

A Strange Loop

Book, Music and Lyrics
by Michael R. Jackson

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The world premiere of *A STRANGE LOOP* was produced by Playwrights Horizons, Inc. (Tim Sanford, Artistic Director; Leslie Marcus, Managing Director; Carol Fishman, General Manager) in association with Page 73 Productions (Michael Walkup, Artistic Director; Amanda Feldman, Managing Director) in New York on June 17, 2019. The performance was directed by Stephen Brackett, with choreography by Raja Feather Kelly, set design by Arnulfo Maldonado, costume design by Montana Levi Blanco, lighting design by Jen Schriever, and music direction by Rona Siddiqui. The Production Stage Manager was Erin Gioia Albrecht. The cast was as follows:

USHER	 Larry Owens
THOUGHT #1	 L Morgan Lee
THOUGHT #2	 James Jackson, Jr.
THOUGHT #3	 John-Michael Lyles
THOUGHT #4	 John-Andrew Morrison
THOUGHT #5	 Jason Veasey
THOUGHT #6	 Antwayn Hopper

A STRANGE LOOP was subsequently produced by Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, DC, on November 22, 2021, with the following cast change:

USHER	 Jaquel Spivey
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A STRANGE LOOP was originally produced on Broadway by Barbara Whitman, and opened at the Lyceum Theatre on April 26, 2022.

CHARACTERS

1 man, 6 any gender adults (2 high voice, 2 flexible voice, 2 low voice)

USHER – A fat American black gay man of high intelligence, low self-image, and deep feelings. He writes stories and songs and wants desperately to be heard. A musical theater writer and Broadway usher.

THOUGHTS #1-6 – A spectrum of bodies that are Usher's perceptions of reality inside and out. They come in many shapes and sizes. But they are all black. And they are as individual in expression as they are a unit.

SETTING

A loop within a loop within a loop inside a perception of one man's reality

NOTE ON MUSIC

The music of *A Strange Loop* is influenced by an eclectic mix of references and styles of everything from “I Hope I Get It” by Marvin Hamlisch in the dance break of “Intermission Song” to “Trust In Him” by The Clark Sisters in the vocals of “AIDS Is God's Punishment” to “Hey Jupiter” by Tori Amos in the Finale to the overall Take 6 style of much of the vocal writing. As such, I would encourage any company doing the show to approach the playing and singing of each song from a place of deep intention. In particular, the actor portraying Usher must resist the temptation to get caught up in the “bops” of the score. Usher is a character who lives within strict artistic and musical guidelines. Every note he sings is deliberate. He only riffs where riffs are written in. The emotions he carries are all in the straightforward delivery of the melody. He often stands apart from the Thoughts, musically and dramaturgically. “Writing A Gospel Play” and “AIDS Is God's Punishment” are the only two songs where there is really freedom to riff or embellish, because of the gospel style he is imitating/satirizing. The notes on the page are there for a reason (including the blue notes). Please honor them – especially when they clash. Dissonance is a strange loop too.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

01. Intermission Song – Intro	Thoughts
02. Intermission Song – Opening.....	Usher, Thoughts
03. Today.....	Usher
04. We Wanna Know.....	Thoughts
05. Inner White Girl	Usher, Thoughts
06. Didn't Want Nothin'	Thoughts
07. Exile In Gayville	Usher, Thoughts
08. Second Wave	Usher
09. Tyler Perry Writes Real Life	Usher, Thoughts
10. Writing A Gospel Play	Usher, Thoughts
11. A Sympathetic Ear	Thought #1
12. Inwood Daddy.....	Usher, Thoughts
13. Boundaries.....	Usher
14. Periodically.....	Thought #4, Usher
15. Didn't Want Nothin' – Reprise	Thought #5
16. Precious Little Dream/AIDS Is God's Punishment.....	Usher, Thoughts
17. Memory Song.....	Usher, Thoughts #2–6
18. A Strange Loop – Finale	Usher, Thoughts

A Strange Loop is dedicated to Darius Marcel Smith and “all those black gay boys I knew
who chose to go on back to the Lord.”

