

## **Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (2014)**

### **Beyond Apocalypse – working within and against the genre**

- Explores how life cannot be only about survival (even in its most catastrophic contexts) and how people find ways to continue;
- Argues that we need to find human connection in friendship and the consolation of art;
- Employs the genre to remind us of our privilege in our current lives;
- Adopts a “quiet,” nostalgic tone and focuses on the effects of loss, highlighting how peoples’ lives are linked through small moments, and that the totality of our lives consists of these small moments.

**Structure:** flashbacks before apocalypse and the aftermath (Year 20), all told in the present tense through shifting/multiple third person perspectives, both limited and omniscient

### **The Theater (Toronto)**

**Chap 1:** Arthur’s death while performing Lear; Jeevan tries to help save Arthur, comforts nearly 8 yr. old Kirsten Raymonde who has witnessed Arthur’s collapse on stage, assuring her that “the last thing he ever did was something that made him happy.” (8)

- **Innocence and trauma:** Jeevan tells Kirsten not “to look” at Arthur dying (5); the irony, though, is that she will soon be forced to witness much worse in the first year of the aftermath, which she will not remember (the mind protecting itself from horror)
- **The stage as metaphor:** “It was too transitory, all those doorways and dark spaces between wings, the missing ceiling. It was more like a terminal … a train station or an airport, everyone passing quickly through.” (5)

**Chapter 2:** Cast and crew of *King Lear* gather in the lobby bar to discuss Arthur’s death, wonder about his family (8 yr. old Tyler, three ex-wives) and gossip about his affair with the child-handler Tanya. After toasting Arthur, we are told everyone at the bar dies within three weeks.

- **Use of prolepsis:** “Of all of them who were at the bar that night, the bartender was the one who survived the longest. He died three weeks later on the road out of the city.” (15)

**Chapter 3:** Jeevan wanders in the snow, receives a phone call from his doctor friend Hua telling him about the Georgian Flu, vaguely blamed on Russia, which “had been somewhat less than transparent about the severity of the crisis” (21)

- **Hyper-aware of apocalypse**
  - “This illness … was going to be the divide between a *before* and an *after*.” (20)
  - “The part of the evening that had transpired in the Elgin Theatre seemed like possibly a different lifetime.” (22)
  - “this bread-and-flower-scented world, this almost-gone place” (23)
  - “You never know when something disastrous might happen” (25)
- **Jeevan as “survivalist” (25):** gets supplies from a local supermarket and heads to Frank’s flat (his disabled brother) to try and endure the coming disaster

**Chapters 4 & 5:** Clark and Miranda informed of Arthur’s death; Miranda is in Malaysia

- **Prolepsis:** of aftermath; Miranda’s own death; all the things that will be lost: “So this is how it ends, she thought … and she was soothed by the banality of it. … This was during the final month of the era when it was possible to press a series of buttons on a telephone and speak with someone on the far side of the earth.” (30)

**Chapter 6: “An incomplete list” (31-32)** – sets up nostalgia for our present but with ambiguous meaning; either we’re supposed to mourn for these things or realize “the banality of it,” how trivial our preoccupations with technology and modern conveniences, which we take for granted

- Mourns loss of art and culture; community and safety; the privileges of those in the developed world – medicine: “pharmaceuticals” and the “certainty of surviving a scratch on one’s hand, a cut on a finger while chopping vegetables for dinner, a dog bite” (31); economic prosperity, air travel, and civic services (31)
- The world both expanded and enclosed, grown smaller and more dangerous: “No more countries, all borders unmanned” (31)
- Loss of frontier/exploration: “No more spacecraft rising up from Cape Canaveral … burning paths through the atmosphere into space.” (32)
- Loss of connection through technology and social media: “no more scrolling through litanies of dreams and nervous hopes and photographs of lunches, cries for help and expressions of contentment and relationship status updates with heart icons whole or broken, plans to meet up later, pleas, complaints, desires, pictures of babies dressed as bears or peppers for Halloween. No more reading and commenting on the lives of others, and in so doing, feeling slightly less alone in the room. No more avatars.” (32)

