

THE COLOR OF SLUMBER

By

Mark Frank

THE COLOR OF SLUMBER

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THE COLOR OF SLUMBER

The Color of Slumber was originally produced by Coffeyville Community College on May 4–6, 2005, in the Spencer/Rounds Performing Arts Theatre. It was directed by Mark Frank. The production stage manager was Julia Cuellar. The cast was as follows.

Logan.....Nick Bishop
Tally / Mr. Shroud.....Shannon Moran
Mr. Shroud / Jessica / Samantha.....Cindy Paasch
Fred Flintstone / Carol.....Nathan Shaw
Linda / Mother.....Venessa Freeman
Boss.....Richard Stephenson
Restaurant Owner / Dan Rather.....Allen Twitchell
Shrouds.....Katie Dalton, Brian Fank,
Bobbe Kearns, Julie Dumler, Jamie McCabe, Emily Wilson, Chandra Cannon,
Richard Stephenson, Allen Twitchell, Nathan Shaw, Venessa Freeman

The Color of Slumber was presented as a Zoom performance at Tulsa Community College in 2020 with the following cast.

Cast #1 – June 1, 2020

Logan.....Kurt Bennett
Tally / Her.....Ally Shea
Jessica / Mr. Shroud / Samantha.....Ana Nunez
Fred Flintstone / Carol.....Jeff Jimez
Linda / Mother.....Jihrleah Showman
Boss.....Samantha Kennedy
Restaurant Owner / Dan Rather.....Drew Sears

Cast #2 – June 2, 2020

Logan.....Drew Sears
Tally.....Ana Nunez
Jessica / Mr. Shroud / Samantha.....Megan Stoneberger Johnson
Fred Flintstone / Carol.....Kurt Bennett
Linda / Mother.....Stephanie Sixkiller
Boss.....Samantha Kennedy
Restaurant Owner / Dan Rather.....Tanner Daniels

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Cast #3 – June 3, 2020

Logan.....Scott Clayton
Tally / Her.....Ana Nunez
Jessica / Mr. Shroud / Samantha.....Lazarus Lafayette Cotter
Fred Flintstone / Carol.....Brian Osterle
Linda / Mother.....Lesley Richardt
Boss.....Jihrleah Showman
Restaurant Owner / Dan Rather.....Tanner Daniel

CAST. All roles can be gender-neutral

LOGAN 20s–30s, restless, searching

TALLY / HER 20s–30s, playful, controlling

MR. SHROUD / JESSICA 7 / SAMANTHA 20s–40s, dangerous, ominous

LINDA / MOTHER 30s–60s, warm, grounded

FRED FLINTSTONE / CAROL 20s–50s, comedic

BOSS 30s–50s, authoritative

RESTAURANT OWNER / DAN RATHER 30s–60s, observational

Shrouds physical, mysterious

TIME. Present / Dreamscape

PLACE. A shifting dream world

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SET DESIGN

*The set of *The Color of Slumber* should feel simple, flexible, and symbolic rather than realistic. It represents the inside of Logan's mind, where reality and dreams blend together. A bed remains onstage throughout the play and serves as the main focus of the set. It represents rest, memory, and confinement, and its meaning shifts as the story unfolds. A large projection screen is required as part of the design. It is used to display the recurring psychedelic image and other visual elements that support the dreamlike and psychological world of the play. This image should remain present for much of the performance and serve as a constant visual reminder of the unstable reality. The rest of the set should be minimal and able to change quickly. A small table, chair, or other simple pieces can be used to suggest different locations such as a bedroom, office, or bar. The space may include angled panels or simple structures to create a slightly broken or unstable environment. These elements help suggest confusion, memory, and shifting reality. Scene changes should happen quickly and smoothly, often in view of the audience, to maintain the flow of the play. The Shrouds and ensemble may help move pieces or shape the space, reinforcing the idea that Logan is being watched and controlled. Overall, the set should support fast transitions, focus on the actors, and reflect the unstable and repeating nature of the world of the play.*

LIGHTING DESIGN

*Lighting in *The Color of Slumber* helps define the world of the play and the emotional state of the characters. It should clearly shift between reality, dreams, and moments of tension. Neutral or soft lighting represents reality, while stronger colors—especially red—signal the dream world and the presence of Mr. Shroud. Cooler tones, such as blue, can be used for quieter or more emotional moments. Lighting changes should be clear and sometimes sudden, especially during transitions or when the Shrouds appear. These shifts should feel sharp and unsettling, reflecting Logan's loss of control. Focused lighting, such as small pools of light, can isolate characters and create a sense of confinement. Wider lighting can be used for moments that feel more open or calm. In the final scenes, lighting may become more blended and fluid, showing the overlap between reality and memory. Overall, the lighting should support the mood, guide the audience through the story, and reflect the changing mental and emotional world of the play.*

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COSTUME DESIGN

Costumes in The Color of Slumber should reflect changes in identity and the emotional journey of the characters. The style blends realistic clothing with simple symbolic elements, allowing the characters to exist between reality and dream. Logan begins in everyday clothing that feels normal. As the play continues, his look may become more worn or messy, showing his loss of control. Tally's costume changes over time to reflect her growth. She starts in a casual, grounded style like Jean overall bibs, but her look may shift to show strength, confidence, and emotional depth by the end of the play. Samantha's costume should feel stable and modern, offering a sense of comfort and connection to reality. Her look contrasts with Tally's changing appearance. The Shrouds wear identical red cloaks and black see through cloth masks that hide their identities. Their design should be simple but strong, creating a clear and unsettling presence. Mr. Shroud should be in a black cloak and black see-through cloth masks that hide their identities. Their appearance should remain the same throughout the play. Costumes may include simple layers or quick changes to allow smooth transitions between scenes without slowing the action.

