Gaia\)](#), has truly earned a place amongst the stars. Only five other people on the entirety of FFXIV's Lamia server have managed this!

**This is a huge achievement for the Lamia server, and for Ross as a FFXIV player.**



### ROSS:

"This is quite easily the most frustrating, stupid, tedious, fun, and exciting thing I've ever done in a video game, let alone XIV." (**Ross, 2018**)

"For those who are unaware, the Unending Coil of Bahamut is a full party (eight players) level 70 trial that was released in patch 4.1 (October 2017). Typically raids in XIV will have two difficulties - Normal and Savage - however this trial was designed to be a step (a huge step) above even Savage difficulty content.



The fight pits you against three bosses from A Realm Reborn (Twintania, Nael Deus Darnus, and of course Bahamut) over a span of 20 minutes with little to no breaks in between. It's an endurance test at heart.

Clearing this trial not only requires comprehension of a ridiculous amount of mechanics and the ability to execute them under pressure, but it also requires an understanding that well... anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. For it's not just you who needs to learn this fight, but there are also seven other people who can each individually wipe the raid at almost any point in the entire 20 minute duration. For anyone to have any chance of clearing this thing, they have to be able to take being called out on their mistakes, but also have the ability to move past the mistakes of others. That is certainly easier said than done when you're doing progression for 100+ hours with the same group of people. Tensions and even resentment can arise between even the nicest of people.

Today, after months and months, and the implosion of one raid group, I finally cleared this fight on SCH. For reference, only five other people on Lamia have done so, even after all of this time.

This was perhaps our most sloppy run yet, and I have no idea how we didn't wipe at 14:25, but it still totally counts.

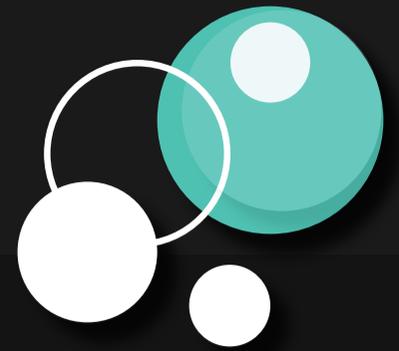
My favourite part has got to be Heavensfall Trio (9:30) because the coordination required is kinda insane. So satisfying to pull off. And of course when Phoenix comes and revives everyone at 15 minutes after Bahamut teraflares the group was amazing to see the first time.

This is quite easily the most frustrating, stupid, tedious, fun, and exciting thing I've ever done in a video game, let alone XIV. While I don't think I'll ever do any serious hardcore raiding again (I'm getting too old and this is a nice note to stop on), overall I enjoyed the entire experience quite a bit.

And hey, the glams aren't half bad either!" **(Ross, 2018)**

See his thread about the moment here:  
[Unending Coil of Bahamut \(Ultimate\) SCH Clear!](#)

And watch it happen on YouTube:  
[Unending Coil of Bahamut \(Ultimate\) Clear! SCH PoV](#)



## GRAPHICS

**F**eaturing our beloved Signature of the Week (and regular GFX) entries! We are proud that we have and have had such amazing graphic artists on our forum. Have you seen the forum site banners, for example? Created by our very own artists here on FFF!

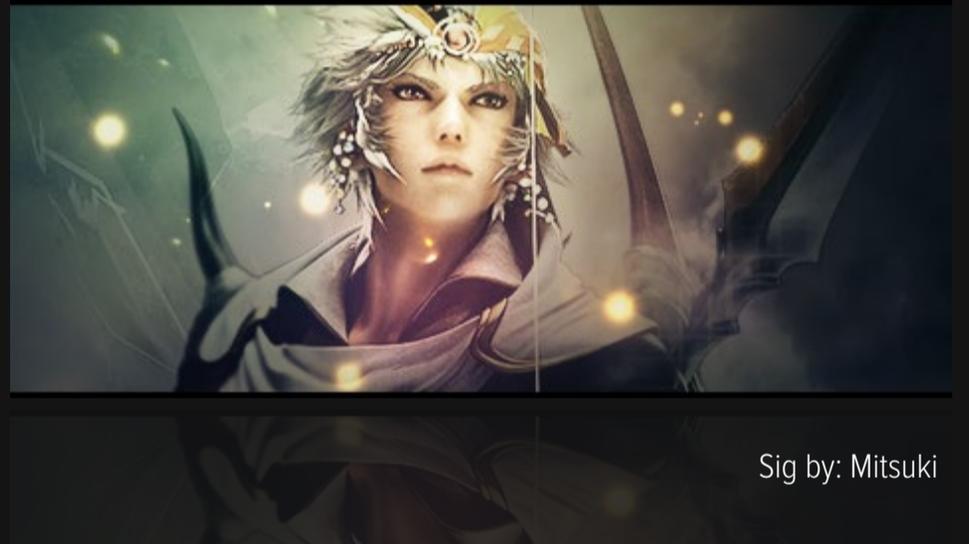
### GFX History:

FFF's favourite creative hobby is as old as the forum itself, with early GFX work dating back to 2006. Many dozens of members have created GFX work, with many GFX artists setting up 'shops'. Most of the time GFX consists of forum signatures and avatars for members on the forum, including requests. GFX artists have set up graphic shops for these requests. However, other works can involve larger pieces, collages, and site banners.

In its heyday there were **GFX clans**, where artists divided themselves into rival groups and called each other out with challenges. It is arguably one of the most memorable experiences in our GFX community.

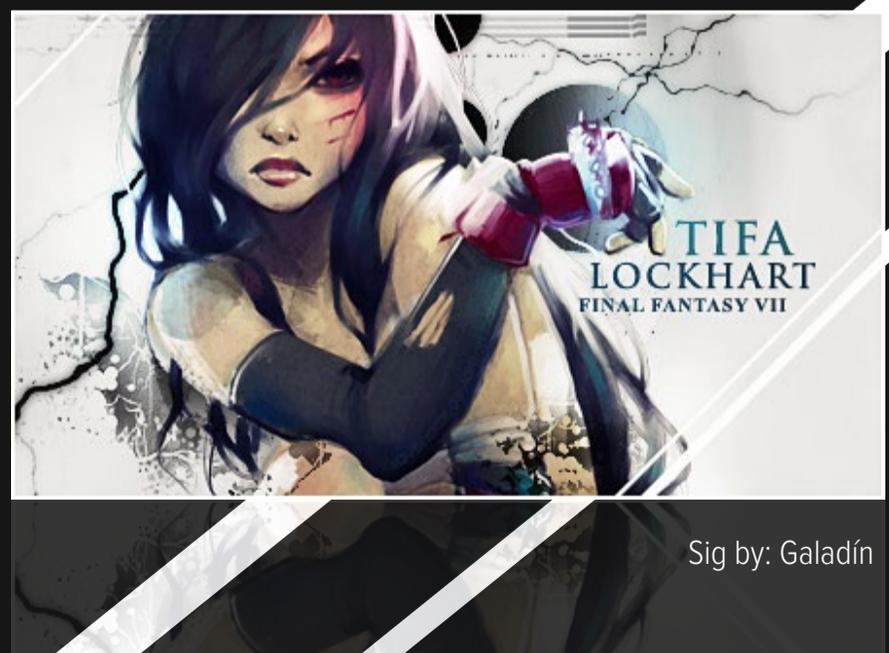


Sig by: Six



Sig by: Mitsuki

Tifa Lockhart is a popular choice among our GFX artists community.



Sig by: Galadín

Aranea Highwind - a sig request for a member.



Harly Mystile - based on our member, Harlequin, one of FFF's beloved FC clan leaders.

## WANT TO SHOWCASE ON FFF?

We're hoping the graphics section picks up a bit of activity, because admittedly it's hard to come by active GFX artists these days. However, if you're looking for inspiration it's always amazing taking a stroll through the graphic threads and seeing all the amazing work people have produced over the years – both old and new members.

We have a GFX lounge where you can discuss pretty much anything graphics related as well. Check it out sometime!

Signature (aka 'tags') styles vary from cool effects to a more simplistic approach. Every artist has their own unique and individual style.



Fancy a go? Contact our moderator Six for more info.



Sig by: Cali



Sig by: Coco



Sig by: Gal



Sig by: Cali



## MEMBER INTERVIEW

INSIDE SCOOP WITH  
GFX ARTIST, SIX.

### How long have you been active with GFX?

Wow. This makes me feel old. Ten years now. It should actually be right about that mark come this summer which is quite scary to think about, don't you think?

### What do you love most about designing and creating signatures / banners?

For me I think it's really about getting your mind to focus on something other than your daily struggles. The 'why' I love creating graphics has changed over the years, that's for sure, but for now I think it's just really important for anyone really to have a hobby. To get creative, get out of that daily slump of tasks and to do lists.

### Any challenges you'd like to delve on and how you typically overcome them?

Admittedly, I've not been as active in the recent months as I have in the past few years. I used to have a big passion for creating text on signatures, typography. Now, I think it's more about making the colours pop and making something stand out, so I'd like dig around in that area a bit more. Challenges... Creativity! Hah! Creativity can't be forced, but sometimes it's good to just start, and see where you end up instead of putting it off all the time. Maybe I should take my own advice, huh?

### Do you have any tips for people with little or no GFX experience who may be interested in embarking on this hobby?

First of all, just start messing around in any editing program to get used to the tools, Photoshop, GIMP, etc. Secondly, make sure you create a thread on FFF for constructive feedback! I wish I had done that a lot sooner because with insight from others, you'll definitely start to see where you can improve a lot faster. We also have some cool resources on our website, so if you're overwhelmed, check out the graphics section. Most of all though, don't pressure yourself too much. Practice doesn't make perfect. Practice makes progress, remember that.

### What does GFX mean to you, personally?

Right now, I'm at a point in my life where I'm pretty much questioning everything. Thinking about my love for graphic design, my passion for stationery, planners, pens, colours, you name it... It just makes me feel like we never really change who we are? Even though the world toughens us up quite a bit, I think it's good to remember that deep down we all like our own little space to be able to pull back to and relax. So to me, not just with GFX, but all my hobbies it really just keeps me grounded. Funny how that works.

Kira has been a Spira Moderator on Final Fantasy Forums since July 12th, 2012. She has regularly hosted Signature of the Week contests (although they are currently on a hiatus), and she is always looking to breathe fresh life into the GFX community. At the time of writing, Kira is the only GFX shop owner who is active, so if anyone has a request for a new signature or avatar, she's the one to call!

DeviantArt Link:

<https://seventosix.deviantart.com>

# SIX



# MEMBER GAME REVIEWS

Welcome to the FFF Magazine Game Review section, where FFF members submit their video game reviews for us to feature. All views expressed in the following reviews will be the authors' own, and they are not representative of the opinions of Final Fantasy Forums as a collective. Our members and staff at FFF have a wide range of varied opinions on the Final Fantasy series, and people have different likes and dislikes.

## FINAL FANTASY XII: ZODIAC AGE



# A FRESH REBIRTH

BY TYLER WOOD (SHU)

As I stare down the horrifying Demon Wall, pushing my party further and further back, I start to panic. I start leaning on my heavy hitters to try to make a dent in this ominous wall of death. When all the sudden Vaan and Balthier's HP drop to 0. After this, you know the story, my party wipes after the demon wall crushes the remaining members of my party.

From the fast action action-oriented ATB, to the time you reconfigure your gambits for the umpteenth time, this remake will have your senses and emotions heightened till the end.

Let's break down the game a bit by starting with the new features this nostalgic beauty brings.

The first and foremost is the new job system reformat. What stands out most is there are twelve different jobs that aligns with the twelve zodiac symbols in which a player

can choose from. This allows the player to immediately choose a specific job specialty right out the gate. In the original game, the jobs were all on one page, and basically each character could be the exact same across.

In Zodiac, not only do you get a new job system, but you also get the ability to have a sub job as well after getting your first Esper. This totally enriches the game play, as now it caveats to more unique character gameplay designs. Also, this allows you to customize your weapons as well.

There are a wide variety of new weapons, fifteen different types to be frank, where the user can take their time to feel out the character. I'd advise going out and finding a cookie cutter approach until New Game+, as this will create some uniqueness to your own game play.

**"I was slowing down to normal game play for nostalgic feel..."**



Additionally, with the new job system comes an overhauled magick system. I know some people were like me in the original and just utilized the gambit system with support abilities. I hardly used magick due to it was late in the game before I could even do decent damage. In Zodiac, this has been totally re-tuned to give you some heavy hitting magic.

Magick is now categorized by five different magicks: White Magick (Support) and Time Magick (Support/Debuff), Black Magick (Damage) and Arcane Magick (Damage), and lastly Green Magick (Support/Debuff/Drain/Syphon). Each of these the user can customize with Gambits and cause some major damage or save your teammates life.

Alternatively, let's be real here, if you are returning veteran of the FFXII lineage, do you really want to do all that walking at real time pace? Well FFXII offers you an option for speeding up gameplay between 2x and 4x with a click of a button. I won't lie, at first, I was a bit miffed by this. Then I started to do a few hunts and oh my, this was handy dandy. I was slowing down to normal game play for nostalgic feel and then speeding up to get back to certain areas without the overuse of teleport stones. I totally recommend giving it a go, but don't get too addicted to this, relive the game!

Also, to keep in the same realm of time management, you can slowly go through the first play around and then 4x multiplier the next in New Game+. The alternative realm of

things is you can start the game in Trial Mode and make the game quite a bit harder with the monsters more difficult as you level up.

We can go on and on about the beautiful new revamped graphics or the stand-alone usage of Espers, but I want you, the gamer, to try all these new features out. I also intentionally left out the Story Line, as this is a revisit and you should expect near the same port. If you aren't impressed, then I'll eat my hat. Hope you enjoyed as I did!



# Game Review

## Final Fantasy XIII

By Paddy McGee

Welcome to McGee's reviews! In this issue we'll be covering one of my *favourite games, ever*: **FINAL FANTASY XIII**.

I mean no disrespect to those who may disagree with my opinions.

### Intro to XIII

Final Fantasy XIII is the thirteenth entry into the long running Final Fantasy Franchise. It recounts a perilous tale of fighting against fate, Demi-Gods and the weirdest monster designs you've ever seen in your life. The battle system is modernised, as are the designs for the futuristic array of our party members which includes:

**Lightning**, a gruff sergeant-turned-idol girl whom is as monotone as a flatline.

**Snow**, a Freedom Fighter with all the wrong words and cheese a-plenty.

**Hope**, the pixel embodiment of an Oedipus complex.

**Vanille**, the reason as to why this game was rated 15+ in Ireland.

**Fang**, an Australian lass with anger issues wearing a Sari.

**Sazh**, a perfectly fine middle aged man who lets a chocobo chick (a chick in more ways than one) stay in his wonderfully styled afro.

