

# Star Ocean: The Second Story Hints and Tips FAQ

by Sherman Tam

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Star Ocean: The Second Story  
In-Depth Tips and Tricks (US version)  
version 0.41  
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---INTRODUCTION---  
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This is the big guide where I put in every little observation and opinion I

have about the game system in Star Ocean: The Second Story. Included are tidbits about every character, notable equipment, tips on some skills and specialties, and other tips on how to play. Most of this guide can be considered "spoilers" of varying degrees; if you want to discover a lot of the aspects of the game yourself, I have created a skills guide that covers the skills system without revealing too much else. There are also plenty of other guides and FAQs that focus on other aspects of the game. If, however, you'd like my ideas on how the game works and tips on how to play and what to use, read on...

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---VERSION CHANGES---  
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0.41 (9/2/99): Added more Killer Moves, fixed some errors, added to Equipment.

0.4 (8/29/99): Added Link Combo and Spell Absorption sections, part of the Killer Move List. Submitted to GameFAQs.

0.3 (8/18/99): Fleshed out the characters section.

0.2 (8/14/99): Added sections on equipment.

0.1 (8/4/99): First release. Private release, just so I can keep track of when this whole thing started...

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---CONVENTIONS---  
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There are a number of conventions I will use throughout this guide. These conventions are for all of the sections; some sections will have additional ones. Most of these are intuitive, but I'd just like to explain, just to be sure.

- Common abbreviations I use include SO2 (Star Ocean: The Second Story), PA (Private Actions) and supers (Super Specialties). Also, the abbreviations for all the character statistics, which are listed on the status page, may be used.
- Many times I will use abbreviations of character names to save space. These abbreviations use the first two letters of the character's name (Cl, Re, Ce, As, Pr, Op, Bo, Er, Le, Di, No, Ch).
- Similarly, I use these abbreviations for the ten elements, which are the same as the game's abbreviations: Et, Wt, Fr, Wd, Th, St, Vc, Lg, Dk, Vd.
- Note that this guide covers only the normal game items, not any bonus or secret items. Covering these would invalidate all those assertions I make of so-and-so weapon or equipment being the best in the game, so I decided to invoke my selective memory and forget about all those strange things you can find if you're really persistent. ;) I do make a few references to them, which I will mark as outside of the normal game.

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---CHARACTERS---  
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Here are my opinions of all the characters, along with how you can recruit

them, their affinity for the different talents, starting skills, and skills to develop or avoid. The format is as follows:

--Name--

Vitals

Recruiting Requirements

General Comments

Battle Ability (normal attack and Killer Move/Spell comments)

Talent Chart

Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Skill/Specialty Recommendations

The Favorite Food is the food that, when eaten, provides substantially more HP/MP recovery for that character. The Favorite Instrument is the instrument that has a greater effect when played by that character.

For the Talent Chart, I used the grading system ABCDF, with A being a good chance, C being average, and F meaning a poor chance. The first letter indicates the chances of starting with that talent, and the second indicates the chances of learning that talent through specialties. There are three special cases: A + denotes a talent that the character automatically starts with; a single - denotes a talent the character cannot have, and a - in either the first or second positions (and another grade in the other position) means that the character cannot start or cannot learn the talent.

--Claude C. Kenni--

Race: Human

Height: 175 cm

Type: Fighter

Weight: 68 kg

Gender: Male

Favorite Food: Steak

Age: 19

Favorite Instrument: Silver Trumpet

Birth Date: January 23

Note: The Silver Trumpet is a bonus item.

Recruiting Requirements: None. Claude will always join.

General Comments: Being one of the two main characters, Claude is your standard blonde-haired, blue-eyed hero. He's your all-around nice guy and easily the strongest and most versatile fighter as well.

Battle Ability: Claude has a fast ground attack with good range. He has the standard jumping air attack, although it doesn't have enormous range and frankly looks a little stupid. His killer moves cover a wide range of abilities, equally deadly against single or multiple enemies. The only real weakness Claude has is in the amount of MP and proficiency required for his killer moves. Claude's moves are the most expensive in terms of MP cost and require the most uses to reach full proficiency.

Talent Chart

Originality	C/C	Sense of Taste	F/F
Dexterity	C/C	Sense of Design	B/C
Writing Ability	B/C	Sense of Rhythm	C/D
Pitch	D/D	Love of Animals	F/D
Sixth Sense	-/F	The Blessing of Manna	-

Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Functionality 1, Scientific Ability 1

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Claude, being the strongest fighter,

should have a good mixture on all the combat skills. Also, Claude should learn writing early in the game to ease the development of later party members. Otherwise, build towards specialties Claude has talents for or can learn easily. Claude, unlike the other two major fighters (Dias and Ashton), has an average chance to learn a fair number of talents. Cooking is definitely not one of his strengths, however. Even so, make sure to give him high levels in Kitchen Knife for the strength benefits.

--Rena Lanford--

Race: Nedian                      Height: 161 cm  
Type: Mage                        Weight: 45 kg  
Gender: Female                    Favorite Food: Shortcake  
Age: 17                            Favorite Instrument: Lyre  
Birth Date: May 13

Recruiting Requirements: None. Rena will always join your party.

General Comments: The other main character in the game besides Claude, Rena is also in standard heroic form -- sensitive, caring, a do-gooder. She serves as the primary healer throughout the game.

Battle Ability: Although she starts off relatively strong in the beginning of the game, Rena, like all other mages, eventually falls behind the fighters in offensive and defensive power. She does, however, have a decent reach in her normal attacks despite using her hands. She has the normal aerial attack, either punching or kicking depending on how close the enemy is. Her spells are for the most part recovery and protection spells; Rena gets all the available recovery spells in the game, along with a few protection and attack spells. Her casting time is quite fast, allowing her to heal quickly and disrupt the actions of enemies, although she probably won't do a lot of damage.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	F/D	Sense of Taste	B/B
Dexterity	B/D	Sense of Design	D/F
Writing Ability	D/C	Sense of Rhythm	D/D
Pitch	A/D	Love of Animals	A/C
Sixth Sense	-	The Blessing of Manna	+

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Recipe 4, Kitchen Knife 1, Good Eye 1  
Cooking 2

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Rena starts with Cooking, which is an easy way of making money early in the game. Cooking is also one of the easiest specialties to improve, Recipe and Good Eye being extremely cheap. If you're short on cash, build up this skill and cook up a storm of food. Otherwise, your skill choices should depend on Rena's talents. Mages, having less need for combat skills, can focus more on item creation or whatever the party doesn't have at the moment. You may need to try for Alchemy if you are short on mages. Also consider learning Writing early, again to help build up later party members. Make sure you

--Celine Jules--

Race: Expel                        Height: 167 cm  
Type: Mage                        Weight: 50 kg  
Gender: Female                    Favorite Food: Baby Rabbit Risotto  
Age: 23                            Favorite Instrument: Violin

Birth Date: September 18

Recruiting Requirements: None. Celine will always offer to join the party.

General Comments: The treasure hunter with the haughty demeanor and the shapely body (and the shower curtain to hide it all), Celine is somewhat condescending, materialistic, and... shallow. Nice, but shallow. Fortunately, she can also throw a mean fireball. Gotta keep the suitors away somehow...

Battle Ability: Celine is probably the best attack mage in the game (not that there are that many). She gets lots of spells and lots of magic power. Unfortunately, she pays the price in terms of her other stats; she is usually the weakest in both offensive and defensive power. While she does use a rod, apparently her grip is wrong, because her normal attack range is quite small and somewhat slow. She has a jumping aerial attack, also with short range. Celine should only be used as a mage, and should be in the back and protected at all times.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	D/B	Sense of Taste	F/F
Dexterity	B/C	Sense of Design	A/B
Writing Ability	F/D	Sense of Rhythm	F/D
Pitch	B/D	Love of Animals	F/-
Sixth Sense	C/C	The Blessing of Manna	+

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Mineralogy 1, Craft 1, Esthetic Sense 5, Scientific Ability 2,  
Fairyology 2  
Alchemy 1, Metalwork 2

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Celine is great at making items, starting with levels in Alchemy and Metalwork. Her high Esthetic Sense also makes her a good candidate for Art. You might want to try having her focus on Musical Talent as well, since the violin is a powerful instrument. Like Claude, Celine is a kitchen casualty, and unless you start with Love of Animals you shouldn't train Celine in Familiar.

#### --Ashton Anchors--

Race: Expel                      Height: 180 cm  
Type: Fighter                      Weight: 80 kg  
Gender: Male                      Favorite Food: Hamburger  
Age: 20                      Favorite Instrument: Piano  
Birth Date: September 28

Recruiting Requirements: To recruit Ashton, you must talk to the two men at the entrance of Herlie before leaving for Lacour and then investigate the mentioned dragon problem in Salva. Recruiting Ashton prevents you from recruiting Opera or Ernest.

General Comments: Poor Ashton is a hero-for-hire who's an all-out nice guy and has the right intentions but is cursed with horrible luck. How bad is his luck? Instead of slaying the dragon in Salva, he becomes merged with it! (Or perhaps more accurately, "them".) Add to the two bickering dragon heads an inferiority complex and an unnatural fascination with barrels and you have a seriously weird character. And a lot of fun. ;)

Battle Ability: Don't be fooled by his personal problems. Ashton is one of



infectious.

Battle Ability: Precis, like all the women in the game, isn't intended to be a damage-soaking type fighter in the front lines. Her normal attack (a mechanical hand that comes out her backpack and punches -- and is that a Playstation controller she's holding to control it!?) has a significant pause and only decent range. She has two different types of aerial attacks; at close range, she does a jumping punch, and at long range she has the more effective missile shot from her backpack. Precis in general will not do that much damage per hit. However, her killer moves are varied and for the most part powerful, including some that make her partially invulnerable and many that will do multiple hits on multiple enemies, somewhat compensating for her lack of power. She doesn't quite the range of Opera or the multi-hit ability of Chisato, but her attacks are still quite useful when combined with other characters to keep the enemy occupied so she can pull them off. Her higher-level moves also drain a lot of MP, so she will frequently run low unless given some help.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	D/C	Sense of Taste	-/D
Dexterity	D/A	Sense of Design	D/A
Writing Ability	F/F	Sense of Rhythm	D/C
Pitch	D/D	Love of Animals	B/D
Sixth Sense	C/F	The Blessing of Manna	-

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Functionality 3, Mech Knowledge 1, Mech Operation 1  
Machinery 1  
100 SP

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: As you can see from the talent chart, Precis is pretty much geared toward one thing: Machinery. This should be her main skill, since she can gain an easy 200 SP if she doesn't start with either Dexterity or Sense of Design, and since she can make unique items with Machinery, including weapons and killer moves. For her other specialties, it mostly depends on what luck you have for her initial talents, as most of them have low learning potential. She can become good at metalwork, perhaps art. Keep her out of the kitchen. Combat-wise, Precis can benefit from any of the normal combat skills.

--Opera Vectra--

Race: Tetragenes	Height: 160 cm
Type: Fighter	Weight: 50 kg
Gender: Female	Favorite Food: Apple Cider
Age: 23	Favorite Instrument: Piano
Birth Date: August 24	

Recruiting Requirements: To recruit Opera, you need to see a PA in the Town of Cross. Then, after finishing the Tournament of Arms in Lacour, you need to see a PA in Hilton. After that you need to go back to Cross Castle, talk to the king, and obtain permission to enter the Mountain Palace, where you'll find Opera. Recruiting Opera means passing up a chance to recruit Ashton.

General Comments: Opera hails from a highly advanced planet whose race has three eyes. She's a noblewoman looking for love, specifically her slippery boyfriend who likes to take interplanetary journeys. Opera is a very determined and competitive woman -- how many other women would acquire such a huge gun (which apparently takes floppies) and go

planet-hopping in a ballroom gown? She can be somewhat blunt and crude at times, although she's not quite as condescending as Celine. Opera also has an enormous tolerance for drink (tea, root beer, or whatever non-alcoholic drinks they renamed everything), and can be seen downing some in many a PA.

