

Final Fantasy VII: Children of Jenova

Chapter 22

/Mommy Daddy help someone help please help help help.../ C.J.'s left hand drew up into a fist, and later she would find four small red crescent moon shapes engraved into the palm where her fingernails had dug in. "Oh no." A scream tried to work its way out of her throat, and she swallowed it back. She gathered her courage and peered back through the small window. Reeve was still in there.

"Hello again," he said. "I haven't seen you around here."

C.J. nodded numbly. "I--I'm new."

"I see. So how'd you get involved with such a fine group of folks as this?" Reeve asked, not even trying to dampen his sarcasm in his voice. He coughed again and winced; it had just started to hurt a few minutes before. "You don't look like much of a fighter. What was it? Did your parents pay Heidegger off to take you in? Or did you just wait in the alley and stab your competition in the back like Archer?"

"I was--I was drafted," C.J. replied flatly. "I don't want to be here. And I don't like Archer either."

"Oh." Reeve sighed. "Sorry. Why don't you just get out of here while you have a chance?"

"I can't." C.J. loosened her tie and unbuttoned the top button of her shirt, revealing the black tracking collar around her neck. "If I try to leave, they'll..."

"They'll kill you." Reeve shook his head in disgust. "I don't suppose you have a name?"

"C.J.," she replied, and Reeve nodded.

"I used to know a little girl named C.J.," he said a bit sadly. "Bravest kid in the world, too. There was--an accident, I guess about a week or so ago...she saved her dad's life, but she...she..." He looked back up at the window, and saw the blonde Turk crying softly. Her eyes were bright green...no, not just bright, glowing with a faint green light. Mako eyes. Besides the fact that they glowed, the eyes were almost identical to Shera's. Other than that, she was an almost perfect copy of Cid. "Oh my God."

And as if to confirm what he now feared, C.J. opened her mouth and spoke again, softly. "Reeve...it's me..."

"Oh, shit." He couldn't even imagine how much it was hurting C.J. to see him like this..."Sweetheart, where have you been all this time? We've all been worried sick about you!"

"I was in Branford for a little while," C.J. sniffled. "That's where I came out of the water. I was a bouncer." She laughed softly. "That's why me and Archer don't like each other. I beat him up." She fumbled in her shirt pocket for the pack of clove cigarettes Kain had left, pulled one out, and lit it up, ducking under the window so Reeve wouldn't see.

"Good for you!" Reeve grinned. "Why'd you beat him up?"

"'Cause he grabbed my butt." She ducked under the window again, took a long drag off the clove, blew out smoke, and licked the sweet taste of cloves from her lips.

Reeve growled softly. "Listen, C.J. I think he might have hurt Reno real bad. I don't think they've been feeding him either. If you get a chance, can you go check on him sometime s--hey! Are you smoking out there!?"

C.J. turned beet red. "Uh huh."

/Boy, Cid's gonna blow a gasket if he finds out about that.../ "Take my advice, sweetie. Don't start. They'll stunt your growth."

"It's a little too late for that now," C.J.--all five feet nine inches of her-- shot back.

They stared at each other for a few moments, then both burst into laughter. "Right, right," Reeve snickered, wiping a tear from his eye. "Somehow I don't think your dad'll see it that way--" As he spoke that last word, his breath caught painfully in his throat again, and he went into a violent coughing fit.

"You okay?" C.J. asked. /Duh! What kinda stupid question is that.../

Reeve nodded, holding the back of his free hand against his mouth, trying to force himself to breathe slowly. "Yeah," he finally croaked. "This is starting to hurt pretty bad, though."

"Maybe you oughta stop talking then," C.J. suggested. Reeve shook his head.

"It's okay. It helps keep my mind off this stuff." He managed a bit of a smile. "So tell me...how exactly did you end up here?"

C.J. told him the whole story, from waking up in Branford to getting her first job as a bouncer, how she'd come so close to getting home only to have the old Viper turn traitor on her and almost blow her up, how the Turks had caught her and hauled her in. By the time she was done, it was almost five in the morning.

"So you haven't seen your dad since then?" Reeve asked quietly, and C.J. shook her head.

"I tried calling home a few times, but nobody was ever there," she said. "And I tried to call you, but I...I got scared and I couldn't say anything."

"That was you!?" Reeve laughed. "Why didn't you say something to me, sweetheart?" Of course Reeve had a pretty good idea why. "Nah, don't worry about it." He sighed, coughed again, and winced. The burning pain in his throat had started to spread to his chest, and he wondered how long it would be before it became too much to bear. "I'm real sorry you have to see this, C.J."