The party members themselves have the hairstyles and hair colours to make any group of San Francisco hipsters drool with envy and enough angst to get themselves a spot in any Hot Topic in the world. Sounds great...Right? Wrong.

“The level of control the player has over most of these variables has been reduced compared to the Gambit system of XII.”

### Bad - The Battle System

XIII utilises a dramatically modified version of the “Active Time Battle” system which was the mainstay for Final Fantasy from IV to IX- the core differences being the multi-section time bar (which allows us to chain attacks), the Stagger bar (which allows the player to deal massive damage to a weakened enemy) and the Paradigm system (which, finally, allowed the player to change the abilities of the party on the fly during battle).

All of this is wrapped up together on a battleground which looks like it's been pulled out of an action RPG series - the characters move and avoid attacks; they stay behind when attacking with magic or get up close when physically whaling on the enemy. It all sounds pretty good, right?

It would be - IF THE GAME LET YOU ACTUALLY PLAY IT. See, XIII does not let you control your character's movement, it restricts most of your movements into very narrow “classes” which mean you spend more time watching the change cutscenes than fighting.





Transformers: ROBOTS IN DISGUISE!!!



Eternal life!  
She's not dead!

Then, when we do eventually get to the fight, the game is too fast to allow the player to choose their own moves, so it provides an auto-battle functionality which chooses the most effective move for the enemy or the most effective buff for your party.

Or rather: **auto-battle** for the Commando role usually means a stream of “Attacks” or “Ruin” while using the Synergist’s **auto-buff** usually means your mage characters get hit with steroids, your tank gets hit with haste so they can **block faster** and your physical characters have their magical potential increased.

The level of control the player has over most of these variables has been reduced compared to the Gambit system of XII. The tactics of the members of your party isn’t just dictated by the role they play in your team, but the overall paradigm- a team of Three Commandos attack one enemy each. You don’t really have a say, but rather you can coerce the game into doing what you want it to.

## Bad - The Narrative and Character Arcs

For me, my greatest interest in XIII was the characters. Final Fantasy, as a series, is notorious for its complexity and depth amongst its characters. Yuna, Auron, Zidane, Vivi, Cloud, Tifa: anyone can look at the roster of protagonists and pick out at least three favourites.

## Snow is, indeed, our resident captain obvious.

In comparison, XIII simply didn’t stack up. Each character feels like they have one “thing”- one niche in which they fit in the overarching game. It didn’t feel natural.

As such, it makes me consider whether that’s the reason that most – if not all- of the secondary arcs are zipped up by the time the team reaches Gran Pulse. Hope’s trauma and issues with Snow are resolved (comically to the point you could call them Batman and Robin), Lightning is not a total Terminator anymore, Sazh – whose arc in Nautilus was probably my favourite of the whole game – kind of just hangs around and complains like your grandad would after a bowel movement.

This is most apparent when Hope receives his Eidolon. For the most part with the core characters, it works as a plot device: Lightning’s and Sazh’s Eidolon battles fit quite well into their arcs - but Hope’s Alexander fight comes LITERALLY just after they all make the agreement to go to Gran Pulse.

Hope isn’t going through emotional turmoil, he has- more or less- accepted his fate, and yet now his Eidolon shows up? They had so, so many other superior points where they could have slotted it in, and it would have worked brilliantly.

It felt like the entire fight was just added because the story writers thought “well, we’ve done all of these vehicle-morphers already and we enjoy the fact they mimic Transformers; why don’t we just throw it in here?” and bashed out a plot-based reasoning with the least amount of effort they could muster.

## Good - The Soundtrack

I bet, by now you’re thinking “McGee, why are you so negative about this game? Did you review it just to hate on it”? Well, yes, but that doesn’t mean I can’t enjoy certain aspects of a game I overall dislike!

My favourite aspect of which is the soundtrack by Masashi Hamauzu: Final Fantasy XIII has one of the best video game scores I’ve ever heard. Honestly, it’s my favourite from the medium of video games and it’s in my top three scores of all time (the first and second place are “Fellowship of the Ring” and “Interstellar”, respectively).

“The Promise” is one of the best slow tempo piano pieces I’ve enjoyed from a video game; “Blinded in Light” is a wonderful battle theme that matched the fast-paced rhapsody that is XIII’s battle system; “March of the Dreadnoughts” is pleasantly tense for a high-strung moment in the narrative and “Vanille’s Theme” has the softest, most whimsical feeling of regret I’ve ever heard in a score.



From my own personal life's experience, at times we need to miss the mark and fail for us to grow. (McGee, 2018)

It somewhat reminds me of the mistakes I've made, but also how I should continue forward and not look back. While perhaps there isn't a single track which could match to something like "A Place to Call Home" or "To Zanarkand", the overall score fits so well with each other - it's magnificent to my ears.

### Good - The Full Motion Video Cutscenes

I've never been much of a shallow person for video games – I'm happy to play games that look awful once they have good gameplay – but boy, XIII is beautiful. Leaving out how pretty the world is in 1080p, 60 FPS on a PC, the cutscenes are something out of this world.

The cutscene wherein the team launch their final assault on Eden is gorgeous. From the monsters, to the Eidolon/transformers to the colours- it's all designed and animated beautifully. Similarly, the scene wherein Snow saves Lightning and Hope in Palumpolum- while intensely busy- really shows us what you could squeeze out of code which came out in 2006.

The best pairing is when the cutscenes and the score works together. The intro cutscene is an astonishingly well made treat, and the score matches beautifully.

Whatever else I've said in this review, this is a beautiful render of CGI animation, and you can't take that away from the graphical engineers.

### Conclusion

It's not that I *hate* XIII, it's just the disappointment. The hollow feeling of unfulfilled potential: the battle system which plays itself; the dreadful dead-end 80% of the character arcs hit before we get into the third act; the *painfully* linear world that- when it does finally open up- is all style, but no substance. "Style over Substance" should be the subtitle to this game.

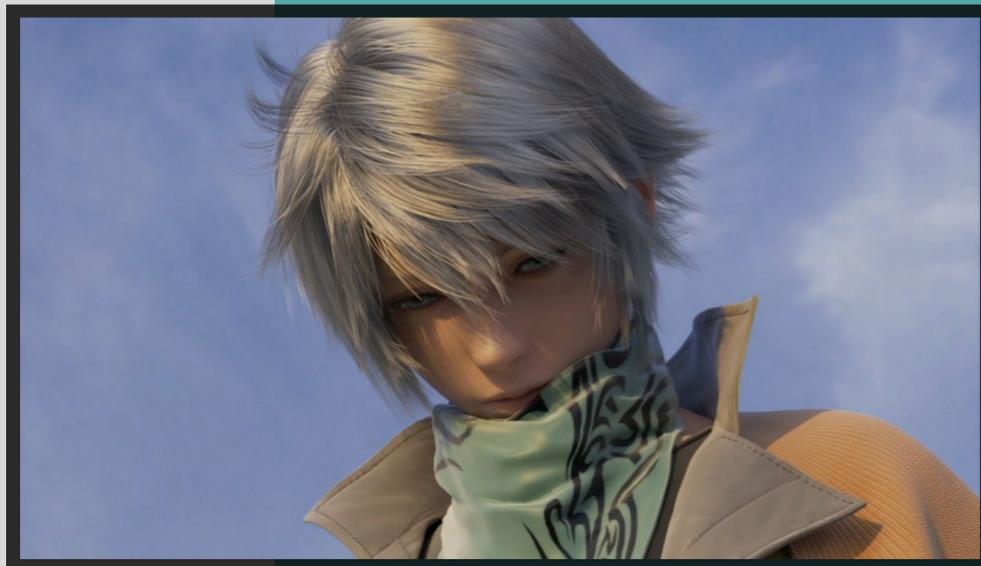
I feel like Final Fantasy XIII shows us potential; the experience that Square Enix *could* allow us to feel in the next generation of video game development; a powerful story, intense and driven characters.

They missed the mark here- no doubt about it in my mind- but they also hit a few high notes.

They showed us that they can take feedback on board and apply it, look at XIII-2's battle system. From my own personal life's experience, at times we need to miss the mark and fail for us to grow. Perhaps in years to come we'll tell ourselves "XIII was the game that made Square Enix sit up and care again".

**Rating: 2 out of 4 crystals**

Me too Hope, me too...



# H34rt1lly

WHY WE HEART LILY

Lily Gardner (also known as h34rt1lly) is an up-and-coming game producer / team leader who has been steadily increasing her portfolio of projects while training at the University of Utah. Additionally, one of Lily's many hobbies is creative writing, and it would be through her fan fiction which members of Final Fantasy Forums would really get to appreciate her talents.

Along with writing fandom for a variety of other franchises, Lily has also written over ten Final Fantasy VIII stories. Like her username would imply (h34rt1lly being a leet spelling of Heartilly, the surname of FFVIII's Rinoa), a passion for Final Fantasy permeates various aspects of Lily's life. The name of her website, [Thundaga.net](http://Thundaga.net), references the Final Fantasy spell.

Before coming to FFF, Administrator Mitsuki met Lily one fateful evening in 2015 at Distant Worlds, Los Angeles. They chatted and clicked easily, and Mitsuki 'recruited' Lily by encouraging her to join the forum. Once registered, Lily started to post her fan fiction and promptly entered and won first place in two of our creative writing competitions (Birthweek 2015's Writing Competition: [Expanding the Universe](#), and the [Creative Writing of the Month](#) for September 2015).

We asked her a couple of questions to learn more about her motivations.

**“To me, Final Fantasy is an escape, a comforting place that I can return to, time and time again.”**

BY LILY GARDNER



**What is your take on Final Fantasy, and what does it mean to you personally?**

“**Final Fantasy** is a legacy, an era of gaming and the way individuals within a generation view the gaming experience. There are few other game series that have lasted as long as Final Fantasy has, with such a passionate fanbase. That evidence is only an affirmation of Final Fantasy's longevity; by simply saying the name alone, it calls a lot of memories to the surface of any gamer's mind - whatever their individual experiences may be.

To me, Final Fantasy is an escape, a comforting place that I can return to, time and time again. It was one of the very first games I

played on my own, and I absolutely fell in love with the immersive narrative and well-rounded, developed characters. I've always been a huge bookworm, and Final Fantasy was one of the few games that played like a book - the installments have the same depth in terms of narrative and characters, with the added bonus of enriching music and fully-fleshed out visual worlds. It blends the best of both mediums, and it was the fully immersive experience that hooked me from an early age. It was something to relate to, to fall in love with.

Now, it's a nostalgic memory. Though new installments are released, when I think of Final Fantasy, I think of good memories and how much the series has affected my life as both a gamer and an individual.”

**When did you first discover your passion for writing?**

“I've always loved reading, ever since my mom first read me the Thai translations of Sailor Moon manga at the ripe old age of

three. From there, I began to soak up each and every book I could find.

By the time I reached young adulthood, reading and fictional worlds had been a large presence in my life - and it remains that way now. I've always been told growing up that I was a strong writer, whether in academic writing or prose, but I had never even considered the idea of creating my own material (whether fully original or in the form of fan fiction) until an English teacher in 11th grade encouraged me to think about it. I had written a short story that she praised, and said that it would be a disservice to myself to simply throw the idea away. I gave it a try, but it didn't go very well, and I kind of shelved the idea for the future.

Fast forward to 2015, when I met a friend in a college class who wrote regularly. I had mentioned a little bit of my past experience with writing to her, and she, like my English teacher before, encouraged me to try again. That time around, I found the flow I had been lacking before, and the words just kept pouring out. I pushed myself to leave my comfort zone and get multiple opinions and feedback on my pieces, and it just expanded from there.

Now, much like ballet (which is another hobby of mine), writing has become a peaceful but engaging activity that I can focus on to relieve stress from my everyday life. It's not easy, but that's why I enjoy it - it's something that gives you near-immediate feedback and it's a unique experience to be able to see your own words on proverbial paper."

### Can you tell us a bit more about your game project, Telophase?

"Telophase is a twin-stick dungeon-crawler set in Ancient Egypt. You must project and recall your character's soul in order to damage enemies, in the hopes of eventually overthrowing the Lord of the Underworld: Anubis.

It focuses on fast-paced gameplay, and features three different stages with three randomly chosen levels that lead up to the stage bosses: Ra, Bastet, and Anubis. Our team consisted of fourteen members, and I served as the producer and team lead. As a producer, it is my job to structure the development sprints, made up of individualized tasks with due dates to keep us on track for final release.

## Want to see her work?

Website and portfolio: <http://thundaga.net>

FFN: <https://www.fanfiction.net/u/1739780>

AO3: <https://archiveofourown.org/users/LILYisatig3r/pseuds/h34rt1lly>

 <https://www.instagram.com/h34rt1lly>

 <https://twitter.com/LILYisatig3r>

On top of that, it is also my responsibility to ensure every team member's path is clear, and if obstacles arise, it is my job to remove them and provide the best road to success. Essentially, I'm the oil that keeps the machine running smoothly, but also the support and cheerleader for every single person!

In addition to handling the logistics and support, I also coordinate the marketing (Steam release, social media, etc) and networking aspects for the team."

### If you were to write a story about any character(s) that you haven't yet written about in a fanfic, who would you pick?

"Ooh, that's a tough question. I would have to say . . . Edea. She's such a central point in the story, the crux of everything that happens, essentially, and there is so little we know about her and Cid's path. Not many people touch on writing from her perspective, show us her thoughts and reactions, and that is something I would love to explore in the future."

### What's your favorite FF fanfic you've written so far?

"I would have to say that my favorite fanfic I've written thus far is either Black Swan or Drowning in Fire, which is a co-authored piece I did with a friend and fellow writer for last year's Successor Challenge.

Black Swan will always have a special place in my heart because of what it did for me in terms of exposure and experience, and even though it could use a re-write/refresh, the original version will always mean a lot to me.

Drowning in Fire was a unique endeavor, and Arenoptara and I have writing styles that mesh very well. It was enjoyable to play with each others' characterizations of Seifer and Selphie, and explore the plot together." (Lily Gardner, 2018)



Telophase header / image source: [Telophase Studios, LLC.](#)

<http://telophase.thundaga.net>

[Telophase on Steam](#)

[Telophase by Telophase Studios - Itch.io](#)



## TELOPHASE

Fast-paced gameplay that forces you to think on your feet in order to defeat all enemies.



UPCOMING FFF  
EVENT

BIRTHWEEK, KUPO?

**BIRTHWEEK IN A  
KUPO-NUTSHELL:**

- Final Fantasy and FFF Member Awards
- Various competitions hosted by the staff
- Forums prizes and member perks
- Monetary rewards through MogShop
- Celebrating FFF!