**Battle Ability:** Opera is the premiere long-range fighter in the game. All of her killer moves have long-range ability (she does have a gun, after all). This makes her extremely effective against enemies who hang around in the rear lines or those that fly. This has its downsides, however, in that Opera is the least effective fighter at close range. Most of her killer moves operate at the very edge of short distance, and enemies that move quickly may overpower her before she attains the right distance to launch her moves. Her normal attack is actually pretty good, coming out fast and with decent range. Opera's aerial attack is also excellent, since she shoots while staying grounded, allowing her to attack at a much faster rate than those characters who must jump to attack flying enemies. Allowing Opera to get close to use these attacks, however, means that she must spend extra time to increase her distance before using her moves. Opera makes a great support character behind the front lines of your party, but a mediocre fighter when forced to do hand-to-hand combat.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	D/B	Sense of Taste	F/F
Dexterity	+	Sense of Design	C/A
Writing Ability	F/D	Sense of Rhythm	B/C
Pitch	B/C	Love of Animals	-
Sixth Sense	-	The Blessing of Manna	-

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Craft 1, Metal Casting 1, Functionality 1, Mech Operation 3  
Customize 1

**Skill/Specialty Recommendations:** Similar to Precis, Opera's primary specialty focus should be on Machinery. Not only does she have a good chance of starting with both talents necessary, she can create weapons and killer moves for herself with Machinery. In fact, since no one sells her weapons until the second half of the game, Machinery is almost the only way to generate weapons to utilize her customizing skills on. Opera is the most limited character in the number of talents she can acquire, although she has good chances to learn a fair number of the ones she can have. She should avoid the Familiar, Cooking, and Authoring specialties unless she starts with the needed talent. Opera makes a good musician and a great metalworker or artist. For combat skills, Opera shouldn't need the Cancel skill, since there's not too many killer moves she can reasonably cancel into. On the other hand, a high Gale level is needed for Opera to maintain the correct amount of distance to use her killer moves.

--Bowman Jean--

Race: Expel	Height: 175 cm
Type: Fighter	Weight: 78 kg
Gender: Male	Favorite Food: Daikon Miso
Age: 27	Favorite Instrument: Harmonica
Birth Date: December 30	

**Recruiting Requirements:** To recruit Bowman, you must not recruit Precis.

**General Comments:** The laid-back pharmacist who involves himself in other



people's problems apparently decides that your problem of saving the world is something he needs to be involved in. Bowman is for the most part an easy-going, if slightly chauvinistic, guy. He's the only character who's married, although this doesn't stop him from occasionally checking out the ladies...

Battle Ability: Bowman's normal attack... sucks. His range is truly pitiful, worse than any other character. Frequently he'll just whiff because the enemy decided to flee right before he starts an attack. His aerial attack is no better, having super-short range from short or long distance. I usually let the computer run Bowman's attacks, since it has a better percentage somehow; when I play Bowman, he only does damage if the enemy runs into his fist. Bowman's killer moves are mixed bag. They certainly have much better range than his normal attack, but some aren't very useful given their speed or effect. All this adds up to Bowman being a mediocre fighter. This isn't to say that Bowman can't do some serious damage if given the chance, but he's not a front-line fighter and shouldn't be counted to wade into large groups of enemies without some backup.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	D/D	Sense of Taste	F/D
Dexterity	F/F	Sense of Design	F/C
Writing Ability	B/B	Sense of Rhythm	F/F
Pitch	D/F	Love of Animals	-/B
Sixth Sense	D/B	The Blessing of Manna	-

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Herbal Medicine 5, Biology 4, Mental Science 2  
Compounding 3  
100 SP

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Considering his talent spread, Bowman is quite specialized in what he is supposed to do. Certainly his main specialty should be Compounding. Since Biology and Mental Science are expensive skills, Bowman should also learn Writing to author books on these two skills for everyone else in the party. He has good chances to learn Sixth Sense and Love of Animals, giving him abilities to scout and call familiars. Lastly, he has a decent chance to create art. Besides that... <shrug> For combat skills, Cancel is pretty worthless unless you like to make things hard on yourself. Similar to Ashton, Bowman has a number of killer moves with preparation time, so beefing up his defensive skills can be beneficial. Also, considering his attack range and him having the only killer move that depends on speed, Gale is important.

--Ernest Raviede--

Race: Tetragenes                      Height: 190 cm  
Type: Fighter                          Weight: 90 kg  
Gender: Male                            Favorite Food: Hassaku Tea  
Age: 35                                    Favorite Instrument: Cembalo  
Birth Date: August 31

Recruiting Requirements: To recruit Ernest, you must first have Opera in your party. Then, you must see a PA in Arlia Village and then travel into Shingo Forest. Ernest will join after an event in the Hoffman Ruins. Since recruiting Opera meant foregoing Ashton, recruiting Ernest is the same. Furthermore, if you've recruited everyone who offered so far, then you will have to choose between the last three available recruits.

General Requirements: Ernest is a strange combination, a character who seems to be pushed as suave, but unfortunately has the job of Indiana Jones and the coat of Jubilee to go along with the voice of James Bond. If you look at him from the other direction, he's got the voice of James Bond when he's supposed to be rugged like Indiana Jones (and he's still got Jubilee's coat). Ultimately I just decided he was a bit ridiculous, although I'm not sure whether I could blame him from running from Opera after hearing her scream like a banshee on the battlefield. Ernest in general doesn't do much except act the part of the world-hopping traveler and archaeologist, focused more on the ruins on the horizon more than the beautiful women swooning all around him.

Battle Ability: After all the trouble to get Ernest, his battle prowess is a bit disappointing. While Ernest has the longest normal attack of anyone in the game, it comes out somewhat slowly. He doesn't actually attack using the full range of his whip, either, but around the range that Claude attacks, which leaves him open to retaliation. On the other hand, enemies that try to run away from Ernest will be in for a nasty surprise, as his attack extends way past the original attack point. As for his aerial attack, it has the same range, but is still a jumping attack and not as effective as Opera's or Leon's attacks. I'm not sure why the programmers didn't just leave Ernest on the ground and have him snap his whip at an upward angle, but again, at least it has range. His killer moves all exhibit the same characteristics, that being slow but possessing good range. He also suffers from Dias syndrome, since none of his killer moves generate more than four hits. All in all, another mediocre fighter; his significant other is the better fighter. Just goes to show you that Indiana was right about primitive weapons versus guns... Ernest also has an inexplicable aversion to Reflective Armor, making his defense potentially low compared to the rest of the fighters, who can all equip better armor.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	F/C	Sense of Taste	F/F
Dexterity	C/C	Sense of Design	D/C
Writing Ability	D/C	Sense of Rhythm	+
Pitch	C/D	Love of Animals	D/D
Sixth Sense	B/C	The Blessing of Manna	-

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Herbal Medicine 5, Patience 5, Whistling 4  
Survival 5

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Not really much to go on, since Survival is for the most part a useless skill by the time you recruit Ernest. Chances are he's not going to want to cook or feed animals, but other than that Ernest has a reasonable chance to acquire every other skill, so his specialties should be tailored to his starting talents and whatever specialty you're lacking in your party at the moment. In combat, Ernest basically needs every skill you can give him. ;)

--Leon D. S. Geeste--

Race: Fellpool	Height: 135 cm
Type: Mage	Weight: 36 kg
Gender: Male	Favorite Food: Carrot Juice
Age: 12	Favorite Instrument: Violin
Birth Date: November 25	

Recruiting Requirements: To recruit Leon, you must be playing Claude's scenario. You cannot (permanently) recruit Leon in Rena's scenario.

General Comments: He's brainy. He's confident. He's arrogant. He's childish. He's puny. And fortunately for all concerned, he's also a dang good mage, making good on all of that childish bravado he keeps saying. Leon is the little (really little) brother of the party, and if you can put up with a bit of his spoiled act you'll find a powerful attack mage at your disposal.

Battle Ability: For such a young kid, Leon is actually quite good in battle. He has one of the most unique normal attacks, where phantoms spring out of his tome to attack. His normal attack, where a purple armor-clad woman swings a sword, is the best out of all the mages, having even more range and speed than certain fighters. His aerial attack, where a green mermaid thrusts a trident skyward (what kind of books does this kid read, anyway?), is equally impressive, possibly the fastest air attack out of all the characters in the game. I occasionally control Leon in close combat to supplement the fighters against pesky flying opponents. It's too bad he doesn't have much power to go with his swing... His magic is equally powerful. While not having the range of spells that Celine has, he has plenty of power and usually the largest amount of MP of any character. He's also the master of spell absorption (see below), making a Leon pairing with another mage extremely deadly when micromanaged correctly.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	D/D	Sense of Taste	D/D
Dexterity	F/F	Sense of Design	D/D
Writing Ability	+	Sense of Rhythm	D/D
Pitch	F/D	Love of Animals	F/D
Sixth Sense	-/D	The Blessing of Manna	+

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

Minerology 3, Scientific Ability 4, Fairyology 1  
Alchemy 2

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Leon doesn't exactly impress with his range of talents. Again, Leon seems to be focused on a few specialties. He makes a good alchemist since the framework is already there. Also, Leon should invest in Writing; he is the only character who can author his weapons, although more powerful weapons can be had through customization. Also, the writing ability allows him to author books on Fairyology, which gives a slight INT boost for mages and is normally an expensive skill. Similar to Celine, you might try going for Musical Talent due to the powerful nature of the Violin. Other than that, just go for whatever specialties fate leans Leon towards... Leon should pump up on the standard mage combat skills, Motormouth and defenses.

--Dias Flac--

Race: Expel	Height: 192 cm
Type: Fighter	Weight: 82 kg
Gender: Male	Favorite Food: Chicken Skewers
Age: 25	Favorite Instrument: Cembalo
Birth Date: August 5	

Recruiting Requirements: To recruit Dias, you must be playing Rena's scenario. You cannot recruit Dias in Claude's scenario.

General Comments: The bad boy of S02, Dias is your typical taciturn brooder, complete with the long hair and tragic past. Dias doesn't get along with anybody except Rena (and that's sorta a stretch, too). He lives only for the battle, and doesn't do too much else except meditate, sleep, and watch other battles. Still, he really is pretty cool with the attitude, even if he doesn't exactly do a lot of party participation.

Battle Ability: Dias is a powerful fighter with a few flaws. He carries a katana-type blade and performs sword-drawing techniques for almost all of his attacks. Unfortunately, rather than making his attacks faster, it slows his normal attack down to a crawl. His actual swing is wicked fast and has excellent range, but he pauses a half-second before swinging, plenty of time for enemies to hit him out of whatever he was thinking of doing. Dias's air attack also has a pause, but since there's a bit of preparation time for everyone's jumping aerial attack anyway, it's less noticeable. Dias's attack style follows a credo of "strike once, strike dead," and his killer moves reflect this philosophy. Most of the moves do more than normal damage with each hit. This is in compensation, unfortunately, to the fact that none of his killer moves hits more than four times. Thus, Claude and other characters will frequently do more damage simply through the sheer volume of hits, and Dias must use strength enhancers to keep up. This problem is alleviated somewhat with Dias's final weapon. Another, less important problem is that Dias has trouble engaging more than one or two enemies at a time. However, if you increase Dias's power, he should be able to solve this problem by mowing through his opponents at a fast clip.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	+	Sense of Taste	F/C
Dexterity	C/C	Sense of Design	D/D
Writing Ability	F/F	Sense of Rhythm	C/F
Pitch	C/F	Love of Animals	F/F
Sixth Sense	D/C	The Blessing of Manna	-

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

400 SP (200 SP the first time he joins, 200 SP the second)

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Dias is first and foremost a fighting man, so he's always ready to customize his weapon. He also has decent chances to acquire Sixth Sense and Sense of Taste, allowing him to scout and cook (hey, wandering swordsmen have to eat, too). Lastly, he has a shot at getting Dexterity, allowing Metalworking. He might have some musical talent, but if he doesn't start out with Pitch and Sense of Rhythm, it's probably not going to happen. Besides, he needs all those precious SPs for his primary skill consumption -- stat builders and combat skills. That's what he's on the team for, right? Make sure to build up Kitchen Knife, Scientific Ability, and Functionality to increase his attack power. Also focus on Mental Training and Below the Belt, perhaps Feint. Because of his pause, it is very difficult to time Dias to cancel. The benefits are large, but the risk that he'll be hit out of his normal attack is usually large enough that I pass on Cancel.

--Noel Chandler--

Race: Nedian                      Height: 173 cm  
Type: Mage                        Weight: 74 kg  
Gender: Male                      Favorite Food: Big Tuna  
Age: 24                            Favorite Instrument: Illusive Shamisen  
Birth Date: February 16  
Note: The Illusive Shamisen is a bonus item.

Although he's listed as a Nedian and his portrait shows normal ears, in the game it's made clear that Noel is a different race, with fur and cat ears. Also, Leon is rendered with feline ears and listed as a Fellpool, but nobody notices the difference on Expel, and his parents are normal Expels. And Noel spelled backwards is Leon. Did somebody get confused at tri-Ace? Or is there a deeper meaning? The mystery thickens...

Recruiting Requirements: None. Noel will always offer to join the party.

General Comments: Noel, the crusader for animals, definitely doesn't personify the "active" in "activist." In fact, Noel for the most part is all pacifist, even down to his battle quotes. He's also pretty complacent when he casts spells, too, speaking as if he was speaking an offhand remark instead of casting some spell that could save his furry hide. Pretty much a sleepy guy with a personality that could put you to sleep. Too bad there's not a spell for that sorta thing...

