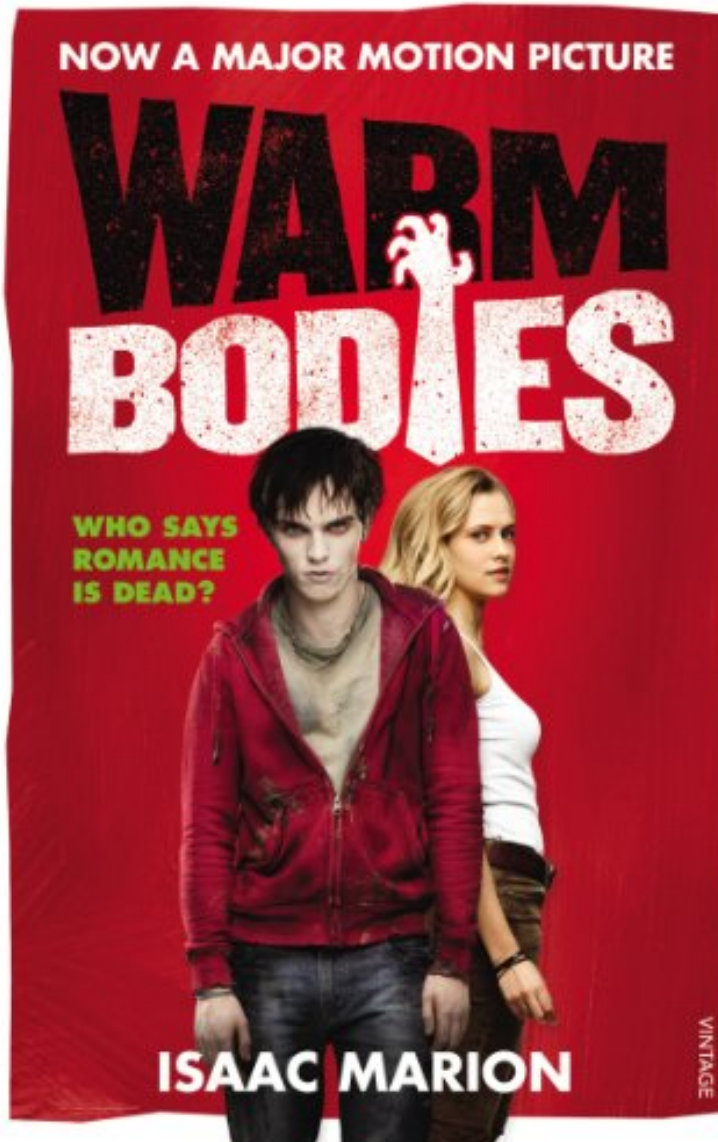


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Warm Bodies (The Warm Bodies Series)



Par Isaac Marion
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Par Isaac Marion : Warm Bodies (The Warm Bodies Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Warm Bodies (The Warm Bodies Series):

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur'R' is a zombie. He has no name, no memories, and no pulse, but he has dreams. He is a little different from his fellow Dead.Amongst the ruins of an abandoned city, R meets a girl. Her name is Julie and she is the opposite of everything he knows - warm and bright and very much alive, she is a blast of colour in a dreary grey landscape. For reasons he can't understand, R chooses to save Julie instead of eating her, and a tense yet strangely tender relationship begins.This has never happened before. It breaks the rules and defies logic, but R is no longer content with life in the grave. He wants to breathe again, he wants to live, and Julie wants to help him. But their grim, rotting world won't be changed without a fight...ExtraitI AM DEAD, but its not so bad. Ive learned to live with it. Im sorry I cant properly introduce myself, but I

