Texas Zombie High School

Dan Moreau
TEXAS ZOMBIE HIGH SCHOOL

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The zombies lived on the other side of the train tracks and the meat processing plant. Each day they'd wait for the offal, organs, brains, heads, hooves, bones and any other part of the cow we didn't use. What a sight. One minute they'd sway and salivate the way zombies do; the next they'd tear into the scraps like a dog eating spaghetti.

They had their own schools and businesses, their own churches, their own lunch counters, water fountains and bathrooms. In the fall, their high school played ours in football. The whole town came. It was the rivalry of all rivalries, the big game, the marquee matchup, zombies vs. humans. But not just a game. It was the be-all end-all. Bragging rights were at stake: Who was better? Zombie or human?

One year a human tackle ripped a zombie player’s whole leg off. He never dropped the ball. After the timeout, he trotted back onto the field, good as new, his leg sewn back onto his hip. Whatever side you rooted for, you had to admire the kid.

Any rivalry is bound to produce high jinks. One year we kidnapped their star running back and buried him in our end zone. It took him days to claw his way from the dirt. Once we stole their quarterback’s arm and hid it in a dumpster.

Then the Supreme Court passed the landmark Zombie v. Ferguson case which outlawed discrimination based on color or creed, dead or undead. Who were they to say what we could and couldn’t do? That was the government for you.

As a result of the ruling, they bused zombies to our high school. Fights broke out. The cafeteria started serving cow brains for accommodation. Teachers taught zombie history and zombie hygiene, which covered the particulars of limb reattachment. April became Zombie History Month. Parents started sending their kids to schools in zombie-free districts. Then they moved away. Zombie fright, they called it.
The annual big game wasn’t the same anymore. It lost its meaning, became another football game. There were zombies and humans on both teams.

Before long, zombies started shopping our supermarkets, eating in our restaurants, drinking from our water fountains, and using our bathrooms. Restaurants started serving brain. Supermarkets started carrying the zombie brands like Brainies and Spam. The meat plant started hiring zombies. They could work all day and night. They worked for less, sometimes just for scraps. They didn’t need health insurance. And they were anti-union. Soon we were all fired and replaced with zombie workers. Give a zombie an inch and he’ll take an ell. That’s what I’ve always said.

One day I was walking down the street, minding my own business, when I saw my first inter-species zombie-human couple. I almost fainted. No sooner had the Supreme Court spoken than women started hooking up with zombies everywhere. Not only had they taken our jobs, but they had also taken our wives, daughters and sisters.

To make matters worse, a zombie family moved in next door. The husband worked at the meat plant and the wife taught preschool. The day after they moved in, they knocked on my door and offered me a platter of cow brains. I told them to get off my property before I shot them to kingdom come. They had a little zombie boy that sat on the porch all day. He didn’t have any friends. He was a small zombie for his age. The other zombies picked on him, called him human, because of his flesh colored skin and blue eyes. He didn’t stalk, stagger or drool. He liked to read and had a cat he never tried to eat. I didn’t know what to make of him.

Coming home one day, I saw a group of zombies piled on top of him. I jumped out of my car and fired my shotgun in the air. “Get off him!” I said. “Go home,” I told him and he scurried off. “As for the rest of you,” I said, “you should be ashamed of yourselves. Does that make you feel big, picking on a little zombie kid? Next time, why don’t you try picking on a human?”

That night there was a knock on my door. It was the zombie boy’s mother. “I wanted to thank you for standing up for Raymond back there. He’s been having a
tough time at school.”

“It’s hard being the new kid.” I said.

Unfortunately, I made things worse for Raymond. Now all the zombie kids taunted him. “Where’s your human friend? You aren’t so tough without him around, are you?” they said.

The only thing I hated more than zombies was the way the strong picked on the weak. After school one day I walked him home, I said, “Do you know what zombies hate most in the world?”

He shook his head.

“Fire,” I said.

“What’s that?” he said.

