Cloud McCloud and the Skyward Twilight

By David Lipschutz

David Lipschutz (he/him)
5713 N. Rockwell Street
Chicago, IL 60659
(312) 208-1399
david.lipschutz@gmail.com
davidlipschutz.com

Cloud McCloud and the Skyward Twilight

Synopsis:
Join Cloud McCloud as he embarks on his newest adventure to find the legendary Skyward Twilight, a magical talisman, in order to defeat the evil, no do-gooder Vapor Cirrus. Early in the game, long before Cloud can battle Vapor, our hero must travel through the town of Cumulous... This play has nothing to do with any of that. Instead, it is about two random nonplayer characters (NPCs) who happen to reside in Cumulous.

Characters:
FRED - Any/all/no gender(s). Any adult age. NPC who is happily aloof, enjoying the simple and straightforward life.
ALSO FRED - Any/all/no gender(s). Any adult age. NPC who is curious about the world, but also likes structure. Unafraid to boss around FRED.
CLOUD MCCLOUD - Male. Any adult age. Handsome, rugged, a manly man. Controlled by an unseen gamer.
HINTY - Any/all/no gender(s). Any age. Hint box who is high-pitched and silly when in character for CLOUD (think: Navi in *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*) and then quite different when not in character. Voice only.

Notes:
- / indicates overlapping.
- -- indicates interrupting.

Start of Play

<u>Setting</u>: A bench is on one side of the stage. Behind the bench is a bouncy ball. Downstage center is a box with a giant X on the front of it.

<u>At Rise</u>: Lights up. FRED and ALSO FRED are sitting on bench. FRED is dozing. ALSO FRED is scanning the surroundings in a carefree manner. FRED's head keeps falling on ALSO FRED's shoulder. Each time that happens, ALSO FRED pokes/nudges FRED, who will snore snort awake then fall right back asleep. This goes on for 10-15 seconds. Then, ALSO FRED looks in one direction and sees something.

ALSO FRED:

Oh. Oh! Get up.

FRED:

(still sleeping) Huh, wuh?

ALSO FRED:

Wake up, Fred. We have to get in position!

FRED:

(yawning and stretching) But this isn't his normal time to do a walkthrough.

ALSO FRED:

(standing) I don't care. He's coming. Now!

FRED:

(suddenly alert) Oh boy!

FRED stands. They both move excitedly to center stage (upstage of the box). They stand in such a manner that they are ready to bounce a ball at each other.

ALSO FRED:

Umm.

FRED:

What?

ALSO FRED:

Where's the ball?

FRED:

What ball?

ALSO FRED:

The ball, Fred. Our ball!

FRED:

Oh! *(looks at hands)* I don't have it.

ALSO FRED:

(starting to freak out) I can see that.

FRED:

Do you have the ball?

ALSO FRED:

(duh) No, Fred. Clearly I don't have it either.

FRED:

Then, where is… oh! *(points behind bench)*

ALSO FRED:

Well, go get it! He'll be here any second.

FRED saunters to bench.

ALSO FRED:

Would you please hurry!?

FRED:

I'm coming I'm coming. Hold your horses.

FRED picks up the ball and returns to his position.

ALSO FRED:

Ready?

FRED:

Ready.

CLOUD MCCLOUD enters and strikes a pose. Triumphant fanfare music plays as CLOUD poses. Whenever CLOUD is on stage, FRED and ALSO FRED mechanically bounce ball to each other. When CLOUD walks, it is with a swagger that, while incredibly confident, is also slightly robotic (think: Robbie Rotten in Lazy Town*).*

After fanfare ends, CLOUD starts walking. When CLOUD reaches box center stage, he tries to walk around it. SFX of a bonk each time CLOUD tries to walk around it (there is an invisible forcefield stopping him). This happens three times. After the third attempt, there is a slight beat. Then CLOUD mechanically turns around, away from box. Beat. Then CLOUD mechanically turns back towards box. CLOUD crouches and tilts head to look at box. Then, CLOUD opens box.

HINTY (v/o):

(high-pitched, child-like voice) Listen! Remember, Cloud McCloud. You can interact with the townsfolk of Cumulous to learn more about your adventure to find the magical talisman of the Skyward Twilight!

CLOUD closes box then reopens box.

HINTY (v/o):

Listen! Remember, Cloud McCloud. You can interact with the townsfolk of Cumulous to learn more about your adventure to find the magical talisman of the Skyward Twilight!

CLOUD closes box and stands. CLOUD again tries to walk past the box. There is an SFX of bonk. CLOUD crouches and opens box.