Battle Ability: Ernest may have problems deciding on his personality, but Noel has a problem deciding on his job. Noel wears the armor of a fighter, has the strategies and some spells of an attack mage, and has the attitude and some spells of a healer. The result, of course, is a disaster. Chief among the problems is Noel's equipment. It would have been acceptable for him to be an attack/healer mage, but the addition of fighting equipment means that Noel can't equip the armor of the other mages, most which gives a substantial magic power boost. Thus, Noel's spells have less effect because of his low magical power. His normal and aerial attacks are also none too impressive, having short range, although he still have more range than Celine (and Bowman, of course). His spells suffer from the aforementioned lack of power. Also, his attack spells aren't too powerful by nature; wind spells apparently have no spell absorbing ability, and the earth spells have problems hitting floating or airborne enemies. Lastly, Noel's healing spell collection is missing a few important spells such as Antidote and Raise Dead, and he gets Dispel at a ridiculously high level. Further complicating matters is his strategy list, which is the same as an attack mage's. Noel will sometimes forget to heal your characters and use an attack spell instead. There are bonus items that alleviate Noel's equipment problems and make him more powerful than Rena, but for the normal game Noel isn't that great at any of the careers he pursues. Which is not to say that Noel isn't worth recruiting at all. A weaker healer who can withstand a few punches is better than no healer at all in case you ever want Rena absent from your battle party. As long as you keep resurrection and status recovery items plentiful, Noel can be useful to your team.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	D/D	Sense of Taste	F/D
Dexterity	F/D	Sense of Design	C/D
Writing Ability	F/D	Sense of Rhythm	C/D
Pitch	B/D	Love of Animals	+
Sixth Sense	D/D	The Blessing of Manna	+

#### Starting Skills/Specialties/SP

290 SP

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Nope, Noel doesn't really have all that much in the talent department, either. You'll want to make sure he starts with a number of talents, since his chances are better to start with a few than the low chance he has at learning them. With his Love of Animals, Familiar will always be available for Noel to learn. The other specialties will again depend on your needs and his talents. For

combat, make sure that Noel has strong Motormouth skills. Also pump up his Mineralogy, Functionality, for their INT bonuses, since he's going to need all the help he can get pumping his magic power.

--Chisato Madison--

Race: Nedian                      Height: 164 cm  
Type: Fighter                    Weight: 52 kg  
Gender: Female                   Favorite Food: none  
Age: 22                            Favorite Instrument: Organ  
Birthday: October 22

Note: Chisato supposedly does have a favorite food, the Fruit Sandwich. Unfortunately, the programmers forgot to program it in the game, so it's impossible to get the sandwich unless you cheat.

Recruiting Requirements: To recruit Chisato, you must explore the Cavern of the Red Crystal and trigger the event where she drops her business card. You must then pick up her card and return it to her in Central City. You must also have a free spot free for her to occupy (in case you have Ernest).

General Comments: Chisato, like any good reporter, is always looking for the next big scoop, and stories don't get any bigger than those about the saviors of the universe. Unfortunately, her black belt wasn't in ninjitsu, because she has a bit of trouble keeping inconspicuous while following you. Apparently her sense of balance stays on the battlefield, too... Other than her zealous commitment to her job, however, Chisato is easygoing and pleasant, even if she doesn't get to do too much as the last available recruit.

Battle Ability: On the battlefield, Chisato for the most part eschews her stun gun in favor of spectacular demonstrations of her martial arts techniques and connections to the Nedian armory. Her normal attack has decent range and a bit of a pause, and she has a typical jumping attack. She does seem to dizzy opponents with her attack more often than any other character. Chisato's killer moves are split along two lines; in one, she relentlessly pummels an enemy with her hands and feet and in the other she pulls out some device to use on multiple opponents. In all cases the lower attack power that she has is made up with multiple hits; in stark contrast to Dias, her killer moves always have at least two hits and frequently many more. Chisato is the queen of mass enemy devastation. Her close-range moves, while impressive, pale in comparison to the havoc she wreaks with her wider area moves. The price for these moves is that each has a pause before they execute and some start uncomfortably close to the enemy. Thus, Chisato needs backup in the form of some other character occupying the enemy while she readies her attacks. Alternately, if you use her martial arts, she needs someone to keep the rest of the enemies off her back while she pummels her current focus, since her close-range moves have no area effect. A worthy addition to any team needing crowd control.

#### Talent Chart

Originality	C/C	Sense of Taste	C/B
Dexterity	C/D	Sense of Design	D/D
Writing Ability	+	Sense of Rhythm	D/D
Pitch	D/D	Love of Animals	C/A
Sixth Sense	-/D	The Blessing of Manna	-

Starting Skills/Specialties/SP  
Copying 4

Skill/Specialty Recommendations: Chisato has specific hobbies that's she's geared towards. One would be Authoring, which she always has the talent for, although she inexplicably doesn't start with the Writing skill. She also has an interest in pets and good food. Lastly, she starts with Reproduction, one of the most useful specialties in the game, especially when coupled with Orchestra or a Violin. For the most part she'll not want to pick up an instrument or a paintbrush, and she's better at copying than making her own jewelry. For combat skills, Chisato is another character that would benefit from increased defenses and speed to keep her fit while she prepares her killer moves. She could also benefit from Mental Training and strength builders, since the large number of hits she racks up gives her ample opportunity to use her combat skills.

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---EQUIPMENT---  
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#### TIPS

Equipment obviously plays an important part in your party's success. The right equipment can give you extra attacks, more attacking power, magic defense, status ailment prevention, etc. Here are a few tips:

- The Equipment Wizard is a finicky creature. It is useful for the first few chapters of the game, but then becomes a hassle when the equipment starts getting more varied. The EW only chooses equipment by their main attribute, i.e. attack power for weapons, defense power for armor. If you make any manual changes, such as replacing accessories, the EW will automatically turn off. Rather than continuously turning the EW back on, you should get used to manually equipping. When the number of accessories increases, you will constantly be doing a lot of accessory moving. Also, many of the later weapons and armor will have other beneficial properties that might make them more desirable despite their lower attack or defense power.
- Pay attention to your elemental attributes. This can be checked for each item on the items screen, or for the character overall on the status screen, by pressing square. The 10 elements, from left to right, are:

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Thunder, Star, Vacuum, Light, Darkness, Void

Having a plus or minus sign in a defense (second row) affects how much damage you take from attacks based on that element. A minus sign will mean more damage, while a plus sign means less damage. These values are cumulative, so wearing two items that are both in strong in Fire will result in an even higher resistance. Wearing items especially strong versus an element can completely negate such elemental attacks or even cause you to gain life when attacked.

Obviously, if you have a minus sign somewhere, that's bad. However, you should find out what equipment is giving you the weakness and consider whether you are likely to encounter enemies using that element. If, for instance, you are on some icy tundra, a weakness in fire may be okay. Facing fire-breathing salamanders, on the other hand...

Elemental attributes on your weapon simply show up as highlighted icons.

The effect of these attributes depends on your enemy's defense, which is similar to the character's in that enemies can be weak or strong to elements.

- Special properties from equipment for the most part aren't cumulative.
  - \* For items that reduce MP cost, the better MP reduction is used. For instance, equipping a Fairy Ring, which reduces MP cost by 1/2, and an Emerald Ring, which reduces MP cost by 2/3, results in a 1/2 MP cost reduction (the Emerald Ring is ignored).
  - \* Items that regain HP or MP aren't cumulative, so wearing two items that regenerate HP every 5 seconds doesn't give you double the regenerative power.
  - \* You can never have more than three attacks per swing on a weapon. If you have a weapon, such as Ashton's Gemini, that gives two attacks per swing, adding a Slayer's Ring (+2 attacks) results in three attacks per swing and one attack wasted.
  - \* Items that affect statistics are cumulative. This includes Atlas Rings, which double your strength; two Atlas Rings would give you quadruple the strength, or an additional 3 x current strength to your attack power.
  - \* Items which give free skills override the character's normal level if the item's level is higher, and does nothing if it is lower.
  - \* Accessories which speed up your character, like Silver Pendants and Zephyr Earrings, give about the equivalent of Gale 10 speed. With experimentation, it seems that equipping two such accessories isn't cumulative. Furthermore, once you achieve Gale 10, the accessories don't seem to make any difference. They also don't give any bonus to speed when under the effects of Comprehension. On the other hand, Bunny Shoes will speed up characters faster than Gale 10 and is unaffected by Comprehension, although Delay spells will still slow you down.
  - \* Not sure about items that reduce or increase enemy encounters. I suspect that they aren't cumulative, and anyway, why would you want to give up more than one slot for any of these items?

#### BEST WEAPONS/ARMOR

Here are the best weapons and armor that all the characters can equip. Since all characters have unique weapons, I'll discuss each separately. The armor will be discussed as a group.

#### --Weapons--

Claude: Eternal Sphere. This awesome sword not only has enormous attacking power and resistance to vacuum, light, and darkness, it emits sparkles when Claude swings, essentially turning his normal attack into a multi-hit barrage.

Rena: Fallen Hope/Empresia. For Rena and the other mages, the Magic rating is more important than the attacking power. Both the Fallen Hope and the Empresia have a high magic power (300). The Empresia has a higher attack power, but the Fallen Hope edges it out in my mind by having the additional benefit of cutting 1/2 the MP cost of spells.

Celine: Silvermoon/Dragon's Tusk. The Dragon's Tusk has the highest Magic power of any of Celine's rods, but the Silvermoon has comparable Magic power and recovers MP over time in battle as well.

Ashton: Melufa/Gemini. Since Ashton uses twin short swords, it's fitting that he have two best weapons. The holy swords Gemini has a powerful



attack, gives extra luck (which Ashton certainly needs), and hits twice on a normal attack. However, it has a large weakness to fire, and it has a star-based attack, which may or may not affect dealt damage. Thus, I usually keep the other weapon around. The counterpart evil sword Melufa has an even higher attack power, double the luck, and a higher critical percentage, as well as an unlisted 30% bonus to HP. It is, however, weak to water. If you don't want to deal with the elemental problems of either sword, the Holy Cross, which has no special properties (but no weakness, either) can be used. My question is, why can't Ashton carry one of each sword in either hand? Just like Goro and Ururun, why play favorites? ;)

Precis: SDUGA Punch. No dispute here. Huge attack rating, lots of guts, and a funny description to boot.

Opera: Psycho Box/Pulse Box. The Psycho Box has the highest attack power out of all her energy boxes. However, it has no other statistical bonuses. The Pulse Box might have a slight delay in its attack and has a slightly lower attack power, but it has a much higher hit percentage bonus.

Bowman: Titan's Fists/Moon Fists. Here's a tough choice. The Moon Fists have the highest attack power available for Bowman. The Titan's Fists, while no pushover, have significantly less attack power. However, they increase the maximum MP for Bowman by 30% and give a big stamina bonus.

Ernest: Dark Whip/Cat o' 9 Tails. The Dark Whip has the highest attack rating of all the customizable weapons, and has good hit and critical percentage bonuses, along with a Darkness-based attack. However, the Cat o' 9 Tails has even more attack power and a triple attack. Honorable mention goes to the Invisible Whip, which has a lower attack power than either but a huge hit percentage bonus.

Leon: Ancient Wisdom. While it might not have the highest magic power (the Book of Chaos and the Treatise have higher magic power), the Ancient Wisdom book is loaded with extras, including a 1/2 MP cost reduction and MP recovery over time in battle.

Dias: Crimson Diablos. The sword with the plain description is hiding a secret: behind the modest attack power lies a magic that doubles your strength when used in battle! Use of this sword and a strength-enhancing accessory truly makes Dias a deadly force. The "Red Devil" also gives a hefty stamina bonus and protects against light, darkness, void, and instant-death spells.

Noel: Platinum Nails. The Platinum Nails offers the highest magic power of all of Noel's weapons. The attack power is nothing to write home about, but Noel can get a triple attack (not that he's going to attack that often).

Chisato: Electron/Spark. Tough choices. Chisato's weapons all don't have particularly strong attack power. She does have the Psychic Gun, which has a much higher attack power. But it also sucks 2 MP for every successful hit you score on an enemy, so with Chisato's multi-hit killer moves this becomes extremely draining. There is also mention of a Flare Gun, but I have yet to ever create it, so until I find a reliable method of creating that gun, the next gun in line for attack power would be the Electron. The Spark also deserves mention because of its triple attack properties, which make it useful if you're using Chisato up close.

--Armor--

Note: the names by the pieces of equipment indicate the characters who I think should equip them. Some pieces can be worn by more than the names I've listed.

