

Just Like Moscow (InfectAMart #2)

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

*“Once an activity becomes the new normal, people adjust and set up new rulesets to follow. In time, the exceptions to these become rare. Until the next new normal arises”*

There was no doubt, people were keeping to themselves and staying home. The roads alternated between minimal to light traffic,

Before exiting the car and heading into InfectAMart, I eye a lone police car sitting and observing eagerly what is happening at the store entrance. But nothing is happening other than a pair of aged workers standing far too close to each other while smoking and gossiping without a care in the world. On passing through the store’s portals, a worker in busy disinfecting several carts to hand out eagerly to the few passengers.

The space between the cash registers and the isles was very empty. No doubt to provide more than adequate space for social distancing. Each aisle told a different story. They ranged to like being at a disco with great abundance especially in the beer and wine aisles. To being completely empty as once found in Communist Moscow. Abundance and scarcity living together side by side without interruption.

People didn't handle the darn social distancing thing well. Some misguided souls thought it was business as usual. And they dawdled in a certain section pondering at length on what might be the best buy. And all the while their cart blocking the middle of the aisle. Plus being oblivious to the still patient people waiting on either side to move in quickly and make their own choices. I am surprised that a fistfight did not break out.

Some customers wore masks as if that could save them from impending doom be it a virus or a car crash.

The plexiglass with its supposed promise of safety to both the cashiers and the customers had not gone up yet. The cashiers were left on their own to bag. The dividers for customers to separate the food were gone as another “safety” mechanism. The cashiers now had a new role of being a knowledge merchant and knowing which days deliveries were made on scarce goods. As if that would satisfy anyone.

I escaped in gratitude no knowing next time if the medical police would be at the front door taking temperatures and inspecting each customer before entry. Or the whole store would be placed on hiatus.

The only expectation was that further change was coming. And with it further surprises and frustrations.

