

Name:

The Greenies By William Goodykoontz

1 John Doe, Jr., is not born with prejudice against people who have green hair. But from the time he is a small child, he is warned against them. He is not supposed to play with green-haired children. He is told not to talk with them. His parents say, "Stay with your own kind. You'll be bad, John, if you mix with green-haired children."

2 As John grew older, he learns that his parents, their friends, and neighbors do not want people with green hair to: attend his church, live in his neighborhood, go to his school, or playground, or camp.

3 John believes what the adults around him say. And they say that green-haired people should go to church elsewhere, and go to other schools. As a child, John does not see many people with green hair.

4 At home, John often listens to his father talk. John Doe, Sr., started out in life with high hopes. But somewhere along the way, John Doe, Sr., did not get the job he wanted or the raise he hoped for. He began to believe that a certain group of people were the cause of his failure and that these people are to blame for everything that is wrong in life. Naturally, the bad ones are the Greenies - the people with green hair!

5 John Doe, Sr., talks against the people with green hair everywhere he goes - in public and in private. At home, especially, he talks about how dirty, dumb, poor, and evil the people with green hair are. Day after day, he makes jokes about them. He says that they should be thrown out of the community or that they are turning the country over to the enemy. And he always says that no Greenies will ever move into his neighborhood. Complaining about the green-haired people makes John Doe, Sr., forget that he himself is something of a failure. And when he is reminded of his failure, he can easily blame it on the green-haired people.

6 John Doe, Jr., begins to believe that his father is right. And anyhow he doesn't often talk with green-haired people to see what they're really like. Sometimes he reads about them in newspapers. But since newspapers play up crime, he usually reads about green-haired people who have gotten into trouble with the law. Again John believes his parents are right. Green-haired people do bad things. Even the newspapers say so.

7 John Doe, Jr., becomes a man. He believes the things he has learned about people with green hair. Then he marries Jane Roe, who has learned the same prejudices against people with green hair. Later they have children. "Don't play with children with green hair. You are bad if you do."

8 So John Doe, Jr., carries over his prejudices to his children. And his children, too, become infected with the disease called prejudice.