-Best Armors-

Battle Suit (all): The absolute last word in physical defense, the Battle Suit will stop most attacks cold. It gives a nice guts bonus, too. If you can acquire this armor somehow (it's not exactly sold at the grocery store or anything), by all means, use it! Especially recommended for fighters like Ashton to make his killer moves more effective or Ernest, since he can't use Reflective Armor.

Reflective Armor (Cl, As, Pr, Op, Bo, Di, No, Ch): The Reflective Armor gives numerous bonuses, including spell resistance, elemental resistances, and MP recovery equal to a Mental Ring. It also has a great defensive rating, just below the Duel Suit. The armor of choice for anyone who can equip it when it comes to magic-slinging foes.

Duel Suit (Cl, As, Di): The Duel Suit has the best defense rating of any non-bonus armor in the game, suitable for the three best fighters in the game. It also gives protection from petrification. However, considering the extra bonuses that Reflective Armor gives, I usually use that. The Duel Suit is useful when status anomalies are more of a concern than spells, or if there is some other equipped spell protection, so I keep a suit or two around to equip.

Sylvan Mail (Pr, Op, Ch): The female counterpart to the Duel Suit, Sylvan Mail has a lower AC rating than Reflective Armor. It is again only useful when status anomalies are a problem, as it prevents petrification.

Mithril Mesh (Er): For some odd reason Ernest can't wear Reflective Armor. The next best available armor is the Mithril Mesh, which unfortunately has a much lower defense and no extras to speak of.

Mithril Coat (No): The armor with the highest available magic bonus for Noel. However, the huge difference in defensive power and the lack of extras compared to the Reflective Armor usually convinces me to keep Noel's magic down in exchange for much better protection. Besides, the magic bonus isn't that high, so Noel would still be weaker than the other mages anyway.

Mirage Robe (Re, Ce, Le): The best mage's armor boasts protection from petrification, strength against five elements, and substantial bonuses to avoidance, stamina, guts, and luck.

Ishtar's Robe (Re, Ce, Le): Another candidate for best mage's robe, Ishtar's Robe protects against instant-death spells and has a higher magic rating than the Mirage Robe, in exchange for less stat bonuses and no elemental protection.

-Best Shields-

Star Guard (Cl, As, Pr, Op, Bo, Er, Di, Ch): The Star Guard has a high defense and the largest avoidance rating for any shield in the game. Its biggest claim to excellence, however, is the sparkles that it emits whenever the wearer blocks. These sparkles are exactly like the ones from the Eternal Sphere, and are considered attacks. Kill monsters without even attacking!

Pallas Athena (Cl, Pr, Di, Er): The Pallas Athena gives resistance versus instant death and resistance versus every element except void (which it's weak in). Great for spell defense.

Algol (Pr, Ch): The Algol has a better defense rating than any other shield, and is the only shield to have a big stamina boost as well. As if that weren't enough, the Algol has a small chance of instantly killing any enemy that attacks the wearer.

Jeanne's Shield (Pr, Ch): Prevents paralysis and is strong to thunder and star-based attacks.

The Armband of Kali (Re, Ce): Only equippable by female characters, The Armband of Kali offers the best shield-based defense available for Rena and Celine.

Rare Gauntlets (Le, No): The next best thing to wearing Kalis for the male set of spellcasters.

Rune Buckler (Re, Ce, Le, No): Although it doesn't provide much defense, the Rune Buckler has a respectable avoidance and also prevents paralysis.

#### -Best Helm-

Odin's Helm (Cl, As, Di): While it doesn't offer that much defensive protection, Odin's Helm has much more to offer. Enormous bonuses to guts and stamina, as well as strength against void, make this helmet highly desirable.

Duel Helm (Cl, As, Bo, Di, Er, No): The Duel Helm has by far the highest defense available in a helmet. Claude, Ashton, and Dias can switch between this and Odin's Helm.

Mithril Helm (Pr, Op, Ch): The next highest defense rating behind the Duel Helm, the Mithril Helm represents the best helmet for the female fighters.

Jeanne's Helm (Pr, Op, Ch): Although not as high in defense as the Mithril Helm, Jeanne's Helm adds strength against water and void.

Isis Tiara (Re, Ce, Le): The best defense on a helm available to the pure mages (although Leon would look sorta strange wearing it).

Hermit's Helm (Re, Ce, Le): A good resistance to fire partly makes up for a lower defense rating than the Isis Tiara.

#### -Best Greaves-

Bunny Shoes (all): Available as a prize in Fun City, the footwear with the most ridiculous name is perhaps the best equipment you can wear.

(Strange how that works out.) The amount of defense it gives is certainly laughable. However, the Bunny Shoes enable the wearer to move extremely fast, faster than normally possible with full Gale, making it a huge improvement for any fighter. Even if you are a mage and don't need the speed, you can benefit from the largest stamina boost in the game. And it's just a great fashion statement. Imagine Dias striking a pose after cutting down an enemy -- while wearing bunny slippers. ;)

Star Greaves (Cl, As, Pr, Op, Bo, Di, Er, Ch): Star Greaves have a high defense rating and are also strong against vacuum and darkness.

Sylvan Boots (Pr, Op, Ch): For the ladies. Same defense as the Star Greaves, minus the elemental resistance.

Mithril Greaves (No): Noel can't wear Star Greaves, so this is the next best thing defensively.

Rune Shoes (Re, Ce, Le, No): While the Rune Shoes don't have great defense, they do have enormous strength against wind and thunder.

Witch's Boots (Re, Ce, Le): The best boot defense available to the pure mages, and they have strength against fire and void as well.

#### RECOMMENDED ACCESSORIES

Due to the huge assortment of accessories available, there are no absolute best combinations of accessories. However, here are some tips and tricks to help you choose what to wear:

- Wearing to cover weaknesses: one of the major functions of accessories is to shore up and weaknesses or add strengths to your characters. Up until the end of the game, most of equipment you'll encounter won't have any extra bonuses, i.e. weapons that reduce MP cost, or armor that protects against elements. Some even have major weaknesses, usually in their elemental strength, that can be lethal unless accounted for by another item which has enough elemental defense to counteract the weakness. And of course, having an elemental strength can make your life much easier when enemy mages come knocking.

\* Keep four Poison/Paralysis/Stone Checks in your inventory. This becomes less important as the game progresses, but until you have equipment or spells that can counteract these status anomalies, having a few of these around can save you a lot of money and time. Later in the game you can get accessories which protect against all status ailments, although none of these have 100% protection like the Checks.

\* If you're stuck looking for good defense against pesky elemental attacks, note that equipping ores and jewels will give you some protection against an element or two in a pinch.

- Wearing to enhance stats: Many of the accessories will give set bonuses to your stats. Some will also give hidden bonuses, additions to your attack or some other stat that isn't shown. The more powerful accessories will give statistical bonuses by percentage, i.e. an extra 30% added to your strength, or some other stat. Since your character's stats increase as you go up in level, most of these percentage bonuses eventually pass all but the highest set number bonuses. These percentage accessories are also a good reason to invest in skills that raise your statistics, since they become more effective when you raise skills that pertain to the affected statistic(s).

- Wearing to reduce MP consumption: A good reason to wear accessories is to reduce the rate of MP consumption your character has. Accessories like Emerald Rings and Mind Rings can keep your character from running out of power over the course of many battles. Another factor to consider is stamina; accessories that have stamina bonuses will help raise the amount of MP regained after battle, rather than controlling the usage during battle. Characters with extremely high stamina can sometimes forgo reduced MP costs because they regain so much MP after battle. Also note that in a strange role reversal, fighters will usually run out of MP

faster than the mages, since they can whip out killer moves faster and don't have as much MP as the mages get as they level up.

- Redundancy: Make sure that you aren't wearing items that have the same functionality, unless it's statistic enhancing. Knowing that your weapon performs the same function as an Emerald Ring allows you to replace that Emerald Ring you might be wearing. If you already have a skill at the same or higher level, wearing an item that gives you the skill is a waste. And so on...
- Accessories that break: If you're wearing an item that seems to be too good to be true, like the Shield Ring that protects against 90% of physical damage, it probably has a downside: some accessories eventually will break, leaving you without the item in the middle of battle. The accessories most suspect are ones that have some sort of absorption involved, such as damage absorption, spell absorption, attack diversion, and so on. Items such as the Wisdom Ring and Silver Cross, which protect against status ailments, will also occasionally break, although it doesn't happen nearly as often. If you plan to use these sorts of accessories, make sure you've bought, made, or copied more so that you have some spares when the current one you're wearing finally falls apart. If you find an accessory breaks too often for your tastes and you don't want to deal with the constant replacement of these items, move on to some more permanent fixtures.
- Accessory pairs: There are a few accessories that seemingly are intended to be worn in pairs. The best example would be the Left Cross/Right Cross combination, where each cross cancels the other's weakness. To a lesser extent, the Pyre Tear and Fairy Tear can be considered a pair. Also, you can get temporary invulnerability by equipping a Lunatic Ring and a Peep Non, at least until the Lunatic Ring breaks.
- If anyone knows what the Insanity Ring does, please inform me, as it is the only accessory that completely befuddles me as to its purpose.
- Specific character recommendations:
  - \* For fighter characters, the Atlas Ring (doubles your strength) can dramatically enhance the power of your attacks and killer moves. This works best for characters who can equip the Pallas Athena (and maybe Odin's Helm), since it will counteract the severe elemental penalties that the Atlas Ring carries. Another good strength enhancer is the Might Chain, which gives 30% extra strength and a stamina bonus; certainly not as good as 100% extra strength, but there aren't any downsides. Wearing strength enhancers is especially important to Dias, who needs to do a lot of damage to counteract his small number of hits per killer move. His best weapon, the Crimson Diablos, acts as a free Atlas Ring. Wearing one Atlas Ring thus will give Dias 4x the strength. Two will give him 8x his strength, which no other character can match. With a decent strength stat, this translates to 9999 damage for every hit, or almost 40,000 damage for a 4-hit killer move! Watch your enemies fall within seconds -- if Dias can hit them, that is... Other accessories that increase strength include the Hard Ring/Earring, which gives a 30% increase at the expense of dexterity, and the Feet Symbol, which gives a 10% increase along with a 20% increase in dexterity.
  - \* Accessories that increase the number of normal attacks per swing are less useful, since not all fighting characters have good normal attacks. The best characters to use these accessories on are probably

Claude, Ashton, Ernest, and Chisato. Precis and Opera are better at longer ranges with their killer moves, Bowman's normal attack is too pitiful to use effectively, and Dias's swing comes out too slow to catch faster opponents. Besides, after some experimentation I've found that Dias can't have more than one normal attack, in keeping with his philosophy of few hits; equipping a Meteor or Slayer's Ring on Dias does nothing. On the other hand, you'll want to use normal attacks if you rely on canceling or if you have the Eternal Sphere for Claude.

- \* The female characters can equip Earrings; Rena and Precis can wear a few, while Celine, Opera, and Chisato can wear the majority of earrings. Earrings usually have different variations on the normal accessories, and using them can free up vital accessories for the male characters. Notable earrings include the Gale Earring, which works just like a Meteor Ring; the Lunatic Earring, which works like an Atlas Ring, except it penalizes your dexterity instead of your elemental strength; and the Silver Earring, which gives 30% extra MP like the Luna Tablet.
- \* Turning to defense, there are a number of items that give bonuses to your constitution and thus your AC. Talismans and the General's Ring will increase CON by 10%, and the General's Ring has a stamina bonus. The Leaf Pendant and the Ring of Sadness will increase CON by 30%. The Ring of Sadness has a corresponding 30% decrease in strength, but if you use it on a mage, it doesn't matter as much. The best of these items would be the Blue Talisman, which gives a 30% increase and a resistance to water, along with a small stamina bonus. This accessory is especially useful to Ashton, who relies on high defense to protect himself while he inserts himself into the enemy back line and when starting his killer moves, most of which have significant preparation times. The strength against water also eliminates his water weakness when using Melufa, his most powerful weapon. Ashton also has special accessories available for his dragons, the Salamander Helmet and Sacknoth's Helmet. These provide straight AC and avoidance bonuses which are quite nice, although Ashton's CON rating will eventually rise enough so that the Blue Talisman is more effective. The Blue Talisman is also useful in conjunction with the Right Cross; along with Reflective Armor, all the elemental weaknesses of the Right Cross can be accounted for, and the cross provides extra AC and avoidance along with its major effect (doubles MP) to supplement the effects of the talisman.

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---KILLER MOVES---  
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#### TIPS

Using Killer Moves is pretty straightforward. Just add them to your L1 and R1 buttons and go commit mayhem. Linking killer moves becomes a bit more complicated, and I've included a list of suggested link combos for each character to help with linking.