## A Midsummer Night’s Dream

### **Chapter 7: Set twenty years later (Year 20)**

- The Travelling Symphony near Lake Michigan; for the past fifteen years, has traveled between “the settlements of the changed world” and “into the unknown landscape” (37), playing music and performing Shakespeare to the surviving population
  - Slow revival of civilization (we are given nothing of the apocalyptic collapse until later in the novel); audience preference for Shakespeare because: “People want what was best about the world” (38)
  - Technology, like electricity, satellites, and the internet, is perhaps “out there somehow, invisible pinpricks of light suspended in the air around them” (38)
  - The briefly rebooted computer screen is “a magical thing with no memories attached” because most of the younger people cannot recall its reality (39)
- Kirsten is now 28, running the lines of *King Lear* with her friend August; Kirsten and August search abandoned houses, looking for useful and reminiscent objects
  - “There were numerous things about the pre-collapse world that Kirsten couldn’t remember—her street address, her mother’s face, the TV shows August never stopped talking about—but she did remember Arthur Leander.” (40)
  - She only hazily remembers him giving her two comic books and Jeevan consoling her (41); searches for her past through her connection to Arthur, she “collected fragments” (40) of his past (photos from magazines) “like an archaeologist” (41)

**Chapter 8:** The comics were *Dr. Eleven, Vol. 1, No. 1: Station Eleven* and *Dr. Eleven, Vol. 1, No. 2: The Pursuit*, about a physicist who lives on a highly-advanced space station. The author had the initials M.C. (Miranda Carroll)

- Kirsten still possesses the comics and “has them memorized” – “all those bright images, that archival paper” – “Is it possible that only ten copies of each of these books exist in the world?” (42); like her clippings, “images from the shadow world, the time before” (66); text from one of the images: “*I stood looking over my damaged home and tried to forget the sweetness of life on Earth*” (42)

**Chapters 9-12:** The Travelling Symphony in St. Deborah by the Water; they sense something off in the town; perform *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a Walmart parking lot; meet the Prophet (Tyler), leader of "a doomsday cult" (62); they pack and leave quickly

- **The symphony is “their only home” (48):** arbitrarily put together over the years, “this collection of petty jealousies, neuroses, undiagnosed PTSD cases, and simmering resentments lived together, travelled together, rehearsed together, performed together 365 days of the year, permanent company. But what made it bearable were the friendships, of course, the camaraderie and the music and the Shakespeare, the moments of transcendent beauty and joy when it didn’t matter who’d used the last rosin on their bow or who anyone had slept with...” (47-48)
- **The salvation of art:** “Sometimes the Traveling Symphony thought that what they were doing was noble” – by believing in “the importance of art … everyone would find it easier to sleep that night. At other times it seemed a difficult and dangerous way to survive and hardly worth it” (Chap. 19, p. 119)
- Meditative chapter on loss and similarities to Shakespeare’s own time; the continuities of history and time; art as a palliative of disaster:
  - “What was lost in the collapse: almost everything, almost everyone, but there is still such beauty” (57)
  - Shakespeare’s play “written in 1594, the year London’s theaters reopened after two seasons of plague” – the play still being performed “centuries later on a distant continent” (57) – “*Because survival is insufficient*” (motto on their caravans, taken from *Star Trek Voyager*) (58)
- Kirsten’s pregnant friend Charlie and her husband are missing, their names found on markers of fake graves (53) along with other empty graves: “What did the graves mark, if not deaths? Did the markers await a future event?” (54) – later explained by Prophet that they mark those who have left the community “because to us they are dead” (62)
- Prophet speaks to audience and symphony members about fate, that they were “spared” for a reason, a higher plan and meaning, an ultimate and absolute ending of the world and that there will be “far more cullings to come” (59-61)
  - The plague was a “cleansing” greater than any other previous virus in history, “a microbe that reduced the population of the fallen world” at a scale that indicated “such a perfect agent of death could only be divine” (60)
  - “The flu … the great cleansing that we suffered twenty years ago, that flu was our flood. The light we carry within us is the ark that carried Noah and his people over the face of the terrible waters, and I submit that we were saved … not only to bring the light, to spread the light, but to *be* the light, we were saved because we *are* the light. We are the pure.” (60)
  - He claims *they* are the last bastion of civilization: “My people and I … when we speak of the light, we speak of order. This is a place of order. People with chaos in their hearts cannot abide here” (61)

