

Final Fantasy X Novelization

By XMatty_SnapsX

Submitted: December 16, 2003

Updated: December 16, 2003

The novelization of Final Fantasy 10, which I am hoping to get published, I just have to finish it first, I hope you guys enjoy it.

Provided by Fanart Central.

http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/XMatty_SnapsX/1175/Final-Fantasy-X-Novelization

Chapter 1 - Prologue-"My Story"	2
Chapter 2 - Chapter One-"The Al Bhed"	5
Chapter 3 - Chapter Two-"The Isle of Besaid"	8
Chapter 4 - Chapter Three-"Not so humble beginnings"	18
Chapter 5 - Chapter Four-"Kilika"	21
Chapter 6 - Chapter Five-"The Wino"	27
Chapter 7 - Chapter Six-"The Amazing Disappearing Summoner"	33

1 - Prologue-"My Story"

He sat there and looked at the people he had journeyed with, the people he had grown with, and as he stood up he felt the heaviness in his heart at what they were to do very shortly. As he walked past each of them, he nodded, hopping to encourage them. He paused at the last one, the Summoner, whose eyes were settled upon the camp fire that was in the middle of their circle, he found his hand on her shoulder, caressing it gently. Her face turned up and she offered a weak smile and a nod, then she looked back to the fire. He moved on, walking slowly up a small slope, he stopped once he reached the peak of it, his arms crossed as he searched the derelict city. A sigh escaped his lips and he began to talk.

"Listen to my story...
This may be...our last chance..."

Fans running back and forth, cheering for someone unknown, everything seemed to have an excited feeling about it. A man ran up to the crowd and shouted above them all, his words drowned by the crowds' cheers. They all turned, like a flock of birds, and hurried over to the dock of the unknown person's house boat. Soon he emerged, his platinum hair stick out wildly from his head, a smug grin on his face, he walked quickly over to his fans, his clothes an unusual mix of black rubber, a gun-metal gauntlet, and a yellow shirt. He reached the first group of fans, who held up strange balls with bumps all over it, the size of a basketball, except blue and white.

A child held out his ball, laughing, his voice rising above the crowd "Can I have your autograph?" the man took the ball; "Of course" he smiled and signed Tidus with a flourish of the pen. He turned, walking over to two scantily clad females, one held out her ball "Good luck tonight!" he took it and signed it eagerly, handing it back "Oh...if I score a goal tonight...and do this..." he held up both hands, three fingers on each hand erect; "That means it was for you, okay?" the girls giggled and hid their blushing faces.

"What seat?" Tidus asked interest gleaming in his eyes. "East block, front row, fifth from the right!" the girl responded, "Got it!" The girl grabbed her friend's wrist and giggled, pulling her away quickly. Tidus turned to the fans, smiling down at three children who held out their balls, he signed all three, something on his wrist beeped three times loudly and he smiled widely. "Well, Gotta go! Cheer for me!" the three children smiled, the middle one started out "...Two, Three!" all the kids yelled out in unison "Teach us to blitz!"

Tidus' smile got even wider, all his pearly whites showing. "Hey, I've got a game to play!" the kid to the left yelled out "Teach us after!" "Well, maybe...um...tonight?" The crowd parted suddenly and a child in a purple hooded dress stepped up, his body seemed to be made of mist, "You can't tonight", Tidus blinked a few times, he turned to the other kids, "Maybe...tomorrow?" the kids looked slightly disappointed, but then the kid to the right raised her voice "Promise?" "I promise..." Tidus soon took off, pushing past the fans, making his way to the stadium.

He walked across a busy road, all of the buildings rose high up from the suspended road. He stopped, pausing at a billboard that's attached to one of the monolithic buildings, a man was there, looking out, his face rough. "Hmmm..." Tidus turned and shook his head, he continued walking even as the billboard

began to talk.

"I was in the coffee shop, running away from home when I heard the news. Our hero, Jecht, gone. Vanished into thin air! My dad must have been his biggest fan. I knew how sad he'd be. Heck, we all were that day. "Zanar", I say to myself, "What are you thinking?" I went running straight back home. We sat up talking 'bout Jecht all night. My dad and I never talked so much. Whoa... Didn't mean to reminisce, folks. Anyway... Ten years later, the Jecht Memorial Cup tournament is today! The two teams that have won through to the finals are...of course, the Abes from A-East, and the Duggles from C-South. I know there's a lot of people out there today to see the star of the Abes! In just one year, he's become the team's number one player! He's Jecht's blood, and the new hope of blitzball! What kind of super play will he show us today? Will we see father's legendary shot? I don't think I'm the only one excited here, folks!"

Tidus finally reached the stadium; he pushed his way past the frantic crowd, entering the large gates of the Blitzball stadium. He ran through the locker room, waving to his fellow players, he began sprinting, bursting through a door which led to a small, marble room. He walked slowly to the elevator, pushing the button for it, the doors slid open with a ding and he stepped through, pressing "Rings", the doors slid shut fast and the elevator rocketed up to position. Tidus waded through the water in the ring, sitting down and closing his eyes for a moment.

The spherical cover that was over the stadium slid open with a metallic hiss as thousand of voices raised to the heavens, screaming out cheers for their teams. Tidus jumped up as the magnificent display of light began to take place in the center of the stadium. Red colored energy began to focus in the center, growing smaller and smaller until finally it burst outwards with a thunderous boom. A shock wave went past the crowds as thousands of gallons began to form a suspended sphere above them.

Across town, a man in a red suit slowly stepped out onto a perch over the city, he looked over to the ocean as a mass of water began to rise from the waves. He held out a white jug, pulling the cork from it, water slowly began to float from the jug and out to the mass.

The aquatic ballet took place as players zipped through the water, hurling the ball to each other, Tidus grabbed the ball in the water, slamming it into the goal zone, cheers explode out of the stadium.

The red clothed man slowly walked down the street, the water from the ocean slowly began to advance on the city, the buildings bending towards it, groaning as the metal bends and break, people screamed and ran past the man, his boot fell into a puddle of water and instead of falling back to the ground, the water flew backwards lazily.

The ball flew past the other players, exploding out of the top of the water, Tidus quickly followed, spinning upside down in the air, he looked out to the mass of water that was quickly advancing upon the city and for an instant time seem to freeze. Red blasts of energy exploded out of the mass of water, slamming into the city, explosions followed. Peoples terrified screams lifted into the air as Tidus began to fall, he grabbed onto one of the rings as the water from the stadium began to fall. Desperate grunts escape his lips as he struggles to hold on, his muscles soon give in as he plummets down into the rest of the water.

Five minutes later, Tidus slowly sits up, shaking his head furiously, he looked around, people are

running frantically from the stadium, he himself jumped up and began to make his way out. As he reached the gates, he spotted the man in the red clothes and dashed to him "Auron! What are you doing here?!" Auron grinned, looking to Tidus. "I was waiting for you." "What are you talking about...hey! Wait!" Auron had already begun to walk away, heading down the road which leads from the stadium.

Tidus ran after him, waving his arms, suddenly, the world around him froze up and he spun around, spotting the child in the purple hooded cloak. "It begins...Don't cry..." the child disappeared and the world unfreezes, Tidus looks around "What the...?" He finally spots Auron, running towards him. "Hey! Wait!" Auron continues walking as Tidus finally catches up. "Hey! Not this way!" "Look!" Auron's hand shoot out as he pointed to the mass of water. "We called it 'Sin'..." Tidus looked over to Auron. "Sin?"

Suddenly, a large tentacle exploded out of a building, landing in front of Auron and Tidus. Auron held out a red blade "Take it...A gift from Jecht..." Tidus took the sword, stumbling back with it under its weight. "My old man?" "I hope you know how to use it." Tidus looked up to the large tentacle, jumping up. "Get out of my town!" he screamed at it, Auron unsheathed his own sword. "Some can't wait to die!" he hissed as he dove forward, slamming his sword into the tentacle. It shuddered dangerously glistened like plastic and moved no more, dead.

Tidus and Auron ran around it, heading towards a new road. Tidus stopped at the sign, "What are you laughing at old man?" He turned, looking at Auron, "Auron! Lets get out of here!" "We're expected." "Huh?" Soon they started up again, running down the road. Things began to slam down into the road around them, surrounding them, large, bird-like animals moved back and forth. Tidus and Auron began cutting through them, but it seemed the animals were an endless sea. "Hmph...this could be bad." Auron looked around, then suddenly he pointed to a tanker which was half way off the road, dangling. "That! Knock it down!" "What?!" "Trust me, you'll see"

Tidus ran forward, hitting the spinning support wheel with his sword, it exploded, sending the tanker down into the area below, a huge explosion resulted, and the building with Tidus' father began to fall. Auron began to run, calling out to Tidus "GO!" Tidus runs frantically, leaping up as the road behind him collapses, for an instant, he is air bourn, screaming, he grabbed onto the ledge of the surviving road. "Auron! Auron!" Tidus is barely able to hold onto to the ledge as Sin begins sucking it up into the air, a large portal opens and the road begins to enter "You're sure?" Auron spoke to no one, he bends down, picking Tidus up by his shirt.

"This is it. This is your story. It all begins here." Auron looked into Tidus' eyes as he began to disappear, sucked head first into the portal. Tidus soon followed, screaming, and then, darkness. Soon, Tidus is floating over the remains of his beloved Zanarkand. "Hey! Hey!" a rough voice sounds out and Tidus began to swim down towards a platform. "My...old man?" Soon he found himself face to face with his younger self. Darkness again, cold and unforgiving.

"I thought about a lot of things...like where I was, or what I had gotten myself into. I started to feel...enh...light-headed...and then...sleepy. I think I had a dream. A dream of being alone. I wanted someone...anyone beside me so I didn't have to feel alone anymore..."

2 - Chapter One-"The Al Bhed"

He awoke in the water, he was always in water, he quickly broke the surface, breathing in deeply, he looked around frantically, this was certainly not Zanarkand. "Anybody there? Auron?! Hey?!" He swam forwards, past the many ruins that scattered the water; he slowly climbed up that stairs that had lead down into the water. Soon he was walking along a path way. The stone was primitive, hand carved he would have guessed, he slowly walked forward over what he assumed was a bridge of sorts. The bridge began to sway then it suddenly gave way, he plummeted back down into the water.

He swam forward gently, diving under the water, he spotted a door way under the water, but he wasn't sure. Before he could go to investigate, a swarm of green, lizard like creatures attacked him, he quickly dodged to the left, swimming past them frantically. He was soon cornered, but before he could attack, the creatures quickly retreated, but one was caught in the jaws of the giant fish like animal that was now floating before him. His eyes widen as he turned to swim, desperate to get away from the thing that was threatening to swallow him whole. The monster gave a loud roar as it followed him in the water, opening its large jaws. "Whoa!" Tidus was nearly swallowed but at the last moment the monster roared and sent him forward, sailing through the water into the door way.

"I had made it out of the frying pan...and into the freezer. I thought I was going to die in this place."

He stepped forward, walking slowly up the cracked staircase, he reached the top and pushed a huge door inwards to a large, derelict chamber. Dome shaped, it must have been some kind of palace before it was decimated. The ceiling cracked, water gushed in like a large water fall. His teeth chattered as he stepped forward, noticing the remains of a camp fire. "Cold...need...fire..." Tidus headed off, in search of kindling and flint, he entered a curved hall, he walked forward, grabbing a withered bouquet of flowers, grumpily, he walked into the nearest room, spotting an open desk with two pieces of flint in it.

He groggily slumped back into the large chamber, bending down over the camp fire circle, he struck up a large flame in a very short period of time, surprised, and he fell back. Instead of standing, he just laid there, rubbing his stomach. "I need food!" Soon his mind began to wonder and he drifted off to sleep.

He was standing in the middle of his house boat as Auron entered, a confused look on Tidus' face, he stepped forward slowly. "What do you want?" Auron grinned, crossing his arms. "It was a bad call. Your team lost because of you." Tidus blinked several times, "You came to say THAT?", "It's been ten years...I thought you'd be crying." Tidus once again blinked several times, "Who...me?" The purple hooded child appeared once again. "You cried" His dream world was suddenly shattered as he woke up with a start.

He looked around, sitting up, his eyes fell on the camp fire, he jumped forward, it was nearly dead. "Hey, wait! Wait! Don't go out on me! Just hold on! I'll go get more wood!" He leaped up, spinning around, a loud thud and scraping of claws made him jump, he spotted a man sized creature, down on all of its six legs, and he jumped forward, slamming his sword down. Nothing happened, Tidus blanched, suddenly the sealed door in the chamber exploded inward with a thunderous boom. People raced in, all wearing body suits and things on their heads that resembled colorful ski-masks.

The female ran up, hurling a grenade at the animal, she quickly grabbed Tidus, turning him from it as the creature went up in flames. Its body exploded in a cloud of colorful orbs, all flying upwards. The girl pulled the goggles from her face as men surrounded Tidus. "Whew, that was close!" A man behind Tidus grabbed his hair, holding him there. "Hey! Lemme go!" The man holding him spoke first "Fryd ec drec?"

The man beside him spoke up next, in the same odd langue "Y fiend! Eh risyh teckieca! Oac! Ed ec cu!" One of the other men brought a blade to Tidus' throat, a sick grin on his face. "Fa gemm ed?" The girl quickly grabbed the mans arm, shaking her head.

"Fyed! Fryd ey ed ec risyh?" the girl said, still holding the mans arm. "Drao yna dra cysa eh taydr." The girl shook her head, flinging out her own blade to the mans throat. "E vunpet ed! Fa pnehk ed fedr ic." She pulled the blade away as the men held onto Tidus' arms, the girl stepped up to him and whispered in his ear. "Cunno..." she slammed her fist into his stomach, he toppled over, being dragged off by the men that held him, She turned, shaking her head, following them.

Tidus was awakened by a strange man elbowing his ribs. "Ced, lybdeja!" Tidus quickly stood up, rubbing his side. "Hey! That hurts..." Another man pointed to him "Hu sujehk, rayn?" Tidus got that same old confused look on his face. "Whoa...okay." He finally got a good look around him, he was on some kind of cargo ship, the deck. The large hatch a few feet from him swung up and open and out came the girl and another man he hadn't seen yet. The man pointed to Tidus and yelled to the other men "Caynlr res!" The men grabbed him and quickly padded him down, then let him go. "Right. Whatever..." He held up his hands, looking around.

"Tu oui hud cbayg?" The man who seemed to be the leader spoke, holding up a pair of goggles to Tidus, making swimming gestures in the air. "I said I don't understand!" The man next to Tidus elbowed him again, "Ehcumahla!" The girl pointed to the man "Fyed!" she turned to Tidus. "He said you can stay if you make yourself useful." Tidus smiled, perhaps there was some hope. "You...you understand me?" The man next to him hit Tidus upside the head, he stumbled forward. "All right, I'll work!"

The girl took Tidus aside, looking at his face. "We found some ancient ruins right beneath us. It's not active now, but there should be some power left. We're gonna go down there and activate it...and then we should be able to salvage the big prize!" Tidus got slightly excited by this, happy to do some hard work. "Rodger!" The girl dived into the water and Tidus followed. They slowly made their way to a large ruined ship. They swam in through a hole in the hull, Tidus went through the dark, murky halls slowly, watching fishes go by. Shortly, they found the main power supply, the girl worked at a snails pace, careful to not harm it, soon they had it up and running.

