

Rufus's Twin

By Jen

Chapter 16: Unpleasant Discoveries

It was early morning, an unusual time for Cid Highwind to be up and coherent. Shera was the one who got up this early, and then walked Mandie to the school. But the night before nightmares had plagued Cid until he finally gave up on sleep altogether and lied next to Shera, watching her chest rise and fall and wondering if her dreams were pleasant.

Three times he had drifted off, only to be awakened in a cold sweat, his limbs weak and shaking as his mind tried to grasp onto reality. In those few moments of consciousness, most of the nightmare eluded him except for one, constant thing: Rufus Shinra. Cid couldn't understand his fear over a man dead for over nine years, nor could he understand why it was his mind chose Rufus to dream about when Sephiroth had been a far greater foe. There had been similar dreams such as these over the last few months, but none with such intensity.

After he saw Mandie off to school, he planned to take the Highwind and head off to talk to Vincent in Nibelheim. He knew Shera would readily listen to his dreams and his fears, but she wouldn't do it with the same detachment and logic that his friend would. Right now, he needed that more than he needed Shera's love. These dreams weren't something that he felt was going to go away; what had once been sporadic nightmares, were becoming frequent, and the way that they caused him to feel alarmed him.

Vincent and Cid were as different as two men could be, yet they were friends. In some strange way they related and complimented one another. Perhaps it was their mutual need for silence, and the fact that one was so blunt, where the other was reserved. Neither of them needed to point that out though, for it was unspoken. They both understood it and that was enough for them. And to Cid's way of thinking, if anyone could help him figure this out, it was Vincent.

Cid stood now, leaning up against the Bronco, thin streams of smoke swirling around his head and he watched the morning sky. Sometimes, he still dreamed of going up there. But a lot had changed over the years, and he wasn't the man he once was. Mandie and Shera had made him realize the important things, and that in turn made him realize he didn't need to achieve something as great as space travel to prove himself. But it didn't mean he forgot to dream now and then.

He never thought he would miss the rocket, but he did. He missed every inch of the rusted hunk of junk. It had been there for so long, a constant reminder of why this town was to begin with, that he had grown used to it, maybe even taken it for granted. Sometimes it was still strange for him to come out of the house and not see it standing there, even after all this time.

He often wondered just why space travel had been so important to him. Perhaps it was because his father's dream had been space travel too. But Ben Highwind had never gotten to see that dream through because in his time with Shinra, before his death, space travel hadn't been an option they had wanted to explore. But he had shared those dreams with his young son, while they sat in a yard, not so different from this one, and watched the clear, blue sky. It fueled the imagination of a young boy, who had built model rockets in his spare time, and became the dream of a man who had made flying a reality.

It had been a while since Cid had thought of his old man. Ben Highwind had been an ace pilot for Shinra, his whole life revolving around his next chance to take to the skies. He had met Cid's mother, Lara, in a cafe in Midgar one night. She had been working as a waitress to make ends meet while she contemplated where her future would take her. Ben's relentless persual of her and his zest for life caught her eye and her heart. They were married six months after meeting, and where Ben went, Sara went.

Sara died giving birth to Cid, and to his knowledge, Ben Highwind was never with another woman after that. Cid spent the first five years of his life with his father's sister in Kalm, seeing his father whenever he got time away from Shinra. One day, Shinra decided to cut back and Cid's father was one of the men they let go of. He then took over caring for his son full time, while working as a mechanic and flying cargo whenever he got the chance.

Cid's childhood was filled with mechanics, flying, and the smell of grease. Cid grew to love everything associated with

planes, and often listened to his father talk for hours of his flying days. Ben Highwind was gruff, short of temper, and smoked like a chimney, but he loved his son and though he never said it, Cid knew.

Then came the day of Cid's 17th year, when the war with Wutai was no longer something just talked about, but a full blown war. Shinra needed all the pilots they could get and Cid's father was one of them. While Cid worked his way through the Shinra Flight Academy, Ben was off fighting. And the day Cid got the news that his father's plane was shot down and he was in critical condition, was the worst day of his life.

He sat with his father while Ben wavered in and out on consciousness, finally passing away three days later. Ironically, the cause of Ben's death didn't deter Cid from flying; instead, it increased his resolve to see his, as well as his father's, dreams fulfilled.