### **I Prefer You with a Crown**

**Chapters 13-15:** Arthur’s and Miranda’s back stories, marriage, and divorce

- **Chapter 13:** Arthur’s point of view; leaves Delano Island when he is 17; early years in Toronto and L.A.; meets Clark when he drops university and begins acting; meets Miranda when she is 17 then seven years later when he returns to Toronto, now famous

- Begins by explaining one of the tabloid photographs that Kirsten found – “Civilization won’t collapse for another fourteen years” (71)
- Arthur’s connection with Miranda: “She’ll know where I’m from. Arthur lives in a permanent state of disorientation … How did I get from there to here?” (77)
- **Chapter 14:** Miranda’s point of view; working at a shipping company as administrative assistant when Arthur calls her again and she leaves her boyfriend, Pablo; she has been working on a series of graphic novels, “Station Eleven.”
  - Dr. Eleven lives on a space station with others from earth, “a thousand years in the future,” they escaped during a hostile alien take-over; the station is highly advanced but the ocean level is too high, the only remaining land is on mountaintops; many survivors, who “long only to go home,” live within shelters under the surface of the water – “All they want is to see sunlight again” (83) and “They spend all their lives waiting for their lives to begin” (86)
  - Ending her relationship with Pablo framed in apocalyptic terms: “It is sometimes necessary to break everything” (85) – “There are thoughts of freedom and imminent escape. I could throw away almost everything, she thinks, and begin all over again. Station Eleven will be my constant” (89)
- **Chapter 15 (Hollywood Hills):** their third wedding anniversary, hosting a dinner party
  - Miranda uncomfortable with the fame and celebrity lifestyle – “These are not her people. She is marooned on a strange planet” (92); realizes “that she’s nearing the end of something” (94); decides to leave Arthur, and tells Luli, her dog, “This life was never ours. … We were just borrowing it” (101)
  - In the middle of the night Miranda goes outside and speaks with Jeevan Chaudhary, who is working as a paparazzi and takes her picture; she returns inside and finds the beginnings of Arthurs letter to V – “*Dear V., Strange days. The feeling that one’s life resembles a movie. Thinking a lot of the future*” (104)
  - Arthur is having affair with his most recent co-star Elizabeth Colton (Tyler’s mother), who claims that “everything happens for a reason” (96); Elizabeth, drunk, comes into Miranda’s study and tries to apologize, claims she’s not a bad person but that it was just “supposed to happen” after Miranda comments, “No one ever thinks they’re awful, even people who actually are. It’s some sort of survival mechanism” (106) (all of this foreshadowing Prophet);
  - **Prolepsis:** three months later, Miranda and Arthur will get divorced; Miranda will return to Toronto, work for the same shipping company again, quickly getting promoted, becomes busy career woman, still works on Station Eleven late at night in hotel rooms, “almost always loves her life but is often lonely” (107) then returns to that night sitting with Elizabeth in her studio looking at her drawings: “Station Eleven is all around them” (107)

**Chapter 16:** Twenty-six years after the dinner party and fifteen years after the Georgian Flu

- François Diallo conducts an interview with Kirsten for his *New Petoskey News*, partly to “create an oral history of this time we live in, and an oral history of the collapse” – creating an archive of the interviews (108); interviews also allow people to hear stories of how others are getting on in different towns; Kirsten asks François if he knows anything about the graphic novels she has; he doesn’t (109)

**Chapter 17:** A year before the Georgian Flu, Arthur and Clark have dinner in London; the last time they will speak “of anything of substance” (111); Elizabeth and Tyler, now in Jerusalem, perhaps because of “all the history in the place” (111); Arthur’s third wife, divorcing him

- Clark realizes Arthur is performing to the room instead of having dinner with him; he is disgusted and leaves soon after, no longer feeling he knows his oldest friend, “Thinking about the terrible gulf of years between eighteen and fifty” (112).