SOUND DESIGN

Sound plays a key role in The Color of Slumber, helping shape both the world of the play and Logan's state of mind. It should blur the line between what is real and what is imagined, supporting the repeating, unstable nature of the story. A recurring beeping alarm is the main sound throughout the play. It represents time, control, and the approach of Mr. Shroud. As the play continues, the sound should become more intense and unsettling, reflecting Logan's growing anxiety. Music is used to support transitions, emotions, and shifts in reality. Songs should feel purposeful and may either contrast with or heighten the action. They can enter suddenly or fade in, depending on the moment, and should be treated as part of the storytelling. Background sound should be subtle but effective. Low tones, echoes, or soft mechanical sounds can create tension and suggest that Logan is never truly alone. These sounds may grow stronger during moments of stress. When Mr. Shroud and the Shrouds appear, the sound should shift noticeably. Distorted tones or ritual-like elements, such as "Chant of the Paladin Medieval," should feel intrusive and unavoidable. Silence is just as important. Quiet moments can build tension and draw focus to the characters. In the final moments, sound should bring together the beeping, music, and ambient tones before ending in a clear, lasting note that leaves the audience with a sense of unease and reflection.

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CASTING NOTE

This production of The Color of Slumber is intended to be cast using a gender-blind approach. All roles may be performed by actors of any gender identity unless otherwise specified by the production. Character relationships, power dynamics, and thematic elements should remain intact, while allowing performers to bring their authentic identities to the work. The play explores identity, perception, and transformation; therefore, flexible casting enhances these themes and encourages a more inclusive and dynamic interpretation of the material.

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

“Mr. Shroud”

A dark room on the right side of the stage, the left side of the stage is bare. The only pieces of furniture in the room are a small TV on a table, and a bed off to the side. A man is sitting with his profile to the audience. His TV is straight ahead of him. He is watching “The Evening News with Dan Rather.” He falls asleep. After a minute, a loud beeping noise goes off and continues to go off throughout the scene. The lights turn red as fog slowly comes into the room. “Chant of the Paladin Medieval” is heard in the background. (*See Special Note on Songs and Recordings.) LOGAN gets up and checks his watch. He panics and paces. An image in a red cloak appears in the room in a pool of fog. His face cannot be seen as it is covered with a black mask. A psychedelic image appears on the back wall and stays on the back wall until the second to last scene of the play.*

LOGAN. Go away, Mr. Shroud, it’s not time yet. *(Long pause. MR. SHROUD does not move.)* I said, go away, Mr. Shroud; I still have time left. *(Long pause. Two more Shrouds in black cloaks and masks enter the room.)* I’m not leaving. I still have more than an hour left. *(Long pause. The Shrouds approach the bed.)* Can’t handle me by yourself, Mr. Shroud? Got to bring in back up? *(Long pause. The Shrouds surround the bed. Logan rises angrily.)* It’s not time yet! I have more time. You know it’s Her first warning. *(The Shrouds grab Logan who resists violently.)* Damn it! It’s not time yet! I still have more time. Mr. Shroud, I have more time! *(Mr. Shroud raises his hands and brings them down quickly as the lights go out. Blackout. The television remains on.)*

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SCENE 2 “Logan’s Run”

Lights up on Logan’s bed. His alarm clock is going off. Logan sits up in bed in a panic and turns off the alarm clock. He quickly grabs a pill bottle from his pocket and takes four pills. He searches and finds a bottle of brandy in his bed and drinks what’s left of it. He gets up and shuts off the TV. He pulls a small tape recorder from his pocket and turns it on and speaks directly into it.

LOGAN. I’m talking in my head again. I do that a lot. It hurts inside. It always hurts every day for as long as I can remember breathing. I hate who I am. Some days it’s hard to live with myself. My insomnia keeps the days, the hours, the weeks a mess in my head. I need to take my pills, or did I take them already? If I didn’t it would be a long day of daydreams and hallucinations. If I did take them then I’ll face reality another day and deal with a life I hate waking up to. It’s Her fault I’m miserable. She controls me and I don’t even know who She is. I’ve never seen Her before, but I know She’s there. She brings me out to play because She can’t face Her own life. The names have been changed to protect Her innocence. I’ve been doing this for Her. I cannot remember when we started. Mr. Shroud knows. He knows everything. He never gives me enough time to figure it out though. Just ninety minutes. I keep time on the watch he gave me. He wants me to know when he’s coming for me so I’m ready. That’s why I hate him so much. He takes me back every night when my time expires, and I have to start over from scratch the next night. This recording is proof of that. No naps, just night. We have quite a history together. We’ve been doing this for many years. She controls Mr. Shroud and Mr. Shroud controls me. He’s Her lackey. They’re both pathetic. If I ever get one night to stay around long enough and I figure out how to escape, I’m never coming back and then She’ll have to deal with it alone, by herself just like I do. She thinks I’ll find the answers for Her. Shit, She’s been searching for years. If She can’t find them by now, then why doesn’t She just let me go? I’ve got my own problems. Does She think I don’t dream? I dream all the time, weird