dont have a name anymore. Hardly any of us do. We lose them like car keys, forget them like anniversaries. Mine might have started with an R, but thats all I have now. Its funny because back when I was alive, I was always forgetting other peoples names. My friend M says the irony of being a zombie is that everything is funny, but you cant smile, because your lips have rotted off. None of us are particularly attractive, but death has been kinder to me than some. Im still in the early stages of decay. Just the gray skin, the unpleasant smell, the dark circles under my eyes. I could almost pass for a Living man in need of a vacation. Before I became a zombie I must have been a businessman, a banker or broker or some young temp learning the ropes, because Im wearing fairly nice clothes. Black slacks, gray shirt, red tie. M makes fun of me sometimes. He points at my tie and tries to laugh, a choked, gurgling rumble deep in his gut. His clothes are holey jeans and a plain white T-shirt. The shirt is looking pretty macabre by now. He should have picked a darker color. We like to joke and speculate about our clothes, since these final fashion choices are the only indication of who we were before we became no one. Some are less obvious than mine: shorts and a sweater, skirt and a blouse. So we make random guesses. You were a waitress. You were a student. Ring any bells? It never does. No one I know has any specific memories. Just a vague, vestigial knowledge of a world long gone. Faint impressions of past lives that linger like phantom limbs. We recognize civilization buildings, cars, a general overview but we have no personal role in it. No history. We are just here. We do what we do, time passes, and no one asks questions. But like Ive said, its not so bad. We may appear mindless, but we arent. The rusty cogs of cogency still spin, just geared down and down till the outer motion is barely visible. We grunt and groan, we shrug and nod, and sometimes a few words slip out. Its not that different from before. But it does make me sad that weve forgotten our names. Out of everything, this seems to me the most tragic. I miss my own and I mourn for everyone elses, because Id like to love them, but I dont know who they are. There are hundreds of us living in an abandoned airport outside some large city. We dont need shelter or warmth, obviously, but we like having the walls and roofs over our heads. Otherwise wed just be wandering in an open field of dust somewhere, and that would be horrifying. To have nothing at all around us, nothing to touch or look at, no hard lines whatsoever, just us and the gaping maw of the sky. I imagine thats what being full-dead is like. An emptiness vast and absolute. I think weve been here a long time. I still have all my flesh, but there are elders who are little more than skeletons with clinging bits of muscle, dry as jerky. Somehow it still extends and contracts, and they keep moving. I have never seen any of us die of old age. Left alone with plenty of food, maybe wed live forever, I dont know. The future is as blurry to me as the past. I cant seem to make myself care about anything to the right or left of the present, and the present isnt exactly urgent. You might say death has relaxed me. I am riding the escalators when M finds me. I ride the escalators several times a day, whenever they move. Its become a ritual. The airport is derelict, but the power still flickers on sometimes, maybe flowing from emergency generators stuttering deep underground. Lights flash and screens blink, machines jolt into motion. I cherish these moments. The feeling of things coming to life. I stand on the steps and ascend like a soul into Heaven, that sugary dream of our childhoods, now a tasteless joke. After maybe thirty repetitions, I rise to find M waiting for me at the top. He is hundreds of pounds of muscle and fat draped on a six-foot-five frame. Bearded, bald, bruised and rotten, his grisly visage slides into view as I crest the staircase summit. Is he the angel that greets me at the gates? His ragged mouth is oozing black drool. He points in a vague direction and grunts, City. I nod and follow him. We are going out to find food. A hunting party forms around us as we shuffle toward town. Its not hard to find recruits for these expeditions, even if no one is hungry. Focused thought is a rare occurrence here, and we all follow it when it manifests. Otherwise wed just be standing around and groaning all day. We do a lot of standing around and groaning. Years pass this way. The flesh withers on our bones and we stand here, waiting for it to go. I often wonder how old I am. The city where we do our hunting is conveniently close. We arrive around noon the next day and start looking for flesh. The new hunger is a strange feeling. We dont feel it in our stomachs some of us dont even have those. We feel it everywhere equally, a sinking, sagging sensation, as if our cells are deflating. Last winter, when so many Living joined the Dead and our prey became scarce, I watched some of my friends become full-dead. The transition was undramatic. They just slowed down, then stopped, and after a while I realized they were corpses. It disquieted me at first, but its against etiquette to notice when one of us dies. I distracted myself with some groaning. I think the world has mostly ended, because the cities we wander through are as rotten as we are. Buildings have collapsed. Rusted cars clog the streets. Most glass is shattered, and the wind drifting through the hollow high-rises moans like an animal left to die. I dont know what happened. Disease? War? Social collapse? Or was it just us? The Dead replacing the Living? I guess its not so important. Once youve arrived at the end of the world,

