

Not Everything is a Reference to your Favourite TV Show

by Alex Aldred

Bestselling American novelist, screenwriter, and television producer George R. R. Martin sits up in bed, and realises he is surrounded by a shambling undead horde.

"Ah!" George says cheerfully, as if he'd been expecting this. "I was wondering when you'd all turn up."

You see, George has assumed that the shambling horde of the undead are white walkers, from his popular series of novels *A Song of Ice and Fire* and their subsequent television adaptation *Game of Thrones*. He has deduced that he is inside a short story in which his inability to finish the manuscript for the sixth novel in the series, *The Winds of Winter*, is collated somehow through metaphor with the slow advance of the white walker army on the continent of Westeros within the fictional world of the franchise. He suspects that the point the author is trying to make revolves around the excessively slow pacing of the white walker army's invasion of the south, and the similarly slow pace at which he, George, produces new content for the series. He wonders if the arrival of the white walkers in his bedroom is intended to be representative of a long journey finally reaching its conclusion, of the much-needed final burst of motivation required to complete the novel finally flourishing into life within him. This pleases George – it means that the author of this story still has some faith in him, and still believes that *The Winds of Winter* will be completed and released in an acceptably timely manner. He is happy that the author is not one of those awful people who keeps speculating about whether or not George will pass away from old age or sickness before he has managed to complete the manuscript.

"Yes, don't you worry," George tells the horde of zombies, although inside he believes that he is talking to the author, and the audience, of the story. "I'll have that damn book finished before I'm dead."

Unfortunately, George R. R. Martin has made an error in judgement. He is not talking to any author, or any audience. This is not a story, and the horde of zombies around his bed are not

white walkers. They are just regular normal zombies, who rose from the dead after an industrial accident involving experimental chemical compounds being deployed at a local graveyard, and now they are hungry for the meat of the living.

George opens his mouth, to congratulate the author for crafting such a concise and pop-culture-aware metaphor, but his words are abruptly cut off when the nearest of the zombies leans forwards and tears a ragged chunk of flesh from his throat.

George R. R. Martin is eaten alive, by zombies who are not a metaphor for anything. They are just hungry, so hungry, and they cannot wait any longer.