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VCE English $\frac{3}{4}$
Station Eleven
Full Notes

Section A: Outline



Outline of Themes

➤ (ST) Struggle (pg XX)

- ⓐ (ST1) Struggle to maintain one's place in the world
 - Struggle to adapt
 - Struggle to find one's place
 - Struggle to not be consumed by one's place
 - Struggle to adjust to a new world
 - Struggle to maintain over one's path
 - Financial struggle
 - Struggle to adjust to the new normal
- ⓐ (ST2) Struggle to handle chaos
- ⓐ (ST3) Struggle to communicate or be present
- ⓐ (ST4) Struggle to fight off danger or ensure one's own security
- ⓐ (ST5) Struggles with health
 - And neglect
 - And denial that one has ailments
- ⓐ (ST6) Sometimes there are hints that struggle/death is ahead
 - Humanity's struggle in the years following the pandemic is foreshadowed
 - Kirsten's paperweight constantly reminds her of the struggles ahead
- ⓐ (ST7) Mental and emotional struggle
 - Struggle with guilt or trauma
 - Struggle with regret
 - Struggle to keep doing what one needs to do

➤ (SU) Survival (pg XX)

- ⓐ (SU1) Sometimes one succumbs and can't keep going on
 - Snow represents looming disaster and the inevitability of death or entropy
 - But snow also sometimes represents perseverance
 - It is never certain whether one will survive
 - One must make difficult decisions
- ⓐ (SU2) In the world of Station Eleven, danger is always imminent
 - The speed and lethality of the flu in the old world
 - The dangers of other people, and of the unknown, in the new world
 - ⓐ Nature can embody the feeling of danger sometimes
 - On Station Eleven
- ⓐ (SU3) A lot is needed to survive
 - Conviction and good instincts are necessary for survival
 - Prioritising self-interest is necessary to survive (even if it's survival in a career or financial sense)
 - Efficiency is necessary for survival
 - Even if one survives, they may feel guilty
 - Compromising one's values (and self-denial that one has compromised them)
 - Stability and safety
 - Luck

➤ (AB) Art and Beauty (pg XX)

- ⓐ (AB1) The passion that one has for artistic pursuits can be fulfilling
 - Artistic pursuits provides happiness
 - They can help one pass the time
 - They are exhilarating
 - They are comforting and illuminating
 - They are validating
 - Producing art can shed light on one's truths and experiences in a way that cannot be achieved by just consuming others' creations
- ⓐ (AB2) Art itself is useful and important
 - It endures
 - Art can aid in remembering the past
 - Art can provide joy and excitement
 - ⓐ It can move people
 - ⓐ It can help people forget the worries of the present
- ⓐ (AB3) Art is beautiful
 - It is beautiful because it is personal
 - People can doubt it is beautiful
 - It is beautiful because it is comforting (even if one does not realise it)
- ⓐ (AB4) The world is beautiful
 - Natural beauty of the world
 - ⓐ Because the world seems exotic and mysterious
 - ⓐ Because there aren't as many people
 - Man-made things as well
 - Appreciating the world can give us moments of peace
 - Even when the Symphony is escaping danger
 - Things in the world are beautiful even if they serve no purpose
 - But the world can feel suffocating even if it is beautiful

➤ (MEM) Memory (pg XX)

- ⓐ (MEM1) Some things have seemingly fallen out of the memory of civilization
 - But in a sense, they haven't
- ⓐ (MEM2) Memory fades
 - Sometimes memories are repressed
 - But some memories have such a profound impact that they never go away
 - People can have differing memories about the same thing
- ⓐ (MEM3) Memories are often wistful, melancholic, haunting
 - But they are still meaningful
- ⓐ (MEM4) People want to remember things that are good
 - Products and culture from the old world
 - People want to remember themselves in their old lives
 - People want to be remembered themselves
 - Fond memories from our past leave an impact on us
 - Some people also understand the importance of remembering the bad
 - Sometimes people are compelled by memories that are little more than vague feelings
 - People want to remember things to which they have some attachment
 - People want to remember the new world as it is
 - It is young people especially who want to remember

- ▶ **(MEM5)** People are preoccupied by memories of the old world
 - ▶ Because things they loved are gone
 - ▶ Dr Eleven comics symbolise how people long for better worlds from their past
 - ▶ Because people think such memories can help humanity
- ▶ **(MEM6)** Children have no memory or knowledge of the old world
 - ▶ This can sometimes bring the wonder and joy of discovery
 - ▶ Withholding knowledge is sometimes deliberate
 - ▶ Giving children knowledge, and also withholding it, is a contentious issue for some people
- ▶ **(B) Belonging (pg XX)**
 - ▶ **(B1)** The tendency to stay in one place
 - ▶ Because it's safer
 - ▶ Because there's no other option
 - ▶ Because one can rest
 - ▶ But staying with the same people can feel ironically lonely
 - ▶ Life felt transitory before the pandemic
 - ▶ **(B2)** Belonging can be fulfilling and comforting
 - ▶ But not if there are fundamental issues in relationships
 - ▶ Comforting due to sheer familiarity
 - ▶ In times of need, we think of others to provide us with comfort
 - ▶ The relief of being reunited with those who we care for
 - ▶ Conversely, it is lonely and frightening to not be with others
 - ▶ Some people are more independent and/or value solace
 - ▶ **(B3)** The importance of being with the right people
 - ▶ Not everyone gets along all the time
 - ▶ Being with compassionate people
 - ▶ Being with leaders you can trust
 - ▶ The conductor is decisive
 - ▶ **(B4)** The drawbacks of being with the wrong people
 - ▶ **(B5)** Communities are never completely harmonious
 - ▶ Because being close together causes friction
 - ▶ Even though they can seem harmonious on the outside
 - ▶ Communities can also be toxic
 - ▶ **(B6)** Some people struggle to maintain positive relationships
 - ▶ **(B7)** Belonging has a different meaning in the new world
 - ▶ The old world had shifted to online
 - ▶ In the new world, relationships are stronger due to tight-knit communities
 - ▶ **(B8)** Belonging takes time to establish
 - ▶ And may require changes to oneself
 - ▶ And lasts longer when there is common ground between people
 - ▶ Common ground may include grief or loss

➤ (P) Purpose (pg XX)

- ⓐ (P1) Purpose can come from a variety of reasons
 - From needing to rise to the occasion
 - From seemingly trivial pursuits
 - From wanting to find remnants of one's past
 - From subconscious thoughts that we deny
 - From not wanting to suffer anymore
 - From wanting to create something
 - From simply needing a purpose
 - Purpose can take the form of frustration
- ⓐ (P2) Our level of motivation is dictated by multiple factors
 - By the actions or emotions of the people around us
 - And by the tasks or responsibilities set by these people
- ⓐ (P3) It often takes time for us to find our purpose
 - Some people don't have purpose
 - Some people question their purpose
- ⓐ (P4) Pursuing one's purpose takes risk and sacrifice
- ⓐ (P5) Some believe in a higher purpose
 - There is danger in such purposes

➤ (MEA) Meaning (pg XX)

- ⓐ (MEA1) People assign meaning to things they deem precious
 - Miranda values independence
 - Remembering the dead
- ⓐ (MEA2) The Symphony, and other people in the post-pandemic world, are constantly on the hunt for meaning
- ⓐ (MEA3) Some people search for higher meaning
 - Tyler creates a framework of meaning to make sense of all that has happened; he views the pandemic as punishment
 - There is a fine line between higher meaning and harmful delusion
- ⓐ (MEA4) Failing to live an authentic life
 - The parallels between King Lear (who dismissed those who lived him in favour of those who flattered him) and Arthur
 - ⓐ Arthur's ego
 - ⓐ Arthur's lack of authenticity
 - ⓐ Similarly to King Lear, Arthur regrets these aspects of his life right before his death, but he cannot make aneds

➤ (H) Hope (pg XX)

- ⓐ (H1) It can be difficult for the people in Station Eleven to maintain hope
 - Because disaster or death is looming
 - Because hope fades over time
 - Because everything they once loved is gone
 - Dr Eleven is the ideal of a person who remains consistently optimistic
 - Because it's easier to accept that there's no more reason to maintain hope

- ▶ **(H2) Some people still remain hopeful that civilisation can recover**
 - ▶ Mandel herself, shown through her word choice - 'interrupted' (i.e. civilisation will prevail in the end)
 - ▶ Mandel, through her numerous shifts in perspective in Chapter 52, makes it feel like the new world is alive
 - ▶ The post-pandemic people are like the people in the Undersea, hoping their world can come back
 - ▶ Even if it is just manifests in the form of dreams
 - ▶ Or in the form of awe
 - ▶ Even if it's from just a morsel of inspiration
 - ▶ There are examples of humanity's inability to lie idle (i.e. they will naturally persevere)
 - ▶ There are examples of humanity's natural tendency to believe everything will be OK
 - ▶ Humans channel their hope into the possibility that technology can re-emerge
 - ▶ Electrical light, especially, seems a symbol of hope
 - ▶ People maintain hope because the world has gradually improved in some ways
- ▶ **(H3) People learn to adapt to the new world**
- ▶ **(H4) Maybe it is better if civilisation does not persevere, or at least not in the same form that it existed in before**

- ▶ **(L) Loss (pg XX)**
 - ▶ **(L1) Loss has a profound impact**
 - ▶ It is shocking
 - ▶ Kirsten's loss of innocence is a pivotal moment in her life
 - ▶ Loss is numbing
 - ▶ Even if it is forewarned
 - ▶ **(L2) Loss of the former world**
 - ▶ Loss of the names of people in it
 - ▶ **(L3) Loss can bring people together**

- ▶ **(V) Maintaining (or failing to maintain) one's values (pg XX)**
 - ▶ **(V1) The value of respecting the dead**
 - ▶ **(V2) The value of doing what is morally right**
 - ▶ **(V3) The value of being authentic to oneself**

Space for Personal Notes

Section B: (ST) Struggle



(ST1) Struggle to maintain one's place in the world

- "Arthur wasn't as famous as he had been, but his pictures still sold, especially now that he was involved in a gladiatorial divorce with a model/actress who'd cheated on him with a director."
- "Arthur was primarily a film actor, and who in Hollywood longs to be older?"
- "Did entertainment lawyers normally work until ten p.m. Pacific? The producer supposed their corner of the legal profession must be unusually competitive."
- "The lawyer ... had been a workaholic all his life and had trained himself to subsist on twenty-minute power naps,"
- "They'd been working together for a long time by then, over ten years, and together they'd survived two corporate reorganizations and a relocation from Toronto to New York."
- "This life was never ours," she whispers to the dog, who has been following her from room to room, and Luli wags her tail and stares at Miranda with wet brown eyes. "We were only ever borrowing it."
- "He remembered having enjoyed it back then, the challenge of living in the world of the play before the play had properly started, but now the lights were too close, too hot, and sweat poured down his back." (Arthur)

➤ **Struggle to adapt**

- 🇨🇦 "These people you coach, do they ever actually change? I mean in any kind of lasting, notable way?" (Dahlia to Clark)

➤ **Struggle to find one's place in the world**

- 🇨🇦 "a semester marked by failure and frustrating attempts at photography." (Miranda)
- 🇨🇦 "by her midthirties she feels competent and at last more or less at ease in the world, studying foreign languages in first-class lounges and traveling in comfortable seats across oceans"
- 🇨🇦 "I love this city and also hate it and I miss you." (Arthur in Dear V)

➤ **Struggle to not be consumed by one's place in the world**

- 🇨🇦 "I think that mystery brunette has a right to her privacy, don't you?" Arthur's smile is calibrated to defuse the remark and render it charming."