**CONFIRMED EVENTS:**

- Site Banner
- FFXIV Screenshot Contest: Festival of the Sun
- Moogle Murder Mystery II
- Monster Slaying Event
- P.O.S.T Event

# BIRTHWEEK 2018

**Birthweek** is usually the most popular of Final Fantasy Forums' annual events. Held to commemorate the community's anniversary (June 6th), it is always the biggest event which the site runs each year.

During these celebrations FFF members come together to participate in a variety of competitions and activities; there is always something for anybody who wants to be involved. In previous years Birthweek has included art, digital GFX, writing, cooking, and photography competitions for people wishing to flex their creative muscles. We have also hosted various game screenshot and Final Fantasy (including FFXIV) screenshot competitions, soundtrack recognition contests, and FF knowledge quizzes and crosswords.

But you do not need any special talents or specialist knowledge in order to enjoy most of Birthweek!

Some events, like the category of competitions which we colloquially call 'doodle games', require only a minimum of effort from participants (the host, Dionysos, does most of the work instead!). During the annual monster slaying event, Dionysos doodles a new FFF mascot based on a well-known Final Fantasy monster and participants use their imaginations to request an injury for Dionysos to add to the beast's drawing. Another 'doodle game' which proved extremely popular last year was the 'Moogle Murder Mystery' following a more RPG-style format, with Dionysos acting as the 'Dungeon Master' and drawing the moves of the participating detectives as they endeavoured to solve a murder.

Through participation in events members can earn forum currency (Gil, Community Tokens, and Gold Points) with which they can purchase items in our digital store, the MogShop. The overall winner of Birthweek also gets extra prizes and a forum award.

That is Birthweek in a kupo-nutshell...

Preparations are in place and by the time of the next issue of our magazine series, the Birthweek celebrations will have long finished.

## **Birthweek 2018: Please be excited!**

2018 will see the site's 12th anniversary, and we can promise you a variety of events as usual. We do have several competitions lined up already, but more are also in the works and shall be announced when Birthweek is launched on **June 1st, 2018!**



# FFF YEARBOOK 2017



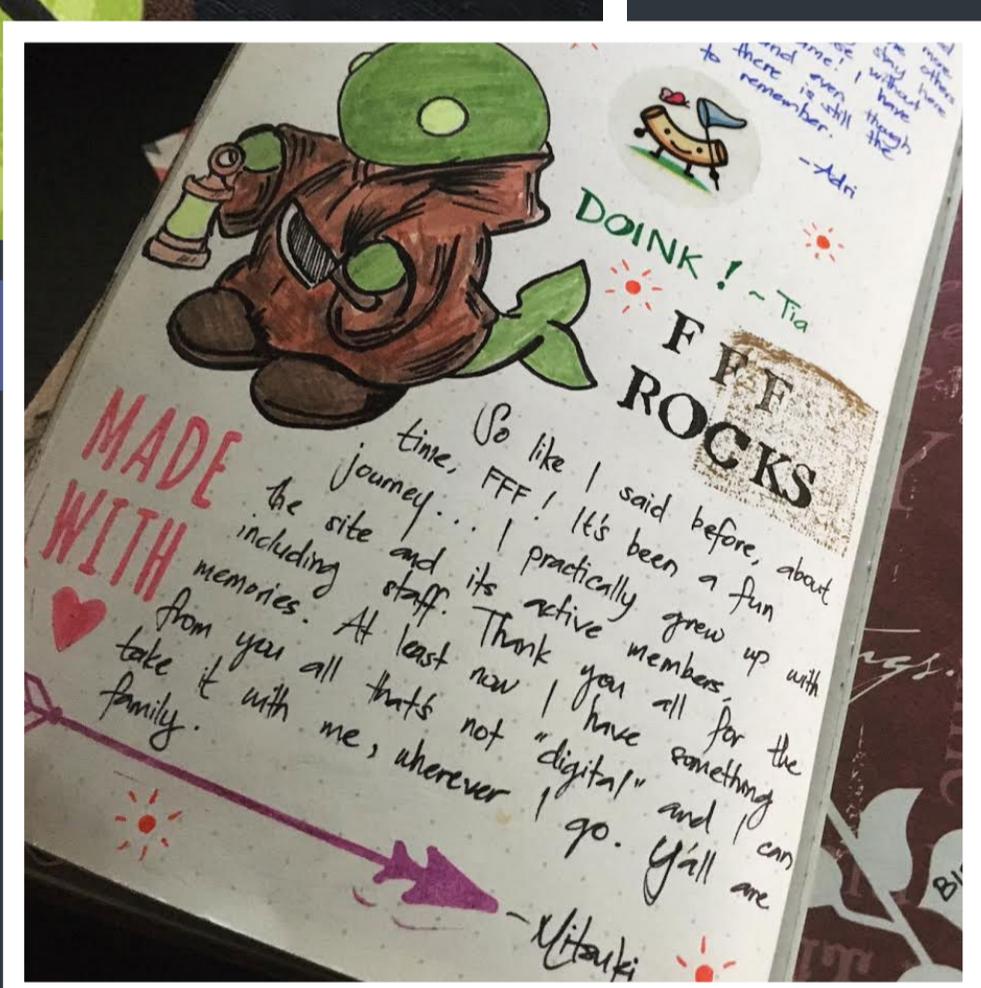
## HOW FINAL FANTASY BROUGHT US ALL TOGETHER

Each Birthweek marks another year gone by in the realm of FFF. Some years were better than others, but the staff and its remaining active community continue to amplify content relating to Final Fantasy (and so much more), inside and outside FFF.

Featuring Mitsuki's FFF Yearbook (via a Midori Traveler's Notebook), the members breathed life to the pages last year during Birthweek event.

Members (including the elusive Lord Golbez) were encouraged to "sign" and write a message for the FFF Yearbook. Something nice, something witty, something FFF. The Scribe (Mitsuki) happily did all the handwritten work. The purpose of this exercise? To step back once in awhile and see how Final Fantasy have brought us all together...albeit on paper. But that's part of the charm.

Check out [The FFF Yearbook 2017](#) for more FFF fun!



# POLYPHEMOS BROMIOS

[BIRTHWEEK '17] FESTIVAL OF THE SUN

WINNER!

## FESTIVAL OF THE SUN BIRTHWEEK 2017

1

### Sun, Sea, Sand, and Screenshots!

FFF moderator Galadin has hosted many FFXIV screenshot competitions over the years. They are typically seasonal in nature, and the summer screenshot competition is incorporated within FFF's Birthweek event.

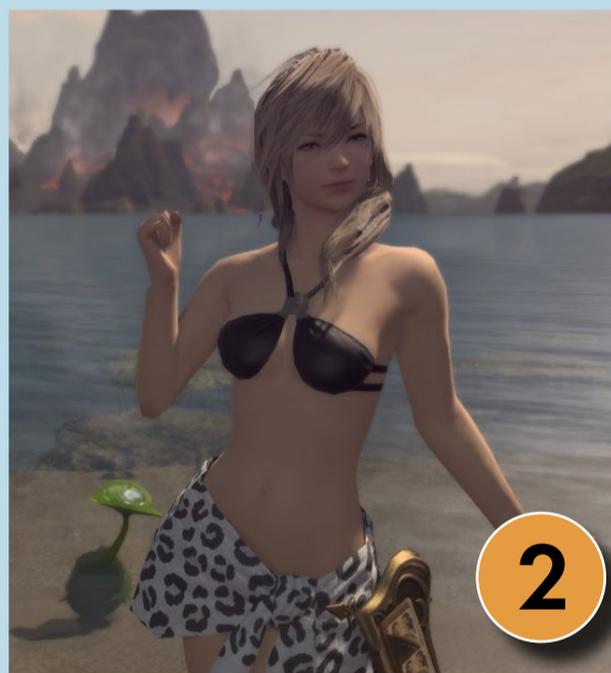
With 'Festival of the Sun' members of our FFF community are encouraged to submit screenshots of their characters showing off their perfect beach bodies with a creative use of location and poses.

Featuring our Top 3 winners from 2017! Do you think you could be beach ready for Birthweek 2018?

### FESTIVAL OF THE SUN WINNERS (FFF USERNAME):

1st: DIONYSOS  
2nd: ROSS  
3rd: SIX

FFXIV SERVER:  
LAMIA



# Moog<sup>le</sup> Mur<sup>der</sup> Mys<sup>tery</sup>

Moog<sup>le</sup> Mur<sup>der</sup> Mys<sup>tery</sup> is a Final Fantasy Forums original RPG-based whodunit game where participants create detective characters, explore maps for clues, and investigate gruesome murders. All detectives, NPCs, maps and interactions are drawn in quick-and-easy style by the host and Game Master (Dionysos). The moves which each detective make, however, are entirely determined by the imaginations and wit of the participants entering the event.

Our first ever Moog<sup>le</sup> Mur<sup>der</sup> Mys<sup>tery</sup> event proved to be a great hit during 2017's Birthweek celebrations. Dionysos was delighted with the effort participants took to get into character by writing detailed posts. This was never asked for, but it greatly enhanced the game experience. Its popularity means that a sequel is in the works for Birthweek 2018. Before it begins, why not familiarize yourselves with the events of the first game? Let's just say that things got a bit crazy!

**Don't take it seriously. We don't.**

## The Case of Pomas Pomson

In 2017, the detectives attempted to solve the mysterious murder of a moog<sup>le</sup> discovered in the lobby of 'Moog<sup>le</sup> Museum'. The museum setting was richly crammed with Final Fantasy references and FFF callbacks. Many of the NPC characters were parodic caricatures of the sort of suspects you would find in a murder mystery drama, and the museum setting playfully critiqued art culture.

At the outset the corpse was known only as a 'Mog Doe' but as FFF's detectives uncovered clues, they soon unraveled his identity as former co-owner of Moog<sup>le</sup> Museum Pomas Pomson... Of course, there were multiple red herrings to throw our detectives off the scent of his murderer, and the reason for his untimely demise.

Out of many NPCs here were the main suspects:



CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION



**Nutt 'Midas' Kuporius:** Owner of Moog<sup>le</sup> Museum. Pomas Pomson's former business partner. Has been stealing and faking artefacts.



**Mogabod:** Foul-mouthed Storage and Acquisitions Manager. Museum muscle. Sleep deprived and making a lot of mistakes as he has worked long hours to support his ailing daughter.



**Kupobella Buqwyrn:** Museum librarian. Leading expert on the Book of Kelly manuscripts which Pomson recently discovered to be faked.



**Nutalie Selz:** Museum shopworker. Flirt who delights in breaking hearts. Irritated with Pomson's affections.



**Sir Mogathon Pomcroft:** 9th Earl of Mogton Manor. Bitter old man. Former owner of the building which is now being disrespected as a museum and entertainment suite.

Detective Kira Frazer (hired by Six) befriended a rubbish-bin rat and an Abomination. She also picked up the camera item and unleashed her inner-Prompto by snapping photographs at random throughout the event!



### The details of the murder!

Pomas Pomson and Nutt Kuporius had been best friends since childhood. As adults they fulfilled their lifelong ambition of founding a Moogle Museum, housed in Mogton Manor (which they recently purchased from a reluctant Mogathon Pomcroft, 9th Earl of Mogton). Their endeavour was a huge hit!

While Pomson remained focused on sticking to their original principles, success corrupted Kuporius (who became a Gillionaire and diverted his attentions to a luxurious entertainment suite and lived in excess). Disgusted, Pomson left the museum.

While Pomson was working as an investigative journalist, he discovered that Kuporius' scandalous activities increased; he was now selling artefacts, commissioning fakes, and buying stolen antiquities at low prices.

Their discord delighted Sir Mogathon Pomcroft, who seized an excellent opportunity to discredit the museum and reclaim his ancestral home. Pomas Pomson should be murdered, and it should be framed to appear as if Kuporius or some other museum staff-member had done the deed. If some clever detectives were to join the dots and arrest Kuporius for the murder of Pomson, and in doing so uncover the report about the thefts and forgeries, then the Moogle Museum will be over for good.

Sir Mogathon Pomcroft's machinations led to Pomas Pomson getting shot by the pistol of the Nutbeard the Pirate exhibit. It was a fitting demise for a man who (in Sir Pomcroft's mind) had effectively stolen and looted his beloved home.

With certain papers, notes and evidence dispersed across the museum in order to mislead the incoming detectives into a belief that Pomson's investigation

was cut short by museum staff and swiftly covered up, Sir Pomcroft was certain that Kuporius would take the fall and the details of his illegal activities would be outed. With Kuporius out of the picture, Mogton Manor could return to its rightful owner...

### Apprehending the villain!

Unfortunately for Sir Mogathon Pomcroft, his actions were discovered by FFF's intelligent detectives! Linnaete's Maybot and sly's OG Angry Bird united and managed to threaten a confession out of Pomcroft using the exhibit with which he had murdered Pomson.

### Moogle Murder Mystery II...

Sir Pomcroft is still in jail today... But like with all counties in murder mystery dramas, Kupocestershire is only safe until the next episode.

There are reports of a dead body, another 'Mog Doe', washed up on the beach of a seaside town...

"Curse you, kup-O! I would have gotten away with it too if it wasn't for you meddling detectives!" (Sir Mogathon Pomcroft, 9th Earl of Mogton, while being arrested)

Will you join the detectives and their investigation?



# CEGLING CORNER

For over a year Final Fantasy Forums has provided members the opportunity to purchase 'Chocobo Eggs' from our online MogShop. Whenever two people buy an egg together, the mystery hatched creature (or 'cegling') bears some of the characteristics or features of both parents.

These ceglings become usable smilies on the forum, but they are also used as the participants in Cegling Games (CEG events). These can provide a great source of income for parents (if only real life worked like that).

## CEG Events:

The Chocobo Egg Games (CEGs for short) are where the infant cegling creatures are put to work in a variety of forum mini-events. The type of games which our ceglings participate in are varied (from simple elimination games to writing competitions), and many games cross-over with FFF's seasonal events.

These events work differently than regular FFF events in their scoring. Usually, every Chocobo Egg creature (or cegling) already born at the time of the start of an event will automatically

participate. When a particular cegling wins a game then both parents of the creature shall get rewarded. The rewards shall, of course, depend on the particular competition.

In some games you do not need to be the owner of a Chocobo Egg to participate, but the Chocobo Egg creatures are the actors in each game. Non-parents still get rewards for participation as is usual in an FFF event.

However, the more children you have, the more likely you are to make a profit from your offspring's adventures.

## THE CEGLINGS SO FAR!



**Name:** Brahnetosaurus  
**Smiley code:** :brahneto:  
**Parents:** Mitsuki and JigoKuu  
**Birthday:** November 9th 2016

**Bio:** The Brahnetosaurus creature is so named as she has a booty strongly resembling Queen Brahne's. The face looks quite similar too. Do not be afraid by this brontosaurus-Brahne hybrid's incessant stomping; she has a soft spot for theatrical spectacles.