**Chapter 18:** A continuation of the interview between François Diallo and Kirsten; discussion of memory and politics of remembering the past

- Kirsten admits she has “some problems with memory” and doesn’t “remember very much from before the collapse” (113); also, doesn’t remember the first year after the collapse, which is “not uncommon among people who were children when it happened” (113)
- Kirsten has been traveling with the symphony since she was fourteen when she was living on her own in an Ohio town after her brother died; she describes the various towns they pass through; claiming things “are much less dangerous” now, people are just trying to recover and move on, creating new governments and traditions (114)
- Some places are still “interested in the past” (114), and François claims, “The more we know about the former world, the better we’ll understand what happened when it fell” – Kirsten responds, “But everyone knows what happened,” implying, what use is the past to them now? (114); François insists on “understanding history” and Kirsten tells him about towns “where the children didn’t know the world had ever been different” (115)
- Kirsten then describes the towns where cults take over as “the most dangerous” because “they’re unpredictable” and “live by an entirely different logic” (115); believing they were “saved” and “survived the collapse because they’re superior people and free from sin” – there’s no way of rationally responding to this, she claims, and you end up “remember[ing] your own lost family and either want to cry or harbor murderous thoughts” (115) – indicates ways in which memory is reduced to the individual rather than the collective or community

### **The Starship (Year 20, primarily Kirsten’s perspective)**

**Chapter 19:** the symphony discovers a stowaway, Eleanor (12 yrs.), who was supposed to become the prophet’s fifth wife (123)

- She tells them Charlie and Jeremy went to “the Museum of Civilization” near Severn City (not a real town) and that the prophet was originally from there (124-125);
- The Prophet and his “religious wanderers” just showed up one day: “He said he was guided by visions and signs. He said he had prophetic dreams” (125)

**Chapter 20:** The symphony stop for a rest in a burnt-out resort town; Kirsten, August, Viola and Jackson search an old school in ruins, only reveals indecipherable traces of the past: “Easy to read the broad outlines of the room’s history … but as always all the details were missing” (129)

- Kirsten and August not as upset as others by the ruins: “We stand it because we were younger than you were when everything ended. Kirsten thought, but not young enough to remember nothing at all. Because there isn’t much time left, because all the roofs are collapsing now and soon none of the old buildings will be safe. Because we are always looking for the former world, before all the traces of the old world are gone.” (130)

**Chapter 21:** interview between François Diallo and Kirsten; she doesn’t wish to discuss “how the world’s changed in [her] lifetime”; François asks her about her two black knife tattoos on her wrist, which she also refuses to discuss (one for each person she has killed) (132)

**Chapter 22:** Kirsten and August search for Dieter and Sayid who vanish while scouting

- There are no tracks to follow: “It was as though Dieter and Sayid had been plucked off the face of the earth” (136); while searching, Kirsten and August discuss if they “ever think about stopping” – if they ever long for a safer, “steadier life than this” – Kirsten says, “Sure. But in what other life would I get to perform Shakespeare?” (135)

**Chapter 23:** Continued disappearances; Kirsten and August separated from caravan

- The following day the symphony decides to move on to Severn City hoping they will find Dieter and Sayid there; another member goes missing; they continue again after no luck searching; Kirsten and August scavenge a burnt-out golf course; when they return, there is no sign of the rest of the symphony; they continue alone.
- August comments on how the Prophet referred to his people as “the light,” and how this is dangerous and was perhaps meant as a threat, because: “If you are the light, if your enemies are the darkness, then there’s nothing that you cannot justify. There’s nothing you can’t survive, because there’s nothing that you will not do” (139)
- Kirsten acutely “aware … of the emptiness of the landscape, the lack of people and animals and caravans around her. Hell is the absence of the people you long for” (144)

**Chapter 24:** Kirsten and August continue to travel while also looking for clothes and other essentials before continuing