- The issues you need to keep in mind when selecting killer moves to use include how you want to use a particular character, the makeup of your enemies, and whether you want to try to upgrade a move. You'll want to consider whether you want a character to get close to enemies or to throw things at them from farther away and pick appropriately ranged moves. If there are flying enemies or mages that you keep bumping into, consider picking moves to get rid of these pesky enemies. Lastly, make sure you

keep a move you like and keep using it even if you get a new killer move, at least until you're sure it's fully upgraded.

- For the most part, Strong Blow and Flip shouldn't be used with killer moves. Strong Blow will knock enemies out of range for multi-hit moves unless the moves have a strong forward component or strike from another direction besides outwards from a character. On the other hand, in certain cases Strong Blow will enable a higher float or will have minimal effect, so it depends on which move you're using. Flip takes extra time and is especially disruptive to long range moves and link combos.
- Any combat skill that relates to attack can be used in killer moves. Sure, it may sound strange that your Poison Pills are hitting Below the Belt and benefit from Mental Training, but if it helps with damage, then you can forget the logic...
- Be careful with some rushing and jumping moves. If you start one of these moves and another character is blocking your path, you normally won't be able to reach the enemy. Don't use these moves if the other fighters in your party are already going to be mixing it up at close range, since they'll frequently get in your way.
- Projectile attacks have a few advantages in that the projectile is considered separate from the character. Thus, if your character is hit while doing a killer move, any projectile already released will continue on its path and won't disappear like melee or streaming attacks. Also, once your character releases a projectile, they are free to move, possibly allowing you to start another move before the last projectile has hit anything.
- Lobbing projectiles have a specific range and don't deal damage until the projectile reaches that range, allowing faster enemies to avoid the projectile by moving towards or away from the character.

#### KILLER MOVE LIST (still in progress)

Killer Moves are the lifeblood of any fighter's attack. The various killer moves each character has can include ones that attack multiple times, hit multiple enemies, teleport characters around the screen, and even allow them to heal.

Killer moves are listed in the following format:

Name (Level Obtained/MP consumption)

Properties

Range

Upgrading Levels

Comments

A + for level obtained indicates that the character starts with this killer move. A - for level obtained indicates that the character must discover the move.

Properties of moves include:

melee: move involves up-close scuffles with hands, feet, and/or weapons

stream: move uses a continuous stream to land multiple hits

shot: move uses projectile which moves in a straight line

lob: move uses projectile which is lobbed in an arc

circle: move uses projectile which circles the user

jump: character jumps into the air, either straight up or in an arc  
rush: character moves forward in a straight line  
dive: character jumps, then rushes forward and downward  
teleport: character disappears and reappears in another area

invulnerable: character becomes invulnerable to certain attacks  
healing: move heals character  
freeze: move immobilizes enemy for a short period of time  
homing: move follows the enemy

If there are two sets of properties separated by a slash, the first set are the properties when used in short range and the second set is for long.

For the range, there are a few notations I use. Range is described on a scale of 0 to 3, with 0 right next to the enemy and 3 from long range. 'I' stand for "infinite" and is a special case where a move can be executed from any distance. If a range is listed as \*/\*, This indicates that there are two different effects for short and long range, with the first number indicating the short range and the second denoting long range. Thus, 0/2 would indicate a move that has a 0 range at short range and 2 at long range. Lastly, -> indicates a change of range during the execution of the move, so 2->0 would be a move that starts at range 2 and ends at range 0.

Almost all moves have upgrading levels, otherwise known as proficiency levels. SO2 rewards frequent use of killer moves by increasing their effectiveness at a specific number of uses. Most of these upgrades come in the form of more damage and/or more hits, although a few moves actually change forms. Not all killer moves have upgrade levels; some come fully powered and some continuously become more powerful. The levels description is also where I note the number of hits that the move has; sometimes this is more of an estimate, such as ~15 for around 15 hits, since it is difficult to gauge the number of hits streaming attacks do. Note that the game will always make the move more powerful with an upgrade, so unless a killer move gets extra hits, assume that the damage is increased.

--Claude--

Phase Gun (Lvl +, 0 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 2

0: Claude shoots a large beam of yellow energy with his gun.

Comments: Claude automatically acquires this move. It is the most efficient move in the game (0 MP) and does good damage for the first killer move available in the game. You can only use this move when playing Claude's scenario, and you don't get it very long, so use it as often as you can.

Air Slash (Lvl 3, 4 MP)

Properties: melee / shot

Range: 0/I

0: (short) Claude swings his sword and forms a bluish shock wave that travels along the ground towards the enemy. 1 hit.

(long) Claude swings and forms a higher wave around his body from front to back. 1 hit.

200: The waves turn gold and reach higher.

Comments: While it works well during the early stages of the game because the enemies are slow, Air Slash is too slow to be useful at long range as the enemies become faster. The close range version will hit multiple enemies if they're close, but will normally hit only once. Useful for the early stages and quite cheap, but Claude gets much better killer



moves later on.

#### Shooting Stars (Lvl 7, 7 MP)

Properties: melee / shot

Range: 0/1

0: (short) Claude pummels the enemy with glowing blue fists. 7 hits.

(long) Claude shoots a disk-shaped projectile. 1 hit.

100: (short) Some punches have more range.

(long) The projectile becomes larger.

200: (short) More punches have a longer range. Punches turn golden.

(long) The projectile becomes larger.

300: (short) All the punches now have the longer range.

(long) Yep, a bigger projectile.

Comments: Claude's first multi-hit killer move, Shooting Stars can be useful until the last stages of the game. However, to make the move truly effective, you need to fully upgrade it. The punches at lower levels just don't have enough range. A full upgrade corrects this problem, and the projectile at higher levels is big enough to hit flying enemies. The short version does take some time and only hits directly in front of Claude, so this move shouldn't be used in large crowds.

#### Head Splitter (Lvl 9, 13 MP)

Properties: melee, jump

Range: I

0: Claude leaps in the air and lands on the enemy while stabbing down.

1 hit.

130: Claude acquires a bluish trail.

260: Claude now somersaults and lands with a downward slash instead of stabbing.

Comments: Head Splitter is an excellent move because Claude rarely misses. Unlike other jumping moves, Claude can jump from any distance and doesn't have to be on the same axis to start the move. The main reason Claude misses are usually from jumps across the battlefield, which take some time and allow the enemy to move out of the way. I actually think the final upgrade level makes Head Splitter worse, since the somersault adds more time and the slash seems to miss more often than the stab.

#### Energy Sword (Lvl 20, 11 MP)

Properties: healing

Range: I

0: Claude assumes a stance and a small circle of energy appears around him. Heals 20% of Claude's HP.

100: The circle becomes larger. Now heals 40% of Claude's HP.

200: The circle becomes larger. Now heals 60% of Claude's HP.

Comments: Energy Sword is the most powerful of the healing killer moves, since it works on percentages rather than absolute healing numbers, thus becoming more powerful as Claude increases in level. The question is, are you going to sacrifice one of Claude's killer move slots for a move that does no damage?

#### Burst Knuckle (Lvl 28, 12 MP)

Properties: melee / shot

Range: 0/1

0: (short) Claude creates a ball of flame on his fist and punches. 1 hit.

(long) Claude throws a projectile of flame. 1 hit, fire elemental.

100: The flames become larger.

Comments: A quick and dirty move, Burst Knuckle comes out extremely fast. Not too flashy, but it does good damage if you're looking for a move that doesn't take too much time to pull off.

Ripper Blast (Lvl 38, 17 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 1/2

0: (short) Claude slams his sword into the ground, and 2 spikes of rock thrust from the ground to impale the enemy. 2 hits.

(long) Same as short range, except instead of one line of spikes Claude generates 7 sets of spikes in a semicircle. 2 hits.

90: Another spike appears. + 1 hit.

180: Another spike appears. + 1 hit.

270: Another spike appears. + 1 hit.

Comments: One of my favorite moves, Ripper Blast upgrades quickly and can prove lethal against groups of enemies, especially from long range. The spikes are also large enough to hit most flying enemies. A great move to use while approaching or as a follow-up with its huge area of effect.

Twin Slash (Lvl 45, 15 MP)

Properties: melee

Range: 0

0: Claude hops into the air and does two vertical slashes. 2 hits.

160: Claude adds two more slashes. +2 hits.

Comments: Not too bad, although the execution is a little slow. The first slash Claude does is upwards, knocking the opponent in the air and rendering them helpless against the remaining slashes. While this move hits high enough to attack flying enemies, you may want to avoid doing so since the first slash will sometimes also knock enemies back and out of range; flying enemies have a greater chance of being knocked out of range. Also, Twin Slash is entirely linear, making it a poor choice for clearing out groups of enemies.

Dragon Howl (Lvl 53, 28 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 1/2

0: (short) A phantom dragon forms above Claude's head and breathes puffs of phantom fire. 3 hits.

(long) Same as above, except the dragon flies forward, giving the move more range. 3 hits.

250: The dragon breathes an extra puff. +1 hit.

500: Another puff. +1 hit.

Comments: This powerful move is hampered somewhat by its high MP cost and the huge amount of uses it takes to upgrade fully. The puffs of fire are high enough to hit airborne enemies, and each puff will knock any enemies hit back and stun them for a short period, so multiple puffs will keep the enemy busy for a while, long enough for you to press your attack. Comes out fast and is probably Claude's biggest MP eater.

Sword Bomber (Lvl 62, 32 MP)

Properties: shot, jump

Range: 3

0: Claude straight into the air and shoots 2 balls of fire towards the enemy. 2 hits.

140: Extra ball. +1 hit.

280: Extra ball. +1 hit.

420: Extra ball. +1 hit.

Comments: Claude's longest range move besides Air Slash, Sword Bomber is excellent for avoiding enemy projectile and breath attacks. The fireballs seem to have a small area effect. The move can also be lethal to advancing flying enemies, as the fireballs will hit them faster. However, due to its distance restraints, Sword Bomber does poorly against very fast enemies and in smaller battlefields.

Mirror Slice (Lvl 70, 38 MP)

Properties: melee

Range: 0

0: Claude performs 2 horizontal slashes, a downward vertical cut, and a fiery uppercut with his sword. 4 hits.

230: Add before the uppercut a turning low horizontal chop, and two more vertical slashes. +3 hits.

460: Add before the uppercut a low horizontal slash and a downward slice. +2 hits.

Comments: Claude's close range whoop-ass killer move has good range, good damage, and will occasionally hit enemies behind and to the side of him, depending on the cut he's doing. A great move to use if you're planning to get up close and personal with the enemy. An interesting fact is that unlike his other moves, the move looks different when Claude is unarmed (much shorter range).

--Ashton--

Twin Stab (Lvl +, 4 MP)

Properties: melee

Range: 0/2

0: (short) Ashton stabs once with each sword. 2 hits.

(long) Still two stabs, but each stab forms a needle of energy that extends farther than the swords. 2 hits.

100: Ashton acquires a greenish glow with the stabs.

Comments: Since Ashton takes the time to draw back before stabbing each time, this move is in general too slow for most enemies. The long version has much longer range than the short version, making it an okay approach move from long range, but the speed kills its use in later levels.

Cross Slash (Lvl +, 8 MP)

Properties: melee / melee, rush

Range: 0/2->0

0: (short) Ashton does a vertical scissors slash, then rushes forward with a horizontal cut. 2 hits.

(long) Ashton leaps toward the enemy with a downward slash, then rushes forward as above. 2 hits.

100: Ashton acquires a greenish trail.

Comments: Again, Ashton is too slow with this move to use it regularly.

This time the delay comes at the end of the move, where Ashton will glide towards the enemy. The problem is, the glide lasts really, really long.

If you hit but don't manage to kill the enemy, you'll essentially be frozen for a bit, and if you whiff, you'll travel a fair distance in the short version and all the way across the screen in the long version.

Both of these result in lost time and more opportunities for Ashton to be hit. However, in the earlier stages Cross Slash is still serviceable; the first slash is large enough to hit flying enemies, and it is pretty powerful. Later, though, you'll want to use other moves for Ashton that don't have such severe penalties.

Leaf Slash (Lvl +, 19 MP)

Properties: melee, teleport, invulnerable

Range: 2->0/I->0

0: Ashton prepares, then runs forward and disappears while three circles waves and leaves appear around the hapless enemy. Ashton will then do two slashes while hiding in the leaves. 2 hits.

200: Ashton adds a third, lower slash. +1 hit.

Comments: The first truly effective killer move for Ashton and one of the coolest looking, IMO. It also showcases Ashton's ninja-like abilities to

"assassinate" enemies anywhere on the battlefield, and is extremely effective against weaker enemies with special abilities, such as enemy mages. There are a few interesting properties to the move as well. When Ashton winks out while running up until the first slash, he is effectively gone from the battlefield and cannot be targeted for any attacks. One of the neatest battles I had involved Ashton charging a mage casting Black Saber, and he disappeared right before the spell went off. Too cool. On the other hand, he is not invulnerable while he's attacking, so spells and fast enemies can hurt him. Also, while Ashton can execute Leaf Slash from anywhere on the battlefield, he cannot be too close to the enemy, since he needs space to run. So, in cases where the battlefield is small, Leaf Slash is not too useful. Also, faster enemies and ones that turn temporarily invulnerable can avoid Leaf Slash.