"Daddy? What're you thinking about?" A voice at his elbow asked, startling him from his thoughts.

He turned to find Mandie there, her book bag on her shoulder and her lunch in her hand.

He smiled, pinching her under the chin before answering, "Your grandpa."

She moved to lean against his side, setting her bags down at her feet so she could cross her arms and unconsciously mimic his stance. "What was he like?"

He grinned slightly. "Me."

"You mean you're like he was," she corrected.

"Yeah, but you never met him, so the best way to describe him is to say he's like your old man. He loved flyin' just as much as me, taught me a lot."

"Where is he?"

"He died."

"Oh. Well, do you think he's up there?" She asked, pointing to the sky.

Cid followed her hand. "Up there?"

"Yeah, flyin' in heaven."

Cid stared down at his daughter, the miniature version of his wife, and then swept her into his arms, squeezing her tightly. She wrapped her arms around his neck and grinned at him in a fashion that was so reminiscent of his father, that his breath caught momentarily. Funny, the things one saw sometimes.

"Enough of that munchkin, we've got to get you to school before you're late and your mama gives me holy hell."

She giggled, before leaping down and grabbing her things. Latching onto Cid's hand, she began pulling him forward, not even stopping to see if he followed. That was his Mandie, always forging ahead often without a second thought. At moments like this, Cid often wondered who was the braver of the two of them; him or her.

Morgan stared at the bruise on her face as she ran the brush through her damp hair. She had been hoping that by staring in the mirror again, she would have another flashback. But she supposed was trying too hard, or that luck simply wasn't going to allow for it. With a sigh, she flung her hair over her shoulders and turned from the mirror. She marveled at Vincent's eye, for he had chosen a simple pair of black pants and a white shirt that fit her perfectly. She had to admit it was nice to get out of that odd black bodysuit she had been wearing.

Stopping at the foot of the bed, she fingered the sleek, black material of her uniform and wished it would give her all the answers she sought. Who had put her in this? And where had she been when she awoke and instinct told her to run? Why was it Vincent was certain she had been asleep for nearly 19 years? It left her cold inside, to think she had lost that much of her life, yet looked as though she were barely over 17. And who was this Hojo and this Sephiroth of her dreams? Vincent seemed to know them, but acted reluctant to talk of them.

Sighing heavily, she flopped down and stared at her booted feet. Lifting one up, she looked closely at it and was surprised to see something on the heel of the boot. Sliding off the bed, she braced one hand on the carpet while the other pulled her boot up for closer inspection. It was a strange red mark, a symbol of some sort. No matter how hard she stared at it, or how long, she couldn't bring out even a spark of recognition.

Rising to her feet, she pushed the symbol from her mind and concentrated on the smell of breakfast wafting throughout the mansion. Whatever he was cooking, it smelled wonderful. She would never have taken Vincent for a man that could cook. Of course, there were a lot of things she didn't know about Vincent. He seemed so cool, so distant and without emotion, that she wondered what had happened to make him that way. There was no chance of getting him to tell her though, he was an intensely private man.

She knew she ought to be frightened; here she was, virtually helpless and at his mercy, because she knew nothing of her past or of this time she was in now. She also knew nothing of Vincent, and his appearance was enough to frighten anyone. Still, she hadn't felt that way around him. He had never done anything to indicate that he would hurt her, as a matter of fact, he went out of his way to avoid her.

Her hand on the inside of the door jamb, she reached up to turn off the light, and then it hit her, where she had seen that mark before; in Sector 7, on a faded sign, with the partial word: 'Shin'. The symbol had been in the background of the picture, and the words had been written over it in bold, black paint. Still, that didn't tell her what it meant. Smacking her hand on the inside of the door frame in frustration, she knew her only hope of an answer was Vincent. It was always Vincent. And truthfully, something inside her hated needing his help so much.

Morgan walked swiftly down the hallway, taking her anger out on the carpet. Perhaps, there was something Vincent knew that he wasn't telling her. If that was the case, she hardly saw where it was fair. He wasn't the one who had lost his memory, forced to depend on a complete stranger for everything.

By the time she reached the kitchen, she had worked herself up so much, that she marched straight up to Vincent and said, "If there's something you aren't telling me, I want to know it right now."

