

The Poetry in Blood by GlassShard

Epilogue: Requiescat

Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright auburn hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone
Lie on her breast,
I vex my heart alone,
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet,
All my life's buried here,
Heap earth upon it.

--Oscar Wilde--

Cloud could almost feel any credibility he'd ever had slipping between his fingers.

"I honestly don't see the point in this," Red XIII growled. He kept his pebbly voice low but still high enough to be heard. He felt the ensuing frown from their leader more than he saw it yet he didn't retract the words, not even when the human woman, Tifa, nudged him in the ribs.

"There really isn't a point, Red," she answered for Cloud, earning a grateful smile in the process, "There's no way we could not investigate that letter. It would be like, like walking by a burning house and doing nothing. You know?"

"No. No, I don't know. You humans seem to be suffering under the delusion that you're heroes. But you're not. We are not. We're a group of rebels and little else."

"Shut up," Cloud mumbled over his shoulder, turning his blue eyes down to glance at the crumpled bit of notebook paper in his hands, "This is called being human beings. I can't ask you to try and understand that since you're, well, whatever you are, but why don't ya shut up with your negativity and let us do what we gotta do?"

"You're in a temper," Red answered with a sniff. He let himself lag a little bit behind so he could sulk in private.

"Yeah, you are," Tifa said, doing just the opposite and quickening her pace to walk at Cloud's side. She laid a hesitant hand on his arm. "You okay?"

"I'm all right."

He might as well have replied in the negative for as valid as the words sounded. But Tifa knew better than to press him. Cloud again, was grateful. To be honest, he wouldn't have blamed either of them for turning right back around and heading out into the countryside again. He wouldn't have blamed them for saying 'To hell with you!' and going off on their own. Some leader he was. Everything he said, every story that he'd tried to relate to his comrades... it all turned false.

What in the hell was Nibelheim doing here?? Even the word brought nothing but images of ash and charred beams to his mind's eye. That was what it had looked like last, right? The fires too. And the heat from Sephiroth's flames... lotsa bodies...

Cloud shook his head before the memories engulfed him. It would all wind up giving him a headache anyway, it never failed. Anything girding the missing five years of his life always did. That was why this god damned Mansion was making him so god damned testy. His head was pounding and his heart was racing just to be here. Did that mean this place had some connection with all the things he couldn't remember?

"So big..." Tifa murmured from his back. He turned and saw her head craned up, taking in the high vaulted ceilings. She ran her hands over the walls to their either side, flaking off the old paper, straightening tilted paintings on their nails. Nanaki's flame gave them enough light to see by but Cloud still made his way carefully down the dusty blue hallway they'd come upon. The boards beneath his feet creaked in a frighteningly familiar way.

"Did you get your own room, Cloud?" Tifa called, trying to mask her delight with the old building. He shrugged.

"Yeah, I think so. We weren't here long, remember?"

She hesitated before answering. "Yeah, I guess so. Th-the guards... did they get their own rooms?"

"Now why in the hell should I remember that?" Cloud barked, turning on her impatiently. He scowled for a moment then hurried to redouble his treads, rushing them down the hall as though something terrible was in pursuit. Tifa clenched her teeth and ignored the questioning glance from Nanaki. They both followed their leader into a dark and ancient bedroom, everything covered over with a layer of fine dust. The space was small, barely lit by the light from a grime-blurred window. If not for Red's tail it would have been impossible to see even the sudden stone wall that loomed up to bar the way.

"Hey, Rudolph," Cloud murmured absently, "Turn down the light, you're going to attract more monsters."

