

Love in the Land of the Dead

I ate her brains out of love, but there was more to it than that. For months, it was just the two of us, along with the zombie hordes. Apocalypse was a bastard like that, a great gore-spattered lottery. When the city, then the suburb, and then the mall survivors dwindled down to just Laura and I, I felt like I'd won that lottery. Laura was a babe—sassy and a bullseye with a shotgun.

Life became a blur of eating out of tins, running hand-in-hand, and adrenalin-charged sex. I came to love Laura, and she me, but we hit tough times when the ammo ran out.

There were so few safe places to hide, and so many zombies. Knots of them clogged every street. As Laura and I eked out a life in the cracks and shadows, I had my realisation.

We were rushing around, exhausted, in a state somewhere between life and death. But the zombies were different, well, except for the life and death thing. Sure, some of their limbs were missing, and they stunk to high heaven, but by God they were serene. They had such a laid-back lifestyle—never in a hurry, never needing to be anywhere.

In the end, I really dug their Zen attitude.

Laura wasn't as supportive of my change of heart as I'd hoped.

We fought repeatedly; she wanted to look for survivors, while I found myself increasingly fascinated by the zombies lurking at our every turn. Soon enough, our arguments led to carelessness.

The zombies found a way into the warehouse where we were holed up.

Their shambling line encircled us. True to her nature, Laura took to them with a chunk of wood. Her last stand was beautiful to watch—a flurry of bludgeoning and desperation. I loved her more in that moment than I ever had before.

But even that wasn't enough. The zombies were inexorable—a groaning, stinking tide of arms and teeth. Laura was thrown to the ground, bleeding and unconscious.

Fascination held me as the zombies moved in. I knew they were hungry, but with typical suave, they took their time.

But I got to her first. I had to.

That's when I ate Laura's brain. Her skull was already cracked, her life already ebbing, and I'd seen enough blood and gore not to get all skittish about it. She tasted salty, like jelly with a hint of chicken. I found out why the zombies hankered for the taste so much. Laura's brain was ambrosia, food for the soul.

I ate her brains out of love, but there was more to it than that. I'd been feeling it build for weeks. All those eyes watching me, all that expectation. Peer pressure was a bitch.

I didn't know how else to show my zombie brothers and sisters that I really did belong.

They left me alone from then on. It's a Zen thing, I guess. Zombies are cool like that.



