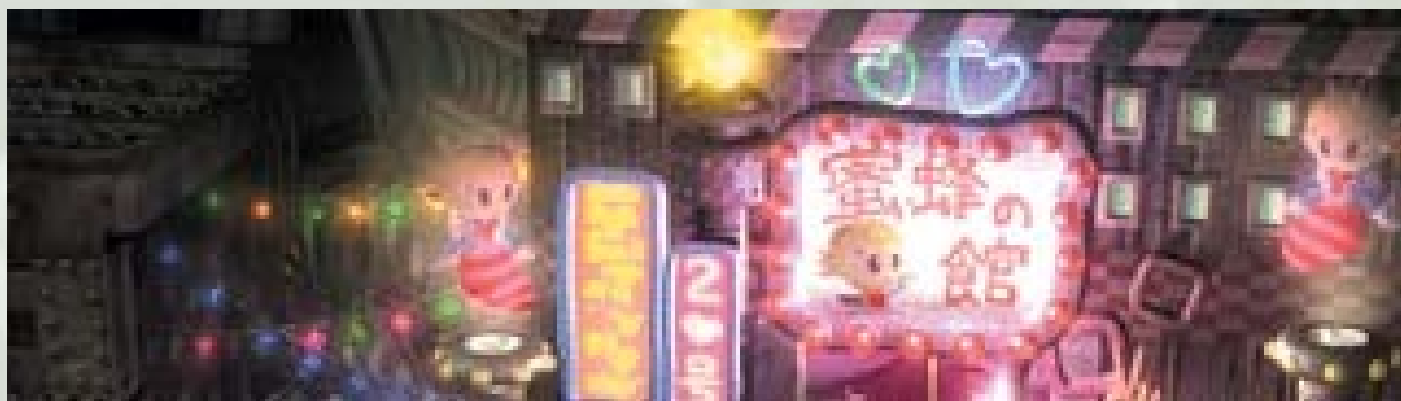





FINAL FANTASY VII


Chapter 5: Miss Cloud




Cloud and Aerith entered Wall Market...





 Here you can find a girl in no time... There is a motel back there, the "Honey Bee Inn", we should start there...


 What kind of place is this?

They headed towards the inn, the bouncer spoke to Cloud.


 Welcome! Even rabble like you can make their dreams come true here! Are you also looking for a girlfriend?


 Save your sale speech for someone else and answer me, do you know Tifa?


 Hey, you're quick one. Tifa is the brand new arrival! Unfortunately for you, she is in the middle of an interview with the Don!


 The Don?

 Yes. Here at the Honey Bee Inn we are to bring any new girls to Don Corneo's mansion!

 Who is he?


 A famous dilettante. He would like to settle now, find a wife... Do you have a membership card?


 Hmm.. no.


 The Honey Bee Inn is a private club! Only members can enter, so scram!


Cloud and Aerith proceeded then to Corneo's mansion. A man was guarding the entrance...




 This is Don Corneo's place. He will not let you in. However your friend...

 Cloud, I'm going in. Wait for me here!

 No!! You can't!

 Why not?

 This mansion... This place... We're in one of the most rotten part of Midgar, so you...





And what are we supposed to do then? You want to come in with me?



If I go in there more people will get hurt... But I can't let you in alone. Darn... First, we need to know if Tifa is okay... Aerith? Why are you laughing like that?



We'll just have to dress you up as a girl, it's the only way!



WHAT!?

Aerith returned to talk to the guard of Don Corneo's mansion...



Can you wait a few minutes? I'll come back with a friend.



Another girl? Seems like a good idea to me... The Don will be pleased too. Who knows, maybe I could also... He he he!



Aerith! I can't...



Aren't worried about Tifa? Let's go then!



But how do you even plan to do that?!



It's obvious that you don't know the place. We're going shopping!

Cloud and Aerith found themselves in a clothing store...



Excuse me, I would like a dress...



This might take a while. Do you have time?



What's the problem?



Well... My father handles the dresses and... he's... let's just say he's busy...



And where is he?



Um... probably at the bar.



So... Without your father we won't be able to get a dress.



Yes. Sorry, he's causing me a lot of trouble... You... Maybe you could go get him?



Well, it doesn't look like we have much of a choice. Alright we'll do it!



Really?! Oh, thank you for taking care of my crazy old man! You should find him at the bar right next door...



Got it. Let's go Cloud.

Cloud and Aerith arrived at the said bar, inside, they spotted the tailor, drunk at the counter...