Northern Cross (Lvl 18, 9 MP)

Properties: melee / melee, shot

Range: 1/2

0: (short) Ashton does two quick scissors slashes, then forms a large ice slab in front of him which eventually emits an icicle.  
3 hits, water elemental (icicle).

(long) Same as above, except that Ashton fires the icicle as a large projectile. 1 hit, water elemental.

100: (short) The icicle spike gets longer.

(long) The shot icicle gains a greenish trail.

200: (short) Ashton now forms 3 spikes.

(long) Icicle gets a longer trail.

Comments: Yep, another super-slow move for Ashton. The culprit here is the enormous pause while Ashton forms his icicle. While the slab of ice might increase his defense and the icicle is pretty big, the time it takes usually gives enough time for the enemy to circle behind you, way out of range of the icicle. There are a few uses for Northern Cross. If you find that enemies are aggressive, you can use Northern Cross as a defensive move. The two slashes at the beginning have good range, and Ashton can still hurt people with his extended sword while he's charging if they run into it. This works quite well if Ashton is baiting enemies or if he cancels an attack and the enemy tries to retaliate. Still, it's just too slow to use effectively in most cases.

Piercing Swords (Lvl 22, 12 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 2

0: Ashton pulls four swords out of nowhere, two in each hand, and throws them like darts. Two are thrown poorly and hit the ground. 2 hits.

65: Same as above, except all four swords are thrown well. +2 hits.

130: Ashton now pulls six swords out, but one flops and hits the ground.  
+ 1 hit.

185: All six swords are now thrown well. +1 hit.

Comments: Piercing Swords has the strangest upgrading sequence of any killer move and has some wacky properties. For one, the move actually seems slightly slower after Ashton pulls six swords, as it takes a little more time for him to pull the last pair out. Also, the move actually is significantly different if Ashton is unarmed; Ashton will instead charge up with some white energy in his hands and shoot two energy projectiles. This unarmed version can also hit flying enemies, while the normal version only travels in a straight line. Weird. Anyway, despite the pause before he throws, this is a decent killer move, mainly because of the possibility of up to six hits and the fact that the swords will travel the length of the screen, making it a good move to throw in a group. It's still too slow for fast-moving enemies, but if you have some cover (say, you do it using another character as a shield), Piercing

Swords can be quite effective.

Hurricane Slash (Lvl 45, 16 MP)

Properties: melee, projectile / melee, projectile, rush

Range: 0/2->0

0: (short) Ashton twists in the air, slicing twice and throws a small whirlwind. 3 hits.

(long) Ashton leaps toward the enemy and does a flip while slashing twice and forming a whirlwind. 3 hits.

200: The whirlwind becomes larger.

Comments: Considering the wait (23 levels!), Hurricane Slash is a great move that should be an integral part of Ashton's repertoire. It does good damage, comes out really fast (surprise, surprise!), and uses a whirlwind projectile which will pop enemies into the air, giving Ashton some breathing room while he recovers from the move (if you look closely, it's because Gyoro and Ururun have to unwind). ;) The upgraded whirlwind is tall enough to hit any flying enemy and will pop enemies even higher. A great move to use while canceling or using link combos. Strong Blow will actually work well with this move, allowing the whirlwind to knock the enemy even higher in the air.

Dead Triangle (Lvl 53, 19 MP)

Properties: melee, teleport, invulnerable, freeze

Range: I->1/I->1

0: (short) Ashton jumps backwards and disappears. Three images of Ashton reappear around the frozen enemy, forming a triangle of energy. All three images stab their hovering swords into the ground, and a large flame appears in the middle of the triangle to burn the enemy. 1 hit.

(long) Same as above, except Ashton jumps forward.

Comments: If the description seems long, that's because the move takes a long time to do. A really, really long time to do. However, this doesn't mean that Dead Triangle is completely useless. Dead Triangle is a highly specialized, unique move that deserves some discussion:

- \* The enemy caught in the triangle is frozen for the duration of the move. This works on any type of enemy, even those who are normally invulnerable to normal attack at times, making this a great move to use on those pesky wizards and floating goat-things that phase out when you try to attack them normally. This will not, however, work on any boss of any sort.
- \* The freeze and possibility of Ashton hitting can only be done if both Ashton and the enemy are unhurt during the move's execution. Thus, if Ashton is hit while he's in the middle of Dead Triangle, no damage will be dealt. Fortunately, only one image of Ashton is real (the one in the bottom corner), but any spells or attacks that ruin Ashton's concentration will disrupt the move. Similarly, any spells or attacks that hit the frozen enemy will disrupt the move, although this is less of a concern. Thus, Dead Triangle is best used on isolated enemies and when your party isn't heavy on attack magic.
- \* While it's usually pretty hard to get the damage off, the freezing part can be highly useful to keep mages and other dangerous foes out of action until you get backup or the other enemies have been dealt with. Dead Triangle is also a great way to get to another area of the battlefield quickly, since Ashton teleports as soon as you start the move; it's only the attack that takes so long...
- \* Ashton is invulnerable during the brief time he's gone from sight, and also while he's in the process of disappearing. This, coupled with

the fact that Ashton jumps backwards at close range, makes this a great canceling move. It rocks in the Dueling Battles in Fun City, since there's no one around to stop Ashton from finishing; just attack, cancel into Dead Triangle, rinse, and repeat. Unless the enemy is really fast, you'll usually catch them while they're trying to retaliate.

Dragon Breath (Lvl 64, 28 MP)

Properties: stream

Range: 2

0: Ashton crosses his arms while Gyoro and Ururun grow huge. One of them, chosen at random, will then breath either fire or ice, respectively. ~8 hits, fire or water elemental.

140: Both Gyoro and Ururun will now breathe. +~8 hits, fire and water elementals.

Comments: Ashton's crowd-clearer move. It comes out a little slow, like most of his other moves, but the breath(s) will generate a slew of hits on any enemy unfortunate enough to be in front of Ashton when his dragons are ready. It pays to upgrade this move, since you get around twice the number of hits, although like all streaming moves it's very difficult to measure.

Sword Dance (Lvl 70, 32 MP)

Properties: melee

Range: 0

0: Ashton does a quick horizontal cut, a downward slash with his other sword, two upper slashes with each sword, another horizontal-downward sequence, another upwards slash, and finally a huge closing swipe with both swords. 8 hits.

200: Ashton adds another horizontal-downward-upward-upward sequence in the middle. +4 hits.

400: Ashton tacks a jumping uppercut and a two-hit flip to the end. +3 hits.

Comments: The counterpart to Claude's Mirror Slice, Ashton's contribution is somewhat different. The slices are much faster, the range is a little less with less damage, and Ashton doesn't move forward as Claude does when doing his slice and dice. While not having the range, Sword Dance is still an awesome move. Ashton makes up the smaller damage compared to Claude's with more slices, although the quick horizontal-downward swings are usually too fast to register as two separate hits, so Ashton will normally get 10 hits fully upgraded on most enemies. The last hit is always at double damage compared to the rest. Also, Sword Dance has some floating properties, where the enemy may be lifted in the air while Ashton shreds them. This is apparent while using Strong Blow, which will definitely pop the enemy higher. Ashton will probably whiff more swings while the enemy comes down, but it's a good way to keep enemies occupied, and the last hit will sometimes float the enemy, allowing you to start all over again. But best of all, Sword Dance has no pause of any sort, making it Ashton's most efficient move overall. Plus it's dang neat looking, making it a must-have for Ashton's arsenal if there's any possibility of close-range encounters.

tri-Ace (Lvl -, 45 MP)

Properties: homing

Range: I

0: Ashton holds his sword out, and Gyoro and Ururun are absorbed into the sword. He then swings the sword twice, forming a ball of energy, then slams the sword into the ground, creating a huge explosion. 1 hit.

140: Ashton's sword and swings acquire a greenish glow.

Comments: Found only in the bonus dungeon, tri-Ace has the widest effect of any move in the game, hitting all the enemies onscreen. Great for taking out lots of enemies and when you want Ashton to attack from long range, as Ashton remains stationary while using tri-Ace. Since the hourglass stops while Ashton is swinging, the pause at the beginning isn't as bad as it appears to be. Add Strong Blow and run into a crowd for laughs; since Strong Blow knocks enemies away from the fighter, Ashton will form a small circle of space around him as enemies are blown away when he uses tri-Ace.

--Precis--

Rocket Punch (Lvl +, 4 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 2

0: Precis launches a rocket-powered metal fist at the enemy. 1 hit.

120: Knuckles on the fist gain a yellow forcefield.

Comments: Pretty straightforward. Rocket Punch doesn't do too much damage, but it's fast and will hit flying enemies. Until something better comes along that accomplishes the same thing, it'll do fine.

Hop Step (Lvl +, 5 MP)

Properties: melee, jump

Range: I->1/3->1

0: Precis leaps in the air, pulls out a huge mallet, and konks the enemy on the noggin. 1 hit.

140: Precis gains a green trail.

Comments: If the range looks strange, it means that Precis can immediately jump if she's at short range, but must close to the edge of short range when she's farther away. Unfortunately, Precis has to be on the same horizontal axis as the enemy when she does this move, so it doesn't come out as fast as Claude's Head Splitter. Also, she doesn't jump as high, which means that sometimes she'll be unable to reach enemies with Hop Step if your other characters are in the way, regulating this move to the average heap.

Mole (Lvl 17, 7 MP)

Properties: melee, teleport, invulnerable

Range: I->0

0: Bobot forms a drilling machine, which Precis jumps into (after donning a helmet) and uses to travel underground and attack the enemy. 1 hit.

100: The machine now travels much faster and hits more. +1 hit.

Comments: A good move which gives Precis some protection while allowing her to approach an enemy. While she's underground, Precis is essentially invulnerable to physical attacks and most spells, although she can be hit with Blood Sucker and other such spells that specifically target her. While you can use Mole from any distance, it's best to use it from outside melee range because of the pause before she jumps in her machine. Mole also makes a good candidate for link combos, since she'll be right next to the enemy after Mole is done and her normal attack is too slow.

Ally-Oop! (Lvl 25, 8 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 2

0: Precis throws the hapless Bobot v1.0 at her enemy. 1 hit.

220: Bobot v2.0 is kicked at the enemy as well. +1 hit.

Comments: Works basically the same as Rocket Punch, although it's a bit more powerful and gains a second hit after upgrading. Use it to hit flying enemies and for a quick one-two attack at a longer range.

Parabola Beam (Lvl 38, 12 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 2

0: Precis turns Bobot into a parabolic dish, which emits rings of energy that hit the enemy. 3 hits.

120: More rings. +1 hit.

240: Even more rings. +1 hit.

Comments: Parabola Beam is a powerful killer move that allows Precis to play keep-away with enemies, since each hit knocks enemies back. The rings have good range and travel fast, and furthermore they have some area, so close groups of enemies will all be hit. Pin enemies against the edge of the battlefield and watch them squirm...

Bang-Bang Attack (Lvl 49, 15 MP)

Properties: melee

0: Precis pulls out a mallet contraption and uses it to flatten the enemy. 1 hit.

170: The mallet swings more. +1 hit.

340: More swings. +1 hit.

510: Swingie swingie. +1 hit.

Comments: Four very quick hits at a very close range. Considering Precis's defense, this is not the best move to use directly, since it leaves Precis vulnerable as she tries to close to use Bang-Bang Attack. On the other hand, its speed makes this move a great add-on to combos.

Bloody Mary (Lvl 57, 32 MP)

Properties: melee, invulnerable

Range: 0

0: Bobot changes into a large machine with a large drill, and Precis once again hops in and rides it into her enemy. 4 hits.

120: +1 hit.

240: +1 hit.

360: +1 hit.

Comments: Precis's most expensive move and highest hit generator, Bloody Mary is great for groups and large enemies, ones that won't move out of the way or attack Precis before Bobot finishes changing. Precis also seems to be invulnerable to physical attacks while she's in her machine, although I'll have to check that again sometime to be sure.

Barrier (Lvl -, 28 MP)

Properties: lob

Range: 2

0: Precis tosses Bobot, which generates a huge semicircular forcefield. 1 hit.

200: The forcefield grows even larger and will now hit twice. 2 hits.

Comments: The first of Precis's Machinery killer moves. One of the best multiple-enemy attacks in the game, Barrier has a large area of effect and can be tossed quickly, making this move a big MP drain (not that speed is bad). The forcefield takes time to grow, however, which leaves Precis vulnerable to attackers who rush her before the forcefield catches up. Also, Precis needs to be on the same axis before she can throw Bobot. Thus, this move is best used as an approach move or as a support move for enemies that other characters are engaging. Works great in combos, too.