- 🎧 "he's tired of talking about herself and asks about him, and he tries to explain the surrealism of this world he's stepped into where people know him when he doesn't know them,"
- 🎧 "It was easier when it was just theater and TV work. The occasional profile or feature or interview or whatever. But you get successful in movies, and Christ, it's like this whole other thing."
- 🎧 "He didn't really even know his only brother. How many friendships had he neglected until they'd faded out?" (Arthur)
- 🎧 By the corporate world
 - "My poor corporate baby," he said. "Lost in the machine." Pablo talks about metaphorical machines a lot, also the Man."

➤ Struggle to adjust to a new world

- 🎧 "I stand waiting for lights to change on corners in Toronto and that whole place, the island I mean, it seems like a different planet." (Arthur in Dear V)
- 🎧 "I have such disorientation, V., I can't tell you. At unexpected moments find myself thinking, how did I get here? How have I landed in this life? Because it seems like an improbable outcome, when I look back at the sequence of events."

➤ Struggle to maintain control over one's path

- 🎧 "Arthur lives in a permanent state of disorientation like a low-grade fever, the question hanging over everything being How did I get from there to here?"

➤ Financial struggle

- 🎧 "he was poised to become the Next Big Thing, but then a show got canceled and he sold nothing else in the year that followed, absolutely nothing, so Miranda signed with a temp agency and found herself a short time later at her desk in a high tower outside Leon Prevant's office door."
- 🎧 "Pablo, it's just a job. We need the money."

➤ Struggle to adjust to the new normal

- 🎧 "What did it mean to seem like yourself, in the course of such unspeakable days? How was anyone supposed to seem?"

Space for Personal Notes

(ST2) Struggle to handle chaos

- *See Survival - Danger is always imminent*
- "Of course," Clark said. "That's one thing I like about birthdays, they stay in one place. Same spot on the calendar, year in, year out."
- "The road was all travelers walking with shell-shocked expressions, children wearing blankets over their coats, people getting killed for the contents of their backpacks, hungry dogs."
- "The news continued on the overhead screens, but he couldn't bear to watch. The stacked body bags, the riots, the closed hospitals, the dead-eyed refugees walking on interstates"
- "They'd been working together for a long time by then, over ten years, and together they'd survived two corporate reorganizations and a relocation from Toronto to New York."
- "That first year everyone was a little crazy." (Clark)

(ST3) Struggle to communicate or be present

- "Are you still with Pablo?" he asks, when they're out on the street. He's hailing a cab. Certain things have been decided without either of them exactly talking about it."
- "he kept getting trapped behind iPhone zombies, people half his age who wandered in a dream with their eyes fixed on their screens"
- "You fall asleep for short periods and then for longer periods and then forever." (Clark)

(ST4) Struggle to fight off danger or ensure one's own security

- "Civilization in Year Twenty was an archipelago of small towns. These towns had fought off ferals, buried their neighbors, lived and died and suffered together in the blood-drenched years just after the collapse"
- "Your friend rejected the prophet's advances," she whispered, close to Kirsten's ear. "They had to leave town. Stop asking questions and tell your people to leave here as quickly as possible."
- "He suggested that we consider leaving Alexandra, as a guarantee of future good relations between the Symphony and the town."
- "I had to leave," the girl said. "I'm so sorry, I'm sorry, I'll do anything" / "I didn't have any choice," she said. "I was going to be his next wife." (Eleanor)

(ST5) Struggles with health

- "The seventh guitar was a nervous person, because he was nearly blind."
- "He'd been able to see reasonably well with an extremely thick pair of glasses, but he'd lost these six years ago and since then he'd lived in a confusing landscape"
- "She was about Kirsten's age or a little younger, and it seemed to Kirsten that she wasn't well. She was very pale and too thin, black circles under her eyes."
- "An illness that passed through the Symphony in spring, a high fever and vomiting, half the Symphony got sick but everyone recovered except the third guitar—a grave by the roadside outside of New Phoenix"
- "There'd been an epidemic, the man had told him. Thirty people had died incandescent with fever, including the mayor."
- **And neglect**
 - ❏ "A serious child, unkempt in a way that suggested neglect, her hair tangled, her T-shirt collar torn."
- **And denial that one has ailments**
 - ❏ "It wasn't her imagination, she definitely had a sore throat.
"It's psychosomatic," she said aloud. "You're afraid of getting sick, so you feel sick. It's nothing."

(ST6) Sometimes there are hints that struggle/death is ahead

- "Someone made a comment about the snow coming down hard, and it was, they could see it through the glass doors at the far end of the lobby."
 - ❏ These minor characters all die soon:
 - "Of all of them there 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."
 - "He looked up and met the eyes of an owl, watching him from a snow-laden branch." (Jeevan)
- **Humanity's struggle in the years following the pandemic is foreshadowed**
 - ❏ "Clark shook the globe and held it up to the light. When he looked through it, the planes were warped and caught in whirling snow."

➤ **Kirsten's paperweight constantly reminds her of this**

- 📄 "Kirsten, teary-eyed and breathless, a few days shy of her eighth birthday, gazed at the object and thought it was the most beautiful, the most wonderful, the strangest thing anyone had ever given her. It was a lump of glass with a storm cloud trapped inside."

(ST7) Mental and emotional struggle

➤ **Struggle with guilt or trauma**

- 📄 "It hollows you out," the boy said, "thinking about it. Remembering what we did, it just guts me. I don't know how else to put it."
- 📄 "it is possible to survive this but not unaltered, and you will carry these men with you through all the nights of your life."
- 📄 "after that first unremembered year, her brother had been plagued by nightmares." (Kirsten)

➤ **Struggle with regret**

- 📄 "This was actually the main difference between twenty-one and fifty-one, he decided, the sheer volume of regret."

➤ **Struggle to keep doing what one needs to do**

- 📄 "Now Hua worked long hours at Toronto General."

Space for Personal Notes

Section C: (SU) Survival



(SU1) Sometimes one succumbs and can't keep going on

- ▶ "The thought of walking here in the snowstorm, desperate to get away from the sickness in town, and at the end of that walk there's this sign, and when you read it you understand that it isn't going to be possible to get away from this."
- ▶ "Everything ends. I am not afraid." (Kirsten)
- ▶ **Snow represents looming disaster and the inevitability of death or entropy**
 - ❏ "The snow was falling fast around them"
 - ❏ "For god's sake," Jeevan heard one of them say, "can no one stop the goddamn snow?"
 - ❏ "The storm had passed, and snow lay deep on the wings of airplanes."
 - ❏ "Others, sick or very tired, would have stepped off the road and lay down on their backs to watch the snow falling down upon them, to look up at the cold sky." (Kirsten)
 - ❏ After Arthur's death:
 - ▶ "The snow was a glimmering pile behind the set now, a little mountain."
 - ❏ Right before the pandemic happens:
 - ▶ "Snow was falling on Yonge Street."
 - ▶ "Well, sure, the snow gets in the way of the shot,"
- ▶ **But snow also sometimes represents perseverance**
 - ❏ "Outside the world was ending and snow continued to fall."
- ▶ **It is never certain whether one will survive**
 - ❏ "Are you fine, Hua my old friend, or will you be fine?"
- ▶ **One must make difficult decisions**
 - ❏ "I think there's just survival out there, Jeevan. I think you should go out there and try to survive."
"I can't just leave you." "I'll leave first," Frank said.
"I've given this some thought."

- “Don’t think of that unspeakable decision, to keep the jet sealed rather than expose a packed airport to a fatal contagion. Don’t think about what enforcing that decision may have required. Don’t think about those last few hours on board.” (Clark about Air Gradia 452)
- “The flu, the snow, the gridlock, the decision: wait in the car, boxed in now by all the cars that have piled up behind, idling to keep the heat on until you run out of gas? Or abandon your car to walk, perhaps with young children, but where exactly? Farther on, toward the airport? Back home?”

(SU2) In the world of Station Eleven, danger is always imminent

➤ The speed and lethality of the flu in the old world

- “I don’t know, Jeevan. That’s the short answer. I don’t know what’s going on. It’s a flu, that much is obvious, but I’ve never seen anything like it. It is so fast. It just seems to spread so quickly—”
- “It’s the fastest incubation period I’ve ever seen.”
- “You get exposed to this, you’re sick within hours.”
- People try to maintain control of their situation, even if they can’t
- “Officials requested that everyone please try their best to stay calm.”
- “People knocked sometimes, and when they did Jeevan and Frank fell silent. They were afraid of everyone who wasn’t them.”

➤ The dangers of other people, and of the unknown, in the new world

- “three knives in her belt.”
- “The reassuring weight of knives on her belt.”
- These towns had fought off ferals, buried their neighbors, lived and died and suffered together in the blood-drenched years”
- “Something in his tone made Kirsten want to run, a suggestion of a trapdoor waiting under every word.” (Tyler)
- “Most towns had sentries with whistles at the obvious points of entry, the idea being that it was nice to have a little warning if marauders were coming through”
- “a town that had been known to shoot outsiders on sight”

- 🎧 "snipers in the Sears Tower"
- 🎧 "Being alive is a risk." (The conductor)
- 🎧 "She'd settled into a wary stillness, the watchfulness of orphans." (Eleanor)
- 🎧 "It was as though Dieter and Sayid had been plucked from the face of the earth."
- 🎧 "every shadow could be hiding someone with a gun who wanted his backpack. He felt his senses sharpening, an absolute focus taking hold." (Jeevan)
- 🎧 "He wasn't specifically sad anymore, but he was aware of death at all times." (Clark at 70 years old)
- 🎧 "She'd killed four people, then, and he'd killed two, and now they'd just dropped in with their baby, and by the absurd standards of the new world—there was a part of him that never stopped exclaiming at the absurd standards of the new world—this was all perfectly normal." (Clark about Charlie and Jeremy)

➤ **Nature can embody the feeling of danger sometimes**

- 🎧 "The forest was a dark mass on either side, alive and filled with indecipherable rustlings"
- 🎧 "The claustrophobia of the forest."