Excuse me, are you the father of the owner of the clothing store?



The clothing store is mine... but I'm not your father.



I'd like you to make me a piece of clothing.



I don't make men's clothes! Besides, I don't want to sew anything anymore!



Cloud, give me a second will you? I'll try to reason with him...

Aerith spoke to the old man...



You know sir, he always said he wanted to dress like a woman, at least once in his life... That's why I wanted the best designer!



What? Such a manly guy, as a woman?



So, what do you say? Shall we try?



...I might be interested. I'm tired of regular clothes... That's quite a challenge...



So would you do it for us?



Okay, I'm in... What kind of dress do you want?



Let's see. Something soft... and shimmering.



Hmm, fine by me. I know someone who has the same kind of... tastes. Maybe they should meet?



A little later, at the clothing store...

Ah! Here you are ! It's ready, all that's left is to try it!

Cloud headed towards the fitting room, the dress under his arm. Once inside...

How... How do you even put that thing on?

Aerith took a peek inside the changing room...

Hey ! What are you looking at !!

There, that's how you wear it. Hmm, it's missing a little something, right? We need to do something about your hair!

I knew you would say that, so I asked a friend about it. Do you know the gym club? There are people... of your kind there, they'll be able to help!

...My kind?! Aerith, what did you tell him?!

Don't worry about it. Thank you, Mr. Fashion Designer, it's a magnificent dress!



Cloud and Aerith left the store and went to the gym. Inside, a very muscular man dressed as a woman welcomes them...

Are you the one who wants to be fabulous?

Fabulous?!

That's him! Can you do something about his hair?

Yes sweetie, but not for free!



Three other gymnasts training at the back, just as feminine, turned around...

Yes! He's going to have to beat Big Bro!!!

It's the only way!

You'll have to measure yourself against us!

That's right, young aspiring lady, it's gonna be tough!

Yeah! You're going down my dear!



Chapter 5: Miss Cloud



And you are...?



You're Great Bro, was it?



What? You haven't heard of me? I'm Big Bro! The talk of all around Wall Market! Big Bro this, Big Bro that! Remember that! Okay, let me explain the rules, ready?



Ready...



Whoever does the most squats in 30 seconds wins! Everyone plays, except for the real girl, understood?



I must not lose, I want Big Bro's wig!



Squats? Seriously?!



Just to be fair, do you want to warm up a little before the match?



I don't need warm ups!



The girl will do the countdown. Ready? Go!

Cloud, Big Bro and the three gymnasts started doing squats...



One. Two! One. Two! You can really feel how it pulls on the butt cheeks, ha ha!



Ridiculous...



Go Cloud! You can do it!



One. Two! One. Two! ...



They are going so fast!!



And now look at this!



You were holding back?!



28, 29, 30!! Stop! Cloud won!



You truly are something special! Alright, I gave my word. Here, take it...



Big Bro, I'm sorry, so sorry for challenging you!

Big Bro punched the gymnast, throwing him into the wall.





Shut up! Stop whining just because you lost!!



Ouch! That must have broke something!

When they left the gym, Aerith inspected Cloud attentively from head to toe...



You will need some makeup!



Hmph... And what will I have to do to get it done this time?



Let's go back to the Honey Bee Inn, I'm sure we can persuade someone to help making you look convincing!



Hmm... You sure played me already...



This time, it's you who's going to play them!



What about the membership card?



He he he... You see that guy over there? Since we arrived, he still hasn't dared to approach the motel, he surely has a card! As it's probably his first time here, all you have to do is ask him to accompany you while wearing your wig! Think of Big Bro when talking to him!



You are twisted girl!

Cloud went to find the man...



Hello my... handsome friend, do you want me accompany you to the motel? They are all... like me in there you know...



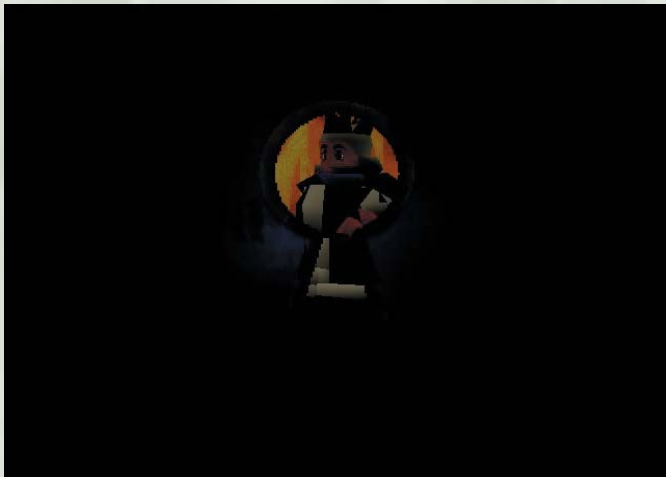
Like you...? Actually... Um... No, I changed my mind... Here, take my card!

