



Becoming a

Zombie



by Ruth Owen

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Back from Death

It's late at night in the city **morgue**. In the center of a brightly lit room, a man's dead body is laid out on a metal table. A doctor holding a **scalpel** is performing an **autopsy**. As she slices into the chest of the **corpse**, its icy, gray hand suddenly jerks and then grabs her arm. Snarling, the corpse rises into a sitting position. Then it attacks, biting the woman again and again, until she crumples to the floor and dies.



Within minutes, the doctor's closed eyes flicker open. Her body is covered with gaping, bloody wounds, but she still staggers to her feet. Together, the two zombies shuffle from the morgue. They have returned from the dead . . . and are **ravenous** for human flesh!

The term *zombie* may come from the words *ndzumbi* and *nzambi*, which originate from two African languages. *Ndzumbi* means "corpse" and *nzambi* means "spirit of a dead person."



The Undead

What are zombies exactly? These nightmarish creatures are driven by one desire—to feed on human flesh. Once a zombie bites a person, the victim dies and then becomes a zombie.

A zombie cannot feel pain and keeps on moving even when its body is badly damaged. According to zombie **lore**, the only way to stop the ferocious creature is to destroy its brain.

For now, the flesh-eating undead only exist in books, games, movies, and TV shows. However, what if our worst nightmares were to come true? Could people actually become real-life zombies?

Even though a zombie can move around, its body **decomposes** over time. Its stinking, decaying flesh soon becomes food for hungry **maggots**. Its rotting skin and muscles peel away from its bones, and its hands, arms, or legs may fall off!