Darius Marcel Smith (September 13, 1982 – February 25, 2019)

(Blackness. Intermission chimes. USHER stands with his back to us ringing chimes from the back of a theater that manifests as a strange loop in his mind along with silhouettes of his thoughts.)

[MUSIC 01 – INTERMISSION SONG (INTRO)]

ALL THOUGHTS.

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER! *(etc.)*

(USHER turns around, chiming.)

USHER. Everyone, please return to your seats; the second act is about to begin!

Everyone, please return to your seats; the second act is about to begin!

There will be performers running down the aisles and wearing pantaloons and gaudy flowing robes that I think are meant to indicate the wholesome beauty of “Mother Africa”! There will be swinging birds on fishing poles and a black Ken doll with a crossover dialect in a lion costume! What else? Oh, yes! In the background, there will be a young overweight-to-obese homosexual and/or gay and/or queer, cisgender, able-bodied university-and-graduate-school educated, musical theater writing, Disney ushering, broke-ass middle-class politically homeless normie leftist black male American descendant of slaves who thinks he’s probably a vers bottom *(The THOUGHTS all burst into laughter and mock the idea that USHER is vers.)* but not totally certain of that obsessing over the latest draft of his self-referential musical *A Strange Loop*! And surrounded by his *extremely* obnoxious Thoughts!

USHER.

A STRANGE LOOP WILL HAVE BLACK SHIT! ALL THOUGHTS.

AND WHITE SHIT! IT’LL GIVE YOU UPTOWN

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!

AND DOWNTOWN! WITH TRUTH-TELLING

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!

AND BUTT-FUCKING! THERE WILL BE BUTT-

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!

FUCKING! SO PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!

SEATS BECAUSE –

can I really write this?

[MUSIC 02 – INTERMISSION SONG (OPENING)]

THOUGHT #1.

HOW MANY MINUTES ’TIL THE END OF INTERMISSION?

THOUGHT #2.

IS THAT HOW THE SHOW SHOULD OPEN?

THOUGHT #1.

SHOULD THERE EVEN BE A SHOW?

THOUGHT #2.

NO, IT SHOULD START WITH WHAT HE'S THINKING

THOUGHT #1.

WHICH IS JUST A CURSOR BLINKING

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

'CAUSE OF ALL OF THE DIRECTIONS THAT THE NARRATIVE COULD GO!

USHER.

HE WANTS TO SHOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO
LIVE UP HERE
AND TRAVEL THE WORLD IN A FAT, BLACK
QUEER BODY

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

OH USHER...

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

HOW MANY MINUTES 'TIL THE END OF INTERMISSION?

THOUGHT #6.

NO ONE CARES ABOUT A WRITER WHO IS STRUGGLING TO WRITE!

THOUGHT #4.

THEY'LL SAY IT'S WAY TOO REPETITIOUS

THOUGHT #3.

AND SO OVERLY AMBITIOUS

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

WHICH OF COURSE MAKES THEM SUSPICIOUS

THOUGHTS #3-6.

THAT YOU THINK YOU'RE FUCKING (H)WHITE!

USHER.

HE HAS TO FIGHT FOR HIS RIGHT TO LIVE
IN A WORLD
THAT CHEWS UP AND SPITS OUT BLACK
QUEERS ON THE DAILY

THOUGHTS #3-6.

HEY, USHER...

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

BLACKNESS, QUEERNESS, FIGHTING BACK TO FILL THIS CIS-HET-ALL-WHITE SPACE -

THOUGHTS #3 & 4.

WITH A PORTRAIT OF A PORTRAIT OF A PORTRAIT OF A BLACK, QUEER FACE!

THOUGHTS #1-4.

AND A CHOIR FULL OF BLACK QUEER VOICES; TREBLE CLEF...

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

...AND ALSO BASS!

ALL THOUGHTS.

THAT ARE CASTING SPELLS TO CONJURE UP A

USHER.

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY -

THOUGHTS #4–6.

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY –

ALL.

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY SHOW!