I opened my Zippo. He cowered. I ran my palm back and forth over the flame. “It’s all right. It won’t hurt you.” I snapped the lighter shut. “I want you to have this. If a zombie gives you trouble, light this and, I guarantee you, they won’t bother you anymore.”

A couple days later, Raymond’s mother and father asked me over for dinner for helping Raymond out with the zombies.

A few nights later, his mother answered the door. I handed her a plastic bag full of brains.

“You shouldn’t have. I’ll put this on some ice. Can I get you anything to drink? Water, beer, spinal fluid?”

“Water, please.”

“My husband’s watching the game in the living room. Why don’t you join him?” The husband was in a La-Z-Boy, holding a beer can.

“Who’s playing?” I said.
“The Florida Flesh Eaters and the Boston De-Brainers.”

On the screen, a zombie player broke his arm. No problem. On the sideline, they tore it off and stuck on a new one.

“Are you a Boston or Florida fan?” I said.

“Neither,” he said. “I go for San Francisco.”

“So, a Johnny Unitas fan?”

“He’s good. But he hasn’t been the same since they resurrected him from the dead.”

“Boston’s got no running game,” I said.

“What are you talking about?” he said. “They got Walter Payton, the greatest of all time among living and dead.”

“Payton’s good, but he’s got no endurance.”

“He’s got no knees. I mean, literally. When they dug him up, they couldn’t find his knees, so he’s playing with replacement parts.”

“Still, you got to love their chances.”

His wife called from the dining room and we moved to the dinner table. “I hope you like brains,” she said.

“Maybe just a salad for me,” I said. I looked around. “Where’s Raymond?”

“We sent him to bed early. That’s why we invited you over. You see, Raymond isn’t like the other boys.”

I smiled. “You’re telling me.”

The wife sighed. “What I’m trying to say is that Raymond is adopted. He’s not even a zombie.”

“But what about his greenish color?” I said.
“That’s just makeup. We couldn’t conceive. My uterus is rotten. The only babies up for adoption were human babies. You see, a zombie mother would sooner eat her baby than give it up for adoption. That said, Raymond’s been a blessing. But it’s hard sometimes. He won’t stagger. He won’t eat brains. He won’t terrorize humans. Frankly, I’m nearing the end of my rope.”

She sobbed.

The husband put his arm around her. “What my wife is trying to say is we were wondering—in fact, we would be honored—if you would be Raymond’s godfather."

She blew her nose, part of which came off in the tissue, and said, “He’ll always be our little Raymond, but there are some things we can’t teach him. Like how to ride a bike."

“We have terrible balance,” the husband said.

“Or how to take a shower,” she said.

“You know how zombies are about water. It speeds up the decomposition.”

I thought about it and said it would be an honor.

After that Raymond and I spent more time together. I showed him how to jab a pitchfork through a zombie’s chest and how to aim a shotgun. We went to ball games and went camping together. He was the son I never had. As he got older, however, we saw less and less of each other. He had his own friends. He tried out for football and became the star quarterback. I watched him grow up from afar and rooted from the sidelines. The boy had one hell of an arm. Got a scholarship to zombie college. After each touchdown he’d point to me and his parents in the stands. Talking about it makes me want to cry.

I once saw this lady on TV. I wasn’t sure if she was zombie or human. She was promoting a book called It Takes a Village. The book says it takes more than two parents to raise a child. Normally I’d agree with that but sometimes it takes two
zombies and a human.

After the zombie riots of ’68, we elected our first zombie mayor. He promised to clean up city hall, fight corruption and improve working conditions at the meat plant. Later he was caught stealing money from the city coffers and sleeping with the city manager. Zombie or human, all politicians are crooked. Some day, in the not too distant future, I’ll bet we’ll have a zombie president in the White House.

Sometimes I visit the old high school stadium. Those games were the one event that brought our town together. It didn’t matter if you were zombie or human. We all cheered when the teams took the field. I guess the moral of the story is that we humans and zombies aren’t all that different. We both love football and the great state of Texas.

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Dan Moreau has published stories in The Journal, Redivider, New Ohio Review, Phoebe, Gargoyle and Crab Creek Review.