Red growled but complied. Since anger usually made the flame at the end of his tail burn brighter though, the request was hard to fulfill. He moved closer, narrowing his good eye as Cloud began to run his hands over the wall. It reached to the ceiling, ten feet up, made up of a variety of stones quarried from every quarter of the continent. Even this was just another sign of Shinra's exorbitant extravagance in building this monster of a Mansion. Nanaki didn't understand humanity's desires for material wealth. Wasn't this Mansion itself proof that none of it could last? One day surely, it had been as beautiful as anything ever made. The glass must have glittered then, the paper glowed fresh and white from the spotless walls. A sight to behold, there was no doubt. Look at it now though. The beast swiveled his hoary head around, flicking his ears up and down in distraction. It was in ruins. Everything was spoiled and just as dead as the man who'd built it. This entire place was a tomb; his fur had been prickling up in unease ever since they'd first set foot in here. He wanted out more than anything and he couldn't understand the enthusiasm that Cloud had shown when he'd stumbled across that letter in the foyer.

"I hate this place," he whined, "I want to leave."

Cloud didn't look up from his examination of the wall. "Feel free."

"Please don't!" Tifa hissed in Red's ear. He glanced up in surprise and saw the fear in the woman's eyes. He nodded his head reluctantly. Cloud was making her just as uneasy as this Mansion, she didn't want to be alone with him. Especially since it seemed to be an unspoken belief that they'd find Sephiroth in the basement.

After a moment of intense scrutiny, Cloud grunted a little noise of triumph, slamming a fist against a certain stone in the wall. It was worn and smooth, quite different from the rest, and clicked under the blow. Tifa shrieked and jumped back when the entire wall slid slowly away to reveal a black and uninviting passage. "Cloud! Please please please don't tell me I have to go down there! Please!"

"It's okay," he answered automatically, voice blank and reassurance thoughtless, "I've been down here before." He threw himself into the passageway without a glance back. Red and Tifa could hear his boots creaking on an ancient staircase.

"This is insane," Nanaki growled. He hung back, looking at the bedroom again, then turning back to the black passage and trying to make something out through it. Nothing. "C'mon, Tifa. Let's just get this over with. Although I don't at all see the point."

~*~

She stuck close to her four-legged companion as they descended the twisting staircase. All she could see was the first step in front of her and the last step at her back, despite how brightly Nanaki tried to make his tail flare up. This place seemed to swallow the light. The air was thick like black cotton and it crushed anything that wasn't just as black, muffling anything that wasn't just as silent. Tifa tried to clear her throat and see if even that would be drowned by the quiet but she couldn't make herself do it. It stuck there, afraid to come out.

The staircase was crazy and old, wooden steps half-rotted and knocked out of place. Tifa kept one hand on Red's back to maintain her balance. She kept it there for comfort too. Bats... at least, things she hoped were bats, fluttered overhead, chirping shrilly, cries slicing through the black cotton air. Things scurried over her feet too but they were always just making their retreats from the pool of dim light before she could see what they were. Tifa jumped five feet in the air when Nanaki snapped at one suddenly, holding it in his jaws.

"Rat," he explained, then jerked his head back and swallowed it down. Tifa turned green.

"Cloud!" she whispered and yelled at once, taking two stairs with one leap and nearly tumbling down the whole set. She ran away from Nanaki, trying to find their leader but he'd wandered further down this staircase than she'd thought. A

wooden step creaked and gave way beneath her left foot and she yelled out, clinging to the wall to keep from falling. The looming wall was damp with mold though and she shrank back from it immediately, wiping green slimy stuff from her hands onto her skirt. Her cry echoed from a ceiling she couldn't see. It rang in her ears and turned into a laugh.

No wonder she and all the kids in Nibelheim had always said this old shack was haunted... it was!

"Cloud!" She ran down the staircase now, letting the steps splinter in her wake as she leap-frogged from one to another. She knocked into Cloud's back without warning, getting a mouthful of blue lint from his shirt. "Cloud! Geez, why don't you wait up if you know this place so damned well?? You left Red and I in the dark!"

"Sorry..." Cloud didn't quit his descent nor bother to slow it. Something was calling from below and to quit approaching it now was unthinkable. "Do you hear that?" he whispered, not turning to see Tifa. She wasn't entirely sure he was even addressing her.