(Dance Break: USHER and the THOUGHTS put on a Big, Black and Queer-Ass American Broadway Show.)

ALL THOUGHTS.

HOW MANY MINUTES 'TIL THE END OF INTERMISSION?

THOUGHTS #1 & 4.

'TIL HE HAS TO FACE THE FACT THAT HE IS REALLY IN A JAM?

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

HE HAS NO PATRONS HE CAN CALL ON NOR A BACKUP PLAN TO FALL ON

THOUGHTS #2 & 3.

JUST A HAMSTER WHEEL TO CRAWL ON

THOUGHTS #1 & 5.

AND NOBODY GIVES A DAMN!

USHER & THOUGHTS #2 & 6.

HE TRIES TO SCRAMBLE AND DODGE AND
EXTRICATE

STILL HIS FATE LIES IN WAIT LIKE A
SCAVENGING VULTURE

THOUGHTS #3 & 4.

HEY, USHER...

USHER & THOUGHT #3.

ALL HE WANTS IS TO SUBVERT
EXPECTATIONS BLACK AND (H)WHITE
FROM THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT FOR THE
GOOD OF THE CULTURE

THOUGHTS #1, 2, 4, 5 & 6.

OH, USHER...

THOUGHT #6.

OH, USHER...

ALL THOUGHTS.

USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!
USHER-USHER! USHER! USHER!
HOW MANY MINUTES 'TIL THE END OF INTERMISSION?
YOU'RE A BALL OF BLACK CONFUSION
THAT KEEPS HITTING A PLATEAU

THOUGHT #2.

YOU CAN'T JUST FLOUT EV'RY CONVENTION

THOUGHT #3.

BUT COMMAND COMPLETE ATTENTION IN A

USHER.

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY SHOW!

THOUGHTS #4–6.

HOW MANY MINUTES 'TIL THE END OF INTERMISSION?
SOME SAY WRITE FROM EXPLORATION
SOME SAY JUST WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

THOUGHT #5.

BUT EITHER WAY YOU KEEP CAREENING SO IT'S HARD TO FIND THE MEANING IN YOUR -

USHER.

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY SHOW!

ALL THOUGHTS.

HOW MANY MINUTES 'TIL THE END OF INTERMISSION?

IF YOU CAN'T PLEASE THE CAUCASIANS YOU WILL NEVER GET THE DOUGH -

USHER.

PLUS CRITICS CLINIC'LLY DENY US

THEN DENY IMPLICIT BIAS

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

WITH THEIR VANITY SUPPORTED

BY A SYSTEM THAT'S DISTORTED

THOUGHTS #3 & 4.

WATCH THEM WRITE YOU OFF AS LAZY

NOT TO MENTION NAVEL-GAZY

ALL THOUGHTS.

LACKING BOTH IN CRAFT AND RIGOR

THOUGHT #3.

'CAUSE YOU'RE JUST A FUCKING [NIG-]

THOUGHTS #1, 2, 4, 5 & 6.

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY -

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY -

ALL THOUGHTS.

BIG, BLACK AND QUEER-ASS AMERICAN BROADWAY -

THOUGHTS #1 & 4.

(Variously.)

USHER-USHER!

USHER! USHER! *(etc.)*

THOUGHT #5.

USHER-USHER-USHER!

(etc.)

USHER.

OH MY GOD

OH MY GOD

OH MY GOD

OH MY GOD *(etc.)*

LESS THAN TWO!!!

THOUGHT #3.

HOW MANY MINUTES

'TIL THE END OF

INTERMISSION?

HOW MANY MINUTES

'TIL THE END OF

INTERMISSION? *(etc.)*

HOW MANY MINUTES

'TIL THE END OF

INTERMISSION?

HOW MANY MINUTES

'TIL THE END OF

INTERMISSION? *(etc.)*

THOUGHT #6.

USHER!

USHER! *(etc.)*

THOUGHT #2.

USHER!

USHER! *(etc.)*

THOUGHT #5. Okay, so what's the tea, bitch?

USHER. Ummmmm...

THOUGHT #2. Where's the sweat, Usher; you're not even trying!

