

# **The Zombie Survival Guide Study Guide**

## **The Zombie Survival Guide by Max Brooks**

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# Plot Summary

The *Zombie Survival Guide* is not a traditional novel. Instead, it is written as if it were a non-fiction guide to identifying and surviving attacks by the living dead. In the mythology of Max Brook's fictional books, zombies are reanimated dead who have been killed and taken over by the Solanum virus. Zombie attacks are often suppressed by the government and the media, and average people must be prepared to fight to survive against these flesh-eating undead. The *Zombie Survival Guide* explains how.

"The Undead: Myths and Realities" explains that zombies are human bodies infected with the deadly Solanum virus. The virus kills the body and then takes it over, creating a new undead "brain" that drives the zombie to kill and eat humans, although it cannot digest them and needs no food. Zombies are slow and shambling but do not tire. The Solanum virus also protects the undead from decay for three to five years.

"Weapons and Combat Techniques" details the best methods and weapons for fighting the undead. Though close combat is discouraged, a crowbar, a small firearm, a trench spike and a Shaolin spade are the most useful weapons. The best anti-zombie combat technique is to keep your distance and make clean head shots with a silent projectile weapon to destroy the brain in one shot without attracting more zombies. Armor is a bad idea, since it slows your movement and causes noise.

"On the Defense" describes creating a defensive position. Having food, water, supplies, weapons and ammunition is important. The best positions are upper floors that zombies can't climb to, such as the second story of a house, upper floor apartments or offices, and an attack roof, if necessary. Block or destroy all stairs. In severe attacks, a self-sufficient fortress will be necessary, such as a military complex, prison or oil rig.

"On the Run" talks about traveling during a zombie attack. Traveling during the day is recommended, since zombies have an advantage at night. Travel light and be prepared physically, as well as have supplies. Prepare as much as possible. For land travel, a motorcycle is the best powered vehicle, but a bicycle is the best all-around choice. Traveling by air is relatively safe, except for refueling. Traveling by water is also a good choice, since zombies cannot swim and therefore sink to the bottom.

"On the Attack" explains how to hunt zombies safely, preferably by luring them to your position and picking them off. The most difficult zombie hunts are under water, requiring preparation and coordination. "Living in an Undead World" describes how to prepare an escape route in case of a zombie takeover and how to start over in an isolated location, away from all civilization.

"Recorded Attacks" describes zombie attacks dating from 60,000 B.C. to 2002 A.D., occurring in every part of the world. Many of the descriptions are vague or distorted, and many records of zombie outbreaks are lost or suppressed. The author suggests that, historically, zombie attacks are growing as the population grows and becomes urbanized and warns that world governments must acknowledge and address the

problem of zombies. The end of the novel contains a journal for readers to use to track possible zombie activity in their area.



# **Introduction and The Undead: Myths and Realities: Solanum: The Virus**

## **Introduction and The Undead: Myths and Realities: Solanum: The Virus Summary**

The *Zombie Survival Guide* is written as if it were a non-fiction guide to identifying and surviving attacks by the living dead. In the mythology of Max Brooks's fictional books, zombies are reanimated dead who have been killed and taken over by the Solanum virus. Zombie attacks are often suppressed by the government and the media, and average people must be prepared to fight to survive against these flesh-eating undead.

Zombies are created by a virus called Solanum, first discovered and named by Jan Vanderhaven. Solanum travels through the blood stream to the brain. It replicates itself in the frontal lobe brain cells and destroys them, killing the host. The virus creates a new brain-like organ that controls the body without needing oxygen.

During the first hour after infection, the wound becomes painful, discolored and clotted. After five hours, the person has a fever, chills, painful joints, vomiting and dementia. After eight hours, fever and dementia increase, and there is numbness and loss of muscle control. After eleven hours, the body is numb and paralyzed with a slow heart rate. The person lapses into a coma at sixteen hours, and the heart stops after twenty hours. After twenty-three hours, the person reanimates as a zombie.

Solanum only infects someone through a bite or other fluid transfer, but it is always fatal. Solanum is fatal to all kinds of animals, but only humans reanimate as zombies. No immunization against Solanum can be developed, since the immunization itself would be fatal. Scientists are researching treatments for Solanum infection, but currently no treatment exists. Cutting off the limb immediately after a bite or other contact is only about 10 percent effective. If an infected person commits suicide, the brain must be destroyed. People who are already dead cannot be animated with the virus.

## **Introduction and The Undead: Myths and Realities: Solanum: The Virus Analysis**

Max Brooks creates a scientific-sounding fake handbook to surviving zombie attacks. The humor of this book is inherent in its structure. Brooks takes a horrific and ludicrous idea, the dead rising, and applies to it a scientific and realistic style, making it into a practical manual. The description of the Solanum virus creates a rationale for the existence of zombies as a scientific phenomenon instead of a supernatural one. By going into the details of the biological mechanisms that make the undead rise, Brooks makes his fictional work of the unbelievable more believable. The medical details sound



plausible and allow the reader to suspend disbelief in the bizarre premise of cannibalistic undead.

By describing how the Solanum virus works, Brooks also creates rules for his undead. Because the undead function through a logical mechanism, they are logical, though deadly, foes. If humans plan well and act rationally, they can easily defeat zombies. The tragedy of zombie encounters is that human beings rarely act rationally or plan well. Instead, human reactions are filled with fear, superstition, religious bias, bigotry and emotion. Human beings' frailties are far more deadly than the zombies themselves.



# The Undead: Myths and Realities: Zombie Attributes

## The Undead: Myths and Realities: Zombie Attributes Summary

Zombie bodies are the same as human bodies. They can spot prey like a human, but it is uncertain if zombies can tell a human from a zombie. Zombies are excellent night hunters, but it is unlikely that they have night vision. Zombies have excellent hearing and are attracted by any noise. Zombies have an exceptional sense of smell. They can always distinguish the smell of living prey. Zombies prefer living flesh or fresh kills to long-dead corpses, but this might be due to smell. Zombies have no sense of touch or pain since their nerves are dead.

Zombies cannot heal themselves. Eventually, zombies rot over three to five years. The Solanum virus wards off most bacteria that naturally rot corpses, allowing zombies to exist for this long. Warm, damp environments cause zombies to rot faster. Zombies can be preserved to stop decay, but stories of Egyptian mummies being preserved zombies are false, since mummification involved removing the brain.

No one knows why zombies attack living humans. They will eat any animals but prefer humans. Zombies can only be killed by destroying the brain and remain infectious for up to two days. Burning zombie corpses is the best way to destroy the contamination. While living, zombies cannot be domesticated, and their behavior cannot be changed.

## The Undead: Myths and Realities: Zombie Attributes Analysis

Brooks continues to describe in scientific-seeming detail everything known about zombies. By organizing his descriptions systematically, as if in a scientific treatise, he creates a veneer of believability. Brooks also uses scientific language and a straightforward tone to create the illusion of a reasonable, rational and authentic text. Brooks insists that all supernatural stories about zombies are myths, and that everything about zombies is explicable, creating a divide between the rational and the irrational. This distinction is essential for survival. If humans behave irrationally, according to superstition or emotion, they die. If humans behave rationally, they survive.

Although Brooks creates a rational-sounding description of zombies, elements of the unknown remain unexplained. Where does the Solanum virus come from? Why does it erupt seemingly spontaneously? Why are zombies driven to eat human flesh, something that has no evolutionary value? These unanswered questions maintain the eerie, horrific feel of a zombie infestation and underscore the idea that, however much





human beings learn about the dangerous world around them, an element of the unknown always continues to exist.

Human beings have advantages over zombies: agility and intelligence. Human beings also have a major disadvantage: emotionalism. Intelligence and emotionalism in a human are in constant conflict during confrontations with zombies, because zombies tend to create an intense emotional reaction in their human adversaries. The zombie's moaning noise, human-looking bodies and incessant lusting for human flesh all intensify emotional responses, so these elements can be considered the primary weapons of the zombie against humans.



# The Undead: Myths and Realities: The Voodoo Zombie through Detection

## The Undead: Myths and Realities: The Voodoo Zombie through Detection Summary

A "voodoo zombie" is supposedly a dead person brought back to life as a slave by a voodoo priest but these have little to do with viral undead. Voodoo priests, or houngans, use a neurotoxin to paralyze a person so that it appears he or she is dead. The person is buried alive and suffers brain damage from lack of oxygen. Voodoo zombies, however, have emotions, thoughts and feel pain. They recognize fire and their surroundings, and they do not have the enhanced senses of viral zombies. Voodoo zombies can also communicate and can be controlled by other humans.

The author divides zombie attacks into four classes. Class 1 is a minor outbreak in a rural or Third World area, with up to twenty zombies. Up to fifty humans may be killed in up to a twenty-mile area, and the attack may last up to two weeks. Class 2 attacks are medium-scale outbreaks with twenty to a hundred zombies and several hundred human victims. A Class 3 attack is a large-scale outbreak with thousands of zombies over hundreds of miles for up to several months. A Class 4 attack would be zombies taking over the civilized world.

## The Undead: Myths and Realities: The Voodoo Zombie through Detection Analysis

Continuing with the novel's condemnation of superstition in favor of science, Brooks explains voodoo zombies as created through poisonous neurotoxins. Then, he proceeds to distinguish them from viral zombies, creating clarity between the clashing zombie mythologies. Brooks also acknowledges zombie films, which first developed the type of zombie Brooks describes. Brooks dismisses zombie films as entertainment, distancing his own "scientific" description from films' fictional portrayals.

Brook's analytical style leads him to define four classes of zombie outbreaks. These classes escalate in scope, leading from minor incidents to world-wide devastation. This escalating sequence of outbreaks reflects a fundamental idea in the book that human beings are doomed to escalating disaster because of their inability to react with cool, competent intelligence instead of fear, superstition and emotion. By creating a system of escalating levels of zombie attacks, Brook creates the expectation that the minor outbreaks must eventually lead to world-wide destruction.



# **Weapons and Combat Techniques: General Rules through Close Combat**

## **Weapons and Combat Techniques: General Rules through Close Combat Summary**

The right weapons are important for fighting zombies. The author also advocates thorough training with your chosen weapon. Weapons must be cleaned and maintained. The author also suggests training your body as your first weapon, using diet and exercise to build stamina and agility.

Hand-to-hand combat is unwise with zombies, but sometimes necessary. Blunt weapons may be used to crush the brain, but this is difficult. Breaching the skull with one blow is the only hope. A steel crowbar is the best blunt weapon and is useful for other tasks.