**Name:** Chocobuncle  
**Smiley code:** :chocobuncle:  
**Parents:** Soulcorruptor and Dionysos  
**Birthday:** January 10th 2017

**Bio:** The Chocobuncle combines the graceful might of a chocobo and a carbuncle, but re-imagines them using the mould of a griffin. This creature loves to guard treasure.



**Name:** Chickenosaurus six  
**Smiley code:** :chickenosaurus:  
**Parents:** Linnaete and Six  
**Birthday:** April 17th 2017

**Bio:** The shortest dinosaur known to science. Livi's appreciation of the Chickenosaurus combined with Kira's love of purple has blossomed into a beautiful Dutch dinosaur. This carnivore needs a stool and decorative clogs in order to feed on its primary food sources of heels, toes, and ankles.



**Name:** Cabroot  
**Smiley code:** :cabroot:  
**Parents:** greeny and Espurr  
**Birthday:** April 18th 2017

**Bio:** What do you get when you mix a cabbage with a lalafell? You get a bizarre creature whose vocabularistics is limited to 'l' and 'am' and 'Cabroot', exclusively in that order.



**Name:** Rossmanian Devil  
**Smiley code:** :rossmanian:  
**Parents:** Ross and Mitsuki  
**Birthday:** July 11th 2017

**Bio:** What happens when a Tasmanian Devil crosses paths with a devout nun? You get a deeply conflicted marsupial obsessed with repentance for the immense sin of its name's implied affiliation with The Beast. This poor creature is often found attempting to exorcise itself. It wears a cross medallion and pushes a bible about wherever it goes.



**Name:** The Abominable Snowmitts  
**Smiley code:** :snowmitts:  
**Parents:** Mitsuki and shivas  
**Birthday:** July 12th 2017

**Bio:** The Abominable SnowMitts is a gorilla-like creature who is at home in the Indian Himalayas. Rumours suggest that it is an avatar of Shiva with the express purpose of cooling down the hot tempers of our modern world. Good luck with that!



**Name:** The Dantelope  
**Smiley code:** :dantelope:  
**Parents:** Dionysos and shivas  
**Birthday:** July 20th 2017

**Bio:** The Dantelope is an antelope-sa-tyr or faun composed of an Arabian oryx. This playful creature brings Dionysian delights to the desert, but also inspires a considerable amount of madness. Approach with caution, but enjoy the grapes and wine in moderation!

**Name:** Moombat  
**Smiley code:** :moombat:  
**Parents:** Galadín and charmy  
**Birthday:** November 1st 2017

**Bio:** On one dark evening a Moomba wandered into Transylvania. Out of the shadows Countess Galadín Nimcelithil crept and sunk her fangs into the unsuspecting feline's furry neck and made a feast of its blood. The result of this union is the horrifically cute Moombat!

**Name:** Angrybeard  
**Smiley code:** :angrybeard:  
**Parents:** sly and Soulcorruptor  
**Birthday:** November 12th 2017

**Bio:** Every now and then a ridiculously manly baby is born. Angrybeard the Bomb makes Spartans look like Boy Scouts. Not only does he spit flame, but he also spits out any milk you attempt to feed him, demanding a spinach and steroids soup instead. Be careful. Angrybeard is extremely volatile and if you tempt fate by angering him even a teeny bit more, he is very likely to self-destruct!



**Name:** Linnerva  
**Smiley code:** :linnerva:  
**Parents:** Soulcorruptor and Linnaete  
**Birthday:** November 14th 2017

**Bio:** All societies need justice. Now that the ceglings are getting numerous, a judiciary has been deemed necessary. Carrying the golden scales of justice in her talons, Linnerva the soulsnatch has enthusiastically assented to the task. All souls shall be judged from up high by this wise but peculiar owl's all-seeing, frightful glare. However, lest Linnerva feel herself too ascended in her position, this hooting harpy has grown donkey ears to ground her with humility.

**Name:** Dinny Sore  
**Smiley code:** :dinny:  
**Parents:** Adri and Dionysos  
**Birthday:** December 12th 2017

**Bio:** Dinny Sore (or simply, The Don) is an Italian immigrant who ruthlessly carved a name for himself in the Canadian criminal underworld. This hadrosaurid dinosaur with Kappa features will make you an offer you cannot refuse. This mobster is inseparable from his trusted Tommy Gun (nicknamed 'Quiet') and fedora hat (nicknamed 'My Love'). You'll sleep with the fishes if you mess with Dinny.

**Name:** Panter Paws  
**Smiley code:** :panterpaws:  
**Parents:** Soulcorruptor and charmy  
**Birthday:** January 5th 2018

**Bio:** Ever wondered how Santa Claus delivers presents to all children in just one night? Teleportation and time travel via the canine abilities of the cool hounds of Eos, of course! That's right, Santa Claus is actually a magical dog named Panter Paws! Mr. Paws wolfs down many cookies, puddings, and Christmas meals, and has piled on the pounds! Thusly, teleporting remains his main method of locomotion. Help him keep Christmas all the year!

Become a parent today by purchasing a 'Chocobo Egg' in the MogShop for 10 Community Tokens!

Every egg needs two parents, and so two members must purchase the Chocobo Egg item in the MogShop for the mystery creature within to develop (otherwise it'll just end up as part of someone's breakfast).

After your purchase you will need to fill in details such as what you think is inside the egg, and who laid the egg. Your comments (alongside those of

your partner's comments) will help determine the form which the emerging hatchling will take.

Even we aren't entirely sure what form the creature inside will take when the egg finally cracks open. We've been too preoccupied with whether or not we could, we have not stopped to think if we should.

Once both shares of the egg have been purchased the egg shall then be incubated (while our genetic interferences determine the morphology

of the growing creature). When it is ready, the egg will hatch and unleash a new, unique smiley onto FFF!

#### CEG LEADERBOARD

1ST		SCORE: 9.5
2ND		SCORE: 8
3RD		SCORE: 7

## Inside Scoop: How the FF Franchise Brought Them Together!

BY LUKE (AURONX)

# FFF LOVE STORY

It's a well-known fact that a community exists for everything. When you find something you really love, it's only natural to look for others to share your experiences with, and who will share their common interests in return. But while a community may form around a particular subject--Final Fantasy, for example--it's the relationships they foster that often end up meaning the most. Sometimes, they even end up meaning... well, a bit more than others.

Sean (.Mosh) was one of the first real friends I made in the Final Fantasy Forums community. Before I'd even had a chance to find my own self-confidence, he provided enough for both of us and struck up a conversation that would end up lasting six years (and counting!) as well as drag me kicking and screaming into the indie game development business (which I now love, by the way) as we collaborated to make our first game. Judy (Lirael) was a close second. Our common bent towards creative writing led to some natural connections and conversations about our craft.

Growing my own friendships led to discussions far beyond the scope of Final Fantasy itself and into such topics as relationships in general--which, as it turned out, were not reaching their desired happy endings for anyone at the time. It was pretty much impossible not to take note of the pieces falling into place as both Sean and Judy shared their stories with me.

At first, prodding Sean to take Judy to Distant Worlds came as something of a joke. There was just one problem: it sounded like it just might work. In fact, it definitely did. Fortunately, the years following provided no shortage of opportunities for me to keep the prods poking. Usually he wouldn't listen (\*cough\* Distant Worlds \*cough\*) but whenever he did it was obvious I'd struck a weak spot. Ironically, I had no idea Judy reciprocated until after Sean told me out of the blue he'd decided to confess.

The rest, as they say, is history in the making. Today, for the inaugural edition of the FFF Mogazine, I'm pleased to present Sean and Judy to give their side of the story and all things life, love, and Final Fantasy. Take it away, you two! (And no need to thank me, Sean. I know you won't anyway.)

“It was pretty much impossible not to take note of the pieces falling into place as both Sean and Judy shared their stories with me.”

-LUKE (AURONX)



“I ALWAYS KNEW HE WAS KIND AND LOYAL”

-JUDY

**So you guys met on Final Fantasy Forums. How long have you two known each other and how did you guys meet? Can you remember who initiated the first conversation and what it was about?**

**Judy:** Sean and I met in 2012. He asked me to create a signature for him because he absolutely loved my art work. Personally, I think it was lust at first chat.

**First impression of your partner?**

**Sean:** *\*says something offensive\**

**Judy:** My first online impression... Well, I thought Sean was quite young! *\*laughs\** I know he's only 15 months younger than I am, but our friendship developed when I started to offer him advice and gave him relationship counselling. I helped him through several breakups - with the same person. That perception didn't really change until we spoke on Skype, at which point Sean became this incredibly funny, incredibly sharp guy. I always knew he was kind and loyal. He's been my best friend since we met, really. Over the years, he's offered me a lot of counselling too!

**Sean:** That's very true. My first impression of Judy... I thought she was very bubbly in nature - very happy. I appreciated how she treated people as a moderator and also followed her art. It's easy to talk to people online. I think I would have struggled if we

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had met in person! I can't remember our first conversations, but I always valued everything she said very highly and over the years, we formed an incredible friendship. When I met her in person for the first time, I just thought she was beautiful - and then she got lost driving me home! Who gets lost in their home city?

**Judy:** I never go to the train station!

**You guys had some great ideas implemented on Final Fantasy Forums in the past. Can you elaborate a bit more on some of those ideas that were implemented on the site?**

**Sean:** I was the founder of the FF-Clans, which Judy implemented as moderator.

**Judy:** I developed on that idea with Cid (who may have changed his name now), creating weekly competitions to engage members in the series, and to create a sense of excitement across the forums. Cid and I also created a text adventure together.

**Sean:** Which I loved. It made me want to do my own. Which I did. Well, I started it. I got my own sub-forum and called it Project World.

**What does Final Fantasy mean to you?**

**Judy:** Final Fantasy literally changed my life. Before I played the games, I was very much an introvert and lacked confidence. I couldn't even stand up or speak in class without having a minor meltdown.

Playing Final Fantasy led me to FF-Hybrid originally, where I made many friends, who helped to boost my confidence and taught me how to believe in myself - and gave me the permission to like myself! Now I'm a teacher and I stand up and present for 5 hours a day, 5 days a week - and I love it. I really do have Final Fantasy to thank for that. Without the games, and without the friends I made through the series, I probably wouldn't be who I am today.

**Sean:** What does Final Fantasy mean to me? Uhm. *\*spends a lot of time thinking\* God. \*laughs\** I guess. *\*starts to make funny thinking noises\** I'd say Final Fantasy was my only source of reading and taught me more English than English itself. It's one of those things that helped me decide where I want to be, and which career I'd like to pursue. I really want to create a world and take people on a journey which brings all of the emotions and thrills Final Fantasy does. I have also made a number of friends through forums. They haven't quite had the same impact on me as they have

had on you, but they understood me. I met Luke, who's my best bud!

**Between the two of you, who is the biggest FF nerd? Who has the largest FF collection?**

**Judy:** Definitely me!

**Sean:** How is it you?

**Judy:** Well... I have numerous physical CDs, art books, figurines, all of the games (I have several copies of a few) and I play Final Fantasy music on the piano so *\*sticks out tongue\**. And I booked to see Distant Worlds - which you refused to attend with me!!

**Sean:** I've played them probably since before you started.

**Judy:** Probably.

**Sean:** I can remember distinctly when I got Final Fantasy VII because my brother didn't know what it was. We went to a store called Prism's Leisure and we all had an allowance - £15/£20 back then. I bought Croc and he bought Final Fantasy VII because he thought it looked cool from the cover. My first response was, "Where's I?! You've started from VII!" He didn't even play it and it took me a year to finish it. It took me two weeks to get past the first boss!

**Judy:** I can beat that. It took me about



five years to complete Final Fantasy X because of Evrae! I beat that monster once after 50 attempts (I'm not exaggerating) and then died to the first wave of mecha. I didn't really understand how Final Fantasy games worked back then... I gave up, then completed it 5 years later in less than a week. I stayed up until 2am to complete the final battle. I didn't die once against Jecht. I finally learned how to level up effectively!

### First FF game played together as a couple?

**Judy:** We played a bit of Final Fantasy XV together.

**Sean:** I finished it for you.

**Judy:** Chapter 13 was so loooooong.

**Sean:** We're definitely playing the Final Fantasy VII remake when it comes out.

**Judy:** Apparently, he's going to use the box to propose to me.

### Is there a Final Fantasy song / track which you think captures your relationship? Or FF tune of your relationship? Any particular lyrics that speaks volume?

**Sean:** I HATE Eyes on Me, so not that.

**Judy:** Oh, I love it! *\*turns it on\**

*\*Sean starts singing along\**

**Judy:** I told you it was good.

### Favorite / least favorite FF game? Favorite / least favorite FF character?

**Judy:** I struggle to decide between IX and X when it comes to selecting my favourite... but I think IX has a slight edge because I love the medieval setting and the more traditional style.

**Sean:** Final Fantasy IX - definitely. A close second would be VII due to the fact it brought me into the franchise.

**Judy:** That's what X is to me.

**Sean:** My least favourite is VIII and IV.

**Judy:** I really enjoyed both of those games! I struggle to think of a main title I dislike. I liked the setting of XII, but I felt it lacked a story and lacked character development, so I'll go with that.

**Sean:** My favourite character is Cloud, though I hate to say it. I think it's purely because VII was my first Final Fantasy and he was the first character I played through a long story with. Vivi is second.

**Judy:** Despite what everyone says, I admire Yuna. She's incredibly young, but shoulders a lot of responsibility with grace. When I was younger, I saw her as something to aspire to, whereas now I realise just how naive and vulnerable she actually is. I didn't agree with her choices in X-2, however...

**Sean:** My least favourite character is Penelo. And Vaan.

**Judy:** They were pointless, weren't they? My least favourite is Seymour!! I can't STAND him! His battle theme, however, is rather excellent.

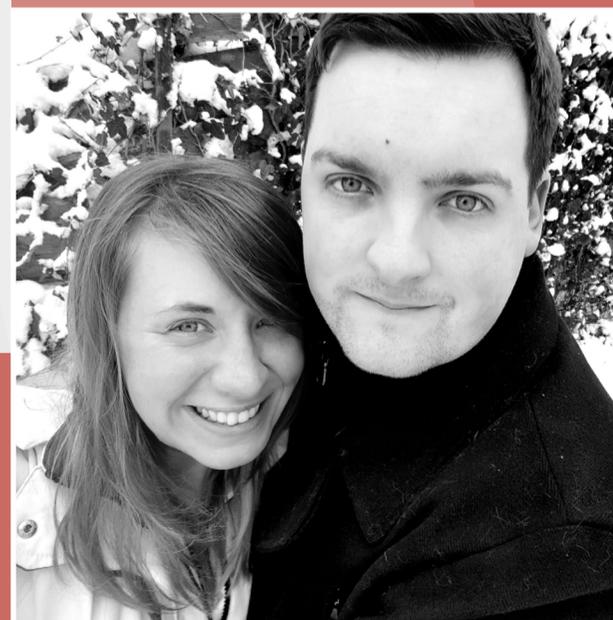
### Final Fantasy character that reminds you most of each other?