Mujin Super Beam (Lvl -, 24 MP)

Properties: shot

Range: 3

0: Precis stands behind Bobot as it grows large and shoots an enormous



laser shot at the enemy. 1 hit, light elemental.

120: The laser shot gets even bigger.

Comments: The second of Precis's Machinery killer moves. Mujin Super Beam is powerful, but the single hit just can't justify the amount of time it takes to set up. Note that Mujin is the Japanese name for Bobot.

Holo-Holograph (Lvl -, 20 MP)

Properties: melee (sort of)

Range: 2

0: Precis dons a beret and sits in a director's chair while shouting orders to a holographic, robotic Ashton-like Bobot imitating Sword Dance. 4 hits.

130: Bobot gets a greenish glow while attacking.

Comments: Easily the funniest move in the game and the only one that is acquired through a PA, Holo-holograph is unfortunately not as useful as Sword Dance. Bobot moves a tad slower and doesn't hit as much, although the range is longer. If you have fighters who like to mix it up face to face, this is a good move to support them, since it won't knock enemies back like many of Precis's other moves, and you don't have to crowd around the enemy due to its range. Having Ashton perform Sword Dance while Precis uses Holo-holograph is pretty interesting looking...

--Opera--

Flame Launcher (Lvl +, 7 MP)

Properties: stream / lob

Range: 0/3

0: (short) Opera's gun emits flames. 2 hits, fire elemental.

(long) Opera shoots a reddish ball that explodes into flames when it hits the ground. 2 hits, fire elemental.

100: The flames become larger. +1 hit.

200: Larger flames. +1 hit.

Comments: Not a bad starting move, since it hits multiple times. Note the huge disparity in the ranges, however; if you want to use the long range version, stay far away, and similarly the short range version should be done at really close range, to lessen the travel time Opera has to run towards/away from the enemy.

Photon Prison (Lvl +, 10 MP)

Properties: shot, freeze

Range: 1/2

0: Opera shoots a blue projectile that can stop the enemy in its tracks. 1 hit.

90: The time that the enemy is frozen is slightly longer.

180: Longer time.

270: Time. Longer.

Comments: While freezing enemies is nice, the problem with Photon Prison is that, unlike Dead Triangle, it doesn't work all the time on normal enemies. In fact, it works less than half the time, and since it doesn't do any damage, most of the time using Photon Prison is just a waste.

Alpha on One (Lvl 24, 23 MP)

Properties: shot, homing

Range: 3

0: Opera rattles off three whitish balls from her gun which home in on the enemy. 3 hits.

220: +1 ball. +1 hit.

440: +1 ball. +1 hit.

Comments: One of Opera's most effective move and my favorite. While expensive to use, The homing ability of Alpha on One is simply second to

none, able to hit almost any enemy. It works particularly well on enemies such as wizards who phase out frequently, following the wizard until he phases in again and nailing him all at once. Alpha on One will occasionally miss against supremely fast enemies and enemies who can stay invulnerable longer than the ball's lifespan (the projectiles eventually disappear after a while if they don't hit a target). The balls will also miss if any other enemy is in its path as it's moving, since it will damage the obstructing target instead. Overall, however, Alpha on One makes an excellent attack against any enemy. Just make sure you have enough space to shoot, or Opera will be running around.

Spread Ray (Lvl 34, 16 MP)

Properties: shot, jump

Range: 3

0: Opera jumps straight into the air and shoots bolts down at the enemy.  
2 hits.

180: +1 bolt. +1 hit.

360: +1 bolt. +1 hit.

540: +1 bolt. +1 hit.

Comments: Very similar to Claude's Sword Bomber, with the same uses.

Spread Ray seems a tad weaker due to less area effect, but I can't be absolutely sure and it doesn't make too much of a difference regardless.

Cold Wind (Lvl 41, 25 MP)

Properties: stream

Range: 1

0: Opera kneels and shoots a cone of ice shards from her gun. 4 hits,  
water elemental.

100: +1 hit.

200: +1 hit.

300: +1 hit.

Comments: While you can get a large number of hits with Cold Wind, normally you won't get all of them, since it knocks lighter enemies back.

Considering the cost and the small amount of damage for each hit, Cold Wind is too inefficient for my tastes. It is useful against enemies weak against fire, and you can solve the knocking back problem by pinning enemies against an edge of the battlefield.

Gravity Shell (Lvl 54, 20 MP)

Properties: lob

Range: 3

0: Opera shoots a small projectile, which forms a huge ball of  
gravitational force and crushes the enemy. 1 hit.

Comments: Sure, it does good damage, but it's slow and hits only once? At such a high level, I would have expected more. Maybe I'm missing some good use for this move, but until then I'd stick with Opera's more effective moves.

Lightning Blade (Lvl 69, 20 MP)

Properties: circle / stream

Range: 0/2

0: (short) Opera charges her gun with green electric current, then creates  
3 columns of lightning which circle her body. 2 hits.

(long) Opera charges her gun with green electric current, then shoots  
a bolt of lightning from her gun. 2 hits.

150: (short) +1 column. +1 hit.

(long) +1 hit.

300: (short) +1 column. +1 hit.

(long) +1 hit.

Comments: Although the pause when Opera collects charge is significant,

this is still a good move for clearing out groups of enemies. The short range version is more dangerous and doesn't work that well until Opera gains extra columns, which shortens the time between hits as well as adding to the number of hits.

Healing Star (Lvl -, 9 MP)

Properties: healing

Range: 1

0: Opera shoots a projectile into the sky, which splits into many stars that heal all characters by  $200 + (\# \text{ uses}) \times 5$  HP.

Comments: The first of Opera's Machinery killer moves. As with the other healing moves, the problem with this move is that you must sacrifice a move slot for a move that does no damage to the enemy and thus severely lowers your attack options. On the other hand, as healing moves go this one is respectable. At 500 uses, Healing Star will heal each party member by  $200+500 \times 5=2700$ . Healing Star also works almost immediately, on par with a spell cast with a successful Motormouth. It doesn't give as much HP as a true healing spell, and it takes a whole lot of uses to become effective, but if you find that your party keeps taking a beating and constantly needs healing, then this can give your mages some fast, cheap support.

Laser Bit (Lvl -, 8 MP)

Properties: shot, lob

Range: 2

0: Opera throws a mirror out, then shoots a ball that hits the mirror and splits into 3, spreading in an even fashion. 1 hit.

100: +1 reflected ball.

200: +1 reflected ball.

300: +1 reflected ball.

Comments: A very strange killer move. Laser Bit is highly inaccurate and takes some time to pull off. Unless the enemy is right where the mirror stops, chances are you aren't going to hit anyone unless they're in a large crowd. Upgrading this move is a must if you plan to use it. Note that it does work significantly better with flying enemies, as the balls first travel upwards; an enemy flying close to the mirror will usually get hit by at least half of the balls.

Hyper Launcher (Lvl -, 34 MP)

Properties: stream

Range: 3

0: Opera transforms her gun into a large beam cannon and shoots a huge beam of energy. ~6 hits.

100: +1 hit.

200: +1 hit.

300: +1 hit.

400: +1 hit.

500: +1 hit.

Comments: This move is extremely difficult to measure in terms of the number of hits, so your mileage may vary. Anyway, even considering the MP cost, this is one of Opera's most effective killer moves. The range and area of the beam is enormous, the damage for each hit is good, and it's just impressive to watch. Best used when pinning the enemy against an edge of the battlefield, to prevent Hyper Launcher from pushing enemies beyond the considerable range of the beam. Like most of Opera's other moves, make sure you account for the range before you start the move to avoid needless running.

--Ernest--

--Dias--

--Chisato--

#### LINK COMBOS

The Link Combo is an accessory that allows characters to "link" two killer moves together so that one is performed immediately after the other. This is faster than inputting the killer moves separately and furthermore allows the character to have four killer moves available. If done properly, link combos can do massive damage. Some combos can also be done while canceling, making the link combo even more effective. However, there are some disadvantages to using link combos. One is that the MP cost for both linked killer moves is considered when you start a combo, so you'll need more MP on hand to use combos. Also, you will lose control of the character for a longer period of time while the character performs both killer moves. This is especially true if the first killer move misses, since the character will continue to attempt the second move while possibly chasing the enemy around the screen. For this reason it is important to keep the preparation time between linked moves down to a minimum. The best combos take into consideration the distance that each is performed and the effect each killer move has on the enemy. Of course, you can also link moves together simply because the result looks cool. ;) Here are some suggestions of link combos for each fighter:

--Claude--

Claude has some of the easiest and most effective link combos, since most of his moves can be executed from close range or have two different forms. All of them can be done with little pause as well, making it easy to string moves together. Finally, with the exception of Sword Bomber, all of these combos can be used with canceling without significant lag time.

Burst Knuckle + Shooting Stars  
+ Twin Slash  
+ Mirror Slice

Burst Knuckle is very quick and does good damage, and you should be able to follow up with a close multi-hitting killer move. Actually, since all these killer moves are close range, you can pretty much combine them in any order and see which ones you like best.

Ripper Blast + Dragon Howl  
+ Head Splitter

Ripper Blast makes an exceptionally good starting combo move. If you start this combo at long range, RB will likely hit an enormous number of enemies. Follow with a medium-range move while the enemy reels.

Dragon Howl + Ripper Blast

The Dragon Howl will knock down floating and flying enemies onto your waiting spikes. Of course, it works well for grounded enemies, too.

Sword Bomber + Ripper Blast  
+ Dragon Howl

Sword Bomber will execute from afar; then, you run in with a slightly shorter range killer move. I particularly like Ripper Blast, since if you're lucky Claude will still be at long range and you'll get the Ripper Blast's complete 180-degree spread.

Mirror Slice + Shooting Stars  
+ Burst Knuckle  
+ Ripper Blast  
+ Twin Slash  
+ Dragon Howl

The concept here is simple: use Claude's most powerful killer move, and if that doesn't kill the enemy, pummel some more. Can easily be reversed, using Mirror Slice at the end and any close-range move to start.

--Ashton--

Ashton has problems with link combos because of the noticeable pauses either at the beginning or end of many of his killer moves, making the placement of such moves problematic. He does have some good canceling opportunities, particularly with Hurricane Slash and Sword Dance combos.

Leaf Slash + Hurricane Slash  
+ Dragon Breath  
+ Sword Dance

While not a great combo due to Leaf Slash's pause at the end, it does allow Ashton to pop up wherever he wants to on the battlefield and cause a ruckus.

Hurricane Slash + Cross Slash  
+ Dead Triangle  
+ Dragon Breath  
+ Sword Dance

The panacea to Ashton's link combo woes, Hurricane Slash is fast and powerful. More importantly, it will knock your opponent into the air for a brief time, giving Ashton crucial time to prepare his next killer move. Add Strong Blow for a higher float. The Sword Dance combination works particularly well, since Sword Dance has almost no preparation time.

Sword Dance + Cross Slash  
+ Hurricane Slash  
+ Dead Triangle  
+ Dragon Breath

Similar to Claude's Mirror Slice combos, you just lay the damage on and wait for the enemy to croak. Sword Dance can also float with Strong Blow and give you extra time to finish off the opponent. Works especially well with Hurricane Slash.

--Precis--

Precis is a good link combo character, since she can toss many of her killer moves at lightning speed. The trick to making combos for her, then, is to make sure the distances match so that she doesn't spend a lot of time running around.

Rocket Punch + Ally-Oop!

Easy 3-hit combo which can hit flying opponents. Switch the two moves for nearly identical results. Substitute Holo-Holograph into either position for more hits but less aerial attack power.

Mole + Hop Step

+ Bang-Bang Attack

+ Bloody Mary

Use Mole to approach an enemy, then use a close range move to continue the assault. Works particularly well with Bang-Bang Attack due to its speed.

Bloody Mary + Bang-Bang Attack

Again, a case where the first move approaches to the correct distance for the second move.

Parabola Beam + Mujin Super Beam

+ Barrier

One of my favorite combos, Parabola Beam will keep enemies away long enough to throw the second move. It works particularly well with Barrier; Precis runs up and lobs a grenade to finish off opponents while they're still recovering from the Parabola Beam's effect. You can substitute Rocket Punch, Ally-Oop!, or Holo-Holograph for Parabola Beam and tack Barrier at the end to get a similar combo.

--Opera--

Opera really isn't much of a combo character because most of her moves lob projectiles and are very finicky about their distance. Thus, if enemies move between the first and second moves, Opera will have to spend extra time adjusting her distance with the opponent. Considering the distance she needs for most of her killer moves, this can amount to a lot of running, so I prefer to keep her moves unlinked.

