**The Run, Part 2**

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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.

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| Answer the following questions based on “The Run, Part 2” |

1. **Read paragraph three from page 2.**

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| Mac was beginning to realize that life as he knew it was over. |

**What does the sentence suggest?**

1. Mac realized that the time for his hair to be done again, or his social life would be over.
2. Mac comes to the realization that things would never be the same.
3. Mac realized that apples and cornbread were in short demand.
4. Mac doesn’t like the price of gas could be so high.
5. **In looking at the interaction between Mac and Dennis in paragraphs 19 and 20, what can the reader conclude about their relationship?**
6. Dennis can trust Mac to be there for him.
7. Mac can trust Dennis to be there for him.
8. Mac likes to play practical jokes on Dennis
9. Dennis does not believe that Mac actually cares for him.

**Running a Real “Zombie 5K”**

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I exercise a lot and try to keep healthy. Last year, I ran in the Boston Marathon with my mom.

Recently, I learned about something called Obstacle Course Racing. This is like a marathon, but they have all these different types of obstacles for you to overcome. You have to climb over walls and slide down ropes. You even crawl through the mud.

They also have a “fun run” called the Zombie 5K. It’s a three-mile race during which you are chased by people dressed like zombies!

When I found out about the Zombie 5K, I knew I had to train for this race and win it. I went to the park and found an area where the city has built some free exercise equipment. They have a little jungle gym and some benches to do push-ups on.

Every day after school, I’d go home and change into my gym clothes. I’d ride my bike over to the park and lock it up real tight with a chain. Then, I’d spend about an hour doing pull-ups on the monkey bars and jumping over blocks of wood.

As I did this, I pretended that zombies were chasing me. Sometimes I would scream and run wildly around in a circle. This generally resulted in people looking at me sideways. People would start laughing and pointing. I didn’t care. I had a race to prepare for.

The only problem was, I didn’t actually know what it would feel like to run while being chased by zombies. So I called my friends Jeff, Amy, and Kristen. I asked if they wanted to have some fun helping me train.

Since it was close to Halloween, a lot of them had monster makeup lying around their homes. A zombie costume isn’t that hard—it’s mostly just old clothes that you were going to throw out anyway!

The next day, we waited until dusk. I went to the park as planned. I don’t know how Jeff and the gang got there. Maybe they changed into their zombie costumes behind a tree. Maybe they got dressed at home and then rode their bikes there (now that would have been funny!).

All I know is that I was running along the track when all of a sudden I heard a loud roar coming from behind me. I turned around, and there was Zombie Amy running full speed in my direction.

“BRAAAAINS!” she said.

“Aw, Amy, come on! That’s so cliché! No real zombie says ‘brains’!” I said.

She wasn’t stopping, though. In fact, she was getting faster. And she seemed to be foaming at the mouth. I noticed other families start to scream and scatter. I guess they believed she was really a zombie.

Amy was obviously really getting into the part, so I decided to play along. I ran as fast as I could until I got to the gate. I jumped over the gate and got the side of my shorts stuck on a prong. Amy wasn’t slowing down.

“Come on, Amy, it’s just a game!” I yelled. I struggled to free myself from the gate as she got closer and closer. Her eyes looked black, and I could smell her breath.

Suddenly, I felt an arm grab me around my waist and pull me off the gate.

“Come on, let’s get out of here!” It was Jeff. He wasn’t in a zombie costume.

“Jeff, why aren’t you in costume?”

“Because that isn’t a costume! She was bitten by a real zombie! Run!”

We started running. I could hear her close behind me now. I could still almost smell her.

We built up speed, and I ran faster than I ever thought I was capable of. Amy was doubling back around now, having gotten in front of us somehow. That’s when I saw Jeff grab his neck and start convulsing.

“Amy… she bit me a little bit,” he said. “Just a little.”

His eyes were getting dark, and he started foaming at the mouth. I knew I had to get to a place they couldn’t follow me: the outdoor gym.

I’d been training there for months. I knew the course backwards and forwards. I leaped over the sit-up planks and the balance beams. The zombies were falling all over themselves. They tripped on the grass and couldn’t stand up straight on the beam.

