

**An Affair of the Heart and Soul**  
**By Meriko**

**Chapter 3: Five Questions, One Answer**

Vincent turned the PHS off and pocketed it, returning his attention to the girl now huddled in his cloak. "Cloud and Tifa - Aeris told you about them?" The girl nodded, and Vincent continued, "They'll be here in the morning to help us get back to the surface. They will have food and clothes for you as well. We should return to the elevator and wait for them. Can you walk?"

In response, the girl placed a hand on the surface of the table and slowly scooted off of the edge. But legs used to floating motionless in liquid were ill suited for landings, however soft, and her legs buckled beneath her once they touched the floor. Vincent knelt and caught her about the waist before she could collapse to the floor.

"You must have been asleep for quite a while," Vincent remarked, as he helped her to stand. He tucked his cloak more securely around her and then gathered her into his arms again, placing her left arm around his shoulder. Startled, her body tensed and she clung to his neck with surprising tenacity.

Vincent began walking towards the door to the girl's former prison. Giving in to a sudden, strange curiosity, he asked her, "What's your name?"

She looked up at his voice, and her eyes widened at finding his face so near her own. Flustered and confused by it, she burrowed her face into his shoulder, as if to hide. Vincent caught a muffled murmur by his ear, "I don't know."

Vincent stopped at the door. Gesturing with his chin, he asked, "Do you know what this door used to say?"

The dark head lifted from his shoulder and craned around to look. "I don't know," she replied, "I've never seen the outside of this door before."

"What about when you were brought here?"

She shook her head, "I wasn't...brought. I've always been here."

Vincent looked down at his charge. Every question he asked her simply created more questions. He read the remaining letters on the door once more. Ma..r.....ion. "What about Marion?"

The girl looked at the door once more. "Marion?" she repeated.

"Yes, Marion."

She'd never heard that name before, but she found that she liked the sound of it. Or perhaps it was simply that she liked his gentle voice? The smooth syllables of her new name fell naturally from his lips, and stirred something in her heart. She nodded, "Marion. My name is Marion."