Beheading a zombie is an option, though the head may still bite. Cutting off limbs, though not deadly, may incapacitate a zombie. Hatchets are good weapons if cornered in close combat. While fencing swords are not suitable, long swords are good weapons. Two-handed long swords are the most accurate and strongest sword. Shorter swords are also useful, such as military machetes and Ninjite swords.

Spears and similar weapons may fend off zombies but are unlikely to kill, and halberds are awkward. Flails may work but require much training. Knives are useful and light. Smooth blades less than six inches are preferable. Trench spikes are the best small weapon, with a seven-inch spike attached to brass knuckles. This weapon is able to stab through a zombie's skull. The originals are hard to get, and you may need to make your own.

## **Weapons and Combat Techniques: General Rules through Close Combat Analysis**

The section on weapons and combat technique begins a detailed analysis of how to fight zombies. Immediately, the author introduces the idea that human beings prepared for zombie attacks have more to fear than the zombies themselves. Other humans are as big a danger, or even bigger. The author recommends keeping a clean record and following all laws so as not to attract the attention of the authorities. The police, he implies, may end up putting you in danger if they distrust you for any reason. One of the major human frailties the author points out here is human beings' inability to get along with each other. Even in a deadly emergency, human beings can be each others' worst enemies.

Brooks does not simply tell the reader what weapons to equip in case of zombie attack. Instead, he thoroughly describes the pros and cons of each weapon. Brooks is encouraging the reader to use his or her intelligence, to weigh the benefits of each weapon and the reasoning behind Brooks' recommendations. Although the idea of combat with flesh-eating zombies is horrifying, Brooks approaches it in the most calculating, intellectual way possible. This creates a tension between the horrific situation and the analytical presentation which highlights the human tension between emotions and intellect.



# **Weapons and Combat Techniques: Slings and Arrows through Firearms**

## **Weapons and Combat Techniques: Slings and Arrows through Firearms Summary**

Weapons such as bows or slingshots can kill at a distance with minimal sound. Slingshots are more accurate but don't hit hard enough. Blowguns are worthless, since zombies cannot be poisoned. Shuriken, throwing knives, longbows and compound bows are useful but require extensive training and expertise. However, flaming bows may be effective. Crossbows are better sniping weapons, but they are heavy and may be best as a primary weapon.

Firearms are the most important weapons, allowing a human to kill scores of zombies. Heavy machine guns are a waste of ammunition against attackers when only a head shot will kill. Machine guns cannot effectively decapitate or dismember a group of zombies. Submachine guns may be useful in close fights. Assault rifles, while they have improved range and accuracy, are no more useful than a rifle because rapid fire is not the best tactic.

Bolt-action or lever-action rifles make excellent zombie defense weapons. They are easy to use with widely-available ammunition. Older, military weapons are preferable because they have hand-to-hand combat capabilities. Semiautomatic rifles are also great anti-zombie weapons but require discipline not to waste ammunition.

A shotgun could blow a zombie's head off or buy time by hitting several zombies who are near each other, but it is no good at long range. The pistol is also not very useful, lacking accuracy. However, it makes a good backup for up-close confrontations. Twenty-two caliber rimfire rifles or pistols are light weapons with light ammunition that is readily available; however, the impact of a bullet is minimal on limbs or the skull, especially at a distance.

## **Weapons and Combat Techniques: Slings and Arrows through Firearms Analysis**

Through Brooks' descriptions of effective and ineffective weapon, he builds a picture of combat with zombies. Particularly when Brooks discusses firearms, it becomes clear that restraint and intelligence are the primary tools necessary for victory. Weapons that are designed for mass destruction are not effective. Weapons that tempt the user into an emotional outburst are not effective. The effective weapons are single-shot, accurate weapons that require the user to calmly consider and aim each shot. Silence is



effective, while noise is dangerous. This dynamic also shows the value of calmness and planning over an emotional reaction and wild responses.

The woman who kills fifteen zombies in twelve seconds with a semiautomatic rifle is an example of how effective skilled, resolved and intelligent human beings can be against even the most deadly threat. A horrifying horde of zombies can be reduced to nothing in minutes with the right equipment, skills and mindset. However, this promising description of what human beings can accomplish must be weighed against the horrifying and sad descriptions of typical human encounters with zombies, which end in nothing but their deaths.

Brooks also constantly points out how knee-jerk reactions and opinions that are not clearly thought through are usually wrong. Most people intuitively think a shotgun might be a good weapon, but on close examination of the facts, Brooks points out that it is inefficient against zombie foes. By pointing out the problems with knee-jerk opinions, Brooks encourages the reader to act through close, thoughtful examination of facts, instead of emotional responses or first guesses.



# **Weapons and Combat Techniques: Explosives through Armor**

## **Weapons and Combat Techniques: Explosives through Armor Summary**

Explosives kill by shrapnel, which is useless against zombies, but may be useful for opening doors or other functions. Zombies do not fear fire, so fire is practically useless as a weapon, sometimes causing more danger through spreading. However, fire is essential to destroying zombie bodies. Molotov cocktails may be used to burn zombies before you run away or burn down infested structures. It risks spreading fire. Blowtorches are only useful to start fires, not as weapons in themselves. Flamethrowers are heavy, difficult to find and fuel and ineffective in most zombie attacks.

Acid can destroy a zombie completely, but it is better for disposal than for combat. Poisons do not work against zombies, nor do biological weapons. Zoological warfare, such as scavengers that will eat dead flesh, is impossible, since no scavenger will eat zombies, and zombie flesh is poisonous. Electricity can paralyze a zombie, but a large amount of electricity is needed to kill. Radiation is also apparently ineffective, although scientists continue to research its effects. Ghouls can survive severe radiation and spread it to humans, for whom it is deadly. Genetic weapons could even be a cure for zombie infections.

Armor is generally a bad idea against zombies, since it makes you slower, less agile and more likely to take risks because you feel protected. Chain mail provides some bite protection, but it is still heavy, noisy and makes fighting more difficult. Helmets diminish visibility and are useless in a zombie fight. Bulletproof vests are only useful for preventing friendly fire injuries. Tight-fitting clothes and short hair are essential to avoid being grasped by zombies.

## **Weapons and Combat Techniques: Explosives through Armor Analysis**

Fire has a dual function as both beneficial and destructive. When used responsibly and intelligently, fire can destroy zombie bodies and eliminate zombie threats. When used thoughtlessly, fire can cause more harm than good, even killing the humans trying to use it. The dual nature of fire as both a weapon and a hazard highlights Brooks' emphasis on always using intelligence instead of emotion or intuition.

Brooks also details a number of creative ideas of ways to destroy zombies. The element of creativity has a mixed result in Brooks' book. Most "outside the box" ideas for zombie killing are fruitless and dangerous. However, creative thinking is often essential for



solving zombie problems. Truly successful creative thinking requires use of the scientific method: observing the behavior of zombies, creating a hypothesis about a functional weapon, and testing the weapon idea to see the results. Brooks' emphasis on scientific approaches complements his emphasis on intelligent and rational thought.

Brooks' discussion of armor again highlights the idea that intuitive decisions are often bad ones. Armor might seem like a good idea, but a careful examination of the facts leads to the conclusion that using armor is short-sighted and ineffective. The counterintuitive alternative, short hair and tight-fitting clothing, is the intelligent, well-thought-out, effective choice.





# On the Defense: The Private Residence

## On the Defense: The Private Residence Summary

Houses are a primary defense location for Class 1 zombie attacks. Stilted homes protect against zombie attacks, and blocking or destroying the outer staircases may be the only necessary modification. Tornado-proof houses are also safe against the undead. Burglar alarms are useless, and security bars are only a temporary measure. Tempered safety glass in steel or concrete frames is effective but expensive.

A ten-foot chain-link fence will fend off a small attack, and a ten-foot cinder-block wall is even more effective, although zoning ordinances may prohibit it. An organized, armed group can protect a six-foot wall, killing any zombies that make it over the wall. Any gates should be a sliding, solid steel or wrought iron door, and a car can be positioned to reinforce the gate. In a Class 3 attack, zombies will climb over each other to get over even a ten-foot wall.

In an apartment, ground-floor units have the highest risk. Destroying a staircase can make the upper floors secure. An apartment complex also contains a small community, and the inhabitants can provide multiple skills. Still, social conflict can occur. Typically, home defense books are geared toward human attacks, and the strategies in them are useless against zombies.

For the best defense during a siege, stock up on multiple weapons and ammunition, including guns and accessories, a crossbow, swords, knives and a hatchet. A typical disaster kit is useful. Equipment stocks should include water, water filtering, purification, and collection materials, food and cooking supplies, medical supplies, fuel and batteries, lamps and flashlights, communication equipment, tools, sanitary equipment, fire extinguishers, flares, earplugs, manuals and repair and maintenance supplies.

In case of an unexpected zombie attack, when there is no time to prepare, a quick defense can be established. For a two-story house, lock all entrances, go upstairs and turn on the bathtub to collect as much water as possible. Collect the best available weapons, and stock the second floor with the equipment available in the shortest possible time. Destroy the staircase to secure the upper floor, but don't use fire. Boarding up doors and windows will not keep out zombies. You may use a ladder to continue stocking the upstairs if one is available. Stay out of sight and make minimal noise and light to avoid attracting large hordes of zombies. Do not use the phone, and keep the ringer on low. Plan an escape route in case retreat is necessary.

For a single-story house, the attic can be adapted as a secure location. The ladder or staircase can usually be easily removed. Do not use the basement as shelter, since you can easily be trapped there. If there is no attic, retreat to the roof for as long as you can last there.



## On the Defense: The Private Residence Analysis

Mobs of human beings are always dangerous because human beings as a group do not behave intelligently and rationally. Brooks points this out through the story of Yahya Bey, in which most of the people are killed as they gather together in groups at public areas. The fact that large numbers of people are irrational and emotional, resulting in danger and death, does not bode well for the continued existence of the human race and foreshadows the apocalyptic scenario put forth at the end of the book.

Brooks selects an individual home as the best short-term defensive position in a zombie attack simply for the reason that large groups of people will put everyone in danger. In a private home, a rational, intelligent individual can control the environment and fight off attacking undead. Intelligence can win out over emotions and mob mentality. Even in an apartment complex, there will be enough people to pose the danger of social conflict, placing everyone in the residence at risk.

Being prepared is an important element of Brooks' narrative. Preplanning is key to survival. Making decisions on the fly and making due with what's available causes humans to fall into the trap of knee-jerk responses and intuitive decisions. Brooks emphasizes planning ahead in order to limit the mistakes of irrational, immediate responses. Again, planning necessitates putting calm intelligence over emotional reactions.