THOUGHT #6. What's next, what's next?

USHER. I don't know –

THOUGHT #4. Well, you better figure it out!

THOUGHT #1. And fast!

[MUSIC 03 – TODAY]

USHER. Okay, okay, I got this, I got this. I think after intermission, Usher should get an early dismissal by his shift supervisor so he can go home to work on *A Strange Loop*.

THOUGHT #3. Well, let's get into it honey!

USHER.

I AM A DISNEY USHER
 I'M BARELY SCRAPING BY
 MY DISCONTENTMENT COMES IN
 MANY SHAPES AND SIZES
 BUT I WOKE UP THIS MORNING
 I TOLD MYSELF TO TRY
 I TOLD MYSELF THAT I WOULD
 MAKE NO COMPROMISES TODAY...
 A MEETING WITH MY LANDLORD
 WHO MAKES ME MISS MY TRAIN
 AND I SMELL AWFUL
 CUZ THERE IS NO TIME TO SHOWER
 I PLASTER ON A SMILE
 PRETEND I HAVE NO BRAIN
 MAKE NICE WITH ASSHOLE TOURISTS
 HOUR AFTER HOUR TODAY...
 TODAY I PLAN TO CHANGE MY WHOLE LIFE FOREVER...

THOUGHT #2. USHER! SURPRISE!

(*À la Wendy Williams.*) How U doin'? It's Your Daily Self-Loathing! And I had some time to kill so I thought I'd drop in to remind you of just how truly worthless you are.

THOUGHT #6. Hey, Usher! How U doin'? It's your Financial Faggotry and baby, we need to *chat* about this situation with *Shittybank Student Loans*!

USHER.

REWRITE THAT SHITTY LYRIC
 TO MAKE THE ENDING LAND
 CONDENSE THE REPETITION
 TO ITS MOST ESSENTIAL
 DEFINE A FORMAL STRUCTURE
 SO PEOPLE UNDERSTAND
 PULL OUT THE STOPS TO SHOW
 HIS STORY'S FULL POTENTIAL TODAY...

USHER.

TODAY I PLAN TO CHANGE THIS SHOW FOR THE BETTER...

THOUGHT #5. Usher! Head of Corporate Niggatry here! Just checking in to see if you found your unapologetic blackness yet? 'Cause your numbers are in the *toilet* with the black excellence cult and you're *real* close to cancelation! Coon!

THOUGHT #1. Usher! As Supervisor of Your Sexual Ambivalence, you can rest assured that I have sealed the gates of your body and mind so that *nothing* can get inside your shitty asshole until *you* give the word!

USHER.

I WANT TO BREAK THE CYCLE
THAT'S SO INGRAINED IN ME
BUT CHANGE COMES WAY TOO SLOW
AND I AM IN A HURRY
THERE'S ALL OF THIS REJECTION
WHICH BRINGS SUCH MISERY
BUT WITH MY WHITE GIRL MUSIC
I DROWN OUT THE FLURRY OF TODAY...

I AM A DISNEY USHER
I'M BARELY SCRAPING BY
MY DISCONTENTMENT COMES IN
MANY SHAPES AND SIZES
WHEN I WAKE UP EACH MORNING
I TELL MYSELF TO TRY
I TELL MYSELF THAT I WILL
MAKE NO COMPROMISES
SO DAYS LIKE THIS JUST GET ME
I HATE DAYS LIKE TODAY
DAYS WHEN I FACE MYSELF AND
SEE THE SAME REFLECTION
SOMEONE WHO'S STUCK REWRITING
BUT STUCK IN HIS OWN WAY
SOMEONE WHO PLANS TO EDIT
EV'RY IMPERFECTION... TODAY...

TODAY I PLAN TO CHANGE MY SELF -

ALL THOUGHTS.

OOH
OOH
OOH
OOH OOH OOH
OOH
OOH
OOH
OOH OOH OOH AH
BLOOP BLOOP BLOOP

THOUGHT #2. Oh, girl, *whatever!*

USHER. Okay. So the work day is done, he's about to sit down to write which is of course the precise moment he gets a call from -

(Each **THOUGHT** eats from a Popeyes* box as **USHER** writes.)

