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Sears craftsman mower parts store

I went to a Sears the other day. A few decades ago, that wouldn't have been a remarkable event. At one time, Sears was the largest retailer in America, with one in 204 working people in the country. Sears anchors in coast-to-coast malls selling everything from back-to-school clothing to tools to washing machines. Those days are long gone. Sears is on the verge of collapse, and some experts doubt it will take much longer. What went wrong with this former icon of American retail? I decided to go to a Sears store myself to try to find out. Last call at Sears Sears | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet My local Sears won't be around for much longer. In June, the company announced that the store, along with more than a dozen others, would close. That's on top of the 245 Sears and Kmart store closures that Sears Holdings announced earlier in 2017. Since 2012, Sears has closed more than half of its stores nationwide. More recently, Sears told employees that it will close another 103 stores in 2018. Once the Sears in La Jolla lights out, the San Diego area will be left with only three outposts of the department store chain. In comparison, struggling Macy's still has 10 stores in the region, Walmart has more than two dozen outposts, and Target has 20. My city is not unusual in that respect. In many parts of the US, Sears is down to only a handful of locations. If you want to shop there, you have to do your best. Next: How big of a fall has Sears taken over the years? Remembering an American icon The entrance to a Sears store | Scott Olson/Getty Images When I jumped into my car on Saturday afternoon to head off on my shopping expedition, I wasn't sure what to expect. In recent years, Sears has become the media favorite retail punching bag, so much so that the company's CEO has blamed dire news stories for slinging away suppliers. But I'm also old enough to remember when Sears was still a retail powerhouse. As a child, I browsed the famous Wish Book for Christmas, and when I got to my first apartment, I bought a mattress from the store. But it was years ago that I set foot in a Sears, let alone bought something there. Given all the doom and gloom around the company, I was preparing for a dreary shopping trip. I imagined empty aisles and empty shelves. What I didn't envision was having trouble finding a place to park. Next: Shockingly, I walked other people into the mall. The death of the mall? A scene at college Center Mall in La Jolla, California | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet Reports of Sears' Slow Death Usually Go Hand hand with an obituary for the American mall. Nobody wants to shop at department stores anymore. Everyone buys what they need online. People want experiences, not things. I'm here to tell you something. Tell. are alive and well, at least in Southern California, the place that stereotypes the birth of the mall rat. The parking lot of the University Town Center mall was full, and I had to circle a few times before finally finding a spot on the top level of the parking garage. Dead malls can be a big problem in some places, but this was clearly thriving. But were these people here to look for bargains in Sears' going-out-of-business sale, or were they planning to visit one of the mall's other attractions, such as the indoor ice rink or the state-of-the-art movie theater with reserved seating? I'll find out soon. Next: This Sears looks like it hasn't been updated since 1977. A relic from another era The Sears store in La Jolla, California | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet The mall I visited opened in 1977, and the Sears store looked like it hadn't been updated since. The building bore all the hallmarks of the colossal, faceless department stores of the time. It was squat, windowless, and built of sand-brown brick. Nothing about it was particularly inviting. In particular, it didn't fit the rest of the mall, which is currently undergoing a massive, multimillion-dollar renovation. (The ongoing construction was one reason why it was so hard to find parking, I realized later.) The contrast between the two parts of the mall couldn't be starker. While University Town Center is aggressively repositioning itself as a luxury entertainment and shopping destination, the Sears store looked like the kind of place you'd only venture into when you had to - say, when your washing machine broke. Next: This Sears didn't have too much more to offer. Picking over the Sears carcass The entrance to Sears | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet Once in the store, I was greeted by a scene familiar to anyone who visited a store in the final stages of a liquidation sale. Picked over shelves, merchandise to varying degrees of disarray, and numerous All Sales Final signs dominated the scene. But despite the somewhat chaotic surroundings, the atmosphere in this Sears was not exactly doom and gloom. The store was humming with shoppers looking for a good deal, and lines on the few open registers were long. I decided to make a circuit around the store. Next: Tools in Sears were on a serious bargain. Bargain hunters dive into empty shelves at Sears | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet I started my Sears shopping trip in the department that once attracted a lot of people to Sears: tools. I wasn't in the market for a drill, but with everything at least 20% off I wish I were. Many of the shelves were already stripped of merchandise, and there were plenty of other people buying what was left. The line at the registry in this section was half a dozen people deep. after a quick round through fitness equipment, it was on men's clothes. Clothes. The menswear left a lot to be desired. High prices and off-season merchandise Out-of-season merchandise for sale at Sears | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet Men's Levi's were 50% off, which led to the first real deal-hunting of the trip. My husband searched through the stacks of denim for pants in his size and preferred number but came dry. So much for scoring a bargain. He also looked at socks, but decided to succeed. Even after accounting for the sale price, he thought he could get a better deal online. However, if we had been in the market for novelty gloves and mittens in Christmas colors, we were in luck. Never mind it was July and we live in California. Clearly, the store had cleaned up its storeroom and was desperate to unload what it could on shoppers. As we shopped, an announcement came over the intercom, urging us to sign up for a Sears credit card. Given the state of affairs in this store, that hardly seemed like a wise choice, but I had to give them credit for trying. Next: There weren't many good gear deals to choose from. Dead zone of the device A sign on the unit of the device on a soon to close Sears | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet After a pass through the jewelry counter, where everything was 70% off, we went upstairs to check out the appliances, electronics and household items. Here the shop was noticeably quieter. The chain's own brand Kenmore devices were only discounted by 10%. Shoppers were scarce. Sears was once a leader in device sales, but it lost its edge to stores such as Home Depot, Lowe's and Best Buy. A few days before my shopping trip, Sears announced that it would partner with Amazon to sell Kenmore devices online, including some with Alexa smart technology. Investors were excited about the shift, bringing a rare good news day for the beleaguered company. Next: Some parts of the store were completely empty of customers. A Long Night for Sears Mattresses For Sale at Sears | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet The overall atmosphere upstairs was considerably gloomier than below. The mattress section was completely free of shoppers, as was the small electronics section. I browsed the kitchen and small appliances, but things were either too expensive (a KitchenAid stand mixer I suspected I could get for less with coupons in a store like Kohl's) or not available (I needed a square frying pan but couldn't find one). The truth was, I wanted to buy something from this Sears, but I had trouble finding everything I wanted or needed. Finally, in the home goods section, I struck gold. I scooped up a few bargain-priced bed pillows to replace our old and worn out went to check out. Next: The line for check out was brutal. 'You can't buy that here' In a Sears store | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet After No Luck Finding an Open Registry Registry We went back to the main level. The line at the checkout at the escalator was long, so we walked over to women's clothing. But as soon as we got into the (much shorter) line there, the clerk waved us away. You should use a registry for Sears customers, she said. A glance at the board above the registry revealed the problem. I was trying to buy Sears merchandise at the Lands' End store in Sears. Retailers might have existed in the same physical space, but they were really two separate stores. As a consumer, the relationship was confusing, and for Lands' End it's seriously bad news. With foot traffic in Sears stores down, Lands' End has struggled with selling its basic polo shirts and khakis. Defeated, we returned to the long line at the original registry and prepared to wait. And wait. Next: It took a full 15 minutes just to make our small purchase. The reckoning process An unmanned register at Sears | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet Sears has previously been criticized for its slow checkout process, which some say is the opposite of customer friendly. Loyal shoppers have complained about not finding available cashiers when they are ready to make a purchase. And then there's the Shop Your Way rewards program. CEO Eddie Lampert has pushed the loyalty program, which he sees as key to the company's asset-light future, where more people shop online rather than in stores. But some employees have said Shop Your Way is confusing, resulting in slower checkouts and abandoned shopping carts. I didn't see any abandoned carts, but even with three cashiers working, the wait to complete our purchase was long. It could be because the employees patiently explained the no return concept to each customer. Or it could be that some people were just buying a lot of things. In any case, it took 15 minutes for us to reach the front of the line. We paid for our items, the cashier stamped all sales definitively on receipt, and we left Sears, maybe for the last time. Next: What will shopping malls look like in the future? The future of retail A Tesla showroom and Amazon bookstore at the University Town Center mall | Megan Elliott/The Cheat Sheet We left the store in the bustling mall. A few doors down was a Tesla showroom and an Amazon Books. This was, I thought, the future of the American mall. You might be able to go there to stare at a fancy car or browse at a bookstore that is seamlessly integrated with its online counterpart. Then go ice skating, go to the fancy cinema or grab a meal at one of the mall's many restaurants some of them a Sbarro). But one thing you probably won't do is shop at Sears. Next: Don't expect to see Sears much longer. A life support chain Based on company boards | Megan Elliott / The cheat sheet of course, of course, not fair to judge an entire chain based on one experience in a soon-to-be-closed location. You don't expect them to find smiling employees, well-stocked shelves and a stress-free shopping experience in a store that's about to close its doors forever. However, my visit offered a glimpse into some of the problems plaguing