As soon as they got back on the boat, lights turned on from under the water, Tidus leaned over the rail and looked down, then turned and walked over to the men and the girl. "Fa vuiht dra airship!" one of the two men said, they began walking to the door that leads into the ship. "Dra naluntc fana nekrd." They reached the door, as they were walking in, they stopped. "Huf, ruf du tnyk ed ib?" Tidus began to walk in and one of the men shoved him back. "Qui, uidceta!" Tidus stepped back, crossing his arms as the door closed. "Hey! I helped out, didn't I?" He turned and walked back to a few crates, sitting down, leaning on them.

He soon laid down, supporting himself with his elbow. "Unhh, Hungry..." His arm was suddenly kicked

and he fell the rest of the way down, the girl put food down by his face and stepped back. "Whoa! Right on!" he began shoveling the food into his mouth, he began choking, the girl tossed him a bottle of water and giggled as he chugged it down. "Its 'cause you eat to fast." She giggled again and he stood up, stretching his arms out, nearly hitting her. "Hey!" she stepped back again. "Hello there! What's your name?" "Rikku..." he grabbed both of her hands, laughing.

"You really do understand! Why didn't you say so earlier?" He let go of her, she placed her hands on her hips. "I didn't have a chance too, everyone thought qui were a fiend." Tidus looked puzzled "Uh...we?" Rikku shook her head "Qui means you..." He nodded and leaned against the railing of the boat. "Who are you guys anyway?" Rikku smiled, "We're Al Bhed. Can't you tell? Wait, you're not an Al Bhed hater, are you?"

He shook his head, "I don't even know what an Al Bhed is..." Rikku blinked and stepped towards him, "Where are you from?" He smiled broadly, "Zanarkand, I'm a blitzball player, Star player of the Zanarkand Abes." Rikku frowned, crossing her arms. "Did you hit your head or something?" "Um, you guys hit me." She frowned a bit more. "Oh, right...Do you remember anything before that?"

"So I told here everything there was to tell about Zanarkand. About life there, blitzball, and Sin's attack...and about how Auron and I were engulfed in this light. I just said things as they came to mind but then I started to wonder..."

"Did I...uh...say something fun?" Rikku shook her head, "You were near Sin..." a general concern in her voice now. "Mmm-hmm..." She stood up straight, clapping. "Don't worry, you'll be better in no time. They say your head gets fuzzy when Sin is near. Maybe you just had some sort of dream." "You mean I'm sick?" He tilted his head to the side. "Because of Sins' toxin...yeah." "You sure?" "Yeah, there is no Zanarkand anymore. Sin destroyed it one thousand years ago. So no one plays blitzball there..."

Tidus stood there, his jaw dropped. "Huh? What do you mean a thousand years ago? But I saw Sin attack Zanarkand! You're saying that happened a thousand years ago?! No way!" Rikku sighed and shook her head. "You said...you play blitzball?" Tidus nodded "Uh-huh..." Rikku smiled, stepping towards him "You know, you should go to Luca. Someone might know who you are, or you might find someone you recognize." Tidus tilted his head again "Luca?" "Okay! Leave it to me! I'll get you to Luca, promise! You'd rather stay here?" he shook his head. "Okay, I'll go tell the others, wait here. Oh, and one thing, don't tell anyone you're from Zanarkand, okay? Yevon says it's a holy place. You might upset someone." He nodded, turning out to the ocean as Rikku ran inside.

"My Zanarkand, some kind of holy place? Yeah, right, I thought. Since when? Yevon? Sin? Luca? I thought Sin took me to a far away place, that I could go back in a day or two. But a thousand years into the future? No way!"

He turned and kicked the cargo, as he does this, a vibrating comes from under the ship and he stumbles back. Two men burst out of the ship, pointing to the water. "Sin!" one slipped and slid across the deck, knocking the other one over. "Sin ec lusa!" "Ihtan ic! Ihtan ic!" A large wave comes up and over the ship, sweeping Tidus off, he slid into the water, enveloped in water once again, the darkness came as he drifted off. He awoke in water, on a sunny beach, he broke the surface. "Rikku?!"

3 - Chapter Two-"The Isle of Besaid"

He looked around himself, at the pristine, cool water; there was no sign of Rikku or even the boat they had been on. He looked down and sighed, and then he looked right towards the shore just as a blitzball flew forward and right into his face. He recovered from the hit and looked towards the shore, spotting a team of men; one of them spoke up "Hey, You okay?" Tidus smiled, he was saved. "Hey!" he leaped out of the water, hurling the ball up, spinning in the air, his foot contacted the ball and it flew past the man. He turned and watched the ball fly into the distance. "Whoa-ho..." Tidus swam out of the water, drudging up the shore.

"Yo! Hiya!" Tidus walked up to the man, who was wearing a very strange outfit, yellow over-alls, no shirt, his red hair was up in the front, curving back. "You wanna try that move one more time?" Tidus grinned and nodded, taking the ball, he tossed it up, it fell back down, hitting his head, it bounced back up and Tidus leaped up with it, spinning in the air, he hit back out towards the sea.

"Finally, things were starting to look up."

The man with the odd hair stepped closer to Tidus, "You're no amateur, who you play for?" Tidus smiled at the guy and nodded, "The Zanarkand Abes!" The man blinked and cocked a brow "What team you say again?" Tidus frowned and looked around, "Uh, I meant...forget that. I got too, uh...close to Sin and my head's all foggy-like. So I don't know where this place is, or even where I came from." The man put a hand on Tidus' shoulder. "Sin's toxin got to you. But you're still alive, Praise be to Yevon." He looked back to the men, letting go of Tidus "Alright, back to practice!"

He looked back to Tidus, "I'm Wakka, coach and captain of the Besaid Aurochs, brudda." Tidus nodded, his stomach growling loudly, he looked down. "What? You hungry?" Tidus nodded again. "Okay! Back to the village! I'll get you somethin'." They walked, side by side, through a small valley, the emerged in a large, over grown area. Tidus and Wakka stopped walking as Tidus grabbed Wakkas' arm.

"I felt like I could trust Wakka, so I just had to ask."

"Its true Zanarkand was destroyed, right? A thousand years ago? So it's just a big pile of rubble now, isn't it?" Wakka sighed and looked at Tidus, then he looked away, not wanting to look into Tidus' eyes. "Long time ago, there were a whole lot of cities in Spira. Big cities, with machina-machines-to run em'. People played all day long and let the machina do the work, and then, well, take a look." Wakka waved his arm, Tidus looked around him, noticing many ruined buildings and a lot of rubble. "Yeah, that was a thousand years ago, just like you said. If you ask me, Sin's our punishment for lettin' things get outta hand. What gets me, though...is that we gotta suffer, 'cause of what some goofballs did way back when! 'Course, we must always repent for our sins! That's important! It's just that, it's hard to keep at it some times." Tidus nodded at this and let go of Wakka.

"It's just like Rikku said. Wakka and Rikku couldn't both be lying, why would they?"

Wakka grinned and hit Tidus' shoulder with his fist softly, to get his attention again, putting his arm around Tidus' shoulder, laughing softly, an almost brother like admiration in his eyes. "But you from the Zanarkand Abes- that was a good one!" Tidus sighed and shook his head. "Hey, I'm not saying the team never existed, ya? But you gotta figure a team livin' in luxury like that'd be pretty soft, eh?" Wakka let go of Tidus and grinned, Tidus offered a weak smile as Wakka began to walk off, Tidus stood there, watching his new friend walk off.

"I appreciated that fact that Wakka was trying to cheer me up. But at the time, all I could think about was...everything that happened to me-all this-started with Sin. Maybe if I could find Sin one more time, I could go home! For now, I'd just live life until that time came. No more worrying about where or when I was. Sure it was hard to not think of home, but I started to feel better already. A little better...maybe."

Tidus realized Wakka has disappeared and he ran after him, he caught up with him near a cliff, beneath the cliff sat a river. Wakka put his hand behind Tidus' back, "Hey! Its this way!" Tidus looked to Wakka "Huh?" Wakka shove Tidus down and into the water, Wakka followed, splashing Tidus as he entered the water, his head popped up from the water and he laughed. "What's the big idea?" Wakka shrugged and began swimming, Tidus shook his head, following him lazily.

Soon Tidus was ahead of Wakka and he reached the end, he looked around confused, then down into the water, he noticed a cave opening. Wakka burst out of the water, wrapping his arm around Tidus' neck. "Lemme go!" Tidus struggled against Wakka, "Got a favor to ask ya." Tidus sighed, "You want me on your team, right?" Wakka let go of Tidus and Tidus drifted off, floating on his back in front of Wakka. "A major blitz tournament's coming up. All of Spira'll be there! It's so huge, I'm sure someone will recognize you! Then you can go back to your old team, right? It'll be fun! What do ya say, huh? Come on! Come on!" Tidus sighed and nodded "Sure thing." "Dude, our teams gonna rock, eh?" Wakka and Tidus dove under the water and swam through the cave.

"I thought then that Blitzball and Sin were the only two things that Spira and Zanarkand had in common. I wasn't too far off, either."

Wakka and Tidus emerged from the cave, water dripping from them, Wakka fixed his hair as they waked up the dirt road. They followed it until they got to another cliff, which looked down upon the village of Besaid. Wakka pointed down to it, about six huts littered it on either side, a small hotel was off to the left side and a huge temple was to the very back. "This is where I was born." Tidus looked over to Wakkas face. "I started blitz when I was five. I joined the Aurochs at thirteen...ten years ago. Ten years...and we never won a game. Well, after last year's tournament, I quit, the time seemed right."

They both began walking along the dirt road again, following it down towards the village. "So, after quitting, I got this new job, ya? But every time my mind wandered, I thought about the game." Tidus grinned, watching his feet, "Ten years without a single win'll do that." Wakka nodded and kept walking, "My first match last year was my big chance. But something else was on my mind. I couldn't focus." Tidus grinned wider, looking up to Wakka. "Nice excuse." Wakka looked over to Tidus, "Hey, hey!" Tidus put up both his hands, "So you want to win the next tournament-go out with a bang?" They both stopped walking at this point, Wakka nodded.

"So, what's our goal?" Tidus asked, crossing his arms. "I don't care what we do, long as we play our best. If we give it our all, I can walk away happy." Tidus' jaw dropped and he shook his head furiously,

the water that was left in it quickly came loose, “No, no, no, no, no. If I say ‘What’s our goal?’ you say ‘Victory!’ When you play blitzball, you play to win!” Wakka looked stunned by this, as if it were an alien concept. “Victory? You serious?” Tidus nodded, Wakka smiled, and they continued on.

Just before they reached the village gates, two militant-looking men came marching up behind them. All four stopped walking, Tidus and Wakka turned, the larger one of the men nodded towards Tidus and spoke, “Ah, the one from the sea!” Tidus cocked his head to the side, the small man spoke up next, “Be on guard, there’s fiends on the road today.” The larger one nodded “After surviving your run in with sin, it would be a shame if something happened now.” The larger one began marching onward, the smaller one struggled to keep up and soon they entered the village, leaving Tidus and Wakka behind.

“Who were they?” Tidus looked over to Wakka as they both turned. “Luzzu and Gatta-Crusaders.” Tidus looked confused “Crews of what?” Wakka smiled “What, you forgot that, too?” Tidus nodded and looked down. “Hey, sorry, don’t worry about it, I’ll help you out.” Tidus smiled, looking up “Cool, in return, come tournament time, I’ll make sure we take the cup!” Wakka nodded and smiled wider “Cool! About the Crusaders, you can ask them yourself. They’ve got a lodge in the village.” They started walking again, entering the village. “Besaid Village.” Wakka looked around the small town with pride.

“They got any food here?” Tidus rubbed his stomach as it growled again. “We’ll get you something over there” Wakka pointed over to one of the little huts. “Take a look around first. Let’s see...” Wakka pointed over to the hotel, “The Crusaders Lodge is over yonder. Luzzu and Gatta are usually there. Oh, right, over here!” Wakka pulled Tidus out of the gates and to the side, Tidus stumbled and looked to Wakka, pushed a few pieces of hair from his own face. “Huh? What’s up?” Wakka looked down at Tidus’ face “You do remember the prayer, right?” Tidus shook his head, confusedly.

“Of course I’d never prayed before in my life. Not that he would know that...”

“You...must have forgot or something. Here, I’ll show you.” Wakka stepped back and raised both of his hands over his head, creating a curve in each arm, he brought them down, the right one under the left, slowly, he formed a circle in front of his chest with his hands and bowed to Tidus, he stood up, letting his arms drop. “Go ahead, you try.” Tidus nodded and repeated Wakkas motion flawlessly, “Hey, not bad. Okay, now go present yourself to the temple Summoner.”

“Any blitzball player would know that ‘prayer’. It was the blitzball sign for victory.”

“I think I’m gonna go check out the Crusaders first, okay?” Wakka nodded, “Sure Brudda.” Tidus waved and walked over to the hotel, pushing back the curtain that was the door. Tidus looked around the entirely blue room, which was small, it had a counter and a table, in the back there were three beds, the curtain to them was open slightly. Gatta was standing in front of the table; Luzzu was sitting across from him. Gatta turned and looked to Tidus. “Hey, you! You were attacked by Sin...right? Recently was it?” Tidus nodded, “I think so.” Gatta crossed his arms “So, Sin can’t be far, right? You’re not hiding anything, are you?” his tone was harsh and serious. “Why would I?” Tidus crossed his arms.

Luzzu nodded towards Tidus, “If Sins nearby, it’ll attack the island for sure. But it hasn’t. I wonder why?” Tidus shook his head, shrugging his shoulders and holding up his hands. “I’m sorry...I really don’t know anything. To tell you the truth, I don’t even know what the Crusaders are-” Gatta spoke up,

cutting Tidus off, "You're kidding! Right...?" Luzzu shook his head, "Sin, the toxin. Gatta, tell him who we are!" This was a command, obviously Luzzu was in charge of this duo. Gatta nodded with pride, his voice swelling with it "Yes, Sir! The Crusaders are sworn to battle Sin! We have chapters throughout Spira, accepting all who wish to join our struggle!"

"The hero Mi' Hien formed the Crusaders eight hundred years ago as the Crimson Blades. Later, our ranks grew, and we called ourselves the Crusaders. We've been fighting Sin ever since!" Tidus stifled a laugh, grinning, "What, you've been fighting eight hundred years and you still haven't beat it?" Gatta looked offended, Luzzu stood up slowly. "Well, we've steered Sin away from towns many times! And that's all we can do. Nobody's been able to defeat it. Our mission as Crusaders is to protect the temples, towns, villages, and people of Spira." Tidus looked somewhat confused, "So then whose job is it to defeat Sin?" Gatta blinked and looked to Luzzu "It does seem rather bad...We could just tell you, but I think it's better for you to try and remember. Go pray at the temple. Perhaps Yevon will help you regain your memory."

Tidus nodded and turned, exiting the hotel, he quickly walked up the small stair way to the temples' entrance way, walking towards the door. He stepped through, entering a round chamber, statues lined the ring of the room, he stepped into the center, looking around. He noticed several large statues towards the back of the temple, a stair way, and two halls on either side of the stair way, he turned around the dimly lighted room, the scent of incense filled the room, musking the air.

