

Terra's Story -A new beginning

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This is the second part to my story about Terra. It continues after she left Balamb Garden in an attempt to save her friends from herself.

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1 - A New Beginning

Chapter 1: A new beginning

It had been a month since Terra jumped from Balamb Garden; away from her friends, away from her home, and away from him. Terra sat in the corner of a dark room, her knees cramped up against her face and her head down in her lap. Her long, brown hair blew in the breeze that came in through the open window, causing her to shiver as it blew across her neck. She opened her eyes, stained a deep red by her hidden powers, which she had unleashed upon herself, and looked out the window at the sky. It was full of stars and the moon was full, shining down upon her small shelter on the edge of the Esthar continent. Tears trickled down her face as she continued to watch the stars as they moved across the sky. He used to watch them with her when they were journeying together. They would lie on the ground together, the fire blazing next to them and watch as the stars shone down upon them; him and the others. She could see his face. His deep brown eyes gazing into hers and his long, red hair capturing the sunlight, seemingly on fire. The more she thought of him, the more determined she became. She missed her friends incredibly but she had to leave them. She didn't want any of them to be hurt again because of her.

Terra gripped her hands tight. Fire formed around them, lighting up the room revealing her shabby bed and her katana as they stood leaning against the wall. They had come in handy on her journey. The monsters of the Esthar continent were a lot less forgiving than those in Balamb and a lot of blood had been spilt to get her this far. Over the past month, she had learned to control the fire to a certain extent, but there was so much more that she had to learn. She closed her eyes and the fire went out. She delved into her pocket and pulled out the pieces of the tablet. She had managed to fuse some of them together but the others had too many chunks missing to fit exactly. She held them up to the light and looked at them. The person in the middle, the Esper, must be one of her ancestors, and they communicated using the strange writing at the bottom of the tablet. Although some was missing, Liney had told her that she had seen some of this writing before, when she had travelled to Esthar during her SeeD missions. This is what had driven Terra in this direction. All she had to do now was find them, then maybe she would get some answers.

The night drew on as Terra continued to sit in the corner, her mind racing with questions. She had so much to discover and she knew that it was here in Esthar where she was going to find it. She decided that she would set out in the morning to the city, where she could stock up on supplies before the long journey ahead of her. Terra stood up and walked across the room, finding her way to her bed. Terra pulled the covers over herself and closed her eyes. There he was again, his beautiful smile gleaming at her.

I love you. Terra said as she rolled over. She soon drifted to sleep, her mind wandering back to her friends at home.

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Balamb Garden had been on quite a journey since Terra left. The Garden had coursed out of control and crashed into the fishing town of Fisherman's horizon, known by the locals as FH. The townsmen had kindly fixed the controls of the Garden and now it was able to be steered to wherever Squall wanted to go. Squall had become the new leader of the Garden after headmaster Cid had decided that the students needed strong and who was one of them to take command and lead them. Now, they were heading to Trabia Garden, another Garden located in the mountains, which had been Galbadia's first

missile strike target.

Hayden and the others had learnt a lot more about the situation at hand. Squall, Zell, Irvine, Quistis and Selphie had all been appointed to assassinate sorceress Edea, the new leader of the Galbadian military. She controlled the people using fear and threats, but the assassination attempt had failed. Edea retaliated by sending missiles towards all the Gardens in a hope to annihilate SeeD, and hopefully, she had missed Trabia too. Everyone, however, feared the worst.

Hayden, Loz, Zack, Kai, Liney and Wulfy were sitting in the quad, their feet dangling down into the cool sea water. They were all missing Terra, especially Hayden, and they had no clue to where she could be.

We really need to think about this. Zack said, punching his fist into the ground. We've looked through every book in the library and still nothing about Espers or the ancient language!

This really sucks! Liney protested. This is all because of us you know.

You mean it's all because of me. Loz replied, turning her head down. I'm the reason Terra first left Balamb with Zack and Kai; to look for me.