it hardly matters which route you took. We start to smell the Living as we approach a dilapidated apartment building. The smell is not the musk of sweat and skin, its the effervescence of life energy, like the ionized tang of lightning and lavender. We dont smell it in our noses. It hits us deeper inside, near our brains, like wasabi. We converge on the building and crash our way inside. We find them huddled in a small studio unit with the windows boarded up. They are dressed worse than we are, wrapped in filthy tatters and rags, all of them badly in need of a shave. M will be saddled with a short blond beard for the rest of his Fleishy existence, but everyone else in our party is cleanshaven. Its one of the perks of being dead, another thing we dont have to worry about anymore. Beards, hair, toenails no more fighting biology. Our wild bodies have finally been tamed. Slow and clumsy but with unswerving commitment, we launch ourselves at the Living. Shotgun blasts fill the dusty air with gunpowder and gore. Black blood spatters the walls. The loss of an arm, a leg, a portion of torso, this is disregarded, shrugged off. A minor cosmetic issue. But some of us take shots to our brains, and we drop. Apparently theres still something of value in that withered gray sponge because if we lose it, we are corpses. The zombies to my left and right hit the ground with moist thuds. But there are plenty of us. We are overwhelming. We set upon the Living, and we eat. Eating is not a pleasant business. I chew off a mans arm, and I hate it. I hate his screams, because I dont like pain, I dont like hurting people, but this is the world now. This is what we do. Of course if I dont eat all of him, if I spare his brain, hell rise up and follow me back to the airport, and that might make me feel better. Ill introduce him to everyone, and maybe well stand around and groan for a while. Its hard to say what friends are anymore, but that might be close. If I restrain myself, if I leave enough But I dont. I cant. As always I go straight for the good part, the part that makes my head light up like a picture tube. I eat the brain, and for about thirty seconds, I have memories. Flashes of parades, perfume, music life. Then it fades, and I get up, and we all stumble out of the city, still cold and gray, but feeling a little better. Not good, exactly, not happy, certainly not alive, but a little less dead. This is the best we can do. I trail behind the group as the city disappears behind us. My steps plod a little heavier than the others. When I pause at a rain-filled pothole to scrub gore off my face and clothes, M drops back and slaps a hand on my shoulder. He knows my distaste for some of our routines. He knows Im a little more sensitive than most. Sometimes he teases me, twirls my messy black hair into pigtails and says, Girl. Such girl. But he knows when to take my gloom seriously. He pats my shoulder and just looks at me. His face isnt capable of much expressive nuance anymore, but I know what he wants to say. I nod, and we keep walking. I dont know why we have to kill people. I dont know what chewing through a mans neck accomplishes. I steal what he has to replace what I lack. He disappears, and I stay. Its simple but senseless, arbitrary laws from some lunatic legislator in the sky. But following those laws keeps me walking, so I follow them to the letter. I eat until I stop eating, then I eat again. How did this start? How did we become what we are? Was it some mysterious virus? Gamma rays? An ancient curse? Or something even more absurd? No one talks about it much. We are here, and this is the way it is. We dont complain. We dont ask questions. We go about our business. There is a chasm between me and the world outside of me. A gap so wide my feelings cant cross it. By the time my screams reach the other side, they have dwindled into groans. At the Arrivals gate, we are greeted by a small crowd, watching us with hungry eyes or eyesockets. We drop our cargo on the floor: two mostly intact men, a few meaty legs, and a dismembered torso, all still warm. Call it leftovers. Call it takeout. Our fellow Dead fall on them and feast right there on the floor like animals. The life remaining in those cells will keep them from full-dying, but the Dead who dont hunt will never quite be satisfied. Like men at sea deprived of fresh fruit, they will wither in their deficiencies, weak and perpetually empty, because the new hunger is a lonely monster. It grudgingly accepts the brown meat and lukewarm blood, but what it craves is closeness, that grim sense of connection that courses between their eyes and ours in those final moments, like some dark negative of love. I wave to M and then break free from the crowd. I have long since acclimated to the Deads pervasive stench, but the reek rising off them today feels especially fetid. Breathing is optional, but I need some air. I wander out into the connecting hallways and ride the conveyors. I stand on the belt and watch the scenery scroll by through the window wall. Not much to see. The runways are turning green, overrun with grass and brush. Jets lie motionless on the concrete like beached whales, white and monumental. Moby Dick, conquered at last. Before, when I was alive, I could never have done this. Standing still, watching the world pass by me, thinking about nearly nothing. I remember effort. I remember targets and deadlines, goals and ambitions. I remember being purposeful, always everywhere all the time. Now Im just standing here on the conveyor, along for the ride. I reach the end, turn around, and go back the other way. The world has been distilled. Being dead is easy. After a few hours of this, I notice a female on the opposite conveyor. She doesnt lurch or groan like most of