"I don't hear anything but you and I, Cloud. And the creatures scratching around in the dark."

"Maybe you're not listening hard enough."

She wasn't sure how to reply so Tifa said nothing. She followed close behind him until they both were able to set their feet down on solid earth.

The spiral stairs had led them down to a new place. Underground, carved from the roots of Mt. Nibel long ago by people long dead, the stone wall and ceiling emitted a purplish phosphorescent glow that lit their surroundings fitfully. Tifa clutched in fear at Cloud's arm. White shapes glowed from the crevices between the earthen floor and wall. Skeletons and... things. There was a yellow light, warm and almost welcoming, glowing from the far end of their hall. Cloud saw it and faltered.

"You okay?" Tifa patted his shoulder, biting back her fear to see how his face now drained so completely of color. "Are we supposed to be down here?" He shook his head as much to clear it as to say no. Tifa saw his right hand stray towards his forehead. She'd see him do that a lot. She wondered what it was that hurt him so badly there.

"Of... of course we're s'posed to be down here," he said, breathing a little labored, "I'm a god damn Shinra employee. I have every right. Right? The-- the labs are at the end of the hall. I don't think this key we found is for anything in there though. Although I know there's a-- there's a cage in the Library. A closet. Aw, fuck, my head hurts..."

"Close your eyes a minute." Tifa guided him to a wall and let him lean against it. Cloud bent almost double, following her advice and rubbing his head through his hair. She kept her words soft and comforting. "It'll be okay. You should see a doctor about your head though, Cloud, you have too many headaches." She rubbed his temples and patted his back through his shirt. Being so close to him was wonderful and at the moment, it seemed right. She'd do anything to keep him from hurting, even something like this, crossing the invisible boundaries they'd set up around each other. "You know this Mansion really well," she whispered, "Did you spend a lot of time in the Laboratory when you were here?"

He grit his teeth, not opening his eyes.

"...yes."

Wiping sweat from beneath his nose, smearing it disgustingly from his brow, Cloud made himself straighten, gently removing Tifa's hand from his head. "I'm okay. Really." Before she could answer, he crossed the hallway with sure and steady steps. There was a door in the opposite wall, embedded almost imperceptibly in the stone. It was rotted and ancient, carved ornately, labeled in a language no one knew. It was locked too. The knob wouldn't move beneath Cloud's trembling hand.

"Try the key," Nanaki whispered, coming upon he and Tifa from behind.

"I-I dunno..." Cloud stuttered, his hand darting from the doorknob as though it'd grown hot to the touch. "I'm suddenly getting a bad feeling about all of this."

"Yes, well I've had a bad feeling about all of this from the start. But you made us find the combination to that blasted safe so we're going to go through with this, whether it's a Shinra trap or not. So open the door, Cloud, and then let's get the heck out of this place." Red drew himself up, waiting for an argument. Cloud turned to face his teammate, key out and in his hand. Why was he so frightened all of a sudden? He could barely breathe through his fear and he was sweating so badly he'd soaked his shirt. He felt foolish to be like this in front of Tifa yet even that sane thought couldn't last in his skull with how badly his head was pounding. This was the same sort of headache he'd get whenever his hidden past arose to mock him. So all of this... this was his past and he wanted to hide from it. Hide from what though? What had happened in this Mansion that was so terrible? Was it just the fact that Sephiroth had gone insane inside these walls? That had to be it...

Cloud wiped his forehead again, taking a couple deep and steadying breaths. He instructed his hand not to tremble as he brought the key in it up to the lock. It did not obey but he was able to get the door open. It swung inwards on sticky hinges.

"Oh gods..."

Tifa whispered her supplication to heaven as her eyes widened. She held onto Cloud from behind with both arms. "Cloud... cloud, what is this place?"

