

Beginning to See the Light (InfectAMart #4)

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*You are free to distribute as long as there are no modifications.*

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

It seemed to be close to some sort of imaginary halfway progress point in the uneasy land of Infectia. While the great and new virus raged, there were now two different sets of citizens. Those like myself that took the whole thing seriously and were decked with a mask, gloves, and personal protective gear. And those that walked around open and vulnerable without anything covering their hands, noses, and mouths. How would this dynamic turn out at InfectAMart? I would know soon enough.

On my visit, I saw no one cleaning the carts. (Although I saw later someone was monitoring those when they were returned.) There were so few to choose from. But it was at least being done at all.

I immediately headed up the toweling aisle praying that this would be my lucky day. And glories on top of glories, it was. I grabbed the last "Bounty" twelve-pack from the lowest shelf and guarded it like precious jewels during the remainder of the trip. And all the while celebrating my lucky catch in secret. There were many generic tissue boxes on sale perhaps as a possible poor substitution. In addition to the toweling, I saw the return of a variety of salad (still only two purchases per customer) and bread selections. A large group of tasty yellow (and not tiny green ones like the first times) bananas were available. But toilet paper, rice, and many cleaning materials were still lacking.

I began observing how those in the store were donned. A majority of those in attendance wore masks as well as clothes. But a sizable number did not including those stocking the shelves and the one packing bags for a forthcoming home delivery or pickup. Age or other factors did not seem to factor in to this health choice. But enough about that.

There seemed to be a sufficient number of cashiers and dare I say it baggers to speed things along. People for the most part kept their social distance while waiting at the designated spots. (Which seemed far less than six feet.) And then I was done and out the door.

For the first time, there was a small semblance of hope that a new sense of normal was coming about. The aisles had largely transitioned from emptiness, to a few, and now a mostly sufficient number of selections. But it would be some time before great abundance and relatively unlimited selections without purchase limits would return.

I left InfectAMart with faith that a return to a normally stocked supermarket in the area was in sight. Just had to patient and have faith.