➤ **On Station Eleven:**

- 🎧 "on Station Eleven's surface it is always sunset or twilight or night."

(SU3) A lot is needed to survive

➤ **Conviction and good instincts are necessary for survival**

- 🎧 "There was a moment of doubt on the way to the cash registers, straining against the weight of the cart—was he overreacting?—but he was committed, he'd decided, too late to turn back." "I'm a survivalist," Jeevan explained."
- 🎧 "Some places, you pass through once and never return, because you can tell something's very wrong." (Kirsten to Diallo)
- 🎧 "I leave neither of them willingly." The conductor's eyes were shining. "But I won't risk the rest of you by staying here a day longer." (After Dieter and Sayid disappear)

➤ **Prioritising self-interest is necessary to survive (even if it's survival in a career or financial sense)**

🗣️ "Speaking for myself, I didn't even think about charity until I was already successful."

➤ **Efficiency is necessary for survival**

🗣️ "The cabs were stripped of everything that added excess weight"

➤ **Even if one survives, they may feel guilty**

🗣️ "If he called a cab he'd be home in a half hour, but he liked being outside in the clear air, away from other people. The snow was falling faster now. He felt extravagantly, guiltily alive. The unfairness of it, his heart pumping faultlessly while somewhere Arthur lay cold and still."

➤ **Compromising one's values (and self-denial that one has compromised them)**

🗣️ ""No one ever thinks they're awful, even people who really actually are. It's some sort of survival mechanism." (Miranda to Elizabeth at Arthur's home)

➤ **Stability and safety**

🗣️ "the expedition was a disaster for them. By the time they reached Ohio they'd lost an actor to some illness on the road, something that looked like malaria, and they got shot at three times in various places. One of the flautists got hit and almost died of a gunshot wound. They—we—the Symphony never left their usual territory again."

🗣️ "Of course," Clark said. "That's one thing I like about birthdays, they stay in one place. Same spot on the calendar, year in, year out." (To Arthur)

➤ **Luck**

🗣️ "His girlfriend, his parents, and his two sisters had died in the first week. He couldn't explain why he wasn't dead too." (Ben)

🗣️ "You must be immune," Jeevan said. "Yes." Ben stared fixedly into the flames. "I'm the luckiest man alive, aren't I?"

🗣️ "Clark woke at four a.m. the next morning and took a taxi to the airport. These were the hours of near misses, the hours of miracles, visible as such only in hindsight over the following days. The flu was already seeping through the city, but he hailed a taxi in which the driver wasn't ill and no one contagious had touched any surface before him,"

🗣️ "But why did they die instead of us?" the boy asked, with an air of patiently reciting a well-rehearsed argument." (Tyler)

🗣️ "the people in there, in the Air Gradia jet, they were just in the wrong place at the wrong time." (Clark)

Section D: (AB) Art and Beauty



(AB1) The passion that one has for artistic pursuits can be fulfilling

➤ Artistic pursuits provides happiness

- 🎧 "It's the thing I love most in the world too," Kirsten said, after some time had passed. "What is?" "Acting," she said, and that was when a young woman with a tear-streaked face emerged from the crowd, arms outstretched."
- 🎧 "It makes me happy. It's peaceful, spending hours working on it. It doesn't really matter to me if anyone else sees it." (Miranda)

➤ They help one pass the time

- 🎧 "she can often spend entire afternoons sketching" (Miranda)
- 🎧 "She works on her never-ending project for hours at a time." (Miranda)

➤ They are exhilarating

- 🎧 "She never feels more alive than at these moments. When onstage she fears nothing."
- 🎧 "Kirsten stood in the state of suspension that always came over her at the end of performances, a sense of having flown very high and landed incompletely, her soul pulling upward out of her chest."

➤ They are comforting and illuminating

- 🎧 "I could throw away almost everything, she thinks, and begin all over again. Station Eleven will be my constant."
- 🎧 "But what made it bearable [was] the music and the Shakespeare,"

➤ They are validating

- 🎧 "They acted because they loved acting, but also, let's be honest here, to be noticed. All they wanted was to be seen."

➤ Producing art can shed light on one's truths and experiences in a way that cannot be achieved by just consuming others' creations

- 🎧 "She'd been thinking lately about writing her own play, seeing if she could convince Gil to stage a performance with the Symphony actors. She wanted to write something modern, something that addressed this age in which they'd somehow landed. " (The clarinet)

- “But look, she’d told him, the difference was that they’d seen electricity, they’d seen everything, they’d watched a civilization collapse, and Shakespeare hadn’t.” (The clarinet)
- “I don’t think I can do better,” she’d told him. “I’m not saying that. I’m just saying the repertoire’s inadequate.” (The clarinet)

(AB2) Art itself is useful and important

➤ It endures

- “And now in a twilight once more lit by candles, the age of electricity having come and gone, Titania turns to face her fairy king.”
- “when he had empty space in the newspaper he filled it with text from his collection. The first issue had an Emily Dickinson poem, the second an excerpt from a biography of Abraham Lincoln.”

➤ Art can aid in remembering the past

- “People want what was best about the world,” Dieter said.

➤ Art can provide joy and excitement

- “In Traverse City the crowd following them down the street upon their arrival had swelled to a hundred,”
- “Ten or fifteen kids followed us through town when we arrived and watched the rehearsal.”
- “They crowded all around us.”

➤ It can move people

- “A man in the front row had tears in his eyes.”

➤ It can help people forget the worries of the present

- “Let us all thank the Traveling Symphony for this beautiful respite from our daily cares.”
- “What the Symphony was doing, 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 tasks of survival.”

(AB3) Art is beautiful

- "there is still such beauty a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream in a parking lot"
- **It is beautiful because it is personal**
 - 🎧 "She started to explain her project to him again but the words stopped in her throat. "You don't have to understand it," she said. "It's mine."
 - 🎧 "It's the work itself that's important to me." Miranda is aware of how pretentious this sounds, but is it still pretentious if it's true?"
- **People can doubt it is beautiful**
 - 🎧 "You're always half on Station Eleven," Pablo said during a fight a week or so ago, "and I don't even understand your project. What are you actually going for here?" (Pablo)
- **Because it is comforting - even if one does not realise it**
 - 🎧 "Elizabeth, who is crying a little, bites her lip and together they look at the sketches and paintings pinned to every wall. The dog stands at attention and stares at the window, where just now a moth brushed up against the glass, and for a moment everything is still. Station Eleven is all around them."

(AB4) The world is beautiful

- **Natural beauty of the world**
 - 🎧 "there is still such beauty ... Twilight in the altered world ... Lake Michigan shining a half mile away."
 - 🎧 "she likes to stand by the glass wall and look out at the lake. When she stands here she feels suspended, floating over the city." (Miranda)
 - 🎧 "walking and walking until their thoughts burned out one by one like dying stars and they fell into a fugue state wherein all that mattered or had ever existed were these trees, this road, the counterpoint rhythms of human footsteps and horses' hooves"
 - 🎧 "it was a relief to walk out into the sunlight, the breeze, and the chatter of crickets."
- **Because the world seems exotic and mysterious**
 - 🎧 "Miranda spends some time on the Asian travel itinerary. Japan, then Singapore, then South Korea. She likes looking up maps and imagining traveling to these places herself."

➤ **Because there aren't as many people**

📄 "The beauty of this world where almost everyone was gone."

➤ **Man-made things as well**

📄 "Why, in his life of frequent travel, had he never recognized the beauty of flight? The improbability of it."

📄 "Clark had always been fond of beautiful objects, and in his present state of mind, all objects were beautiful."

➤ **Appreciating the world can give us moments of peace**

📄 "While he was waiting for the day to end he sat at Frank's desk, looking out at the lake. Trying to hold on to the tranquility of these last few moments, here in this apartment where he'd been for so long."

📄 Miranda's death: "Miranda opened her eyes in time to see the sunrise. A wash of violent color, pink and streaks of brilliant orange, the container ships on the horizon suspended between the blaze of the sky and the water aflame, the seascape bleeding into confused visions of Station Eleven, its extravagant sunsets and its indigo sea. The lights of the fleet fading into morning, the ocean burning into sky."

➤ **Even when the Symphony is escaping danger**

📄 "The only sounds were the clapping of horseshoes on cracked pavement, the creaking of the caravans, the footsteps of the Symphony as they walked, small rustlings from the night forest. A fragrance of pine and wildflowers and grass in the air, the stars so bright that the caravans cast lurching shadows on the road."

➤ **Things in the world are beautiful even if they serve no purpose**

📄 "The paperweight was a smooth lump of glass with storm clouds in it, about the size of a plum. It was of no practical use whatsoever, nothing but dead weight in the bag but she found it beautiful."

➤ **But the world can feel suffocating even if it is beautiful**

📄 "It was," he tells them, "it is," and then finds a way to change the subject because it's difficult to explain this next part. Yes, it was beautiful. It was the most beautiful place I have ever seen. It was gorgeous and claustrophobic. I loved it and I always wanted to escape." (Arthur)

Section E: (MEM) Memory

(MEM1) Some things have seemingly fallen out of the memory of civilisation

- "all the other components that no one under the age of twenty had ever seen in operation"
- "DIALLO: The mystery audience member who knew CPR. He's in the New York Times obituary."
- RAYMONDE: He was kind to me. Do you know his name?
- DIALLO: I'm not sure anyone does."
- "None of the older Symphony members knew much about science, which was frankly maddening given how much time these people had had to look things up on the Internet before the world ended."
- **But in a sense, they haven't**
 - 🗣️ "Here's the thing, kids, the entire world is a place where artifacts from the old world are preserved."

(MEM2) Memory Fades

- "There were countless things about the pre-collapse world that Kirsten couldn't remember—her street address, her mother's face, the TV shows that August never stopped talking about—"
- "cocaine and smooth girls with perfect skin in houses and hotel rooms, a number of years that come back to him later in strobelike flashes" (Arthur)
- **Sometimes memories are repressed**
 - 🗣️ "I think I've mentioned before, I have some problems with memory. I can't remember very much from before the collapse."
 - 🗣️ "The road," he'd always said, when she shook him awake and asked what he'd been dreaming of. He'd said, "I hope you never remember it."
 - 🗣️ "DIALLO: It's not uncommon among people who were children when it happened."