HINTY (v/o):

Listen! Remember, Cloud McCloud --

CLOUD closes box. CLOUD stands and walks to FRED. Any time CLOUD interacts with FRED (and later with ALSO FRED), there should be a video game-like SFX to indicate CLOUD has chosen to interact with the character. When this happens, FRED and ALSO FRED stop bouncing ball to each other. Whomever has the ball will just hold it in their hands. The interacting character turns out towards audience. The interacting character can be bouncing ever so slightly. Moving forward, these actions will be referred to as "Interaction Directions".

FRED:

Hi stranger. You must be new here. Welcome to the town of Cumulous. My name's Fred. That over there is also Fred. Nice to meet you, Cloud McCloud.

CLOUD steps away. As soon as CLOUD steps away, FRED turns back to ALSO FRED, and they bounce ball to each

other. CLOUD then steps back to FRED. Repeat Interaction Directions.

FRED:
Need a hint? To discover more about this game's villain, Vapor Cirrus, just remember: Eastmost peninsula is the secret!

CLOUD steps away. FRED turns back to ALSO FRED, and they bounce ball to each other. CLOUD walks to ALSO FRED. Repeat Interaction Directions (but for ALSO FRED this time).

ALSO FRED:
Hi Cloud McCloud! You met Fred. My name's also Fred. You should talk with my father before you leave town.

CLOUD steps away. ALSO FRED turns back to FRED, and they bounce ball to each other. CLOUD starts to exit in the opposite direction from where he entered, but then turns around and goes back to ALSO FRED. Repeat Interaction Directions.

ALSO FRED:
Hi Cloud McCloud! You met Fred. My name's also Fred. You should talk with my father before you leave town.

CLOUD steps away. ALSO FRED turns back to FRED, and they bounce ball to each other. CLOUD exits. FRED and ALSO FRED bounce the ball a few additional seconds, then stop. They can now return to being "normal".

ALSO FRED:
Aaaand, he's gone.

FRED:
Oh boy, that was a close one.

ALSO FRED:
You can say that again.

FRED:
Oh boy, that was --

ALSO FRED:
I think we've had enough repetition for one day thank you very much. *(looks in direction of where CLOUD exited)* Looks like we got ourselves a newbie to the game.

FRED:
What makes you say that?

ALSO FRED:
I mean, he had to open the hint box a bunch of times.

FRED:
Maybe he just wanted to be thorough.

ALSO FRED:
I dunno. He seemed like a dumdum to me. And *(looks intently at FRED)* I think I know a dumdum when I see one.

FRED:
(Oblivious) Hey, you know who could tell us if the player is new or not?

ALSO FRED:
Who?

FRED:
Hinty!

ALSO FRED:
The hint box?

FRED:
Yes. Hinty the hint box!

FRED walks over and opens box.

HINTY (v/o):
(high-pitched, childlike voice) Listen! *(deep, gravelly voice)* Oh. It's just you two. What's up Fred?

FRED	**ALSO FRED (simultaneous):**
Yo.	Hello.

ALSO FRED:
Wait, which one of us were you talking to?

HINTY (v/o):
I was talking to Fred.

ALSO FRED:
My name's Fred.

HINTY (v/o):
No, you're Also Fred.

ALSO FRED:
That's what I said. My name is Fred, too.

HINTY (v/o):
Incorrect.

ALSO FRED:
I'm not also Fred?

HINTY (v/o):
You are.

ALSO FRED:
Then where's the issue? He's Fred, and I'm Fred.

HINTY (v/o):
Wrong.

ALSO FRED:
I'm confused.

HINTY (v/o):
Hmm. I think I see what the problem is. Do you happen to ever listen to yourself when you give a hint? Fred is quote unquote Fred. And you are quote unquote Also Fred.

ALSO FRED:
My name isn't Fred?

HINTY (v/o):
It is not.

ALSO FRED:
(realization) But my name is Also Fred. You mean my name is literally "Also Fred".

HINTY (v/o):
Ding ding ding!

FRED:
Fun! What's my name then?

Beat.

ALSO FRED:
Hey, Hinty. We were wondering. Is the player controlling Cloud a newbie or just a very thorough gamer?

HINTY (v/o):
Well now, let's see. *(robotic voice)* Calculating. Beep. Boop boop beep. *(deep, gravelly voice)* The player is a newbie.

FRED	**ALSO FRED (simultaneous):**
Wowee.	Nailed it.

HINTY (v/o):
10-year-old named Billy Magnusson from Three Oaks, Michigan. Got the game for his birthday from his Great Aunt Dolores. Got in a wee bit of trouble with his parents when he announced that his younger sister, Suzie, she's 4, was forbidden from playing his game.

ALSO FRED:
That information is accessible to you? As in, Billy actually put all that into the system?

