

# Until We Died

by A. Pseudonym

Whatever world we were in had been ended. I was driving with her on a sea-side road, salt-white blazing to the right, sahara to the left. There was an incongruity of abrupt cafes on the beach. We stopped our big farm truck with its covered bed, and she struck up talk with a jazz band setting up for the night. I was annoyed. We fought; she was always too friendly. I wanted to move on, get past the surreal. Leave the awkwardness alone. She mocked me.

But that was a memory of the past. It had been our last day together, and she came to violence and torture. Point of no return. Now even the loneliness of that final place had nowhere to go. Marauders, cannibals, leathered barbarians, tropish folk come to life. Everyone dead, no one buried, hot sand and quiet ocean only.

We, who knows who but I was with them, running. Hiding in metal ruins. The rending of those outside was horrible. Visions of isolate bands evolving apart, hibernating like animals, creeping together in the dirt. Gritty pale people huddled at weak fires, smiling in the dark between screams in the distance, perpetual. Caverns of rape and murder without salvation.

The end of it turned stranger. I chose a different vantage point, watched the self who lost her committing suicide. He threw himself down from a rock. The rest of us fled, and now the desert gave way to a green woods and then a clearing with a house like a castle. We made our last stand there. In the attic there were books, and we protected them like children.