He performed a Cloud-like shrug. "A tomb I suppose." The fear left quickly as he realized Sephiroth wasn't in this mysterious new room. He entered without hesitation, not even bothering to unsheathe his sword. Once he saw the lone closed coffin in the crypt's center though, he paused abruptly, eyes narrowing in curiosity.

"Have you been in here before?" Tifa asked in his ear. He shook his head.

"Locked, remember? I've never seen any of this. Weird though, don't ya think? To have some place like this right by the labs? Heh, actually, a crypt near the Shinra labs makes perfect sense. It tells so much about the science department." Cloud chuckled, moving towards the coffin. Tifa popped him in the shoulder impatiently.

"It isn't funny. And you're not opening that coffin... Cloud! get your hands away from it!" She grabbed his wrists as she saw he was drawing near. Why would he want to open this? Why were they in this room at all? Tifa's frightened eyes looked to Red but he had no answers for her. And Cloud was too busy staring at the coffin beneath his barely restrained hands to offer her even a clue.

"The letter says there's a Turk in here," he said softly, "I want to see."

"Turk or no!" Tifa hissed, "There's nothing but a dead body in here! It's a coffin, Cloud, why d'you want to look inside! That's just morbid and weird."

"Well then I'm morbid and weird," he answered rebelliously. Nanaki grinned.

"I'll second that."

"Shaddup." Cloud worked his gloved fingers under the lid of the coffin cautiously, wrinkling his brows in concentration. Tifa wasn't going to support him in unearthing a corpse. She let go of his wrists and took a few steps backwards, taking up a fighting stance. She didn't trust this Mansion, not a single thing about it. Maybe it was all something stemming from her childhood, she wasn't sure, but that was just the way things were. When she was seven her friends had dared her to run past the gates and write 'Shinra sucks' on the back wall of the porch. She'd tripped on the twisted weeds of the front lawn though and skinned an elbow, losing the dare and getting teased for a week. She harbored an old grudge against this building. It had been the only thing left standing after Nibelheim had burned. It practically begged to be hated.

Cloud moved his fingers all around the lid of the coffin, crusty grime peeling from between it and the box itself. He made a little ring of such debris as he worked his way around its perimeter, licking his lips in anticipation. He knew he'd find something worth the search in here. He'd known it the moment he'd seen the little scrap of paper on the floor downstairs. The writing on it was so familiar. It was like a message from an old friend, telling of a gift yet to be given--

The lid flew from the coffin without warning, shooting up into the air and slamming against the crypt's rear wall, sending up pieces of decayed skin and bits of bone as it settled noisily into the contents of another displayed casket. Cloud blinked dust out of his eyes, bringing his fists up to wipe it away. He coughed and could hear Tifa and Red doing the same, trying to find a clear breath through the dusty air. Someone whispered something Cloud couldn't make out and when he was finally able to see sort of clearly again, the ex-Soldier had to shiver and step back.

Vincent blinked sleepily.

The light, as low as it was in the crypt, still sent needles into his sensitive eyes and he laid a hand over the both of them, blocking it out. He'd forgotten what light looked like, that it could let you see things at all. Wasn't all the world just as black as the inside of a coffin?

Another thirty years now?

Fifty?

A hundred?

Slow and deliberate, Vincent sat up, hair sliding away from his white features and back behind his shoulders. His cloak rustled loudly. His breathing resumed a more normal pace. Hojo's chemicals swam in his body, keeping his heart rate much too low. Everything spun before his eyes.

Then the nightmare returned to his memory and nothing else mattered.

"Who are you?" he demanded of the three shadowy figures staring at him from outside the close confines of his coffin. "You have no right to be here. If you're searching for hell, take a knife to your throats and find your own. This is mine. Let me have it in peace."

Chaos was hungry and he was roaring in Vincent's head. He had to return and feed the demon, he couldn't let it starve. Pain... had to feed it pain or it would rise to the surface and make its own... "...nightmares," he whispered, "A life of nightmares but it's mine and I have to go back... strangers, be gone. I have nothing to say to you..."