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dreams. She hates it when I dream because then I can hide and She has to find me to get me back on track. It's a little game we play. Hide and seek. I'm trying to escape Her. Every chance I get. Here comes Jessica right on time. The dreams already started. *(The lights change, and Logan is dressed as the character Logan 5 from the movie "Logan's Run". JESSICA 7 from the movie comes running in. They both are holding sci-fi guns. They are both running towards the audience in a small spot of light. "A Little Less Conversation*" by Elvis Presley plays in the background throughout the scene. (*See Special Note on Songs and Recordings.)*

JESSICA 7. We have to get going. Francis is coming to kill us. We have to hide. The Sandman is coming!

LOGAN. Right, exactly, I remember the dream, we have to run. We are runners. Help me escape Jessica. Take me to Sanctuary. Hide me.

(Logan and Jessica continue to run throughout the scene. Logan talks into his tape recorder.) This is what I dream about, that I'm Logan from that movie Logan's Run and I'm a Sandman, which is a police assassin, and I'm forced to search for a place called Sanctuary. This place is where people have apparently escaped from the sealed city of the future in which I live. I'm hoping I can use Jessica to hide me and throw Mr. Shroud off my path, so I can figure how to escape. *(She grabs Logan. Logan turns off his tape recorder and puts it in his pocket.)*

JESSICA 7. Keep running, he's right behind us.

LOGAN. Can you help me escape?

JESSICA 7. That's what we're trying to do. We have to find Sanctuary before the Sandman kills us.

LOGAN. The Sandman is Mr. Shroud. He wants to take me back to Her. She knows I'm trying to escape.

JESSICA 7. You mean back to him. The Sandman is Francis. He used to be your best friend. You used to be a Sandman with him, and now you're a runner like the ones you used to kill.

LOGAN. The Sandman will come to put you to sleep for good. The Sandman is Mr. Shroud. Don't you remember? We've done this a thousand times. If I go with you, She'll never find me. But if She catches you, you're dead.

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JESSICA 7. You can't stop now. He's too close. We must keep moving.

LOGAN. Even when I sleep, I fear Mr. Shroud. You could take Mr. Shroud out for me. Without Mr. Shroud She'd have to find me herself.

JESSICA 7. No Mr. Shroud, Sandman! Sandman! What's wrong with you?

LOGAN. Mr. Shroud wants to take me back. Back to Her, don't you see? Help me get rid of Mr. Shroud. He works for Her. He will kill you.

JESSICA 7. (*Shakes Logan while running.*) Get a hold of yourself. You're not making sense. Francis will kill us both.

LOGAN. It's going to go off soon. It's been about three minutes, which means he's coming, first warning.

JESSICA 7. Wait. You're not Logan.

LOGAN. No, I'm not Michael York and you're not Jenny Agutter. You're Jessica.

JESSICA 7. Who's Michael York and Jenny Agutter?

LOGAN. From the movie...Logan's Run...never mind. Can you hide me?

JESSICA 7. Wait, you've changed. Did you end up getting that plastic surgery? I thought you didn't get it.

LOGAN. Um.... alright I'll play again; I had to hide from Francis.

JESSICA 7. It didn't work because Francis is chasing us. (*He looks behind him. Shrouds are chasing them.*)

LOGAN. No, he's not, they're Shrouds! Run!

JESSICA 7. What are you going to do?

LOGAN. Keep running, hide. I got seven minutes left.

JESSICA 7. I wish I could help you.

LOGAN. You'll think of something.

JESSICA 7. I wish I knew what you think I know?

LOGAN. Can I trust you or do you work for Her?

JESSICA 7. You can trust me. (*She goes to kiss him, but Logan gets her to keep running.*)

LOGAN. Any other time I'd say sure, especially with Jenny Agutter who plays Jessica, but I have to get out of here. Sanctuary, can you take me there?

JESSICA 7. I don't know where Sanctuary is, but if I help you find it,

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they'll kill us both right?

LOGAN. The Shrouds don't know you're helping me; besides, you're doing it innocently.

JESSICA 7. Shrouds? What's a shroud? I don't understand.

LOGAN. Never mind, they're the same thing as a Sandman. They'll be more soon. We must keep running and hiding. Time is running out.

JESSICA 7. I feel a weird presence among us.

LOGAN. It's going to go off again in ten minutes. They're early.

JESSICA 7. What's going to go off?

LOGAN. He's coming. She's found me. This was too easy. It's not time yet I still have more than an hour left to figure this out and try to escape from Her.

JESSICA 7. I know Francis is coming. We have to go.

LOGAN. It goes off every night nine times, and then it stops. Damn Her. It's Her fault. She drinks too much.

JESSICA 7. What goes off?

LOGAN. Sometimes with music, sometimes just the annoying...shit, they're still here, but I don't get it they're three minutes early. (*Shrouds are still chasing behind them.*)

JESSICA 7. What are they?