Preparation, however, goes hand-in-hand with adaptability. Brooks emphasizes having escape routes planned and knowing information in advance of desperate situations, something the reader (in the fictional context of a zombie-threatened world) is already doing by reading his book. A mentally-prepared person is able to adapt to unexpected situations because he or she has thought out reasoned responses in advance.



# On the Defense: Public Spaces through The Fortress

## On the Defense: Public Spaces through The Fortress Summary

Office buildings with upper floors can be secured from zombies, much like the upper stories of apartment buildings. Schools vary in defensibility. Inner-city schools may have fencing, strong structural integrity, food and supplies. Hospitals may seem safe and well-stocked, but the infected often come there, so hospitals are quickly overrun. Police stations quickly become overcrowded and uncontrolled. Retail stores may have roll-down gates sufficient for smaller attacks, but an escape route is essential. Smaller markets with steel gates can be havens in smaller attacks.

Shopping malls are indefensible, with too many entrances and openings, plus they attract humans and zombies. Churches may have solid doors, high windows and wrought-iron fences to prevent invasion, but rarely are they secure enough to keep out a horde of zombies. Warehouses have security offices, and the stock may be used for reinforcement, so often they are good choices. Piers and docks can be made secure with the right supplies and modifications, since zombies cannot swim. A ship can be secured, but be certain that no infected are aboard and that zombies cannot climb aboard from shallow water.

Banks may seem attractive because of their security, but alarms, cameras and low gates are useless against zombies. TCemeteries, though they sound unsafe, are relatively secure. Zombies reanimate long before burial, and no zombie could claw its way out of a buried coffin, and there is little in a cemetery to attract the undead. Government buildings, however, attract large numbers of people and are best avoided.

Avoid buildings storing dangerous materials and complex machines. When considering a location to take shelter, ask if there is a wall or other barrier around the outside. Assess the number of entrances and how many people you have for defense. Will zombies be able to enter, and is there an escape route? Are there water, supplies, weapons, tools, communications equipment and materials for reinforcement? How long could you survive there?

Military complexes are good locations with high security, good supplies, equipment, communication and, of course, soldiers. Prisons are also effective fortresses with many defensible positions, including cell blocks and individual rooms. Older prisons are the most defensible, with high walls and heavy construction. Inmates will likely be released in a large-scale attack, but be careful when approaching the prison and ascertain that inmates, or inmates and guards together, are not running the prison.



## On the Defense: Public Spaces through The Fortress Analysis

Brooks inserts social commentary into his book on zombies. When reviewing places from the point of view of zombie defense, he notes that inner-city schools are more like fortresses than places of learning. The implication of this for the real-world society is left up to the reader, but the difference between impoverished inner-city conditions and suburban ones are pointed out, perhaps with a subtle message to the reader. Brooks also turns knee-jerk logic on its head, pointing out that hospitals and police stations are unsafe in emergencies, although they are the places that people first think of when they think "safety." This irony also serves as social commentary, since the elements of society that are set up to keep us secure quickly become death traps.

Banks are another example of a societal institution of security that is really not secure. The technology that humans rely on has no real function once society begins to crumble. Humanity lives in a mainly-constructed reality, and banks, hospitals and police stations quickly degrade when another reality, such as a zombie reality, intrudes. Continuing to turn popular wisdom on its head, Brooks points out that cemeteries would be relatively safe areas in zombie attacks. By constantly turning around common wisdom and knee-jerk reactions, Brooks promotes independent thinking.

When Brooks discusses creating a fortress to withstand a long-term zombie attack, he favors older prisons. Again, this highlights the issue of human's constructed reality and assumed safety. The technology dependent on a society's support will soon become useless. Also, Brooks cautions against a military complex, reflecting his earlier warnings against fleeing to public institutions such as a police station. A military complex is also dependent on society, and when frantic people are fleeing toward them, military complexes will soon be overstressed. The constructs of government and military that humanity has built for its protection are more vulnerable than they seem.



# On the Run: General Rules through Vehicles

## On the Run: General Rules through Vehicles Summary

During a zombie attack, any number of events could make escape from a secure position necessary. If an escape run is essential, stay focused on your goal, and don't get sidetracked on inessential stops. Clearly define your destination before starting and have a backup plan. Get all the information you can about your escape route and eventual destination before you start, and make a plan for your journey, including plans for supplies, routes and contingencies.

Travel in small groups to make organization good and travel time short. Train and organize the group to work together before leaving. Keep your equipment on you, and make outrunning zombies the first defense. Make as little noise as possible and move without talking. Also, stay in covered areas and limit use of light, traveling by day. Stay attentive to potential threats, and maintain sleep to stay alert and able. Do not use signals to planes or patrols that could attract zombies, and stay out of urban areas.

Vehicles are attractive for quick travel and the power to run over zombies, but fuel may be a problem. Also, roads may be blocked, and bridges may be down. Driving off-road may strand you without fuel or cause irreparable damage to the vehicle. Also, cars cause noise, which attracts zombies. Immediately run from a malfunctioning vehicle, because zombies will be on the way. If escaping in a sedan, look for good gas mileage, storage space and reliability. SUVs may also not have the off-road capabilities they seem to promise. Trucks have bad gas mileage and are generally limited in their off-road capabilities.

A bus has poor mileage and is noisy and hard to handle. Armored cars are rare but can be secure, despite poor gas mileage and no off-road ability. Motorcycles, though seeming to lack security, are the best option. Dirt bikes can travel in all types of terrain. They are fast and agile and can be pushed if they run out of fuel.

## On the Run: General Rules through Vehicles Analysis

The Lawson film shows an example of how human beings, in an emotionally-stressed condition, can make emotional, and therefore, deadly decisions. The choice of a bus for an escape vehicle turns into a death trap. This cautionary tale leads the reader to consider their choices more rationally and calmly, while providing an exciting and titillating tale that might be straight off a zombie-movie screen. Brooks emphasizes planning ahead and taking time to make important decisions, therefore relying on intelligence and informed decision making instead of an emotional response to flee. Preparation, organization and restraint are all aspects of calm and rational thought.



Again, Brooks emphasizes that what seems "obvious" is usually not well-thought-out. A car seems intuitively like the best means of travel through a zombie-infested area, but Brooks is careful to point out all the negatives of using a car. They are not versatile in adverse conditions. They are noisy. They require fuel. Through this discussion, Brooks shows the reader that thinking through a situation instead of taking the most obvious and easiest answer gives a better result. In a zombie-infested world, the difference between a knee-jerk response and a reasoned response is literally the difference between life and death.



# On the Run: Terrain Types through Alternate Means of Transportation

## On the Run: Terrain Types through Alternate Means of Transportation Summary

On the run from zombies, your environment is important. In a forest, trees can provide cover, and animal noises may alert you to zombie activity. Food is available, and tree branches provide safety for sleep. However, search helicopters are unlikely to spot you and have little area to land. Open plains give zombies a clear view of you and require caution. Stay on the ground and crawl if zombies are visible. Fields with tall crops provide cover but also obscure zombies. Avoid noise at all costs. Hills limit how far you can see, and hilltops make you visible to zombies. Travel on your stomach when approaching high ground.

Cities are dangerous areas to travel because of both humans and zombies. Familiarity with the area is essential. Cars or other four-wheel vehicles are useless, since the roadways will certainly be blocked. Motorcycles are too loud. It's best to travel by bicycle or foot. Freeways are the safest routes, with low travel time and protective fences. However, abandoned cars will be prevalent, and some will contain zombies. All will contain flammable gas, so be careful with firearms.

Sewers, subways, or other underground travel can trap you with no escape, and human survivors in the city may shoot you. Do not travel in the city at night unless unavoidable. If you need to sleep in the city at night, choose a building with a flat roof and only one entrance, not touching any nearby structures but near enough to jump if necessary. Block the door to the roof and have an escape plan.

If traveling by plane, you'll need a pilot and sufficient fuel. Stopping for fuel is extremely hazardous, and a plane crash could attract zombies from a wide radius. Helicopters offer flexibility for landing and takeoff but are noisy, so refueling should be carefully planned. Balloons are fuel efficient but hard to steer. Airships, though rare, give the best of both worlds.

Traveling by water is also safe, since zombies cannot swim. Motorboats give travelers speed and control, but fuel can run out. Also, motorboats are loud and can attract zombies, so the motor should be used minimally. Sailboats are quiet but unpredictable, at the whim of the weather. Rowboats are a good option, but the travelers may become fatigued. Also, bring plenty of supplies, including water. The water you're traveling on is likely unfit to drink.



## On the Run: Terrain Types through Alternate Means of Transportation Analysis

Systematically, Brooks evaluates every type of terrain for benefits and dangers while fleeing zombies. The systematic approach that he exhibits throughout the novel sets up the author/narrator as an expert. The author/narrator must be a trustworthy expert for the reader to accept the opinions and ideas that are advanced throughout the narrative. The author/narrator's expertise is what gives him authority. Brooks also emphasizes paying attention to the environment, thinking about what you observe and making conclusions based on those observations. These elements are essential to scientific thought, which is closely tied to the rational thought that Brooks urges on the reader.

Brooks tells the reader to avoid signs of survivors if traveling through an urban area. This is significant, because in the event of a zombie uprising, human beings are not only dangerous to themselves but to other humans. Essentially, human beings cannot trust one another in the case of a zombie attack and must only trust themselves. Even a well-intentioned survivor is likely to be deadly to anyone approaching his or her position. This goes against all humanity's basic social instinct. Trust is an important issue underlying Brooks' rejection of social institutions such as police stations, hospitals and military installations, and it surfaces again here, as Brooks warns readers not to approach other survivors.

Brooks also promotes unconventional thinking, recommending airships or blimps as good alternative air travel to traditional planes or helicopters. By considering airships and balloons, Brooks is showing the author/narrator's thoroughness and wide expertise. Even in the safest modes of travel, though, Brooks constantly urges caution and wariness. Human beings under attack by zombies must be vigilant and never weaken. In this way, humans must be almost superhuman to survive.





# On the Attack: General Rules through Terrain Types

## On the Attack: General Rules through Terrain Types Summary

To carry out a search-and-destroy mission for zombies, always organize a group instead of trying to work by yourself. Stay alert at all times, and use guides who know the area. Keep a secure base for retreat if necessary. Always hunt zombies during the day and have an escape route.

When hunting zombies, create a solid position, make noise, and let the zombies come to you. If searching a building, always listen at a door before opening it, and make noise to see if you hear a response inside. Maintain good communication with your party and get rid of all bodies. If you use fire, make sure the fire is controlled. Finally, never send an individual into any infected area alone.