"Nightmares?" Cloud found his voice suddenly and stepped forward again. This wasn't what he'd been expecting to find. A man in a blue suit perhaps, maybe a monster like in the pods in the reactor... but what was this? Both? Or neither at all? And what was this echoing feeling of familiarity? As though the pale face hidden behind the crimson garb and raven hair was something he'd seen before. Cloud's head pounded but he pushed the pain away. "What sorta nightmares?" he asked quietly, "I have nightmares too. What are yours like?"

Vincent laughed at the words and pain blossomed in his throat. Laughing hurt a voice so unused to speech. Had it always been this way? He laughed again only because there were so many answerless questions. Chaos laughed too. It wanted to kill these intruders and thought it funny that Vincent would fight the suggestion. You don't know them, it said, If you don't know them, it's okay. Correct? Isn't that the rule? Tell me it's the rule, Master. Tell me tell metellmetellmetellme....

Would it happen again? Vincent held his claw close to his chest, wrapping his good hand around it, afraid it might fly right off his arm and act on its own. Chaos had too much control. He'd grown too fat, too arrogant, too confident. He knew his other half too well now and had certain ideas of what it would do if left unchecked.

"Leave," he warned the strangers. To them he appeared unnaturally calm. Inside, a storm raged. "There is no good in this place. It is a Mansion for fools who die and the monsters who kill them. This Mansion is the beginning of your nightmare."

Was that a clue? Cloud stepped backwards, mako blue eyes trained on the black-haired man's face. No, it was just obvious. "How did you know?"

"Know what?" The voice had a ring of familiarity to it. It caught Vincent's attention and he began to wake up a little more. He fought off the chemical's debilitating effects, fought off Chaos' ungodly screeching. "What do you know?"

"It's like ya said," Cloud answered immediately. He felt Tifa come up from behind, lay an ignorant though well meaning hand on his shoulder. She could not know this, no one could know this but-- but-- know what?! Why did his head hurt?! "This mansion really is the beginning of a nightmare. But it's no, it's not a dream, it's real. Sephiroth lost his mind. He found the dark secrets hidden here..."

Sephiroth... that was a name he knew. That was her son. But he was dead... dead... everyone...

Chaos laughed and Vincent bowed his head to watch the young man speaking just outside his sanctuary. His mouth moved, lips conveyed words, but Vincent did not listen to the story he told. A part of him already knew it all. When the boy paused, Vincent let words come from himself to fill the silence. It was strange to hear himself speak coherently after what he came to realize had been almost two years of sleep. The nightmares were screaming and regret; a world made real and infinite in his mind. Any horrors could happen there and be worse than anything that happened in reality. Twenty-seven years of tragedy revisited time and again. Add to that the night he'd awoken over a year ago to a Mansion full of evil with himself king demon over it all, and there was enough fodder for an eternity of torture.

When Vincent came to his senses again, he realized he'd told them his story and never shed a tear. He'd reduced it all to a few words spoken in a hollow, haunted voice.

Why in the hell should it be anything else?

"How long have you been here?" Cloud asked, daring to move close enough to get a good look at the man's clawed left arm. It fascinated him, he couldn't explain why. It seemed as familiar as his face. Vincent would not answer though. He sank down in his coffin, sliding the lid back over. He knew they would not dare to open it again. If they did, he would kill them. No. Chaos would kill them. He had to remember the difference.

They left after a while.

Vincent laid his head down, let the hair cover his face, let his collar come up to catch his shallow breaths. The dark was back before his eyes. He hated the light and all the things it showed him. The coffin was beautiful in its blackness. He moved a hand through it, feeling the ring on his finger but very grateful that he could not see it. It was enough to know it was there. It was Lucrecia holding his hand but if he'd had to look in the face he'd helped kill... he'd go mad.