THOUGHT #4. USHERRRRRRRRR!!!!!!!!!!!! IT'S YOUR *MOTHER* CALLIIIIIIING!!!!

THOUGHT #3. I ain't want nuthin'.

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THOUGHT #5. I just thought you might be interested to know about some more of this mess goin' on with yo brutha, yo niece, and her *airheaded mama* –

THOUGHT #6. who been goin' around tellin' different people at church like that dat-blasted airheaded Phaedra that God sent her a vision of you touchin' Nala –

THOUGHT #1. *on the vagina* –

THOUGHT #2. at the family reunion las' July.

THOUGHT #5. Now Iunno if Nala even know what a vagina *is* or not –

THOUGHT #1. Let alone whether somebody done *touched* her on it –

THOUGHT #3. But since she don't know no better than to repeat after her *airheaded mama* –

THOUGHT #4. now Nala goin' aroun' tellin' different people at church like that dat-blasted airheaded Phaedra that you “touched” her –

THOUGHT #5. *on the vagina* –

THOUGHT #2. at the family reunion las' July –

THOUGHT #6. so now *Rafiki* –

THOUGHT #3. yo niece's “*mother*” –

THOUGHT #1. “Doesn't know if she feel comfortable letting her dorter come over to her grandmother and grandfather house –

THOUGHT #5. not if we just gonna be lettin' her get *molested all the time*.”

THOUGHT #2. Now how you like them apples?

THOUGHT #1. *And that's why I cain't lose no weight.*

THOUGHT #4. 'Cause I be gettin' into it wit different people and get to feeling so melancholy that all I can do is sit here with this *dat-blasted* Popeyes when *IT AIN'T EVEN GOOD!*

[MUSIC 04 – WE WANNA KNOW]

THOUGHT #2. But annnnnnnnnnyway...that's not why I called.

THOUGHT #3. I called 'cause I wanna discuss my son!

THOUGHT #5. Are you still flowing within your purpose and lettin' the Lord lead ya and guide ya and direct thy path?

THOUGHT #6. Are you still urshering?

THOUGHT #1. When you gon' get discovered?

THOUGHT #3. Ain't it about time for a producer to give you the hook-up on one of yo musical the-A-ter writings?

THOUGHT #4. And what about yo friend Toya? She still married to that guy? You think she might ever change her mind and get sweet on you? C'mon, son! What's the 4-1-1?

ALL THOUGHTS.

WE WANNA KNOW WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN NEW YORK!

WE WANNA KNOW

WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN YA LIFE

ALL THOUGHTS.

WIT PEOPLE THERE LIVIN' ANY WHICH-A WAY
 AND TO HECK WITH WHAT THE B-I-B-L-E SAY
 WE WANNA KNOW WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN NEW YORK!

WE WANNA KNOW
 IF YOU BEEN CHASIN' YA DREAM
 'CAUSE AFTER WHAT ME AND YO DAD WENT THROUGH
 TO SEND YO BLACK BOOTIE TO NYU

THOUGHTS #3-6.

IT APPEARS YOU BE JES' RUNNING AROUND
 AND WITHOUT ANY DIRECTION

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

OOH OOH

THOUGHT #2.

AND WITHOUT ANY DIRECTION

THOUGHT #1.

AND WITHOUT ANY DIRECTION

THOUGHTS #3-6.

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY WANTED TO DO
 THEN WHY AIN'T YOU JES' STAY HERE?