Vincent turned slowly, a spatula in his hand. He could hear the fury vibrating in her voice, and didn't blame her for it. She was lost and forced to depend on him, something that obviously went against her nature and frustrated her to the point of anger. But she was a stranger, and he was not in the habit of sharing his past with someone he didn't know. No matter what she appeared to be, he could not trust her yet.

"Wouldn't you like to eat first?" He answered calmly.

Morgan ignored the rumbling in her stomach. "No! I know you know more than you're telling. I don't understand why you won't share it if it'll help me recover my memory. How would you like to wake up and realize you've lost 19 years of your life?!"

If it were at all possible, Vincent's expression became even more closed and his eyes bored into her with such an intensity, that she was forced to look away.

"Thirty years."

"What?" She asked, turning back to him with a puzzled expression.

"I woke up to find 30 years of my life gone." He replied tonelessly, turning away from her to tend to the eggs that were cooking.

Morgan felt like someone had doused her with ice water. She had come into the kitchen with every intent of making Vincent tell her what he was keeping hidden, and inadvertently, said something terrible to him. She hadn't meant to hurt him, she had only wanted him to help her.

She backed up until her legs hit a chair, and let out a little gasp as her backside collided with the hard seat.

"I'm...I'm sorry, I didn't mean to..."

In her silence, Vincent turned. "Was that not your intent? Didn't you want to know about me? Why I look the way I do? Why I have this claw?" He stopped, stabbing it upward. "Why I know so much about Hojo and Sephiroth?"

She blinked, too shocked to be faced with his fury to say anything in response. His crimson eyes were blazing with barely controlled rage, and the corner of his mouth was wrenched upward, twisting his expression into a sneer. Then, as quickly as it had come, it left. His face became so still, it was as though he had never given into anger in the first place.

Morgan had only now realized that behind the calm facade, there was a lot going on inside of this man. She had truly thought that he was without emotion, unable to grasp the simple concept of empathy and concern. Yet if she thought about it, he had been there for her when she woke from her nightmare, and held her quietly while she tried to get past the fright. He was just very good at controlling his emotions.

Vincent flipped an egg slowly, his hand rigid with control. What he really wanted to do, was slam the spatula down onto the pan until it snapped. In under just a few minutes, this girl, this stranger had broken his control and gotten him to reveal just how much his own appearance bothered him. Given time, he was afraid she would break through his barriers completely and perhaps even come to mean something to him. He couldn't allow for that. Not after Lucrecia.

Because of him, Lucrecia had never gotten to hold her own son. If things had been different, if he hadn't been such a coward and ran away from his feelings after being rejected by her, all that had come after might never have been. He had found so much out later; how inadequate he made her feel, how scared. She had turned to Hojo, because he had been familiar, because he had been a scientist like she was and shared her ambitions.

He never should have let her go. She really had loved him, and when she had needed him the most, he had been too selfish to think past his own hurt to help her. In the process, he had lost her and 30 years of his life. Thirty years; by then, it was too late to change anything that had gone before. But the others had given him a chance to change what could come. Together, they had stopped Hojo from ever harming another innocent, and saved the Planet.

Vincent did not like being hailed a hero though; he had simply done what was needed, and now he only wanted to live in peace. He was learning though, that there was no such thing as that word. For nine years, they had lived in relative calm, until now. One event after the other seemed to be pointing toward some sort of culmination. And he had the feeling, that it was coming very soon. He couldn't help but wonder how Morgan fit into all this. Was she simply a coincidence, or something more?

The few flashbacks that Morgan had, had, seemed to point toward Hojo. How had he abused her? What had he done to her that had caused her to lose 19 years of her life, a situation so close to his own, that it made him vaguely uncomfortable. Though he would have liked to say she was telling him the truth, he did not know that for certain. After all that had happened lately, it was better for him to remain on his guard. He didn't want anything happening to his friends.

"I want to show you something. Maybe you can tell me what it means," Morgan spoke up quietly.

Vincent slid eggs onto a plate before turning to face her again. She was looking at him seriously, her dark eyes large and unblinking. He was certain he had frightened her with his outburst of anger. It was nothing though, compared to the scare she would get if he lost control enough to change.

Lifting her boot up, she pointed toward a small, red mark. Even from here, Vincent could see it perfectly. "Shinra," he said simply.

"Shinra. The company...that controls Midgar? Why would I be wearing boots with their mark?"