Since it had rained last night, there was a puddle of mud surrounding the monkey bars. I looked behind me to see my former friends were slowly gaining on me. I figured they’d fall in the mud puddle, but so would I! So I got my footing on a balance beam and jumped high into the air. I grabbed onto the first monkey bar and swung as hard as I could. The next thing I knew, I was all the way across on the other side.

My zombified friends were slipping around in the mud. They couldn’t even stand up straight. Panic was setting in. I knew I could keep running, but where was I running to? Where would I hide?

That’s when I saw Kristen.

She didn’t appear to be a zombie… yet. She was waving her arms frantically. Could I trust her? I decided that I had to. I had no choice.

I noticed Kristen appeared to be sobbing on the ground. But wait—no. She was *laughing*. Our friends are monsters trying to murder us and she was *laughing*?

She pointed back towards Jeff and Amy, and they were on the ground laughing, too.

“We got you… so… good!” Amy said, laughing so hard she could barely finish speaking.

“You did what? Are you kidding me?”

“It’s a joke!” she said.

I was so incredibly angry. I mean, I was really livid! My face felt hot and flushed. “What’s wrong with you?” I asked them.

Amy came toward me, wiping away the fake foam from her mouth. Jeff was removing contact lenses.

“You smell horrible!” I said.

“Yeah, uh. We kind of rubbed some spoiled milk on our clothes before we came. You know, to get the full effect,” Amy said.

“You’ve got to admit it was pretty brilliant,” Jeff said.

“You really tricked me, you guys.”

“We’re sorry,” Kristen said. “But I watched the whole thing. You *owned* that obstacle course, and you did it under pressure!”

“Well, I guess that’s true. I’m not nervous about the race any more!”

“You’re going to be amazing, and we’ll be there to cheer you on! In zombie makeup, of course.”

I started to laugh a little bit. I was still fuming mad and didn’t want to laugh. I just couldn’t help it.

“I knew real zombies didn’t say BRAINS!” I said. “You guys are hacks!”

“BRAAAAINS!” said Amy, holding out her arms to my neck.

I couldn’t hold in the laughter any more.

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| Answer the following questions based on “Running a Real ‘Zombie 5K’” |

1. **The irony of the following quotation calls attention to--**

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| Since it was close to Halloween, a lot of them had monster makeup lying around their homes. A zombie costume isn’t that hard—it’s mostly just old clothes that you were going to throw out anyway! |

1. the ease of becoming a zombie in a modern society.
2. how easily one could dress up as a zombie.
3. the reality of dressing zombies would be difficult at the best of times.
4. the fact that zombies are fictional characters that do not exist in reality.
5. **How does the graphic at the beginning contribute to the passage?**
6. It prefaces the content with an inaccurate depiction of a Zombie 5k.
7. It shows how pleasant the weather was during the Zombie 5k.
8. It allows the reader to see the finesse necessary to complete a Zombie 5k.
9. It scares the reader due to the horrific nature of obstacles.

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| Answer the following questions based on “The Run, Part 2” and “Running a Real ‘Zombie 5K’” |

1. **Read this sentence from “Running a Real ‘Zombie 5K’”**

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| Since it was close to Halloween, a lot of them had monster makeup lying around their homes. A zombie costume isn’t that hard—it’s mostly just old clothes that you were going to throw out anyway! |

**Which sentence from “The Run, Part 2” contrasts with the attitude expressed in the sentence from “Running a Real ‘Zombie 5k”.**

* 1. “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.”
  2. “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.
  3. 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.
  4. 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...

1. **Both the author of “The Run, Part 2” and the author of “Running a Real ‘Zombie 5K’”-**
   1. are writing about the terrifying reality that zombies would create.
   2. are showing the effects of how healthy living can be on your survival.
   3. have an interest in writing about how much fun a Zombie Apocalypse can be.
   4. have no interest in showing the funnier aspects of zombies.
2. **What is the purpose of paragraph 3 in “The Run, Part 2” and paragraph 26 in “Running a Real ‘Zombie 5K’”?**
   1. To explain the terror that real zombies would cause with the characters.
   2. To point out how silly the zombies act.
   3. To emphasize the undead nature of the living dead.
   4. To specify how best to deal with a zombie in a confined space.