➤ **But some memories have such a profound impact that they never go away**

📖 "Still, the fact is that a woman walked into a lake that wasn't large and no one found the body for two weeks despite intensive searching, and the episode sparks up against Arthur's childhood memories retrospectively and leaves a frisson of darkness that wasn't there at the time." (Arthur)

➤ **People can have differing memories about the same thing**

📖 Paperweight:

- "Her gaze falls on the gift that Clark brought this evening, a paperweight of clouded glass. When she holds it, it's a pleasing weight in the palm of her hand. It's like looking into a storm."
- "Kirsten, teary-eyed and breathless, a few days shy of her eighth birthday, gazed at the object and thought it was the most beautiful, the most wonderful, the strangest thing anyone had ever given her. It was a lump of glass with a storm cloud trapped inside."

(MEM3) Memories are often wistful, melancholic, haunting

- "Do you remember when we were young and gorgeous? Clark wanted to ask. Do you remember when everything seemed limitless?" (Clark talking to Arthur)
- "the ones who remembered the lost world thinking longingly of air-conditioning even after all these years."
- "doesn't it seem like the people who struggle the most with it are the people who remember the old world clearly?" (Kirsten)
- "What I mean to say is, the more you remember, the more you've lost." (Kirsten)
- "Those previous versions of herself were so distant now that remembering them was almost like remembering other people, acquaintances, young women whom she'd known a long time ago, and she felt such compassion for them." (Miranda)
- "I dream of chocolate-chip cookies. Don't torture me." (Clark)
- "She looked up at the dark windows, the curve of wings. Impossible to imagine that machines so enormous had ever taken to the air." (Kirsten)
- "The boy turns to his parents and for an instant in the twilight he looks like his namesake, like Jeevan's brother. He comes to them, the moment already passed, and Jeevan lifts him into his arms to kiss the silk of his hair. Always these memories, barely submerged." (Jeevan)

➤ But they are still meaningful

- 🇨🇩 "he had an idea—too sentimental to speak aloud and he knew none of his divorced friends would ever own up to it—that something must linger, a half-life of marriage, some sense memory of love even if obviously not the thing itself. He thought these people must mean something to one another, even if they didn't like one another anymore."

(MEM4) People want to remember things that are good

➤ Products and culture from the old world

- 🇨🇩 "They'd performed more modern plays sometimes in the first few years, but what was startling, what no one would have anticipated, was that audiences seemed to prefer Shakespeare to their other theatrical offerings."
- 🇨🇩 "It was possible to look up at the McDonald's sign and fleetingly imagine, by keeping her gaze directed upward so that there was only the sign and the sky, that this was still the former world and she could stop in for a burger." (Kirsten)
- 🇨🇩 "While he talked she allowed herself to imagine that she remembered it." (Kirsten as August talks about Star Trek)
- 🇨🇩 "Clark was thinking about how lucky he'd been. Not just the mere fact of survival, which was of course remarkable in and of itself, but to have seen one world end and another begin. And not just to have seen the remembered splendors of the former world, the space shuttles and the electrical grid and the amplified guitars, the computers that could be held in the palm of a hand and the high-speed trains between cities"
- 🇨🇩 "Did you ever use the phrase 'in the mix?'" "I don't think so. No. I wouldn't have." "I hated that one especially." Garrett was studying the report. "Oh, I didn't mind it so much. It made me think of baking. My mother would buy these cookie mixes sometimes when I was a kid." (Clark)
- 🇨🇩 "There seemed to be a limitless number of objects in the world that had no practical use but that people wanted to preserve: cell phones with their delicate buttons, iPads, Tyler's Nintendo console, a selection of laptops. There were a number of impractical shoes, stilettos mostly, beautiful and strange. There were three car engines in a row, cleaned and polished, a motorcycle composed mostly of gleaming chrome. Traders brought things for Clark sometimes, objects of no real value that they knew he would like: magazines and newspapers, a stamp collection, coins."

➤ People want to remember themselves in their old lives

- 🇨🇩 "The last time I ate an ice-cream cone in a park in the sunlight. The last time I danced in a club. The last time I saw a moving bus. The last time I boarded an airplane that hadn't been repurposed as living quarters, an airplane that actually took off. The last time I ate an orange." (Clark)

“He remembered being here with Clark at three or four or sometimes five in the morning, during what seemed at the time like adulthood and seemed in retrospect like a dream. The dream lasted just a moment, but the moment was bright: both of them taking acting classes, Arthur working as a waiter while Clark burned through a small inheritance. Clark had been magnificent, actually, in retrospect.” (Arthur)

➤ People want to be remembered themselves

“First we only want to be seen, but once we’re seen, that’s not enough anymore. After that, we want to be remembered.” (Frank quoting a philanthropist)

➤ Fond memories from our past leave an impact on us

“In Arthur’s memories of the lake, his mother is reading a book under the trees on the shore while his little brother splashes around with water wings in the shallows and bugs land fleetingly on the water’s surface.”

“He’d been spending more time in the past lately. He liked to close his eyes and let his memories overtake him.” (Clark)

“A life, remembered, is a series of photographs and disconnected short films: the school play when he was nine, his father beaming in the front row; clubbing with Arthur in Toronto, under whirling lights; a lecture hall at NYU.” (Clark)

➤ People also understand the importance of remembering the bad

“Kirsten also had two black knives tattooed on the back of her right wrist, but these were less troubling to Dieter, being much smaller and inked to mark specific events.”

➤ Sometimes people are compelled by memories that are little more than vague feelings

“Nothing in Kirsten’s collection suggested the Arthur Leander she remembered, but what did she actually remember? Arthur was a fleeting impression of kindness and gray hair, a man who’d once pressed two comic books into her hands”

➤ People want to remember things to which they have some attachment

“She liked to look through the clippings sometimes, a steadying habit. These images from the shadow world, the time before the Georgia Flu, indistinct in the moonlight but she’d memorized the details of every one: Arthur Leander and his second wife, Elizabeth, on a restaurant patio with Tyler, their infant son; Arthur with his third wife, Lydia, a few months later; Arthur with Tyler at LAX.”

➤ **People want to remember the new world as it is**

- 🇨🇩 “And more than that, well, publishing the newspaper has been an invigorating project, but then I thought, Why stop with a newspaper? Why not create an oral history of this time we live in, and an oral history of the collapse?”

➤ **It is young people especially who want to remember:**

- 🇨🇩 “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 former world are gone.”

(MEM5) People are preoccupied by memories of the old world

- “We long only for the world we were born into.” (Kirsten quoting Dr Eleven comics)

➤ **Because things they loved are gone**

- 🇨🇩 “August had stared at the screen with a lost expression.”
- 🇨🇩 “[Dieter] longed for the sound of an electric guitar.”
- 🇨🇩 “Dieter remembered everything.”
- 🇨🇩 “August always gazed longingly at televisions. ”
- 🇨🇩 “What was he like, your brother?” “He was sad,” she said. “He remembered everything.” (Diallo)
- 🇨🇩 **Dr Eleven comics symbolise how people long for better worlds from their past:**

➤ “A line of text across the bottom of the frame: *I stood looking over my damaged home and tried to forget the sweetness of life on Earth.*”

➤ “There are people who, after fifteen years of perpetual twilight, long only to go home, ”

➤ **Because they think such memories can help humanity**

- 🇨🇩 “The more we know about the former world, the better we’ll understand what happened when it fell.” (Diallo)
- 🇨🇩 “I believe in understanding history.” (Diallo)





(MEM6) Children have no memory or knowledge of the old world

➤ This can sometimes bring the wonder and joy of discovery

- 🇨🇩 "Alexandra had been enraptured, the screen a magical thing with no memories attached."
- 🇨🇩 "It just came out of a vent?" Alexandra asked."
- 🇨🇩 "Rocket ships ..." "The ships we used to go to space." "It's incredible," she said, shaking her head." (Emmanuelle)
- 🇨🇩 "Emmanuelle, the first child born in the airport, came in often to look at the phones."

➤ Withholding knowledge is sometimes deliberate

- 🇨🇩 "Other towns, discussion of the past is discouraged."
- 🇨🇩 "I don't know," their friend was saying now. "Does it still make sense to teach kids about the way things were?" (Michael, Jeevan's friend)

➤ Giving children knowledge, and also withholding it, is a contentious issue for some people

- 🇨🇩 "Kirsten found herself wondering, as she always did when she saw children, if it was better or worse to have never known any world except the one after the Georgia Flu."
- 🇨🇩 "his eleven-year-old daughter had come home crying that afternoon, because the teacher had let slip that life expectancies were much longer before the Georgia Flu, that once sixty hadn't been considered particularly old, and she was scared, she didn't understand, it wasn't fair, she wanted to live as long as people used to." (Michael, Jeevan's friend)

Space for Personal Notes

Section F: (B) Belonging



(B1) The tendency to stay in one place

➤ Because it's safer

- 🇨🇩 "Well," Jeevan said, "maybe we should stay in one place and let her find us." He remembered once having read advice to this effect in a brochure about what to do if you're lost in the woods."
- 🇨🇩 "...settled wherever they could, clustered close together for safety in truck stops and former restaurants and old motels."
- 🇨🇩 "The towns... survived against unspeakable odds and then only by holding together into the calm,"
- 🇨🇩 "She'd been surprised by the emotion that had overtaken her on the return, when the scouting party had struggled past the roadblock with their carts of supplies, their napkins and their clinking bottles of Tabasco sauce, up the airport road and then the airport had come into view between the trees. Home, she'd thought, and she'd felt such relief." (Dolores)

➤ Because there's no other option

- 🇨🇩 "By then most people had settled somewhere, because the gasoline had all gone stale by Year Three and you can't keep walking forever. "
- 🇨🇩 "the truth was that the Symphony was their only home."
- 🇨🇩 "The world's become so local, hasn't it?"

➤ Because one can rest

- 🇨🇩 "These are the times when I want to stop," August whispered. "You ever think about stopping?" "You mean not traveling anymore?" "You ever think about it? There's got to be a steadier life than this."

➤ But staying with the same people can feel ironically lonely

- 🇨🇩 "But sometimes the small circle of people and firelight seemed only to accentuate the emptiness of the continent, the loneliness of it, a candle flickering in vast darkness." (Clark)

➤ Life felt transitory before the pandemic

- 🇨🇩 "Not quite a room, Jeevan thought now, looking around the stage. It was too transitory, all those doorways and dark spaces between wings, the missing ceiling. It was more like a terminal, he thought, a train station or an airport, everyone passing quickly through."