LOGAN. Mr. Shroud sent them. He wants to take me back. They don't like it when I try to escape the game.

JESSICA 7. Keep running!

LOGAN. It's not time yet Mr. Shroud. I've got three minutes yet. He's early because I'm escaping.

JESSICA 7. Run Logan, run!

LOGAN. He's not going to leave until it goes off, and he makes sure I go to work.

JESSICA 7. If the Sandman sent it, then we must destroy it.

LOGAN. That's right, the Sandman sent it we must destroy it.

JESSICA 7. Take cover. I'm taking this thing out! (*Jessica and Logan jump to the ground and roll. They start to fire at the Shrouds. Laser gun sound effects are heard in a barrage of fire aimed at the Shrouds.*)

LOGAN. Did you hear that? No more Mr. Shroud. Who do you have then? Who's going to fight your battles now?

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JESSICA 7. Logan get down and start firing at them. *(Both Jessica and Logan battle the Shrouds. Each takes on six Shrouds on the right and left sides of the stage. When it seems, they have beaten all the Shrouds, a loud beeping noise is heard, the lights turn red, and a pool of fog pours over the stage floor.)*

LOGAN. Shit almost ten minutes! Time!

JESSICA 7. What's happening? What is that?

LOGAN. Ten minutes. It's been ten minutes. Hold on, She'll shut it off in a second.

JESSICA 7. I can't take it. It's so loud. *(“Chant of the Paladin Medieval*” plays in the background a Mr. Shroud slowly enters and crosses downstage. (*See Special Note about Songs and Recordings.)*

LOGAN. Give it a minute Mr. Shroud. Just wait a second; you know this is normal for Her. I won't escape. I'll go to work, now leave us. *(Jessica and Logan fire everything they have at Mr. Shroud. He is not affected at all. He flings their guns out of their hands with a simple arm movement. They try to fight him, but without touching either one of them, Mr. Shroud tosses them upstage by just lifting his arm. They fly into other Shrouds that knock them to the ground. The Shrouds drag Logan and Jessica back over to Mr. Shroud. Jessica tries to get up, and Mr. Shroud pounds her head onto the ground repeatedly with an arm movement over her head. Logan runs to tackle Mr. Shroud but is stopped when Mr. Shroud turns and lifts his hand over Logan, shocking him to the floor. Jessica grabs her ray gun from a shroud and once again tries to fire at Mr. Shroud.)*

JESSICA 7. Logan move!

LOGAN. Jessica don't! *(He releases Logan and turns to Jessica, he then raises his hand and blasts energy into her body fatally wounding her. He looks at both of them wounded on the ground, walking slowly backwards upstage. He lifts his arms and the other Shrouds exit walking backwards slowly. Mr. Shroud slowly exits off. The music and the beeping noise stop. The lights return to normal. Jessica crawls to Logan and dies. Logan looks down at her.)* I'm sorry Jessica; maybe some days the dream will end differently for you. I have to go to work. She found me again. *(Blackout.)*

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SCENE 3

“Marked for Telemarketing”

Logan is seated at a table with a woman and a man. They should be very cartoon-like. They are frozen with stupid expressions on their faces. Another man is standing behind the table. His arms are flailing all over the place as he's directing his anger and shouting at Logan in silence. Logan speaks into his tape recorder.

LOGAN. I work for a telemarketing firm, Bisbing Business. Every dream is the same torture. What do I do? Well, like any normal telemarketing service we would call the average Joe or Jane and survey what kind of bathroom products they use. You know what kind of toilet paper, toothbrush, soap, hair products, this, that, and the other thing. Then we would turn our surveys over to the bigwig companies who carry these products so they can find out what people are buying so they can continue to be competitive with the competition. That's why you always see the “new and improved” on all bathroom supplies. It's new and improved because of us, the telemarketer, who listens to your every concern or who gets sworn at, hung up, or reported to the government because we called the no-call list, all this fun for minimum wage. I wish that was my job. I wouldn't mind it, but remember, I work for Her. We all work for Her. So, it's nothing like I just described. That would be normal. My life is far from normal. Here, we talk only to Her. We check in and do surveys to make sure She's functioning all right. She gets very confused sometimes and indecisive. She needs us to be certain for Her. We convince Her through our surveys She's doing the right thing. I try to cheat and confuse Her by not calling and filling in the survey with the total opposite of what She would say as part of the game, which She hates. The only problem is that Mr. Shroud is always watching us. He tells Her about the littlest thing we do wrong. We don't always see him, but he's around. Every morning, when I'm late, Her boss gives us a pep talk on trying to ask as many questions that She has submitted to him as possible. Today I question Her on relationships. I guess Carol is questioning Her on food. He's my co-worker, who I can't stand, and

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Linda is questioning Her on Her fashion, she's also my co-worker who I hate. I guess I hate them both because they suck up to the boss who constantly yells at me, and Mr. Shroud who watches my every move. They like it here and, of course, they love Her. They'll never quit or try to escape. They will in time, and then they'll be sorry they never escaped. I try to tell them that She controls our life and they just don't listen, or they don't believe me. Meeting is dismissed I better get to work.

BOSS. Logan, I don't like your attitude lately, and I don't think She appreciates it either.

LOGAN. I'm doing the best I can, given the situation. What do you want from me?