Vincent set her eggs down before her. "If Hojo is the man in your dreams, then perhaps you were once a part of one of his experiments for Shinra."

Experiments. That word made her blood chill in her veins. It brought her dream of the night before back in vivid clarity. The shot. The pain. The voice of the man she hated. Maybe Vincent was right; maybe she had been part of an experiment. But what did it mean exactly? Vincent had said Hojo was dead. Did that mean that she would have been forever asleep beneath the city if she hadn't somehow woken up?

"But what was I doing under the city? And...what if I was never meant to wake up? I just don't understand any of it."

"Eat your eggs." Vincent replied, returning to the sink to clean up the small mess.

"You sound like my father." She said, smiling slightly.

Vincent threw her a glance over his shoulder. "Do you remember more of him?"

Her smile faded. "No, I just meant...oh never mind."

While he cleaned, he spoke calmly, and methodically, "From what you have told me so far, it appears to have happened like this. Nineteen years before, you went into Midgar to sell your fruit while a parade was going on. You were grabbed by two men, and then taken somewhere. Apparently, to Professor Hojo, who seems to have injected you with Mako at the least, and then left you to sleep under the city. When you woke, did you see others?"

She frowned. "Others? I...I couldn't see very well until I was already running through some sort of tunnel." She sighed heavily, "I just wish I could remember it all."

"Since when did you start entertain' women, Vince?" A gruff voice asked from the doorway.

Vincent turned, having already heard Cid's approach. Morgan, however, started, dropping part of her egg on the floor at her feet. She jumped up from her chair to look the new arrival over, not quite sure what to make of who she saw there. He was wearing a faded flight jacket, carrying a large spear, and smoking a cigarette, the smell of which was cutting through the lingering scent of her eggs.

"Cid. Did you come for breakfast?"

Cid laughed, slapping his thigh. "Your sense of humor kills me Vince. You know Shera cooks ten times better than you do."

Morgan blinked. She hadn't thought there was a trace of amusement in Vincent's words. Maybe this man knew him better. He appeared to be making himself right at home, she noted, watching him rifle through the cupboard until he found a mug to pour coffee into.

"Yes, so you have said before," Vincent replied.

Cid turned around, lounging against the counter, and pierced Morgan with his clear, blue gaze. "So, are ya gonna introduce me or what?"

She found her voice. "Morgan."

"Just Morgan?"

"Quit being nosy," Vincent admonished.

"What? I'm just bein' friendly."

"It's only Morgan, because I can't remember anything else. Vincent rescued me from being killed in Sector 7 and brought

me here."

Cid raised an eyebrow. There was obviously more to this situation than just that. He knew Vincent probably better than anyone else, but his friend wasn't someone who was very open, or trusting where strangers were concerned. He wondered then, what it was about this girl that seemed to have piqued Vincent's interest. Right now though, there were other things he wanted to discuss with his friend. He figured that if Vincent trusted this girl enough to bring her here, then she must be all right.

Morgan forced herself to eat the rest of her breakfast quickly, wondering at the small, but significant change that seemed to come over Vincent while in Cid's presence. It was obvious that these two had been friends for some time and that this man understood Vincent, even if she couldn't figure out how he saw beyond Vincent's front.

"Cid Highwind. Best damn pilot around," Cid said, by way of greeting.

"He is extremely modest," Vincent said, and this time Morgan could see he was making a joke, even if his tone and expression remained the same. "I thought you were coming down with chicken pox, friend."

Cid grinned, exhaling smoke out of his nose. "Yeah, well, the doc over in Mideel fixed that. Though I had to have a goddamned shot. He fixed up Mandie too."

Morgan felt like she was intruding, and felt vaguely uncomfortable in the presence of another stranger. Because though this man said nothing, every so often he would look at her, and his expression left nothing to be questioned. This man made no attempts at hiding his emotions. He didn't trust her, and he wanted to know just who she was. If only, she knew who she was.

Rising, she said, "Excuse me."

Before either of them could reply, she left the room.

Cid stared after her. "Well. Guess she didn't like the company."

"It is not that. She has lost her memory," he informed Cid, and then went on to tell him everything that he knew about her condition.

Cid whistled. "That bastard Hojo again, huh? Wonder what the hell she was doin' under the city though. It's gotta be as rotten as hell down there."