(B2) Belonging can be fulfilling and comforting

- "But what made it bearable were the friendships, of course, the camaraderie," (Kirsten)
- "What he loved was the conversation, the moments of lightness or even just silence, the not being by himself." (Clark)
- "Even after all these years there were moments when he was overcome by his good fortune at having found this place, this tranquility, this woman, at having lived to see a time worth living in. He squeezed Daria's hand." (Jeevan)
- "She loved them so desperately." (Kirsten about the Symphony)
- **But not if there are fundamental issues in relationships**
 - ❏ "she looked at him and thought, I prefer you with a crown, but of course she would never say this aloud." (Miranda about Arthur)
- **Because there's no other option**
 - ❏ "By then most people had settled somewhere, because the gasoline had all gone stale by Year Three and you can't keep walking forever."
 - ❏ "the truth was that the Symphony was their only home."
 - ❏ "The world's become so local, hasn't it?"
- **Comforting due to sheer familiarity**
 - ❏ "what surprises her is that the first place that comes to mind is Neptune Logistics. She misses the order of the place, the utter manageability of her job there," (Miranda)
- **In times of need, we think of others to provide us with comfort**
 - ❏ "Was Robert awake at this moment? Was he trying to leave New York?" (Clark)
 - ❏ "The scar on Robert's arm just above the elbow, from when he'd broken his arm very badly in the seventh grade, the bouquet of tiger lilies that Robert had sent to Clark's office just last week. Robert in the mornings: he liked to read a novel while he ate breakfast." (Clark)
- **The relief of being reunited with those who we care for**
 - ❏ "Sorry about the crossbows," the man said pleasantly, "necessary precaution, I'm afraid—" But he stopped then, confused, because the woman's bow had clattered to the pavement and she was running to the new arrivals, she was laughing and shouting their names and trying to embrace all of them at once." (Charlie)

➤ **Conversely, it is lonely and frightening to not be with others**

- 🇨🇪 "Kirsten slept fitfully, aware each time she woke 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."
- 🇨🇪 "as the days passed, the meaning of the emptiness began to sink in. The Georgia Flu was so efficient that there was almost no one left." (Jeevan)
- 🇨🇪 "As Jeevan walked on alone he 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."
- 🇨🇪 "She was thinking about the way she'd always taken for granted that the world had certain people in it, either central to her days or unseen and infrequently thought of. How without any one of these people the world is a subtly but unmistakably altered place, the dial turned just one or two degrees."

➤ **Some people are more independent and/or value solace**

- 🇨🇪 "I don't mind going alone," she said. (Kirsten)
- 🇨🇪 "The pleasure of being alone for once, away from the clamor of the Symphony."
- 🇨🇪 "Once in the room he sits on the bed, relieved to be alone and unlooked-at" (Arthur)

(B3) The importance of being with the right people

➤ **Not everyone gets along all the time**

- 🇨🇪 "They weren't friends exactly, at least not in the sense of seeing one another outside of the office, but she thought of Leon as her friendliest ally." (Miranda and Leon)
- 🇨🇪 "If she could only speak to August. We traveled so far and your friendship meant everything. It was very difficult, but there were moments of beauty."

➤ **Being with compassionate people**

- 🇨🇪 "Alexandra was fifteen, the Symphony's youngest actor. They'd found her on the road as a baby."

➤ **Being with leaders you can trust**

- 🇨🇪 "our fearless leader" (The conductor)

The conductor is decisive

- "It's a risk," Dieter said. "Being alive is a risk." She folded the map. "I'm missing two Symphony members, and I still think they went south. If there's a population in Severn City, perhaps they'll know the best route back to our usual territory. We continue south along the lakeshore."

(B4) The drawbacks of being with the wrong people

- "I can't believe you left me at the theater," he said. "You just left me at the theater performing CPR on a dead actor."
- "They'd been a couple for two years, until four months earlier, when she'd slept with a traveling peddler more or less out of boredom," (Kirsten and Sayid)
- Intertextuality: "Sartre: Hell is other people" (Sayid)
- "she likes being at Neptune Logistics more than she likes being at home. Home is a small dark apartment with an ever-growing population of dust bunnies" (Miranda)
- "Why would a three-year wedding anniversary celebration involve anyone other than the two people who are actually married to one another? Who are all these extraneous people at my table?" (Miranda about Arthur et al)
- "I wish you'd try a little harder," Arthur has said to her once or twice, but she knows she'll never belong here no matter how hard she tries. These are not her people. She is marooned on a strange planet. The best she can do is pretend to be unflappable when she isn't."
- "There's nothing to be gained by watching the shipwreck." (Miranda on Arthur and Elizabeth)
- "Clark had thought he was meeting his oldest friend for dinner, but Arthur wasn't having dinner with a friend, Clark realized, so much as having dinner with an audience. He felt sick with disgust."
- "you said you'd always be my friend but you're not, actually, are you? I've only realized that recently. You don't have any interest in my life." (Arthur in Dear V)
- "everyone knows when you've got a terrible marriage, it's like having bad breath" (Dahlia to Clark)
- "He'd snapped at Miranda, mostly out of guilt, and they'd both said unpleasant things in the car." (Arthur)

(B5) Communities are never completely harmonious

➤ Because being close together causes friction

- 🇨🇩 "The problem with the Traveling Symphony was the same problem suffered by every group of people everywhere since before the collapse, undoubtedly since well before the beginning of recorded history."
- 🇨🇩 "this collection of petty jealousies, neuroses, undiagnosed PTSD cases, and simmering resentments lived together, traveled together, rehearsed together, performed together 365 days of the year, permanent company, permanent tour."

➤ Even though they can seem harmonious on the outside

- 🇨🇩 Metaphor - 'the Wendy's' being an ugly chaotic group which looks nice and beautiful from the front: "The Wendy's was a low square building with the look of having been slapped together from a kit in an architecturally careless era, but it had a beautiful front door."

➤ Communities can also be toxic

- 🇨🇩 "When the fallen slink away without permission," he said, "we hold funerals for them and erect markers in the graveyard, because to us they are dead."
- 🇨🇩 "It's a doomsday cult." (The conductor)
- 🇨🇩 "This is one of those places where you don't notice everyone's dropping dead around you till you've already drunk the poisoned wine."
- 🇨🇩 "Sometimes a cult takes over, and those towns are the most dangerous." (Kirsten to Diallo)
 - "You can't argue with them, because they live by an entirely different logic."

(B6) Some people struggle to maintain positive relationships

- "Poor kid," the producer said. "Did Arthur have anyone he was close with? This provoked an uncomfortable silence."
- "His lawyer," the bartender said finally. "Christ, what a thing. You die, and they call your lawyer."
- "As a boy he'd been quiet and a little shy, obsessed with classical music; he'd had no interest in sports and had never been especially adept at getting along with people" (August)
- "Are you still with Pablo?" he asks, when they're out on the street. He's hailing a cab. Certain things have been decided without either of them exactly talking about it."

(B7) Belonging has a different meaning in the new world

➤ The old world had shifted to online

- 🇨🇦 "No more 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."
- 🇨🇦 "Garrett made his fingers into a gun and aimed it at the tree line. "Ka-pow!" he whispered. And then, louder, "I used to write 'T-H-X' when I wanted to say 'thank you.' " "I did that too. Because, what, it would've taken too much time and effort to punch in an extra three letters and just say thanks? I can't fathom it."

➤ In the new world, relationships are stronger due to tight-knit communities

- 🇨🇦 "His dear friend Annette had died of an unknown illness in Year Seventeen, and he wore her Lufthansa neck scarf in memory."

(B8) Belonging takes time to establish

➤ "by her midthirties she feels competent and at last more or less at ease in the world, studying foreign languages in first-class lounges and traveling in comfortable seats across oceans"

➤ And may require changes to oneself

- 🇨🇦 "I'm glad to get out of that field," Viola said. She'd had a different name when she was younger, but had taken on the name of her instrument after the collapse."

➤ And lasts longer when there is common ground between people

- 🇨🇦 "But why me? We haven't spoken since the last divorce hearing." "You know where I'm from," he said, and she understood what he meant by this. Once we lived on an island in the ocean. Once we took the ferry to go to high school, and at night the sky was brilliant in the absence of all these city lights."

➤ Common ground may include grief or loss

- 🇨🇦 "in all probability everyone here with him in the airport had lost someone too. All at once he felt an aching tenderness for his fellow refugees, these hundred or so strangers here in the airport."

Section G: (P) Purpose



(P1) Purpose can come from a variety of reasons

➤ From needing to rise to the occasion

- 🇨🇩 "He reached Allan Gardens Park, more or less the halfway point, and this was where he found himself blindsided by an unexpected joy. Arthur died, he told himself, you couldn't save him, there's nothing to be happy about. But there was, he was exhilarated, because he'd wondered all his life what his profession should be, and now he was certain, absolutely certain that he wanted to be a paramedic. At moments when other people could only stare, he wanted to be the one to step forward." (Jeevan)

➤ From seemingly trivial pursuits

- 🇨🇩 "When they broke into houses now, August searched for issues of TV Guide."

➤ From wanting to find remnants of one's past

- 🇨🇩 "When Kirsten was in the houses, she searched for celebrity-gossip magazines, because once, when she was sixteen years old, she'd flipped through a magazine on a dust-blackened side table and found her past:"
- 🇨🇩 "but she did remember Arthur Leander, and after that first sighting she went through every magazine she could find in search of him."
- 🇨🇩 "Nothing else in the rest of the magazines, but this find was remarkable, this was enough."

➤ From subconscious thoughts that we deny

- 🇨🇩 "He wasn't expecting fame, although he secretly longed for it in his twenties just like everyone else, and now that he has it he's not sure what to do with it."

➤ From not wanting to suffer anymore

- 🇨🇩 "Captain Lonagan: You should try to understand them. (The next panel is a close-up of his face.) All they want is to see sunlight again. Can you blame them?" (Dr Eleven comics)

➤ From wanting to create something

- 🇨🇩 "And more than that, well, publishing the newspaper has been an invigorating project, but then I thought, Why stop with a newspaper? Why not create an oral history of this time we live in, and an oral history of the collapse?"

➤ From simply needing a purpose

- 🇨🇩 "Frank never stopped working. The philanthropist's memoir was almost complete. "He's probably dead," Jeevan said. "Probably," Frank agreed. "Why are you still writing about him?" "I signed a contract." "But everyone else who signed the contract ..." "I know," Frank said."
- 🇨🇩 "Frank was hiding in his project, Jeevan had realized, but he couldn't begrudge Frank the strategy. If Jeevan had had a project, he'd have hid in it too."

➤ Purpose can take the form of frustration

- 🇨🇩 "by this point he's twenty-eight, time speeding up in a way that disconcerts him, the parties going too late and getting too sloppy,"
- 🇨🇩 "She could call in sick to work, pack up her things, and be gone in a few hours. It is sometimes necessary to break everything." (Miranda about Pablo)
- 🇨🇩 " They are always waiting, the people of the Undersea. They spend all their lives waiting for their lives to begin."
- 🇨🇩 "I remember when I thought I'd rather die than stay on the island" (Arthur)
- 🇨🇩 "They acted because they loved acting, but also, let's be honest here, to be noticed. All they wanted was to be seen."