"It was then, standing in that place, that I began to realize how different this world was from my own."

Tidus walked up to one of the large statues, a man, holding a staff, dressed in a floor length coat which buttoned in the front. An old priest approached Tidus, smiling softly, "Ten years have passed since Lord Braska became High Summoner, and finally we receive a statue for our temple." Tidus turned and looked to the Priest, feeling a sense of serenity from him, yet, there seemed to be corruption in his eyes, Tidus shook his head slightly, "Its my imagination" he thought to himself. "What's a High Summoner?" all around the temple, gasps sounded out, Tidus looked around himself, looking back to the Priest. "I...I got too close to Sin's...uh...toxin."

"It was funny hearing my self make the same excuse over and over...funny...and a little sad."

Tidus looked down, then back up, smiling as the Priest prayed before him. "Praise be to Yevon that you survived Sins touch." Tidus nodded, smiling wider, "Uh...thanks...I guess." The Priest nodded slowly again, "Now, allow me to refresh your memory. The Summoners' are practitioners of a sacred art, sworn to protect the people of Yevon. Only a chosen few become Summoners, who call forth entities of great power: the Aeons. The aeons hear our prayers and come down to us. They are the blessing of Yevon."

"So what he meant...was that we should respect some kind of great man or something like that...I figured."

"Perhaps you should pray my son." Tidus nodded and turned, walking to one of the smaller statues, he got on his knees and preformed the prayer, feeling quite silly. Once he had finished, he stood, bowed to the Priest and turned, exiting the temple. Tidus walked over to the hut where Wakka had pointed out before, he entered it, and there was a single bed, a small, round table, where food was laid out. Wakka

was sitting next to the table; he was still chopping up food. "Sorry man, no time for food yet. Take a nap! You looked bushed!" Tidus yawned and stretched, "Thanks! I think I will!" Tidus walked over to the small bed and sat down, he nodded to Wakka then laid down, stretching out, soon he was asleep.

The Priest from the temple entered the hut, "You could at least go see how they are doing." Wakka stood up, looking to him. "We can't interfere, it's a rule." The Priest sighed, his voice concerned "But its been nearly..." The room whitens as Tidus enters his dream world, His old boat house floats, drenched by the sun; a man stands on it, talking to a woman. "But it's been nearly a day already." The woman looked down, then back up, "Perhaps you could go look for us." The man nodded, crossing his arms. "People are searching for him now." The woman sighed, "Thank you..."

A young child comes up, Tidus' six year old self. "Who cares whether he comes back or not?" The woman looked shocked, "But, he might die!" The young Tidus nodded, "Fine! Let him!" The woman kneeled down, putting her hand on his shoulder, looking into his eyes. "Do you...do you hate him so?" young Tidus nods yes, looking away from the woman's eyes. "If he dies, you'll never be able to tell him how much you hate him." The little boy let a few tears escape his eyes. Tidus sat bolt up in the bed, looking around. Wakka was no where to be seen, he sighed and stood up, stretching.

"Wakka?" Tidus walked out of the hut, glancing around, shading his eyes from the setting sun. Tidus remembered the Priest and Wakka leaving, so he made his way back into the temple, greeted by the sickly sweet scent. He spotted Wakka and the Priest, he walked over to them slowly. "Is there something wrong?" Wakka nodded, "The Summoner hasn't returned from the trial." Tidus cocked his head to the side "Eh?" "Well, Apprentice Summoner, really." Tidus nodded, "Ah..." Wakka pointed to the door that's at the top of the stair well. "There's a room in there called the 'Cloister of Trials', beyond is where the apprentice summoner prays. If the prayer is heard, the apprentice becomes a fully-fledged summoner, remember?"

"So someone is in there somewhere and they haven't come back out. Right, I got it." Tidus smiled at Wakka, patting his arm. "A day's already gone by." Tidus frowned, looking towards the door. "Is it particularly dangerous in there?" Wakka nodded solemnly, "Sometimes, yes." Tidus looked back to Wakka, "Why don't you go in and help?" Wakka grinned at Tidus' concern. "There's already Guardians in there, besides, it's forbidden." Tidus shook his head and run up the stairs, reaching for the door, the Priest called to him "The precepts must be obeyed!" Tidus shook his head and opened the door, "Like I care!"

"Maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all..."

Tidus entered a small grey room, looking around, spotting a glyph on the wall, he touched it gently and a chime rang out, the wall to the right of him slide up and he turned, walking down a flight of stairs slowly. He noticed a blue sphere in the wall, he grabbed it out and turned, studying the sphere as he walked, soon, however, he walked straight into two doors, the sphere went flying out of his hand, and, as if pulled by some magnetic bond, was inserted into a socket in the door, it swung open. Tidus slowly entered an "U" shaped hall, he crept up the first part of the hall, noticing another place for a sphere, he quickly turned and walked back to the doors, taking the sphere from the socket, as soon as he did it flew to the other one, the wall flew up.

Tidus walked to the small opening, another sphere, a green one, sat in the hole, Tidus picked it up and it

flew from his hand, he ran after it, barreling down the hall way, the only light coming from the sphere. It sunk into a small, stone pedestal, the wall behind it seemed to dissolve into nothing. "Whoa...this place..." he stepped into the room, walking slowly forward, as soon as he did, the pedestal flew forward, slamming into a hole in the ground; Tidus had to jump to the side to not be hit by it. "...Is defiantly dangerous."

The floor began to glow as Wakka walked up behind Tidus, "What's gotten into you?!" Tidus turned and looked down, shrugging. "Hey...its okay, only Summoners and their guardians can enter here. It's a tradition, very important." Tidus looked back up, "So, what about you?" Wakka smiled proudly, standing up straight and puffing out his chest, "Me? I'm a Guardian." Tidus grinned, shaking his head, they both stepped onto the place where the floor had changed, it started to lower, and Tidus looked around a bit worriedly. "Guardian?" Tidus looked intrigued, "Summoners go on a pilgrimage to pray at every temple in Spira. Guardians protect them. The guardians in there now...one of them got short fuse, and who knows what the others thinking." The elevator reached its destination and they stepped off.

"Well, now that we've come this far...might as well go all the way!" Tidus and Wakka entered yet another circular room, this one was heavily decorated with religious paraphernalia, and the far end had a stair way which lead up to an oval shaped door, which had hangings around it. A chesty woman, wearing a beautiful black dress with tan fur trim, and a front composed completely of belt (which exposed a bit of her upper thigh.) Her long, black braided hair swayed as she walked up to Wakka and Tidus, her right eye covered with woven hair. A fury in her exposed eye was obvious; it was red, her lips full and the color of rotten grapes. Three necklaces adorn her slender neck.

"What are you doing here? Didn't think we'd be able to handle it?" Wakka looked a bit frightened, but Tidus noticed something else in both of their eyes, a longing of sorts; a passion for each other that could not, no, must not be expressed. "No, its uh...just..." he looked to Tidus and sighed. "See, I told you she gets mad easy." Tidus looked over to the large, fury man, who had a broken horn sticking out of his forehead, his fur was completely blue and his face came into a muzzle. His yellow eyes just stared at Tidus, making him uneasy. The female Guardian stepped up to Tidus, gasping a bit. "Who...are you?" But before Tidus could answer, the door slid open and everyone turned, looking.

A light seemed to outline a slim, small figure, she stepped out slowly, her blue dress flowing gently around her slender legs, it led up to a yellow guarder, with a pink pentagonal shape on it, several strands of pink rope fell from it. Her breasts were covered with a cross of white cotton; a sapphire jewel adorned her breast on a sterling silver chain. She was stunning, an innocence about her. She slowly stumbled as she exited, leaning against the side, her eyes closed, her face pale from the hard time she just had, her brown hair flowing around her head.

She stumbled forward once more, tumbling down the stair. The blue Guardian rushed forward, catching her before she could fall just one stair, everyone watched her as he helped her stand. She tossed back her hair and opened her eyes, one green and one blue, those deep pools showed so much wisdom, Tidus felt something stir inside his stomach as her pink, rosebud lips moved, her beautiful voice coming out softly, "I've done it...I have become...a Summoner." The Guardians and Tidus slowly exited the Cloister, Tidus' knees had already gone weak from his experience with the young, beautiful summoner. As they reached the main temple area, the Summoner and Guardians exited, Tidus just stood there, watching the door.

“Man, was I surprised, and here I was thinking Summoners were all old geezers.”

Tidus slowly walked out of the temple, “Hey! Over here!” Wakka quickly grabbed Tidus around the neck, pulling him towards a bunch of people, gathering around a circle. “What? Ow!” Wakka laughed, “Wait till you see this!” Tidus whined, struggling, “I can’t see anything!” Wakka let go of Tidus and Tidus stepped up to the circle, the Summoner was standing in the center, smiling towards Wakka. Wakka nods, “Ready!” the Summoner grins, “Okay!” she turned her back to them, holding out her arms, in her right hand a blue staff with a yellow circle that had intricate designs on it. She twirled it around and soon a brilliant flash of light appeared at her feet and spread out.

Glyphs appeared all over the ground as four white orbs flew up into the sky coming together at some unknown point, Tidus watched in wonder as a bird like creature flew down, landing next to the Summoner. Its neck was adorned with red feathers, its face pinched into a sharp beak, its eyes fierce, yet loving, its wings spread out, flesh colored, turning down in gently curves, three on each; all had several jewels on it. The Summoner put her hand on its beak and nuzzled against its neck, smiling. Her blue hair wrap jingling lightly against its neck. She stepped back and sent it back to its resting place, she turned, Wakka and the female Guardian walked to her, both patting her shoulders.

“I had never seen anything like it in my life. Sure, it was a little scary, but still...I could feel a strange kind of gentleness coming from it.”

Tidus and Wakka returned to Wakkas hut, sitting down at the table, Tidus studied Wakkas face. “So, does stuff like that happen often around here?” Wakka smiled, passing Tidus a sandwich and a few crackers. “Only every time a Summoner passes through to get that Aeon, which hasn’t been much Brudda” Tidus nodded, taking a few bites of his food. “Do Aeons have separate names or are they just all called Aeons?” Wakka shrugged, “It really depends on the Summoner, they can choose to name it something, like Valefor, which you just saw, or they can call it somethin’ else, ya? It’s a personal journey and choice.” Tidus nodded, finishing his food. “We’re having a party as soon as the sun sets, you’re coming to meet the team, ya?” Tidus nodded, noticing the fading of light outside.

“I remember...that night, we talked for the first time. I didn’t know it then, everything changed, for everyone...for me...”

Tidus and Wakka emerged from his hut, Wakka walked off to join his team by the camp fire and Tidus followed. Wakka looked over to Tidus “Let me introduce you to the team” Wakka put his arm around Tidus’ shoulder, nodding to the men. “This guy wants into the tournament so bad, I let him on the team. His memory’s a little fuzzy, so don’t mind him if he says anything odd!” He looked to Tidus. “Come on, say ‘Hi’” He nudged Tidus forward. “Uh...Hey, guys...”

In perfect unison, the men say “Hello” back, all nodding at the same time. Tidus blinked several times, “So...what’s our goal?” the Aurochs all, once again, spoke in perfect unison, “To do our best!” Wakka grinned, talking to his team in a firm, yet caring voice, “Nope, we got a new goal now! Our new goal...is victory! To win every match, defeat every opposing team! To bring the Crystal Cup back to our Island! That’s all we need to do to win, easy, ya?” The men looked around at each other, their mouths all dropped. “Victory...?” they said in unison, more of a question really, “Victory! Victory! Victory! Victory! Yeah!” they all jumped and hollered. The Summoner who was sitting with an old woman, an old man, and their grand daughter, looked over, catching Tidus’ eyes, she smiled and looked back to the little girl.

Tidus slowly walked over to her, Wakka watched with a suspicious eye. The old man spoke up first, "You heathen!" the old woman pointed at Tidus, "Stay away from the Summoner!" the little girl joined in too, stepping in front of the Summoner as she stood up, the little girl's small fists on her hips, "You're a bad man!" The Summoner smiled and stepped aside, walking towards Tidus, the old man spoke yet again, "Lady Yuna, be careful!" Yuna stopped and turned, looking to the group. "But it was really my fault to begin with." She turned back to Tidus and smiled.

"I'm Yuna, thank you so much for your help earlier." Tidus blinked several times, he stepped forward slightly, "I'm sorry about that. Wasn't that...wasn't I not supposed to...guess I kinda over reacted." He smiled sheepishly and looked down. "Oh, no. I was...over confident." Tidus looked up and nodded, "Um, I saw that aeon thing. Tha-that's amazing!" Yuna smiled proudly, giggling slightly, "Really? Do you think I can become high Summoner?" Tidus nodded, but before he could speak, the little girl was tugging on Yuna's dress, Yuna looked down and smiled. "Lady Yuna, come play with me some more!" Yuna nodded and the girl went back to her grandparents, Yuna looked back up to Tidus. "So, tomorrow, then?" "Tomorrow?" Yuna nodded, "We're going on the same boat, aren't we?" Tidus smiled "Oh, really?" "We can talk more. You can tell me all about Zanarkand!" She turned and walked back to her friends, sitting down.

Wakka walked up behind Tidus, looking to him. "She's cute, ya?" Tidus grinned and nodded, "Yeah!" Wakka frowned, resulting in Tidus' frown. "Don't get any ideas." Tidus blinked and grinned again, "No promises there, big guy. Hey, but what if she, like, comes on to me?" Wakka shook his head, still frowning, "That's not going to happen." Tidus sighed and looked down, then back up to Wakka. "If you get tired, let me know. I have a bed made for you." Tidus yawned and nodded, "Not such a bad idea." Wakka grinned, "Hm, ready for bed?" Tidus nodded "Yeah," Wakka pointed to the hotel, "Good, sleep tight." Tidus walked into the hotel, walking past the front desk, he found his bed and laid down, quickly falling asleep.

He found himself walking along the pier in Besaid, he spotted Yuna and jogged over to her. "Where's that boat?" Yuna shrugged and looked worried, "Everyone will find us if it doesn't come soon." Tidus looked at her face, "You really sure this is okay?" She smiled reassuringly, "Will you take me to Zanarkand?" Tidus smiled, which quickly melted into a frown as he heard foot steps running towards them and a familiar voice, "Hey! You said you'd go with me!" Rikku stopped running, putting her hands on her hips. Tidus quickly turned from both of them; he pretended to jog in place. "Oh, hey, I...uh" Rikku pointed a finger at Tidus, "I thought Wakka told you not to get any ideas!"

Yuna gasped, "Hey did?" Rikku nodded to Yuna, "Yeah!" she looked back to Tidus, "So you're coming with me!" A rugged voice sounded out, eerily familiar, "Hey! Stop dreaming!" Tidus had become his younger self, his father, Jecht had appeared; Rikku and Yuna stood at either side of him. "You with a woman? You can't even catch a ball! Oh, what's the matter?" Young Tidus was crouching down, hiding his face. "Gonna cry again? Cry, cry. That's the only thing you're good for!" The young Tidus looked up, his voice quiet and soft, "I...hate you..." Jecht looked at him, "Huh? What'd you say?" Yuna smiled warmly, "You have to speak loudly." "I hate you!" The young Tidus cried out, "Eh?" Jecht blinked, "That's the spirit!" Rikku pumped her fists into the air. "You can do it!"

