

Ugly

by Moe Cidaly

The ugly baby was found on the steps of an orphanage. He had no deformities of any kind, but he lacked the proportions one finds attractive in human facial features.

As a child, he loved the tale of *The Ugly Duckling*, hoping that when he grew older he would transform into a handsome young man. As an adult though, he hated the tale, finding himself more of a monkey than a swan.

When the ugly young man left the orphanage, the best job he could find was looking after the monkeys in a zoo. One day, he noticed that, while walking in the streets, he could not separate the girls from the trees. It was like walking in a street full of jewelry shops without having a penny in his pocket: gems looked as dull as stones on the pavement. To him, to take beauty into consideration required it to be affordable. He grew tired of wanting things he couldn't have. There he began to feel that if Tarzan was a human found by the apes, he was the other side of the story.

So he started to spend more time with those animals. He sat there looking at them for hours. He knew all ten of them by name. The oldest one was Goo and the prettiest one was Gia. He started to eat with them. He even became a vegetarian and found it disgusting to see humans eating meat—as if they were flesh-eating sheep.

Now he could understand what the monkeys were saying. It seemed that they understood him as well.

One night he found the old Goo dead. He and the monkeys dug a grave inside the cage and buried their friend. That night he didn't leave their side. In the morning, a fellow zookeeper found the door of the cage open.

“The ugly bastard left the door open,” he grumbled as he closed and locked it. Then he counted the monkeys to make sure none had escaped. There were ten of them sleeping in there like ugly babies.