Each person should have a primary and secondary firearm, ammunition, cleaning kit, knife, flashlight, hand-to-hand weapon, flares, a mirror, a radio, matches or lighters, food, water, a bedroll and appropriate clothes. Groups should have additional weapons and water, rope, binoculars, a comprehensive set of tools, a medical kit, maps and compasses, batteries and flares. Vehicles can be used for transportation and to attract zombies through noise.

While hunting zombies in the forest, look for freshly-eaten bodies and use trees for lookout points. In the plains, long-range weapons can be used. In planted fields, fire can be used to destroy the tall crops and prevent ambush by the undead. In the tundra, undead may be frozen and create new attacks when thawed. In a hilly area, take high ground for best visibility and shoot zombies as they clumsily try to climb up. The desert poses dangers for zombie hunters, who will be out during the hottest part of the day. In a swamp, the water is a hazard and must be approached with caution.

## On the Attack: General Rules through Terrain Types Analysis

The best methods for hunting zombies are somewhat counterintuitive. No one wants to attract zombies, but attracting zombies to a fortified position is the heart of every successful method of zombie hunting. The human being has the advantage over the zombie because zombies are instinctive, predictable creatures. Humans can rely on zombies always reacting in the same way, much as any force in the natural world consistently respond in the same way. Applying a force to an object results in an equal and opposite force. Making noise attracts zombies in the area. Because zombies can be

observed and their behavior predicted, human beings can consistently defeat them using reliable methods.

When discussing terrain for zombie-hunting, Brooks reiterates his messages of preparation, thought and constant wariness. He asks the reader again to pay attention to the natural world and to make intelligent decisions based on observation. Natural dangers exist in many environments, especially the desert, and part of intelligent, clear thinking is not being only narrowly focused on zombies. Being alert and thoughtful requires seeing the whole picture, including the natural threats of a hazardous environment.



# On the Attack: Strategies

## On the Attack: Strategies Summary

To use the lure and destroy strategy, drive a vehicle into an infected area, make noise to attract zombies and drive out, leading the zombies to sharpshooters. In the barricade strategy, draw zombies to a fixed position. In the tower strategy, set up a secure, long-term position in a high location and attract zombies to your shooters. The tank tactic uses an armored car or similar vehicle. Team members inside the vehicle attract zombies with noise and shoot them through firing slits. A stampede strategy involves driving a number of vehicles through an infestation, running over zombies. . The motorized sweep is a slow-moving caravan of well-protected vehicles carrying armed sharpshooters to pick off the undead. An airborne sweep has limited usefulness. It requires an open area and still requires extensive cleanup. Air transport is best used as transportation and support. Parachute drops of hunters may sound attractive, but they are dangerous and ineffective. A fire, though destructive, can be effective.

Since zombies sink and do not swim, they can easily be submerged under water. When hunting zombies under water, be familiar with the body of water, including depth, visibility and exits to other waterways. Search the area from outside the water first, using sonar or other technology, if needed. However, zombies may still be obscured by underwater formations. Think about draining the water, if possible. If you need to go underwater, find an experienced scuba diver, or spend time training your team if time allows.

Different bodies of water provide different zombie hunting conditions. Rivers with heavy currents might wash zombies miles away. Nets at narrow points can catch the undead as they float past. Lakes and ponds can be watched from the shore for undead wandering out, and the water can be swept for those remaining submerged. Frozen zombies may reemerge in the spring. Swamps are difficult hunting grounds, with shallow water and low visibility. Large numbers of hunters with poles and searchlights is the best way. The open ocean is almost impossible to hunt, but the undead pose few threats in the ocean. If zombies make it to the ocean, watch the currents and the coastline carefully.

## On the Attack: Strategies Analysis

Most of the strategies that Brooks presents for hunting zombies are based on the simple idea of luring out the zombies and picking them off from a secure location. The variations are basically the type of lure and the type of secure position. Brooks also presents a "stampede" strategy that involves running over zombies recklessly with cars. This impressive-seeming and action-packed strategy appeals to people's instincts to respond to zombies with frantic emotions. However, this strategy proves to be ineffective. Running over a zombie seldom kills it, leaving the dangerous job of picking



through a pile of writhing undead and killing them. As in most instances, the most emotionally-appealing strategies and those that are chosen through a knee-jerk response, are ultimately ineffective and dangerous.

The airborne sweep is another tactic that seems to have advantages at first glance and has obvious appeal as an immediate choice. Like the "stampede" strategy, using flyovers to shoot zombies is ineffective and a waste of resources. In almost every instance, the instinctual choice is the wrong one. Reasoned, thoughtful consideration is the only way to make an effective choice.

Underwater hunts for zombies are dangerous because the water is not a natural environment for human beings, and zombies have the advantage of not needing to breathe. Brooks notes that the dangers of underwater hunting often have a positive result because the hunters stay more alert and are less likely to become over-confident. By making this point, Brooks is saying that the surroundings and the zombies are not the worst dangers that human beings face. The worst threat to human beings is human error and human fallibility.



# Living in an Undead World: The Undead World through Starting Over

## Living in an Undead World: The Undead World through Starting Over Summary

In a doomsday scenario, machinery falls into disrepair and perhaps explodes. Zombies first destroy cities and then homes in the countryside, ravaging animals as well as humans. Fortified areas run low on supplies, and the occupants become prey to zombies on excursions or evacuations. Looters on the run are overrun by zombies or destroyed by infighting. The undead will always survive. Some animals will go extinct, and others will adapt. All remnants of civilization will be deserted or destroyed.

To prepare for escape, get a group together to pool resources and abilities. Members of your group can train in useful skills such as farming and blacksmithing. However, a group always has the potential for social problems such as power-grabbing, especially if everyone believes the world is lost. Take advantage of society's knowledge by studying every aspect of survival. Start training yourself to live without luxuries by simplifying your diet, eliminating alcohol and tobacco and even substituting natural healing therapies for medicines.

An escape destination must be chosen in advance. Choose a location for its remoteness, access to fresh water, farming capacity, natural defensive position and other natural resources, such as wood. Food, water and remoteness are crucial. Planning an escape route to the chosen location is key. Escaping during a zombie attack will be full of dangers, and if the military takes over, they will be your biggest problem. Have several backup plans with contingency strategies. Make a detailed list of needed equipment, including survival necessities, equipment to build and expand your shelter and equipment to provide the luxuries of home. Purchase as many items as possible, and research the other items, including backup plans of where to get them. Be prepared to buy what you need in cash at a location within two hours' drive in an emergency.

After arriving at your destination, immediately create perimeter defenses against zombies and marauders. Plan defensive fortifications in advance and have a fall back position within your new home. In case of an incursion, also plan an escape route, a location to regroup and a secondary escape location. Once you're established in your primary location with defenses and plans in place, be vigilant, looking for intruders or signs of possible attack.



## Living in an Undead World: The Undead World through Starting Over Analysis

Brooks extends his description of zombie activity into an imagined future. Although Brooks terms this worst-case scenario as "improbable," he belies this by urging readers to begin making expensive, time-consuming and difficult preparations right away, planning for perhaps an imminent threat. The worst-case scenario serves as a warning to humanity of ultimate destruction if reason and intelligence are constantly overridden by ignorance, superstition, emotionalism and bigotry. Zombies, in Brooks' work, stand in for almost any threat that humanity faces, from disease to nuclear war, and the solution is rational thought.

Brooks' portrayal of looters and marauders in an undead world devoid of the protections of human government and social order shows how fragile humanity's protections are. People rely on the government, the police and the other elements of society for survival, but these are largely constructed from human agreements. When these agreements start to fall apart, society crumbles, and humankind is left to deal with the harsh realities of the natural world. Without the cushion of societal protections, intelligence and rationality are even more important. Brooks recommends rejection of all social protections, creating an isolated community that is self-sufficient.

Learning, training, preparation and vigilance are the keys to success. All these are aspects of intelligence. Learning uses existing knowledge to make more intelligent decisions. Training develops measured instincts and pre-thought-out actions. Preparation requires making reasoned and intelligent decisions in advance instead of being carried away by emotional or intuitive actions in an emergency, and vigilance requires the careful observation and cautious evaluation of events as they occur.

Again, Brooks brings up that the current protectors of society, in this case the military, cannot be trusted in an emergency situation and that human beings are their own worst enemies. Divisions between nations will be as harmful as military actions. Independent thought and action are necessary for survival. The four key elements of learning, training, preparation and vigilance do not stop after a group arrives at their destination. Reasoned thought and intelligent action must become the cornerstones of the new society if it is going to survive in the harsh environment of a zombie-human war.



# Living in an Undead World: Terrain Types through Then What?

## Living in an Undead World: Terrain Types through Then What? Summary

In choosing a location for your new home, choose the harshest environments, since they will have the lowest populations. Deserts are among the safest environments. Rocks can be a natural resource for building. A secluded spot deep in the desert would be an unlikely and perhaps deadly target for bandits. Mountains are a good defensive position, with steep slopes to slow zombies. Camouflage is important, and resources must be available on the mountaintop.

The jungle provides food, water, resources and camouflage; however, disease, preserving food and mold are problems in this wet environment. Metal will easily rust, and cloth will rot. Tundra is more promising, since it is inhospitable to human refugees and marauders. Zombies, however, will not be deterred by the environment, and you must have a strong defensive position. Polar environments are the harshest. Ice and snow are potential building materials. Surviving this environment requires preparation and skill. However, zombies and human bandits will not be a problem. Islands are another option. Zombies cannot swim, so a mass infestation is unlikely. However, islands close to shore will be overcome with refugees. Choose an inaccessible island without a natural harbor and with hazardous reefs or high cliffs.

Surviving at sea on a ship is possible but unlikely. Fuel will run out, as will medicine and vitamins. Between infighting, zombie attacks and waning supplies, the seas will become deadly. To attempt survival at sea, you need ten years' commercial or military sea experience and a wind-powered craft one hundred feet or more and built to survive. You must be capable of desalinating sea water and preparing food without fuel. Emergency equipment, deep knowledge of ocean flora and fauna, and a safe haven for retreat are essential. Moving from island to island might be better but will be dangerous.

Your retreat may need to last through ten years of zombie-human war and five more years until most zombies rot after humanity is extinguished. Decades may pass before all zombies are gone. In the first year, a state of emergency will occur, and you will establish your outpost. After five or ten years, the human-zombie war will be over, and human society will be gone. After twenty years, you may send out a scouting party. If they don't return, prepare for battle. Don't send another party for five more years. If they do return, you will have information.

Zombies may still cover the earth, or perhaps few undead will exist. The final option is that all humans and zombies are gone. In any case, the ecosystem will be drastically changed. After the zombie threat has passed, consider expanding your settlement or



moving to a slightly-more hospitable, but secluded, area. Security should still be your primary concern. The important thing is that you have survived.