"Your guess is as good as mine. I know that there is more, but she seems unable to remember anything except in short flashbacks. What few she has had, came in the form of dreams."

Cid raised an eyebrow. "Dreams? Can you trust that?"

Vincent shrugged. "Do I have any choice? I cannot turn her away if she needs the help."

"Hmm." Cid replied, noncommittally, taking a seat at the table.

Vincent settled in across from him and asked, "So what does bring you here? I can tell you have much on your mind."

"Yeah. I've been having these crazy ass dreams. They change in content, but they always have Rufus Shinra in'em," he was staring down at his cup of coffee, and didn't notice the flicker of surprise cross Vincent's face. "Last night, they just kept coming and coming. Finally, I gave up on sleep. I don't what the hell this is 'bout Vince, but somethin' tells me it's bad."

"Rufus Shinra."

Cid looked up. "You know somethin'?"

"Not necessarily know something, but rather, I have had dreams with him in them too."

Cid's eyes widened in surprise. "You too...wonder if that means more than just us have been havin' them? It could mean more than just a dream. But what?"

"I do not know. Rufus was never that much of a threat to us."

Cid frowned. "Well, if we're the only ones havin' these dreams, why us?"

"We might not be the only ones. The others might have had dreams and passed them off as just that. But if we are all having dreams about Rufus Shinra, we must figure out why we find him such a threat. Or, better yet, what is causing these dreams?"

"Or who," Cid remarked bitterly. "Just seems kinda funny to me that the two of us would have similar dreams. It don't make no sense. I don't think it's just a coincidence."

Morgan wandered through the mansion, coming to a room with what appeared to be a very large closet in it. She could see the outline of the door, but not how to get it open. She supposed she shouldn't even be considering looking in it, because it would be invading Vincent's privacy, but curiosity got the better of her. Reaching out, she pushed on it with her hands and was surprised to see it give way, thrusting a rush of stale air in her face.

When she waved the dust away, she found that the doorway led to a staircase, not a closet. She was hesitant to go down, not certain of what she would find, but curiosity caught her again and she started down. Her first step caused the wood to creak and moan, and she was afraid that the stairs might be too old to support her. But after waiting a few moments she found them to be sturdy enough, so she continued on.

The atmosphere became thicker and the light dimmer the farther down she got. When she finally reached the bottom, she glanced around somewhat nervously, thinking that this basement reminded her too much of the tunnels she had ran through to reach the surface. Something kept her pushing on though, and she went into the first room she came to, intrigued by the intricate carvings on the door.

To her horror, she stumbled upon a room filled with coffins. She wasn't certain exactly why Vincent had coffins in his basement, and her wariness of him rose. He didn't seem like the kind of man to do it, but what if he were killing people and locking them up here so no one found out? Listen to yourself Morgan! You sound like a paranoid ninny. Despite her reservations, she continued forward, relieved to find the coffin in the center empty, its lid lying a few feet away.

She didn't quite have the gumption to check the other ones though, and made a hasty retreat, wondering still, why there were coffins in the basement. Somehow, she just couldn't see Vincent harming someone in that way. If he was like that, then he wouldn't have saved her. You could be his next victim.

"Shut up," she muttered to herself, going through the next door, and hoping she didn't find anything horrible.

The first thing she stumbled upon were two large tubes, the glass stained a faint greenish-blue. Intrigued, she walked up and touched her hand to one. All at once, dizziness overtook her. The world wavered, and she fell to her knees.

"Are you certain you want to leave her in there for another week? She's already been in there for three. Any more might kill her."

"I am in charge of this project, and you follow my orders. She has not been responding to the treatments as well as I would like."

"B-but, she could get Mako poisoning!"

"So? We have plenty of others to replace her if she does. Also, once she is done with this treatment, I want additional ones injected directly into the bloodstream."

"Good, he's gone. Dammit. He's insane. I don't know why I work under him."

She couldn't move her body. It was as though she were floating in mid air. Her mind worked perfectly though, and she could hear the muffled words of those outside of her containment unit. She hated it in here. When they had first put her in, she was certain she would drown. But her body slowly adapted to breathing in the thick, viscous substance and to her horror, she was awake most of the time.

One more week. How could she survive one more week. And then, she had heard him say there would be more treatments after she was done in here. Why couldn't they just go too far and end her life? There was no way she would give in to cowardice that way. But there were some days when she wanted nothing more than to just die.

