

“Refueling”

The swarm of crazed people was rushing toward them. Mac turned the keys in the truck’s ignition. The engine sputtered but refused to turn on. “Try again,” said Dennis. Mac turned the keys again. Again the engine coughed, and the emergency lights flickered before it cut out. Mac tried to stay calm, but he felt a wave of cold panic.

“Keep trying the engine,” said Dennis. “I’ll hop out and try to push the truck to start.”

Dennis jumped out of the truck and ran to the back. He shoved the truck’s bumper, pushing all of his weight against the vehicle. Inside the truck, Mac kept turning the key in the ignition. Dennis could hear the angry roar of the mob as they grew closer. Dennis gave one final push and felt the truck move. He scrambled into the truck’s bed. “Go, go, go!” he screamed at Mac.

Mac turned the truck into a U-turn. The wheels screeched as the back of the truck swung around. In the truck’s bed, Dennis directly faced the people running at them. He no longer needed binoculars to see their wild eyes. The crowd was only twenty feet away.

“Go!” Dennis screamed again, and Mac slammed on the gas. The truck sped forward, and Dennis clung to the sides of it to keep from falling off the back. He was drenched in sweat, and his hands were still shaking.

Mac and Dennis drove back the way they had come, away from the city and the **hordes**. Once they had driven far enough that they thought it was safe to stop, Mac pulled over to the side of the road. He paused the truck just long enough for Dennis to jump back into the passenger seat.

“Were those zombies?” asked Mac.

“I don’t know,” said Dennis. “Whatever they were, they didn’t seem completely human. That must be what the **plague** does to people.”

The young men talked over their next move as they drove. Big cities seemed dangerous, but the small towns were abandoned. Should they

head back to the ranch? Go deeper into the wilderness? Or try to find other survivors who were also on the run? There was no easy answer. No matter what decision they made, it would be risky.

“Let’s stop at the next gas station and fill up some extra containers,” said Mac. “We need to get more gas. I don’t want to be low on fuel the next time we come across a group like that.” Dennis stared out the window silently. He was hoping they would never come across a group like that again.

They passed a gas station a few miles down the road. They approached the gas station slowly, checking for signs of life, but there were none. Dennis hopped out and opened the gas cap. The gas pump seemed to be working, so he filled up the truck’s tank. Once the tank was full, Dennis began filling up extra containers and putting them in the truck’s bed.

Mac decided that he would go inside the gas station to look for additional food and **supplies**. They still had some cornbread and apples from the ranch, but he didn’t know when they would be able to stop again. Mac was beginning to realize that life as he knew it was over. They needed to be ready to survive.

“I’m going to head inside to find extra food,” Mac said to Dennis. “Here are the keys to the truck. Be ready to get in and drive away quickly if we have to make a fast escape.”

Dennis nodded and took the keys. “Be careful, Mac,” he said. “Who knows what you’ll find in there.”

Mac opened the door to the gas station slowly. The inside was dark and silent. “Hello?” he called, “Anybody there?” Mac flipped a switch on the wall, and fluorescent lights flickered on. He looked around at the empty store. There were signs of a struggle. Bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor. One of the glass refrigerator doors had been torn off its hinges. Mac stood, holding his breath, listening. All he heard was the hum of the refrigerators and the sound of Dennis filling up outside.

Mac grabbed a few plastic bags from the counter. He filled them with enough **supplies** for a few more weeks: trail mix, bottled water, medicine, granola bars, and jars of peanut butter. Mac wondered if he should pay for these things. He wasn’t sure if the owner of the gas

station was even alive, and Mac and Dennis might need the money later. Then, Mac remembered Ann Greerson's goodbye back at the ranch. She had told them to remember their manners. Mac didn't want to let her down. He reached into his wallet and found a twenty-dollar bill. He had just placed it on the counter, when he heard a sound behind him. Mac froze. He wasn't alone in the store.

Outside, Dennis had filled up six containers with gasoline. He climbed into the front seat and put the keys in the ignition. He turned on the radio, but all he could find was static. Dennis kept moving the dial and searching for a station. Suddenly, the static cleared, and he heard a voice.

"Is anyone out there?" the voice said. It was a girl's voice. "My name is Anna Johnson. This is my father's radio kit. He's gone now. The **plague** arrived in Sunnydale one week ago." The girl's voice shook with sobs. "I just want to know if there's anyone else out there. Anyone who's still human." Dennis felt horrible for her. He and Mac had each other, but Anna was all alone. Dennis looked at the clock. It had been fifteen minutes. He felt uneasy; it shouldn't have taken Mac this long to grab a few **supplies**.

Suddenly, he heard his name. "Dennis! Dennis!" Mac was crying out for him from inside the store. Dennis jumped out of the truck and ran toward the entrance.

DIARY ASSIGNMENT FOR TODAY:

*Continue w/ your same character

*Explain today's events: emotions, action, fears, plans, predictions?

*Answer ONE question

1. The young men talked over their next move as they drove. Big cities seemed dangerous, but the small towns were abandoned. Should they head back to the ranch? Go deeper into the wilderness? Or try to find other survivors who were also on the run? There was no easy answer. No matter what decision they made, it would be risky.

Based on the information in the story, why might any decision the young men make be risky?

2. Mac didn't want to let her down. He reached into his wallet and found a twenty-dollar bill. He had just placed it on the counter when he heard a sound behind him. Mac froze. He wasn't alone in the store.

What evidence supports the statement that Mac "wasn't alone in the store"?