

# 2018 YOUNG PEOPLE'S Creative Writing Contest

FOR AGES 10-18

"I Am What I Am" by Elsie Burns  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Short Play 13-15

Poems ● Essays ● Comix  
Short Plays ● Short Stories

CASH PRIZES!

Entries Accepted Feb. 1-March 3

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## I Am What I Am 1

## I Am What I Am

Setting: (Chairs placed in a semi-circle towards the back of the stage, six in total.)

## Scene 1

Person 1: (walks to the center of the stage) I Am What I Am. Each day is hard for me to breath. The walls seem to close me off to the world, making me quiet and terrified. Every time I close my eyes, I envision a dark room, I can't see anything and yet I can feel the edges pressing closer and closer. I start to suffocate and I can't breathe anymore. I open my eyes before the walls crush me any further, but this dream is preventing me from sleeping. Depression. That's What I Am.

(Waits)

Person 2: (walks to the center of the stage) I Am What I Am. Each day I wake up with a smile, ready to face the day. I see every moment as an opportunity to embrace new people. When I close my eyes, I see a sailboat, alone on the sea where laughter can be heard in the depth of the sea. The people are happy; their lives finally fulfilled, they can live freely and be themselves. This encourages me to be the best person I can be no

matter what anyone else thinks. If something prevents me from being me, I break it down. Optimism. That's What I Am.

Person 1: (steps forward) How can you smile at the world when in the next moment it'll raise its hand and strike?

Person 2: (turns to face Person 1) How can you live in the darkest part of the world when there is so much more?

Person 1: People like you don't experience the struggle of life. You go around with a carefree attitude because nothing fazes you.

Person 2: And you walk around with all anger of the world on your shoulders, because you're terrified of being you.

Person 1: Don't pretend like you know me! You don't! You don't know what it's like to look into the mirror and think 'I hate myself,' because you look in the mirror and say 'I'm awesome!'

Person 2: I try to help you, but you don't know me either. You don't know the bright side of life.

Person 1: I'd like to see you live one day like me!

Person 2: I already did! I went through that battle, of me vs. me. I did feel the pain and saw the dark room. I felt the walls crush me! Because I used to be you!

Person 1: You used to be me?

Person 2: Yes, and if I can overcome the struggle, so can you. You have to know who you are, a person made to be beautiful, no matter what anyone else says.

Person 1: How do I do that?

Person 2: You Are What Are, that is what you think of yourself, not what anyone else says or believes you are. So ask yourself this: "What Do I think of Me?"

Person 1: (shakes head) I Am What I Am.

Person 2: As Am I.

(Person 1 and Person 2 exit)

Scene 2: (directly after scene 1)

(Victim, Bully walk in)

(The Victim walks to the center of the stage; the Bully crosses their arms)

Victim: I Am What You Make Me, a nerd, someone who isn't necessarily part of the popular crowd. The one who does my homework and yours without questions, the one who's always willing. "Clueless," "lame," "geek," these are just some of my labels. I Am someone who's easily persuaded by a "please," and "I'll make it up to you," when in all actuality you never do. (Turns to the other person)

Bully: (Shakes their head and walks to the center, facing audience) I Am What You Make Me, the 'popular' one, the one who always has friends, and the best of everything. The one with the nice house, car, and seemingly perfect life. But, strip that away and you'll something very different.

(turns to face the Victim)

I Am What I Am. The one whose life looks perfect but is broken. The one with the parents who are never around, and when they are they fight nonstop for no reason. Am I the best at everything? Maybe, but it's because my parents want me to be. I've always grown up, poor little rich kid, never have I been just Me.

Victim: (walks forward) You say your life is broken, then why are you trying to break mine?

Bully: Because I hope that with everything I do, I can make someone feel the same pain I feel.

Victim: But does it make you happy?

Bully: (looks away) Happiness is just a word. I've never known that feeling.

Victim: (nods and walk forward) You say your parents fight, ask them why! You say 'poor little rich me,' and yet everything you've done has shown people that you're just that!

Bully: (scoffs) You say you're the victim? You've never had someone hold you to higher standards than you can manage! You've never felt the weight of parents pressuring you to continue the family legacy because it's what's required!

Victim: You've never had less than 10 friends in your whole lifetimes!

Bully: They aren't friends! They're people that it's 'socially acceptable' for me be with! They're the people my wealth and status have handpicked and fated me too. They act like they care, but if I lost my money and my physical appearance, they would scatter!

Victim: (thinks for a moment) Maybe we're both victims of something we can't control.

Bully: What's that?

Victim: Society.

Bully: (whispers) We Are What We Are not what they make us.

Victim: (agrees) I Am What I Am not what they made me.

(Bully and Victim exit)

Scene 3: (directly after scene 2)

(Child and World)

Child: (walks to the center) I Am If You'll Have Me. The newborn child, waiting for its chance to shine. The one whose mind will be shaped by what you have to give me and what you don't. The one who'll grow to know your hope and your fear. The one who will hear the lullaby hummed in the dead of night, and will fall asleep on a shoulder.

(smiles)

The one who'll laugh as I play my games and will cry whenever you show me the worst. I see as I watch the love and kindness. I will grow to understand you more and more from

my infancy to adulthood. And though I Am my own person all the things instilled in youth will influence me.

World: (walks to the center next to Child) I Am If You'll Have Me. A world that sometimes may accept you and sometimes might not. A world where the best of us are sometimes silenced and the worst shine. A world where anger and violence tear the people apart, but they also bring them together. Because though I Am Broken, love and unity still prosper. Because if there is ever a time where the world comes together, it's through the pain and suffering.

Child: What happens when I fall?

World: Your family and friends will pick you up. Optimism will always be there.

Child: What happens to me?

World: You'll change, depending on how your family shapes you and how you view me and yourself.

Child: What happens to you?



World: I Am What I Am, no matter the person, the place, or the time, I Am Me. I'll stay the same. There will always be the same choices; it's just a matter of which one you'll choose.

Child: I Am What I Am. A child ready to face the world, with my family to guide me and love inside me.

(Person 1, Person 2, Victim, and Bully all reenter the stage)

Person 1: You Are What You Are.

Person 2: You are the choices you make.

Victim: No one can take that away.

Bully: So find a path and let and it take you.

World: But remember You Are What You Choose.

(All sit down except Child as they say their line. Child watches each of them with a smile.)

Person 1: Depressed.

Person 2: Optimistic.

Victim: Victim.

Bully: Oppressor.

World: Make your choice.

Person 1, Person 2, Victim, Bully, World: We're here but we can't tell you what to do.

Child: (backs up slowly) Because I Am What I Am, and so are you.

Child: (looks back at the other five, and at the sixth chair. Child shakes head and starts to walk away. Child looks back at the five and motions for them to follow. They exit, Child being the last to take one last glance and nod.)

The End