It's no-one's fault. Wulfy said standing up. His wolf-like features made him look terrifying, but he was wise and completely docile, except when there were monsters around.

She left to protect us. Kai said, brushing his hand over his throat. He owed a lot to Terra. His voice box had been destroyed during the fight to save Terra from the bite bugs and he hadn't been able to speak since, not until that day, the day where they were nearly all killed. She doesn't want us to be used again to get to her. Hayden looked down at his reflection in the water. His red hair blew in the breeze and flicked around his face, every now and then covering his brown eyes. The water was so clear, reminding him of when Terra had dived down into it and how when he got there, he couldn't find her. He had searched for almost an hour before the light made it impossible to search any longer. Tears fell down into the water as Hayden relived everything in his mind and his thoughts wandered to the worst case scenario. What if she was dead? She would have died alone with no-one beside her to hold her hand. Hayden looked up as he felt a hand on his shoulder. Loz was standing above him in a sympathetic manner.

I'm sure she's alive. Loz said gently. She crouched down next to him and pushed her glasses back up the bridge of her nose. I know she's a fighter. She'll probably be on her own journey, trying to discover herself. And that was when it clicked. Hayden sat bolt upright, making Loz jump. He grabbed her before she fell in the water and stood up.

Liney! he called across the quad. Liney turned from hugging Kai and looked at him. Where did you say you found those writings?

2 - Decision Making

Chapter 2: Decision making

The sun shone brightly through the small window as Terra pulled her things together. Finding the city of Esthar would be tough. She had heard that the entire city was surrounded by an illusionary veil that blended into the background, making the city impossible to see from a distance. Terra picked up her katana and strapped them on her back and picked up her waist bag from next to her bed. Checking that she still had some potions left, she set off out of the door of the small wooden hut.

Thanks. She said as she handed some Gil to a short, elderly man. He tipped his hat and Terra waved as she set off deeper into the salt flats that were situated close to where the city apparently lay in hiding. The salty earth moved under her feet as she walked along, keeping an eye out for monsters. There were many skeletons littered around, perfectly preserved in the salt that made up the scenery. Terra climbed on top of a large skull and held her hand over her eyes, shielding them from the sun. She still had a long way to go before the end of the flats and she didn't have any water. She hadn't yet learned how to control her water power. Terra climbed down again and continued on her way, but it wasn't long before her journey was disturbed.

Terra stopped and looked up at the sky. She swore she was seeing things as, in the distance, she swore she saw it flicker. She continued to watch, completely unawares of the dangers that were approaching her. The ground shook violently, catching her off guard and causing her to trip. She fell to the ground, throwing her potions all over the floor. She quickly scurried across the floor, picking them up and stuffing them into her bag, and that is when she saw it. Standing only a few metres away was the largest monster she had ever seen. It had huge tusks and red, feather-like spikes that stuck out of its back. Its body was skinny, brown and shrivelled and its eyes were sunken deep. Terra stood up slowly, not daring to take her eyes off it in case it attacked. She slowly reached behind her back, carefully withdrawing her katana. The blades rubbed against the scabbards as she pulled them out, which the monster obviously heard. It reared up, revealing its true height, and roared menacingly. It swung its clawed hand down towards Terra who jumped out of the way, landing gracefully on her hands and one knee. She began to run towards the monster, dodging its every attack, before bringing her katana down on its arm. It yowled as the arm fell off and disintegrated. Terra flipped backwards as the monster swiped again and smiled. This was too easy. Her joy was short lived, however, as the monster began to spasm. Its shoulder grew larger and larger like a giant spot just about ready to burst. Terra watched in horror as the mass split open, revealing a brand new arm, thicker than the one before. This wasn't going to be as easy as she first thought.