## **Living in an Undead World: Terrain Types through Then What? Analysis**

Brooks again urges readers not to use intuition to make decisions but instead to use rational thought. The harshest environments, which seem least attractive, are actually the best choices in the instance of a zombie-human world war. Deserts and arctic areas are the most secure, and the harshness of the environment is easier to cope with than the onslaught of millions of zombies. Brooks also notes that other human beings cannot be trusted, and any position that has human contact, however minor, is compromised. Human activity brings with it the dangers of both zombies and marauders. Self-sufficiency and independence is preferable to trusting more than a handful of other human beings.

Brooks goes into detail about the dangers of surviving at sea. Again, what seems like an intuitively good idea has hidden hazards that are easily discovered with careful forethought and study. He gives a grim picture of the seas after a worldwide zombie war. Human beings from all over the world will set sail with whatever means are available, and they will succumb to pirates marauding the ocean seas, unforeseen zombie attacks and the hazards of the ocean. Resources will be slim or nonexistent, and ghost ships or zombie ships will soon own the seas. Anywhere to which masses of people flee, Brooks implies, is deadly because the knee-jerk, intuitive response is always the incorrect one.

Brooks gives a time line of the development of a worldwide zombie war. The picture is grim. Zombie films, the tradition from which this novel arises, traditionally end with the deaths of the characters and a grim outlook for humanity. In Brooks' novel, he keeps up this tradition. After ten years of war, society will have completely collapsed. After twenty years, the zombie threat probably still wanders the earth. While any cache of human survivors exist, including the reader, zombies are still a deadly threat ready to attack at the first moment of human weakness.





# **Recorded Attacks: 60,000 B.C., Katanda, Central Africa to 1583 A.D., Siberia**

## **Recorded Attacks: 60,000 B.C., Katanda, Central Africa to 1583 A.D., Siberia Summary**

The book chronicles recorded zombie attacks throughout history, and the author cautions that there have been many attacks not recorded or suppressed. In Katanda, Central Africa, thirteen crushed skulls and burned bodies dating from 60,000 B.C. are unearthed in a cave near the Upper Semliki River, along with a cave painting suggesting zombies. In 1892, British archaeologists unearth a corpse, with apparent zombie bite marks and detectable Solanum in its brain, apparently entombed alive in Hieraconpollic, Egypt in 3000 B.C. It tried to scratch its way out over several years.

In 121 A.D., in what would later be Scotland, chieftains send 3,000 men to end what they think is a rebellion of the insane. Six hundred are eaten by zombies, and the rest are infected and become zombies. A Roman merchant, Sextus Sempronius Tubero, realizes that decapitation is the only way to kill the zombies and reports it to the Roman commander Marcus Lucius Terentius. Soon, 9,000 undead wander toward a Roman outpost of 480 men. The Romans build a trench, fill it with oil, and light it, burning approaching zombies and funneling the rest into a narrow corridor, where the Roman soldiers decapitate them and throw them into the flames. This incident becomes a template for Roman combat with zombies.

Local militia in Palestine defeat fifteen zombies, and Dr. Ibrahim Obeidallah takes a newly-bitten woman as a patient, though she is confined to the city jail. He observes her die and reanimate and performs experiments on her, providing much information on zombie physiology. Obeidallah continues to research zombies throughout the Middle East. In 1099, invading Christians behead Obeidallah as a Satan worshiper and destroy much of his work. A colleague later publishes Obeidallah's life story.

Francis Drake, while circling the globe, stops at an unnamed Pacific island in 1579, where the natives warn him of an island of the dead nearby. Drake investigates and sees the locals drop off a dying man. Zombies, attracted by a horn call, come out to feed on him, and the man becomes a zombie himself. In Siberia in 1583, a lost Cossack scouting party is saved by a tribe, which the scouting party first pillages and then cannibalizes. Finally, the scouts dig up the graveyard to feed on the frozen corpses. They dig up a bound corpse, who defrosts and attacks them. The Cossacks eat her and die of poison. One survivor, who didn't eat the zombie flesh, is chased off by a wounded companion, who has turned into a zombie.



## **Recorded Attacks: 60,000 B.C., Katanda, Central Africa to 1583 A.D., Siberia Analysis**

The final section of Brooks' novel chronicles the history of zombie attacks from 60,000 B.C. to the present. The tales of zombie activity illustrate the importance of good observation and clear thinking and the dangers of emotional and superstitious reactions. The fact that the zombie attacks occur throughout human history and all over the world builds in the reader a sense that the zombie threat is ubiquitous, constantly surrounding human society. The author is sure to remind the reader that there have been many more zombie attacks than are listed in the novel, making the threat sound even more deadly and immediate.

The early reports of zombie attacks are vague and sometimes mixed with fanciful superstition, such as the snake fangs and leopard claws attributed to the zombies by Hanno of Carthage. This shows how often human communication fails and how easily human superstition takes over. Brooks also uses historical figures and events in his tales of the undead, such as Alexander the Great and Sir Francis Drake. These tidbits of reality function similarly to the detailed descriptions of actual weapons in earlier portions of the book. They create an eerily realistic feel to a fantastical, impossible horror scenario.

In contrast to men of superstition, Brooks also presents men of science. Dr. Ibrahim Obeidallah is the first such man, who studies zombie physiology, providing important information on how to combat zombies. Superstition, however, overcomes him when he is beheaded as a devil-worshiper. Lundergaart and Father Negron also represent superstition, attributing zombies to curses and spiritual sickness. Note that even as early as 1281, government forces, in this case the Catholic Church, work to suppress stories of zombies, which do not fit with their world views. Cordoza's story is an example of how human greed and bigotry can lead to destruction. Cordoza refuses to believe the locals' warnings. Cultural conflict is an issue here, as in the story of the Cossacks in 1583.



# **Recorded Attacks: 1587 A.D., Roanoke Island, North Carolina through 1893 A.D., Fort Louis Philippe, French North Africa**

## **Recorded Attacks: 1587 A.D., Roanoke Island, North Carolina through 1893 A.D., Fort Louis Philippe, French North Africa Summary**

English colonists on Roanoke Island, North Carolina, in 1587, send a party to the mainland for food. The party disappears for three weeks, and only one survivor returns, reporting an attack by zombie-like creatures. Disbelieving him, the colonists hang him. Another party is sent out and attacked by zombies, including some of the original party. They return wounded, and become zombies. It is unclear whether the town is destroyed by zombies or by local Croatan Nation natives. In 1611, a Portuguese merchant Enrique Desilva is trading in Edo, Japan, when he hears a story about a secret "Brotherhood of Life" that trains to kill demons, which from the description are zombies. The man who told an acquaintance of Desilva about this brotherhood has been murdered to prevent him from talking about it. Desilva's report contains some inaccuracies but may be true.

In 1690, Portuguese ship *Marialva* leaves West Africa transporting slaves to Brazil but never arrives. Three years later, Danish ship *Zeebrug* finds the missing ship adrift. The cargo is filled with still-chained zombies. The lifeboats are missing, and the captain shot himself in the head. The Danish ship sinks the *Marialva*. In 1762, a zombie outbreak occurs on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. Warnings from locals are ignored, and the infestation wipes out half the white population in ten days and the rest flee. The remaining slaves hunt down and kill the zombies over seven days. The incident is put down as a slave uprising, and European colonists reclaim the island.

In 1893, a French Foreign Legion officer in northern Africa writes about an Arab arriving at Fort Louis Philippe with a report of a cannibalistic plague. Soon, a horde of zombies approaches the fort, and a siege begins. The fort sends a corporal for help, but he never returns. The French don't know how to combat the zombies, and the fort is under siege for three years. The last remaining twenty-seven survivors climb on the fort's wall, removing the ladders, and lure the zombies into the fort, locking them in. The survivors march 240 miles across the desert. The incident has been covered up by the French army, including the later trial of Colonel Drax.



## **Recorded Attacks: 1587 A.D., Roanoke Island, North Carolina through 1893 A.D., Fort Louis Philippe, French North Africa Analysis**

The elements of superstition, disbelief, and bigotry continue to surface in Brooks' accounts. On Roanoke Island, the colonies choose to hang a survivor of a zombie attack instead of finding out the truth first. The story of the Marialva highlights the horrors of slavery, and man's inhumanity to man. Meanwhile, the story of the zombie infestation on St. Lucia shows how bigotry leads to destruction. The whites refuse to believe the black slaves, and the slaves rise up to fight off zombies.

The attack at Fort Louis Phillippe illustrates both the hazards of lack of intelligent observation and the importance of thoughtful planning. No one notices in battle that the zombies can be killed by head wounds, and this leads directly to the soldiers being trapped and under siege. Colonel Drax's plan, however, is an example of planning and intelligence, as he successfully tricks the lemming-like zombies into the fort and trapping them. Again, government forces, in this case the French army, insist on covering up all zombie incidents, showing themselves to be untrustworthy.



## **Recorded Attacks: 1901 A.D., Lu Shan, Formosa to 1984 A.D., Cabrio, Arizona**

### **Recorded Attacks: 1901 A.D., Lu Shan, Formosa to 1984 A.D., Cabrio, Arizona Summary**

In 1901 in Lu Shan, Formosa, a zombie outbreak begins with several ill peasants. Local missionaries believe it is God's punishment and head for the village. A party of soldiers go into the village and are attacked. An old Chinese man killing zombies with a shovel gestures for them to shoot the heads, and the soldiers begin killing the zombies. Among the dead, they find the missionaries and their leader, Pastor Alfred. One of the soldiers is discharged and imprisoned for selling the story to a pulp magazine.

An African guide named Simon is tried for decapitating a white hunter, Karl Seekt, and his lawyer pleads insanity because Simon says Seekt was a zombie. Simon is hanged. In Louisiana in 1911, several youths stay in the zombie-infested swamps overnight on a dare, and none return. A search party finds zombies, including the youths, and the event escalates. Zombies overrunning the town are set aflame, accidentally starting a conflagration. The government covers up the incident, attributing it to nonexistent black slaves. In 1913, in Surinam, Dr. Jan Vanderhaven studies zombie "patients" at a hospital, where he discovers and names the Solanum virus.

In Kenya in 1957, a British officer interrogates a captured Gikuyu rebel, who relates of his beheading and burying five zombies. In 1960, something goes wrong with Soviet operation "Sturgeon," based on the Japanese Black Dragon projects during World War II. A zombie outbreak strands scientists under siege in a prison in Siberia. Help never arrives, but the scientists are equipped to hold out until winter, when the zombies should freeze solid. Before winter arrives, the Soviets drop a nuclear weapon, destroying the prison under the guise of a nuclear test and covering up the program.

