

DiPucchio, Kelly. *Zombie in Love*. Illus. Scott Campbell. New York: Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2011. Print.

Just in time for Valentine's Day, here is a guilelessly grotesque exploration of a young zombie's search for a sweetheart. Not surprisingly, when you're a zombie, it's complicated.

Among online arbiters of taste, the debate surrounding whether zombies are the new vampires seems to have peaked in the summer of 2010. This rings true for this reviewer, who recalls among that summer's highlights a spontaneous trip through a charity zombie car wash. However late Kelly DiPucchio's *Zombie in Love* is to the trend, it is a worthwhile addition, primarily because it contains Scott Campbell's illustrations.

[DiPucchio](#), known for *Grace for President* and *The Sandwich Swap*, provides a detailed, straightforward description of protagonist Mortimer's efforts to find a date for the Cupid's Ball. He does his best to "put himself out there" in ways any singleton might try (walk dog in park, place personal ad, take ballroom dancing lessons, etc.). Mortimer's efforts fail because, while he is intelligent and thoughtful, he is also a bug-eyed, rotten-toothed zombie whose limbs fall off while he's lifting weights at the gym. In other words, everyone who's not a zombie finds him off-putting.

DiPucchio's prose is unexciting, but this isn't a fatal flaw, since Scott Campbell's illustrations are the main attraction in *Zombie in Love*. [Campbell](#), a multi-disciplinary artist, is known mainly for his work on comics and video games, as well as the beloved [Great Showdowns by Scott C.](#) web series. He elegantly captures Mortimer's hope, despondence, and ghastliness, while also giving us a richly-imagined vision of everyday zombie life ("life"?).

In the end, Mortimer meets his clumsy, putrid match in Mildred, a fellow zombie, leaving us with a lesson about keeping faith that there's someone out there for everyone. This is a less subversive message than some readers may hope for. Rather than seeing someone "normal" value Mortimer's inner qualities over his physicality, we see the two ugliest people at Cupid's Ball find love at first sight.

*Zombie in Love* offers a sweet, superficial story and engrossing watercolour illustrations for readers in elementary school.

Recommended: 3 out of 4 stars

Reviewer: Sarah Polkinghorne