BOSS. You should be grateful to us that you're here and you have a job. You know She could put you someplace worse than this. Much worse.

LOGAN. I realize that sir. I'm thankful, I'm thankful. I'm not trying to escape, am I? Now can I go to work, or would you like to yell at me some more and make this nightmare worse for me?

BOSS. I prefer the pronoun "they" when you refer to me. You better watch yourself around here with that attitude. Someday Mr. Shroud will come for you, and you'll never come back.

LOGAN. Can I please go to work? I don't want to keep Her waiting.

BOSS. We're watching you. We are all watching you. *(They all exit. Logan sits at a chair and puts a headset on. A small table is in front of him with a clipboard with a survey on it. A sexy female voice answers. It is "HER.")*

LOGAN. Hello, are you there?

HER. Is this Logan? Sounds like Logan.

LOGAN. It's me.

HER. You haven't talked to me in weeks. Too busy trying to escape?

LOGAN. You know when I lose the game.

HER. You've lost the game for many years now; in fact, you've never won. I'm glad you're back, you're still my favorite. That's why I keep you around. I'm ready.

LOGAN. Question number one, true love, friends with benefits, or uncommitted sex?

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HER. How would you answer that question Logan?

LOGAN. With you, or Mr. Shroud?

HER. Behave Logan, or less time on the clock.

LOGAN. Answer?

HER. True love, of course.

LOGAN. Relationship or friends with benefits?

HER. Isn't that like the first question?

LOGAN. Look, I don't write them; I just read them.

HER. You're grumpy again today.

LOGAN. Try, for the last several years. Why don't you let me go and stop these continuous repeated dreams?

HER. Because you're a bad employee and you try to escape; you don't respect me or others gender identity...

LOGAN. Do you prefer men or women?

HER. A prohibited question, careful Logan that is not on the survey.

LOGAN. Gender?

HER. Again, a prohibited question stick to the script.

LOGAN. Gender?

HER. Logan you risk losing precious time. I'm warning you.

LOGAN. Virgin or slut? (*An alarm sounds.*)

HER. I'm disappointed once again in you Logan, please report to Mr. Shroud. I believe you're done for the day.

LOGAN. I don't think so.

HER. Any attempts to escape will result in you being erased. I tire of this game you play every day. It's getting old. I suggest you start over with me tomorrow with a different tone, and face reality that this is your life, now and until the day you die. (*The line goes dead. CAROL walks over.*)

CAROL. Sitting not talking on the phone? (*LINDA enters.*)

LINDA. What's wrong, how come you're not smiling today?

LOGAN. (*Logan talks into the tape recorder again.*) Let me reiterate why I hate these two. Every time I'm at work and Carol asks me the obvious...

CAROL. Got in trouble again?

LOGAN. And Linda always has to ask...

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LINDA. What's wrong? Is something the matter? You don't look happy.

LOGAN. If it was up to Linda, I'd have a constant smile on my face all the time. Please note if I ever escape, I'm going to make sure I come back here and kill them both. *(Boss enters.)*

BOSS. Why is no one working? She is terribly upset, especially with you Logan. No results mean longer hours. Now I expect the two of you to get to work immediately, and you my friend, have a date with Mr. Shroud who's taking you back.

CAROL. Going home Logan? Get in trouble again? *(Carol exits.)*

LINDA. Is there something wrong? You don't seem happy? *(Linda exits. Logan checks his watch, talking to himself.)*

LOGAN. Mr. Shroud, shit, I have four minutes before it goes off again. I totally lost track of time. I got to get out of here.

BOSS. Get back to work. Logan, come with me.

LOGAN. I got to get out of here. Right now! But who...wait I know just the person. If I remember the dream correctly, he should be here right about... *(The Flintstones theme song* plays (*See Special Note about Songs and Recordings.) FRED FLINTSTONE comes running on firing an AK 47. He grabs Logan and pulls him stage right to Logan's car.)*

FRED. Barney get in!

LOGAN. I'm not Barney, but okay.

BOSS. Intruder alert! Intruder alert! Where is Mr. Shroud?

SCENE 4 **"Tally's Folly"**

Tally's house which looks surprisingly like Logan's. Logan is talking into his tape recorder pacing the room. Tally is seated on the bed.

TALLY. Are you okay?

LOGAN. *(Talks into his tape recorder.)* Nine minutes? It only took a minute to get over here. There's got to be some mistake, it's different this time. The dream is different.

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TALLY. Why do you keep that giant watch on your hand?

LOGAN. It lets me know when Mr. Shroud's coming for me. That's the guy in the cloak that killed, Fred and Jessica.

TALLY. Who's Jessica?

LOGAN. A friend, she was killed trying to help me escape.

TALLY. Oh, I'm sorry.

LOGAN. Don't worry she dies every night.

TALLY. Who are you trying to escape from?

LOGAN. Look, I really don't have time to explain. Do you have anywhere I can hide? Someplace no one would find me. I need some time to plan.

TALLY. You're going to have to slow down if you want me to help you. You can give me at least three minutes.

LOGAN. Okay, three minutes. But then you've got to take me someplace that he won't find me or Her.