### **Recorded Attacks: 1901 A.D., Lu Shan, Formosa to 1984 A.D., Cabrio, Arizona Analysis**

The conflict between religion and science continues in Brooks' narratives. Pastor Alfred looks first to religion for answers before looking for natural explanations and so becomes a zombie. In contrast, Dr. Jan Vanderhaven provides the essential knowledge that zombies are created by a virus, showing the power of science. Jane Massey, also a scientist, is one of the few white characters who listen to native guides and avoid zombie-infested territories.

Bigotry and cultural separations are also present. The African guide Simon cannot even be saved by pleading insanity, since it is not a legal defense for native Africans.



Lacoutour dehumanizes the locals in French Indochina so greatly that he is willing to buy them as victims for a kind of human-zombie dog fighting. The British refuse to believe a Gikuyu rebel's story of local zombies. The cattle ranchers who hope to take over Indian land are displaying bigotry and cultural dissonance. During the ultimate battle in the Indian village, the army treats the Indians as badly as the zombies, killing everything that moves.

Human fallibility is illustrated in the story of the Louisiana town overrun by zombies in 1911, after several young people dare each other to stay in the zombie-infested swamps overnight. The young people don't act intelligently, but neither does the rest of the town, since its inhabitants accidentally start an uncontrolled fire. The Nevada farmers killed in 1962, succumb not to zombies, but only to their human weaknesses. There is no reason why these men had to die, except their own fears.

The government is clearly not to be trusted. In the Louisiana town destroyed by zombies and fire, the government covers it up. The attack in Sperry, Alabama is put down to mass hysteria. Similarly, the Brazilian government covers up zombie attacks in its territory. The Japanese military tries to use zombies to their own advantage through vicious biological experiments with human victims. Later, the Soviets pick up a similar operation, this time naming it Sturgeon. Government secrecy and military buildup never cease, although they move from one portion of the world to another. The napalm air strike in Laos in 1968, is another example of how the government reacts, or overreacts, to the zombie threat, using brute force instead of calm and reasoned efficiency.



# **Recorded Attacks: 1987 A.D., Khotan China through Historical Analysis and Appendix: Outbreak Journal**

## **Recorded Attacks: 1987 A.D., Khotan China through Historical Analysis and Appendix: Outbreak Journal Summary**

In 1987, zombies attack a nuclear power plant in Khotan, China. The attack is covered up, and details are unknown, leading to speculation of a Chinese military zombie project. At Joshua Tree National Monument in the California desert in 1992, park rangers find a dead camper with bite marks and a smashed skull. An autopsy reveals that she was bitten by a missing wildlife photographer and in turn bit her boyfriend, Patrick MacDonald, also missing.

In Los Angeles in 1993, the Venice Boardwalk Reds gang enters downtown to attack another gang, Los Peros Negros. They run over a zombie, crashing their car and attracting more zombies with gunshots. Fleeing, they run into the rival gang and join forces, retreating to a well-defended school. While reinforcement from other gangs is on the way, the well-armed gangs kill the zombies surrounding the school. Police and the other gangs arrive simultaneously, and the gang members are all arrested. Patrick MacDonald's wallet is found on an unidentifiable dead body. The incident is reported as a gang shootout, and the gang members involved are killed in prison within the year.

The next month in East L.A., a wounded sanitation worker emerges from a manhole near the home of Octavio and Rosa Melgar and says that he and his coworkers were attacked by "crazies." The man dies, and the ambulance crashes and burns on its way to the hospital. Later, government agencies descend on the manhole. A year later in San Pedro, California, a freighter from the Philippines unloads a cargo container, and a watchman, hearing sounds from inside, opens it, releasing forty-six zombies. Thirteen workers barricade themselves with cargo containers and use cranes to crush the zombies. Police dispatch most of the remaining zombies, and the rest are assumed drifted out to sea. The incident has gone unreported, and the existence of the original container was denied.

A month later on the California coast, three men report drawing a body up on a fishing line and being attacked by the undead corpse, which they beat back into the water with an oar. In 1996, a zombie wearing a Pakistani uniform approaches the Indian border, detonating several mines but continuing forward. The zombie is shot in the head by Indian guards, and the body is removed by the government. In 1998, a documentary filmmaker named Jacob Taylor sends some crew members to Siberia in advance of





filming a frozen saber-tooth carcass and a sixteenth-century Cossack corpse. The crew members disappear. The filmmaker arrives the next month and finds thirty-six zombies.

The filmmaker and crew retreat to the upper story of a farmhouse and destroy one staircase. The zombies prevent destruction of the other, but the filmmakers cover the staircase with bedroom doors, creating a ramp they can push the zombies down with brooms. One of the broom handles breaks, accidentally gouging a zombie's eye and showing the film crew how to kill them. The crew begins systematically killing the zombies with an ax, sledgehammer and crowbar. The film taken by Taylor of the incident has been denounced as a hoax.

In Morocco in 2001, a zombie attack in a fishing village is put down to mass hysteria. Locals bind the zombies and drop them in the sea. In 2002, in the Virgin Islands, a zombie of Middle Eastern or North African origin washes ashore and begins attacking the locals. The police arrive and fail to kill the zombie with two chest shots. A six-year-old runs up to the creature, which grabs the child. Policemen wrestle the child away, and a Dominican immigrant in the crowd takes one of the officers' guns and shoots the zombie in the head. The man is later acquitted and disappears to the U.S. The zombie becomes a tourist gimmick, the "St. Thomas Zombie."

Although some believe that modern zombie attacks are more common simply because earlier civilizations had fewer records, the greater, more urban world population is probably responsible for the growing number of attacks. To prevent an ultimate catastrophe, governments will need to recognize the threat of zombies. The author includes a zombie outbreak journal for the reader to record suspected zombie attacks in his or her area.

## **Recorded Attacks: 1987 A.D., Khotan China through Historical Analysis and Appendix: Outbreak Journal Analysis**

Brooks continues to present evidence of government military zombie projects, including the Chinese nuclear power plant incident, the Soviet Sturgeon incident, the Japanese World War II, zombie experiments, and even the U.S. government confiscating zombies and infected people. This suggests that a human/zombie war might be inevitable, caused not by a natural zombie outbreak but instead started by the use of zombies by military forces. Zombies, like fire, are a dangerous natural force, and the fact that governments are keeping them at secret facilities and preparing to unleash them on humanity seems to suggest that the governments don't understand the seriousness of a zombie threat. In this context, zombies can be compared to nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. Through this threat, humans will not merely be destroyed. They will destroy themselves.

As Brooks' stories go on, it becomes apparent that zombie infestations lead to other, related zombie activity. Zombies may seemingly be wiped out, but they resurface again





and again, sometimes nearby and sometimes far away. The case of Patrick MacDonald illustrates this. He spreads a minor incident to a populated area, causing a bigger outbreak. Then, nearby, another incident happens in the sewers. Is it related? Could the San Pedro incident be related, too? Certainly, that incident leads to another attack on the coast. Even the Cossack zombie incident from 1583, resurfaces more than 400 years later.

The missing wildlife photographer who initially infected MacDonald's girlfriend is still missing, somewhere in the California desert. Perhaps he will be lost and slowly rot, or perhaps he will infect another camper. Perhaps he will wander into a heavily populated area and start a Class 3 outbreak, or worse. Other zombies are missing, too. How long will bound zombies remain on the sea floor? Will they walk up onto the beach later, as in the St. Thomas Zombie incident? Brooks designs his stories to encourage paranoia, the uneasy feeling that whether from a minor natural outbreak or from an act of war, worldwide zombie infestation is only a matter of time.

Brooks makes the same point in his "Historical Analysis," arguing that the more dense human population and the prevalence of high-speed travel lead to greater and greater chances of zombie outbreaks. The book is designed to encourage the reader to feel fear at the zombie threat, providing a journal to track possible zombie activity. By the end, it successfully creates an atmosphere of paranoia.



# Characters

## The Author/Narrator

Because *The Zombie Survival Guide* is written as if it were a non-fiction book, without characters, the only character consistently present is the author and narrator.

Throughout the book, the author, in his fictionalized guise as a zombie expert, imparts knowledge and advice to the reader. He sets himself up as an authority, although he gives no information about himself or his background. He merely assures the reader that the information is well-researched. Is he a trustworthy narrator?

The narrator uses scientific language and meticulously divides his book into analytical segments to give an aura of authority. He presents pros and cons to the reader, encouraging the reader to use rational thought to make choices based on the evidence. His emphasis is on rationality and intelligence, and his suggestions seem to be rational and based on calm, cool thought. The narrator warns against superstition, bigotry and emotional reactions to dangerous situations. The dangers he warns about, in the context of a world infested by zombies, sound very real.

However, as the book goes on, the narrator begins seeming paranoid. Much of the evidence of zombie attacks is potentially unreliable or vague, and most of the zombie attacks have been covered up or denied by the government. Is it possible that the existence of zombies is merely a conspiracy theory? The narrator warns the reader to be well-armed, stockpiling supplies and preparing to flee the country—costly and extreme actions. The narrator also asks the reader to look for disguised reports of zombie attacks, in other words, to read into news article to find zombie attacks where perhaps there are none. The narrator presents himself as a rational authority, but the reader must wonder if he is, in reality, a paranoid fanatic.

## Zombies

Zombies are the subject of *The Zombie Survival Guide*. No zombie has any distinction or identity, but zombies taken as a group are fundamental to the novel. Zombies are people who have died of a viral disease called Solanum. Solanum kills a human host and then takes over the brain, replacing the human's neural network with its own structure. The Solanum virus then controls the undead human body, and the zombie is driven to seek out and eat human flesh that it cannot digest.

Zombies are mindless creatures that operate solely on instinct. They cannot learn, and they have no memories. They are human in shape, but they are entirely emptied of humanity. They have drives without reason or reward. Without the ability to reason or vestiges of humanity, zombies become faceless enemies. They react to stimuli in a predictable way, without variation. Responding to zombies as if they were human is



extremely dangerous, so the existence of zombies promotes distancing one's self from emotions.

Another danger of zombies is psychological damage. Zombies cause intense stress, promoting humans to turn on each other. Zombies also produce a continuous moaning sound that is psychologically damaging. People can be driven crazy by the sound of moaning zombies. The sounds of a zombie also makes emotional responses dangerous, thus the author promotes cold, calm intellectual consideration over emotional reactions to situations.

## **Dr. Jan Vanderhaven**

In 1913, Dr. Vanderhaven is studying zombies, believing them victims of an unusual illness. Vanderhaven discovers and names the virus Solanum, which infects humans and causes them to become zombies.