**Sean:** Oh \*\*\*\*.

**Judy:** You're Zidane because you're so sarcastic all the time.

**Sean:** I was going to say Garnet. Posh. Smart. Can handle herself when the time rises. I think you are pretty much Garnet. It's weird. She starts off as a "poshy posh," and you are very posh - then she goes through a lot of things and it doesn't affect her character, it just makes her stronger - and she hits a stage where instead of being a support character, she becomes a main character. She's not a damsel in distress. I just think that summarises you to a T. Am I really just a monkey?

**Judy:** Yes.



FFF LOVEBIRDS

# FASHION CRITIC

## CID DEL NORTE MARQUEZ



Cid Del Norte Marquez (Final Fantasy VI) was the Gestahlian Empire's chief genetic engineer. As the inventor of Magitek, Cid was more loyal to his research than he was to the Empire that benefited from him. The pang of conscience which Cid experienced prevented him from condoning the Empire's many moral shortcomings... Too bad his conscience did not extend to his wardrobe.



# LINNAETE'S FASHION CRITIQUE CORNER

Our resident diminutive potato takes on ghastly garments, atrocious attires and crappy costumes

## POLYPHEMOS BROMIOS

There is something almost admirable about a man who proudly parades his crown jewels for all to see. His bounteous bulge takes centre stage, concealed only by what looks more like an oversized nappy (or a diaper for my American readers!). I only fear for that ship in the background, for the alluring beauty of Polyphemos's assets will inevitably bring any stalwart sailors to an untimely and rocky end – not unlike any mythological siren.



Let's put aside for a moment how disproportionately tiny that head is when you compare it with the rest of the body (maybe it shrunk in the wash?) and admire the sheer, unkempt sexiness of that pirate look. What more can you expect from a man who has likely been out at sea for weeks, is ridden with scurvy and battles hair lice on a daily basis?

## MITSUKI CALEI

Millions of years of evolution. Tens of thousands of years of homosapiens rising up to become the dominant species. Thousands of years of civilisation. And what do we have to show for it? A green pompadour hairstyle. I cannot say when in our history we as a species have strayed, but I hope that Tonberry doinks her for this insolence.



Look at that exposed chest. Look at that flimsy yellow rag that serves as the only line of defence between a sharp steel blade and her vital organs. Ms Calei would not survive any Tonberry doinks, let alone the winter. That said, a Tonberry is short and Ms Calei's legs look very well protected, which means I may need to partially rescind what I just said...

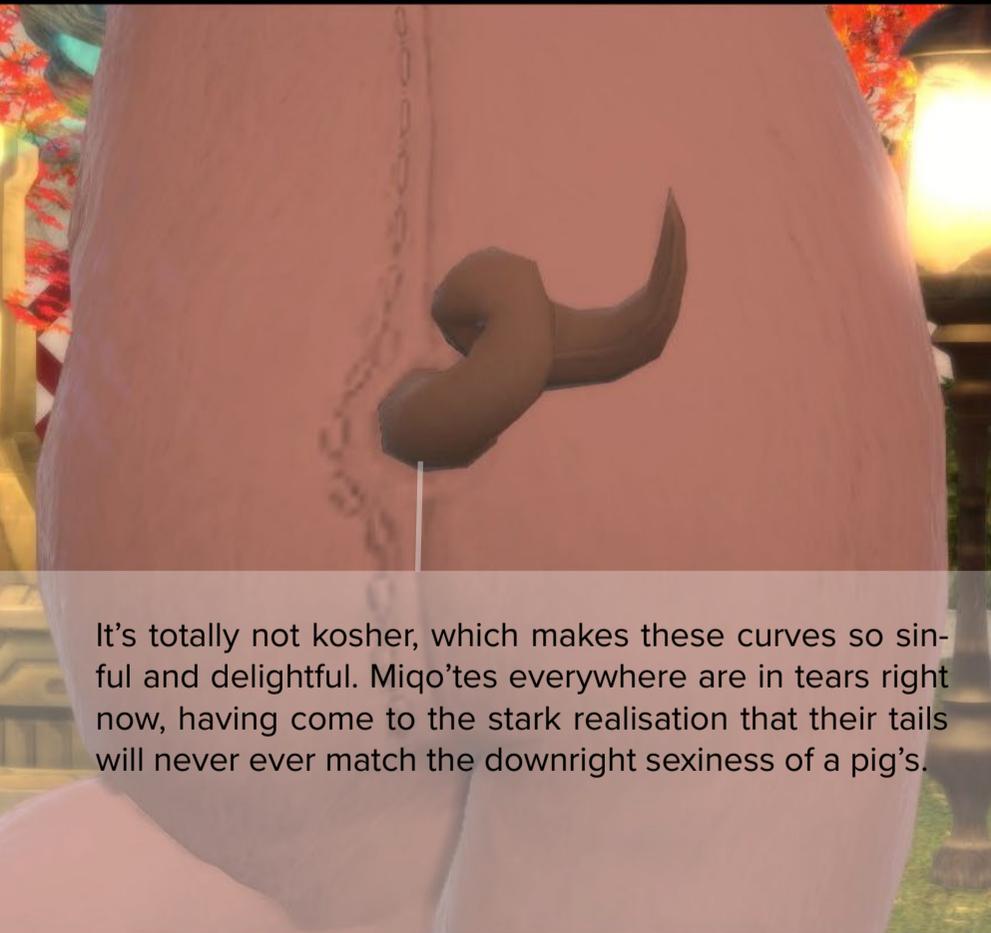
Frankly, I am terrified. This is not the face of a living person. This is the face of an unthinking husk. What has happened to this woman's soul? Maybe she lost it somewhere in the Palace of the Dead? Maybe she never owned a soul...

I'm sorry; I have to dock off some points here because this outfit has one major oversight. How is the fabled feline thief herself supposed to make off with anyone's stash of money and valuable goods with no discernible pockets or attached pouches? Is she supposed to parkour her way from her latest victim's home while carrying a heavy sack of loose change?

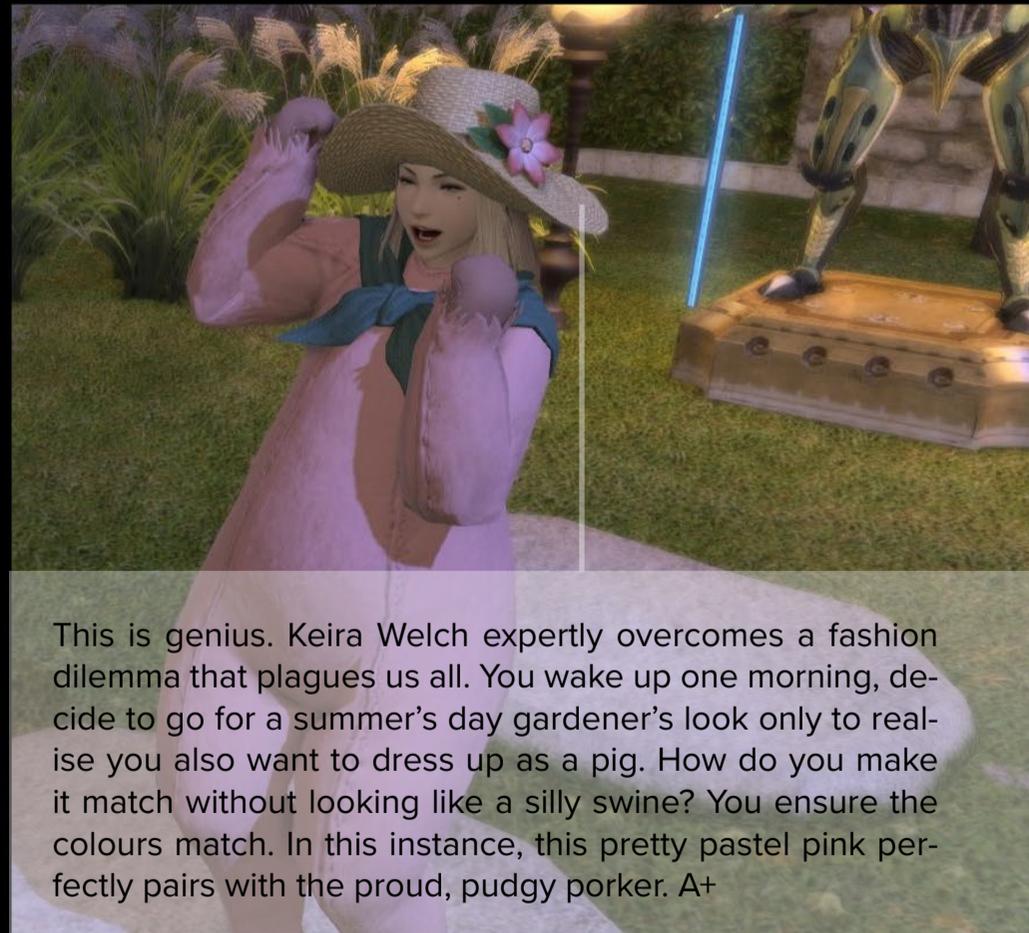


Ingenious, Q. You can cover up those CCTV cameras with floating trading cards! Now the mysterious Black Cat Phantom Thief Seven Rivers can silently break into Harly Mystile's home and clear out his Gil stash before sunrise without fear of being identified. Granted, all this can be avoided if she just wears a lovely helmet or a pig costume...

## KEIRA WELCH



It's totally not kosher, which makes these curves so sinful and delightful. Miqo'tes everywhere are in tears right now, having come to the stark realisation that their tails will never ever match the downright sexiness of a pig's.



This is genius. Keira Welch expertly overcomes a fashion dilemma that plagues us all. You wake up one morning, decide to go for a summer's day gardener's look only to realise you also want to dress up as a pig. How do you make it match without looking like a silly swine? You ensure the colours match. In this instance, this pretty pastel pink perfectly pairs with the proud, pudgy porker. A+

# Queen Kelly I of Alexandria

## Bambi's Magical Wedding



Scrumptious Stronghold: Alexandria Castle.

Planning on getting married? Want to get married in the future? Get inspired and take notes from Kelly's special occasion and you'll be guaranteed a memorable day!

In the September of 2014 Kelly (known on Final Fantasy Forums as Bambi: our undisputed top poster record holder) married her husband, Tom. Kelly, a lifelong admirer of *Final Fantasy*, carried the series with her to her wedding day and afforded it a major role in the event.

Held at the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester, England, Kelly's wedding was a creative triumph: an occasion to make all geeks gawk.

For a *Final Fantasy* fan the centrepiece of the event (but second to the bride and groom, of course!) would be their magnificent wedding cake.

The crowning glory was a splendidly sculpted cake of Alexandria Castle from *Final Fantasy IX*. From the delicious detail of the pure-white icing molded around the castle and its turret towers, to the emblematic giant sword ascending heavenwards, no detail was missed.



"I...so happy..."

We cannot get over how even the wings are present, spreading out to recreate the classic moment as the Eidolon Alexander is summoned to defend the city from Bahamut's rage.

This lustrous marvel was created by ***Black Cherry Cake Company***, based in Rossendale, Lancashire, England. *Black Cherry* is a gold award winning cake designer who specializes in creating custom alternative wedding cakes of high quality. They certainly captured the magical intricacies which make Alexandria Castle one of the most recognisable landmarks in the *Final Fantasy* universe! Kelly had originally brainstormed with *Black Cherry* the possibility of creating a tiered cake with Midgar from *Final Fantasy VII* as the base. When Kelly pointed out an image of Alexandria Castle to her cake designer and joked about the

possibility of recreating it “wings an’ all”, the designer enthusiastically leapt to the challenge and produced a phenomenal work of art.

Even to those uninitiated into *Final Fantasy* fandom, this was a superb choice. Nothing epitomises a fairytale or fantasy setting better than a beautiful castle, and since fantasy themes are perfect for the special occasion of a wedding, it fits. Yet to aficionados of *Final Fantasy* it represents one of the most iconic moments of the franchise's history; a wonderfully suitable ac-

companion to such an iconic moment of Kelly's life too!

It's a lucky break that Quina was too busy getting married to Vivi at Conde Petie or the cake would never have made it to Manchester!



## Facilitating Kelly's Fantasy

The Alexandria Cake-Castle was not the only *Final Fantasy* nod on Kelly's wedding day. There were other, critically important aspects which were themed around the FF series too.

During the ceremony itself while waiting for the approach of the bride (AKA while the bride was waiting for her cue to emerge) Nobuo Uematsu's 'Prelude' (*Final Fantasy VII*)

played. Once this cleverly chosen 'prelude' to the bride's arrival had ended, Kelly walked down the aisle to 'Main Theme' (*Final Fantasy XII*).

Also, if you were to look closely at the paper flowers which Kelly's bridesmaids carried, you would notice that they were actually created from cut-up pieces of *Final Fantasy* strategy guides!

### Fun Fact:

Kelly hilariously walked the wrong way down the aisle in typical Kelly fashion!



## Beyond Final Fantasy

While Kelly is, very evidently, a *Final Fantasy* buff, she and Tom are also fans of a variety of popular culture franchises. Their wedding was the ultimate geek-out with an ordered mixture of references to their favourite TV shows and films. Each table at the reception was themed for a different franchise with central displays forming talking points per table.

To give only three examples: the *Doctor Who* table was inhabited by bride and groom Daleks, of course; the *Game of Thrones* table was decorated with dragon eggs; and the *Red Dwarf* table saw a miniature of the ship-to-surface transport vehicle Starbug landed there! With such varied displays it had the appearance of a brilliant convention event as well as a wedding!



BE SURE TO CHECK THEM OUT SOMETIME!

### Remember the cake!

The reaction to the ceremonial cake was phenomenal, as expected. The members of *Final Fantasy Forums* were amazed by the photographs of her cake and her wedding day on the forum. Kelly was delighted when *Official PlayStation Magazine* featured her cake in an issue soon after her wedding. Here at FFF we're a little late to the party (approaching four years), but since this is Final Fantasy Forums' first magazine, we knew her cake was just too fantastic a piece of art that it would be a terrible waste not to feature the masterpiece in our magazine somewhere!

Kelly's 'Alexandria Castle' represents the sort of dream fantasy wedding which many of us would crave for, but so very few of us would be mad enough to carry out!

Have you had any special moments or major life events with a *Final Fantasy* twist? Share your special moments with us. Contact us on the forum or social media and we might feature it in a future issue!

"That's it! I've come up with a new recipe!"