The man was leaving. "No! Don't leave me!" She shouted, but nothing came out. Her mouth opened and closed in a fashion reminiscent of a fish, but nothing came out.

Morgan jerked upward, her breathing coming in fast, shallow gaps, her body covered in sweat. It had been another memory, this time, so vivid, she was almost certain she were living the experience again. Rising on shaky legs, she stared at the containment units again. She had been in one of those. This man, this Hojo, had put her in one of these things. Why did Vincent have these in his basement, these torture chambers?

Wrapping her arms tightly around herself, she wandered into the next room, passing piles of books, covered in dust and seemingly unmoved for years. Finally, she came into a room containing a desk. The desk was surrounded by hundreds of files, and the top of it was littered with them as well. Walking forward, she reached out and fingered them. One in the center of the desk caught her eye. It said Vincent Valentine on a small strip of white paper.

"Vincent? Why does he have a file with his name on it? I shouldn't read it..." but even as she told herself this, she reached out and picked it up.

The first name that caught her eye, was Professor Nathan Hojo, written in black ink, in the upper right-hand corner. A cold, hard lump formed in the pit of her stomach as she read on. The handwriting was barely legible, and it looked as though Hojo had not been able to find the time to type this out. Unless...it didn't seem to read as she thought a standard file would. Instead, it sounded almost like a diary.

'He is such a fool. He thinks because he is a Turk, that he is indestructible. I will show him. He will see that he can't have her. She is mine. And he will pay.'

Morgan skipped down a bit farther and continued to read. 'I started the process today. I found that my bullet has done irreparable damage and that I must find some other way to utilize his arm. I thought about cutting it off. He would hate that. But no, instead I think I will find a way to give him a symbol, something he will never forget. Every time he looks at it, he will be reminded of me. I have given it great thought, and come up with a metal claw. How much that will make him feel like a monster!'

She almost couldn't read on because she thought she understood where this was going. 'The claw is at least usable. But I have done other things. Fascinating things. He was always so calm, so in control. I wanted to change that from the moment I set eyes on his smug face. So I did. I injected him with samples, samples Gast knows nothing about. They were found alongside his precious Jenova, and I took them for myself. Gast can't have everything. I have studied them, but find myself unable to identify them. I used them on Vincent. It had changed his eye color to a startling red. Imagine looking in the mirror everyday now!'

Morgan dropped the file with a cry, covering her mouth and staring at the object as though it were the most offensive thing she had ever seen. "Hojo...Hojo did that to Vincent. No wonder he doesn't want to talk about it."

Unable to stop herself, she reached down and picked the file up again. 'I came down to see him again today. To my utter surprise, he took on look at me, and transformed into this most amazing beast! It was frightening really! And I laughed. Oh how he hated my laughter. He managed to break his restraints. I knew he was too dangerous for me to continue working on now. So I had to find a way to lock him up. I knew what I wanted to do. It was only fitting. It had been my original intentions to begin with. I knocked him out with a tranquilizer. It took three! I placed him in a coffin in a room just beyond

this one. I locked him in it, and then locked the door. I didn't think he would attempt escape. He knew what a monster he was. He would never see daylight again.'

Morgan felt horror and sadness wash over her. Whatever Hojo had done to her, it was nothing compared to the torture Vincent must have went through at his hands. But why? Why did Hojo hate him so? She knew she was used for some plan of Hojo's, but there was so much hatred in these writings of the events. It was so tangible, she could almost taste it. Then she remembered his first words: 'He will see that he can't have her. She is mine.' Who was this woman?

Feeling horrible for reading it, for prying in Vincent's life when she was certain he wouldn't have wanted her to know, she set it back down on the desk exactly as she had found it. The slight jostle caused a large stack of files to collapse, and she watched in dismay as they fell off the desk. The only one remaining, was one that looked much older than the rest. Not older actually, but as though it had been stored in a damp or dark place.

It had no sticker on the outside of it as the other file had, so she opened it gingerly, wondering what she would find inside. This one was typed up, and orderly. She read silently for a few moments, and then stopped, even more surprised at what she had found here. It was plans for an enormous army. Each man and woman needed to be physically fit and capable of being infused with many treatments of Mako.