## **Yahya Bey**

Yahya Bey's home village of Oltu, Turkey, is attacked by zombies at night. A fire kills survivors, who gather at the police station. The doctor's house is overcome with victims, who become zombies. Bey, who is six at the time, climbs to the roof and stays all night. The town is destroyed, but Bey survives.

## **Sextus Sempronios Tubero**

Tubero is a Roman merchant who discovers that decapitation kills zombies.

## **Marcus Lucius Terentius**

Terentius is a Roman commander who successfully destroys 9,000 zombies with 480 men through calm, strategic planning.

## **Dr. Ibrahim Obeidallah**

Obeidallah is a Middle Eastern doctor who studies zombie physiology. Most of his work has been lost, but a biography of Obeidallah's life still exists.

## **Gunnbjorn Lundergaard**

Lundergaard creates a colony in Greenland in 1253, and when he returns to find all the inhabitants dead and zombies wandering the area, he orders himself killed and everything burned to the ground. Lundergaard believes the colony is cursed.



## **Father Esteban Negron**

A Spanish priest working in Mexico in 1523, Negron believes that zombies can be cured through spiritual intervention.

## **Don Rafael Cordoza**

A Spanish explorer in search of El Dorado, Cordoza refuses to listen to local warnings of the undead, leading his party to destruction.

## **James Miller, Luke MacNamara, and Willard Douglass**

Three Bostonian treasure hunters planning to loot Myan ruins try to save a zombie from being buried alive, thinking it is human. MacNamara is killed, and the others are bitten and presumably later die.

## **Elija Black**

Elija Black is a Lakota man who, at a young age, must kill his grandfather because of a zombie bite. He becomes the first zombie hunter and dramatically saves the town of Hayward, Washington after a zombie attack in 1888.

## **Pastor Alfred**

Pastor Alfred is a missionary who believes zombies are a religious problem. He heads into an infected town and becomes a zombie himself.

## **Simon**

Simon is an African guide who decapitates a white hunter because he is a zombie. Simon's lawyer tries to plead insanity, but the plea is not allowed for African natives, and Simon is hanged.

## **Christopher Wells**

Wells is a British copilot transporting a frozen zombie to Colombo in 1923. His crew is attacked by the thawed zombie and the crew parachutes out, but the crew-chief has been bitten and becomes a zombie on the life raft. Wells kicks both his companions into the ocean. His story is later dismissed as delusion.



## **Regina Clark**

In 1947, Regina Clark herds the zombies attacking her small town into an alley and kills them all with an M1 carbine.

## **Jean Beart Lacoutour**

Lacoutour plays a game where he buys victims from local families in French Indochina to pit against zombies in fights. Lacoutour and other Frenchmen then bet on the results. Lacoutour later dies, apparently from becoming a zombie and then being shot in the head.

## **Jane Massey**

A scientist studying silverback gorillas, Massey avoids zombie-infested territory by following the advice of her local guide.

## **Colonel Jacob Korsunsky**

Korsunsky is an Israeli colonel who leads an illegal mission into Egypt to destroy zombies that are attacking a small Egyptian village.

## **Patrick MacDonald**

Patrick MacDonald is a man whose girlfriend is found dead, with bite marks and a smashed skull, in Joshua Tree National Monument in the California desert. Patrick MacDonald goes missing and later surfaces as the probable cause of a zombie infestation in downtown Los Angeles.

## **Octavio and Rosa Melgar**

The Melgars are witnesses to an escapee from a zombie attack in the East L.A. sewers.

## **Jacob Tailor**

Jacob Tailor is a filmmaker who goes to Siberia with his crew to film a frozen saber-tooth body and a sixteenth-century Cossack corpse. Tailor and his crew find themselves under attack by zombies after the Cossack thaws. The crew fortifies the top floor of a farmhouse and eventually discover how to kill the zombies through head wounds. They kill all the attacking zombies, and Tailor takes film of the entire incident. The film is suppressed.



## Objects/Places

### Solanum

Solanum is the virus that infects humans and turns them into zombies.

### Trench Spikes

A seven-inch spike attached to brass knuckles, the trench spike is a useful tool for piercing zombies' skulls.

### Shaolin Spades

A Shaolin spade is a staff with a blade on each end, useful in decapitating zombies from a distance.

### M1 Garand

Semiautomatic rifles are a good firearm against zombies, and the M1 Garand is a solid version with a bayonet for close combat. However, this weapon requires discipline not to waste ammunition.

### Tight-Fitting Clothing and Short Hair

Tight-fitting clothing and short hair are the best protection in a zombie fight. They prevent zombies from being able to grab onto you during a fight.

### Fortress

In the case of a large, extended zombie attack, a self-sufficient and secure location or fortress, will be necessary for survival. A military complex, prison or possibly an oil rig may be a good location to survive an indefinite siege.

### The Lawson Film

An 8mm home movie chronicles the attempt of five people to escape a zombie attack in Lawson, Montana. They try to drive away on a bus, but they crash and are overrun with zombies.



## **Katanda, Central Africa**

Katanda, Central Africa is the location of the oldest suspected zombie activity, a site where thirteen crushed skulls and burned bodies were found dating from 60,000 B.C.

## **Castle in Saxony, Northern Germany**

In 850 A.D., zombies are trapped in a castle in Saxony after a zombie outbreak. The castle is closed and barred, and the moans of the undead can be heard from inside for years to come. The castle is declared haunted by the local people.

## **Preserved Zombie Head**

Kublai Khan has a preserved zombie head supposedly captured by his ancestor Genghis Kahn.

## **Roanoke Island, North Carolina**

The disappearance of the English colony on Roanoke Island, North Carolina in 1587, is attributed to a zombie attack.

## **Brotherhood of Life**

The Brotherhood of Life is a Japanese secret society that trains to kill zombies, which they believe are demons.

## **Marialva**

A slave ship traveling from West Africa is the site of a zombie attack at sea, and in a horrifying incident, the chained slaves in the cargo hold cannot escape their doom as one after another is bitten and turned into a zombie.

## **Knudhansen Party**

The Knudhansen Party is a party of pioneers that apparently dies of a zombie outbreak in Wyoming in 1848. A Lakota man, Elija Black, who later becomes the first zombie hunter, happens on the party with his grandfather. The two dispatch the zombies, and the young man must kill his grandfather, who has been bitten.



## **RMS Rona**

A British ship transporting prisoners to Australia is attacked by a zombie, and the captain locks a zombie crewman in with the prisoners. The ship is later destroyed in a storm.

## **Piedmont, Oregon**

In 1882, this mining town is destroyed in a zombie attack, and fifty-eight survivors starve to death after trapping themselves in a silver mine.

## **Fort Louis Phillipe**

Fort Louis Phillipe is a French Foreign Legion fort in northern Africa that comes under siege by zombies. The commander finally makes a plan to lure the zombies into the secured fort, while the remaining survivors escape across the desert.

## **Black Dragon**

Black Dragon is a Japanese military unit that performs biological experiments, including a plan to breed and train zombies, in the 1940s.

## **Sturgeon**

Sturgeon is a secret Soviet military operation experimenting with zombies during the cold war.

## **Khotan, China**

A zombie attack occurs at a nuclear power plant in Khotan, China in 1987. The attack is covered up by the Chinese government, and some people suspect that the Chinese have a secret military zombie project.

## **Venice Boardwalk Reds and Los Peros Negros**

The two rival gangs, the Venice Boardwalk Reds and the Los Peros Negros join forces to fight off a zombie attack in downtown Los Angeles.



## **St. Thomas Zombie**

In 2002, a zombie washes ashore in the Virgin Islands and nearly bits a six-year-old child. An onlooker grabs a policeman's gun and shoots the zombie in the head. This zombie may be part of an attack in 2001 in Morocco, where the zombies were bound and dropped into the sea. The St. Thomas Zombie becomes a tourist gimmick like the Loch Ness Monster.



# Themes

## Planning and Thinking

The biggest asset that human beings have against zombies is the human mind, with its ability to think and reason. Humans are rational beings, and zombies are not. Through calm and rational thinking and preparations, humans can always be victorious over zombies. Intelligence and rationality at all costs are the only ways to survive.

Scientific thought is at the core of rational thought. When in the midst of a zombie attack, those that use observation to discover that zombies can be killed by head wounds find the means of survival. Others are too panicked by the zombies that continue to advance after being shot repeatedly in the chest to notice that those with head wounds are dead. Those who fail to observe and use reason and instead succumb to panic are doomed to be trapped or killed.

Planning is an important part of thinking. Knee-jerk responses and off-the-cuff guesses are often wrong. Situations must be thoroughly examined. By planning in advance, the pitfalls of guessing and reacting instead of thinking can be avoided. Another aspect of planning is studying. The author urges the reader to study everything he or she can and to learn everything possible about survival, zombies, building, growing food and every important aspect of maintaining life. Mistakes have been made throughout history, and knowledge has been acquired by generations of humans. Through study, humans can learn from the past and take advantage of existing knowledge, avoiding past mistakes and gaining the upper hand in the quest for survival.

## Human Failures

Human beings are fallible creatures. Brooks portrays human failures as the biggest threat to survival against zombies, which are easily killed with a calm and clear head. When human beings die to zombies, it is because they are emotional and irrational. Humans often refuse to accept what is happening, failing to understand the nature and seriousness of the threat. When human beings become superstitious about the zombies, whether attributing the zombie virus to a punishment by God or a curse, they are doomed because they stop looking for a rational explanation and way to deal with the problem.

When human beings become overwrought because of the constant moaning noises of the zombies, they turn on others and themselves, such as the four farmers found dead in a secure barn after being driven there by zombies. When human beings become emotional because they cannot distinguish between the corpse the zombie is using as a vessel and the loved one who is now dead, they are in imminent danger. Zombie threats easily escalate because people can't process what's happening around them and can't accept that their family members or friends no longer inhabit their former bodies.



Perhaps humanity's worst failure in the book is the failure to work together. Whites won't believe the native Arabs, blacks, or Indians because of bigotry, which often results in a massacre by zombies. In a panic, human beings trample each other in a rush to save themselves. Human beings turn on each other, viciously and violently, when under stress. The author warns of marauding human raiders in a future apocalyptic world. Governments try to use zombies as weapons, creating zombie outbreaks that need not have happened. Humans play vicious games, pitting zombies against human victims. It's not surprising that the perpetrator of these games winds up decayed and shot in the head. Human cruelty and man's inhumanity to man leads to demise.