The man ran away, Aerith looked at Cloud with a mischievous look.



Nicely done Cloud! You know, I won't be able to go in there, I look too... normal. But go ahead. I'll attempt to convince the bouncer, I'll join you if I can!





The Honey Bee Inn lobby had five doors. Intrigued, Cloud approached one of them, he heard a few snippets of the conversations of the occupants of the room...



The wind calmed down... It's the resurrected demon curse, our beloved queen does not wake up... The time has come... a legend passed down between generations... The sought Promise Land... Magic eyes... will not lead to the Promised Land...



Excuse me?

Cloud jumped, a hostess in bee costume had caught him spying on one of the rooms...



Pfft... Well I mean um... Oh screw it, hurry up and choose a room.



But uh... How can I say it... What I would like is um...



I get it, you are a shy one. Hurry up and choose one.

Cloud entered one of the bedrooms.



I'll be back right away, I'll get ready.

Cloud sat down on the bed. He thought about the whole story and let out a long sigh. Suddenly, he startled, thinking he saw a ghost who was none other than...himself! His vision turned red and a voice spoke in his head...



What are you doing in here? ...Do you believe merely thinking about your problems will solve them...?

He tried to struggle. It was a double of himself threatening him, Cloud was petrified. He felt himself fainting...



You can't change anything by sitting quietly and watching.



What are you talking about?



It started to move!



What did?



Wake up!





Wake up !

Cloud opened his eyes. A mustachioed man was shaking him vigorously.



Phew! I am relieved! Dude, she told me you fainted!

Cloud turned around and looked at the hostess.



No no no, don't be so tense now!



Huh? What?



Hmm? They say that youth is short! You have to seize the chance when it comes!



But... What are you talking about?



It's time, dude, everyone is coming!



Everyone...? What the...



Big Bro and several gymnasts arrived...
One. Two ! One. Two ! Cloud's squats!



Oh no...



What's up with you dude? You chose this room, this means don't like being alone!



Looks like I've been cataloged for life...



Loosen up baby! My name is Mukki! Come on, everyone in the Jacuzzi!



*The whole group entered the narrow Jacuzzi
Cloud felt extremely uncomfortable...*



It's great, isn't it? It warms the heart! So dude, how are you feeling, good right?



I... don't feel so well, I'm leaving...



Oh... I see... Well, I hope we see each other again! By the way, how old are you?



21...



Almost half my age! Daddy is very jealous! Wanna be part of my group of "young friends"?





I don't want to be rude but can you please talk to someone else. All I wanted is to get my makeup done!



Oh! You should have said so sooner! Alright, come with me!



See you later baby!

Cloud followed the hostess to their preparation room...



Some colors, a bit of makeup and... Oh, gosh, you look like a real... perv!



Um... Thank you?

Cloud hurried towards the exit. Once outside, he noticed that Aerith still hadn't had time to enter, she was surrounded by a flock of flirts...



Oh! There's Cloud I was talking about!



Aerith, let's get out of here please!



Your makeup is amazing!

They headed to the clothing store to put on the dress...



Everything is ready! Aren't you going to get dressed?

Cloud went to put on the dress and the wig...



Not bad, maybe I found a new niche! Thanks for the inspiration. The dress is on me!



You need to walk more gracefully... just like that Miss Cloud!



Whaa...?



You are so cute Miss Cloud. I want one too, which one would suit me?



This one?



No, rather this one!



Dad, what are you talking about, she needs this one!



If I may, I think that one...



I want THIS ONE!

Aerith had just taken off the shelf a superb bright red dress with a wide neckline...



What?!



Huh?



But...



I'm gonna go change. No peeking!

She dressed up...



So, what do you think?



Well um... You are... That's very... Wow!



Oh, very funny Cloud!

They went back to Don Corneo's mansion...



Woah! Your friend is very... special!



Isn't she?



...



Come in, come in!



Hello ladies! I'll inform the Don of your arrival. Stay there...