- They run into an older man on his own, tell him they are going to the Museum of Civilization, “a place where artifacts from the old world are preserved”; the man laughs, “the entire world is a place where artifacts from the old world are preserved” (146)
- Sighting a deer crossing the road and vanishing into the forest: “The beauty of this world where almost everyone was gone. If hell is other people, what is a world with almost no people in it? Perhaps soon humanity would simply flicker out, but Kirsten found this thought more peaceful than sad. So many species had appeared and later vanished from this world; what was one more? How many people were even left now?” (148)
- While searching a house, finding “a wedding gown and a black suit,” she recalls the purpose of the Symphony, “what they were always doing, was trying to cast a spell, and costuming helped; the lives they brushed up against were work-worn and difficult, people who spent all their time engaged in the task of survival” and in a world that was “horrifically short on elegance” (151)
- Kirsten also looking for, *Dear V.*, an unauthorized portrait of Arthur Leander’s life, which she had carried with her from Year 1 but lost two years ago; a book that “her mother had told her she wasn’t allowed to read” (152)

**Chapter 25:** “A few of the letters”

- The first from Arthur’s time soon after arriving in Toronto as a teenager, struggling in acting classes and befriending Clark; goes on to write about falling in love with Miranda and then Elizabeth; describes Delano island, his childhood home, as something that feels “past-tense somehow, like a dream I had once” – “like a different planet” (155).

**Chapter 26:** Clark receives a phone call from Elizabeth “three weeks before the pandemic”;

- Elizabeth informs him of *Dear V.*, both are mortified, “the indescribable luxury of being concerned about a book of published letters” (159);
- While at work later that day, Clark interviews a woman who claims “the corporate world’s full of ghosts” or more accurately, “adulthood’s full of ghosts”; people are “trapped”; “High-functioning sleepwalkers” (163); “nothing ever jolts them awake” and they’re not even aware they are unhappy (164)

- Clark realizes his own life is just as joyless: “When was the last time he’d been truly moved by anything? When had he last felt awe or inspiration?” –he has been “minimally present in this world” (164) – thus, *Mandel seems to be saying, the (genre of) apocalypse meant to remind us to “wake up” and not take for granted the “luxury” of our world? But whose world? It’s an incredibly privileged world that is lost. Is that what she’s trying to remind us of, our own privilege? Not sure I buy this...*

### **Toronto (Jeevan’s experiences interspersed with continuing Kirsten interview)**

**Chapters 27-30:** Eight days after the outbreak, while Jeevan is living with his brother, Frank, he remembers his interview with Arthur (seven years before the outbreak)

- Arthur, exhausted and planning to leave Elizabeth for his current costar, Lydia, but can’t bring himself to tell her because “nothing bad has ever happened to her” (173); his son Tyler only a baby at this point; and Jeevan promises he won’t release the story for 24 hours – Jeevan remembers that he kept his word, not sure why this is what he would “fixate on” while “the world was ending” (173);
- Jeevan stays with his brother Frank for the first 30 days after the outbreak; they still have plenty of water, but the lights have gone out, as has the Internet and the television; he still hopes for rescue: “Days slipped past and the news went on and on until it began to seem abstract, a horror movie that wouldn’t end” (176)

**Chapter 31 (Interview):** François and Kirsten speak about night one in Toronto; Arthur’s death and the involvement of Jeevan, though it is revealed that nobody knows who he was.

**Chapter 32:** By day 47, Jeevan and Frank are still in his apartment. Jeevan knows they must leave soon, and decides they will go under cover of a snow storm.

- Jeevan insists that “There’s still a world out there” while Frank says “there’s just survival out there” and that he “should go out there and try to survive” – Jeevan refuses to leave Frank behind but Frank implies that he plans to kill himself (183)

**Chapter 33 (Interview):** Diallo boasts about having “the second-to-last edition of the New York Times” (184) – *an (incomplete) record of history at the end of the world* – Kirsten reveals she stayed with her brother and never saw her parents again, she assumed they were some of the first to die: “People just vanished” (185)

**Chapter 34:** On day 58, Frank reads Jeevan some of the celebrity memoirs he’s been editing:

- “I’ve been thinking lately about immortality. What it means to be remembered” – claims all the old Hollywood stars, “long-dead actors on the screen,” will “never truly die” because they’re preserved on film – *irony, of course, is that this does not hold true in the apocalypse; fragility of (digital) archives* – “They’re all immortal to me. First we want only to be seen, but once we’re seen, that’s not enough anymore. After that we want to be remembered” (186-187)

**Chapter 35 (Interview):** Kirsten reveals in the beginning she watched television in her parent’s basement and that her brother would go out at night to steal food; they left Toronto soon after and travelled into the United States with no set destination in mind.