(P2) Our level of motivation is dictated by multiple factors

➤ By the actions or emotions of the people around us

- 🇨🇩 "she'd abandoned him there, she'd left him onstage performing CPR on a dead actor and gone home, and now she wanted him to buy milk. Now that he'd stopped walking, Jeevan was cold. His toes were numb. All the magic of the storm had left him, and the happiness he'd felt a moment earlier was fading.

➤ And by the tasks or responsibilities set by these people

- 🇨🇩 "There's rarely enough work to keep her occupied for more than an hour or two at a time, which means she can often spend entire afternoons sketching" (Miranda)

Space for Personal Notes

(P3) It often takes time for us to find our purpose

- "Up until tonight he hadn't been certain. He'd been searching for a profession for so long now. He'd been a bartender, a paparazzo, an entertainment journalist, then a paparazzo again and then once again a bartender, and that was just the past dozen years."
- "He'd been searching for a profession for so long now. He'd been a bartender, a paparazzo, an entertainment journalist, then a paparazzo again and then once again a bartender, and that was just the past dozen years."
- "Jeevan tried unsuccessfully to establish himself as a wedding photographer"
- "He thought he wanted to study economics, but when he arrives in Toronto he discovers that he wants to do almost anything else. He worked hard in high school, but he's an indifferent student at the university." (Arthur)
- "The point of coming to this city wasn't school, he decides. School was just his method of escape. The point was the city of Toronto itself." (Arthur)
- **Some people don't have purpose**
 - 🗣️ "adulthood's full of ghosts" (Dahlia)
 - 🗣️ "I'm talking about these people who've ended up in one life instead of another and they are just so disappointed. Do you know what I mean? They've done what's expected of them." (Dahlia)
 - 🗣️ "High-functioning sleepwalkers, essentially." (Dahlia)
- **Some people question their purpose**
 - 🗣️ "interviewing actors was better than stalking them, but what kind of a journalism career was this? What kind of life?"
 - 🗣️ "Some people, his brother Frank for example, were currently covering the war in Afghanistan for Reuters. Jeevan didn't specifically want to be Frank, but he couldn't help but feel that he'd made a number of wrong turns in comparison."

(P4) Pursuing one's purpose takes risk and sacrifice

- "the conductor had gathered a few of her friends from their military orchestra, left the air base where they'd been living, and set out into the unknown landscape."
- "Can you call the pursuit of happiness dishonorable?" (Arthur to Miranda)

- "At other times it seemed a difficult and dangerous way to survive and hardly worth it, especially at times when they had to camp between towns, when they were turned away at gunpoint from hostile places, when they were traveling in snow or rain through dangerous territory, actors and musicians carrying guns and crossbows, the horses exhaling great clouds of steam, times when they were cold and afraid and their feet were wet."
- "His family was in L.A. He wasn't willing to accept the possibility of not seeing them again. "Anyone wants to come with me," he said, "it's a free flight to Los Angeles." (Pilot)

(P5) Some believe in a higher purpose

- *See Meaning*
- "I submit that we were saved"—his voice was rising—"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."
- "I am a messenger," he said, when introduced to people. No one knew his real name. He said he was guided by visions and signs. He said he had prophetic dreams."
- "All of this," the prophet said, serene, "all of our activities, Sayid, you must understand this, all of your suffering, it's all part of a greater plan."
- There is danger in such purposes
 - 🇨 "last year's pestilence was but further preview and there will be more cullings, far more cullings to come"
 - 🇨 "He had a dream where God told him he was to repopulate the earth."
 - 🇨 "If you are the light, if your enemies are 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." (Kirsten about the prophet)
 - 🇨 "The fifth bride," the archer whispered. "It was my duty. She was chosen."

Space for Personal Notes

Section H: (MEA) Meaning

(MEA1) People assign meaning to things they deem precious

- *See Art and Beauty, See Belonging*
- "In the inside cover of the first issue, someone has written "Copy 2 of 10" in pencil. In the second issue, the notation is "Copy 3 of 10." Is it possible that only ten copies of each of these books exist in the world?"
- **Miranda values independence**
 - 🗣️ "In the next version of her life, she decides, she will be entirely independent."
- **Remembering the dead**
 - 🗣️ "The graveyard between Runways Six and Seven, each grave marked by an airplane tray table driven into the ground, details of the deceased carved into the tray's hard plastic."

(MEA2) The Symphony, and other people in the post-pandemic world, are constantly on the hunt for meaning

- "but the lead caravan carries an additional line of text: Because survival is insufficient."

(MEA3) Some people search for higher meaning

- "No, it's just, if everything happens for a reason," Elizabeth persists, "as personally, I believe that it does, then when I hear a story of how two people came together, it's like a piece of the plan is being revealed."
- "I submit," the prophet said, "that everything that has ever happened on this earth has happened for a reason."
- "A new world requires new gods," they said. They said, "We are guided by visions." (Band of religious wanderers)
- **Tyler creates a framework of meaning to make sense of all that has happened; he views the pandemic as punishment**

- 📌 "There was the outbreak of 1918, my people, the timing obvious, divine punishment for the waste and slaughter of the First World War."
- 📌 "And then came a virus like an avenging angel, unsurvivable"
- 📌 "I submit, my beloved people, that such a perfect agent of death could only be divine. For we have read of such a cleansing of the earth, have we not?"
- 📌 "The flu," the prophet said, "the great cleansing that we suffered twenty years ago, that flu was our flood."
- **There is a fine line between higher meaning and harmful delusion**
- 📌 "and then they tell you that they were saved from the Georgia Flu and survived the collapse because they're superior people and free from sin, and what can you say to that?"

(MEA4) Failing to live an authentic life

- **The parallels between King Lear (who dismissed those who lived him in favour of those who flattered him) and Arthur**
- 📌 **Arthur's ego**
 - "He likes the idea of returning to Canada in triumph, which he's aware is egotistical but what can you do."
- 📌 **Arthur's lack of authenticity**
 - "I don't know," he said. "I never really understood the point of it, to be honest." There was relief in admitting this to someone, after all these years. "The Undersea, especially. All those people in limbo, waiting around, plotting, for what?"
- 📌 **Similarly to King Lear, Arthur regrets these aspects of his life right before his death, but he cannot make amends**
 - "He found he was a man who repented almost everything, regrets crowding in around him like moths to a light."

Space for Personal Notes

Section I: (H) Hope (and the perseverance of civilisation)

(H1) It can be difficult for the people in Station Eleven to maintain hope

➤ Because disaster or death is looming

- 🗣️ "Jeevan was crushed by a sudden certainty that this was it, that this illness Hua was describing was going to be the divide between a before and an after, a line drawn through his life."
- 🗣️ "moving quickly through this bread-and-flower-scented world, this almost-gone place"
- 🗣️ "the girl who needed Effexor slipped out through "an entrance on the other side of the airport and walked away into the trees. A group of them tried to find her, but couldn't."

➤ Because hope fades over time

- 🗣️ "the first unspeakable years when everyone was traveling, before everyone caught on that there was no place they could walk to where life continued as it had before"

➤ Because everything they once loved is gone

- 🗣️ "[Dieter] himself found it difficult to live in the present. He'd played in a punk band in college and longed for the sound of an electric guitar."

➤ Dr Eleven is the ideal of a person who remains consistently optimistic

- 🗣️ "He is a person from the future who never whines."

➤ Because it's easier to accept that there's no more reason to maintain hope

- 🗣️ "The sensation of being in a dream that will end at any moment, only she isn't sure if she's fighting to wake up or to stay asleep." (Miranda on pending relationship breakdown with Arthur)

(H2) Some people still remain hopeful that civilisation can recover

➤ Mandel herself, shown through her word choice - 'interrupted' (i.e. civilisation will prevail in the end):

- 🗣️ " a universe in which civilization hadn't been so brutally interrupted."

➤ Mandel, through her numerous shifts in perspective in Chapter 52, makes it feel like the new world is alive

- 🗣️ "Kirsten stares through the telescope at the town with electric light."

📌 "In the terminal building, Charlie and August sit by Sayid's bed in the Baggage Claim infirmary and tell him about the concert, and he smiles for the first time in a number of days."

📌 "A thousand miles to the south of the airport, Jeevan is baking bread in an outdoor oven."

📌 "Far to the north, in a place so distant that in this flightless world it might as well be another planet, the caravans of the Traveling Symphony are arriving at the Severn City Airport."

➤ **The post-pandemic people are like the people in the Undersea, hoping their world can come back**

📌 "These people living out their lives in underwater fallout shelters, clinging to the hope that the world they remembered could be restored." (Miranda)

➤ **Even if it is just manifests in the form of dreams**

📌 "In the dream I was so happy," he whispered. "I looked up and there it was, the plane had finally come. There was still a civilization somewhere. I fell to my knees. I started weeping and laughing, and then I woke up."

📌 "A sea of electric lights. It gives me chills to think of it." (Kirsten)

📌 "A parallel universe where space travel was invented," August said. This was a game they'd been playing for a decade."

📌 Or in the form of awe

➤ "He stood by the case and found himself moved by every object he saw there, by the human enterprise each object had required."

➤ **Even if it's from just a morsel of inspiration**

📌 "The mention of Arthur aside, he realized, this was an extraordinary development. If there were newspapers now, what else might be possible?" (Clark)

📌 "It's the most extraordinary thing. I don't know how they did it on such a large scale." (Clark)

📌 "In the distance, pinpricks of light arranged into a grid. There, plainly visible on the side of a hill some miles distant: a town, or a village, whose streets were lit up with electricity."

📌 "He has no expectation of seeing an airplane rise again in his lifetime, but is it possible that somewhere there are ships setting out? If there are again towns with streetlights, if there are symphonies and newspapers, then what else might this awakening world contain?" (Clark)

➤ **There are examples of humanity's inability to lie idle (i.e. they will naturally persevere)**

🇬🇪 "It's the waiting," Clark had heard a woman say, "I can't take the waiting, I have to do something, even if it's just walking to the nearest town to see what's going on...."

🇬🇪 "Kirsten was looking at the improvised printing press, massive in the shadows at the back of the room." (Diallo)

➤ There are examples of humanity's natural tendency to believe everything will be OK

🇬🇪 "all these moments when everyone must have thought the world was ending, but all those moments, they were all temporary. It always passes." (Elizabeth)

🇬🇪 "But Elizabeth was unshakable in her convictions. "Everything happens for a reason," she said. "This will pass. Everything passes."