C.J. sniffled softly. "I know."

"I'll probably still be here tomorrow night," Reeve said. "But I don't know if I'll be very good company then. Scarlet told me I'd probably last two days in here, but the way this is going..." He sighed again. "I don't think you're going to want to see me tomorrow, and I don't think I can stand the thought of you having to see me like that."

"I don't care," C.J. replied. "I can't just leave you alone in there."

"You're still stubborn," Reeve said with a little laugh. "Why in the world would you want to come back?"

C.J. sniffled again and cast her eyes floor-ward. "Because I lo--because I do, that's why."

/"Because I love you?" Is that what she was going to say?/ Reeve rubbed his eyes, which were also starting to sting. Whether it was due to gas, fatigue, or tears he wasn't sure. /They're killing her too. They don't know it, but they are./ "I guess your shift's almost over," he said.

C.J. checked her watch. "Crap...yeah."

"Okay." Reeve nodded. "You don't want them to come in here and see you crying. You better go ahead and act like you're doing guard stuff, okay?"

"Kay." C.J. sniffled again and wiped her eyes. "I'll see you tomorrow then. And I'll go check on Reno."

"Good girl." Reeve smiled faintly again. "Don't worry too much about me, okay?" He coughed again, flinching at both the pain and the sudden bitter, metallic taste in his mouth. "And if you get the chance...could you kick Archer in the butt for me?"

C.J. giggled. "Sure." With that, she turned away from the gas chamber door and sat back down with her book to wait for her relief.

Reeve sighed as his view of the outside world was reduced once again to a small square section of a beige wall. Another short coughing fit took hold of him, and again he pressed the back of his free hand to his mouth in an effort to muffle it. When it passed, he groaned softly and wiped his mouth with his sleeve and leaned his head back, shutting his eyes and trying to catch his breath. That was getting more and more difficult. He was sure all the talking he'd been doing hadn't helped in that department, but it was better than sitting in here in silence waiting to die.

He opened his eyes again, and started to reach up and rub them with his free hand. Then he stopped, looking numbly at his sleeve. "Oh, hell," he croaked, staring at the fresh red stain on the white fabric.

* * *

"Hoo kay," Cid sighed, rubbing his red and tired eyes. He and Vincent had been up all night fiddling with the Illusion Materia Yuffie had handed over to them, and now Cid had managed to work it into an odd little contraption which was now attached to an old truck they'd found in Wutai. After Cid had crossed the palm of the truck's owner with a considerable amount of green, he had been more than willing to let them experiment on it. Now a strange little metal box sat on the dash, wired to the truck's ignition. "Fire it up, Vincent."

Vincent turned the key, and the truck started with a shudder and several backfires. Once it was running smoothly, Vincent threw a switch on the box...and the truck vanished from sight. There was no telltale distortion in the air where it had been, only four short tire-shaped divots in the dirt.

So far, so good. The truck backfired again and threatened to stall; Vincent nudged the gas pedal and watched the fuel needle droop. He got the feeling that this particular truck's fuel consumption was measured in gallons per mile instead of the other way around. "Cid, whatever you're going to do you'd better hurry, unless you want to walk to the gas station..."

"Just keep it runnin' a little longer," Cid said, climbing aboard the Highwind and heading for the bridge. Once there, he fired up the tracking device he'd so recently added and scanned the area where the truck should have been.

It didn't show up.

He double-checked. Then he triple-checked. Then, just to be certain he was pointing the damn thing the right way, he scanned all around the airship for any trace of an old rickety truck.

Nothing.

"HOT DAMN!" he whooped, leaping straight up into the air and grinning. "Holy shit! It works!" He shut down the ship's power and trotted back out, where the truck was making rather unpleasant growling noises. "Hey, Vincent! We did it!"

The truck backfired one last time, loudly, and died with a wheeze. Shortly after that, it faded back into view. "The tracker didn't pick it up?" Vincent asked.

"Hell no!" Cid laughed. "I just hope it works on the Highwind." He lit up a cigarette and puffed on it contentedly. "Hell, what am I sayin'...of course it'll work."

A sleepy-looking Elena padded out to the makeshift test site and sat down on the hood of the truck. "Our Shinra mystery man's at it again," she said, tossing Cid a stack of papers she'd printed up. "This doesn't look too good, Cid."

Cid groaned. "Aw, shit...what is it now?" He leafed through the printouts and swore softly. "Oh, man."