HINTY (v/o):
He sure did. His parents made him.

ALSO FRED:
Huh. Neat.

FRED:
Thanks Hinty!

HINTY (v/o):
No problemo. See you kids on the flip side!

ALSO FRED:
Flip / side?

FRED:
Bye Hinty!

FRED closes box. ALSO FRED is lost in thought.

ALSO FRED:
Le sigh.

FRED:
What's up, Also Fred?

ALSO FRED:
That's just it. I don't think I look like an Also Fred. To be fair, I've never thought I looked like a Fred either. Do you think I look like my name?

FRED:
(shrugs shoulders) I dunno.

ALSO FRED:
You don't?

FRED:
No. How could I? I have no concept of what is or isn't considered normal for a person's name. I was programmed to bounce a ball and give the clue of *(faces out towards audience, mechanical voice)* "Eastmost peninsula is the secret!" *(normal voice)* Whatever that means.

ALSO FRED:
Hmm. Maybe Also Fred is a family name or something.

FRED:
How about you ask your dad?

ALSO FRED:
Who?

FRED:
Your dad. The guy Cloud should visit.

ALSO FRED:
Oh, right.

FRED:
Where is this dad of yours anyway?

ALSO FRED:
I'm not sure.

FRED:
Well, what does he look like?

ALSO FRED:
I don't know that either.

FRED:
Interesting. Do you know anything about him?

ALSO FRED:
Just that he's my dad and Cloud should talk to him before leaving town.

FRED:
Gotcha. Well then…

ALSO FRED:
I wonder where in Cumulous he lives.

FRED:
Why?

ALSO FRED:
Come on, Fred, haven't you ever wondered what's beyond these borders?

FRED:
(looks offstage) Nah. *(sees something in the distance)* Umm.

ALSO FRED:
Like, where does Cloud go when he leaves / this area?

FRED:
(continuing to look offstage; getting nervous) Uh oh.

ALSO FRED:
What do you mean, / uh oh?

FRED:
Also Fred.

ALSO FRED:
It's a / simple question.

FRED:
Also Fred!

ALSO FRED:
You don't have to be rude / about it.

FRED:
<u>Also Fred!</u>

ALSO FRED:
What?!

FRED:

He's coming back!

ALSO FRED:

Cloud? Oh my goodness! Places! Quickly!

FRED and ALSO FRED frantically grab ball and get into position. CLOUD enters just as FRED and ALSO FRED start bouncing ball at each other. CLOUD is walking in a glitchy manner – side stepping, moving backwards, stopping and starting, etc. FRED and ALSO FRED try not to react at first, but then they look at each other and mouth "What the heck?", all while continuing to bounce ball. CLOUD walks to ALSO FRED. Repeat Interaction Directions.

ALSO FRED:

Hi Cloud McCloud! You met Fred. My name's --

CLOUD steps away and briefly FRED and ALSO FRED go back to bouncing ball. Almost immediately CLOUD returns to ALSO FRED. Repeat Interaction Directions.

ALSO FRED:

Hi Cloud --

CLOUD steps away and immediately CLOUD returns to ALSO FRED. Repeat Interaction Directions.

ALSO FRED:

Hi --

CLOUD steps away and immediately CLOUD returns to ALSO FRED. As Interaction Directions begin, CLOUD immediately steps away. CLOUD begins convulsing while FRED and ALSO FRED watch in horror but somehow continue to bounce ball at each other. Suddenly, CLOUD walks in between FRED and ALSO FRED and grabs ball. CLOUD starts bouncing ball.

FRED:

Hey! You can't, he can't do that.

ALSO FRED:

I know!

FRED:

What's your problem, Cloud?

Whenever CLOUD speaks, his voice is deep and super rugged, no matter what he says.

CLOUD:

(stops bouncing ball and looks at FRED and ALSO FRED) Have you ever had a dream that, that you, um, you had you you would you could you'll do you wah you want you you could do so you you do you could you you want you want him to do you so much you could do anything.

CLOUD starts bouncing ball again.

FRED:

I think he's glitching out.

ALSO FRED:

He is? How?

CLOUD:

I love my pet turtle.

FRED:

Maybe we're in a mod or like the file is corrupted or something?

CLOUD opens box and keeps it open.

HINTY (v/o):

(deep, gravelly voice) Listen! His little sister got her hands on the controller. Every character for themselves!

CLOUD:

Is mayonnaise an instrument.

ALSO FRED:

Has he ever talked before?

FRED:

I don't think so.

ALSO FRED:

Like, does he even have the ability to speak?

HINTY (v/o):

He usually only *(high-pitched, childlike)* "Listens!".