us; her head just lolls from side to side. I like that about her, that she doesn't lurch or groan. I catch her eye and stare at her as we approach. For a brief moment we are side by side, only a few feet away. We pass, then travel on to opposite ends of the hall. We turn around and look at each other. We get back on the conveyors. We pass each other again. I grimace and she grimaces back. On our third pass, the airport power dies, and we come to a halt perfectly aligned. I wheeze hello, and she responds with a hunch of her shoulder. I like her. I reach out and touch her hair. Like me, her decomposition is at an early stage. Her skin is pale and her eyes are sunken, but she has no exposed bones or organs. Her irises are an especially light shade of that strange pewter gray all the Dead share. Her graveclothes are a black skirt and a snug white buttonup. I suspect she used to be a receptionist. Pinned to her chest is a silver nametag. She has a name. I stare hard at the tag; I lean in close, putting my face inches from her breasts, but it doesn't help. The letters spin and reverse in my vision; I can't hold them down. As always, they elude me, just a series of meaningless lines and blots. Another of Ms undead ironies—from nametags to newspapers, the answers to our questions are written all around us, and we don't know how to read. I point at the tag and look her in the eyes. Your name?

She looks at me blankly. I point at myself and pronounce the remaining fragment of my own name. Rrr. Then I point at her again. Her eyes drop to the floor. She shakes her head. She doesn't remember. She doesn't even have syllable one, like M and I do. She is no one. But don't I always expect too much? I reach out and take her hand. We walk off the conveyers with our arms stretched across the divider. This female and I have fallen in love. Or what's left of it. I think I remember what love was like before. There were complex emotional and biological factors. We had elaborate tests to pass, connections to forge, ups and downs and tears and whirlwinds. It was an ordeal, an exercise in agony, but it was alive. The new love is simpler. Easier. But small. My girlfriend doesn't talk much. We walk through the echoing corridors of the airport, occasionally passing someone staring out a window or at a wall. I try to think of things to say but nothing comes, and if something did come I probably couldn't say it. This is my great obstacle, the biggest of all the boulders littering my path. In my mind I am eloquent; I can climb intricate scaffolds of words to reach the highest cathedral ceilings and paint my thoughts. But when I open my mouth, it all collapses. So far my personal record is four rolling syllables before some thing jams. And I may be the most loquacious zombie in this airport. I don't know why we don't speak. I can't explain the suffocating silence that hangs over our world, cutting us off from each other like prison-visit Plexiglas. Prepositions are painful, articles are arduous, adjectives are wild overachievements. Is this muteness a real physical handicap? One of the many symptoms of being Dead? Or do we just have nothing left to say? I attempt conversation with my girlfriend, testing out a few awkward phrases and shallow questions, trying to get a reaction out of her, any twitch of wit. But she just looks at me like I'm weird. We wander for a few hours, directionless, then she grips my hand and starts leading me somewhere. We stumble our way down the halted escalators and out onto the tarmac. I sigh wearily. She is taking me to church. The Dead have built a sanctuary on the runway. At some point in the distant past, someone pushed all the stair trucks together into a circle, forming a kind of amphitheater. We gather here, we stand here, we lift our arms and moan. The ancient Boneyes wave their skeletal limbs in the center