Terra wouldn't be able to defeat it on her own. This was obviously a zombie creature, and as she had no idea how to trigger her healing powers, she decided the best option would be to flee. Turning tail, she ran, the monster following close behind. She jumped again and again out of its way as it continued to attack throwing her in all directions. Suddenly, she noticed a large crack in the side of a cliff face. She dove into it, catching the monster unawares. It crashed straight into the side of the cliff, causing it to tremor. Terra moved back as far as she could as the monster's hand entered the hole, groping around for her but unable to reach. In its anger, it reared back and slammed its tusks into the cliff face. Rocks began falling from the cave roof each time it hit the cliff. Soon, the entrance had been completely blocked, trapping Terra inside. Only a small sliver of light shone through. Terra crawled over to the hole and peered through. The monster was leaving. Terra sank against the wall. What was she meant to do

now? If she attacked the wall, it would surely cause the whole roof to cave in. she was trapped.

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So you see, headmaster, Loz said to Cid as they stood in his office. We have reason to believe that Terra has travelled to Esthar.

I see. Cid replied. He paced up and down as Loz, Hayden, Liney, Kai, Zack and Wulfy looked on, waiting for a response. I shall have to talk to Nida, the pilot, to see how close he can get to the Esthar continent so you can reach Terra.

Thank you! Hayden exclaimed as Cid stood on the lift to take him up to the bridge. Thank you so much! Cid tipped his glasses as he vanished from view above them.

How do you think we can get to Esthar? Zack asked. I heard it was surrounded by a mountain range of some sort.

It is. Liney replied. I don't know if the Garden can get over it. We may have to go by foot. Everyone sighed, except Hayden, who stared out of the window with extreme determination. The mountainous continent was coming into view as the Garden continued across the water. Hayden could make out Trabia Garden in the distance, but it would be a while before they got there. First, they had to find a way the Garden can make up onto the land. Suddenly, the lift jerked as it began to move downwards to the lower floor. Headmaster Cid slowly emerged with a slight look of concern on his face. Everyone looked at him expecting the worst.

So? Kai asked as Cid stepped off the lift into his office.

I'm afraid we can't get that close. Cid said shaking his head. There are so many mountains and rocky regions in the way that the Garden can't get over.

Is there any other way? Hayden asked, almost shouting.

Yes but it will take a long time. Cid replied. You will have to go to the chocobo shrine and meet a man called the chocobo sage. He will give you a chocobo that can travel over those peaks.

It doesn't seem too tough. Zack laughed.

I'm afraid it is. Cid continued. First you need to travel north, and then you'll need to complete some tasks before he thinks you are to be trusted.

That's in the wrong direction! Hayden exclaimed. And what do you mean by tasks? Cid shook his head. He had no idea.

You'll just have to be prepared for anything. Hayden turned around and ran for the lift. The others ran after him, just making it into the lift as Hayden pushed the button.

Where are you going? Wulfy asked, a look of confusion on his face. Hayden just continued to look forwards, the determination on his face growing more and more by the second. As soon as the doors opened on the ground floor Hayden sped out, running full speed around the fountain. Wulfy managed to keep up with him whilst the others fell back, helping up those that Hayden had knocked over in his rush. Wulfy said nothing but continued to run with Hayden as he sped towards the training centre. Suddenly, Hayden stopped. He was breathing heavily and his look of determination had sunken. He collapsed to his knees. Wulfy slowly walked over to him, placing his clawed hand on his shoulder.

I have to do this. Hayden said between breaths. He turned to look at Wulfy who nodded.

I know. Wulfy agreed. It may be dangerous and most of the rocky outcrops will be impossible for you to scale. Please, allow me to accompany you. Hayden looked at Wulfy. His expression was stern, as though he would never allow him to say no. She's important to me too. She's the only family I have left. Hayden stood up and placed his hand on Wulfy's shoulder. He had forgotten that Wulfy was probably going through the same thing as he was. He nodded his head. Good. Wulfy replied. But first I think we need some training. With that, Wulfy leapt over Hayden, drawing his sword. He ran full throttle through the gates into the heart of the training centre. Hayden stood for a second, then, smiling, he charged up

his claw arm and ran to join Wulfy.

3 - chapter 3

Chapter 3: The rescue begins.