Tidus sat up straight in his bed, crying out "I hate you!" He looked around slowly, breathing deeply, he ran a hand through his hair, sighing. "He's dead, okay? Dead!" the voice of the female Guardian came

to Tidus' ears, he stood up, walking groggily to the door of the lodge, he looked out of it, seeing Wakka and the female Guardian standing face to face. The female Guardian had her arms crossed over her chest again. "He does look a lot like Chappu. I was surprised too, the first time I saw him. But no matter what he looks like, he isn't Chappu. You shouldn't have brought him here in the first place!"

"Yeah, but...he needed our help!" Lulu shook her head, putting her hand to her forehead, letting it drop back down, "Excuses again?" Wakka sighed, he looked down, his voice weak, "Yeah, but..." Lulu growled, waving both her hands out at him. "That's it. No more. Enough, Wakka!" her voice was harsh and cold, she turned and walked from him and to her hut, closing the sash hard behind herself. Wakka looked down and whispered softly "Lulu...please...", Tidus thought "Sooo, Lulu's her name, hmm..." He closed the door. Wakka entered it quickly, Tidus looked to him, "Scary! So, whose Chappu?"

Wakka looked down, "My little brother Chappu, he looked like you." Tidus looked down with him, "He's dead?" Wakka sighed heavily, "He was with the Crusaders, when they fought Sin last year. He didn't make it, I first heard on the day of the tournament." Tidus looked up, nodding "Oh...so that's why..." Wakka looked up also, his eyes glassy from tears that had not yet spilled over, "I became a Guardian to fight Sin, ya?" Tidus nodded, getting it, "Revenge, then?" Wakka nodded back, frowning, "That was the idea. I'm more worried about a stupid game now then avenging my brother. Well, after next tournament, I'll be a Guardian full time. I know it kinda looks like I'm using you, but I'm not."

Tidus nodded understandingly, "Don't worry, I mean, I owe you a lot. You really helped me out, you know? What I mean is...thanks, Wakka." Wakka smiled sheepishly and blushed slightly, "Stop! You're embarrassing me!" They shambled off to bed, laughing, and both fell asleep, accompanied by each others snores. When the sun rose and the rooster, or at least Spiras' equivalent to a rooster, crowed, Tidus sat up in his bed, rubbing his sleep filled eyes; he crawled out of bed and stumbled out of the lodge. Wakka and Lulu were already waiting.

"Hey! Sleepy head!" he waved Tidus over, Tidus obeyed, stretching as he got there. "I want to give you something." Wakka held out a blue sword, it seemed to be made of liquid; the handle was a dragon's mouth which eventually turned into the blade, which had a jutting hook at the end. Tidus twirled it; his eyes wide, the red ribbons blew in the wind gently. "Whoa! You're giving this...to me?" Wakka smiled, beaming, "Yeah! Use it well!" Lulu sighed and looked to Wakka, "That's the sword you gave Chappu." Tidus felt an uneasiness now, "Well, he never used it. Where's Yuna?" Tidus looked around, then back to Wakka, "We're taking the same boat as Yuna, right? Why do we gotta wait here?"

Wakka looked to him, "Yuna came to this village ten years ago, when the last calm started." Tidus nodded, and then cocked his head to the side, "The calm?" Wakka nodded, "Since then, she's been like a little sister to me and Lulu, but she had the talent...she became an apprentice. Now, today, she leaves as a Summoner." Lulu nodded, looking to Tidus, "This is our journey...we should leave together." Just then, a thump is heard near the temple and everyone looked over, Yuna is standing there, two large luggage trunks are on either side of her.

Lulu nodded to her, calling out, "You really don't need all that luggage." Yuna looked down to the trunks, then back to Lulu, "They're not really my things...they're gifts for the temples we're to visit..." Wakka spoke up, calling Yunas attention to him, "This isn't a vacation, Yuna." Yuna looked down and sighed, "I guess...I guess you're right." She steps towards them, leaving her trunks behind. "Okay! We're off!" The group turned and left the village slowly, walking up the dirt trail. Once they reached the

top of the hill, Lulu, Wakka, and Yuna stepped off towards a small statue on the cliff.

Wakka kneeled down, Yuna kneeled down behind him and Lulu stood beside both of them. Wakka and Yuna prayed slowly. Wakka stands up and steps back, watching Yuna. "What's going on?" Wakka looked to Tidus, "It's an ancient custom. People leaving the Island pray here for a safe trip. Chappu didn't pray that day..." Tidus nodded and walked to the statue, kneeling next to Yuna, he prayed silently and stood up with Yuna. "That should do it." Wakka began walking, Yuna and Lulu followed slowly. After they disappeared behind a bend, Tidus followed, walking along the mountain side, rust-red ruins extend from it, several columns adorn it.

As Tidus stepped forward, a flash of blue appeared on one of the columns, Tidus began spinning as more flashes appeared, and growls reverberate around him as the blue guardian slammed down in front of him. His sharp claws turned into a fist as he pounded the ground, a few cracks appearing in the earthen floor. The Guardian roared, his blood-stained teeth showing, all sharp. The Guardian stood up, whipping out his spear, Tidus quickly pulled out his sword, stepping back. The Guardian began glowing and he leaped up into the air, barreling down towards Tidus, the spear about to puncture his chest, he slammed his sword into and sent the Guardian off to the side, Tidus stumbled back.

"That's enough!" Wakka quickly walked to them, grabbing the Guardians arm. Tidus, breathing heavily, looked to Lulu, "What's with that guy?" Lulu grinned and nodded towards him "Kimahri Ronso, of the Ronso tribe. He's learned the fiend's way of fighting." Tidus blinked and waved his arm, "That's not what I meant!" Yuna stepped forward, smiling warmly at Tidus; Wakka spoke up "He's another one of Yunas' guardians." Yuna giggled slightly, "Sometimes we don't understand him either, Kimahri doesn't talk much anyway." Wakka rolled his eyes "Hmph..." Yunas jaw dropped and she looked at Wakka, "But he's protected me since I was a child!" Lulu and Wakka laugh.

They all eventually made it to the sunny beach, passing a water fall, and the over grown area again. As soon as they made it to the dock, people were crying and hugging Yuna; she just smiled at them and spoke words of soft encouragement. When the S.S. Liki pulled up, she slowly stepped on board, the huge boat was shaped like a giant cross-bow, the sail was colorfully decorated with different symbols, and it was a beautiful ship, wooden, a sense of nostalgia about it. As soon as Lulu, Wakka, Kimahri, and Tidus boarded the boat, they turned and waved, Yuna lifted her voice, "Good bye, all of you, I will...miss you..." A silent tear rolled down her face as the boat took off.

4 - Chapter Three-"Not so humble beginnings"

As the S.S. Liki set sail, the wind picked up, blowing in the scent of sea weed and minerals from the rich, unspoiled sea. The day was clear; the blue sky seemed to go forever, and Tidus felt that maybe everything was going to be okay in this new time and place. He spotted a man looking out towards Besaid with binoculars, he quickly ran over to him, leaping onto his shoulders, grabbing the binoculars; he turned around, landing on the banister of the boat. He looked around at the people, finding Lulu's black hair, he slowly traveled up it, stopping briefly on her bosoms before moving on, stopping on her china doll face. She looked over and frowned, Tidus quickly looked away, spotting Kimahri, then he moved over, finally finding Yuna. The color had returned to her soft pink cheeks, she smiled softly and waved.

She continued walking and Tidus tossed the binoculars back to the man, he walked towards Yuna as she got to the very front of the boat, she was quickly surrounded by men and he couldn't get to her, he sat there, listening to them speak about her. One of the passengers nudged his friend, whispering "Word is that Summoners got noble blood!" The friend nodded and nudged the guy, "I heard she's Lord Braska's daughter" The guy looked to his friend, "Ya don't say?" Tidus tilted his head, "Lord Braska's...daughter?" Tidus rolled his eyes and turned, walking back to Lulu and Wakka. "So, is Yunas' father famous or something?"

Wakka nodded, watching Yuna with a sharp eye, "She's the daughter of High Summoner Braska, you saw his statue at the temple" Tidus nodded, remembering the large man in the floor length coat. "Lord Braska defeated Sin ten years ago; Yuna's the heir to a great legacy!" Tidus sighed and shook his head, "It's tough when your father's famous." Wakka looked confused, tilted his head to the side, "Huh?" Lulu stepped closer, a slight upturn to her lips, "Wakka's...a bit lacking...in the imagination department." Tidus grinned, his eyes lighting up, "Ha ha! Thanks, Lulu. I'll keep that in mind." Wakka sighed slightly, "The group around Yuna is gone, I hate it when people group around her, ya? Scared she's gonna get hurt or somethin', ya know?"

Tidus nodded and walked over to her slowly, leaning against the railing, he looked to her and smiled. Yuna smiled back, looking around a bit, "The wind...it's nice..." Tidus looked a bit confused at first, and then they both started laughing. Yuna looked over to Tidus again, smiling a little wider, "You're a blitzball player, aren't you?" Tidus nodded, watching her eyes, "From Zanarkand, right?" Tidus sighed and looked away. "You hear that from Wakka?" Yuna nodded firmly "Mm-hm." Tidus sighed again, looking back to her, "Wakka doesn't believe me at all." Yuna stepped forward, placing a tender hand on his forearm, causing a spark to run through Tidus, "But I believe you!" She pulled her hand back, smiling.

She stepped back, holding out her arms, her eyes lighting up. "I've heard, in Zanarkand...there is a great stadium, all lit up! Even at night!" Tidus looked at her with weary eyes, "Huh?" Yuna nodded, smiling wider, "Great blitzball tournaments are held there, and the stands are always full!" Tidus stepped forward, holding out his hand "How do you know that?" Yuna clapped her hands together, "A man named Jecht told me. He was my father's Guardian." Tidus blanched, stepping back, choking out the words "My...my father...his name is Jecht!" Yuna gasped, clapping her hands again, "Amazing! You

know, our meeting like this must be a blessing of Yevon!" Tidus looked down, shaking his head.

"Sounds like him, but it can't be him." Yuna tilted her head to the side, trying to see his face "Why not?" Tidus sighed heavily, "My old man, he died. Ten years ago, off the coast of Zanarkand." Yuna put a hand on Tidus' shoulder "I'm sorry..." Tidus shrugged gently, looking to her face "He went out to sea for training one day...and never came back, no one's seen him since." Yuna smiled, squeezing his shoulder, "Why, that's the day Sir Jecht came to Spira! It's true! I first met Jecht ten years and three months ago! I remember, that was the day my father left. The date fits, doesn't it?" Tidus nodded, looking skeptical, "Yeah, but how would he get here?" Yuna smiled warmly, letting go of Tidus' shoulder, "You're here, are you not?"

Before Tidus could respond, the boat began to shake and tumble, the Liki got tossed and hurled from wave to wave, Yuna lost her footing, falling back, she grabbed onto the harpoon station, holding her hand out to Tidus. Tidus reached out, trying to get her, but before he could, Kimahri was on it, he leaped and grabbed her, holding her to him. Sin's fin began to raise out of the water from the left side of the boat, speeding past them. One of the crew members screamed out, pointing "Sin!" The fin was a mass of grey flesh, deep scars covered it, it sliced through the water like a butcher knife through flesh, creating a current, pulling the boat, which was dwarfed in comparison to the monolithic fin.

The crew members quickly go to the harpoon stations, getting ready to shoot. Wakka cried out, "What do you think you're doing? Stick a harpoon in em' and we'll get dragged under!" The passenger growled, looking to Wakka, "Sin is going for Kilika! Our families are in Kilika!" He looked over to Yuna, "Forgive us, Lady Summoner." She nodded, closing her eyes. Wakka put a hand to his forehead, rubbing it, "Wait!...Oh boy..." Wakka grabbed onto Yuna to help Kimahri keep her on board. The harpoons were launched simultaneously, both cutting through the air, the rope going taut as the sphere heads slammed into the grey skin.

"Yuna! Do you think you could summon?" Tidus looked at her, Yuna nodded, pushing off of Wakka and Kimahri, she started dancing. The glyphs appeared on the ground and spun around her as the four white orbs exploded into the air, forming the Aeon, it slammed down, Yuna pointed with her wand at the fin, "Valefor! Build energy!" The air darkened as the animal began to draw energy from the fin. Soon it started glowing, the animal growled loudly as little tiny lightning bolts shot off of him. Yuna twirled her staff, pointing to the fin again, "Valefor! Energy Beam!" The animal opened its mouth and energy began to fill it, a bright red orb appeared in its beak and suddenly, a huge beam of red energy exploded out, Valefor cut it across the fin, a huge explosion resulted, the harpoon cords snapping.

The Aeon disappeared as the fin sank into the waves. Wakka sighed, looking around, "Everybody okay?" Yuna shook her head, "Where's Tidus?" Wakka looked around then ran to the edge of the boat, leaping into the water. Piranha like fish were attacking Tidus as he just floated there, Wakka hurled his ball at them and they swam away, he tossed a small bottle at Tidus, it exploded and silver light seemed to come from Tidus' skin as he woke up. Tidus looked around, surprised, then suddenly, dolphins burst past, like torpedo's, all of them running from the large, jelly fish like monster that had swam close to them.

Wakka pointed and Tidus nodded, Wakka held back his ball into his stomach, his eyes closed; grey energy particles seem to flow from the water into him, turning the ball into grey stone. Wakka hurled it; it slammed into the creature, embedding itself into its skin. The creature emitted an unearthly tone as it

turned into stone; a low rumbling began, vibrating through the water. The creature exploded, dust particles flying through the water, the ball shot towards Wakka, he held out his hands, catching it. A rope ladder was lowered into the water from the boat and Tidus and Wakka climbed up, both laying sprawled out on the deck.

Sin burst out of the water, then slammed back down into it as he headed for the small town of Kilika. It was floating over water, made completely out of wood and grass huts. Two children were jumping with glee, playing with a blitzball as their Mother fed their little brother. A wall of water rose up out of the sea like a bat out of hell, soon, energy waves started crashing down from it, flattening the area where the children were playing, the mother jumped up, screaming. Soon Sin started sucking at the small town, tearing people from their homes, tearing the homes from the docks. A man flew through the air, slamming into a tree, the tree went with him as he flew into Sin. Fiends burst from Sin, flying out to the city, slamming into the trees and homes. Kilika has been reduced to rubble and a few docks still clinging to the land.

“When Sin attacked Zanarkand that day, I woke up in Spira. I kept hoping that it would work in reverse, too.”

Yuna looked out to the carnage from the S.S. Liki, her eyes glossy with tears that she swore she would not release. Her soft voice come out with strong determination as she spoke “I will defeat Sin...I must defeat Sin.” The ship moved through the debris gently, the town had be decimated, the crusaders here seem to have failed. The boat docked, and as people started to leave, Yuna just stared at the destruction that had come from Sin.

“I was just fooling myself. Maybe it was that day...on the sea, under the burning sun. I started to give up hope. I was in a foreign world. I wasn't going home. This was my new reality, and I was stuck in it for good.”

