

InfectaMart

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[This is a descriptive piece on what it was like shopping this day. ]

It seems that Sociology has a sub-discipline for nearly everything. This includes the areas of natural and other disasters. It observes how organizations are strained and social relations are re-negotiated. This descriptive story is along those lines.

In the time of great sickness, people modify their behavior. They arrive at the stores earlier than usual. They stand back twice the usual respectful distance while waiting to be served in the deli or checkout line. Some buy their usual with half-filled carts. And others get enough to make it through two zombie apocalypses. Everyone is complaining about the lack of their usual soap or bread (Although aficionados of the "cheap bread" could still be satisfied. Others complain that they spent more than their usual thirty-six dollars. It is a moment of great dissatisfaction.

Some shoppers wore no gloves, others wore two or just one. Perhaps it was easier to grab things this way as they eagerly search for that aisleway lacking human companions. Then quickly whisk away to the next empty row. If they see another being, very little is said. As if words could cause infections. Interestingly, I saw no one with masks and had to deal with far too many elderly people that were coughing more than desired.

What is revealing as to what is being bought. Empty are the aisles of toweling, toilet paper, and small water bottles. But well stocked are areas comprised of laundry soap, chocolate, cereal, and the self-medication items of beer and wine. With a lack of sports to watch and events to go to, some were amusing themselves with nothing other than liquid refreshments. One wonders if the aristocrats made it through the plague this way as well.

The store personnel and shelf stockers were less than usual. Had the scare already kept them away? Those that could be found joked about purchasing what you could find. And the place seemed about 65% stocked.

No longer was there a store filled with abundant selections. Instead, shoppers were confronted with a new normal of scarcity. All were hoping for a return to the way it was. Until at least the next pandemic makes a fateful arrival.