Terra rummaged through her bag. She hadn't brought any food or water with her. She had hoped that she would have found the city by now and she would be stocking up on supplies for the next leg of the journey. She had already tried to move the boulders that were blocking the entrance, but every time she tried, more fell down in their place. The hole that had been her small source of light had now been completely covered by more rocks and dirt that had fallen down in her attempts to break through, but other smaller holes had now appeared allowing some air to leak in. As the sun began to set over the Esthar salt flats, the temperature began to drop. Terra clenched her fists, forming balls of fire around them, providing some warmth but there was nothing around that she could use as firewood. The fire slowly began to die down as it drained her energy until, eventually, they had gone out completely. Terra sat against the wall, shivering and exhausted. She created the flames again and again, with each one lasting less time than the one before until she was so exhausted that she couldn't do anymore. She collapsed to the floor, her breathing unsteady and her breath turning to mist as it left her mouth.

Don't fall asleep. She said to herself. Must stay awake. She forced herself to sit up but her arm buckled under her weight. She fell down to the ground again, unable to move. She continued to drift in and out of consciousness finding it harder and harder to stay awake as time went on. It was now completely dark outside and Terra was losing hope. She closed her eyes.

Hello!? a voice suddenly called from behind the rocks. Anyone in there? Terra pulled herself up. The sound of someone's voice had given her hope.

Help. She said weakly. The person on the other side stopped moving.

There is! There's someone in there! I told you I heard something close! The voice said. Terra could hear the footsteps of another coming closer to the entrance.

Hello? a new voice said. This one was female and a lot softer. Terra couldn't bring herself to speak again. I don't hear anything but I can tell you're right. Terra's heart lifted.

Get out of the way! the huskier voice exclaimed. Terra watched as the holes in the wall became larger. Some rocks fell down from the roof as more and more were removed from the entrance. Eventually, a large gap had been formed at the top, and a bright light shone in. Terra shielded her eyes then looked up to where the light was coming from. A young man, aged around 20 was looking down at her. His eyes were a dark green and his hair was long and silver. Terra was shocked. She had never seen someone like this before.

Ered. Is she in there? The female voice asked. Terra was confused who they knew she was female but right now she didn't care less. The man called Ered turned away from the hole and Terra could hear more digging. The hole steadily became wider and wider and eventually, it was large enough for someone to fit through. Ered reached through and held out his hand. Terra clasped it and was shocked as he pulled her clean out with hardly any effort. He sat her down on the floor and stood over her. Terra could see them both clearly now. Ered was very muscley and tall, but his face seemed almost gentle. The girl on the other hand was rather thin. Her hair was long and plaited and her skin was a dark tan.

Are you alright? the girl asked. Terra looked up at her but her vision became blurry. She began to fall backwards. Everything went black.

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Today. Hayden said to Wulfy as the Garden reached the bank of the continent. The others were all in the library researching the chocobo sage but Hayden wasn't interested in any chocobos. He was going now. Both he and Wulfy would travel by foot across the mountain range to reach Esthar. Going north first would take far too long. For all they know, Terra may have already moved on by the time they get the chocobos and come back south again. Hayden didn't want to risk it. Balamb Garden was slowly approaching Trabia and the plan was that as it landed, Wulfy and Hayden would jump ship and head south towards the mountains. Hopefully, if they stuck to the forests, then the others wouldn't see them leaving.

Hayden and Wulfy made their way down to the main gates, their packs full of supplies ready for the long journey ahead of them. The Garden slowed down as Trabia Garden came closer and Wulfy was shocked by what he saw. The Garden was in total disarray. There were no obvious building structures anymore and it looked as though there had been many casualties. A direct hit. Wulfy bowed his head. How many had died because of a mistake? He didn't want to think about it. His thoughts needed to be on the task at hand. Hayden grabbed Wulfy's arm. Now, they were going to jump. Hayden went first, rolling on the ground as he landed then picking himself up and running for the nearest patch of trees. Wulfy followed soon after, landing gracefully on his paw-like feet, and chased after Hayden into the trees. No-one had seen them leave.