Yuna slowly stepped off the boat, followed by Lulu, Wakka, and Kimahri. Yuna was approached by a young woman and a middle aged man. She smiled at them, “Greetings! I am the Summoner Yuna. I have come from the temple in Besaid.” The woman preformed the prayer, “M' lady Summoner!” Yuna nodded to her, “If there is no other Summoner here, please allow me to perform the sending.” The man bowed, “Thanks be to ye.” The woman bowed along with the man, her voice frantic, “Our loved ones, we feared they would become fiends!” Yuna nodded, Lulu had settled beside her, “Take me to them.” The woman and the man turned and walked, Yuna and Lulu followed suit, Kimahri waited a few moments and then bounded after them. Wakka looked to Tidus as the Aurochs stepped off the boat, “We'll go see what we can do to help in the town.” Tidus nodded and watched Wakka and the Aurochs go off, Tidus turned and walked the path that Yuna had just gone.

5 - Chapter Four-"Kilika"

Tidus finally caught up with Lulu, he turned, Yuna is comforting several people near the edge of a broken dock, beyond, under the water many make-shift caskets sit. Tidus looked to Lulu, "Uh, what's a 'sending'? Are we going somewhere?" Lulu sighed, shaking her head, she looked to him, "You truly all clueless. Are you sure it's your memory that's the problem?" Tidus shrugged, Lulu sighed and continued on, "The dead need guidance." Tidus looked puzzled at this, he opened his mouth to say something but Lulu sighed angrily, obviously annoyed, "Filled with grief over their own death, they refuse to face their fate." Tidus nodded, "They yearn to live on, and resent those still alive. You see, they envy the living. And in time, that envy turns to anger, even hate. Should these souls remain in Spira, they become fiends, who prey on the living. Sad, isn't it?" Before Tidus could respond, she went on. "The sending takes them to the Far plane, where they may rest in peace."

"Summoners do this?" Lulu nodded, pointing to the water. Yuna had taken off her boots and take out her staff, She slowly stepped forward onto the water, her feet not sinking into it, but rather, walking on it as if it were made of something solid. The sun had just began to set, casting a pink glow to the water, making it the color of champagne. Yunas own skin had been cast in a golden light, accentuating her beauty. She reached the coffins in the water, she began to spin the staff slowly around her, she bend down, coming up in a circle, spinning the staff in one hand. She grasped it with both her hands and shoved it forward in the air, her body following, and as she twisted and turned in her dance of the death, the orange fire in the torches on the docks all broke out into blue bell flames.

A haunting sound filled the air as the Hymn of the Fayth began to come from the water, as Yuna turned, the water exploded up, lifting her five feet into the air, she danced on the pillar of water as pyre-flies burst from the coffins, flying around Yuna. The mother from Sins attack, who was still alive, fell to her knees, crying out in despair as her children were sent to the Far plane. People on the dock cried and Tidus watched, soon the fire turned back to normal and Yuna was let down onto the water, she walked back to the people. "It must be tough, being a Summoner." Lulu looked to Tidus, sighing again, "Yuna choose her own path. She knew from the beginning what it meant. All we can do is protect her along the way, until the end." Tidus blinked several times, "Until the...end? What's the end?" Everyone on the dock had turned and looked to them.

Lulu shook her head again, rubbing her left temple, "Until she defeats sin." Lulu let her hand drop and she walked over to Yuna, smiling at her. "I hope...I hope I did okay." Lulu put her hands on Yunas shoulders, nodding "You did very well! They've reached the Far plane by now. But...no tears next time, hm?" Yuna nodded and smiled, Tidus watched them walk off, he just leaned back, watching the people leave the dock. His eyes met the sunset and he smiled weakly.

"I wished there would never be a next time. No more people being killed by Sin. No more sendings for Yuna. Everyone stood there, watching her. It was strange, and somehow...horrifying. I never wanted to see it again."

Tidus slowly walked down the stairs of the hotel he was staying in, he stepped out onto the dock, stretching his arms far above his head. One of the Aurochs ran up to him, "Hey! You awake? Cap'n Wakka's waitin' for you!" The guy ran off, Tidus followed close behind and soon they found Wakka, he turned and smiled at Tidus. "Ah! There you are!" Wakka turned to his team mates, "Besaid Aurochs, huddle!" They all came to him, lining up. "On to the temple, we pray for victory!" The Aurochs ran off, Wakka turned to Tidus and smiled widely. "High Summoner O'Halland used to live in the Kilika temple here." Tidus grinned, obviously clueless. "Yep, Lord O'Halland was once a great blitzer, ya know?"

"Wakka..." Tidus looked to his face, "Hm?" Tidus sighed and looked down, "Praying for victory's good and all...but is this right?" Wakka tilted his head to the side, crossing his arms, "Something wrong with enjoying Blitzball?" Tidus shrugged, looking back up, "Is this really the time?" Wakka nodded, a huge smile coming onto his face, "This is the only time! The players fight with all their strength: the fans cheer for their favorite team. They forget pain, suffering...only the game matters!" Tidus nodded, understanding, "That's why blitz has been around for so long, least, that's what I think." Tidus nodded again, holding up his hands, walking backwards, "Whatever you say." Wakka pumped his fist into the air, "Let's play...and win! Right?" Tidus nodded firmly, "Right!" Wakka pointed off to the horizon, "Temple's beyond the jungle there. Let's go!" Tidus nodded and began walking off.

Tidus and Wakka worked their way along the docks, stopping at a broken down hut, a small girl was sitting in the rubble crying. Suddenly, the rubble began shaking, Tidus leapt forward, grabbing the girl and leaping off the rubble, it dropped into the water just as he had left, and the girl got up, sniffled a few times, and then ran into the nearest hut. Tidus got up and dusted off his clothes. He and Wakka began walking again, off into the distance; they stepped through a small gate into a wooded area. Tidus and Wakka approached Lulu, Yuna, and Kimahri, Lulu was rubbing her left temple again. Wakka looked to Lulu, "What's up?" Lulu sighed, looking towards them, then she focused her red eyes on Tidus, "Yuna's saying she wants you with us." Tidus looked confused, "Huh?"

"I want to ask you to be my guardian." Wakka and Tidus' eyes both got wide, they looked to Yuna, Lulu went back to rubbing her temple. "Yuna! What? This is no time for jokes, ya?" Yuna crossed her arms stubbornly, "Hey may be a blitzball whiz kid, but up against fiends, he's a newbie." Yuna sighed and looked down, then back up to Wakka, "Not a Guardian, then...I just want him near by." Tidus stepped towards her, "What? What do you mean?" Yuna looked to Lulu, casting her a pleading glance, then back towards Tidus, "It's just that...well..." Lulu stepped beside Yuna, looking to Tidus, "We're all going to the temple anyway, can't this wait until later?" Yuna nodded to Lulu, then looked back to Tidus, "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have..." Tidus held up his hands, offering a weak smile, "There's nothing to be sorry about, I'm not just really sure what's going on here." Yuna nodded, "My Apologies." Lulu looked to the men, pointing to the trail, "Go ahead, I must discuss something with Yuna." The guys nodded and walked up the trail, Lulu put her hand on Yuna's shoulder and looked into her eyes. "I see the way you look at him..."

Yuna avoided Lulu's eyes, "I don't look at him in any way..." Lulu sighed, "Don't lead him on, Yuna, you know it can never be..." Lulu turned and walked onwards, Yuna watched her friend go, saying silently to herself "It's the truth, you know it Yuna, like the precepts say, 'Deny thy self happiness for the happiness of the country, Summoners live and breath to defeat Sin, and will sacrifice all, even love, to do so.'" She let a single tear fall, catching it in her palm, she clutched her fist, walking forwards, a smile spreading across her face. She walked on, crossing her arms over her chest, they finally reached the stairwell that lead up to the temple.

Tidus looks up the great stone stairway, looking to Wakka, "These stone steps have a history, you know?" Tidus looked back up the stairs, smiling, "Yep, Lord O'Halland trained here at his peak." Two of the Aurochs were stretching out, they laughed, nodding towards Tidus. Tidus looked to them, grinning, "A race, huh? Think you can beat me?" They stood up, nodding again; Wakka looked to Yuna, "Yuna, if you would." She nodded and they all lined up, Yuna stood beside them, holding out her hand, "Ready?" She suddenly turned and ran up the stairs, giggling all the way. "Hey! Hey!" Wakka and the guys ran after her, Lulu grinned, laughing lightly. Suddenly, the two Aurochs came running down the stairs, past them, Wakka came, waving his arm, "Everyone! Quick! Sinspawn!" Lulu and Kimahri ran up the stairs, emerging on a plateau like area.

Two large, green tentacles waved in the air, a huge, bulbous sprout protruded from the ground. Lulu rushed forward, pointing her hand at it, one of the tentacles slashed at her wrist, wrapping a green, stringy substance around it. She pointed her other hand and cried out "FIRE!" a plume of fire exploded out of her hand and slammed into the tentacle, it dropped dead to the ground, she quickly spun around. "ELEMENTAL FURY! FIRE!" bursts of fire exploded out of the ground as Lulu glowed bright red, the last tentacle hit the ground, the bulb began to shudder as it opened, revealing the fiend inside. The fiend shot out several spikes which hit into Lulu's arm, she fell to her knees, holding her arm. "LULU!" Tidus burst up the stairs, unsheathing his sword, he spun on the ground, slamming it into the fiend's face.

Plumes of pyre-flies erupted out of the bulbous shape, Yuna had already ran to Lulu, pouring a shimmering liquid out of a bottle onto her arm, the spikes dissolved and her wounds disappeared. Lulu stood up with the aid of Wakka. Tidus stood there, breathing heavily, Wakka walked over to Tidus, cuffing his shoulder with his hand, "Sorry 'bout that! Hoped to break you in a little slower." Tidus grinned, catching his breath, "Being a Guardian's tiring." Wakka patted his shoulder gently, "You handled yourself pretty well; you got talent." Tidus shrugged, "Nah..." He looked to the huge holes left by the Sinspawn.

"So, what are those 'Sinspawn' anyway?" Lulu stepped up, rubbing her arm, her dress already sewed up, "Fiends, they fall from Sin's body, and are left behind in his wake." Wakka nodded, "Leave 'em alone and Sin comes back for 'em, you gotta be quick!" Tidus nodded, they began to walk up another set of stairs, Tidus watched Yuna from behind, her hair bounce, her shoulders held up high, her back slender. He snapped out of it as Wakka, shook his arm, laughing.

"That moment when Wakka told me I had talent in battle...I think that was when I seriously considered becoming a Guardian."

As soon as they reached the top of the stairs, Wakka spoke up, "So, uh...they got fiends in Zanarkand too?" Tidus nodded, looking to Wakka, "Just a few, it's a big deal when one shows up, though." Tidus thought for a moment, his eyes widening, his face getting defensive, "Hey! Since when have you believed me about Zanarkand, anyway?" Wakka shrugged, holding up his hands, "I've been thinking, maybe people Sin gets to don't die. Maybe Sin carries 'em through time. Like a thousand years through time. And then maybe, one day, they just pop back, see?" Lulu was already all over this, her face turning red, her eyes turned from stern to furious, her hands clenched into tight fists, "Amazing! Simply amazing..."

Wakka looked to her, she looked right back, poor Wakka looked like a deer caught in the head lights.

"You make one theory after another, refusing to face the simple truth! Sin didn't take Chappu anywhere! Sin crushed him and left him on the D'jose shore!" Wakka was frowning, he tried desperately to not look at her eyes, but he couldn't he was transfixed, "Your brother won't just pop back! Oh, and one more thing" her eyes traveled to Tidus, he was stuck in place as well, "No matter how much you want it" she looked back to Wakka, "No one can take Chappu's place!" her eyes traveled back to Tidus, "No one can replace Sir Jecht, for that matter." Then her eyes settled on Yuna, "And there's no replacement for Lord Braska, either. Its Pointless to think about it, and sad." She turned, her belts clanking; she walked up the stairs the rest of the way.

Wakka sat on the steps, looking to the sky, talking to himself more then anyone else really, "I...I could never be what Chappu was." He stood up, looking to Tidus, "Well, stuff happens, best not to worry." Tidus nodded, they walked up the stairs the rest of the way, Tidus watched Wakkas face.

"Wakka, Lulu, and Wakka's brother Chappu, something had happened between them a long time ago, I was sure of it. Well, whatever it was, it was none of my business, that's for sure. Best not go there."

They reached the temple, a cave like structure with orbs of fire protruding off of the stone walls. They entered the main circle; the ground underneath them had orange fire burning beneath glass. Three men approached the group, obviously Blitzball players, Wakka nodded to the one in the middle, "You here to pray for victory, too?" The player shook his head, grinning cockily, "Us? Pray? Who needs to pray? The Luca Goers always win!" Wakka rolled his eyes, "Oh yeah? Then why are you here?" The player to the left shook his head, grinning in the same way as his obvious boss, "We've been praying for some competition!" The three laughed, then the boss spoke up again, "So, what's your goal this time? You gonna 'do your best' again? Ha! It's too bad your best isn't good enough! Why even bother showing up?" Tidus stepped forward.

"This time, we play to win!" The boss stepped up to Tidus, "Oh! Play away!" they started walking away and the boss called back, "Just remember even kids can play, boys!" Wakka turned, looking back towards them, "See you in the finals!" Tidus turned, patting Wakkas shoulder, "We'll beat them. We have too!" Yuna stepped up to Tidus, placing a tender hand on his forearm, "You know that team?" Tidus looked to her face, "Putting people down...They're just as bad as my old man!" Yuna stepped back, shaking her head "But Sir Jecht was a kind, gentle man!" Tidus shrugged, "Well, not my Jecht."

"Even ten years after he left...just thinking about my old man got me angry. But maybe it was just my way of keeping him...nah."

They all slowly entered the temple, which was much different then Besaid, it smelt of the beach, clean, soothing, four pillars stood around the center of the room, fire at the tops, illuminating the statues of the circular room, Wakka slowly walked over to one of the statues, he bowed down, "Lord O'Halland, guide our feet." Tidus walked up beside him, kneeling down, he prayed silently. Suddenly, the door to the Cloister opened, a scantily clad woman and a large, muscle-head man walked out. She made her way over to Yuna, Wakka and Tidus stood up, looking to her, Lulu crossed her arms over her chest, rolling her eyes at the woman's absurd apparel. "A Summoner, are you?" Yuna smiled, nodding, "My name is Yuna-From the Isle of Besaid." The woman nodded, "Dona. So, you're the High Summoner Braska's daughter. That's quite a name to live up to." She cast a glance around at Yunas Guardians.

"My, my, my...And all these...people are your Guardians? My, what a rabble!" She looked from face to

face, then back to Yuna, "As I recall, Lord Braska only had two Guardians. Quality over quantity, my dear, what ever were you thinking?" Yuna's eyes widened, her eyes getting slightly glossy, "I have need of only one Guardian. Right, Barthello?" the muscle-head man nodded yes. Yuna waved her arm back towards her Guardians, "I only have as many Guardians as I have people I can trust. I trust them all with my life! To have so many Guardians is a joy, and an honor! Even more so than being my fathers daughter." Yuna crossed her arms, "Of course, I would never think of questioning your ways, either. So, Lady Dona, I ask of you: Please, leave us in peace."

Dona rolled her eyes, "You do what you want." She looked over to Barthello, "Barthello, we're leaving" They abruptly turned and walked out of the temple. Tidus looked to Yuna, she smiled at him, watching his face, he thought to himself, "A Guardian is someone a Summoner can rely on. Someone she can trust with her life."