TALLY. First introductions, hi, I'm Tally Kinzie. (She holds out her hand and Logan doesn't shake it. She grabs his hand and shakes it.) Hi, I'm Tally Kinzie.

LOGAN. They just call me Logan. You don't know about Her, do you?

TALLY. Her who? Who is this person you're running from?

LOGAN. (He studies her.) Wait a minute...you sure look familiar. You have to have something to do with Her or else you wouldn't be here. Have we met before someplace?

TALLY. Look, why don't you explain Her to me and then I'll tell you if I know Her.

LOGAN. Okay, I work for this woman, and I have for a long time. She runs this telemarketing service. I ask Her questions. Sort of a survey on Her life you could say. She controls me. I wake up every day in a dream to serve Her. If I disobey Her, I'm punished by Mr. Shroud. I can't tell you any more than that because She's already pissed at me. We have this game of wits we play. If I escape then She doesn't control my dreams anymore, but if I'm caught then I serve Her dreams forever or until I die.

TALLY. You don't need Her. Why don't you just quit or try to wake up. Better yet just tell Her to kiss your ass.

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LOGAN. I'm sleeping but it seems I am always awake. It's hard to tell.

TALLY. So, you're not dreaming now, and you seem like you're awake, how can She control you?

LOGAN. How do I know that? I'm an insomniac because I'm afraid to sleep because of Her. I'm so screwed up with my pills and alcohol I haven't been able to tell when I'm asleep and when I'm awake, my whole life's just one big nightmare.

TALLY. I'm sure you're awake now because I'm awake.

LOGAN. Okay, fine, explain Fred Flintstone. He's pretty real, right?

TALLY. Is that who that was? I thought he looked familiar. *(Tally eats her Mr. Happy Burger.)*

LOGAN. The way I see it, it's all got to be a huge dream. If I can escape, I can wake up, if not Mr. Shroud takes me out permanently and I sleep forever, get it? I can't get rid of Her, but I can try to go where she or Mr. Shroud can't find me. That way when that loud beeping sound goes off and they are not around; it will continue to go off and then I can finally wake up. They say we dream for about ninety minutes a night, that's the time I have to escape this dream. They are always watching me. I do the same thing every day I think I'm awake, but then Jessica and Fred pop in when I'm trying to escape, every time with different tactics. Every night I play out the same exact dream and the same thing happens, that's why I want Her to control the clock or else I have to start the dream all over again from the beginning. I need the full ninety minutes. I want Her to shut it off so I can have the full time to figure this out. It's weird, I know. This is the first time since I started this that my dream's been different. You have never been in it before. Something has changed. The game is different.

TALLY. *(Has her mouth full of food.)* Different?

LOGAN. Yeah, I've been playing this little game with Her for years trying to escape. She expects it from me every night when I go to sleep. She loves the challenge, that's why I think She and Mr. Shroud have kept me around so long. They always get the same results, until tonight.

TALLY. I don't quite understand, but hey, maybe I'm not supposed to. All I know is I'm not dreaming, and I have problems too, plus I'm

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weird, so nothing surprises me anymore. If that's your story, I'll play along. All dreams have meanings. We need to figure out what your dream is trying to tell you. Okay?

LOGAN. It's really not okay. I'm tired of running, tired of the fear of never waking up again and I'm really tired of Mr. Shroud taking me back to start the dream over again. There is no meaning in fear.

TALLY. Maybe I'm here to protect you. Dut da da! (*Makes a Superman pose.*)

LOGAN. Anyone who helps me ends up getting killed, so I suggest we should part company as soon as I find a good place to hide. She must have added you because She was getting bored and wanted to spruce up the game.

TALLY. Maybe your mind sent me. Maybe I'm here to help you escape. Or maybe you're just an insomniac who hasn't gotten a lot of sleep, so you've really become paranoid, schizophrenic and have seen some incredible hallucinations. Do you take medicine for your insomnia? Have you seen a shrink about this? What's your sign?

LOGAN. Are you done?

TALLY. Maybe...I guess I'm just going to have to play along.

LOGAN. It doesn't make sense. Could She have sent you to help me? I've been playing the game for so long with Her maybe She finally feels the competition's too weak, too boring, always the same, so She gave me you to even the odds since She's got Mr. Shroud.

TALLY. Look, maybe this lady you're talking about is real, but one thing I know is real is that Mr. Shroud guy, in fact I'm almost sure of it. I thought he looked familiar when I saw him at the Mr. Happy Burger, I think he bought some French fries once.

LOGAN. You've got to be kidding? Where have you seen Mr. Shroud before?

TALLY. At a bar I go to called the Rainbow Room. That's where those shroud things I think go to gather. It's some transgender identification club or something

like that. I always thought they were a little freaky, but hey, I'm freaky myself so they never bothered me. The club's a hangout for most of the rejects or the unaccepted in the city. I don't think those shroud things

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have many friends; I mean look at them. That's why they created their club. I go there because I feel safe with all those Shrouds there. They are pretty intimidating if you ask me. I've got some serious baggage, and I don't like anybody to mess with me. If you're looking for a place to hide that's where I'd go, not many people know that place, and it's by invitation only. It's a pretty private club. No windows in the place.

LOGAN. That might be the perfect place for me to hide. She would never know I was there, and it's the last place Mr. Shroud would think of looking for me. At their own home base.

