“Blurred Lines” by Alexandra Wicklund
3rd Place, Short Play 16-18
Cast of Characters

Juvenis: (Main Character) boy between the ages of 12-16

Veteris: (Old Abstract Perception) man ranging from 50-on, features roughly coinciding with main character's most obvious features

Amica: (Friend Abstract Perception) girl or boy between the ages of 12-16

Cogitatio: (Reflection Abstract Perception) boy with similar features and age as the main character

Geminus: (Double Abstract Perception) boy with similar features and age as the main character

Mater: (Main Character’s Mother) female around 35-45, features somewhat coinciding with main character’s most obvious features

Time

The present.

Synopsis

A young boy, heavily burdened with compulsive addictions and crippling insecurities, is unexpectedly confronted with his self-imposed hindrances through the objective lenses of three abstract individuals who unexpectedly appear in his dreams in order to propose the wisdom of the future, the interpretation of the present, and the regrets of the past.

Setting

Modern teenage-boy-decorated bedroom with a cot toward Middle/Stage Left and a bedroom door on Stage Left. Large mirror is Stage Center against the wall.

SCENE ONE

On Rise

Cot is toward Stage Left and a bedroom door on Stage Left. Juvenis gradually crosses the threshold of the bedroom door.

Mother is not to be seen, hidden backstage but near enough for her voice to be heard.

Juvenis:

(Enters through the bedroom door, casting backpack carelessly onto the floor) My word, Mom, back off, will you?

I'm fine.
Mater:

(Out of view backstage) Fine? You're fine? You get suspended from school grounds because of possession, but oh, no problem, you're...you're just fine?

Juvenis:

(Annoyed and sarcastic, yelling back through the door) Sorry that it's my life!

Mater:

(Laughs scoffingly, mutters to herself) It'll be the Devil's life soon if you're not careful.

Juvenis:

(Whirls around back toward the door) Mater!

Mater:

(Sighs, registering a breaking point) Juvenis... I don't...understand what's going on right now. But you can't, absolutely can not, continue on like this, coming home eyes bloodshot and with...with heaven knows what else! Lord help me, I...

Juvenis:

(Forcefully slams door, interrupting Mater in mid-sentence) Stay out of my business! (lays down in bed, quietly to himself) I'm just...just fine.

On Exit

Juvenis falls into a fitful sleep as the lights go black.

SCENE TWO

On Rise

The room has transformed into a garden, though the cot remains to Stage Left. A silhouette screen is Stage Center with an outdoor chair behind the screen facing Stage Left, and in front of the screen within the garden is a matching chair facing Stage Right with the set's outdoor table “between” them. As the lights rise, lying on the bed in the same position as Juvenis is Veretis. He awakes, slightly baffled, examining himself as one who has been spirited into a different body while Juvenis (as a silhouette behind the screen) does the same simultaneously.

Veteris:
(Looks surprisingly at the silhouette with an air of understanding) Why, hello there.

Juvenis:

(Confused, motioning from behind the silhouette screen) Who...who are you?

Veteris:

(Arising from the cot, straightening his rumpled shirt) I suppose time does take its toll on us older ones, though I don’t think I’ve changed all that much from the days of my youth that you can’t recognize me. You’ve looked at yourself in the mirror long enough...

Juvenis:

(Pauses for a few moments in disbelief) You mean, you’re...me? When I’m...older?

Veteris:

(Heartily laughs, begins to pace slowly throughout the garden) Quite right, young man, quite right.

Juvenis:

(Angrily taps on his own head) Why are you...up...here?

Veteris:

(Acts as if he didn’t hear, walks toward the chair patiently) Will you sit with me?

Juvenis:

(Pushes against the silhouette screen and at the air behind him in vain) Do I even have a choice? There’s not much else to do in here. I can’t even get out of (motions with hands) here.

Veteris:

(Sits down) You always have a choice.

Juvenis:

(A moment passes before he begrudgingly sits down in his chair behind the silhouette screen, scoffingly) So what are you here for, old man?

Veteris:

(Humoredly laughs, reaches for the flowers arrayed on top of the outdoor table) To smell these flowers? Do you ever wonder how they can grow from inferior seeds into glorious, beautiful elements of nature?
(Slouches in chair and shrugs) Enlighten me.

Veteris:

(Amused, pulls out a specific flower from the boutique) That's my exact point. This flower didn't do anything. It neither planted itself in the dirt nor watered its seed nor raised its stems nor separated its petals. It simply happened, either by God's hand or Mother Earth's, but without effort on its own part all the same.