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We're nearing Trabia. Liney said as she looked out of the library window. Is everyone ready? Kai looked up from his book. He had been studying the monsters that live around Trabia and was not looking forward to it out there.

We're in for a tough one. He said as he shut the book and stood up to join Liney at the window, placing his arm round her waist. Zack and Loz got up and joined them at the window.

It's terrible! Loz said as she saw the destruction. Why did they do this?

Blame those stupid SeeDs! Zack exclaimed. Liney gave him a scornful look. I don't mean you! Zack said quickly, defending himself. I mean Squall and the others.

We'd better find Hayden and Wulfy and get ready to go. Loz said as she turned around to go back to the table to get her bag.

Where are they anyway? Liney asked as she joined Loz. Loz shrugged her shoulders. Liney turned to the other but they shrugged too. Well we'd better get looking for them.

4 - Wulfy's past

Chapter 4: Wulfy's past

Wulfy and Hayden ran through the woodland continuing south. Everything was quiet. There were no bird calls or sounds of monsters. Hayden simply presumed they had been scared away by the missile strike. The woods were dense. With mere metres distance between trees. The canopy was thick allowing only slivers of light through. Hayden stumbled on a root and fell, but was instantly caught by Wulfy who helped him up. Hayden smiled and then began running again. It had been nearly an hour and the ground was becoming rockier as they went, hinting that they were nearing the bottom of the mountain. Now was a good time to rest. Wulfy climbed the nearest tree and sat with his legs hanging down. He looked into the distance for any sign of danger, but, after seeing none, he jumped back down again.

We rest here, he said, sitting on the floor. Hayden stayed standing.

We can't rest yet! he exclaimed. Wulfy looked up at him. Who knows where she is now!? Wulfy sighed but continued sitting.

And how exactly will you be able to find her if you can no longer walk from exhaustion and hunger? Wulfy said calmly. Hayden didn't know what to say. Wulfy did have a very good point. Reluctantly, he sat down. It felt good to be off his feet but he preferred to be on the move. They rested for an hour before setting off again, this time, walking instead of running, as the ground was now too rocky to risk running on. It steadily became steeper and steeper and the forest began to spread out, until there were no longer any trees ahead of them. Hayden stopped and looked around. They had gone a lot further than he thought, and a lot higher. In the distance, he could see Balamb Garden, hovering next to Trabia. The others would be looking for them now, ready to head off north. He should have left a note or a message or something.

Hayden and Wulfy continued on their way up the mountainside, Wulfy taking the lead. It was now incredibly steep and the air was getting thinner, making them need to stop often so they could catch their breath as they clambered over rocks and cliff edges. Hayden was glad now that Wulfy had offered to come along. He couldn't have handled it on his own. Eventually, the pair reached a steep cliff. Wulfy sprang up, jumping from rock to rock with complete ease as Hayden looked on. The cliff must have been at least six metres high and he couldn't see any obvious way of him getting up there. Wulfy looked down as he realised that Hayden was struggling. He reached into his bag and pulled out a rope, which he tied to a rock at his end and lowered the rest down. Hayden grabbed hold of it and pulled it to check it was secure then began climbing up, holding tight to the rope and walking on the side of the cliff. The rocks were damp and slippery and Hayden had almost reached the top when he lost his footing. He held on tight to the rope, swinging in mid-air. Wulfy grabbed the rope and began to pull Hayden up slowly, walking backwards and digging his feet into the rocky earth. As Hayden reached the top, Wulfy grabbed his hand and pulled him over. They both sat out of breath and lacking oxygen.

How much farther? Hayden asked between gasps. Wulfy looked around. The mist was very thick around them.

I can't tell. He replied. The mist is too thick. We should rest until it has cleared. Hayden nodded and fell flat on his back looking up at the sky. They had been travelling for almost a day now and the night was setting in fast. Wulfy looked around for some kindling for a fire, returning with an armful of dry plants and twigs. Hayden sat up and began to light the fire then together, they sat under the stars, eating rations and watching the flames flicker.