Once reception guy disappeared from view Aerith whispered to Cloud...



This is our chance! Let's find Tifa! Alright, where could she be?





There she is! Um, I'm not very... presentable. Could you?



Oh Cloud! You can be such a goof sometimes.

Aerith headed towards Tifa...



Tifa? It's a pleasure to meet you, I am Aerith! Cloud told me a lot about you!



Cloud...?



Don't worry, he and I just met, there's nothing between us!



Worried? About what? Cloud and I grew up together, there is nothing else!



Poor Cloud, standing there having to hear us say there is nothing...



Wait! Cloud?! Is that you? Why are you dressed like that? What are you doing here? And what happened to you after you fell? Are you okay?



Hum, can I answer? I'm dressed like this because it was the only way to get in here. Aerith, who took care of me after the fall, helped me find you!



Oh...Thank you Aerith!



Tifa, what are you doing in a place like this?



Well, um... It's pretty... confidential...



It's okay, I'm covering my ears!



It really glad you are fine. After we returned from the reactor, we met a guy asking strange questions about Avalanche. Barret interrogated him. And that's when the name of Don Corneo came up. Barret asked me to leave that pervert alone, but I went anyway.



I see, you want to know what he knows...



Yes, but now I'm in trouble! Every day, the Don brings three girls and only chooses one... He is looking for a wife! I have to get chosen, I need to learn what he knows.



Sorry, but I heard everything! Since we know who those three girls are, there's no problem right?



I guess so but...



No Aerith, I don't want you to get involved!



Would you rather Tifa takes all the risk?



No more but...



I grew up in the slums, I'm used to dangerous situations!



Are you sure Aerith?



Yes! Absolutely.



Hey! I was looking for you everywhere! It's time ladies! The Don awaits!



Come on Cloud, let's go!



I shouldn't ask but the third girl is me right?



You're right, you shouldn't...



...ask.



The Don is waiting in his room.



Very good! Now line up in front of the Don!



Hee he he! You ladies are looking beautiful! Now let's see, which one shall I pick? Hee he he he!

The Don was pacing from one to the other...



This one...? Or maybe you...

Cloud was sweating profusely, the Don didn't seem to notice. But what's more, he was looking at him with an intense gaze...



Ooh yes, that's it! I've decided! My choice for tonight is... This sturdy young lady!



Now wait a minute! Well... I mean, no need to rush!



Ooh! Playing hard to get? I like that! Okay, guys, you can have the other two!



Thanks boss!



Alright! Shall we go, sweetie?

Cloud looked down and followed the Don to his bedroom... Tifa and Aerith followed the other two guards.



Alone at last! Hee he he, come to daddy honey! You are so cute, I will never get tired of looking at you! So how do you like me?



Um...very handsome Mr. Corneo!



Now, show me how you make a man happy...



Is it really that important?



Ooh I can't hold on anymore. You got me, I give up! Give me a kiss, just one little kiss!

Suddenly, Tifa and Aerith came into the room.



One minute!



Ooh, all three at once!



Cloud, what were you doing?

Cloud jumped to the other side of the bed, ripping off his dress...



A man? No, a... SOLDIER?!



Ex-SOLDIER!



What is going on?



Shut up ! We're the ones asking questions now!



Why were your men asking around about Avalanche? Speak or else...



I'll cut them off!



No! Not that, I'll tell you everything! I was asked to find the place where the man with the gun for an arm was hiding!



By whom?



No! If I reveal it to you, I will pay for it with my life!



Speak ! If you don't...



I'll rip them off!



...?



...!



Waaah! No ! It was Heidegger, from Shinra!



The head of public security!?



What does he want? Speak, if you don't tell us...



I'll crush them!



You... You're serious, aren't you? They want to infiltrate Avalanche, and stomp them. And I mean really stomp them... literally! They want to disconnect the support that holds the plate above them!



You're talking about the pillar?!



Yes, they know their hideout is in the Sector 7 slums.



We have to get there as fast as possible! Cloud, I'll need your help!



Of course Tifa!



Wait a second !



Shut up, we've heard you enough!



Just a moment! Why do you think villains such as me would tells the truth so freely? Because they think they've already won? Because they're faced with certain death? Or because they've lost their minds?



Because you are nuts Corneo!



Bzzzzt! Wrong!

He lowered a lever hidden behind his bed, a trapdoor opened under the feet of Cloud, Tifa and Aerith...



Because I always win! Farewell my pretty creatures! Hee he he he...