Juvenis:

(Sarcastically and disinterested) And?

Veteris:

(Looks up pointedly, gesturing the flower toward Juvenis) Are you a flower, Juvenis?

Juvenis:

(Self-assured) No.

Veteris:

Are you certain?

Juvenis:

(Passive aggressive and prolonged) Yes.

Veteris:

So you aren't one of these flowers?

Juvenis:

(Offensively irritated) No, of course not.

Veteris:

(Leans in with an almost condemning tone) Then why do you sit there like one, living as if everything will come to you when you wish it, as if the world will unearth its produce and provisions to you freely without any effort on your part? Will the world plant you in an elevated position, will it water your friendships, raise your potential, or separate you from your failures? Do you think God will use you when you sit there complacent, or do you think Mother Earth will profit you for your foolhardy laziness?
Juvenis:

(Jumps out of chair in a rage, yelling furiously) How dare you?! You don't even know me! Get out of my head, you and your twisted...just...just get out of...my...head!

On Exit

Juvenis “kicks” at Veteris's chair from behind the silhouette screen, and Veteris falls backward in his seat with a cry as the lights fade to black.

SCENE THREE

On Rise

Cot remains to Stage Left, the stage is a completely black space with nothing in it besides the silhouette screen in the same Stage Center as before. Where Veteris had fallen now lies Amica on the ground, who awakes to the same bewilderment and astonishment as Veritis. Juvenis repeats the examining gestures simultaneously behind the silhouette screen.

Amica:

(Slowly rises to their feet, glancing around before noticing Juvenis) You?

Juvenis:

(Breathing hard and tense) Another one?! I swear...

Amica:

(Interrupting, slightly sarcastically concerned, hands motioning) Would you calm down? Take a breath? Maybe stop yelling so loudly that you're bound to burst my eardrums?

Juvenis:

(Sarcastically) Oh, sorry, my bad. Let me just give you some space...oh, wait, YOU are the one invading MY space. So, no, no, how about you just leave, and then neither of us will have anything to worry about?

Amica:

(Sits down on the ground in criss-cross) I would love to, believe me, but I can't. Not yet, at least.

Juvenis:

(Throwing hands up in the air helplessly) Then when?!
Amica:

(Forcefully) When you calm down, and let me say what I’ve come to say.

Juvenis:

(A few moments of silence pass as he wrestles within himself, finally conceeding with arms crossed) Fine. You know what, fine. Go ahead, go ahead, what is your word of wisdom? I’m sure it’ll be better than the old man’s inspiring dialogue.

Amica:

(Offers a friendly laugh) I think this will be more of a monologue, but do bear with me.

Juvenis:

(Nods mockingly, motioning for Amica to go ahead) Of course, of course. The stage is yours.

Amica:

(Rises with a sense of fear and courage) I will be abrupt and quite frank with you. As one who knows you, and as one whom you know, I believe I can BE. You can be quite an ignorant halfwit.

Juvenis:

(Laughs coarsely in surprise, sarcastically clutches his chest) Ouch, that hurt.

Amica:

(Meekly) Well, it has hurt me. To be honest, it has hurt me. Your words cut deeper than your switchblade ever can, and they leave more clearer a bruise than your fists ever will.

Juvenis:

(Emits a half-hearted laugh) I have never struck you, nor have I ever seen you before in my life. Who are you to tell me such a thing?

Amica:

(With desperate, exaggerated hand motions) Don’t you understand? I am a representation of all those you have hurt passing through the halls, passing around cruel notes and gossip, never once stopping to reflect on what you have done. You’re like a flood of water, rushing through life without ceasing for even a second to reflect on who you have obliterated in your wake. Can’t you see? Won’t you consider those you have hurt?
Juvenis:

(Looks at his feet) Don’t act so high and mighty. All of you, you have done it all too, behind closed doors and among close friends. It’s all hypocritical!

Amica:

(Nods concedingly) Yes, perhaps so, but you are responsible for your own actions, are you not? You can’t cast the blame for your cruelties upon those others, can you? Your life, your words, your actions, they are your own responsibility as well as your reckoning, are they not?

Juvenis:

(Shakes head slowly) It’s not that easy to control what I can’t help but do. How can I control my temper, or control my tongue, or control... (voice catches as he tries to breathe slower) I know... I know my excuses are as frail as brittle bones, but I can’t... I don’t... want to change.

