

THE HISTORY OF PREJUDICE



People were looking more and more like animals, Ken Onis decided. The woman who worked in the next office was a dead ringer for Miss Piggy. And why did he never notice before that his law partner had a sheep's snout, the center and bottom of his face protruding like an enormous tumor? His wife, Lisa, he sadly acknowledged, had the jaw and teeth of a horse, a backside large enough to merit her own stable.

Sometimes a person's likeness to a particular animal was uncanny and should have been embarrassing. If the mailman had any idea how much he looked like a beagle, his long ears flapping along the sides of his face, those squinty little dark eyes, he'd never come out of his house. But still he delivered the mail every day, whistling as he dropped the envelopes through the slot.

Ken studied his own face in the mirror, running his hand over his narrow face, his jutting but skinny chin, and declared with conviction, "Goat." Not bad. Some people resembled rodents, reptiles, even insects. He thought of his daughter, Jasmine, only six years old and not a care in the world. Like all children, she was beautiful, but for how long? When would her peaches and cream complexion start to resemble a goat or a horse, or perhaps some hybrid animal? Only time would tell.

On the morning train into the office, Ken read news magazines. One day, he became engrossed in an article titled, "The New Animal Bioethics." Animal organs were being transplanted into humans. Animal cloning would allow more harvesting of organs. Some people were upset; was it moral, ethical? One nurse was quoted as saying, "Forget morality; it's disgusting!" A doctor who had performed several transplants, however, was quoted as saying, "Look, we share about 99% of our DNA with chimps. We're not that different." Ken studied a photograph in the article of a pig's liver, an