➤ Humans channel their hope into the possibility that technology can re-emerge

🇬🇪 "In Traverse City, the town they'd recently left, an inventor had rigged an electrical system in an attic. It was modest in scope, a stationary bicycle that when pedaled vigorously could power a laptop, but the inventor had grander aspirations: the point wasn't actually the electrical system, the point was that he was looking for the Internet. A few of the younger Symphony members had felt a little thrill when he'd said this, remembered the stories they'd been told about WiFi and the impossible-to-imagine Cloud, wondered if the Internet might still be out there somehow, invisible pinpricks of light suspended in the air around them."

🇬🇪 Electrical light, especially, seems a symbol of hope

➤ "[Kirsten] was fascinated by electricity. She harbored visions of a lamp with a pink shade on a side table, a nightlight shaped like a puffy half-moon, a chandelier in a dining room, a brilliant stage."

➤ "She was beside herself with impatience to see the far southern town with the electrical grid." (Kirsten)

➤ People maintain hope because the world has gradually improved in some ways

🇬🇪 "It's much less dangerous than it used to be." (Kirsten to Diallo)

🇬🇪 "Alexandra knew how to shoot, but the world was softening. There was a fair chance, Kirsten thought, that Alexandra would live out her life without killing anyone."

🇬🇪 "She was a younger fifteen-year-old than Kirsten had ever been."

🇬🇪 "Help you?" he asked. His tone wasn't unfriendly, and this was the pleasure of being alive in Year Twenty, this calmer age."

(H3) People learn to adapt to the new world

- "DIALLO: It's my own private shorthand. I made it up."
- "I've got something I thought you might like," he said, "for that museum of yours," and he handed over three sheets of rough paper. "What is this?" "It's a newspaper," the trader said. Three consecutive issues, a few months out of date. It was published irregularly out of New Petoskey, the trader said. There were announcements of births and deaths and weddings. A column for bartering: a local man was seeking new shoes in exchange for milk and eggs; someone else had a pair of reading glasses that she was hoping to trade for a pair of jeans, size 6."
- "A thousand miles to the south of the airport, Jeevan is baking bread in an outdoor oven. He rarely thinks of his old life anymore, although he has dreams sometimes about a stage, an actor fallen in the shimmering snow, and other dreams where he's pushing shopping carts through blizzards. His small son kneels by his feet, playing with a puppy. This boy born into the new world, his mother resting indoors with the baby."

(H4) Maybe it is better if civilisation does not persevere, or at least not in the same form that it existed in before

- "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 earth; what was one more?"
- "Okay, say you go into the break room," she said, "and a couple people you like are there, say someone's telling a funny story, you laugh a little, you feel included, everyone's so funny, you go back to your desk with a sort of, I don't know, I guess afterglow would be the word? You go back to your desk with an afterglow, but then by four or five o'clock the day's just turned into yet another day, and you go on like that, looking forward to five o'clock and then the weekend and then your two or three annual weeks of paid vacation time, day in day out, and that's what happens to your life."

Space for Personal Notes

Section J: (L) Loss

(L1) Loss has a profound impact

➤ It is shocking

- ❶ "Miranda," he said, "I'm afraid I'm calling with some rather bad news. Perhaps you should sit down."
- ❷ "It's hard to take in." He cleared his throat again. "It's a shock, it's ... I've known him since I was eighteen. It seems impossible to me too."
- ❸ Even though Jeevan did not know Arthur well, he is still haunted by his death
 - "He shook his head to dispel the image of Arthur's blank stare"

➤ Kirsten's loss of innocence is a pivotal moment in her life

- ❶ "He's going to die, isn't he?" She was breathing in little sobs." (Kirsten)

➤ Loss is numbing

- ❶ "So this is how it ends, she thought, when the call was over, and she was soothed by the banality of it. You get a phone call in a foreign country, and just like that the man with whom you once thought you'd grow old has departed from this earth."

➤ Even if it is forewarned

- ❶ "I can't just leave you."
"I'll leave first," Frank said. "I've given this some thought."
"What do you mean?" he asked, but he knew what Frank meant."

(L2) Loss of the former world

- "No more diving into pools of chlorinated water lit green from below. No more ball games played out under floodlights. No more porch lights with moths fluttering on summer nights. No more trains running under the surface of cities on the dazzling power of the electric third rail. No more cities. No more films, except rarely, except with a generator drowning out half the dialogue, and only then for the first little while until the fuel for the generators ran out, because automobile gas goes stale after two or three years."
- Of the names of people in it

- 🗣️ "DIALLO: The mystery audience member who knew CPR. He's in the New York Times obituary. RAYMONDE: He was kind to me. Do you know his name? DIALLO: I'm not sure anyone does."

➤ **But not all names are lost**

- 🗣️ "Frank," Jeevan says to his son, "go see if your mother's hungry." He lifts the pan with the bread from the oven, which in a previous incarnation was an oil drum. His son runs indoors, the puppy close at his heels."
- 🗣️ "The boy turns to his parents and for an instant in the twilight he looks like his namesake, like Jeevan's brother. He comes to them, the moment already passed, and Jeevan lifts him into his arms to kiss the silk of his hair. Always these memories, barely submerged."

L3 - Loss can bring people together

- "in all probability everyone here with him in the airport had lost someone too. All at once he felt an aching tenderness for his fellow refugees, these hundred or so strangers here in the airport."

Space for Personal Notes

Section K: (V) Maintaining (or failing to maintain) one's values

(V1) The value of respecting the dead

- "He likes to say a prayer over the dead." (August)
- "When he murmured over the dead, he seemed to be talking only to them. "I hope it was peaceful at the end," she'd heard him say. Or, "You have a really nice house. I'm sorry for taking your boots." Or, "Wherever you are, I hope your family's there too." (August)

(V2) The value of doing what is morally right

- ""There's the death of the body, and there's the death of the soul."
- "What to do with Eleanor? They knew they risked accusations of kidnapping and they had long adhered to a strict policy of non-intervention in the politics of the towns through which they passed, but no one could imagine delivering a child bride back to the prophet. Had a grave marker with her name on it already been driven into the earth? Would a grave be dug if she returned? Nothing for it but to take the girl and press on into the unknown south, farther down the eastern shore of Lake Michigan than they'd ever been."
- "What choice do I have? You know how this ... this time we live in, you know how it forces a person to do things." (Boy who works for the prophet)
- "It hollows you out," the boy said, "thinking about it. Remembering what we did, it just guts me. I don't know how else to put it."

(V3) The value of being authentic to oneself

- "Dinner party last night (very awkward and ill-advised in retrospect, long story, seemed like good idea at time) and I looked up at one point and he was giving me this look, like I'd disappointed him personally, and I realized he's right to be disappointed. I disappoint myself too." (Arthur in Dear V)
- "I'm a man of my word," Jeevan said. At that point in his directionless life he wasn't sure if this was true or not, but it was nice to think that it might be."

Space for Personal Notes

Section L: Miscellaneous Quotes



Miscellaneous Quotes

- "She's always found the house beautiful, but it's even more so now that she knows she's leaving."
- "In all my life, there will never be another house like this."
- "Her gaze falls on the gift that Clark brought this evening, a paperweight of clouded glass. When she holds it, it's a pleasing weight in the palm of her hand. It's like looking into a storm." (Miranda)
- "There had always been a massive delicate infrastructure of people, all of them working unnoticed around us, and when people stop going to work, the entire operation grinds to a halt." (Jeevan)
- "None of them went into the entertainment industry because they wanted to do good in the world." (Frank quoting philanthropist)
- "The era of light pollution had come to an end. The increasing brilliance meant the grid was failing, darkness pooling over the earth. I was here for the end of electricity. The thought sent shivers up Clark's spine."
- "The shock of realizing that this was probably actually the ending, after a lifetime of near misses, after all this time. She walked forward through the radiant world, the sunlight and shadow and green."
- "Whoever they are," the prophet said, "they'll arrive too late. You think you kneel before a man, but you kneel before the sunrise. We are the light moving over the surface of the waters, over the darkness of the undersea."
- "The Undersea?" she whispered, but the prophet was no longer listening to her. A look of perfect serenity had come over his face and he was looking at her, no, through her, a smile on his lips.
- "'We long only to go home,' " Kirsten said. This was from the first issue, Station Eleven. A face-off between Dr. Eleven and an adversary from the Undersea. " 'We dream of sunlight, we dream of walking on earth.'"
- "Dr. Eleven: What was it like for you, at the end? Captain Lonagan: It was exactly like waking up from a dream."
- "A young woman stopped abruptly at the top of the subway stairs and he almost crashed into her, glared as he brushed past—she didn't notice, enraptured by her screen"

Characters

Arthur

- ▶ "Arthur Leander was running out of time"
- ▶ "Jeevan was thinking of the time he'd interviewed Arthur in Los Angeles, years ago now, during his brief career as an entertainment journalist."
- ▶ " In the morning, after a number of increasingly irritable telephone exchanges, Arthur's closest friend began calling Arthur's ex-wives."
- ▶ "I knew him," she'd told August, breathless. "He gave me the comics I showed you!"
- ▶ "He doesn't feel that he really has any idea how to act, so he starts spending all his money on acting classes, where he meets his best friend, Clark."
- ▶ "He likes the idea of returning to Canada in triumph, which he's aware is egotistical but what can you do."
- ▶ "Arthur lives in a permanent state of disorientation like a low-grade fever, the question hanging over everything being How did I get from there to here?"
- ▶ "he's tired of talking about herself and asks about him, and he tries to explain the surrealism of this world he's stepped into where people know him when he doesn't know them,"
- ▶ "He wasn't expecting fame, although he secretly longed for it in his twenties just like everyone else, and now that he has it he's not sure what to do with it."
- ▶ "You remember when we used to listen to music in your room in the cliff house? I was thinking about what a nice time that was, even though I was about to leave for Toronto so it was also sad. I remember staring at the leaves outside your window and trying to imagine I was staring at skyscrapers and what would that be like, would I miss the leaves, etc., and then I get to Toronto and there's a tree right outside my window so all I see are leaves."
- ▶ "I didn't tell you this but last month in acting class the instructor told me he felt I was a little flat, which is his way of saying he thinks I'm a terrible actor. He said something vague and almost kind about how difficult it can be to improve. I said, watch me, and he looked surprised and sort of blinked at me and then mostly ignored me for the next three weeks. But then last night I was doing my monologue and when I looked up he was watching me, really watching me, and he said goodnight to me for the first time in weeks and I felt like there was hope."
- ▶ "Seven years before the end of the world, Jeevan Chaudhary booked an interview with Arthur Leander."
- ▶ "I've always been interested in people," Arthur said. "What drives them, what moves them,"

- "You should've seen him," Clark said. "I should've seen ... I'm sorry, what?" "Back at the beginning, when he was just starting out. You've seen his talent, his talent was obvious, but if you'd seen him before any of the rest of it, all the tabloids and movies and divorces, the fame, all those warping things."
- "He would buy an apartment within walking distance of Elizabeth's house and he'd see Tyler every day."
- "I don't know," he said. "I never really understood the point of it, to be honest." There was relief in admitting this to someone, after all these years. "The Undersea, especially. All those people in limbo, waiting around, plotting, for what?"
- "I have a present for you." He felt a little guilty as he handed her the Dr. Eleven comics, because after all Miranda had intended them for him, but he didn't want the comics because he didn't want possessions. He didn't want anything except his son."
- "He found he was a man who repented almost everything, regrets crowding in around him like moths to a light."

