

My Friend SIMON

by Mazikeen "Maze" Larson

My friend, Simon, watches me from the moment I enter the cat room of Friends of Upland Animal Shelter. He watches with veiled interest, lacking the gusto that would complement his unending curiosity. Simon, the ten-month-old brown tabby, watches from afar, releasing a gentle meow.

In a constantly changing rotation of animals that come through the shelter—they often adopt 50-100 animals every month—Simon is the calm: a resident for close to six months. I always look forward to seeing Simon, because I know that he will almost undoubtedly still be inside his kennel. I watch people walk by his kennel, without a second (or sometimes even a first) glance. Friends of Upland—a no-kill shelter—has given him a chance. Although I would consider myself more of a dog person, I cannot deny the impact Simon has had on me. Somehow, I have fallen in love with the cat that never leaves the kennel, the cat that rarely lets you pet him, and so have most of the regular cat room volunteers. There is something about Simon, something lighthearted and unique, something silently daring. I keep hoping that soon someone will walk through from the hours of noon to 3PM and see it too, but until then, everyday volunteering at Friends means visiting my friend, Simon.

While Simon lacks the adventurous spirit, he has inspired me to aspire towards it. Every day is what you make it—dull or exciting; fun or soul-sucking. Do you stay inside your kennel, or do you push the boundaries? Do you curl up inside yourself, or do you teeter ever closer to the edge of greatness? Sometimes the path forward in life involves stepping a little outside your comfort zone. Talking to new people, going to a new school (college, anyone?), starting a new job, and becoming an adult all while you'd rather stay in your well-accustomed K-12 routine. For Simon, adoption would mean leaving his kennel—his comfort zone—and every day I see him edge closer and closer to exploring the world. While not all of us step out of our comfort zones willingly, sometimes we need a guide to show us how to be adventurous (or curious) about what lay just outside of the known. Simon would need someone loving and patient, with a sense of adventure or just the opposite, someone calm and curious about the world. Perhaps a booklover or a traveler, or why not both?

Whoever ends up adopting Simon, I hope will give him a good home, because a shelter may be a second chance, but a kennel is not a home.

Located at 1275 San Bernardino Road in Upland, CA you can schedule a visit by appointment 11AM-12PM or 3PM-4PM.

Walk-thru hours are Noon to 3PM.



Ground Zero continued.



Ninth grade student, Paola Soto exclaimed her favorite character was Cheong-san "as he gave it his all to maintain the ones he loves safe." Cheong-san was a vital character to his classmates as he led them to safety alongside character Lee Su-hyeok; both characters who are distinct heartthrobs of the show among many fans. In response to the group of surviving students, Soto reflected, "I liked that the students that grouped up all relied and trusted each other and put their all into surviving even when things got tough."

The show covers the reality that balancing a social life as a student is one thing but being forced to fend for yourself while carrying the burden of protecting your friends is an unmatched pressure to face at an early age. During one of the episodes, the surviving students reflect on the following question: would the wise and older survive, or the young and hopeful? Soto expressed, "I feel like younger and hopeful people would survive because they would not only have a shot at survival for their young age but also because they have hope in surviving so they wouldn't give up so easily."

We also know that every zombie media out there has a unique backstory in response to how the zombie virus came to be, but in *All Of Us Are Dead*, we get a backstory that holds a personal origin unmatched to any other. Hyosan High School teacher, Byeong-chan, created the virus in response to seeing his son, Jin-su, being bullied. After many attempts made by Byeong-chan to help his son, he felt helpless and created the virus in hopes of making his son physically stronger.

Although Byeong-chan never had any ill intentions, his virus went completely wrong and brought havoc upon both students and the entirety of the Hyosan city. Unfortunately, the virus has also begun to mutate, but not exactly in the worst ways possible, that is if it does not fall into the wrong hands. School bully, Yoon Gwi-nam, happens to become a *halfbie*, making him nearly indestructible.

Comedic relief character, Yang Dae-su, makes the daunting realization that some victims have evolved to be both human and a zombie, hence the term—*halfbies*. Throughout the show we get little insight into what it means to be a halfbie. With the few witnessed characters we see turned into halfbies, we witness their urges to feed on human flesh and they appear to heal quickly from any imposed injuries; what remains in question is just how far their superhuman abilities can go.

After an agonizing twelve episodes, many questions are left unanswered with hints at the survival of one student who was assumed to be dead. Director, Lee Jae Gyu, made it clear to fans that he created the series with a second season in mind. This means we have yet to find out whether the city of Hyson remains a ground zero for zombies, and if not zombies, then *halfbies*.