"What?" Vincent peered over Cid's shoulder. "They've...they've already executed Reeve?"

Elena shook her head. "Yes and no. They put him in the gas chamber, but he's still alive. According to this stuff, he's probably got another day or so to go. Vail cooked up some really nasty slow-acting stuff to use on him." She sighed. "I imagine he's not very comfortable right now."

"That's fuckin' inhuman," Cid spat, his eyes still scanning the printouts. "Just when I think that bitch can't get any worse...oh, no." He sighed heavily. "And look who they got guardin' him at night."

"Yeah," Elena sighed. "Poor kid."

"You don't know the half of it," Cid replied. "She...um...she...she's kinda got a crush on him."

Elena gasped. "Oh no...that's terrible...but it's not all bad news." She pulled a sheet of paper from the stack. "We know exactly where they're keeping Reno, at least. And there's something else. About that tracking collar they put on Junior."

"What about it?" Cid snapped, and Elena snickered.

"Our mystery man managed to get me access to the tracking system that keeps tabs on it." She grinned. "I can see exactly where she is all the time."

"Elena..." Cid lit another cigarette. "Are you sure this stuff is good? I mean, are you sure someone's not sending it to trick us?"

"I thought about that," Elena said with a small nod. "And I've been trying to figure out who's sending it. It's got to be one of the Turks. Other than Heidegger and Scarlet, they're the only ones with that kind of system access. And I thought maybe they're sending me fake stuff, but when I read it...I just get the feeling that it's real. Everything jives like it should."

"Okay," Cid said calmly. "Then we got someone in Shinra on our side. We go in there, we get Reno, get Reeve, get Junior, and find out who this mystery dude is so we can get him the hell out before Scarlet finds out about him."

"What if it -is- a trap?" Vincent asked softly. "This all seems a little too convenient."

Cid was silent for a few seconds, painfully aware that one pair of ruby eyes and one pair of amber eyes were locked on him, awaiting his decision. "We deal with it."

* * *

Shera Highwind lay awake in the bed she usually shared with Cid, staring at the ceiling. Without her glasses, the light fixture above wasn't much more than a roundish pale fuzzy blob on the ceiling. That didn't matter.

She was busy trying to picture what Junior must look like now. The handwriting on the postcard she'd sent had not been the uncoordinated scrawl of a six-year-old. Junior's penmanship had always been neat compared to other children her age, but it was still uneven at best. The lines written in crisp blue ink on the card were uniform and tidy, obviously the earmark of a larger hand with more control of the fine art of writing.

What would she look like, all grown up? Had her tiny feet finally caught up with the rest of her? She would be tall, that much Shera knew. She had always been tall. She knew that, but found herself unable to picture standing on her tiptoes to kiss her daughter's forehead.

She -could- picture Junior dressed up in a pink flight suit, with a pair of goggles perched on her forehead and a red licorice twist sticking out of her mouth like a cigarette. She had always favored Cid. /Oh dear,/ she thought suddenly, /I hope she hasn't started smoking.../ At that precise moment, Junior was in fact lighting up one of the clove cigarettes she'd found in her new home and getting chewed out by Reeve for it.

The hall phone rang, jarring Shera out of her reverie, and she stumbled out of bed, feeling her way along the wall in the dark until she reached the little table where the phone sat. "H--hello?"

"Shera?" A pause. "Shera, where's Cid?"

"Cloud?" Shera flipped on the light, squinting uncomfortably. "Um, I don't know. I thought he was supposed to meet up with you in Junon or something."

"Things didn't quite go like we planned. Don't worry. It's all okay. I found Zack."

Shera let out a sigh of relief. "Oh, that's wonderful! Where are you now?"

"We're at the Gold Saucer. I lost my PHS phone so I couldn't get hold of Cid. Just tell him that's where we are when you see him, okay?"

"Of course!" Shera replied.

"Thanks, Shera." And with that, Cloud hung up.

Shera set the phone back down and picked her way back to the bedroom. Something wasn't right. Cloud had sounded--well, he'd sounded like he was making an effort to sound normal. Still, Tifa would be so happy to know everything was all right, and Junior would be happy to see Zack again.

But she just couldn't shake the feeling that something about this was horribly wrong.

* * *

C.J. looked up from her book as the door to the little beige room opened and Stuart stepped through it, followed by Raven, Heidegger, and Scarlet. Heidegger eyed her oddly, then looked back at Raven.

"Why doesn't she have a weapon?" he asked. "Just how did you expect her to guard something if she doesn't have anything to guard it with?"