the chain. For one, it seems out-of-step with broader retail trends. Compared to the other stores in the mall, Sears was a dinosaur. The picture was sloppy, compared to neighbors such as Tesla, the Apple Store and Nordstrom. Even good for the limited selection, the merchandise was lackluster and quite uninspired. I could get similar, if not identical items elsewhere, probably for less money. But is consumer disinterest and amazon's temptation the real reason Sears is failing? Next: Here's why Sears is doomed. What went wrong for Sears A Sears store in a nearly empty mall | Spencer Platt/Getty Images It's easy to blame fickle shoppers who now prefer to buy online for all of Sears' problems, but pointing the finger at changing customer behavior is too easy. The undoing of Sears is at least partly of its own making. When industry experts look at what went wrong at Sears, many zero in on the controversial CEO. Lampert, a former hedge fund whiz kid who people once called the next Warren Buffett, owns nearly half of Sears' stock, and he has also lent the company a ton of money to keep it afloat. As one of the Sears' biggest creditors, he stands to win even if the company eventually goes under, as The New York Times explained. Critics have said he refused to invest in stores, plundered the company's assets, and has no retail experience, all of which have hurt both Sears and Kmart. Next: Is there any chance of a triumphant return of the once great retailer? Can Sears turn things around? An empty Sears shopping cart | Scott Olson/Getty Images With the vultures circling, is there any hope of Sears turning things around? Many say it's not likely. Even Sears itself is not very optimistic, noting in its most recent annual report that Significant doubts exist regarding the company's ability to continue as a going concern. It's a bitter end for a company that once shaped the way Americans shopped. The company's venerable catalog was the Amazon of its day. The investment in suburban stores helped drive the development of the mall. But as discount chains like Target and Walmart moved in on its turf in the 80s and the company made unwise moves non-retail businesses, Sears stumbled, and it never really recovered. Who will miss Sears when it's gone? The number of loyal customers of the store is decreasing. The 140,000 people who still work for Sears Holdings will lose their jobs if it ultimately fails. But the rest of America can barely notice the end of the Giant. When I walked back to the car after browsing the mall, I passed two women in the opposite direction. Do you want to go to Sears? one asked the other. I didn't hear her companion's answer, but I almost stopped to warn her. Don't bother, I was going to say. There's nothing there. More from The Cheat Sheet:

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