**Chapter 36:** Frank dies in bed after overdosing on sleeping pills; Jeevan leaves the apartment and walks along the edge of the lake: “The world had emptied out” (190)

- By the fifth day he met with people and travelled with them until they wanted to go in different directions; “he walked on alone [and] felt himself disappearing into the landscape. He was a small, insignificant thing, drifting down the shore. He had never felt so alive or so sad” (193)

- He rarely sees fellow travelers: “At first the solitude was a relief – he’s imagined a lawless world, he’d imagined being robbed of his backpack and left to die without supplies a thousand times – but as the days passed, the meaning of the emptiness began to sink in. The Georgian flu was so efficient that there was almost no one left.” (191-192)
- Recalls observing to Frank that it was “like those disaster movies” but clings to hope of an “afterward” while Frank replies, “What makes you think we’ll make it to an afterward?” (193)
- The solitude and emptiness almost drive him mad: “It was becoming more difficult to hold on to himself. He tried to keep up a litany of biographical facts as he walked, trying to anchor himself to this life, to this earth. … But these thoughts broke apart in his head and were replaced by strange fragments: This is my soul and the world unwinding, this is my heart in the still winter air. … He looked up and met the eyes of an owl, watching him from a snow-laden branch” (194) – *the world will survive without us*

**Chapter 37 (Interview):** Kirsten can’t remember anything else about that first year; she knows she walked with her brother, before finally settling in a town; thinks the people who have had the hardest time since the collapse are those “who remember the old world clearly” because ‘the more you remember, the more you’ve lost” (195) – all she really remembers is the old technology (196); *basically, a nostalgia for electricity?*

### **The Airplanes (Miranda’s last days)**

**Chapter 38:** Kirsten and August speak about “the theory of multiple universes” – and one of the major losses is that of scientific knowledge (199) – August believes that there is “a universe in which civilization hadn’t been so brutally interrupted” (200)

- They play out their old game of imagining who they would have been in this parallel universe, “in that other, shadow life” (201), “playing out somewhere at the present moment” (202); he would have been a physicist and Kirsten a famous actress
- Kirsten’s fantasizes “a parallel universe where we boarded Station Eleven and escaped before the world ended” (202) – but August retorts, “The world didn’t end … It’s still spinning” and that he likes “this world better” (202-203)
- Kirsten finds an old picture of Miranda visiting Arthur in the theatre two weeks before the outbreak, tries to locate herself in the past, at that moment (201)

**Chapter 39:** Miranda in Toronto two weeks before the outbreak, when the photo was taken

- “She saw ghosts of herself everywhere here” (205) – “previous versions of herself [that] were so different now that remembering them was almost like remembering other people” (206) – reminds herself, “I regret nothing” (206)
- Visits Arthur, hasn’t seen him in eleven years, his father just died, she’s angry about the *Dear V.* book, but Arthur insists that he “treated Victoria like a diary” – “a repository for my thoughts” (211); Miranda suspects Arthur is acting when he speaks to her
- Seven-year-old Kirsten comes into Arthur’s dressing room, to sit and color (212); Miranda gives Arthur two copies of Station Eleven; she’d become annoyed with Dr. Eleven and more interested in the survivors living in the “limbo” of the Undersea, “clinging to the hope that the world they remembered could be restored” (213)

**Chapter 40:** Miranda in Malaysia – “just before the world ended” (217), unaware of the severity of the situation and that the airports were all closed – “Later that evening she would find herself troubled and at moments even a little amused by the memory of how casually everyone had once thrown the word *collapse* around, before anyone understood what the word truly meant” (217)

- Clark calls her about Arthur's death and funeral plans; he gets a flight out of New York the next day on his way to Toronto, coincidentally Elizabeth and Tyler on the same flight; an announcement reveals that the flight would be diverted to Severn City airport.