Raven blinked. Heidegger's calm, collected tone surprised her. "I didn't think she needed one," she replied, still a bit taken aback. "She's good at hand-to-hand."

"Yeah, ask Archer," Stuart cut in. Heidegger ignored him.

"Take her down to the armory immediately," Heidegger ordered, and Raven nodded. "Issue her a weapon and at least a Restore Materia. Understood?"

"Yes sir." Raven shot an uneasy smile at C.J., who was stuffing her book into her bag. "All ready, dear?"

"Yes ma'am," she replied softly, sneaking one last look through the gas chamber door's window as she stood and saying a silent goodbye to Reeve before Raven led her out the door.

Scarlet peered through the window as well and laughed loudly, causing both Stuart and Heidegger to wince. "Are we having fun yet, handsome?"

"Go to hell," Reeve croaked, staring icily at her. "Just when I start thinking you can't possibly sink any lower, you always manage to--" He trailed off, coughing violently, and Scarlet laughed again.

"I take it you're referring to my newest Turk," she said. "She's a little soft. That's why I gave her this assignment." Scarlet smiled and snickered. "I found that tape in your office, and I know all about her cute little crush on you. If Vail's right, and she usually is, you're probably going to kick off sometime tomorrow night, right smack in the middle of C.J.'s shift. I can't think of a better way to toughen her up...can you?"

"You're disgusting," Reeve wheezed, drawing his sleeve across his mouth again and trying not to notice the blood that stained it. "You--" His breath caught in his throat with an alarming rattle, and once more his words were interrupted by a severe coughing fit.

Scarlet watched with detached amusement as he reflexively tried to curl up into a ball in his chair but succeeded only in leaning forward, left hand clamped over his mouth, tears in his eyes. "Save your breath," she hissed, turning away and walking out of the room, followed by Heidegger.

* * *

C.J. was, to say the least, floored by the vast selection of weapons in the Shinra armory. Raven stood near one wall, pawing through bins of Materia, occasionally pausing to set one aside, leaving C.J. to pick through the assortment of swords and knives and such. She picked up a standard-issue SOLDIER sword and scowled. Too big, too heavy. She found a small dagger in a leg sheath and took it, figuring it would make a fine backup weapon. But she couldn't find anything else to suit her.

"Come on," Raven sighed, idly rolling the four Materia she'd picked out on the counter like marbles. "Just grab something already."

C.J. opened her mouth to say something--and then she saw it, half- obscured in the corner by a stack of folded SOLDIER uniforms. Its blade vaguely resembled a very large can opener, and at the opposite end of its dark violet shaft was a large, ornate diamond-shaped thing which C.J. guessed could be used for whacking people over the head. "I want that," she said, pointing at the thing.

"Huh? Oh, that thing?" Raven picked her way around the piles of armor and uniforms and retrieved the huge pole-arm. "We've had it sitting around here forever. Vail found it on one of her expeditions up North. Here." She extended the butt end of it to C.J., who grasped it and hefted it in her hands.

Not too heavy, not too light, balanced perfectly. An odd symbol that looked like an ornate lower-case "h" was engraved at the base of the blade. She recognized it as the astronomical symbol for Saturn. "Cool," she murmured, making a few experimental parries and thrusts with it.

"About time," Raven sighed, snapping the four Materia into the little slots along the glaive's shaft. "Okay. I got you--" she pointed at the orbs as she named them off-- "Restore, Lightning, Fire, and my personal favorite of this batch, Hecate Summon. Sorry none of the magic ones are mastered. Level 2's going to be the best you get out of any of them, and that's the Restore one."

"No problem," C.J. said, barely hearing. "Can I go home now?"

Raven chuckled softly. "Of course."

They hadn't counted on one thing: how the hell C.J. was going to fit six feet of Saturn Glaive into the tiny black sports car Raven drove. In the end, they simply poked it into the back seat, with the butt end sticking out the passenger side window where it threatened to deck unsuspecting pedestrians and very nearly took out a parking meter as Raven took a corner a little too fast trying to beat the traffic light. As she pulled into C.J.'s driveway, her cell phone chirped merrily.

"The master calls," Raven sighed, pulling the thing out of her pocket and hitting the "talk" button. A voice so loud C.J. could hear it issued forth from the earpiece:

"RAVEN! My office! NOW!"