THOUGHT #1. 'Cause you selfish.**THOUGHTS #3-6.**

EV'RY TIME WE CALL YOU UP YOU JES' CLAIM
 THAT YOU DONE MADE SOME CONNECTION

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

OOH OOH

THOUGHT #2. You so full o' doo-doo, yo eyes is brown.**THOUGHTS #3-6.**

YOU CAN LIE TO YOURSELF IF YOU WANT
 BUT YOU CAIN'T LIE TO ME, DEAR

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

OOH OOH

THOUGHT #4. You say you be off writin' musicals but what the heck kinda music you be writin'?**THOUGHT #1.** It probably sound like that dat-blasted white girl music you used to listen to 'n try to hide from me 'n y'Dad when you was in high school, don't it?**THOUGHT #2.** You ain't up there in New York thinking you a white girl wit yo musical the-A-ter writings is you?**THOUGHT #5.** 'Cause every time we ask you just say you be writin' "about 'life'!"**THOUGHT #1.** And I'm like *LIFE!* What you know about *life*?**THOUGHT #6.** You ain't but twenty-five years old!**THOUGHT #3.** Almost *twenty-six!***THOUGHT #2.** You gon' turn twenty-six *on* the twenty-six.**THOUGHT #4.** But I'on care if you twenty-six or a *hundred* and twenty-six, I did all the work to birf you in this world so now *it's time for you to give back.* I gotta *job* for you:

ALL THOUGHTS.

YOU RUNNIN' AROUND THERE WIT A MFA
SO NOW YOU GONNA WRITE ME A GOSPEL PLAY

THOUGHT #4. Like *Tyler Perry*.

THOUGHT #5. 'Cause *Tyler Perry* writes real life.

THOUGHT #3. *Tyler Perry* knows how to bring everything together wit all the *stories*? And all the *singing*? And all the different people *talking*?

THOUGHT #1. And *Tyler Perry* don't never forget to bring in the spirit'ch'alities.

THOUGHT #2. 'Cause *Tyler Perry* loves his Mama –

THOUGHT #6. And the Lord –

THOUGHT #1. So write a nice, clean *Tyler Perry*-like gospel play for your parents please –

THOUGHT #5. It's the *least* your black butt can do after all the love we done gave –

THOUGHT #6. And all the money we done come off of –

THOUGHT #3. Unless you just don't love your Mama –

THOUGHT #4. Or the Lord...

[MUSIC 05 – INNER WHITE GIRL]**USHER.**

ON DAYS HIS BLACKNESS FEELS LIKE ANOTHER HURDLE
THAT WON'T GET OUT OF HIS WAY
HIS INNER WHITE GIRL STARTS KICKIN' LIKE A BABY
SHE WANTS TO COME OUT AND PLAY
SHE DOESN'T CARE IF SHE RUFFLES ANY FEATHERS
IN FACT, THAT IS HER M.O.
WHERE HE'S THE KING OF AVOIDING CONFRONTATION
THERE'S NOT A BOMB SHE WON'T THROW BECAUSE

USHER & ALL THOUGHTS.

WHITE GIRLS CAN DO ANYTHING, CAN'T THEY?
BLACK BOYS MUST ALWAYS OBEY THEIR MOTHERS!
WHITE GIRLS CAN DO ANYTHING, CAN'T THEY?
CAN'T THEY? CAN'T THEY? CAN'T THEY?

USHER.

SOME DAYS HE FEELS LIKE HIS BLACKNESS
IS A TREASURE
THAT'S UNDER CONSTANT ATTACK

HIS INNER WHITE GIRL PROTECTS IT
FROM MARAUDERS
SHE ALWAYS TAKES UP THE SLACK

THOUGHTS #1 & 3.

WHO WHO IS YOU WHO WHO IS YOU?

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH

THOUGHTS #1 & 3.

WHO WHO IS YOU WHO WHO IS YOU?

THOUGHTS #2 & 4.

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH

USHER.

SHE LETS HIM FEEL LIKE A HUMAN
SUPERNOVA
LIKE HE COULD CONQUER THE EARTH

LIKE HE'S THE HEIR TO THE POWER AND
OPPRESSION
HER KIND HAVE WIELDED SINCE BIRTH

BECAUSE

USHER & ALL THOUGHTS.

WHITE GIRLS CAN DO ANYTHING, CAN'T THEY?
BLACK BOYS MUST ALWAYS OBEY THEIR MOTHERS!
WHITE GIRLS CAN DO ANYTHING, CAN'T THEY?
CAN'T THEY? CAN'T THEY? CAN'T THEY?