**Chapter 41:** Miranda beginning to feel ill; she gradually deteriorates; dies watching the horizon on a beach in Malaysia, hallucinating in her fever, "the seascape bleeding into confused visions of Station Eleven, its extravagant sunsets and its indigo seas. The lights of the fleet fading into morning, the ocean burning into sky" (228)

- Earlier: "She was thinking about the way she'd always taken for granted that the world had certain people in it ... How without any one of these people the world is a subtly but unmistakably altered place" (225)

### The Terminal

**Chapter 42:** Clark still finds it hard to believe he survived the outbreak and the 20 years that followed, living in an airport, finding satisfaction in his museum; recalls the first day at airport

- "At first the people ... counted time as though they were only temporarily stranded" since "the entire history of being stranded in airports up to that point was also a history of eventually becoming unstranded" – "time had been reset by catastrophe" (231)
- Clark feels "lucky" that he survived, but also that he'd "seen one world end and another begin. And not just to have seen the remembered splendors of the former world ... but to have lived among those wonders for so long" (231-232) – "these taken-for-granted miracles that had persisted all around them" (231)
- **Clark's Museum of Civilization** (231): an archive of these once mundane objects, like iPhones, radios, laptops, electric toasters (232); stationed in the Skymiles Lounge of concourse C; started by placing a few items in a case, soon others were adding to it; he "took his role as curator seriously" and tries to explain the wonders of the old world to the children born after the collapse (232)
- Elizabeth claims the collapse is "unprecedented ... In all of human history" – *not really; we always think our own Ends are unprecedented* – for Clark and most of the passengers, they could "comprehend the scope of the outbreak" but not "what it meant" (236)
- "The fabric was unraveling. It will be hard to come back from this ... because in those first days it was still inconceivable that civilization might not come back at all" (239)

**Chapter 43:** Clark recalls the first 100 days in the airport, highly self-conscious of living through the apocalypse (243-244, 246, 248, 256); how they survived and worked to create a community, tolerating no violence; for example, a rape occurred on day 85, and they tied the man up and sent him out into the wilderness alone (252); citizenship redefined (251-52)

- Elizabeth refuses "to believe that civilization has just *come to an end*" (248) and keeps insisting "Everything happens for a reason" (249) and that everything would go back to normal and "we'll all finally get to go home" (251)
- He began avoiding Elizabeth and Tyler, because of their strange disconnection; Tyler frequently reading his comic books and the New Testament; wandered the airport alone; had a way of sneaking up on people silently (252-253).
- Clark decides to create the Museum on Day 100, partly in honor of his boyfriend, Robert, who had been a curator; partly to regain a purpose to his life, and to restore a sense of humanity through its own artefacts – "all objects were beautiful" and he is "moved" by the thought of "the human enterprise each object had required" (255)

**Chapter 44:** after 15 years, 300 people living in the airport and Clark devotes his time to looking after the museum now that he is older:

- He keeps displayed the passports of Elizabeth and Tyler who had left the airport in Year Two – “They were unsettling people” (258); three months before they left Clark had caught Tyler reading the bible to the quarantined plane; Clark concerned by his and Elizabeth’s belief that there was a “divine judgement” involved (259-261); they left with “a band of religious wanderers” that summer (261)
- They start a school in the airport, children learning about former world and its technologies as “abstractions” (262); Clark excited to read the newspaper that came from New Petoskey, especially the Kirsten interview, not just because of the connection with Arthur, but “If there were newspapers now, what else might be possible?” (264)

**Chapter 45 (Interview):** Kirsten agrees to answer some of the more uncomfortable questions if she’s not recorded, because she collects “celebrity-gossip clippings” and thus claims to “understand something about permanent records” (268)

- Reveals her brother died of an infection from standing on a broken nail, a “stupid death that would’ve never happened in the old world” (267); Diallo has also heard from others that she had killed two people and that was what her tattoos signified (267)

**Chapter 46:** In Year 15, Jeevan living in a peaceful southern town with 27 other families; married a woman named Daria in Year 10 and was working as a doctor;

- Discussion of whether teaching kids what the world used to be like would “make them more or less happy”; some think they should “let go” but Jeevan doesn’t want to (270)
- One evening a man comes to him with his wife, who had been shot by the prophet and his men when she refused to let them take her with them (274)