“ Too bad the FFF couldn't be wedding crashers. ”

SHACE (2014)



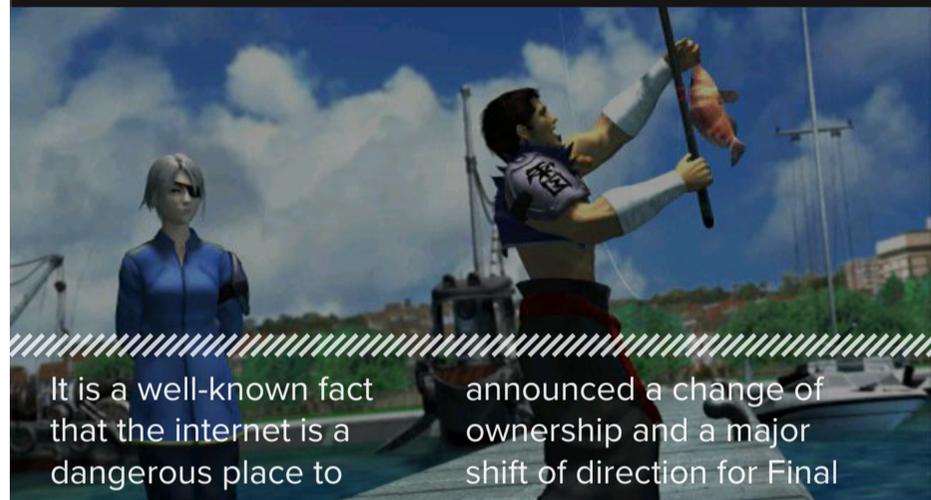
# TIME COMPRESSION

Relive Classic FFF Moments

## SOMETHING FISHY: FFF's hilarious fishing forum prank

Reel it in  
for real!

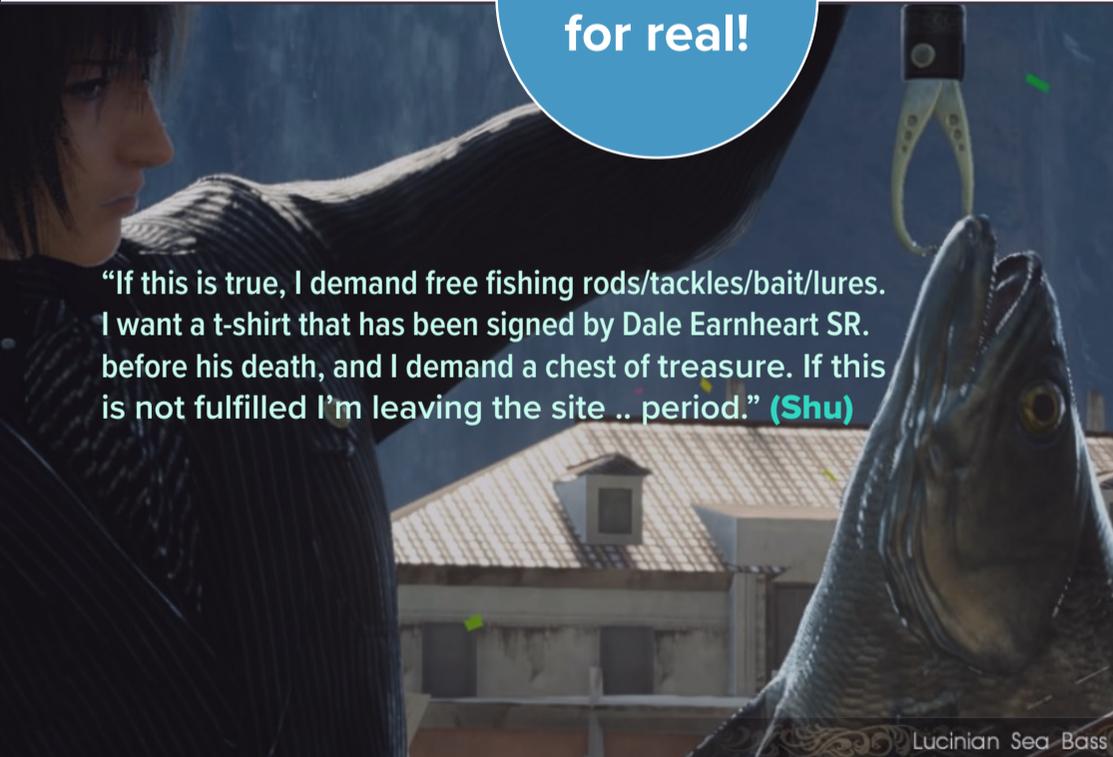
"If this is true, I demand free fishing rods/tackles/bait/lures. I want a t-shirt that has been signed by Dale Earnheart SR. before his death, and I demand a chest of treasure. If this is not fulfilled I'm leaving the site .. period." (Shu)



It is a well-known fact that the internet is a dangerous place to surf. The endless jokes and pranks which swim within its unfathomable depths can frequently appear dangerous from the surface...

FFF has proved itself to be no exception here, but no pranks on FFF are as notorious as the one launched on March 30th 2009 by the most unlikely of people: FFF's Site Owner, Lord Golbez. Under a thread named 'Site Ownership Change' the slippery Lord Golbez

announced a change of ownership and a major shift of direction for Final Fantasy Forums. Actually, the admin team at the time wrote the announcement itself, and Lord Golbez agreed to post it to add legitimacy to the announcement. It was announced in a completely deadpan, official manner that an account called Captain SeaBass would be taking over the forum, and that the forum will be turned into a fishing forum called *Bass Fishing Message Board...* Within two weeks!



Lucinian Sea Bass

34.8 in.  
14.3 lb.

New Record  
New Record

## MEET CAPTAIN SEABASS!

Try your luck and catch a **Lucinian Sea Bass** at Altissia today!

**Recommended lure:**  
Knife T. Tonberry

## The Fishy Announcement:

“...I’m assuming it’s going to be completely about fishing, because fishing mixed with Final Fantasy is a bit @#^%#\$ up. I’m not staying for a fishing message board. I got better @#^% to do.” **(BustaMo)**

“

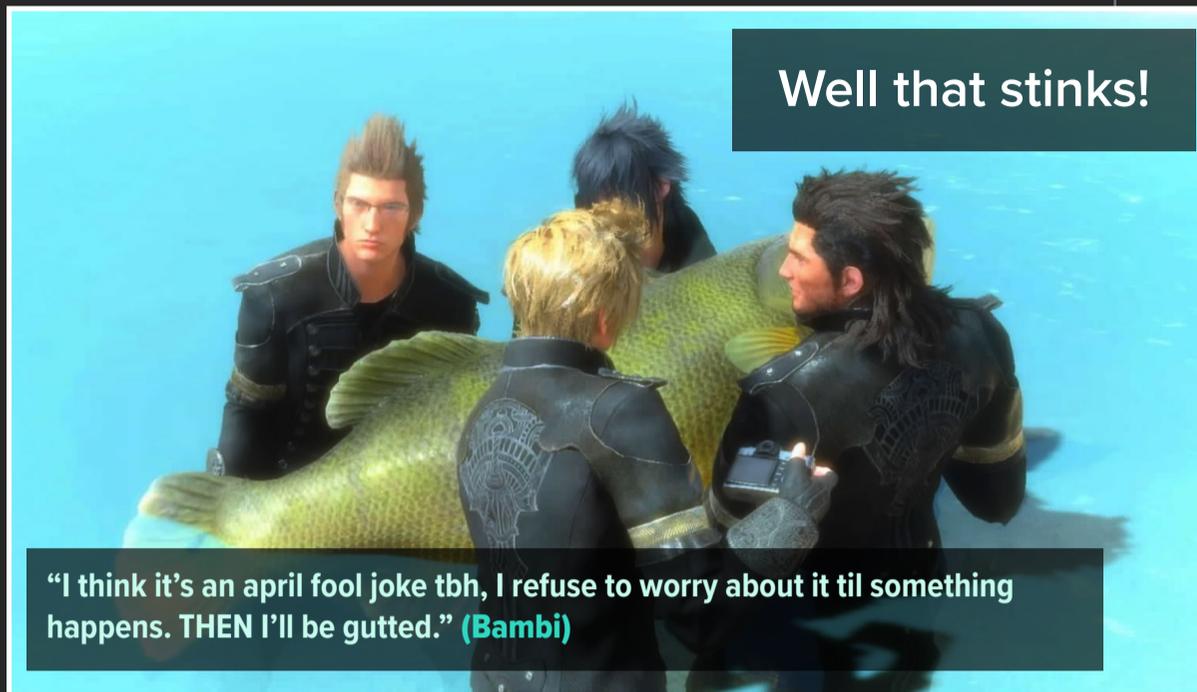
Members, Staff, and the whole Final Fantasy Community,

I would like to take this time now to make a few announcements regarding the upcoming sudden changes that will be occurring here at the forums. This will be a surprise to all of you, staff and members alike as I have not shared information on this topic at all with anyone yet. I trust that you will have faith in me to understand my situation and the reasons for the upcoming transition.

The site is in the process of being sold/handed over to a new owner and will be transformed into a Bass Fishing Message Board with the URL formally changing in roughly 2 weeks to <http://www.seabassforums.net>.

Currently their site is merging with a larger board, and in-turn will merge with this website here at Final Fantasy Forums for a full transition. All members here will still have their accounts if they wish. Just the theme of the website as a whole will be undergoing a drastic change, including the body of staff, administrators included. I know this is a sudden and bold move but the site has their own qualified staff members to begin with, and when the merge takes place, their staff will remain in position.

The new Owner of the Site whom I have been in contact with just recently and talked to a few days ago has



registered officially here and his account is: Captain SeaBass.

I would hope you would all welcome him to the site as you would any other, and I myself would like to thank every member here for the time they put into the site to make it a great success and joy to be here. Whether you stick around at the new site or decide to move on to a new set of message boards, I would once again like to express how much I appreciate the time everyone put into this site.

All the best and apologies for delayed news,  
[Lord Golbez](#)

Obvious joke?  
THIS WAS  
REELY FUNNY!



After the line was cast, some members were quick to point out the somewhat fishy timing of the announcement a few days before April Fool’s Day, yet others swallowed the joke hook, line, and sinker.

Many held their mouths agape like confused guppies. Others pulled angry rage faces like surfacing sharks attacking a boat. Some even threatened to migrate to the fresh waters of a new forum...

This was one unexpected tackle. Even staff members were gutted; this an-

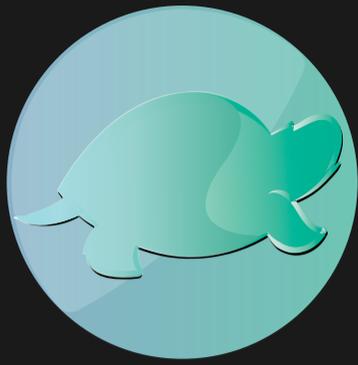
nouncement came entirely out of the blue. Plus, it wasn’t technically April Fool’s Day yet, so it couldn’t possibly be an April Fool’s prank, they debated...

The mixed haul of reactions makes for hilarious reading today, and despite some earnestly disappointed remarks about the ‘change’, all was soon forgiven and Lord Golbez was off the hook when it was revealed to be just a bit of finny fun.

Never before nor since has a prank of this scale been pulled off on FFF.

Staff today have to be extra careful when making official announcements in case our announcements are dismissed as pranks. Whenever we announce anything drastically new or fun, we now always have to reel it in a bit...

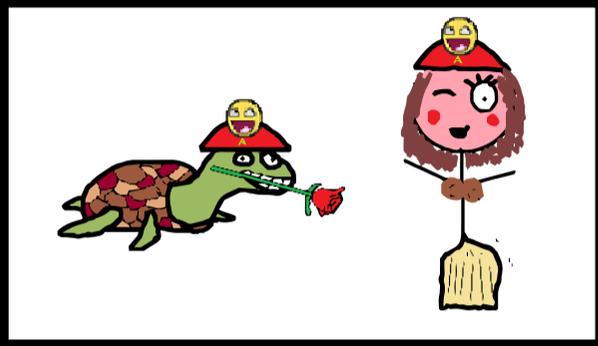
You can see the thread here:  
[Site Ownership Change](#)



# FFF MASCOTS

EXPLAINING FFF'S INSANITY, CHARACTER BY CHARACTER

## TIMMY THE TURTLE



Drawings (by Dionysos) are excerpted from the 'Dear Diary' journal during Survivor 2009.

### DEAR DIARY

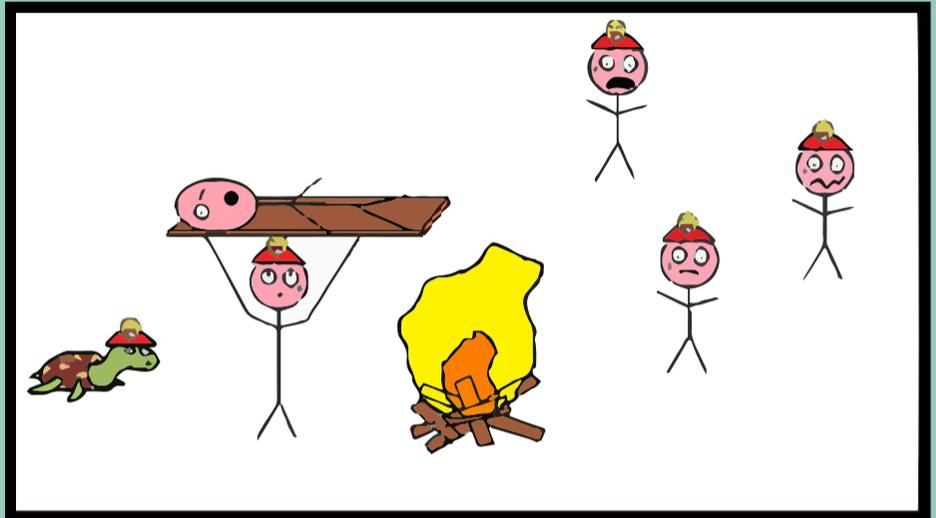
"I was walking along the beach and found a turtle! It was epic, because it just stood there and looked at me, and gave a massive grin. From then on I knew it was destiny. This turtle was my new best friend." -DIONYSOS

### THE BIRTH OF TIMMY

It all began during 2009's Survivor event. Dionysos (then Argor) had been sent to live with 'Camp A' (AKA 'Camp Awesome'). During an isolated day of boredom, Dionysos 'met' (translation: drew and posted) a lovely turtle with a 'massive grin'. The two became fast friends. Soon enough Timmy was the camp mascot and particularly loved charming the young ladies and participating in acts of mischief in the camp.