As the night drew on, the pair slept, each taking turns to watch for danger. The mist was still strong as the night became colder, making it very difficult to see anything. Hayden sat playing with his claw arm, leaning against a large rock. He had been on watch for nearly two hours now. *Only three more hours to go* he thought to himself as his claw arm flickered with electricity and then off again. The night was so quiet and nothing had come close to where the two were camping. The fire continued to flicker on, illuminating the rock face and Wulfy, who was curled up in a corner, snoring loudly. If anything, that was what was keeping Hayden awake. He looked over at Wulfy and chuckled to himself before turning back to watch around them. Suddenly, something caught his eye. Through the mist, he swore he could make out a dark figure, silhouetted amongst the trees. He looked closer, squinting his eyes in an attempt to see through the mist. The figure was drawing nearer and to Hayden's surprise, it was human shaped.

Hello!? Hayden called out in its direction. The figure stopped. Are you ok? he asked, wondering whether it was hurt as it seemed to be walking with an exaggerated limp, but it said nothing. Hayden picked himself up off the floor and began slowly walking towards the figure. It still didn't make any sound. Hayden looked around at Wulfy who had stirred slightly, then turned back to look at the figure. It was gone. Hayden was surprised. Had he imagined it? No, he was certain he saw something. He continued to watch the spot where he had seen it until he felt something grab his neck from behind. The grip was getting tighter as though it was trying to choke him. He put his hands up to his throat as it began lifting him off the ground and grabbed what was around it. It felt fleshy and unnatural. Hayden continued to struggle, calling out as best he could, but it wouldn't let go.

Suddenly, the grip loosened and Hayden fell to the floor gasping for air. He turned around to see Wulfy hanging on the back of the most hideous creature he had ever seen. It had a human form but its limbs were disproportioned and deformed, some large, others small. Its skin was all bulging and lumpy and covered in veins and its face looked dead and empty. Wulfy was flailing around everywhere as the monster tried endlessly to throw him off. He tried many times to reach for his sword but every time he tried, the monster flung him in a different direction and he had to grab hold again. Hayden caught his breath and stood up, charging his claw arm. He took his chance and dove at the monster, making contact with its stomach. It yowled but appeared undamaged. Hayden jumped back as it swung for him then dove in again, this time at its head and once again it shook off the attack.

What is this thing!? Hayden shouted at Wulfy who was still keeping the beast occupied.

Geosageno! Wulfy cried back, wavering his speech due to the thrashing movements of the monster.

It's another Parody experiment! Zombie! Hayden only heard the words Parody and Zombie but that was enough. He ran to his pack, avoiding another onslaught from the monster's flailing arms. Diving deep, he pulled out a red feather and threw it at Wulfy. Wulfy caught it and pressed it onto the Geosageno's back. It yowled in immense pain as the feather worked on it. Its skin bubbled green and began to melt off and the monster sank into a steaming, green puddle. Wulfy collapsed on the ground, exhausted from having to hold on so long. Hayden walked over to Wulfy.

Phoenix down. Wulfy smirked. Why didn't I think of that sooner? Hayden laughed but he was still curious.

Where did it come from? he asked. Wulfy hesitated slightly then, after he caught his breath, he spoke. It was one of the other many experiments, courtesy of Parody. He said, pushing himself up off the floor.

They used pieces of dead and dying flesh to create zombie creatures. However, some escaped it seems and this particular one& Wulfy pointed to the green sludge, has been following me all around the Esthar continent. I managed to get away from it when I crossed overseas.

You mean, Parody is in Esthar? Hayden asked. Wulfy nodded. But I thought they were Galbadian.

They are. Wulfy replied. But they were found by the government and made to disband. However, they took all their research, including myself, to Esthar. Hayden didn't know what to say.

What would you do if you found them? he asked. Wulfy looked up into the sky. Dawn was approaching.

I don't know. He said. Let's just hope we don't.