## Trust

Because zombies are the dead bodies of former human beings, in a world of zombies, no one can be truly trusted. A friend or family member can be bitten, and there is no cure. The dead will rise and attack those nearest and dearest to them without discrimination. Ultimately, trusting a loved one becomes a death sentence. Instead, in an undead world, the reader is urged to always suspect potential zombie infection and be ready to shoot a loved one at a moment's notice.

The government also cannot be trusted. Government agencies clearly know about zombie threats, but they will not admit zombie activity to the public. Governments around the world host experimental military zombie projects, despite the danger of outbreaks at zombie experiment facilities. Zombies and victims of zombie bites are whisked away without explanation, and even intense zombie attacks are covered up. Unable to trust the government, the individual citizen must fend for himself.

In situations of stress, no one can be trusted. Neighbors may riot and turn against neighbors. In the future apocalypse, surely many people will become roving, violent marauders. The individual, in this atmosphere of mistrust, is encouraged to be always vigilant and even paranoid. Trusting the world and other people is just too fraught with dangers.

# Style

## Point of View

Because Brooks' book is written as a survival guide instead of as a traditional novel, its point of view is unique. Brooks writes in the second-person point of view, directly addressing the reader. The book functions as a conversation between the fictional author, an expert on zombies, and the reader, an average person hoping to gain the insight and information needed to survive a potential zombie attack. The author becomes the main character in the novel, since, instead of telling a story, the author gives information.

The reader only has the author's word and the substance of the author's text to judge the validity of the point of view. The author, then, becomes an unreliable narrator. What are the credentials of the author? He assures the reader that the information is well-researched and based on facts and evidence. However, the reader has no outside source or way of knowing where the author got his information.

The author is not merely an objective, absent element, as in an encyclopedia. He urges the reader to paranoia and drastic steps in preparing for the end of the world. He displays cynicism, pointedly showing human faults and follies. He offers commentary on our society. Our inner cities are locked and gated. Our gang members are often better organized and better able to deal with zombie threats than police and government. Our leaders try to hide threats from the people instead of dealing with them openly and preparing the public. He clearly has an agenda and a point of view. The reader is left to wonder why and how this anonymous narrator came to these conclusions.

## Setting

Because of the book's unique format, it has no traditional setting. Instead, the setting is the world. Brooks' world is not very far removed from the real world, giving a sense of reality to its threats. Brooks brings in details of weapons, historical figures and historical events to add to the sense of reality. Brooks' world deviates from the real world only in one important aspect: the existence of a virus that kills human beings and takes over their bodies, making them into zombies. The zombie threat is the core of Brooks' wide-ranging setting.

The story of zombies dates back to 60,000 A.D. and is traced through history and every culture. Brooks uses these many settings, times and contexts to show the ubiquitous nature of the zombie threat, its constant recurrence, and its escalation over time, as man expands his society around the planet. When Brooks covers the potential terrains for zombie conflicts or for creating a defensive location, he explores every terrain type from arctic wastelands to tropical rain forests. This systematic exploration not only gives



the book a sense of thoroughness as a survival guide, but it also underscores the idea that zombies are a threat everywhere, at every time and place.

Brooks also projects the zombie threat into the future to create a picture of a zombie apocalypse, where mankind can only survive in isolated pockets in remote, unwelcoming locations. The zombie future serves as a cautionary tale against human failures such as irrationality, bigotry and superstition. The zombie-dominated future is a prediction, and so it is avoidable, if human beings are able to act rationally and intelligently, using the advantages of being human while avoiding its pitfalls.

## Language and Meaning

Brooks uses scientific and formal language to convey the impression of a researched and documented survival guide. The narrator portrays himself as an expert, someone whose opinions can be trusted and relied on, even in the deadliest encounters with zombies. Because of this, the author uses the language of science to sound informed and intelligent. The fictional world of the novel requires its narrator to be trustworthy and believable, even though he is talking of fantastical things.

However, instead of being merely straightforward and informational, his language also reveals the character and point of view of the narrator. The narrator uses questions to echo the common wisdom or knee-jerk reactions that people have regarding zombie-related issues. Wouldn't plate mail armor provide total protection? Wouldn't a car be the best way to zoom through zombie territory? The author puts forth these questions and then knocks them down, showing the reader that a knee-jerk reaction or first guess is seldom the most intelligent response.

The author also uses language to create a sense of urgency and even paranoia. When he talks about "alarmists," he puts the word in quotes, implying that seeming alarmists are actually quite logical because the threat is so great. He urges the reader to keep a gun clean and close. He urges watchfulness and wariness to the point of paranoia because the results of not being paranoid might be catastrophic. All this creates a sense of horror at the coming apocalypse. Even so, the book has a subtle humor through its portrayal of human foibles, its rational treatment of the irrational idea of the dead rising from the grave and its cynical commentary on society.

## Structure

Brooks structures his book as a survival guide, with seven sections. Each section is divided into subsections and methodically organized, reflecting Brooks' emphasis on science and reasoning, even in the face of the unreasonable. The first section introduces the idea of zombies and explains what they are. The next section explains how to fight zombies. These two sections set up the rules of Brooks' zombie-filled world and serve as an introduction to the book. Brooks immediately decries any supernatural elements of zombies and firmly puts the onus for survival on the ability of humans to think rationally and act intelligently.



The following four sections represent an escalation in potential battles against zombies. In the first section, the human must survive a zombie siege. In the second section, the human flees. Then, the human makes a comeback in the third section, hunting the zombies. However, in the fourth section, projecting into an apocalyptic future, the humans ultimately fail, and the world is overrun with zombies. This section shows a dim outlook for humanity as unable to, as a whole, act rationally.

The last section of the book chronicles the recorded history of zombie attacks throughout the world, from 60,000 B.C. to 2002 A.D., and is the only section with elements of traditional storytelling. Instead of merely one story, the author tells a myriad of them—sixty-one mini-stories about zombie attacks and human survival or human destruction. The zombie attacks escalate, occurring more often as history progresses and leading the reader to the uncomfortable feeling that a world-wide zombie threat could be imminent. The descriptions of zombie activity interconnect, as one zombie survivor of an incident leads to another incident later in history. Zombies exist frozen in ice or walking the sea floor, ready at any moment to emerge and begin the apocalypse.



## Quotes

"The dead walk among us. Zombies, ghouls—no matter what their label—these somnambulists are the greatest threat to humanity, other than humanity itself." — Introduction, page xiii

"A true crisis. Class 3 outbreaks, more than any other, demonstrate the clear threat posed by the living dead. Zombies will number in the thousands, encompassing an area of several hundred miles." —The Undead: Myths and Realities: Outbreaks: Class 3, page 25

"Of all the weapons discussed in this book, nothing is more important than your primary firearm. Keep it cleaned, keep it oiled, keep it loaded, keep it close. With a cool head, steady hand, and plenty of ammunition, one human is more than a match for an army of zombies." —Weapons and Combat Techniques: Firearms, page 41

"With so much protection, wouldn't one be able to wander among the undead ranks, taunting them at will with no danger of repercussion? In truth, standard medieval armor is far from invulnerable." —Weapons and Combat Techniques: Armor: 1. Plate Mail, page 59

"Buildings in poorer, inner-city neighborhoods tend to be more secure than others. Their reliance on high fences, razor wire, barred windows, and other anti-crime features make them readily defensible. Buildings in middle- or high-income areas tend to emphasize aesthetics. What rich city council wants an eyesore in its neighborhood? Instead of ugly, even tacky, safety features, these affluent people rely more heavily on law enforcement and private security (forces of proven unreliability)." —On the Defense: Public Spaces: General Rules, page 86

"Before packing anything, ask yourself, 'Do I really need this?' Once you've compiled your gear, go down the list and ask that question again. Once you've done that, do it again." —On the Run: Equipment, page 101

"The worst thing you can do when stepping into a boat is believe that the danger is over. This false sense of security has caused the death of hundreds of people, victims who could have easily been survivors if they had kept their guard up and their minds working." —On the Run: Alternate Means of Transportation: 2. By Water: General Rules, page 122

"So let's assume that you have followed all these instructions correctly. The battle is over, the area is secure, the victims have been mourned, the zombies have been burned. Hopefully, this will be the last time you will ever have to raise your hand to undead flesh. But what if it isn't? What if your struggle was merely one small theater of a greater, all-out war between the living and the dead? What if, heaven forbid, it is a war humanity loses?" —On the Attack, page 153



"When the living dead triumph, the world degenerates into utter chaos. All social order evaporates." —Living in an Undead World: The Undead World, page 155

"Post-apocalyptic fiction usually shows the survivors of a new age reclaiming their world in dramatic steps, such as retaking an entire city. While this makes for exciting imagery, especially in moving pictures, it does not represent a safe or efficient means of re-colonization." —Living in an Undead World: Then What?, page 180

"Even worse is the awful likelihood that one of these crewmembers attacked and infected a chained slave. This new ghoul, in turn, bit the chained, screaming person next to him. On and on down the line, until the screams were eventually quiet and the entire hold was filled with zombies. Imagining those at the end of the line, seeing their future creeping steadily closer, was enough to conjure the worst nightmares." —Recorded Attacks: 1690 A.D., the Southern Atlantic, page 201

"According to Shore, when Japanese forces invaded the Dutch East Indies in 1941-42, a copy of Jan Vanderhaven's work was discovered in a medical library in Surabaya. The work was sent to Black Dragon headquarters in Harbin for further study. Although a theoretical plan was ordered, no sample of Solanum could be found (proof that the ancient zombie-killing 'Brotherhood of Life' had done its job too well). All this changed six months later with the incident on Atuk Island. The four restrained zombies were delivered to Harbin. Experiments were performed on three of them, and one was used specifically to breed other zombies. Shore states that Japanese 'dissidents' (anyone who disagreed with the military regime) were used as guinea pigs." —Recorded Attacks: 1942-45 A.D., Harbin, Japanese Puppet State of Manchukuo (Manchuria), page 221

"The world's population is growing. Its center has shifted from rural to urban zones. Transportation has linked the planet with increasing speed. All these factors have led to a renaissance of infectious diseases, most of which were thought to be eradicated centuries ago. Logic dictates that Solanum can flourish in such a ripe environment." —Recorded Attacks, Historical Analysis, page 247





## Topics for Discussion

Given the fictional world Brooks presents, is a world-wide, apocalyptic zombie outbreak inevitable?

Why does Brooks choose to write a fictional survival guide instead of a traditional novel?

How believable is Brooks' explanation of zombies and zombie physiology?

Why does Brooks include historic figures such as Kublai Khan and Alexander the Great in his fictional accounts of zombie outbreaks?

What makes someone a successful zombie hunter in Brooks' mythology?

What elements of horror and humor exist in Brooks' book?

How believable are Brooks' portrayals of human reactions to zombies?