Raven grimaced, holding the phone away from her ear. "God, Scarlet, you don't have to scream at me," she finally said as C.J. wrestled her weapon out of the back seat. "Wh--okay! Okay! Don't get your fishnets in such a wad! I'm on the way!" Raven turned the phone off and rolled her eyes. "Who pissed in HER cornflakes this morning? I'll see you tonight, C.J."

"Uh, bye." C.J. turned toward the door as Raven peeled out in her driveway, unlocking it and stepping inside as the little black car sped off down the street.

As soon as she crossed the threshold and closed the door, her hands began to shake uncontrollably. The Saturn Glaive clattered to the floor, knocking a small potted plant off the entry hall table. The pot shattered. Clods of soil and shards of terracotta exploded outward. The plant lay on its side, roots exposed, like a jellyfish washed up on the beach.

C.J. didn't notice.

Blinded by tears, she tore up the stairs and flung herself onto the bed, burying her face in the stomach of the giant Mog pillow and sobbing loudly and pitifully. She felt the soft warm form of a cat curling up against her side and paid it no heed.

/I wanna go home!/ the voice of her younger self screamed inside her head. /I wanna go home NOW!/

"Shut up," C.J. sniffled into the pillow. The cat shifted a bit and snuggled up closer.

The voice did not obey. /I want Mama I want Daddy I wanna go home I wanna see Ryan I wanna--/

"Shut up...just shut up..." C.J.'s shaking hand tore absently at the ear of the Moogle pillow.

/--see Zack I wanna go home I--/

"SHUT UP!" C.J. screamed, sitting up abruptly and startling the cat that had cuddled up to her. She stormed out of bed and across the room, where she faced her reflection in the dresser mirror. "You--" she began, pointing an accusing finger at herself, "are not a baby!"

/Mama--/

"You are not a little kid!"

/Daddy--/

"YOU ARE A GROWN-UP!" she screamed at her reflection. "SO STOP YOUR GODDAMN WHINING AND ACT LIKE ONE!"

/home--/

C.J. let out a scream like a banshee, and with strength borne of fear and rage and further fueled by the Mako running through her veins, drove her fist into the mirror.

/.../

The leather gloves she wore as part of her Turk uniform had, for the most part, protected her hand, but a stray shard of mirror glass had caught her exposed knuckle. She didn't notice.

In a much calmer voice, she addressed the sniffing six-year-old in her head. "I have to pull it together. I can't let Raven or Archer or Heidegger see me like this. I sure as hell can't let Reeve see me like this."

/.../

"If I'm going to look like a grown-up, I'm going to have to act like one. So go away. Leave me alone. I don't want you around anymore." Three drops of blood from her cut finger pattered onto the surface of the dresser.

The child-voice was silent.

Calmly, C.J. went back downstairs and mended her wound with her new Restore Materia. She kicked off her shoes and left them lying on the living room floor. She peeled off her jacket and threw it on the back of the sofa.

She went into the kitchen and fed the cats. She dragged out a broom and dustpan and cleaned up the potted plant's remains. She went back upstairs and swept up the mirror fragments. That done, she pulled off the rest of her uniform, changed into a T-shirt, and crawled into bed.

She would keep her wits about her, and she would figure out a way to get out of here.

* * *

"What's your problem, Scarlet?" snapped a very irate Raven as she shut the door to the President's office behind her. Scarlet replied by throwing a stack of computer printouts in her direction. Raven picked them up and thumbed through them. "Where'd this come from?"

"That," Scarlet began, "is a record of an unauthorized transmission that came from this building last night while C.J. was here. Now I've checked the tracker records, and they confirm that her sweet little ass was right there in that room all fucking night with no access to a terminal. She didn't even leave to pee or have a cup of coffee."

"What do you expect me to do about it?" Raven spat, tossing the printouts back at Scarlet.

"It came from your terminal. And you weren't home last night."

"What!?" Raven blurted, eyes wide. "Are you accusing me?"

"Why not?" Scarlet narrowed her eyes at Raven. "You're the only one with the skills. And I've seen how you look at that kid. Do you think you're helping her--"

"For your information, I was at the bar last night," Raven sniffed. "Archer was with me; feel free to ask him." She sat down on the edge of Scarlet's desk. "Are you insinuating something?"

Scarlet just glared, and Raven laughed.

"My interest in C.J. is strictly professional. Unlike you, I do have some morals."

"Excuse me!?"

Raven's eyes drilled into Scarlet. "I saw the surveillance video of when you were strapping Reeve into his chair in there. That was just plain sick, Scarlet. I'm not surprised that he decked you."

