

Script Excerpt from AS I AM - workshop performance

Opening:

On stage is a set of four cages, with the masks for each character hanging on them. The actors enter and stand behind their own cage, looking at the audience. The Zoo keeper stands DC.

Voice Over: Throughout history, people with physical and mental disabilities have been abandoned at birth, banished from society, used as court jesters, drowned and burned during the inquisition, gassed in Nazi Germany, and still continue to be segregated, institutionalized, tortured in the name of behavior management, abused, raped, euthanised and murdered.

Zoo Keeper: Idiots - they hear, but do not see. They see, but do not regard. Having no ideas, and thinking not, they have nothing to desire.

The cast begins to struggle, looking for a way out of the cages, some yelling "no!"

Scene 1: The Zoo

Voice Over: Sub-human treatment makes valuable individuals novelties, much like animals.

The cast put on their animal masks and a poem runs over top.

Slide: The Zoo.

Voice Over: Sometimes I feel like people don't see
What I really am, just what they want me to be
They put me in these roles, and tell me how I should act
So I hide under a mask, and agree to this pact.

The Zoo Keeper does a little performance with animal while her assistant talks about them.

Slide: A tiger.

Asst: The tiger, a powerful creature, has often, throughout history, been chained in an attempt to tame the desire to follow its own path and to keep this majestic animal in captivity where it performs simple tricks to please its masters.

Slide: A walrus.

Asst: The walrus, while appearing awesomely dangerous, has developed sharp tusks in order to protect its smooth, gentle flesh from predators. Surprisingly agile for its massive size, the walrus defends its community, serving as a strong caregiver.

Slide: A badger.

Asst: The badger, a very private animal, prefers burrowing away in a comfortable home. However, should that home be disturbed this seemingly gentle creature fights back with a ferocity particularly vicious for its small size.

Slide: A monkey.

Asst: The monkey, of the family of mammals closest to human intelligence, is often trained in order to test its knowledge. Rather than liberating the species, it becomes a trained performer, providing entertainment to those who watch.

The animals all repeat their performances at the same time. The Assistant starts to bring in a bucket full of animal food. The animals all reach for food as...

Zoo Keeper: Do not feed the animals. They need their medication first.

The cast changes out of their animals into their institution masks as the Zoo Keeper brings in a tray with pill cups on it.