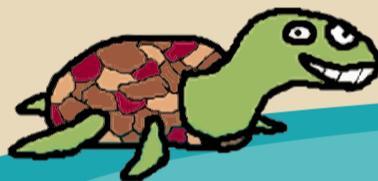
### TIMMY'S WIDER IMPACT

Since Timmy joined the forum, he has done far more than just cameo in other forum events. Mitsuki created a vector image of a turtle based on Timmy and uses it on multiple platforms. The forum award 'Turtle Soup' was created using this same image (and named in his honour). This award is granted to people who win in the doodle games in which Timmy often cameos.



### WHERE WOULD FFF BE WITHOUT TIMMY THE TURTLE?

This friendly reptile with an awkwardly charming smile first captured the hearts of the community nearly ten years ago, but he's had quite the adventure since!



*I'll be waiting for you...so...  
If you come here...  
You'll find me.  
I promise.*



## TIMMY OFF-ISLAND

Timmy was delighted to be picked up by Dionysos and 'flown' off island to the main boards of Final Fantasy Forums. In fact, most of Timmy's life has been spent away from the Survivor island he hailed from. While Timmy's youth was spent surfing the waves, he now idly surfs the web. Yet it took several years for the character to really come into his own in some of the forum's doodle games and image-based RPGs.

Irrespective of Timmy's eternal grin, his doodle game debut was in fact a very traumatic experience. The naughty moogles who stole Christmas, Mogrinch, dreamt of turning Timmy into Turtle Soup and creating a lyre from his shell during the Moogles Merry-making game (2014)!



Disturbed by this experience, Timmy hid in the taxidermist's studio in 2015's Haunted House game (2015) trying to blend in as an exhibit. That was until Galadin's character,

Lego Batman, discovered him to be alive and fed the poor creature to a hungry alligator in order to choke the beast.

A resilient creature, Timmy did not die during FFF's 'big-lipped alligator moment'. The Treasure Hunt game (2016) was a far more relaxing experience for our beloved turtle. Here, Ross' chocobo, Serina, dug Timmy out of the sand on a beach. Back in his natural habitat, Timmy and Serina became good friends in a scene which accurately mirrored Dionysos' initial encounter with the character back in 2009. When Serina set up an exhibition gallery to showcase her findings on the island, she made sure that Timmy had some lettuce and a bowl of water in his tiny enclosure....

Thankfully the cruelty of Ross' chocobo's betrayal was short-lived. The owner of Moogles Museum, Nutt 'Midas' Kuporius, saw the potential of the turtle's toothy smile in attracting visitors to his museum and so purchased him. A large enclosure was built to imitate Timmy's natural habitat on Survivor Island. When a terrible crime was committed not long afterwards during the Moogles Murder Mystery game (2017), Timmy was discovered by SoulCorruptor's Dr. Fistbeard inhabiting his own enclosure in the Aquarium wing of the museum. Timmy's incessant smile in an adjacent room to a horrific murder was more than a little bit suspicious, and a bloody mop had been discovered next to him. Despite this he was not convicted of any wrong-doing...

Despite being an exhibit in a museum (and a suspect in a murder enquiry) Timmy was

able to sneak out of Moogles Museum long enough to actually contribute to the murder of Azzy the Ahriman, a glam-rockstar Evil Eye. During the Annihilate Azzy the Ahriman event (2017), Linnaete (Livi) suggested that Timmy should eat something radioactive and mutate into a "vicious bipedal being of carnage and bloodlust" and suplex poor Azzy. This he did, with his own style.



These temporary enhancements soon wore off. Timmy most recently popped up during the Chocobo Race FATE, a Christmas 2017 event. Here, our friend's important grin granted the chocobo Hammish McHaggis an extra roll and gave him a speedy boost.

When and where will Timmy next appear? This is a secret that only Timmy knows, but he shall whisper ideas in Dionysos' ears soon.

## SPECIES INFORMATION

**Fact file:** Timmy the Turtle

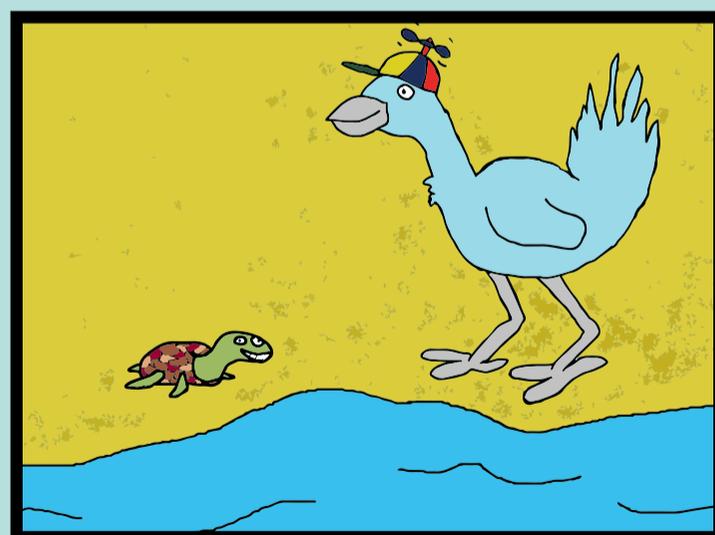
**Species name:** *Chelonia argorus*.

**Conservation status:** Extinct in the wild.

**Habitat:** beaches, pools, and in the palm of your hand.

**Diet:** In the wild he liked coconuts and berries... Since leaving his tropical habitat he enjoys cabbage, lettuce, cocktails, hot chocolate, and he developed a recent taste for radioactive materials.

**Unique feature:** The most unique feature of this turtle is the awkwardly charming smile. This serves as a defensive mechanism as potential predators cannot bring themselves to eat this unusually friendly and likable animal. It is also crucial for courting rituals. Although it was presumed by Dionysos that Timmy was an only child and only example of the species *Chelonia argorus*, it was recently revealed that he has a twin. The Twin Turtle shares the same attributes of Timmy, except he has ginger hair, freckles, and requires glasses to see past his smile. With this new information it is very possible that other *Chelonia argorus* specimens might exist.



You can meet Timmy today by using the smiley code :argor: in any post or in the SB chat. Try it and become enamoured of his sweet smile!

Moogles and Tonberries are raving about this dish! “It’s absolutely Chocoli-cious!”



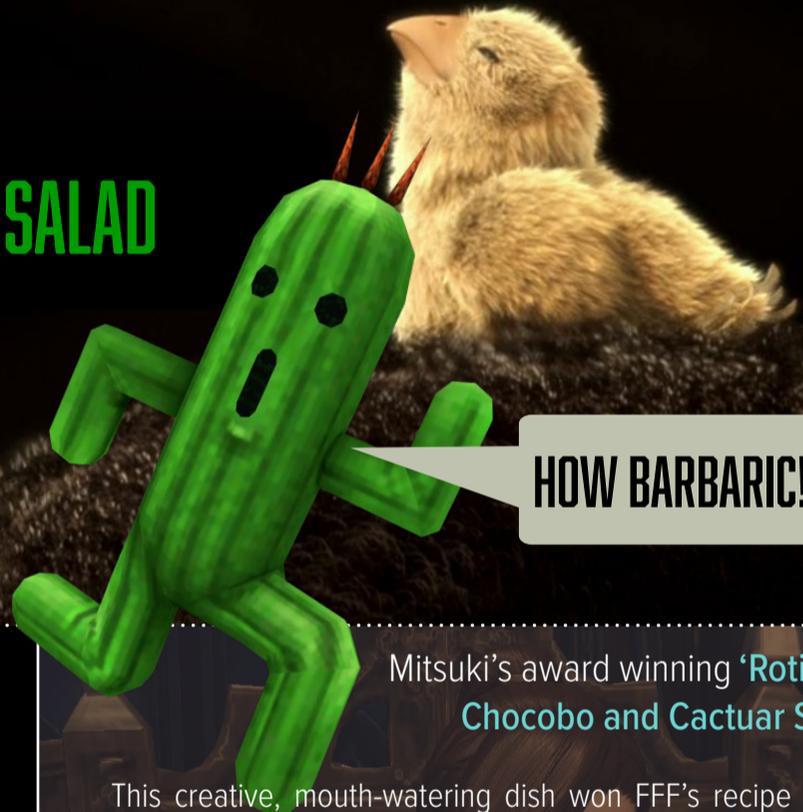
## I’VE COME UP WITH A NEW RECIPE

‘Showcasing the original recipes of FFF members. ‘I’ve Come Up With A New Recipe’ made its debut on our annual event, Birthweek 2017.

## ROTISSERIE CHOCOBO AND CACTUAR SALAD



\*No moogles or tonberries were harmed in the process.  
FINAL FANTASY FORUMS - SPRING / SUMMER 2018



HOW BARBARIC!

Mitsuki’s award winning ‘**Rotisserie Chocobo and Cactuar Salad**’!

This creative, mouth-watering dish won FFF’s recipe contest during Birthweek 2017.

**Chef notes:** “So I have for you a sweet phasana fruit glazed rotisserie chocobo, served with crisp gysahl greens and cactuar salad with carob nuts atop a thousand needles!”

### Ingredients:

- Young Turkey Breast (chocobo)
- Tomatoes (Phasana fruit)
- Cactus (Cactuar) three ways
- Kale (Gysahl Greens)
- Walnuts (Carob Nuts)
- Peaches and syrup (for glaze)
- Toothpicks (carefully apply needles afterwards)

### Recipe:

Cannot be revealed due to the old-fashioned barbaric preparations of this dish.

# PITIOSS PUZZLES

How closely have you read this issue?

CLUES:



Across

- 1. Upcoming UK KupoCon event
- 4. Zaper's graphic novel concerns dreams of this mythical creature
- 6. If Shakespeare is 'The Sweet Swan of Stratford', Lord Avon is this bird
- 7. Musician who recently remixed FFVI's 'Epitaph'
- 9. Cocoon's Carbuncle dresses like one of these
- 10. The chef who created 'Rotisserie Chocobo and Cactuar salad'
- 11. A very adventurous reporter chocobo
- 12. Zidane's theatre troupe
- 13. Timmy the Turtle was born during this event
- 14. Prank site owner captain

Down

- 2. Bambi's wedding cake took the form of this castle
- 3. Firstborn of the ceglings
- 5. Linnaete's Water Fiend
- 8. A name proposed for this magazine which Mitsuki turned into a song
- 10. Sean protests against being called this animal

1.



## WHO CAST THESE SHADOWS?

Solve each puzzle activity and submit answers to Dionysos to receive 5 Community Tokens (CT) and 3 Gold Points (GP) for each puzzle.

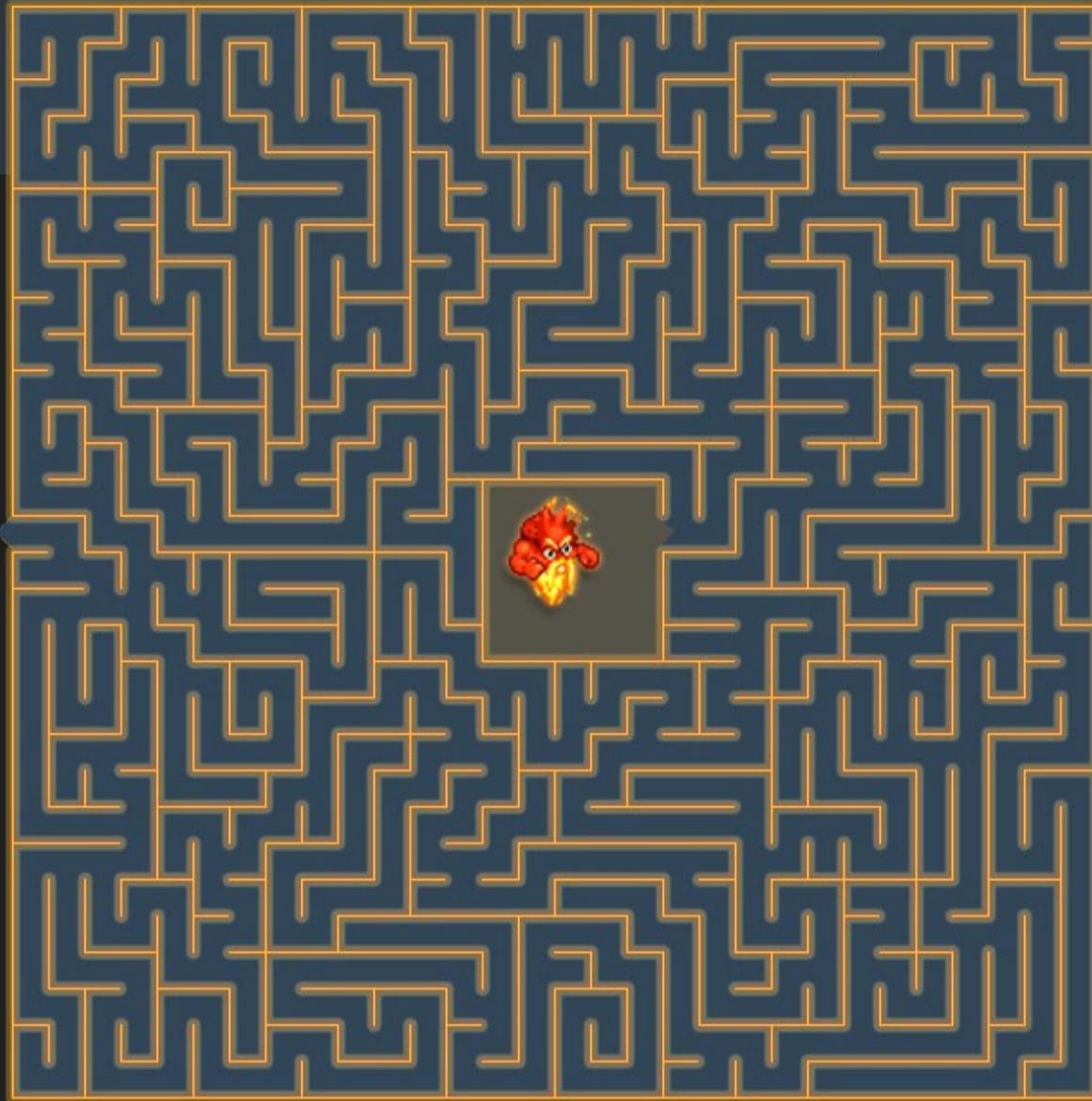
2.



3.



Here's a quick activity! Angrybeard accidentally set this maze on fire. Help him escape before he explodes! Can you do this in less than **20 seconds**? Start your timer and go!



Cegling Comic #1

## FFF PROMO! A SPECIAL GIFT FOR YOU!

GP currency is strictly tied to monetary rewards (e.g. gift cards, games, etc) so do your best to collect GP when the opportunity strikes! To learn more about FFF currency system, please contact the staff.

REDEEM FFF CODE

EXPIRES - 08/31/18

### 5 GP REWARD

USE PROMO CODE:  
FFFMOGAZINSRING18



Use the code in the Redeem tab whenever you click on the currency on the forums.