"I wondered, did Yuna feel that way about me...what's she smiling about?"

The group slowly walked up the stairs to the Cloister, a small circular room with a platform was all that could be seen, Tidus looked around, confusedly, Wakka pointed to the platform, "The Fayth is below! Lets do it!" Lulu nodded, stepping onto the elevator, Yuna looped her arm in Lulus, "Kimahri, Wakka, ready?" They both nodded and boarded the elevator, Tidus went to step on but Kimahri pushed him back, "Hey! What gives?" Lulu smiled, "You're not a Guardian yet." Yuna smiled, nodding, "We'll be back as soon as we can, okay?" The elevator goes down without him, "Oh! Sure! Soon like 'tomorrow' soon, I bet!" The elevator comes back up, empty, Tidus turned and began to walk out, except his exit was barred by Barthello and Dona, "Where's Yuna?" Tidus pointed to the elevator carelessly, "Then why are you here?" Tidus held up his hands.

"Hey, I'm not a Guardian, so I'm not supposed to go in, right?" Dona grinned, "Hmm. Not a Guardian you say?" Barthello picked Tidus up with ease, "Hey! Wait! Ah! Lemme go!" Barthello threw Tidus onto the elevator, "Hey! What's the big idea?" Dona grinned, stepping close to the elevator, pushing the small glyph with her foot, "Just a little game." The elevator steadily went down, dropping him off in a small corridor which lead to large doors. Tidus slowly walked towards them "This is bad...really bad." He reached the doors, putting his hand on the handle, "Only Guardians allowed, and I'm sure no Guardian." He sighed and pushed the doors in, "Well, I guess its too late now." He slowly stepped into a circular room, Wakka, Lulu, and Kimahri were standing in it, the entrance to the Chamber of the Fayth was at the far side, as usual.

Wakka's eyes went wide when he saw Tidus, "Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!" Tidus held his hands up, "It was Dona and that big muscle-head man!" Lulus strict voice cut through the silence, "Yuna will be the one to suffer the consequences!" Tidus looked from Lulu to Wakka, "The consequences?" Wakka pointed to Tidus, "She could be excommunicated!" Tidus looked to Wakka, "Just wait." Tidus nodded, "So, what's in there anyway?" Wakka looked to the entrance to the chamber, "The Fayth, remember?" Tidus nodded, obviously clueless, yet again, "Oh yeah, that thing. Right." Lulu shook her head, rubbing her left temple again, "The Fayth are people who gave their lives to battle Sin. Yevon took their souls, willingly given from their still-living bodies."

Tidus cocked his head to the side, "Huh?" Lulu sighed again, "Now they live forever, trapped in statues. But when a Summoner beckons, the souls of the Fayth emerge once again. That's what we call an Aeon." Tidus nodded to the door, "All that in this room? S-so what's Yuna doing in there?" Wakka

looked to the door also, "She prays with all her heart for a way to defeat Sin." Tidus nodded, the door to the Fayth chamber slid up and open, Yuna walked out, kneeling down in the center of the room. Lulu knelt down and rubbing her shoulders gently. The hymn of the Fayth echoed from the chamber.

"There was something I didn't tell anyone else that day. That song we heard there, in the temple...I knew it from my childhood. It was proof that Spira and Zanarkand were connected somehow. At least to me it was. Maybe that's why, suddenly, I felt like...I just wanted to go home. I tried to say something, to tell them. But the words wouldn't come."

The group left the temple, settling outside, Tidus flashed back to when he was in Zanarkand, the house boat, the crowds, the fame, the lights, he missed it all so much.

"I thought I had put my feelings for Zanarkand behind me. But they were there, and they grew inside me, bigger, and bigger, till I was just ready to burst."

Tidus had gotten so engrossed with the flash back that he hadn't realized everyone except Yuna had already gone back to Kilika, she looked to him, concerned, "Are...are you okay?" Tidus looked down, "I...I don't know." Yuna put a hand on his shoulder, squeezing it gently, "What do you want to do?" Tidus sighed and looked up to her face, "To scream out loud." All the sudden, Tidus burst out screaming, Yuna jumped back, laughing slightly, almost nervously, then she joined him for a moment and they both burst out laughing, they headed back down the stairs and to Kilika, all the way to the dock, stepping onto a new boat, the S.S. Wino, Yuna turns, as the boat set sails, she watches the sun set on the town of Kilika.

6 - Chapter Five-"The Wino"

"Off to Luca at last! The match starts soon as we get there, so rest up on the way, ya?" Wakka smiled, walking away from Tidus, leaving him alone on the deck of the S.S. Wino. Tidus looked around the crowded deck, spotting Yuna, surrounded by those blitzball creeps from Kilika, he slowly made his way over, leaning against the railing, he smiled to Yuna, and then looked to the guys. "What are you all talking about?" One of the men, whose name turned out to be Bickson, Tidus found out by Yuna pointing to him and mouthing his name, spoke up, "Who are you supposed to be?" the other guy, whose name was Graav (thanks Yuna), spoke up next, "Ah, I remember him. Guy from Kilika." Bickson looked over to his friend, "Hmm?" Graav laughed, "You know, one of the Besaid Aurochs, said somethin' about winning the cup." Bickson grinned, looking to Tidus, "Oh! Right, you're the idiot."

Yunas mouth dropped and she slapped Bicksons' arm, "Don't call him that!" Bickson rubbed his arm, looking to Yuna, "But he is an idiot, they don't got what it takes to win the cup." Tidus stepped up, crossing his arms, "Well, they do now that I'm here." Yuna grinned, nodding, "Yes, the will win! He used to be the star player of the Zanarkand Abes!" Graav chuckled, looking to Yuna, "Yeah, as if anyone lived in those ruins." Yuna gasped, shaking her head, "It's not ruins, there's a big city there!" Tidus looked at Yuna, his eyes big, he shook his head behind the back of the players, She looked to him, "There is!" The two men turned and looked to Tidus, "I-I got to close to Sin and-" Yuna stepped to him, turning, she looked to the men, "There is a city! Really!" Bickson arched a brow, "Right, whatever your Ladyship says." They turned and walked away, Yuna followed them, in pursuit of making them believe.

Tidus, left alone, turned and walked towards the stairs that led up to the upper deck, he climbed up them slowly, hearing voices, he sat on the stairs and listened to his two friends. "Well?" Lulu crossed her arms as Wakka sat down on the deck, he groaned, "Say something, you'll take responsibility?" Wakka groaned again, "Relax! He's bound to know someone in Luca." Lulu growled resiliently, "And if not?" Wakka sighed, shaking his head, "He could always join a blitz team. Anyhow, its better than just leaving him in Besaid!" Lulu laughed, shaking her head, "What? Just leaving him in Luca?" Wakka sighed again, grumbling, "What do you want me to do?"

"Yuna wants to make him a guardian." Lulu stepped towards Wakka, "Oh yeah, geez...there's that too, eh?" Lulu nodded, "And whose fault is that?" Wakka jumped up, pointing to Lulu, "Not mine!" Lulu growled again, "It is mine, huh?" She nodded. "Why do you think she wants to make him a Guardian anyway?" Lulu sighed, "Because he's Sir Jechts' son." Wakka nodded, "Oh...right..." Then he looked down, then back to Lulu, "You sure 'bout that? He's really Sir Jecht's son?" Lulu shrugged, "It's hard to say, but Yuna seems to believe so." Wakka nodded, "Okay" Lulu threw up her arms, letting them drop right down, she growled again, "'Okay'? 'Okay'?! That's all you have to say?"

"Well, yeah, I mean...he's gotta decide for himself, ya? Well, him and Yuna, I guess." Lulu nodded, smiling, "You're right, for once." Wakka scowled, "Ahem!" Lulu frowned, looking down, "I wonder which is best." Wakka sat back down, looking up to Lulu, she looked back down, "Why don't you tell him he should?" Wakka got a confused look on his face, "Should what?" Lulu sighed, rubbing her left temple, "Become Yuna's Guardian." Wakka blanched, "Why me?", Lulu crossed her arms, looking at

him with her angry stare, "Because Yuna can't!" Wakka crossed his own arms, "Why not?" Lulu shook her head, "He hates his father-what he was, what he did. Do you really think she can possibly say to him 'I want you to be my Guardian, like your father was to mine.'?"

"Aren't you being over sensitive?" Lulu growls again, turning her back to Wakka, "Alright, alright, I'll try talking to him after the tournament." She turned back to him, her eyes full of caution, "Be discreet." Wakka nods, "I know, its his decision." Wakka sighed, looking to the sky, "He doesn't like his father?" Lulu shook her head, "Apparently, he told Yuna as much." Wakka sighed, "Hating your own father, huh? Sounds like a luxury to me. I don't remember my parents. Can't say I feel about 'em." Lulu nodded, looking down to the wooden floor, "I...I was five then, so I remember mine a little." Wakka jumped up, angrily, "Damn it! Sin just takes everything away from us!"

Tidus walked up the rest of the way, he walked past Lulu to Wakka, Wakka looked to his face, smiling, "Go to bed, bud. Tournament starts tomorrow morning." Tidus nodded and turned, heading for the stairs, Wakka called out to him, "Someone's bound to recognize you when they see your moves out there." Tidus nodded, he walked down the steps and out towards the main deck. A lone blitzball was illuminated by the moons silvery light. Tidus walked up to it, remembering when he was a child, he had tried to kick the ball. Jecht had taunted him, asking him if he wanted to follow in his foot steps, and that he usually charged for lessons.

Tidus kicked the ball up, leaping up into the air, spinning around, he turned to kick the ball while he was in the air, but the ball had already fallen back, slamming into his head, Tidus fell to the deck. He sat up slowly, rubbing his head. Yuna walked out onto the deck, laughing slightly, "That was the Jecht shot, wasn't it?" Tidus stood up, he turned and looked to her, "How did you know?" Yuna smiled, "Sir Jecht showed it to me when I was a child. He called it the 'Sublimely Magnificent Jecht Shot Mark III'" Tidus shook his head, leaning against the railing of the boat, "Stupid name, huh?" Yuna shrugged, smiling, "You know what? There is no Mark I or Mark II, you know?" Yuna shook her head, "My old man said the name 'Mark III' was just something to hook the crowd. He said they'd come back every night, expecting to see Mark I and Mark II. And they really did come back. I used to get so mad."

Yuna giggled, rubbing her own arm, "Is he alive, you think?" Yuna shrugged, shaking her head, "I don't know. But, Sir Jecht was my father's Guardian." Tidus sighed, "So he's famous here, too?" Yuna nodded, "Yes. So if anything happened to him, I should think word would get around fast." Tidus sighed, looking down into the water, "Uh huh." Yuna stepped forward, looking around nervously, "What would you do, if you found him?" Tidus shrugged, "Who knows? I thought he died ten years ago. Well...I'd probably just smack him one. After everything he put mom and me through. And because he was famous, I was always...Well, you should know, Yuna. Your father's famous too. Everyone in Spira knows him, right? Ain't it tough?" Yuna shrugged yet again, looking down. "It is hard to follow in his footsteps, as a Summoner."

"Sure." Yuna sighed, looking back to Tidus, "But the honor of having a father like him surpasses all that, I think." Tidus shook his head, "Well, there wasn't much to honor about my old man." Yunas jaw dropped, she shook her head, "You shouldn't say that about your father!" Tidus stood up, stepping to the side, "I got the right!" Yuna sighed and nodded, "I guess you do." A blitzball hit Tidus in the side of the head and Wakka called down from the upper deck, "Hey Kiddos! It's bed time, ya? We all got a big day ahead of us tomorrow!" Tidus sighed and waved to Yuna, he walked slowly around the boat until he reached the stairs that lead down into its bowels. He entered the lodge of the boat and laid down in his

bed, closing his eyes.

"I didn't think my old man would come to Luca. He never did like watching other people play. But I couldn't help feeling something bad was going to happen. And these feelings of mine are usually right. Sure, I had told Wakka I'd help him win the tournament. But I wasn't sure I had it in me to play at all anymore."

The S.S. Wino lazily sailed through the night, the next morning, as the sun rose, a large gush of wind kicked up the speed. The Wino speed towards Luca, a large dome was at the southern most tip of the city, surrounded by five points, each had a color of the rainbow on them, brilliant fires, each of the flames matched the color of their points. Tidus was holding onto the ropes of the Wino, his eyes bright as he saw the stadium. The boat docked slowly, coming to a stop, and the commentators started up. "Ah, over there! The ships carrying the players are arriving now! This would be dock number two. All the way from Kilika, the Kilika beasts!" Men stepped off of the boat, waving, their supporters cheered them on as they went. "High Summoner O'Halland used to play for them-a big name to live up to. Their home town was recently attacked by Sin. Isn't that right, Jimma?"

"Yes, Bobba, they're going to be pulling out all the stops to try and bring back the cup this year." The Aurochs slowly, almost shamefully, stepped off the boat. "Exciting, isn't it folks? Out next team off the ramp is...Well, Well, Well! If it isn't the Besaid Aurochs!" Wakka and Tidus both stood proud as their teams name was announced, but the rest of the players just kind of shuffled their feet and looked down. "They're a living, breathing, statistical impossibility! I've never seen a team this bad, folks! That's right! In twenty-three years they've never made it past the first round! Only a few die-hard fans are in the audience today!" Several people were waiting on the dock, except they weren't cheering, they looked nervous and unsure as to why they came. "Best of luck to them, and a safe journey back to Besaid."

"Right Jimma. Moving right along." The Luca Goers soon stepped off the boat, "Moving right along, our next team is...Hey there folks! Our very own Luca Goers!" The majority of the people on the dock jumped and cheered, pumping their fists into the air, whistling and crying out. "They've got power! They've got speed! They've got teamwork! They're an all-around first-class team! And they're back home in Luca!" Tidus was rolling his eyes all the way through, he watched the loud speaker, "Without a doubt, they are the favorite team this year, Bobba. And after the way they dominated last year, it'd take a miracle for them to lose today!" Their fans were cheering again, shoving aside the Aurochs fans, who seemed used to this treatment. "You can say that again, Jimma. Look at the crowd, folks! Look at the crowd! Looks like of all Luca has turned out to cheer the Goers on! They know, I know, and you know, folks, the Luca Goers are number one!"

After the commentary was over, Tidus sighed, looking over, he spotted a loose megaphone in a large crate of them. Wakka cuffed his hand on Tidus' shoulder, "It's like this every year, ya? Don't let it bother you." Tidus lunged forward, grabbing the megaphone, he climbed up a bunch of crates and cried out, pointing to the Goers, everyone turned and watched, "Stop right there, Goers! You guys are smilin' now, but not for long! 'Cause this year, us Aurochs are taking the cup! Ha ha!" Tidus leaped all the way back down, putting the megaphone back in its place. Wakka immediately walked to him, "What in Yevons name were you doing up there?!" One of the Aurochs stepped up, "We sure stood out, though!" another one walked up, grinning proudly, "We were on the sphere!" Wakka looked to his

team-mates, "We were?!" Suddenly, a man bursts past, running at top speed, "Maester Mika is here!" A woman followed, "Already?" Another man burst past, "The number three dock!"

