



## The Inner STAR

Imagine a time in the not-too-distant future, where a not-so-unfamiliar virus has consumed the world. Now, imagine a time in the not-too-distant future where not-so-different social injustices have negatively controlled people all over the world. Finally, imagine being a not-so-happy teenager in the middle of this heavily oppressed world---what's a teen to do?! Top it all off with the typical pressures of adolescence: insecurity, anxiety and the desperate search for finding one's identity. What does all of this add up too? Say hello to **Star**, a bright 15-year-old girl whose unique appearance keeps her in a self-imposed social prison. Despite her parent's encouragement, she prefers not to be seen and resides in a lonely place where bullying is impossible. Until one day when she is magically lifted from her isolation and dropped into an astonishing land of *segregation, hate and enslavement*. The inhabitants of this dark world see Star as their bright light towards a world of *Unity, Love and Freedom*. The big question: How does Star see *herself*? Witness her amazing journey as struggles to find her **Inner Star**.

THE INNER STAR

This play was created by the *THA 470: Ensemble Theater* class at SUNY Buffalo State College during the Fall of 2020, when the COVID virus and multiple social injustices had thrown our world into isolation, frustration and fear. This student 'village' chose to process the pandemic through the building of a story that reflected their personal feelings, society's realities and potential solutions during this challenging and chaotic time.

THE INNER STAR must always be performed with the ensemble representing all action of the play with their bodies and voices. There should be no physical set and minimal costumes. The play must always be followed by a kinesthetic workshop with the audience activating the lessons of the play. The actors become the facilitators of the workshop. Both the play and workshop should be 60 minutes.

THE INNER STAR is a co-production of SUNY Buffalo State's Anne Frank Project and Theater Department. Any unauthorized use of this play is strictly prohibited by law.

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ACT I

## SCENE 1

The play begins with all actors in a line upstage of the playing area.

STAR and her PARENTS emerge from the line to watch TV, noises are general "womp womp" sounds, made by all ensemble. The channel is changed three times, with different "womps" each time. A final change of the channel and a large interrupting sound comes from the seated PARENTS, indicating an interruption in the broadcast.

**GOVERNMENT:** Now let's take a break from regular programming for an emergency message: An airborne virus called VIRUS X has suddenly appeared on earth. It attacks the hair cells of any living creature, causing a disorder in the growth of human hair. In three to six days, the virus destroys the hair on your entire body from head to toe, inside out. This is a painful process and there is no known cure.

**TV HOST: (Covering their head)** This is a painful process indeed, and there is no known cure. The government has created 50 temporary solutions for the virus called the BOE. The BOE covers your head, so please protect your hair from the air carrying VIRUS X. At present, the government chooses who receives these BOES... I am Victor/Vivian, and this has been the news.

STAR, a 15-year-old high school girl, did not receive a BOE and neither did her parents. STAR has a beautiful and highly unusual blend of unruly, soft wavy, coiley, curly, and straight long, thick, bright red hair, but no self-confidence and was home schooled because of it. She believes that she will be made fun of because she is different. Six months into VIRUS X's appearance, STAR'S parents decided to transition their daughter into a virtual classroom called Pop-Up. STAR lives in SUVI where the streets are abandoned, where the chances of hearing the sounds of cars driving in the streets are slim to none. This is a place where the homes are in the beginning phases of being overrun by foliage and weeds. Not pretty.

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STAR sits on the sofa in the living room and watches the news on TV with her parents. Suddenly, STAR angrily turned off the TV.

**STAR:** Ah! God! Why do I have such strange and crazy hair! If others see it, they will laugh at me, because I am so different! I'm never going to school again!

Star throws a fit and runs to her room...her parents are left alone in the living room.

DAD looks through stage right window.

**DAD:** (sigh) It's been six months and the Suvi streets where we live has been abandoned by the world. Like autumn leaves on the streets, waiting to be swept away. No one wants to come here and no one pays attention to us.

Mom looks out stage left window.

**MOM:** Although we couldn't change the world, we can try to make ourselves better in this harsh environment. Just like the cactus in the desert, we can survive forever.

Light beat

From her room, Star lets out a loud sob, as DAD goes to see STAR, MOM stops him, and motions that she can handle it. MOM walks over to STAR and tries to console her daughter.

**MOM:** As long as the world is not destroyed, our lives are hopeful. Your studies must continue, so we've decided to transition you to a virtual classroom called Pop-up.

STAR sits in front of her computer.

**STAR:** Ahhh! Why is my face on the screen?! Why is there no beauty function in POP-UP for my hair and face?!?!

**MOM:** I don't think you need to worry about your hair at all. Everyone's hair is beautiful in a different way. Rapunzel has long hair, longer than anyone else around her; Ariel has a beautiful blend of wavy, curly, thick, red hair. Your hair is just like Ariel's! You're a mermaid princess!

STAR begins to cry again.

**STAR:** But I'm not beauti...I'm not a fairytale princess, or a made-up mermaid, I'm just, (sobs)

**MOM:** People think they are beautiful not because Rapunzel and Ariel are princesses, but because they are confident and brave. Your hair is just as pretty as theirs, but no one sees it! Now is the time to tell the world, "I am beautiful, I am confident!"

ENSEMBLE:

"I am beautiful, I am confident!"

*Several days, weeks, and months pass as STAR attempts to learn in school this way.*

**STAR:** (Crying over her laptop) Well Pop-Up didn't help. This hair. This STUPID, UGLY, FRIZZY HAIR! No one can see me like this...

Suddenly, STAR's laptop starts glitching.

**STAR:** No, No, NO, NO not now. Please not now!

STAR hovers over her laptop and watches as it begins to spark and buzz with electricity. TEACHER begins to address the class.

**TEACHER:** (Static) Welc(...) ba(...) one.Le(...) (...)ar(...) atte(...) (shhhhhhhh static).

STAR touches the laptop, immediately opening a portal.

**STAR:** What the...?!?

STAR touches the screen and the portal sucks her in. STAR is tossed through a vortex, and begins to fall.

**STAR:** AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!

STAR lands on the ground of Stardust Valley.

**STAR:** (Super confused) Where... Where am I? What just happened?

*Noises of the jungle begin to flow around her. STAR is alone in a scary, unfamiliar place.*