circle, rasping out dry, wordless sermons through toothy grins. I don't understand what this is. I don't think any of us do. But it's the only time we willingly gather under the open sky. That vast cosmic mouth, distant mountains like teeth in the skull of God, yawning wide to devour us. To swallow us down to where we probably belong. My girlfriend appears to be more devout than I am. She closes her eyes and waves her arms in a way that looks almost heartfelt. I stand next to her and hold my hands in the air stiffly. At some unknown cue, maybe drawn by her fervor, the Boneyes stop their preaching and stare at us. One of them comes forward, climbs our stairs, and takes us both by the wrists. It leads us down into the circle and raises our hands in its clawed grip. It lets out a kind of roar, an unearthly sound like a blast of air through a broken hunting horn, shockingly loud, frightening birds out of trees. The congregation murmurs in response, and it's done. We are married. We step back onto the stair seats. The service resumes. My new wife closes her eyes and waves her arms. The day after our wedding, we have children. A small group of Boneyes stops us in the hall and presents them to us. A boy and a girl, both around six years old. The boy is curly blond, with gray skin and gray eyes, perhaps once Caucasian. The girl is darker, with black hair and ashy brown skin, deeply shadowed around her steely eyes. She may have been Arab. The Boneyes nudge them forward and they give us tentative smiles, hug our legs. I pat them on their heads and ask their names, but they don't have any. I sigh, and my wife and I keep walking, hand in hand with our new children. I wasn't exactly expecting this. This is a big responsibility. The young Dead don't have the natural feeding instincts the adults do. They have to be tended and trained, and they will never grow up. Stunted by our curse, they

will stay small and rot, then become little skeletons, animate but empty, their brains rattling stiff in their skulls, repeating their routines and rituals until one day, I can only assume, the bones themselves will disintegrate, and they'll just be gone. Look at them. Watch them as my wife and I release their hands and they wander outside to play. They tease each other and grin. They play with things that aren't even toys: staplers and mugs and calculators. They giggle and laugh, though it sounds choked through their dry throats. We've bleached their brains, robbed them of breath, but they still cling to the cliff edge. They resist our curse for as long as they possibly can. I watch them disappear into the pale daylight at the end of the hall. Deep inside me, in some dark and cobwebbed chamber, I feel something twitch.

2011 Isaac Marion *Revue de presse* Elegantly written, touching, and fun. (Audrey Niffenegger, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Time Traveler's Wife*) Dark and funny. (Wired) *Warm Bodies* is a terrific zombook. Whether you're warm-bodied or cold-bodied, snuggle up to it with the lights low and enjoy a dead-lightful combination of horror and romance. (Examiner.com) The writing is lively, the characters intriguing, and the creative reinvention of popular themes is thought-provoking. (Commonsensemedia.org) Compulsively readable. (TheReadingGate.com) A masterfully crafted retelling of *Romeo Juliet*. (Goodreads.com) Remarkable. From the very first page you are hooked on protagonist R's story. You actually care about R. Yes, you find yourself really caring about a zombie. (Teenlitrocks.com) Fun and entertaining. (Gliterarygirl.com) Marion's novel is even better [than the movie], digging deep into sardonic observations about humanity, comic takes on zombie behavior and stirring reflections on what it really means to be alive or dead. (Seattle Times) Artful. (The Onion A.V. Club) Highly original. (SeattleTimes.com)