Scarlet flinched as Raven hit that sore spot in her ego. "I can see I'm not going to get anywhere with this," she huffed. "You've got twenty-four hours to find out who the hell is leaking this shit, and God help you if you don't."

Raven slid off the desk and stomped toward the door. "Fine!" she shot over her shoulder, slamming the door behind her. "Bitch," she muttered as she walked away.

"I HEARD THAT!"

* * *

The air inside the gas chamber was now not only laden with whatever nasty substances Vail had cooked up, it was growing hotter by the minute. Of course it was; it just wouldn't do to have a ventilation system in a gas chamber.

Reeve reached up with a trembling hand and brushed a damp lock of hair out of his eyes. The squirrely brown-haired guy was still pacing around outside the door. How long would it be before C.J. came back? He had promised himself that he would not die on her watch...but now he was starting to worry that he wouldn't be able to keep that promise.

The pain in his throat and his chest was almost unbearable now; every gulp of air he managed to draw into his lungs--which wasn't many--without coughing his goddamned head off felt like liquid fire. He had long since stopped hoping that

he would pass out if it started to hurt too badly. Maybe Vail had put something in the gas that kept him awake. He wanted to scream. He -needed- to scream, but his voice had stopped working soon after C.J. had left. So he did the next best thing. He cried.

* * *

Annie Wright was not having a good day.

The new bouncer she'd hired to replace C.J. was all but worthless; Chopper had easily pounded the crap out of him, almost immediately after which he'd walked off the job. She'd run out of moonshine. And some asshole had managed to choke down not one, but two platters of nuclear waste wings. Annie suspected, judging by the guy's unusually slurred speech even when sober, that he had no functioning nerves in his mouth. At least she took some comfort in the knowledge that he would be paying the price sometime tomorrow when the wings got done wandering through his intestinal tract and decided to leave.

So naturally, when the "whump" of a not-too-expertly landed airship reverberated through the Hangar, Annie was somewhat less than thrilled.

"What the HELL'S goin' on out here?" she screamed up at the black airship's crewmen, who were trickling off the ship like a stream of black ants. "That's no way to treat a fine piece a' machinery like that! Where's yer got-damn pilot?"

The crewmen looked at each other nervously. "Uh..." one finally stammered, "we don't really have one. We built this airship, and Shinra wanted us to tear it down, and we couldn't do it, so--"

"So you stole it? 'S that it?" Annie took a moment to savor the whipped- puppy expressions on the faces of the crewmen. "And not a damn one of ya's a pilot?"

More whipped-puppy expressions. Hoo boy.

Annie gazed up at the sleek black ship. Damn, it was a beauty...almost as pretty as the famous Highwind. And here it was, being flown around by a bunch of yahoos that didn't even have their wings.

It didn't take too long before Annie made up her mind what to do. She rushed back into the bar, shooed the patrons out with the two-by-four she kept under the bar next to her pistol, flipped the "open" sign over to the "closed" side, and came back out, locking the door behind her. "I'm gettin' too damn old for the bar business anyway," she said a little sadly, looking at the Hangar one last time before climbing aboard the Blackhawk.

Author's Notes: When I write about what poor Reeve is going through in the gas chamber, I am writing from experience. I am right in the middle of the Great Texas Smoke Storm of '98 *hack* *hack* *die*...Precious and Dammit are modeled, not at all loosely, after my own cats; only the names have been changed--actually, that's not entirely true; I often call Midnight "Precious," and Spazz hears "Dammit, stop that!" a lot...who's the mystery Shinra connection? We've pretty much eliminated Raven...or have we?...More to come, as always. Stay tuned. Oh, by the way—yes, C.J.'s Saturn Glaive is a cameo appearance by Sailor Saturn's Silence Glaive, and it's also the closest you're going to see to a SM/FF7 crossover from me.

--Sailor Solathei

"Ice...snacks...and--fifty gallons of BEER!? What kind of life does she lead, anyway!?" --Shinji Ikari

"Hang on to your drawers and don't piss in 'em!" --Cid Highwind

"A brand new ML to blow up! Wai!" --Zen

"Excuse me, I am a lost little boy. Can you help me?.....well, SCREW YOU TOO!" --Cartman

Happiness is a belt-fed weapon

Sailor Solathei's Cid Highwind shrine (still under very heavy construction)

<http://members.xoom.com/ssolathei/cidshrine.html> and the Cid Highwind Otaku

Ring: <http://members.xoom.com/ssolathei/ring.html>

Hang on to your shorts... 's all I got to say about this one.