Vincent had only to let them and the chemicals would shut his body down again and he could return to the hell of his mind. That boy... surely he had changed from the shivering thing Vincent remembered from the mako reactor. He remembered him perfectly now. Blue eyes lost in bloodshot red, calling for him to leave Jenova alone. A frightened young man, like Chet had been as he lay bleeding. Why had Chet died and Cloud been allowed to live? Or maybe Chet was not dead at all. When Vincent had realized where Lucrecia truly was, he hadn't been able to make himself stay. He'd had to go to her. If only to bury her.

There were voices coming from the Library. He could hear them tolerably well through the walls. It was Cloud and the strangers.

Chaos wrapped his claws around Vincent's neck. This was an old game. The human couldn't breathe now and the demon laughed, squeezing him close like a doll. Then he rocked him back and forth, letting the razor points of his hands dig into the soft flesh of his throat. Vincent was so used to the pain that he didn't feel the need to cry out. There was no one to hear him anyway. He used to call for help. Whether he called it only in his mind or if he truly called out, he never knew. After long enough, when no one came, he stopped calling. Chaos only bore down harder when he let it be known it hurt anyway. Better to be quiet, maybe the demon would become weary of the game sooner. He'd grown cold after so long and he knew it. There were things wrong with his head. He knew that too.

Names rattled off in ears that refused to acknowledge them. Vincent closed his mind to the screaming that came from nowhere.

The footsteps were in the hallway again. Cloud and the strangers. They'd leave the Mansion soon. There was so little to see here.

Screams swallowed the footsteps. Vincent could feel himself falling deeper into sleep. Soon, maybe he wouldn't be so keenly aware of the torture in his mind. If he could fall away into unconsciousness he might be dead next time he awoke. Hojo's chemicals could not make him live forever. He'd die when he deserved it.

Chaos screamed and Vincent jerked his face away when the lid of his coffin flew suddenly open.

The light again; blinding white. It hadn't died after all. Blackness withered beneath it.

Vincent covered his eyes and heard her voice. It was the same voice from long ago, from the laboratory. He'd been ready to lay down then and let it end but she hadn't let him. She'd told him to find Hojo. Find Hojo. Find Hojo.

He heard her voice again now, just as he had before. No face to accompany it though. She was not buried in this mansion any longer, there was no ghost to remind her lover of his duties, his sins, and his pain. The voice was there though because Vincent had buried that in his heart. It could still command him though its mistress lay buried in a cave of falling waters.

Find him. Find him. Find him.

But of course I will, he wanted to answer. Because it all begins and ends with the Professor.

~*~

Cloud tossed the small materia back and forth in his hands. Those hands were still trembling and Tifa saw them. She walked closer to her friend, close enough that their shoulders brushed at every other step. "He's a lunatic, you realize that, right?" she whispered in his ear. Cloud nodded but said nothing. Long blonde bangs hid his eyes and Tifa couldn't see if he was really agreeing or only trying his hardest to get her to be silent. Sephiroth had been in the Library. He'd left them with an invitation.

They were accepting it.

Tifa took the materia from Cloud's hand and stuffed it in a slot in her glove, just so it'd be out of his sight. That seemed to help. Their leader picked his head up and held his chin straight, turning once to be sure Red and Tifa were following. The pain in his mind slowly left, lifting like a fog from his senses. Concentrating hard to keep his steps straight and even, Cloud wouldn't look around at the hallway as they passed through it. These fucking skeletons were too fucking familiar.

They were almost to the spiral staircase when the creaking of a door opening halted them. Tifa turned before the others did. Vincent stood in the shadows.

"Will I meet Hojo if I come with you?" His voice was so soft that they almost didn't hear it. He had to remember that not everyone had ears like his. He raised his voice and asked again.

"Probably," Cloud answered, lips pursed, "We're... we're after them all. Hojo's on the list."

"He usually is."