(anything) + Alpha on One

Alpha on One is great in that it doesn't depend on maintaining a certain distance while Opera is shooting, since the balls home anyway. Shoot and forget about them.

Cold Wind + Hyper Launcher

Opera's multi-hit mania combo. Push opponents back with Cold Wind, then push them back a little more with Hyper Launcher. If you can pin enemies to the side of the battlefield, this combo is devastating. You can also substitute Lightning Blade for either move.

--Bowman--

Bowman thrives on multiple killer moves, and he has some unique moves that can make for some truly strange combos.

Pillory + Spirit Attack

+ Poison Pills

+ Burst Fist

Pillory allows Bowman to teleport around the battlefield, so tacking a move with the proper range allows Bowman to follow up.

Whirlwind Fist + Spirit Attack

+ Pillory

+ Death Siege

+ Explosion Pills

In one of the strangest combos around, Whirlwind Fist knocks opponents so high, they're considered long range -- which means Bowman will sink into his shadow for Pillory, increasing his chances of connecting. Spirit Attack will usually whiff one or more of the fireballs, Death Siege relies on the opponents landing before the images converge, and Explosion pills make big pillars of fire to catch the enemy before they land. Truly a bizarre combo.

Spirit Attack + Burst Fist  
+ Firebird Attack  
+ Explosion Pills

The fully upgraded Spirit Attack will knock enemies far back, allowing for a longer-ranged projectile to be used afterwards. Burst Fist + Spirit Attack also works quite well, with Burst Fist allowing an attack at long range for more versatility.

Explosion Pills + Poison Pills

Attack of the pills. Explosion Pills has longer range than Poison Pills, giving Bowman a little more range to start the combo. Works fairly well against flying enemies, since a higher-powered Poison Pills will emit tendrils and Explosion Pills naturally has lots of vertical range.

Sakura Attack + Death Siege

Similar to the other multi-hit barrages, Sakura Attack lays lots of hits on an enemy, and Death Siege, which is the only other move Bowman has that works at point-blank range, executes immediately after and hits the enemy a few more times.

--Ernest--

Ernest has a lot of pauses in his killer moves, making them difficult to use in a combo. However, his great attack range allows him to employ moves before the enemy gets in range to retaliate.

Thousand Whips + Dimension Whip  
+ Broken Heart  
+ Thunder Whip  
+ Sonic Whip

Thousand Whips makes an excellent combo starter due to its speed and ability to move enemies away from Ernest, allowing him to set up his second move. My favorite of these is the one with Broken Heart, which also executes quickly and in most cases has just the right range for enemies after Thousand Whips.

Dimension Whip + Thousand Whips

Dimension Whip can do a good amount of damage, but leaves Ernest open while the dimensional portals are appearing. Thus, Ernest can follow up with his fastest move, which will usually come out just when Dimension Whip is hitting and increase the chances of Thousand Whips connecting.

Thunder Whip + Thousand Whips  
+ Broken Heart

Again, a slower move is followed up with a faster move to press the enemy while it's reeling.

--Dias--

Linking combos is essential to Dias scoring multiple hits on enemies, given his killer move repertoire. Linking allows Dias to score many more hits. Better yet, given the power of many of his moves, Dias will often kill the enemy with the first move, saving MP and time.

Air Slash + Chaos Sword  
+ Hawk Scream Blast

Dias's Air Slash is vastly better than Claude's, allowing it to be quite effective in combos. Using Air Slash allows the second move to be executed at long range. All three of these moves have both a long range

and short range form, allowing for great versatility; you can interchange any of them and get an effective combo for both long and short range. My personal favorite is Chaos Sword + Hawk Scream Blast. Fully upgraded, Chaos Sword allows for two hits, while Hawk Scream Blast hits three times at close range.

Gale Stab/Firebird Shock Wave + Chaos Sword  
+ Cross Wave  
+ Crescent Wave  
+ Hawk Scream Blast  
+ Illusion

Both Gale Stab and Firebird Shock Wave move Dias next to the enemy, allowing him to continue his mayhem with a close range move.

Crescent Moon Flash + Gale Stab  
+ Firebird Shock Wave

With this combo Dias releases the moon projectile and follows up with a rushing attack. Works well with any close range move or combo you have for Dias on the other shoulder button, since Dias will end at close range.

Crescent Moon Flash + Full Moon Slash

Moon attacks. This works best when Full Moon Slash isn't fully upgraded and has more range, although the powered Full Moon Slash certainly can be used.

Illusion + Chaos Sword  
+ Cross Wave  
+ Crescent Wave  
+ Hawk Scream Blast  
+ Full Moon Slash

Again, the idea is to lay down immense damage and follow it up with more if the enemy doesn't croak. Most of these moves, with the exception of Full Moon Slash, can be interchanged. Full Moon Slash is a special case; it should only be used in this fashion when it's fully upgraded, and only at the end because of its pause after Dias is finished. I find it useful after Illusion or some other close range move to clean up, either by striking quick-moving enemies that can dodge or by clearing out enemies thinking of sneaking up around Dias.

--Chisato--

Chisato works enormously well with linked combos, decimating large groups of enemies with repeated attacks and allowing her to execute some of her slower moves while enemies are recovering from her initial attack.

Twister + Whirlwind  
+ Rising Dragon

Chisato's close-range martial arts moves work great when linked. Whirlwind + Rising Dragon also works quite well, especially with canceling. Rising Dragon + Whirlwind will also work, although the hits of Rising Dragon usually force the enemy a little farther than the range of Whirlwind.

Burning Cards + 10,000 Volts

The two moves with an arc range. Use Burning Cards first to give more range to start, or switch the order and use 10,000 Volts first to clear room for Burning Cards.

10,000 Volts + Flamethrower

The volts clear room for the flamethrower to prep. Works with both



versions of Flamethrower; the lower versions give lots of hits, while the fully upgraded version has more range and works especially well with 10,000 Volts on flying enemies.

#### Flamethrower + Tear Gas

A multi-hit stream nightmare. This combo works best with the lower versions of Flamethrower. Tear Gas + Flamethrower also works well with any version of Flamethrower.

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---SPELLS---  
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#### TIPS

Spells are really straightforward. For the most part the job of a mage simply consists of casting the most damaging spell and/or providing healing spells for the wounded. However, there are a few things you can do to make your spell experiences smoother:

- If using the AI to control your mages, make sure you turn off all spells that you don't want the AI to use. Note that you can always directly control a mage and cast any spell you want; turning off spells only affect the AI's ability to cast a spell. This can be important in cases like Noel's Earthquake, which will not hit flying or hovering enemies; if you are encountering a lot of these enemies and Noel frequently whiffs, disable the spell and let Noel cast Foehn, which will hit all enemies. Also, if an enemy is strong against a particular element, try forcing your mages to use other spells, although the AI is smart enough not to waste spells on enemies that are completely immune to magic.
- Similarly, disabling spells and controlling mages directly can be useful in certain battle situations. If you find that your enemies are too fast for your fighters or that the pesky enemy mages are casting too many spells, force your mages to cast lower cost, faster spells. Mages work just as well disrupting enemy actions as they do dealing out mass damage.

#### SPELL LIST (still under construction)

--Rena--

--Celine--

--Leon--

--Noel--

#### SPELL ABSORPTION

Spell Absorption is the counterpart to Link Combos for fighters. Using two mages, spells with compatible elements will interact, resulting in enhanced visual effects. When spells are absorbed, words and arrows appear on the bottom right hand corner of the battle screen, something like:

Friend -> Absorb -> Friend

This indicates that the cast spells are interacting (not that you couldn't tell that from the graphics). It also indicates which spell is being absorbed into which, although I have yet to figure out which direction the arrows go to indicated the first or second spell that is cast. Lastly, and most importantly, it indicates whether the effect is with friends or enemies. Spell absorption can be done with any mages, including enemies. It's possible for enemies to absorb their spells, or in rare cases for enemies to absorb your spells and vice versa, making absorption a dangerous pastime in certain situations.

There has also been mention of spell canceling, where one spell cancels out the effects of another. However, I've never seen this phenomenon myself, and elements one would expect to cancel each other, such as fire and water, end up being absorbed, so I don't have any more information on this area unless someone can tell me how to do it.

Spell absorption is much more difficult to accomplish than link combos and will not work for all spells. Also, the spell damage is purely additive, i.e. two spells interacting results in the same damage as if the spells were cast separately, with a few exceptions. Only certain spells can be absorbed, usually mid-level spells. For these reasons, spell absorption is more a novelty rather than an essential battle technique.

This is not to say that spell absorption is completely useless, however. For one, the resulting spell effects are usually impressive. Spell absorption can also help you extend the power of your area effect spells. Since the spell damage is additive over all the effect of the spells, you can spread more damage over a larger area than you would with separate castings. For example, Eruption and Deep Freeze are both area spells that can interact. If the two spells are cast on two different groups of enemies, the damage to each enemy is still the sum of the damage each would do separately. However, since the spells were cast on separate groups, the total damage done and the area of effect is greater. Another example is Eruption and Noah. The sum of both spell damages is applied to the area of the spell with higher cost, in this case Noah. Thus, you get the damage sum of Eruption and Noah applied to all the enemies. In general, spell absorption with two area spells or a lower-cost area spell with a more powerful spell that affects all enemies will give you more damage done. Combining two all-enemy spells results in the same damage as separate castings, and combining a lower-cost spell that hits all enemies with an area-effect spell results in less total damage, making combinations like Ray and Black Saber pointless.

The mechanics of spell absorption are as follows: Two spells which have the same or related associated elements will interact when cast at almost the same time. It has been my experience that the spell that is higher in MP cost will be the one that absorbs the power from the other spell. Not all spells can be absorbed; none of the lower level spells which don't stop the hourglass can be absorbed. The most powerful spells likewise cannot be absorbed, and you wouldn't want to anyway, since if two powerful spells each did more than 5000 damage and were absorbed you'd do less damage, since the limit to damage is 9999 a hit. Spell absorption is thus most useful with the mid-level spells. The easiest way to accomplish spell absorption that I've found is to cast the spell with the higher cost first, since spell cost roughly corresponds to casting time. Then, depending on the cost of the second spell, switch control to the second mage and wait a bit before casting the second spell. If the two spells have about the same cost or if the first mage succeeded with Motormouth, the second spell should be cast immediately. On the other hand, if the second spell has significantly less cost, you may have to wait a few seconds. In the case

of Motormouth, you also may want to consider switching to a cheaper spell of the same element to cast faster and catch up with the first mage.

The spells for each element that can be used in absorption are as follows:

Earth: Earth Grave  
Water: Acid Rain, Deep Freeze, Noah  
Fire: Eruption  
Wind: (none)  
Thunder: Thunderstorm, Thunder Cloud  
Star: Starlight, Tractor Beam  
Vacuum: Energy Arrow, Blood Sucker  
Light: Ray, Light Cross, Lunar Light, Star Flare  
Darkness: Shadow Bolt, Black Saber, Shadow Flare  
Void: Press, Gravity Press, Gremlin Lair

Each element, with the exception of Wind, can be used to absorb spells of the same element. The following elements also will interact:

Earth + Water  
Water + Fire  
Water + Thunder  
Fire + Vacuum  
Star + Light  
Star + Void  
Light + Darkness

Note that due to spell distribution Noel is pretty useless for spell absorption, while Leon is the master of combining spells due to his command of water, void, and darkness.

There are two spells which are particularly effective in spell absorption, both of which belong to Leon. These spells both have special properties which allow absorptions to deal much more damage than the normal additive damage of normal spell absorption:

Acid Rain is a unique spell in that it's the only spell that can be used in absorption that doesn't do any damage. The spell normally lowers enemies' defensive values. However, used in absorption, it allows spells to do maximum damage. That's right, 9999 damage to all enemies that are hit! It is best used with Earth Grave, since both spells are extremely cheap and can be easily timed. However, Eruption and Thunderstorm will also work fairly well, although Eruption might affect only those enemies within its area when used. Be warned that a few enemies will be immune or even absorb the damage, gaining 9999 HP! Thus, make sure you try this combination on enemies and see which are affected.

Gremlin Lair is the other spell which works amazingly well with spell absorption. This is due to its properties as the only multi-hitting spell in the game. The trick here is that the damage is summed for each hit that Gremlin Lair does. Since each enemy is hit at least five times, absorption can make this spell extremely powerful. The best spell to use would be Tractor Beam, which can add over 1000 damage to each hit. Any other star or void spell will add significant damage to this combo, though, so use this often if you have Leon around.

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---CREDITS---  
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GameFAQs ([www.gamefaqs.com](http://www.gamefaqs.com)), one of the greatest places to find information on any game out there. There are a whole bunch of FAQs on SO2 now, so anything you might ask is probably there.

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