**Chapter 47:** Clark is 70 in year 19, “spending more time in the past lately. He liked to close his eyes and let his memories overtake him. A life, remembered, is a series of photographs and disconnected short films” (278-279)

- Discussing his previous work with his friend Garrett, remembering in mock horror their old use of text and email language (278); Charlie and Jeremy arrive; when they tell him about the prophet he’s certain it was Tyler; they don’t know what happened to Elizabeth since she wasn’t with the prophet, Clark muses over “what became” of her or “of anyone” since “so many had vanished, uncounted and unmarked, why not Elizabeth too?” (280) – *one of the major shifts in the world is that people’s lives and deaths remain unaccounted for because lack of technology*

### **The Prophet (anti-climactic conclusion to the villain narrative)**

**Chapters 48-50:** Kirsten and August rescue Sayid; learn the symphony had been warned of the Prophet’s plans to attack them and they changed routes, heading toward Severn City;

- Kirsten thinks about someday writing her own play, producing new material/art in the world: “Survival might be insufficient … but on the other hand, so was Shakespeare” – they needed something that reflected the differences of their own world post-collapse, of all that “had been lost” (288); recalls the two people she’d killed (295-96)
- They encounter the Prophet, and Kirsten realizes he has read Station Eleven; they both quote text to each other; the young boy with the group (tormented by the violence he’d witnessed and participated in, 292) shoots the Prophet in the head, before the others are killed by August; the boy shoots himself and Kirsten feels sorrow for who the Prophet had once been – “perhaps he’d had the misfortune of remembering everything” (300-304)

**Chapter 51 & 52:** Kirsten, August and Sayid arrive at the airport, reunited with Charlie and Jeremy; Clark takes Kirsten to the control tower, where she sees in the distance a town with electric lighting (311); meanwhile, the symphony is finally arriving and thousands of miles away Jeevan is happy baking bread with his two children and his wife; his son named Frank after his brother; he “rarely thinks of his old life anymore” (312) yet there are “Always these memories, barely submerged” (313).

### Station Eleven

**Chapter 53:** On the day of his death, Arthur thinking about his life, sad about his failed marriages and his distance from his son

- He gives a copy of *Station Eleven* to Kirsten and one to Tyler “because he didn’t want possessions” (322); parallel to *Lear*, no longer wants the burden of things or “the sheer volume of regret” (327)
- On stage, when he has his heart attack, mispeaks the line “The wren goes to’t,” remembering when he was a boy of seven on Delano Island, when he’d “found a wounded bird on the beach” and its “heart had stopped in the palm of his hand, a fluttering that faltered and went still” – as he collapses he looks up into lights with fake snow falling and he thinks “it was the most beautiful thing he’d ever seen” (329)

**Chapter 54:** His death elides into Miranda’s death, “delirious on an empty beach on the coast of Malaysia with seabirds rising and plummeting through the air and a line of ships fading out on the horizon, this was the image she kept thinking of, drifting away from and then toward it and then slipping somehow through the frame” (330)

- Miranda slips into Station Eleven, its images blended with her real life, a piece of dialogue between two characters the last thing she recalls: “What was it like for you, at the end? … It was exactly like waking up from a dream” (330)

**Chapter 55:** The Symphony stays at the airport for five weeks before going south into unknown territory, to find the town with electricity; Kirsten leaves Clark one copy of *Station Eleven* for the museum, so “at least one book will be safe” as they go off into unknown territory (331)

- Clark recognizes a scene from his own life in the dinner party scene from the comic book and wonders what happened to her (332); he thinks about the possibilities of the world reborn – “If there are again towns with streetlights, if there are symphonies and newspapers, then what else might this awakening world contain?” (332)
- He knows he won’t live to see it, but he imagines ships sailing across the ocean, “steered by sailors armed with maps and knowledge of the stars, driven by need or perhaps simply curiosity” (332-333) – linking to Miranda’s death and her image/vision of “a line of ships fading out on the horizon” (330), Clark “likes the thought of ships moving over the water, toward another world just out of sight” (333)