Kirsten

- "She collected fragments, stored in a ziplock bag in her backpack. A picture of Arthur alone on a beach, looking pensive and out of shape. A picture of him with his first wife, Miranda, and then later with his second wife, Elizabeth, a malnourished-looking blonde who didn't smile for cameras. Then with their son, who was about the same age as Kirsten, and later still with a third wife who looked very similar to the second one."
- "The girl looked like a china doll, she thought. She looked like someone who'd been well-cared-for and coddled all her life."
- "He'd heard stories from other Symphony members about her knife-throwing abilities. She was supposedly able to hit the center of targets blindfolded."
- "When Kirsten thought of the ways the world had changed in her lifetime, her thoughts always eventually circled back to Alexandra. Alexandra knew how to shoot, but the world was softening. There was a fair chance, Kirsten thought, that Alexandra would live out her life without killing anyone. She was a younger fifteen-year-old than Kirsten had ever been."
- "What was the Symphony without Dieter and the clarinet and Sayid? Kirsten had thought of Dieter as a sort of older brother, she realized, perhaps a cousin, a fixture in her life and in the life of the Symphony. It seemed in some abstract way impossible that the Symphony continued without him."
- "DIALLO: I'll ask you more about Arthur Leander and the comics in a moment. Perhaps I could ask you a few questions about your life first?
RAYMONDE: You know me, François. We've been coming through this town for years."

DIALLO: Yes, yes, of course, but some of our readers might not know you, or the Symphony. I've been giving copies of the paper to traders, asking them to distribute it along their routes. You've been acting since you were very young, isn't that right?

RAYMONDE: Very young. I was in a commercial when I was three. Do you remember commercials?

DIALLO: I do, regrettably. What were you selling?

RAYMONDE: I don't actually remember the thing itself, the commercial, but I remember my brother telling me it was for arrowroot biscuits.

DIALLO: I remember those too. What came after the biscuits?

RAYMONDE: I actually don't remember, but my brother told me a little. He said I did more commercials, and when I was six or seven I had a recurring role on a televised ... on a televised show.

DIALLO: Do you remember which show?

RAYMONDE: I wish I did. I can't remember anything about it. I think I've mentioned before, I have some problems with memory. I can't remember very much from before the collapse.

DIALLO: It's not uncommon among people who were children when it happened. And the Symphony? You've been with them for a while, haven't you?

RAYMONDE: Since I was fourteen.

DIALLO: Where did they find you?

RAYMONDE: Ohio. The town where we ended up after we left Toronto, my brother and I, and then after he died I was there by myself.

DIALLO: I didn't know they went that far south.

RAYMONDE: They only went down there once. It was a failed experiment. They wanted to expand the territory, so that spring they followed the Maumee River down past the ruins of Toledo, and then the Auglaize River into Ohio, and they eventually walked into the town where I lived.

DIALLO: Why do you say it was a failed experiment?

RAYMONDE: I'll always be grateful that they passed through my town, but the expedition was a disaster for them. By the time they reached Ohio they'd lost an actor to some illness on the road, something that looked like malaria, and they got shot at three times in various places. One of the flautists got hit and almost died of a gunshot wound. They—we—the Symphony never left their usual territory again.

DIALLO: It seems like a very dangerous life.

RAYMONDE: No, that was years ago. It's much less dangerous than it used to be."

Jeevan

- "Jeevan's understanding of disaster preparedness was based entirely on action movies, but on the other hand, he'd seen a lot of action movies. He started with water, filled one of the oversized shopping carts with as many cases and bottles as he could fit."
- "Jeevan had been working as a paparazzo for some years and had made a passable living at it, but he was sick to death of stalking celebrities from behind sidewalk planters and lying in wait in parked cars, so he was trying to become an entertainment journalist, which he felt was sleazy but less sleazy than his current profession. "
- "His disappointment at Arthur's disinterest in talking to him was curdling into hostility, and beneath that lurked a number of larger questions of the kind that kept him up at night: interviewing actors was better than stalking them, but what kind of a journalism career was this? What kind of life? Some people managed to do things that actually mattered. Some people, his brother Frank for example, were currently covering the war in Afghanistan for Reuters. Jeevan didn't specifically want to be Frank, but he couldn't help but feel that he'd made a number of wrong turns in comparison."

- "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. My name is Jeevan Chaudhary. I was a photographer and then I was going to be a paramedic."
- Jeevan had walked a thousand miles. In Year Three he'd wandered into a settlement called McKinley, named by the town's founders. There had been eight of them originally, a sales team from the marketing firm of McKinley Stevenson Davies, stranded on an isolated corporate retreat when the Georgia Flu swept over the continent. A few days out of the retreat they'd found an abandoned motel on a disused stretch of road far from major highways, and it had seemed as good a place to stop as any. The sales team had moved into the rooms and stayed there, at first because those early years were terrifying and no one wanted to live too far from anyone else; later out of habit. There were twenty-seven families here now, a peaceful settlement across the road from a river. In the summer of Year Ten, Jeevan had married one of the settlement's founders, a former sales assistant named Daria, and this evening she was sitting with him and a friend of theirs on the riverbank."

Miranda

- "Most of Miranda's office clothes come from a bargain outlet just off Yonge Street, and they always look okay under the dressing room lights but by the time she gets home they're all wrong, the black skirt shining with acrylic fibers, the blouse in a synthetic fabric that clings unpleasantly, everything cheap-looking and highly flammable."
- "What she can never tell Pablo, because he disdains all things corporate, is that she likes being at Neptune Logistics more than she likes being at home. Home is a small dark apartment with an ever-growing population of dust bunnies, the hallway narrowed by Pablo's canvases propped up against the walls, an easel blocking the lower half of the living room window. Her workspace at Neptune Logistics is all clean lines and recessed lighting."

Clark

- "He was thinking of the book, and thinking of what Dahlia had said about sleepwalking, and a strange thought came to him: had Arthur seen that Clark was sleepwalking? Would this be in the letters to V.? Because he had been sleepwalking, Clark realized, moving half-asleep through the motions of his life for a while now, years; not specifically unhappy, but when had he last found real joy in his work? When was the last time he'd been truly moved by anything? When had he last felt awe or inspiration? He wished he could somehow go back and find the iPhone people whom he'd jostled on the sidewalk earlier, apologize to them—I'm sorry, I've just realized that I'm as minimally present in this world as you are, I had no right to judge—and also he wanted to call every target of every 360° report and apologize to them too, because it's an awful thing to appear in someone else's report, he saw that now, it's an awful thing to be the target."
- "On Day Twenty-Seven he parted his hair neatly down the middle and shaved off the left side. "It's the haircut I had from ages seventeen through nineteen," he told Dolores when she raised an eyebrow at him. Dolores was a business traveler, single, no family, which meant that she was one of the saner people in the airport. She and Clark had an agreement: she'd promised to tell him if he began showing signs of having lost his mind, and vice versa. What he didn't tell her was that after all these years of corporate respectability, the haircut made him feel like himself again."

- "Clark had always been fond of beautiful objects, and in his present state of mind, all objects were beautiful. He stood by the case and found himself moved by every object he saw there, by the human enterprise each object had required."

Tyler

- "It was strange, she kept thinking, that the prophet's dog had the same name as the dog in her comic books. She'd never heard the name Luli before or since."
- "Everything happens for a reason," Tyler said. Clark hadn't noticed his approach. Tyler had been wandering the airport of late, and he had a way of moving so quietly that he seemed to materialize out of nowhere. He spoke so rarely that it was easy to forget he was there. "That's what my mom said," he added when everyone stared at him."
- "I have walked all my life through this tarnished world," the prophet said, "and I have seen such darkness, such shadows and horrors."
- "The prophet was about her age. Whatever else the prophet had become, he'd once been a boy adrift on the road, and perhaps he'd had the misfortune of remembering everything."

The Symphony

- "The Symphony had been resting in New Petoskey for a week and a half so far, and François had interviewed almost all of them.
- 📖 August had told him about walking away from his empty house in Massachusetts with his violin, falling in with a cult for three years before he walked away again and stumbled across the Symphony.
- 📖 Viola had a harrowing story about riding a bicycle west out of the burnt-out ruins of a Connecticut suburb, aged fifteen, harboring vague notions of California but set upon by passersby long before she got there, grievously harmed, joining up with other half-feral teenagers in a marauding gang and then slipping away from them, walking alone for a hundred miles, whispering French to herself because all the horror in her life had transpired in English and she thought switching languages might save her, wandering into a town through which the Symphony passed five years later.
- 📖 The third cello had buried his parents after both died in the absence of insulin, and then spent four years holed up in the safety and boredom of their remote cottage on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, set out finally because he feared he'd lose his mind if he didn't find another human being to talk to, also because you can eat only so much venison before you'd give your right arm to eat almost anything else, made his way south and east and over the Mackinac Bridge ten years before the bridge's center section collapsed, lived on the outskirts of the close-knit band of fishermen in Mackinaw City until the Symphony passed through.
- When it came down to it, François had realized, all of the Symphony's stories were the same, in two variations.

- 📌 Everyone else died, I walked, I found the Symphony.
- 📌 Or, I was very young when it happened, I was born after it happened, I have no memories or few memories of any other way of living, and I have been walking all my life.”
- “The truth was, the clarinet hated Shakespeare. She’d been a double major in college, theater and music, a sophomore the year the world changed, lit up by an obsession with twenty-first-century experimental German theater. Twenty years after the collapse, she loved the music of the Symphony, loved being a part of it, but found the Symphony’s insistence on performing Shakespeare insufferable. She tried to keep this opinion to herself and occasionally succeeded.”
- “Dieter the night she met him in central Ohio, when she was fourteen and Dieter was in his late twenties, half a lifetime ago. On her first night with the Symphony he’d served her dinner by the fire. She’d been so alone since her brother’s death, and when the Symphony agreed to let her join them it had seemed like the best thing that had ever happened to her, and that first night she’d been almost too excited to eat. She remembered Dieter talking to her about Shakespeare, Shakespeare’s works and family, Shakespeare’s plague-haunted life.”

Space for Personal Notes