A lot of what she read beyond that point became confusing. She didn't understand the terms, nor the tests that it referred to. The one thing she did understand though, was that after all of the treatments, they were to be put asleep until the time they were needed. It seemed Hojo had found some sort of machine that would allow him to simulate death. It would mean that no nourishment was needed to sustain the body, and somehow, though she couldn't understand it, the Mako would serve as a sort of preservative.

The report indicated that his mind was unable to be shut down, even while the body would be considered clinically dead. Once the machine was turned off, the soldiers would awaken and obey the direct orders of the first human they came into contact with. Months of programming saw to this.

She stared at the file numbly. "Was this...is this what I am? Why was I different then? I shouldn't have even thought of escape, if what this file says is true."

Suddenly she knew it was important for Vincent to see this file. Grasping it tightly in her hand, she ran out of the room and up the stairs. Her mind was working furiously; if this was what she had been a part of, then what had Hojo needed it for? She had awakened underground, and to her way of thinking, that meant Hojo had wanted to keep the existence of the army a secret. From whom though? Shinra? After what she read about his experiments on Vincent, she didn't find that hard to believe.

Though her lungs were burning, and her legs were aching intolerably by the time she reached the hallway the kitchen was in, she didn't stop running. She felt the need to get this to Vincent as soon as possible. It didn't occur to her, that he might realize that she had been reading through other files. All she knew was that she was excited and horrified about her discovery all at once. It might mean that she was one step closer to finding out who she was.

She burst into the kitchen, finding Vincent and Cid sitting at the table. They looked up questionably, and though she wanted to answer them right away, she couldn't regain her breath. Instead, she waved the file in front of her and indicated for them to take it. Just as Cid was reaching out, Vincent jumped to his feet, knocking his chair to the floor. In one fluid movement, he had his gun drawn and Morgan behind him.

Cid, respectful of Vincent's instincts, forgot the file that had fallen to the floor and to Morgan's utter surprise, jumped up, over the table, and landed next to Vincent, his spear readied.

She must have been staring at him, for he grinned and said, "Not bad for an old man, eh?"

Seconds later, four black clothed men came through the doorway. They wore matching helmets that covered everything but their nose and mouth and carried large guns in their hands. Morgan let out a gasp when she realized that their uniforms were similar to the one she had worn before. She couldn't see much more than that, for Vincent moved her farther back into the corner and his cape obscured her vision.

"Come with us. If you do not struggle, no harm will come to you." One said, his tone monotonous.

Vincent watched them, his eyes taking in their positions, the height of their weapons, and just how close they stood to one another. He too, had noticed they were wearing similar outfits to the one Morgan had been wearing when he found her. As much as he disliked the thought, he was realizing that she might not be what she seemed. Her presence here could have been merely a ruse. For all he knew, she could be working with the soldiers standing in front of them.

"Drop your weapons." Another ordered.

Cid dropped his cigarette to the floor and crushed it beneath his heel. "Eat shit."

Morgan, thinking she might have some influence, stepped out from behind Vincent and walked forward.

"Morgan." Vincent hissed.

"Please, you don't want to do this," she tried.

The one in front eyed her. "The master considers you extremely important. Do not force me to harm you."

"I'm not threatening you. I just want-" she moved farther forward.

"Stay back!" The last one yelled, opening fire.

Vincent started forward at the same time that the soldier shot, but even he was not quick enough. The soldiers opened fire again, and with a curse, Cid leapt in front of his friend, determined that the same fate wouldn't befall him. They hit their mark, and Vincent watched Cid crumpled onto the floor next to Morgan. He felt black rage sweep over him then. It grew and grew, until he had no control over it any longer. With a scream of fury, he transformed into Chaos and took out the nearest soldier with a sweep of his claws.

Frantically, the last three opened fire. Chaos kept coming at them, and managed to take out another man before he finally collapsed to the floor. Lifting his head weakly, he grasped the ankle of the soldier in front of him and was about to yank him down, when unconsciousness overtook him.

Okay, I know that I didn't get around to writing everyone a dream, but I found it was difficult when I didn't get to nighttime enough! So, you'll have to bear with me when I mention some of the characters having dreams you never got to read.

Hmm...wonder what's to become of Morgan, Cid, and Vincent? Guess you'll just have to wait and see!

Thanks again for reading!