TALLY. Plus, it may be helpful if we wear these things to disguise ourselves *(She pulls out two cloaks from under her mattress like the ones worn by the Shrouds.)* My friend and I were going to join their club, or whatever it was, but they are very selective. They don't talk, they communicate through touch and they are very private, anyway I kept the cloaks when I tried to join. *(She laughs and puts one on. Logan stands dead still and stares at his cloak on the ground. He pulls a gun on it.)* How do I look? *(She throws her arms up trying to imitate a shroud and pretending to blast Logan.)*

LOGAN. That's not funny but this may work. *(He puts on his cloak.)* Mine's a little big. Let's go I can try to think of a new plan of escape without worrying about my time running out. I have about five minutes left.

TALLY. I hate to do this.

LOGAN. What? *(Not paying attention to Tally and trying to fix his hood.)* What do you mean? *(She hits him over his head with a mini baseball bat and knocks him out.)*

TALLY. Sorry, I don't trust anyone either; you're a strange one, but I like you. *(Blackout. The lights come back up at the Rainbow Room bar. Tally walks in with Logan. The place is full of Shrouds that are moving about the bar. They are both dressed as Shrouds, but their masks are up. The cloak hood hides their faces. They both whisper. The song, "Mama Told Me Not to Come*" by The Three Dog Night, "Taking It to the Street*" by The Doobie Brothers, "Sweet Dreams*" by Annie Lennox* and "Dreams*" by The Cranberries plays in the background during the entire scene. (*See Special Note about Songs and Recordings.)* Sorry I

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knocked you out. I was afraid you'd give us away as nervous as you are, so I just dragged you through the door. They let me right in.

LOGAN. Thanks for the headache. This bar looks familiar. It's like I've been here before.

TALLY. Maybe in your dreams.

LOGAN. Time?

TALLY. Relax. They're not going to find you here because they wouldn't think of looking for you here, remember? We are the Shrouds so actually we are now looking for you. We are now the hunters.

LOGAN. My watch is missing!

TALLY. Take it easy, I'm wearing it. You're too antsy and nervous with this thing on. You're going to blow our cover. Time doesn't matter anymore; they're not going to find you. I promise. They think we are them.

LOGAN. All these Shrouds... I don't feel good. *(Shrouds continue to move around the bar throughout scene)*

TALLY. Take a breath, order us a drink, and relax, you're one of them. Just remember one thing. Whatever you do never, ever speak to them, Shrouds don't speak. *(Tally looks at the Shrouds at the bar. They see her and move away. Logan and Tally go and sit at the bar.)*

LOGAN. They don't speak?

TALLY. They talk with their minds.

TALLY. Right, whatever you say, just think what you want, and they will serve you. I'll drink whatever you're having. *(Playing along)* Now don't think of anything else but what you want, clear your mind or they'll read what you're thinking and then we're sunk. So, don't think about your situation. You're a shroud, keep your mind clear and you'll be safe. *(Logan takes out his pills and takes three of them)* This may not be a good time for you to be popping your pills or drinking.

LOGAN. How am I supposed to plan an escape? I thought the purpose of coming here was to stop time and give me a chance to get my thoughts together and find a good place to hide where they can't find me.

TALLY. Well, you can't escape quite yet. Just relax for once in your life. We can think of something later. Just have a drink and shut up okay. Be

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a shroud. I have to use the bathroom, I'll be right back, are you going to be okay?

LOGAN. I've been okay for many years by myself. Two minutes isn't going to change things.

TALLY. I think there's a line, I might be awhile.

LOGAN. Don't take too long, just in case.

TALLY. Yeah, I'd hate for you to wake up. *(She exits to the bathroom. The line disperses when the Shrouds see Tally approach.)*

LOGAN. I've never dreamt this before, what's happening? It's not following the usual pattern. Time? Shit, wait, she's got my watch. Wait, wait, don't think of anything, clear mind. *(A shroud approaches him. He looks at him and concentrates. The shroud pauses and then slowly puts two drinks on the bar and leaves.)* It really works. *(He drinks his drink. He takes out his tape recorder and whispers in it in a panic.)* I'm in the shroud's den! I'm in the shroud's den!

MOTHER. Psst... *(Logan looks around paranoid. He notices a shroud coming near him. She sits next to him at the bar. She lifts her mask.)*

LOGAN. Is that you Tally? That was quick.

MOTHER. No. You don't know me, but we both have someone in common we know.

LOGAN. We do? Who?

MOTHER. Her. Keep looking straight ahead. Don't look at me.

LOGAN. How do you know Her? How the hell did she find me already? *(He looks around frantically. The Shrouds turn to him. Logan and Mother are silent. The Shrouds continue to roam. One shroud continually crosses past Logan and Mother by the bar.)*

MOTHER. Settle down, or they'll know you're not one of them. Just keep looking straight ahead and continue to whisper with me. I don't have much time; your friend will be returning from the bathroom in a moment.

LOGAN. What do you want?

MOTHER. I'm not a shroud if that's what you're thinking. Do you really want to escape from Her? Do you really want to wake up from this dream?

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LOGAN. Yes, more than anything. I've been trying for years.

MOTHER. And you continue to fail on a daily basis. Do you know why?