The man stepped from the black space between the doorway and wall, pacing briskly after them, shedding the dark from his body like water. He was moving well despite so long tucked away but only because Chaos was so eager to make a kill. With amazing composure, he walked past the small group, giving not a glance to Nanaki, not a glance to the macabre accessories strewn upon the floor. A part of Cloud seemed very upset that this stranger had just added himself to their party. Vincent seemed to sense that. He halted in his quick clip down the hall and let his new "leader" catch up. Once they stood side by side, his red eyes worked their way down to Cloud's wrapped wrist. After his vision had adjusted to the light before, those bandages had been the first thing he'd seen on this young man. And the only thing besides the tiny ring on his right hand that could convince him that his memories of the events of a year and half ago weren't all another nightmare.

"Hey..." he murmured conspiratorially, "Why is there a bandage around your wrist. What wound is that from?"

Cloud didn't know why but some intrinsic instinct, something that knew more than his conscious mind, made him draw back away from the red-eyed man. He clutched his wrapped arm close, shaking his head. "I-- I don't know. It's been wrapped since before I can remember. Just-- just leave me alone, all right?"

Vincent smiled darkly, the hint of a white fang flashing over one lip. "Of course," he whispered before leaving the crypt behind forever, "I didn't like you very much the first time."

--End--

~*~

heeheeheeheehee.... ^_^

Surprisingly, the Poetry in Blood wound up being one of the most enjoyable things I've ever sat down to write. And turned out to be surprisingly popular with people. You're all sick! You hear me? Sick!! ^_^~ Thanks for reading it everyone!

Interesting (to me) PiB tidbits:

--Dr. Bier was named after my history teacher. Who's actually quite a nice old lady (though she laughs like a donkey)

--Dr. Roger Waters was named after my favourite member of Pink Floyd. Well, ex-member, he kinda quit the group.

--Pepper (the intern, Vinny's first victim) was the name of my hamster. He's dead now too :(Sucked dry by a vampire vacuum (you think I'm joking?) And no, I didn't do it, it was an accident (really!)

--Reno's appearance was added solely to bug Rhysa. Too bad I couldn't beat him up *wicked grin*

--Dr. Meer is a comic character of mine (though he's a hired bodyguard in my comic book, not a weenie scientist. I just kinda borrowed his name...

--Hojo is vastly underappreciated.

--Vanswith is just a silly name (if you're last name's Vanswith, my apologies)

--Chet is a combination of me, you, and any other rational person who might suddenly find themselves stranded in a mansion looking for their lost sibling with only a vampire to depend on for help. Plus he's a frigging riot to write.

--In the story, Vincent isn't *technically* vampire. He's more like an artificially produced one. Look to Anne Rice for the real thing. (you really should too, the vamp chronicles rule!)

--It's hard thinking of creative ways for scientists to die.

--Anyone notice there were like, no females in this story? Sara Hadley doesn't count, she had all of like, two lines. Hmm... I didn't do it on purpose, honestly. I guess there was Lucrecia in the prologue. That's the *prologue* though, does it count? What about the epilogue with Tifa? Hmm...

--Wutai ninja do in fact use hand grenades.

--Yes, this fic exists in the same dimension as Too Much in the Sun and Worm Revolts. I don't like to mix realities, what's true in one of my fics, is true in another. This is why Vincent mentions Keen.

--There was no shounen-ai between Zack and Cloud, okay people?! They're just really good friends and they watch out for each other! Same with Chet and Vinny! Quit accusing me of it! ^_^

--Zack's demise was cut from chapter 7 because I didn't like writing it. Zack's too cool to die :(There's much to be said for twisted stories where you don't have to stick to the plot of the game.

--And last but not least: Total Body Count : 13, including all Turks, scientists, interns and innocent villagers. The lesson to be learned here? Stay out of my fics if you value your life O_O

Finished 5/10/2000

by GlassShard