

# Searching for Survivors [The Run Series, #3]

by ReadWorks



"Dennis! Dennis!" Mac sounded frantic. Dennis raced across the parking lot toward the gas station. "I'm coming, Mac!" he yelled to his friend, and burst into the store.

Mac was at the counter. When Dennis walked in, Mac pointed to the back of the store. The door of the men's bathroom was slowly creaking open. Just then the door swung wide, and a man appeared. The man's hair was matted and disheveled. His clothes were ripped and dirty. Parts of his skin were covered in deep purple and black marks. Even from the door, Dennis could detect the man's stench. He smelled like the fermented slop that they fed to pigs on the ranch. It was obvious that the plague had gotten this man.

The man hovered in the doorway of the bathroom, looking first at Mac and then at Dennis. His eyes were red and bloodshot, and they rolled around in his sockets, unable to focus. "Argghhh," the man growled. Drool dripped down his chin as he stepped forward.

"Mac," said Dennis quietly, backing toward the front door. "Let's get out of here."

Mac began edging toward the door, too, taking the bags of food and supplies with him. Suddenly, the crazed man lurched forward and started running toward the two younger men. Thinking quickly, Dennis reached out to the shelves of soup behind him. He threw the cans at the man as hard as he could. Back when he and Mac lived on the ranch, Dennis used to throw stones to scare off the coyotes. He had a strong throwing arm and good aim.

One of the cans hit the crazed man square in the face, and he crumpled to the ground.

"Don't go near the body," said Dennis. "We don't know if he's contagious."

"Don't worry. I'm not going anywhere near it," said Mac. "Let's get out of here." They turned to exit when they heard another slow creak. Mac and Dennis paused. There was still someone else in the gas station. They turned around and saw that now the door to the women's bathroom was opening. Dennis picked up more cans and handed a few to Mac. They watched the door and readied themselves to throw the cans as soon as a target came into view.

"Hello?" A young boy stuck his head out from the bathroom. He couldn't have been more than six or seven years old. "Is it safe?" he asked.

Mac and Dennis looked at the boy. He seemed healthy but scared.

"How long have you been in there?" asked Mac.

"A day or two," said the boy. "I locked myself in. I saw a group of people coming; they looked dangerous. So I hid. There's no one else around anymore."

Dennis and Mac exchanged a look. They couldn't leave this kid here alone to fend for himself. He wouldn't last a week.

"Grab some supplies, and come with us," said Dennis. "We're looking for other survivors."

The boy followed the two young men to the truck and climbed between them. As they drove, Dennis and Mac learned that the boy's name was Jeremiah. His parents had worked in one of the big hospitals in the city. When the plague hit, they had volunteered to help nurse the first victims. His parents had never come home. Jeremiah had waited a week and then tried to go to the hospital. No one was there. The entire building was abandoned and vacant.

"I don't know what happened to them," said Jeremiah. "So I left the city on my bike. I rode and rode until I came to the gas station. I thought I was safe until a new group of plagued people showed up."

Dennis and Mac nodded. Who knew how many families had been ripped apart by the plague? The important thing now was figuring out their next step. Dennis told Mac that he had heard the voice of a girl on the radio. "Her name was Anna, and she was the last one alive in her town, Sunnydale. She was on her father's radio kit, looking for others," said Dennis.

Mac looked at Dennis. "We're going to Sunnydale, aren't we?" he asked. Dennis nodded.

"And then?" asked Jeremiah.

Mac cleared his throat. He had an idea. Mac pointed out that it was too dangerous to go to the cities and that they only had enough gas to drive another four hundred miles. The safest thing to do would be to go somewhere rural. They should head to a place where they could set up a strong defense. Then they could wait out the plague for a few more weeks before trying to find other survivors.

Dennis thought about Mac's plan. It made sense. "Okay," he said. "But we look for Anna first. We might be her only chance at survival." In his head, Dennis could still hear the girl's voice and her sobbing as she made her radio broadcast.

The sun was setting when the truck pulled onto the main street of Sunnydale. "How will we find her?" asked Mac. "We can't just knock on every door in this town."

Dennis was fiddling with the radio again. "Let's see if we can hear her," he said. "Maybe she'll say her address." The static cleared, and there again was Anna's voice. She was still broadcasting.

"Is anyone there? Anyone liste-"

Suddenly, Anna's voice stopped. The young men heard a pounding on the door in the background. There was a crash and then sounds of a struggle. Dennis gripped the wheel so hard that his knuckles turned white. They were too late.