**Final Fantasy Forums** recognizes that the old star signs are wrong. Follow our corrected star signs (using a Final Fantasy-based astrology system approved by **Dr. Tot**) and learn what the stars say about you!

# FFF HOROSCOPES

## Athenaeum Astrologicum

**Aries the Ram (Pulse/Cocoon Sheep)**  
March 21 – April 19

You are enjoying that people flock around you and call you a cute little darling. You are very generous and trusting, allowing people to get close and extract from you that which you have in abundance. Be careful; if you never mince your words, people will no longer count on you.

**Taurus the Bull (Minotaur/Sacred)**  
April 20 – May 20

You sometimes feel trapped in a labyrinthine prison, not knowing when you will be released. Fear not. Stick close to your family, though you may squabble, and you will find yourself capable of reaching dizzy heights.

**Gemini the Twins (Zorn and Thorn)**  
May 21 – June 21

Your quirky mannerisms have raised your status in life. Embrace them. Extract all you can from the attention you receive. You will soon join with someone special; special someone will join with you soon.

**Cancer the Crab (Karlamos)**  
June 22 – July 22

Your powerful personality pulls people towards you. Some people might try to fight it. Persevere and your rivals will be cast adrift.

**Leo the Lion (Griever)**  
July 23 – August 22

You have the rare opportunity to embrace the ultimate manifestation of yourself. Your dreams and sense of worth will take an outward form if you let it. Unleash yourself!

**Virgo the Maiden (Terra Branford)**  
August 23 – September 22

You have sacrificed an important part of yourself in your quest to help others. Your caring nature will soon be rewarded.

**Libra the Scales of Judgement**  
(Ring of the Lucii)  
September 23 – October 22

You hold something precious in your hands. You fear a painful rejection if you attempt to engage with it. If it is important to you, try it! Justify your actions with your pure heart and intentions.

**Scorpio the Scorpion (Guard Scorpion)**  
October 23 – November 21

You stand against those who would break the law. They will attack you when your tail is up. Be ready to counterattack.

**Sagittarius the Centaur (ExDeath)**  
November 22 – December 21

You remain as strong as an oak. Branch out and do whatever you want to do. Few others will understand your goals, but you should pursue them anyway; those who would stop you will all mean nothing when you are done.

**Capricorn the Sea-goat (Yan with a fish-tail)**  
December 22 – January 19

Your outward appearance means that you are an overlooked individual, but you are extraordinarily powerful. You find it easier to exert yourself with groups of like-minded individuals with which you make up a fearsome flock. If you snort at all who dare to tell you not to pursue your ambitions then you should find more doors opening for you.

**Aquarius the Water-bearer (Tidus)**  
January 20 – February 18

Your optimism is akin to a dream. Some might find your forced laughter tiresome and unconventional, but you will reap therapeutic benefits. You will soon be recognized as an invaluable companion, so long as you are brave enough to plunge into the pool of the unknown.

**Pisces the Fish (Mr. Fish of the Forgotten Capital)**  
February 19 – March 20

You are at the centre of a number of rumours regarding another person. Don't let this trouble you; you are a worthy and interesting individual in your own right. You provide a distraction and draw a sense of wonder. Use this to your advantage.

**COMPATIBILITY**

Leo and Sagittarius.  
Virgo and Taurus.  
Libra and Gemini.  
Scorpio and Cancer.  
Sagittarius and Aries.  
Capricorn and Taurus.  
Aquarius and Gemini.  
Pisces and Scorpio.

# THREAD PROMPTS

Here at FFF we like to have fun and add FF flavor to our thread titles. When members create threads, rather than seeing the generic "Thread title" the system will now randomly generate custom FF-themed thread prompts, adapted from famous quotes across the series! Below are a few samples.

Got any suggestions? Contact us - we'd love to see some member input!



## **FFI:**

- You, thread-maker, will knock them all down! (Adapted from Garland quote)
- I can't post a blasted thread without my crystal eye! (Adapted from Matoya quote)

## **FFIV:**

- Watch your thread, windbag! (Adapted from Edge quote)

## **FFV:**

- Sweet Christmas, it's a talking turtle! (Bartz referring to Ghido, but on FFF we might think about Timmy)
- Post your thread, you addle-pated foul-complexioned scofflaw! (Adapted from Faris quote)

## **FFVI:**

- Delicious Morsel, I'd love to get my tentacles around this thread! (Adapted from Ultros quote about Terra)
- Post post, or you'll be toast! (Adapted from Kefka quote "Run run, or you'll be well done!")
- Hee, hee! Nothing can beat the music of hundreds of voices posting in unison! (famous Kefka quote)

## **FFVII:**

- Don't make your thread just a memory. (Adapted from Sephiroth quote in Advent Children)
- Post when its tail is up! (Adapted from the famous Guard Scorpion moment)
- This thread are sick. (Adapted from the famous mis-translation)
- Sit your ass down in that chair and post your god-damn THREAD! (Adapted from famous Cid quote)

## **FFVIII:**

- I post with passion, from the heart! That's what matters most. (Adapted from Laguna quote)
- Here we go... Psyche yourself up and post, baby! (Adapted from Zell quote)

## **FFIX:**

- There no munchies here, thread taste good though. (Adapted from Quina quote)
- No Cloud, no Squall shall hinder your post! (Adapted from famous line from 'I Want to Be Your Canary')

## **FFX:**

- Once Lady Yuna fixes her hair, we post! (Adapted from Auron quote)
- Pick spot. Shut up. Post. (Adapted from Kimahri quote)

## **FFXII:**

- Don't listen to Ondore's posts! (Adapted from famous Vaan quote)

## **FFXIII:**

- It's not a question of can or can't. There are some threads in life you just do. (Adapted from Lightning quote)

## **FFXV:**

- That's it! I've come up with a new post! (Adapted from Ignis recipe quote)

# PAISSA PROTECTION SOCIETY

## Hunted. Eaten. Forced to fight.

This is the fate which awaits all paissas like Polonius unless we act now.

When we found Polonius he was shy, scared, and untrusting of our help. His family had been slaughtered for game meat. He had been living in fear after multiple attempts to capture him, leaving him scarred both physically and mentally. As we approached, Polonius collapsed into a heap and shook so vigorously that vets couldn't safely sedate him.

The rampant abuse of paissas is not sustainable. Within a generation there will be no paissas left on The Sea of Clouds. Every 'adventurer' who helps the Vanu capture a paissa is contributing to the problem.



There is even a worrying trend of using an obnoxious amount of paissa fur to ornament houses with an emulation of giant paissas. If you think it looks 'cute' to dress your house as a paissa, imagine the psychological effect this will have on a paissa knowing that its brethren have been fashionably skinned for aesthetic purposes.

This must stop now.

The so-called 'paissa brat' minions are young orphaned paissas which have been cruelly plucked from their parents' side. All in the name of profit. If you cannot love and respect your paissa pet and give them the affection they need to thrive, send them to us and we will ensure a happy life for your paissa.

Thankfully, with the support of the PPS, Polonius the Paissa has been housed in a secret 'Paissa Preservation Park' along with other rescued paissas. Here they are looked after and granted the freedom from danger that they deserve, but we hope that one day all paissas can live free and happy in the wild once more.



Please support the PPS today and show your solidarity.

Tweet @PaissaProSoc

#ProtectPaissas



# Turtle's Paradise No. 1

ADVERTISEMENT FLYER



## FINAL FANTASY FORUMS DISCORD:

A voice/text chat app for FFF gamers that launched in May 2015. Despite its misleading logo, Mickey Mouse pants it is not. In July 2015, we created a Discord account for FFF, mainly for FFXIV gaming and hoping to get connected easily outside the game/forum.

If you haven't joined yet, we invite our members to join our [FFF Discord](#) and chat with us, wherever you are. It's mobile-friendly and free!

## JOIN SOULCORRUPTOR'S FFXI SERVER:

Come and join LJ (Soulcorruptor) on this 100% free private Final Fantasy XI server (Supernova)! No monthly sub or game purchase required. You need only download it and dive into the world of Vana'Diel. With various perks (such as faster exp, easy warping, and starting with 1,000,000 Gil), this server is set up to ensure that you can relax and have a good time. LJ hopes to see you there!

Stay tuned: LJ's review of FFXI will be featured in FFF's next magazine issue.



LOGO BY MITSUKI

## JOIN OUR FREE COMPANY:

The FC derived from Final Fantasy Forums requires all prospective members to sign up to the forums in order to preserve the close-knit communal spirit of the FC. By recruiting players to the FC, we hope to integrate our members to the site community while offering incentives to provide a fun and unique system that will hopefully lead to strong ties in the future. This is our vision, our goal, our niche.

If you are up for the challenge and are a team player we welcome you to join the [Final Fantasy Forums FC!](#)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Creating FFF's first magazine issue has felt like a task tremendous enough to rival Sabin's suplex of the Phantom Train. It could not have been completed were it not for the following contributors to which we offer gratitude in abundance.

## MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTION

### Project Leads:

#### Dionysos:

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / PRIMARY AUTHOR / INTERVIEWER / PAINT ARTIST

#### Mitsuki:

GRAPHIC & LAYOUT DESIGNER / AUTHOR / INTERVIEWER / EDITOR

### Project Contributors:

**Linnaete:** AUTHOR / EDITOR / ARTIST

**Paddy McGee:** AUTHOR / EDITOR

**Tia:** PDF EDITOR / PROOFREADER

**Luke / AuronX:** AUTHOR / INTERVIEWER / PROOFREADER

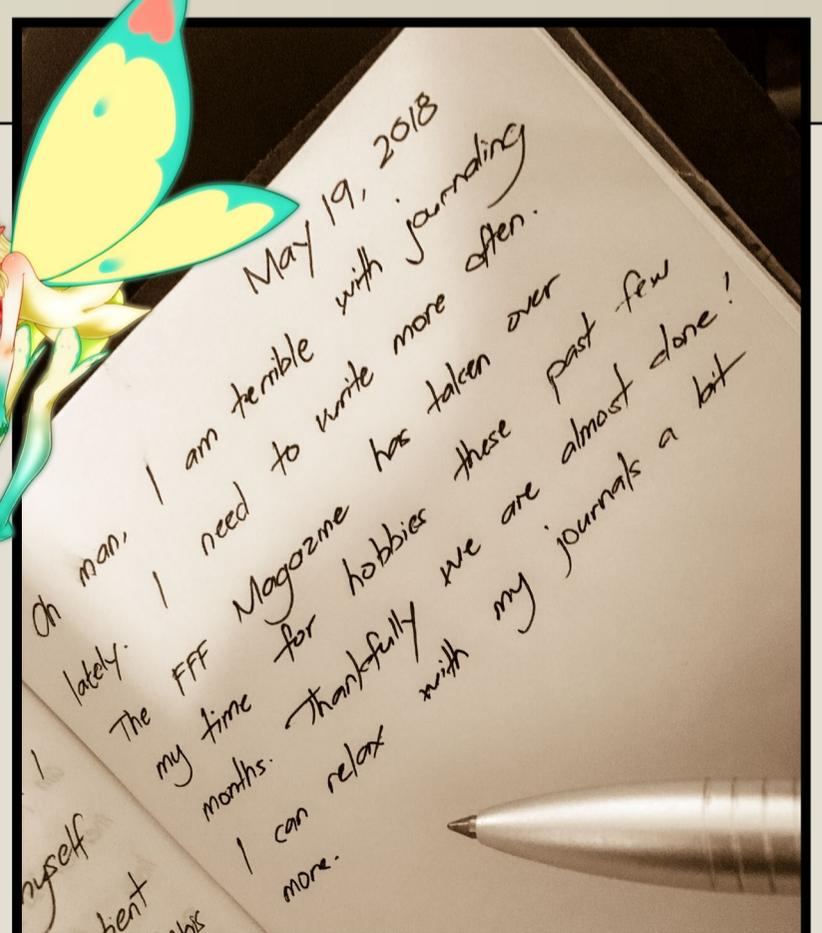
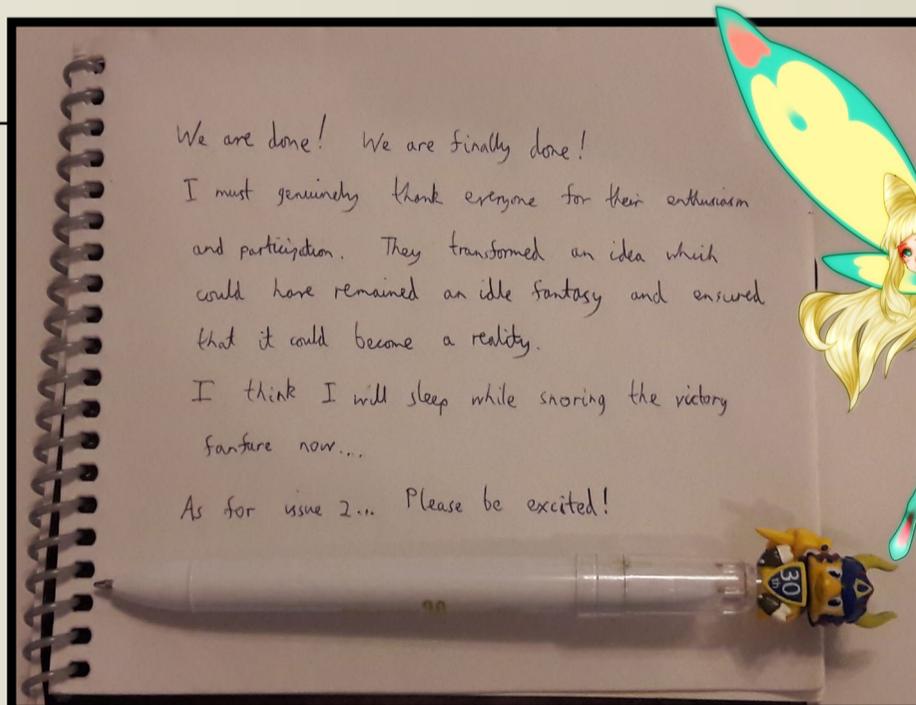
**Tyler / Shu:** AUTHOR

**Six:** AUTHOR / PROOFREADER / GRAPHICS ASSISTANT

**Galadín:** ADOBE (INDESIGN / ILLUSTRATOR) INFO CONSULTANT

**Cali:** CONSULTING EXPERT ON CETRA / PROOFREADER

**Belazor/Fil:** XENFORO 2 INFO CONSULTANT



Both Dionysos (above) and Mitsuki (right) were so exhausted that they forgot to sign their usernames.

# CONTENT ATTRIBUTIONS

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**Cali:** GFX art.  
**Coco:** GFX art.  
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**Yuleth:** [Eos](#) image.