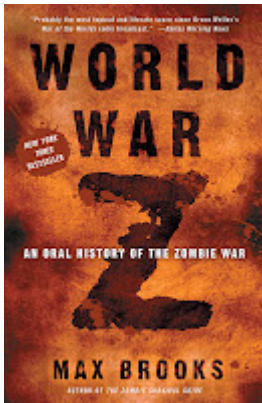


Review: World War Z



What a fun read. I was lent Max Brooks' *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War* to read after my recent abortive attempt at reading fiction.

Now I don't get the whole zombie thing. I know it's been around for years and maybe it's just facebook exposure but the whole zombie party or zombie flash-mob seems to be increasing.

And it's just... I don't know, I just don't get it. All I've been able to glean is that to be true to canonical zombie-lore a zombie story must involve brains and slow shuffles with arms held out. In which case, WWZ is truly non-apocryphal.

I liked the style. The narrative is framed around a series of interviews in which you hear each interviewee speak in the first person with the odd question or description from the interviewer. You can imagine this book as a Four Corners story or some other documentary with talking faces on black backgrounds and the odd snippet of stock footage. I've been watching "The Pacific" – it's almost like that. Brooks does a marvellous job of maintaining the fourth-wall. The narrative, being of our own era, merges with your own TV-viewing experiences of Iraq War accounts and the like and you are convinced.

I've heard complaints about the plot – how it peters out at the end. It didn't matter. The book wraps up with short comments from those who have "spoken" earlier. That's how documentaries end. There's even a quote from a classical

Australian rock ballad on the last page – that's got to be worth something.

It has all the zombie-stuff: the gore, the moans, the oozing puss and the baseball bats. But it sneaks this into an interweaving symphony of character study so much that you don't mind. And you don't feel the need to join the next flash mob.

Which I won't, unless some zombiephile can explain to me the point.