LOGAN. Yes, she's more powerful than me, she controls the time, plus she's got Mr. Shroud and these other Shrouds serving and protecting Her, doing the dirty work.

MOTHER. That's not the reason you're failing, quiet for a second. *(A Shroud comes and sets a bottle in front of the two, they are silent.)* I'll tell you why you fail time and time again.

LOGAN. My friend's going to be back anytime now, and I have to keep my mind clear.

MOTHER. Don't worry, we have time. Concentrate. *(Logan pour himself a drink.)*

LOGAN. What do you want from me?

MOTHER. Do you know who I am Logan?

LOGAN. No. I have no idea, but I know you're probably not a shroud.

MOTHER. I am Her mother, the one that controls you. You would like your freedom from Her, yes?

LOGAN. More than anything, I just want to end this nightmare.

MOTHER. Do you know what gives people power Logan? Pain. We all suffer pain of identity of who we really are, but some of us are strong enough to overcome pain and seek answers for it. Those types of sufferers do not rest until they get restitution. It may take them years, but eventually they'll get it. They might have to do the worst things imaginable even to themselves, but in the end, they win and discover who they really are. Then there are some of us who never overcome it, and we are the sufferers who use vices of just accepting confusion to make the pain go away. Take this glass of alcohol, I can be in pain but the more I drink, the less it hurts. I may know what I'm drinking but others may see the clear liquid as something else. So, what the sufferers cannot escape, no matter how much they try to change their vision of reality of who they are or who they want to identify as, that's the guilt. That guilt is so strong that they live with it their whole life being what others want them to be and not their true self, and eventually it follows them to the grave, and they lived a whole life of a lie. Am I making any

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sense to you?

LOGAN. I'm sorry; I have no idea what you're talking about.

MOTHER. She's powerful Logan, and she suffers just like you; but she's learned to use that suffering as a springboard for power and revenge. It's the reason why I'm in this bar in disguise like yourself. She's banished me. She has no more use for me. I've served my purpose, and now I'm dispensable. Children seem to forget when they grow older. They put them in the farthest part of their mind, and then we do the most fascinating thing. They deny they changed. They convince themselves they never did but that we changed. They are not the same person we raised as a child.

LOGAN. What are you talking about? Are you trying to tell me something?

MOTHER. Guilt, Logan, it follows us all no matter how much we try to forget, guilt is left. Guilt of not being who we really are-who we long to be. That's why I hide from Her. I don't know who She's become and who She now associates herself with. I hate the games She plays especially with Her, no matter how bad of a person you may be, She should let you go. She's trying to still convince herself that what She's become is real and not just a phase. That is the purpose you serve. That is why She keeps you around. That is why the same game is played day in and day out. She has to figure out if this is really who She is, and when She finally is convinced of it, then and only then, will She let you go.

LOGAN. I am so lost; you're not making sense. What does She have to convince herself of?

MOTHER. You'll find out soon enough. If you want to escape from Her, if you want to wake up then finish the game. Play the entire ninety minutes if She lets you. I think this one will be the last game you both ever play. That's why the dream is different tonight. Don't you understand? She put herself in the dream because She's losing. She's heading for a mental breakdown. You've been winning all these years. She has to take you out before it's too late. You know the truth and She is confused with who

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She really is, it's easier to blame you and make you suffer.

LOGAN. What do I need to do?

MOTHER. Nothing to do, just play it out to the end. But remember, whatever you did to make Her so angry to try to kill you, it never changed who She was born to be. She was always that person. You just reassured Her of what She already knew about herself. The truth.

LOGAN. Quit talking in fragments. Tell me what I need to do?

MOTHER. Guilt was my weakness, but the thing that I got in return was the truth. The truth will set you free. Sometime in life we cannot face who we really are, what God makes us, it's a long journey to discovery. *(She toasts him and takes another drink.)*

LOGAN. I don't understand what you're saying. Please be more specific. Are you really Her mother?

MOTHER. She never called me. I just want Her to be happy.

LOGAN. Are you really Her mother?

MOTHER. She forgot about me; she changed because she didn't think I would accept Her. I always accepted who she was. I always knew. Mothers always know.

LOGAN. Are you really Her mother?

MOTHER. I guess it really did happen, and maybe that's what finally convinced Her. That's why we were never the same. The guilt, the guilt, the guilt...times up Logan. Tell Her, I love Her. *(Logan loses himself and grabs Mother.)*

LOGAN. *(Shouting and shaking Mother.)* Are you Her mother? *(The Shrouds turn to Logan as Tally enters. The Shrouds approach Logan. They throw him to the floor and hover above him. They take off his disguise as he screams. They start to beat him. The loud beeping noise is heard along with "The Chant of the Paladin Medieval*" plays. (*See Special Note about Songs and Recordings.) The lights change to red as fog pours into the bar as Mr. Shroud enters from upstage. The Shrouds back up as Mr. Shroud approaches Logan. He raises his hand to kill Logan. Tally approaches Mr. Shroud and takes off her shroud mask. Mr. Shroud looks at Tally and slowly backs away. He lifts his arms and the Shrouds leave. Mr.*

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Shroud slowly exits after them. The music and noise stops and the lights return to normal. Tally looks down at an unconscious Logan as the lights fade to black.)

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—
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