Amica:

Really? You enjoy putting on an extra layer of protective skin at school, tearing it off for a brief breath of air at home, and always being worried and wary that maybe you put it on wrong, that maybe there was a small crack left uncovered, open and expose to those that you’ve hurt? Have you ever stopped to wonder that maybe not everyone is out to get you? That maybe your guard is up against nothing but empty air and powerless demons?

Juvenis:

(Quietly but firmly) Stop. Just... stop. I don’t need... want to deal with this right now.

Amica:

(Walks toward the silhouette, slowly reaches out to “touch” Juvenis through the silhouette screen) I see you.

On Exit

Lights fade to black as Amica’s hand touches the silhouette screen, and Juvenis’ hand reaches out to touch hers from the opposite side of the silhouette screen.

SCENE FOUR

On Rise
Bedroom setting with the silhouette screen remaining at Stage Center. The mirror frames the upper part of silhouette screen without the reflection piece in it. Juvenis' hand is still against the silhouette screen in the center of the mirror's frame behind the silhouette screen, and where Amica's hand was is now Cogitatio and his hand in front of the silhouette screen. Cogitatio is adorned with hideous looks and hairstyle like an animal, dressed identical to what Juvenis was. Geminus is beside Cogitatio with his hand also where Amica's was. All three jump back in astonishment when they come to and see one other.

Juvenis:

(Disgusting tone) Two?! Who in the world are you?

Geminus:

(Cowering to the side) Please don't be angry with me; I just...

Cogitatio:

(Pushes Geminus aside, squaring up to Juvenis) Don't be such a coward! And don't be so daft! You know us.

Juvenis:

(Defensively angry) No, I don't, you... (catches himself, looking to-and-fro between both individuals) You can't be.

Geminus:

(Cowardly piping up in a quiet voice) You've got it.

Juvenis:

(In disbelief, hands flying) Impossible. I...I'm not...you two. There's only one of me. Not two!

Geminus:

(Barely a fearful whisper) Isn't there though?

Cogitatio:

(Loud and obnoxious, pointing condemningly) Don't deny it! Don't deny us!

Juvenis:

(Yelling) I can't deny something that never existed! I am not, can not, be a coward and an oppressor simultaneously. That's absurd! Explain how in the entire universe that could possibly be. Hm?! Explain it!

Geminus:
(Nervously) A coward to not face up to yourself, scared of what others will think of the real you...

Cogitatio:

(Interrupting harshly, advancing toward the “mirror”) And an oppressor against those who are helpless before you, using them to appease your own self-hate...

Juvenis:

(Angrily interrupting) Speak for yourself! I'm nothing like your idiotic self, not in any way!

Cogitatio:

(Furiously offended) What did you just call me?

Juvenis:

(Lets out a mocking laugh) Oh, are you deaf as well as dumb?

Cogitatio:

(Begins to advance toward Juvenis, fists clenched) If you won't confront yourself by yourself, I'll do it myself!

Geminus:

(Yanking on Cogitatio's shirt, trying to hold him back) Please! Can't we find the middle ground!

On Exit

Cogitatio throws off Geminus and advances violently toward the silhouette screen, fists ready. Geminus scramble after him, trying to stop him. Juvenis lets out a scream and throws himself at Cogitatio, fists clenched, and breaks through the silhouette screen as the lights go dark.

SCENE FIVE

On Rise

Juvenis' bedroom is back with the cot at Stage Left/Center as well as the bedroom door. Backpack and decorations are where they were before. Juvenis lies on the bed as he was when he went to sleep. He abruptly awakes with a start, swinging at the empty air above him before he comes to reality, chest heaving, and sits up immediately, perching on the end of his bed. He rubs his head in confusion and glances at the mirror in thoughtfulness.

Juvenis:

(Shakes head defiantly and lets out a taunt laugh, standing up to pace the room) Middle ground, huh? Middle
ground. Middle ground between cowardness and cruelness. Is there even such a thing? Is there a middle

ground between idleness and overbearing pressure? Is there a middle ground between maliciousness and

being so gentle people trod right over you? (sits on bed, drops his head into his hands) Lord, oh Lord, if you're

even up there, do help me to... to get better, to do better, to be better. Because the lines between who I am

and who I want to be are getting a little too blurry for my comfort.

**On Exit**

Juvenis arises and straightens his rumpled clothes, holding his head high as he walks back out of the bedroom door. The

lights fade to black.