

Jeremy

by Sam Kurd

My name is Jeremy, and I am in love with a zombie.

Her name is Mary. We went to school together, though obviously she wasn't a zombie back then. We grew up together, but we never spoke much. She was one of the popular girls, always surrounded by a group of pretty interchangeable airheads. They may as well have been clones, but she ... she was different. She was special.

I loved her from afar. I'd sit in the row behind her in English class, paying more attention to the back of her head than to the lessons. I think I fell in love with her blonde dye job a little bit. You could occasionally see dark roots at her scalp, but to me that was just endearing. I love her hair. Sure, it's not in the best of condition now, what with all the rotting and stuff, but back then it was shiny and luxurious. And it always smelled of strawberries. I climbed through her bathroom window once and checked out the shampoo she was using. I like strawberries.

When the zombie outbreak happened, there was a lot of panic, but school carried on as normal for the first week. Our town didn't have a serious zombie problem for a while, but when they started showing up on school grounds then lessons were cancelled for obvious reasons. The world had more important things to deal with than algebra. I was furious. Not about algebra, but because I wouldn't see Mary every day if we weren't going to school. Life wouldn't be worth living if I couldn't spend it with the girl I loved. Isn't that what love is about?

I was lucky enough to run into her during one of my forages for food and supplies. I was good at keeping out of zombies' way; I've turned a lifetime of being ignored and unnoticed at school into a lifesaving talent. My parents weren't as lucky. I don't care that much; we never really saw eye to eye. For a pair of bigshot scientists, they sure weren't very good at survival.

I watched as Mary ran down the main road that runs down through the centre of our town. She had about a small mob of

zombies following her. They move slowly, but she was wearing heels. I love her with all of my heart, but she wasn't the smartest girl when she was alive.

I ran up beside her, grabbed her wrist. She screamed and hit me, but calmed down when I assured her I was still alive. I pulled her off the road and brought her to my house. I'd boarded up the windows and front door so we climbed the oak tree beside the house and entered the house through the attic window. My house isn't totally zombie proof but I'd reinforced the doors and had other countermeasures in place. It still keeps them out, though I'm not sure how long for.

I made Mary a cup of coffee and she sat in my kitchen, sobbing. I watched her. I love watching her. She wanted to know what was going on, why the world had gone crazy. I didn't have any answers for her. I didn't care. To me, the only important thing in the world was that Mary. Was. In. MY. Kitchen. My dream come true. Lifetime objective? Achieved.

She had a bite on her wrist, so I washed it clean and bandaged it. I was closer to her than I'd ever been, touching her, my heart pounding like it wanted to burst out of my chest and leap into hers. When I finished I held her and she wept. Then I kissed her, full on the lips. That's when things went sour.

She jerked back as if she'd been burned and lashed out, slapping me across the face. She looked so disgusted, as if it weren't me that had kissed her but one of the rotting corpses that shambled and moaned outside.

"I'd rather die," she said. "I'd rather die."

Well.

I sort of lost it.

I grabbed her by the arms and dragged her down the stairs to the basement. My parents had a lab down there — nice thick walls, a security-glass window in the door, perfect for keeping specimens in. They'd trapped a couple of zombies in there, the zombies that had eventually torn them apart, but I'd dealt with them. The room was

empty until I threw Mary into it, slamming and locking the door behind her.

She banged on the glass, furious. She was angry for about an hour. Then she cried some more. After a couple of hours she told me I was handsome, told me she'd kiss me and more if I opened the door. An hour or two after that she cried about being hungry. She sure used to cry a lot. I watched her cry. I stood in front of the little window and watched all of this. I watched her starve. I watched her get sick. Over two days, I watched her die. And I watched her come back.

You know, I asked her out once, back when she was alive. She looked at me, sneering. She doesn't sneer now. She snarls occasionally, but she never sneers. I watch her through the window in door to the secure room I keep her in. Sometimes she watches me back and we spend hours staring at each other. I can tell she wants me to let her out, so we can be together. I think I will, soon. We share something, a spark. I know she wants me now, I know she wants to be with me.

She loves me for my brains.