"Look!" cried Jeremiah. On the main street, the doors to one of the houses had opened. A teenaged girl was running out. She looked terrified, but not like the wild members of the swarm. Something else came out of the house, chasing her.

"Jump in the truck!" screamed Mac. The girl ran and leapt into the back of the truck, and Dennis hit the accelerator. There was a howl of frustration from the plagued person as his victim escaped.

"Uh-oh," said Jeremiah. "That doesn't look good."

He pointed to the girl's leg. The zombie had cut a long gash in her shin. The wound was already turning dark purple.

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Ed. : *The tale continues in Part 4, "On the Road."*

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

1. Who walks out of the men's bathroom in the gas station?

- A. a scared boy who is about six or seven years old
- B. a terrified teenaged girl who has a wound in her leg
- C. a man with red eyes, ripped clothes, and a bad smell
- D. a nurse who volunteered to take care of plague victims at a hospital

2. What point of view is this story told from?

- A. second person point of view
- B. third person limited point of view
- C. third person omniscient point of view
- D. first person point of view

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"Mac was at the counter. When Dennis walked in, Mac pointed to the back of the store. The door of the men's bathroom was slowly creaking open. Just then the door swung wide, and a man appeared. The man's hair was matted and disheveled. His clothes were ripped and dirty. Parts of his skin were covered in deep purple and black marks. Even from the door, Dennis could detect the man's stench. He smelled like the fermented slop that they fed to pigs on the ranch. It was obvious that the plague had gotten this man."

Based on this evidence, what can you conclude about people who get the plague?

- A. People who get the plague have to go to the bathroom more often than people who do not have the plague.
- B. People who get the plague have short hair, wear long pants, and use a lot of deodorant.
- C. People who get the plague develop purple and black marks and become smelly.
- D. People who get the plague start to behave like pigs.

4. Why might Dennis have thrown cans at the man running toward him and Mac?

- A. Dennis thought the man was hungry and wanted to provide him with cans of soup.
- B. Dennis thought the man was harmless and wanted to tease him by throwing cans at him.
- C. Dennis thought the man was dangerous and wanted to protect himself and Mac.
- D. Dennis thought the man was lost and wanted him to start walking in the opposite direction.

5. What is the main idea of this story?

- A. A few young people try to stay safe from crazed plague victims.
- B. Dennis and Mac meet a boy named Jeremiah at a gas station.
- C. A man with ripped clothes and red eyes runs out of a bathroom toward Mac and Dennis.
- D. A teenaged girl jumps into the back of a truck after being attacked by a zombie.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Mac was at the counter. When Dennis walked in, Mac pointed to the back of the store. The door of the men's bathroom was slowly creaking open. Just then the door swung wide, and a man appeared. The man's hair was matted and disheveled. His clothes were ripped and dirty. Parts of his skin were covered in deep purple and black marks. Even from the door, Dennis could detect the man's stench. He smelled like the fermented slop that they fed to pigs on the ranch. It was obvious that the plague had gotten this man."

Imagery is descriptive language that focuses on one or more of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. What senses does the imagery in these sentences focus on?

- A. sound, touch, and taste
- B. sight, touch, and taste
- C. touch, smell, and taste
- D. sight, sound, and smell

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"Mac and Dennis looked at the boy. He seemed healthy but scared."

How could these sentences be combined without changing their meaning?

- A. Mac and Dennis looked at the boy, which seemed healthy but scared.
- B. Mac and Dennis looked at the boy, who seemed healthy but scared.
- C. Mac and Dennis looked at the boy, although healthy but scared.
- D. Mac and Dennis looked at the boy and seemed healthy but scared.

8. Whom or what is a teenaged girl running from at the end of the story?

9. What color does the wound on the girl's leg turn?

10. Read these sentences from the text.

"Mac was at the counter. When Dennis walked in, Mac pointed to the back of the store. The door of the men's bathroom was slowly creaking open. Just then the door swung wide, and a man appeared. The man's hair was matted and disheveled. His clothes were ripped and dirty. Parts of his skin were covered in deep purple and black marks. Even from the door, Dennis could detect the man's stench. He smelled like the fermented slop that they fed to pigs on the ranch. It was obvious that the plague had gotten this man."

Based on these sentences and the color of the girl's wound at the end of the story, what might happen to the girl? Support your answer with evidence from the text.