USHER.

THEY GET TO BE "COOL, TALL,
VULN'RABLE AND LUSCIOUS"
THEY GET TO BE WILD AND UNWISE

THEY GET TO BE SHY AND INTROSPECTIVE

THEY GET TO MAKE NOISE
THEY GET TO MESMERIZE

BLACK BOYS DON'T GET TO BE "COOL,
TALL, VULN'RABLE AND LUSCIOUS"
DON'T GET TO BE WILD AND UNWISE

DON'T GET TO BE SHY AND INTROSPECTIVE

DON'T GET TO MAKE NOISE
DON'T GET TO FANTASIZE...

USHER.

HIS BLACKNESS DOESN'T LOOK BLUE IN ANY MOONLIGHT
WHICH MAKES HIM HARDER TO SEE
THAT'S WHY HE CLINGS TO HIS SILLY INNER WHITE GIRL
THE SAME ONE CLINGING TO ME

THOUGHTS #1 & 3.

WHO

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

WHO

THOUGHTS #1 & 3.

WHO

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

WHO

THOUGHTS #2 & 4.

WHO

ALL THOUGHTS.

WHO

THOUGHTS #2 & 4.

WHO

ALL THOUGHTS.

WHO

THOUGHTS #1-3.

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

AH

THOUGHTS #4-6.

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO DO

DO DO DO DO

OOH

AH

USHER.

WE WANT TO BE FREE!
WE WANT TO BELONG!
WE WANT EITHER LOVE
OR VALIDATION

BUT NEITHER COME EASILY
SO HER SIREN SONG
KEEPS US IN TOTAL
SUBJUGATION...

WE WANT TO BE "COOL,
TALL, VULN'RABLE,
AND LUSCIOUS..."

THOUGHTS #1-3.

OOH
OOH
LOVE

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

TOTAL SUBJUGATION

THOUGHTS #4-6.

OOH
OOH

THOUGHTS #3-6.

WHITE GIRLS CAN DO
ANYTHING CAN'T THEY?

THOUGHTS #1-4.

BLACK BOYS MUST ALWAYS OBEY
THEIR MOTHERS

THOUGHTS #5 & 6.

HEH HEH HEH HEH
HEH HEH HEH

THOUGHTS #1 & 2.

WHO WHO IS YOU?

THOUGHTS #3 & 4.

WHITE GIRLS CAN
DO ANYTHING

AND BLACK!

AND BLACK!

WE WANT TO BE SHY AND
INTROSPECTIVE

WE WANT TO MAKE NOISE

WHO WHO IS YOU?

CAN'T THEY?

CAN'T THEY?

HEH HEH HEH HEH

HEH HEH HEH

WE WANT TO MESMERIZE

WHO WHO IS YOU?

CAN'T THEY?

CAN'T THEY?

BE BLACK!

BE BLACK!

WHY CAN'T WE BE "COOL,
TALL, VULN'RABLE,
AND LUSCIOUS?"

WHO WHO IS YOU?

WHITE GIRLS CAN
DO ANYTHING

WHY CAN'T YOU

BE BLACK?

WHY CAN'T WE EXPRESS
IN OUR OWN WAY?

WHO WHO IS YOU?

CAN'T THEY?

BLACK BOYS MUST
ALWAYS OBEY

YOU BLACK!

YOU BLACK!

WHY CAN'T WE UNLEASH
WHAT'S LOCKED INSIDE US?

WHO MADE UP THESE RULES

THAT BLACK BOYS HAVE TO OBEY?

*(The **THOUGHTS** each peruse a draft of A Strange Loop critically.)*

THOUGHT #3. Uh huh. And an inner white girl is who or what exactly?

USHER. Like Liz Phair? Tori Amos? Joni Mitchell? Those ladies? It's really more of an abstract concept than anything I think. A gesture.

THOUGHT #3. Oy. And just so I'm understanding correctly, he just turns his back to us? That's seriously how the show ends?

USHER. Possibly. In this draft at least.

THOUGHT #3. Hmm. Well, that's certainly a choice.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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