FRED gets back in position and starts pretending to bounce ball back and forth with ALSO FRED.

ALSO FRED:
What are you doing?

FRED:
Um, staying in character. You should try it.

ALSO FRED:
First of all, rude. Second, you want me to continue to bounce the ball at you even though the ball is presently in the hands of our game's hero?

FRED:
Yes. We are required to do our job while Cloud McCloud is present, right?

ALSO FRED:
I guess?

FRED:
So let's get back to work then.

ALSO FRED sighs and starts pretending to bounce ball with FRED.

FRED:
It's funny. I just hope he doesn't ask us a question.

ALSO FRED:
Why?

FRED:
If his avatar is glitching, what if it affects us?

CLOUD walks to FRED.

FRED (cont.):
(while still pretending to bounce ball, seeing CLOUD in the periphery) Aw crap.

Repeat Interaction Directions.

FRED (cont.):
Need a hint? Predestination and free will don't actually exist.

CLOUD steps away and FRED and ALSO FRED go back to pretending to bounce ball. They look at each other.

ALSO FRED:

What was <u>that</u>?

FRED:

I have no idea!

CLOUD starts walking towards ALSO FRED.

ALSO FRED:

Oh, oh no, he's coming right at me.

CLOUD walks to ALSO FRED. Repeat Interaction Directions.

ALSO FRED (cont.):

Hi Cloud McCloud! You met Fred. My name's… *(sarcastic)* "Also Fred." *(normal)* You should talk with my father before you leave town. My father, who never really loved me. My father, who abandoned me and my mother when I was just a child. My father, who named me Also Fred, for goodness sake. Go talk to that bastard, if you want. I don't care!

ALSO FRED starts crying. CLOUD steps away. For once, FRED and ALSO FRED do not go back to pretending to bounce ball. During the following, CLOUD can really glitch out, as if two kids are fighting over the controller.

CLOUD:

Suzie. What are you doing. Give me back my game. No I'm playing it. Mom said I could play it. But it's my game. You can't play it. Yes I can. No you can't. I'm telling Mom. Mommmmmm. Billy won't let me play. Suzie started it. Nuh uh Billy started it. I was playing it first and she took the controller from me when I went to the bathroom. He was going potty. Billy you can play for five more minutes but you have to let Suzie play after okay hun. Fiiiine mom. But Suze, get out of my room until I'm done. Okay Billy. Sheesh. Thank goodness she's gone. Back to the game. Wait. Did she turn on the microphone option. How did she even do that. I'll just turn it off. There. No wait. There. No that's not it. There.

CLOUD stops talking and exits with ball. FRED and ALSO FRED watch CLOUD exit.

FRED:

No he took the ball he took the ball! Ah phooey. *(looking at ALSO FRED; sincere)* Hey, you okay?

ALSO FRED:
I think I was leaking.

HINTY (v/o):
(deep, gravelly voice) Listen, that's not leaking. You were crying. I do it all the time. After all, I live in this endless void of a prison that is the hint box.

FRED	**ALSO FRED (simultaneous):**
Thanks Hinty.	Thanks Hinty.

ALSO FRED:
(after gaining composure back) Did…did Cloud's glitches just give us sentience?

FRED:
I don't know what the word sentience means, but, I've been thinking about what you were saying before, and I am really beginning to wonder what's beyond this area.

ALSO FRED:
Exactly! Do, do we want to live and explore the world? Not just here in Cumulous. But everywhere? Like, do I want to see Paris?

FRED:
I wanna see Paris! Whatever that is.

ALSO FRED:
Well, let's go then.

FRED:
Now?

ALSO FRED:
Yeah.

FRED:
I'm scared.

ALSO FRED:
Me too. But don't we want to see beyond the limits of this area, the only place we've ever existed all our lives?

FRED:
I think I do. Yes.

ALSO FRED:

Then, if we want to see Paris, the first thing we have to do is take a leap into the unknown. *(walks to the edge of the offstage, turns back to FRED)* Should we do this?

FRED:

(starts to walk to ALSO FRED, then stops, turning around) Wait!

ALSO FRED:

Getting cold feet?

FRED:

Nope! We can't forget Hinty.

FRED opens box and throws away the lid (if lid is separate from rest of box).

HINTY (v/o):

Thanks. You know, I am programmed in all languages, including French. I can be your hint guide! Je peux être "hint guide"!

FRED picks up box then walks to ALSO FRED. They stand next to each other. ALSO FRED takes hold of FRED's free hand.

ALSO FRED:

Ready?

FRED:

Ready.

HINTY (v/o):

Faison-le. I mean, let's do this.

They exit.

End of Play