



## “SIMON”

21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2010

It gives me both exquisite pain and pleasure to share Simon's story with you today.

Simon came to BrightHaven almost a year ago as a feral, who we sometimes glimpsed in the distance, generally running in the opposite direction as fast as he could! Over time we saw him randomly – enough to see how wild and vicious he was – once even attacking my Mother's cat through her garden fence.....The noise was terrible and poor Neill almost had a heart attack in fright. Our other feral lady, Linda, stayed well away from this fearsome young warrior it seemed, but we feared for her safety too sometimes.

Well, around two months ago our sightings of Simon became more frequent, and now closer to the house....culminating with his appearance one morning in Linda's chosen bed on our back patio! Friendly he was not! Fearful, in fact terrified of us, he beat a hasty retreat as dawn broke, but stole back again each night to sleep in light and safety. Of course I began to include him in the BrightHaven feeding schedule and he eagerly devoured the natural diet with glee and satisfaction.

A sweet and childlike face was given to this sweet soul and he would oft run around me in circles as he raced to begin his dinner feast – taking great care though, not to stray too close. Over time he began to look at me with interest and perhaps less fear – but only a tad, for he would still not allow me close.

And then one day our difficult journey began, as Simon appeared one morning with a terrible wound to his front right paw. Horribly swollen and disfigured, his leg needed immediate care – but could we trap him? – We could not! I reverted to feeding him again, as he clearly still had an appetite, and was able to hide antibiotics in his meals.....The wound was worsening daily and Simon becoming lethargic.....BUT then, one morning the magical mystery of the incredible power of youth to heal began, and slowly Simon's leg shrunk to normal size and he could walk on it once more!

Phew – that was a heartwarming day indeed – short lived though, as the very next day Simon once again appeared with an even worse injury – this time to his rear right leg. My heart sank and I raced indoors to make his dinner, complete with antibiotics.....Simon ate a few mouthfuls and then gazed at me slowly and knowingly, and then climbed into his basket.

I left the food – but he was too wily, and for the next couple of meals he ate in desultory fashion without medicine. I tried to slip all manner of good things into his food, but by now his appetite was dwindling and we resorted again to the trap – we HAD to get him. Simon, sadly was as defiant as we – and left the property as the trap was set – only to return when we dismantled it.



His conditions for us were clear and he forced us to honor them. Then came the morning when he was obviously weaker and failing and we gathered determined to get our man, which we did in a final mid-air catch from Richard, as Simon summoned a super strength to escape us.

Blanca raced him to emergency care, where his wounds were examined and tended to and I brought him home, in the knowledge he was failing fast. Our Dr. Adriana as always, raced to the rescue and worked hard to prescribe life-saving remedies to help correct his life threatening anemia and infection, but, seeing his blood panel we knew the worst – that time was terribly short and now we had to care for a wild man who did not wish our love...or did he???

I made him comfortable in the tiny office beside my bedroom – a quiet place reserved for writing and peace, and Blanca and I began his care. It did not take long for his barriers of fear to drop as he realized we had little but love left to offer him. First he met my gaze with an unblinking sweet stare and then.....a soft but unmistakable purr echoed. His paws began to knead the blankets – and he was lost in love to the humans his Mother had told him were so evil! Time to learn more about each other for us and that we did – together in bed for the next two nights when he cuddled and purred as any normal pet would do – lying in the circle of my arms.

The deep and passionate love of a Mother for her child is the only way I can express the deep feelings that arose within me for this defenseless, dying creature from the wild, who gave me his heart. Blanca and I tended to his every need, dressing his wounds carefully and gently and kissing him often on his cute head and face. He reveled in it.

Time was short though, and on Thursday morning it ran out. Simon spent the night in my arms. Richard did the early morning chores that day so that I could stay in bed with my boy and hold and cuddle him as he began his journey beyond. Blanca arrived and stole into the bed too – to take him tenderly for a while. At that time I told Simon I would prepare a basket so he could be with me whilst I worked as we could not remain in bed all day....He met my eyes and Blanca's and left in a sweet and gentle passing that left us all in awe and swift tears.

Simon came to us a fighting warrior and left in peace and love.

*Like a comet blazing 'cross the evening sky, gone too soon.  
Like a rainbow fading in the twinkling of an eye, gone too soon.*

*Shiny and sparkly and splendidly bright.  
Here one day, gone one night.  
Like the loss of sunlight on a cloudy afternoon. Gone too soon.  
Like a castle built upon a sandy beach. Gone too soon.*

*Like a perfect flower that is just beyond your reach, gone too soon.  
Born to amuse, to inspire, to delight - here one day, gone one night.  
Like a sunset dying with the rising of the moon,  
gone too soon , gone too soon"*

*Lyrics by Buz Kohan. Music by Larry Grossman.*

**Sung by Michael Jackson for Ryan White, a little boy who was a hemophiliac, and died of aids from a blood transfusion.**

***Simon too, had aids and was gone too soon.***