Tidus turned to Yuna, "What's up now?" She was smiling widely, obviously excited, "Maester Mika has arrived, that's what!" Tidus tilted his head to the side, "Mika? Maester?" Lulu stepped up, shaking her head in her disapproving way. "Maester Mika is the leader of all the people of Spira. He's come all the way from Bevelle. The tournament is being held to honor his fifty years as Maester." Tidus' eyes went wide, he crossed his arms, giving Lulu a look, "Fifty years? Shouldn't he be, uh, retired by now?" Wakka stepped up to Tidus, grabbing his arm. "Hey! Mind your mouth, now." Yuna jumped with excitement, smiling widely still, "Let's all go see him!" Tidus saw how excited she was and he immediately started off to the number three dock, everyone followed as he marched on, determined to let Yuna see this Maester.

They all stepped onto the dock, which was crowded with people, "I can't see a thing!" Wakka shoved Tidus aside, "Shhh!" Music began to play loudly as a very tall man, with blue hair that spiked out in three places, and all came down in front of his face, his skin seemed to be cracked with blue scars on his forehead, his chest exposed, the skin folded over, he was not a handsome man. A man near the front leaned in to a woman and whispered, "That's a Guado, right?" The woman nodded, "Who could it be?" Another man, who joined them, nodded towards the Guado, "Isn't that Maester Seymour?" Seymour turned, going to his knees, he began to pray, everyone behind him did the same, Except for two people, Tidus and Lulu. Soon, an old man emerged from the boat, he held out his hands to the crowd.

"People of Spira, I thank you for your generous welcome." He looked down to Seymour, "Rise, Maester Seymour. And all of you as well." Seymour and the crowd all stood up, Mika walked down the ramp, Seymour turned and Mika put his hand on Seymour's shoulder. "I present to you...the son of Maester Jyscal Guado, who departed for the far plane a fortnight past. As some of you already know, he has been officially ordained a Maester of Yevon." Seymour looked around, smiling, he looked straight at Yuna, he seemed to speak to her directly, yet to the crowd at the same time. "I am Seymour Guado. I am honored to receive the title of Maester. In life, my father Jyscal worked to foster friendship between man and Guado. I vow to carry on his legacy, and to fulfill my duties as Maester to the best of my abilities."

Everyone, even Lulu, bowed their head, all except for Tidus, "Hmph." Wakka dug his elbow into Tidus' side, "You, too! Bow your head!" Tidus growled and bowed his head. Seymour and Mika slowly left the dock, after shaking hands with many of the people. Wakka smiled, he turned to his team, "Really psyches you up, ya?" The team nodded, all grunting their responses. Wakka pointed all around, finally introducing the team completely to Tidus. A young guy with tanned skin and dark eyes nodded, "That's Datto." Another guy, around Wakka's age, with red hair, who could have been Wakkas cousin, nodded, "That's Letty." Another guy, with light skin and blonde hair smiled at Tidus, he was obviously shy, "That's Jessu, he's really shy." A large, corpulent man, with bright orange hair stepped forward, a turkeys leg in one hand, and cup of something in the other, he nodded as he tore another piece of turkey off of the leg, Wakka laughed, "That's Keepa."

After the Aurochs had all gotten settled in their locker room, Tidus stepped in, Wakka was no where to be seen, he stepped towards Datto. "Where's Wakka?" Datto nodded, "At the match-up draws." Letty sighed, looking down, "We had to play the Goers in the first match last year." Jessu stepped up,

stomping his left foot, "And the year before that! And the one before that, too!" Keepa waddled forth, shoving Letty aside, "Well, we would've lost to anyone, anyway." Wakka stepped through the door, waving a piece of paper in his hand, "Cap' n Wakka!" Datto grabbed the paper, reading it to himself, "We're playin' the Al Bhed Psyches first! If we win, we're in the finals! That's right, we got seeded! Two wins and we're the champions!" The door creaked yet again and in came Yuna and Lulu.

Yuna quickly went over to Tidus, she smiled, taking both his hands, "There you are! Someone said they saw Sir Auron in a café!" Tidus stepped back, slipping his hands from hers, "A-Auron?" Yuna nodded, grinning, "Yes, Sir Auron! Let's go find him!" Wakka walked up, shaking his head. "Hey! Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey! The game starts like...real soon!" Tidus looked to Wakka, he frowned, "C-come back real quick, ya?" Tidus smiled, nodding, "Hey, I'll be back." Wakka nodded back, "Yeah, Okay." Tidus cocked his head to the side, "Hey, Wakka. You're stiff, man." Wakka began to rub his face, "No, no, not your face. Just breathe out, relax. Like this." Tidus let his shoulders fall back, he breathed in deeply, relaxing his body. "Just breathe, yeah!" Wakka mimicked him, relaxing himself. Yuna giggled and turned, she waved to Tidus and he followed her out of the locker room.

They walked down the hall of the locker area and stepped out to a court yard, they walked down a set of stone steps and started off towards a large bridge, "Maybe now we can find Sir Jecht." Tidus stopped walked, Kimahri joined them, his arms crossed over his chest as he watched them. "Huh? How?" Yuna smiled at him, "Sir Auron was also my father's Guardian. So, he might know where Sir Jecht is. Let's go now." They continued walking down the bridge.

"It didn't even occur to me to think that the Auron Yuna was talking about...and the one from Zanarkand could be two different people. I don't know why, but I knew it was the same guy. I knew it was the same Auron."

Tidus spotted two Al Bhed Psyches who were watching Yuna; they leaned in to each other, speaking in hushed tones. "E meto Summoner!" the other Al Bhed nodded, responding, "Fa sicd nabund." Tidus walked up to them, grinning, "Hey! Al Bhed Psyches, right? Some Al Bhed saved me the other day, and...this girl Rikku gave me food and...uh...You don't understand me, do you? Uh, anyway...If you meet Rikku, tell her thanks for me. Oh, and as for the first game? May the best team win!" Tidus looked around, realizing he had lost sight of Yuna and Kimahri, Tidus jogged up the bridge to see Yuna, a camera on her, and a woman trying to ask her questions, a crowd had formed. "I'm sorry, please let me through..." Yuna turned, spotting Tidus, "Hey! Let's go." Yuna began walking, thinking Tidus was beside her, "I hope we don't get separated." Someone called out to her from behind, "Yuna!"

Tidus was a few feet back, waving his arms; he put his fingers in his mouth and let out a loud, long whistle. He jogged up to her, she looked amazed. "What was that?" Tidus laughed slightly, "In Zanarkand, we do this to cheer on Blitzball players." Tidus put his fingers back to his mouth, letting out another whistle. "You try it too! Put your fingers in your mouth like this." Yuna put her fingers to her lips, "Like this?" Tidus shook his head, he put his fingers to his lips, "Uh-uh, not like that. Like this. Then, you just blow." She tried to blow, no sound came out, she tried once again, and no sound came out. "Its not working." She looked disheartened. Tidus smiled, "Practice!" Yuna nodded, smiling, "Okay."

"Hey, use that if we get separated. Then, I'll come running, okay? Well, guess we should stick together, then, till you can do it." Yuna nodded, smiling broadly, "Yes, sir!" They continued walking across the bridge until they got to a large, circular market place. Tidus looked around, coming up to a large statue

of pure crystal, reaching up at least ten feet. "Whoa! This is a pretty big town!" Yuna nodded, stepping up to the crystal, "Luca is the second largest city in Spira." Tidus looked to her, grinning sheepishly, "I thought every town was little-you know, like Besaid and Kilika." Yuna nodded, understanding, "Towns don't usually get bigger than that. Because when a lot of people start to gather..." Tidus nodded, "Sin...? What about Luca? It's safe here?" Yuna shook her head, "It's not any different, but the stadium is here. The Crusaders fight to protect it with all their strength."

Tidus cocked his head to the said, "They protect the stadium?" Yuna sighed, looking up to the clear blue sky, "Blitzball's really the only entertainment that we have. Spira's a little short on fun these days." Tidus shook his head, pulling on his hair gently, "Whoa! Talk about pressure!" Yuna smiled, giggling softly. "That's right! Is Zanarkand like this, too?" Tidus smiled widely, shaking his head, "Well, there are more buildings, all tall ones and cramped together." Yuna grinned, looking all around her at the sky, "Oh! They must be so tall! Don't you ever get dizzy?" Tidus laughed, grinning. Yuna pointed to a small café, "Let's go find Sir Auron!" They both walked to the Café, Kimahri behind them, as they stepped in, Kimahri walked off to the side. Tidus looked around, sighing heavily, "Aurons not here..."

Yuna walked over to a bunch of Al Bhed to talk to them, Tidus walked over to Kimahri, who was being confronted by two Ronso's, both of them seem to tower over Kimahri, who was rather tall himself, each had a full horn on their head, one was grey furred and one was yellow. The yellow one spoke first, "Why not talk, Kimahri? Not see Yenke for ten years! Say something! Kimahri forget Yenke? Forget Biran?" the grey one stepped closer to Kimahri, "Leave Kimahri, Yenke. Kimahri is small Ronso. Kimahri so small can't see Yenke and Biran's faces." Yenke crosses his arms over his large chest, shaking out his main. "Kimahri forget Ronso friends? We taught you much at time of horn-molt! Biran taught Kimahri to be strong Ronso!" Biran growled, "Maybe taught too much." Tidus put his hand on Kimahri's arm, "Take 'em on!"

Yenke began laughing and Kimahri slammed his fist into Yenke's chin, Yenke fell backwards. The bar-keep cried out, "Take it outside! The tournaments starting, you hear?" Biran goes after Kimahri, shoving him. Tidus turned around, looking the large screen behind the bar, "The game!" Maester Mika's face appeared on screen, "Today, on the glorious day, players from all over Spira have assembled here...to participate in this great contest of bravery, skill, and strength. All of these fine teams, equally renowned, deserve to win the cup today. Such is the nature of this contest. Let us, the spectators, play our role accordingly. Let us sing to the glory of the winners, and applaud equally the valor of the defeated. Contestants, may Yevon be with you."

People cheered and screamed at the top of their lungs as several cannons positioned themselves around the stadium, a great arch-way began to spin around the stadium as loud bangs signified the water being released into the sphere-pool. The water glistened in the mid-day sun, it soon filled the sphere-pool, creating a deep blue gem in the center of the Stadium. A large red fire burst out of the top of the stadium as horns were loudly played. The Aurochs and Psyches both leaped into the pool, taking position in the water, the Blitzball was released, Wakka and the Psyches front man both stretched out for the ball, as if in slow motion, then the screen went black, Tidus blinked. The bar-keep spoke up, "If you want to see the rest of the game, go to the stadium, you lookie-lu" Tidus grabbed Kimahri, "We have to get to that stadium." And bolted out of the café's doors.

7 - Chapter Six-"The Amazing Disappearing Summoner"

Lulu ran up to them outside, she look quite disheveled, she kneeled down, breathing heavily, then came back up, "Where in Spira have you been?!" Tidus looked to her, giving her a funny look, "Huh?" Lulu growled, grabbing Tidus by his shirt, "Yuna's been kidnapped by the Al Bhed Psyches! In return for her safe return, they want the Aurochs to lose!" Tidus' eyes went wide, "What?!" Lulu let go of his shirt, putting her hands on her hips, "If they're only Blitzball players, I doubt they'd do anything drastic. But we shouldn't take chances. Lets go get her." Lulu and Kimahri turned and began jogging off to the docks. Tidus called out to them, "I'm going too! This will be no problem! They're telling the Aurochs to throw the game, as if they needed to! I mean, how good a team can they be?"

"Wakka said the same thing. He'll take care of the game, we should go get Yuna. The Al Bhed boat is in dock four. Let's go." They continued running towards the docks, dodging machina sentries here and there, they finally arrived at dock four, where a sphere screen came to life. "The Aurochs are keeping the score tied with some excellent defense, folks!" One of the Psyches came up behind Wakka as he caught a ball, slamming himself into Wakka. "Ow! He'll feel that one in the morning!" Wakka floated there, not moving, "But the referee doesn't call the foul! Wakka's taking a real beating out there!" Tidus pumped his fist at the screen, "He's still in there!" Lulu sighed, "He won't last. Wakka's always like that." Tidus sighed again, crossing his arms "Ouch..." Lulu turned and run down the dock, "Let's go!"

Tidus and Kimahri ran down the dock with Lulu, the Al Bhed ship already began to depart. They ran, running up the ramp, Tidus, Lulu, and Kimahri leapt, floating in the air for a second, they came to a rolling land on the ship. The deck swung open, a large, ominous machine soon floated up, the back of it opened, revealing a dozen guns, it turned on, humming with electricity. Lulu lunged forward, holding out her hands, a gigantic bolt of white lightening escaped her purple nails. It burnt the air as it arched into the large machina. Sparks exploded out of it, as piece after piece began to fall back into the bowels of the ship. Lulu threw out her hands one more time and flames exploded up under the machine, sending it over the edge of the ship.

Tidus stood in awe, his eyes wide as the deck slammed back down. The door to the boat zoomed up, an Al Bhed slammed onto the floor, Yuna stepped out, smiling sweetly. She walked over to Lulu, who hugged her. "I hope you hurt them." Yuna smiled, "A little." Then she turned to Tidus, who was frowning, he looked around the boat. "What is it?" Tidus shook his head, rubbing his forehead. "There were these Al Bhed that saved my life when I first came to Spira. They took me on their ship, even gave me food. I was kinda hoping this was the same ship. But it's not. I wonder if they're all gone." Yuna looked concerned, she stepped closer to Tidus.

"What happened?" Tidus looked up to her face, "Sin came up near us. I made it out okay, but I don't know what happened to their ship." Yuna looked around, to Lulu, then Kimahri, then finally back to Tidus, "Um...was there anyone called Cid on that ship?" Tidus shrugged, shaking his head, "I don't know. They were all speaking that Al Bhed language." Yuna sighed, stepping back; she stood next to Lulu, looping their arms as she so often did. "I see..." Tidus looked out to the water, then back to Yuna, "So...who's Cid?" Yuna smiled, her eyes searching the metal deck of the ship. "He's my uncle, but

I've never actually met him." Tidus nodded, then he smiled widely, "Wait. That means you're Al Bhed, too, Yuna?"

Yuna nodded, "On my Mother's side, yes. Cid is my mother's brother. He became distant after my mother married. But she told me to seek him out if I ever needed help." Tidus nodded, understanding, "So, you're worried he was...?" Lulu interrupted him, stepping forward, "Don't tell Wakka about Yuna's lineage. The thing about Wakka-he's never had much love for the Al Bhed." Tidus' eyes went wide and his mouth fell open, "Whoa! I gotta tell Wakka!" Lulu burst forward, grabbing Tidus' shirt again, "I told you not to tell Wakka!" Yuna shook her head, putting her hand on Lulu's arm, "The Game!" Lulu let go of Tidus, turning towards the stadium, "Oh!" She held up her hand, releasing a brilliant white orb which flew to over the Stadium.

Wakka looked up from the water, spotting the orb, he made hand movements to his team mates and they started attacking the Psyches. "Thirty seconds left! The Aurochs are launching an all-out offensive! I long pass for Letty!" Letty launches the Blitzball to Wakka, who catches it without a hitch, "It goes through!" Wakka shoots the ball, it barrels for the goal. "He shoots!" The ball slammed past the goalie, a loud horn sounded as the score board changed. "Gooooaall!" the timer buzzed as the Aurochs all came together in the sphere-pool, hugging. "Unbelievable! The Aurochs win the Match! Three to Two!"

