

# Refueling [The Run Series, #2]

by ReadWorks



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 car and ran toward the entrance.

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Ed.: *The tale continues in Part 3, "Searching for Survivors".*



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1.** Who is rushing toward Mac and Dennis at the beginning of the story?

- A. a swarm of crazed people
- B. a woman named Ann Greerson
- C. a girl named Anna Johnson
- D. the owner of a gas station

**2.** Where does the second half of this story take place?

- A. two miles outside a big city
- B. in and around a gas station
- C. at a ranch
- D. deep in the wilderness

**3.** Read these sentences from the text.

Were those zombies?' asked Mac.

'I don't know,' said Dennis. 'Whatever they were, they didn't seem completely human.'

What evidence from the story supports the idea that the people Mac and Dennis saw were not "completely human"?

- A. There were a lot of them.
- B. They were "only twenty feet away" from Mac and Dennis.
- C. They were "crazed" and had "wild eyes."
- D. They were running toward Mac and Dennis.



**4. Read these sentences from the text.**

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?

- A. They do not have much experience driving long distances at night.
- B. They do not know whether they can trust the girl who says her name is Anna Johnson.
- C. They have no map and do not know how to get back to the ranch.
- D. Wherever they go, there is a chance they will come across more "crazed people."

**5. What is the main idea of this story?**

- A. A girl named Anna Johnson uses her father's radio kit to ask whether anyone "who's still human" is out there.
- B. Two young men barely escape a crowd of people rushing toward them.
- C. Mac enters a gas station and fills plastic bags with trail mix, bottled water, medicine, granola bars, and jars of peanut butter.
- D. Two young men are trying to survive in a world where almost everyone seems to have gone crazy.

**6. Read these sentences from the text.**

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Based on these sentences, what does the phrase "on the run" mean?

- A. trying to help people
- B. trying to win a race
- C. trying to hurry up
- D. trying to escape or hide



**7.** Read these sentences from the text.

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.

How could the last two sentences here be rewritten to show the relationship between them?

- A. There were signs of a struggle. Meanwhile, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
- B. There were signs of a struggle. For example, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
- C. There were signs of a struggle. On the other hand, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
- D. There were signs of a struggle. Ultimately, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.

**8.** Read these sentences from the text.

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"?

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**9.** Why does Dennis jump out of the truck and run toward the gas station at the end of the story? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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**10.** Who or what might be inside the store with Mac? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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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"?

The sound Mac hears behind him supports the statement that he "wasn't alone in the store."

**9.** Why does Dennis jump out of the truck and run toward the gas station at the end of the story? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Answers may vary, but students should recognize that Dennis's actions are triggered by Mac's calls of "Dennis! Dennis!" from inside the gas station. Students may infer that Dennis runs toward the station to help Mac.

**10.** Who or what might be inside the store with Mac? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Answers may vary, as long as they are supported by the text. For example, students may infer that someone or something dangerous is inside the store with Mac. That would explain why he yells Dennis's name -- he needs help. Students may go further and infer that whoever or whatever is inside the store is another one of the "crazed people" Mac and Dennis saw at the beginning of the story.