Tidus and the group were all huddled in front of the sphere screen, "We won!" Yuna jumped up and down, laughing, "We did it! We're in the finals!" Lulu shook her head, rubbing her left temple, "Not the most...graceful win. If it was Chappu, he'd still be standing." Tidus put his hands on his hips, turning to Lulu, giving her a disgusted look. "Hey, aren't you being just a little unfair?" Lulu crossed her arms over her chest, growling out her words, "Excuse me." Tidus sighed, letting his own arms fall to his sides, "I know I could never take Chappu's place. You're the one who told Wakka that, right, Lulu? And I don't think Wakka would ever try to take Chappu's pla-" Lulu already had Tidus' shirt in her clutches, her face close to his, her eyes glowing with rage. "You don't want to finish that sentence..." she shoved him back and headed off to the Locker room.

Tidus, Yuna, and Kimahri followed, but not too closely, for Lulu was throwing out sparks every now and then, obviously pissed off. In the locker room, Wakka was laying down on the benches, his team-mates surrounding him. Datto stepped close to Wakka, "Sure you're all right, Cap' n?" Letty stepped closer as well, "The game starts in a few minutes. You sure you're okay?" Jessu stepped up, his arms crossed, "We're playing the Goers, too." Wakka tried to sit up slowly, he collapsed back to the bench, groaning. Tidus, Yuna, and Lulu stepped into the room. Tidus grinned, walking over to the group, "Miss me?" Datto quickly walked to Yuna, "Lady Yuna!" Letty followed, hugging her, "Are you okay?!" She stepped back, looking around the locker room, "All this because of me. I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!"

Wakka managed to sit up, he looked over to Yuna, "How can you let some Al Bhed kidnap you?" Tidus looked from Yuna to Wakka, "Hey, let it go, alright?" Wakka sighed, he rubbed his ribs, avoiding eye contact with Yuna, "Don't go near Al Bhed anymore, okay? They're trouble." Yuna sighed and turned, she quickly walked out of the locker room, Lulu stared at Wakka, her arms crossed. "The game starts soon, no time for warm-ups, ready?" Tidus grinned, nodding, "Lemme at 'em!" Wakka smiled at Tidus,

"Alright!" He looked over to his team, "I got something to tell you boys. After this game...I'm retiring. I promised myself this would be my last tournament. Win or lose, I'm quitting Blitzball. But you know...since we're here, we might as well win!" The Aurochs all nodded and spoke in unison, "Yeah!" The benched player, whose name is Botta, stepped up, "A-am I on the bench?"

Wakka shook his head, "I'm warming the bench. He's taking my place. All right boys, let's win this one! Let's make the Goers goners!" Tidus pumped his fist into the air, "Let's Blitz!" All of the Aurochs threw their hands up, cheering loudly. The team and Tidus ran out the door, heading for the stadium, Lulu stepped up to Wakka, who was now standing. "I saw you floating there...on the sphere." Wakka sighed, stepping closer to her, he put a hand on her cheek. "Hey, you weren't supposed to see that." His speech was slurred and his eyes rolled into the back of his head, he went limp into Lulu's arms, at first she was rigid, but then she relaxed, nuzzling against him. "You really gave it your all, didn't you?"

Tidus and the Aurochs were all around the sphere-pool, Tidus put his hands on his hips, "Alright boys, what're we gonna do?" The team all grinned together, throwing their hands up into the air, "Win!" they said in unison. "For Cap' n Wakka!" Botta grinned sheepishly as everyone turned to look at him. They all jumped into the sphere-pool as the commentary started up. Lulu looked up to the speaker in the locker room as Bobba's voice rang out, "This is it, folks. In just a few minutes, the championship game!" Wakka sighed, he pulled a pen from the wall, Lulu turned and read what he had put, "'My best memories are here. Wakka, Captain of the Aurochs.' That's very nice Wakka." She hugged him again.

"But who could have imagined...A championship game between these two teams? Our legendary Luca Goers going against...the horrendously ill-fated Besaid Aurochs!" The crowd was going crazy, screaming and cheering, "This looks like history in the making, Bobba." Down near the crowd, a familiar red flicker of something walked past a few stands, Auron stood in the crowd; his eyes hidden by sun glasses. Inside the sphere-pool, Tidus and the Aurochs were getting into position, Graav and the Goers were doing the same, Graav swam up to Tidus, holding out his hand. Tidus went to take it, but Graav slammed it into his stomach. "They're already going at it, folks! The Goers are taunting the Aurochs!" The horn that signifies the beginning of the game sounded out loudly, the Blitzball was released and off the two teams went.

Twisting and turning in the water, unbelievably fast. The Goers already had scored two goals, the Aurochs had one. Soon, the half time buzzer sounded off, the people in the stands were watching the pool, a slow chant started coming from the Auroch fans, barely understandable at first, but then the rest of the stadium joined in. "Wakka, Wakka, Wakka, Wakka." Tidus looked around the stadium from the pool, "Everyone seems to be calling for Wakka, folks!" Tidus smiled, he slowly turned and swam his way out of the sphere-pool. "Say...where is that player going? He's leaving the sphere-pool! He may be injured!" Tidus burst out of the pool, landing in the players exit, he got up, walking slowly into the locker room. Wakka looked up, nodded, and left for the players hallway.

"To be honest, I did kinda feel left out, but...it really was the Aurochs' and Wakka's show, after all."

The crowd seemed to scream louder than ever as soon as Wakka entered the sphere-pool. "I wonder what's happening? The crowd is going wild!" Wakka reached the center of the sphere-pool, he waved to the crowd and they continued to chant his name. "Ah! It's Wakka! He's back on the field and ready to go! The Aurochs seem glad to have him back!" The commenced and Wakka completely dominated the field. He tackled, swam for his life, and scored four times before the game was finally completed,

leading his team into the victory he so craved. "Unbelievable! The Aurochs win, folks! This is one for the record books!" Tidus and Wakka were relaxing in the water after the game, the rest of the players had already left the pool and they began to make their way towards the players exit, suddenly, flashes of green color filled the sphere-pool and screams sounded out from the stadium.

The stadium had somehow filled with fiends, they attacked people, people attacked people, screaming to get out before they were killed. Tidus and Wakka were surrounded by a bunch of green, lizard-fish fiends, Tidus and Wakka began attacking their way towards the exit, cloud after cloud of pyre-flies filled the water and finally, they reached the exit. Lulu, Kimahri, and Yuna were standing in the stadium, Lulu was frantically looking around at all the fiends, "What's happening?" Auron stepped completely into the stadium, shrugging his coat off his working arm. He pulled out his blade and dived in, slamming it into a huge lizard fiend, sending it into oblivion. "Auron!" Tidus ran up to Auron, followed by Wakka, "Sir Auron?!"

"So, you do know him?" Tidus looked to Wakka, Wakka nodded, "Yeah. Best Guardian there ever was." The fiends seemed to be multiplying, every one knocked down, ten took its place, Maester Seymour slowly walked out onto one of the viewing balconies. He held his hands to the sky, it seemed to darken as a huge chain with a three-pronged hook crashed into the ground. Blood seemed to spurt up and out, forming a small pool around it. The chain began to slowly pull up, revealing a hideous Aeon. It seemed to be born of bondage, chained together, held back by woman's arms around its next. It got its name by the picture hanging on its chest, the "Anima Soula", or the woman in chains. Anima looked around to all of the fiends, its one exposed eye began to glow, a huge explosion of light came out of it and the bulk of the fiends exploded.

Anima's eye kept lighting up and blowing out, the pyre-flies that resulted were sucked into the Aeons now bleeding eye. Later, in the market place, Wakka was surrounded by his team, he held the trophy close to himself. "You really leavin', Cap'n?" Datto was looking down, Letty stepped forward, "Shouldn't you heal up first?" Wakka shook his head, "Yuna needs me with her now. I can't be lying around in some bed." The Aurochs all looked down, Datto spoke up, "Yeah, but..." Wakka sighed, looking to his team-mates, "Come on, look sharp! The blitz season just started. Don't make those faces, ya?" Wakka handed the trophy to Letty, who took it reluctantly. "Well...see you boys! You be good." The Aurochs all sighed, speaking very quietly, "...Cap'n..." Wakka put his hands on his hips, "I can't hear you!" The Aurochs all nodded, looking up, "Cap'n!"

Later, on a large bridge that lead up to the exit of Luca, which was a large plateau that had a very, very big stair well. Yuna looked to Wakka, putting her hand on his arm, "Are you sure?" Wakka nodded, looking down to Luca, "Never liked long goodbyes anyway. Sorry for making you wait, Yuna. I had some promises to keep, ya? From now on, I'm your full-time Guardian." Yuna smiled, nodding, "Then welcome back, Sir Wakka. Good to have you with us." Wakka grinned, shaking his head, "Hey, it's good to be back, ya?" He looked over to Lulu, "So, any news on what happened?" Lulu shook her head, shrugging her shoulders, "Not really. We don't know where the fiends came from. Maester Mika is safe and sound, thanks to Maester Seymour. That's about it."

"Maester Seymour's Aeon...it was so powerful." Yuna looked off to the distance, in awe. Down in Luca, Tidus and Auron were standing around the docks. Auron turned to leave, Tidus stepped up, grabbing his arm roughly, "Hey, you! Don't just stand there! All of this is your fault! Getting' swallowed by Sin! Ending up here in Spira! Not being able to go back to Zanarkand-everything, everything! I'm telling you,

it's all your fault!" Auron laughed, shaking his head. "Who are you, anyway? You knew my old man, didn't you? And you also knew Yuna's father?" Auron nodded slowly, turning to Tidus, "That's correct." Tidus shook his head, waving his arms, "Hey, man, there's no way. That's just impossible." Auron shrugged, shaking his head, "Nothing impossible about it. Jecht, Braska, and I... Together we defeated Sin ten years ago. Then I went to Zanarkand where I watched over you. So that one day I could bring you to Spira."

Tidus crossed his arms, sighing heavily, "Why did it have to be me?" Auron smiled, patting Tidus' back, "Jecht asked me to." Tidus looked up, "Is he alive?" Auron turned away from Tidus, stepping towards the water, "It depends on what you mean by 'alive.' He is no longer human. But then... I saw something of Jecht there in that shell, couldn't you? You must have felt him when you came in contact with Sin." A flash of light filled Tidus' eyes, "It can't be..." Auron turned, looking back to Tidus, "It is, Sin is Jecht." Tidus turned, stomping his foot, balling his fists, "No! That's ridiculous! No way! I don't believe you!" Auron sighed, stepping up to Tidus, "But it is the truth. You'll see for yourself. Come with me."

"If I say no?" Auron groaned at that, shaking his head, "Every story must have an ending." Tidus growled, stomping again, "I don't care about your stories!" Auron sighed, looking down to the ground, "I see. Sorry you feel that way. Fine, then. Come or don't come, it's your decision." Tidus cried out, shaking his head, "What am I supposed to say? You tell me it's my decision... But I don't have a choice, do I? You're the only one who can tell me what's going on, anyway! I have to go with you! I have to!" Auron chuckled at that, turning around, "Irritating, I know. Or are you afraid? It's all right..." Tidus walked around in a circle for a bit, thinking, then he looked to Auron, who was standing there, ever patient. "Auron? Will I ever go back home? Back to Zanarkand?"

Auron shrugged, "That's up to Jecht. I'm going to offer my services to Yuna. Come." Auron and Tidus began to make their way to the bridge. Yuna and Wakka were still watching the horizon. "Do you think he's staying here?" Lulu stepped up, looking to Wakka, "Sir Auron knows him, apparently. You were right. He did meet someone he knew." Yuna watched the crowd down in the city, "Do you think he'll find his way back to Zanarkand?" Wakka shrugged, "In any case, I'll miss having him around." Yuna nodded and turned, heading towards the stairs which lead down back into Luca, "He's still in town, isn't he? I think I'll go see him... oh!" Tidus and Auron had just reached to top step, they walked over to the group. "Whoa." Wakka and Lulu stepped up. "Sir Auron?" Auron nodded to Yuna, "Yuna." She nodded back, "Sir?" Auron, his face very grim, stepped closer to the group. "I wish to become your Guardian, do you accept?"

"You serious?" Wakka was in awe, he stared at Auron. "You refuse?" Yuna snapped out of her own daze, she stepped forward, "No, no! We accept! Right, everyone?" Wakka nodded, "O-of course! No problem at all!" Lulu stepped forward, her face skeptical, "But... why?" Auron stepped towards her, "I promised Braska." Yuna smiled, "You promised my father? Thank you, Sir Auron! You're welcome to join us!" Auron grabbed Tidus, pulling him forward, "And... he comes too." Tidus scratched the back of his head, nervously glancing around, "Hi... guys, eh... Howdy!" Auron sighed, looking to Tidus, "This one I promised Jecht." Yuna stepped forward, "Is Sir Jecht alive?" Auron shrugged, unhanding Tidus, "Can't say. Haven't seen him in ten years." Yuna looked down, "I... see." Auron patted her shoulder, "You'll meet eventually." Yuna looked up, smiling, "Yes, I'm looking forward to it!"

Auron looked over to Lulu, stepping towards her, "What's our itinerary? Where are we heading?" Yuna waved Tidus to her and she walked to the balcony, "Hey, come with me." Tidus walked over to her,

smiling, "Hey, watch this!" She put her fingers to her lips and blew a loud, clear whistle. "Hey, you got pretty good." Yuna tilted her head to the side, "You sound sad." Tidus sighed, looking down, "Yeah...maybe..." Yuna smiled, getting a bit excited, "Wanna scream?" Tidus sighed and looked to her, "I don't think that's going to help this time." She frowned, looking around for a moment, then she smiled, "You know what? It's embarrassing to say this myself...but Summoners and their Guardians are kind of like Spira's ray of light. A lot of people in Spira depend on us. I learned to practice smiling when I'm sad, you know? I know it's hard..." Tidus nodded, still frowning, "Yeah, I understand...I think."

"Right, now let's see what you can do!" Tidus looked around, then he tried to smile, making a weird face, his cheeks went red and he looked around, "Th-this is weird." Yuna smiled, "Next, try laughing out-loud!" Tidus looked to her, crossing his arms, "What?" Yuna grinned, nodding her head, "Come on, show me!" Tidus looked out to the horizon and began to laugh, almost manically, really, really loudly. Yuna looked around as people started to stare, "You probably shouldn't laugh anymore..." Tidus looked to her and smiled, he continued laughing, she shook her head and began herself, they both paused, looking to each other, then both of them looked out to the horizon, laughing manically together.

After a few moments, they both broke out into real laughter, Yuna shook her head, "Too funny!" Tidus grinned, looking to her, "It was your idea!" Yuna looked down as they both stopped laughing, "Um...thank you. I want my journey to be full of laughter." Tidus nodded, smiling, "Okay!" Yuna looked out to the horizon, smiling, she turned and leaning against the balcony, looking to Tidus, "If we should get separated..." Tidus looked to her, smiling, "Yeah?" She looked down, then back up, "Just whistle...I'll come running..." Tidus grinned, then Yuna looked him in the eyes, "I promise..."