**Study Guide: *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

“An audacious, darkly glittering novel set in the eerie days of civilization's collapse, *Station Eleven* tells the spellbinding story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Pre-Reading**

Essential Questions

Define “humanity.”

Why is art important?

If all technology crashed (ALL), what would you miss the most? Why?

Discuss Epigraph

“The bright side of the planet moves toward darkness  
And the cities are falling asleep, each in its hour,  
And for me, now as then, it is too much.  
There is too much world.”Czesław Miłosz from *The Separate Notebooks*

**During Reading: Study Guide/Discussion Questions**  
  
**Section 1: “The Theater” (1-32)**

1. Discuss the situation (and the implications) of the following quote: “He felt extravagantly, guiltily alive” (11).
2. Find examples of both direct and indirect characterization of Jeevan. What is he like?
3. Discuss the effects of the repetition on pages 31 and 32. Create your own version of this section (fewer than 200 words).

**Post Reading Homework (Answer on a separate paper.)**

Exposition: in terms of plot structure, the beginning of any novel, play or film reveals its characters and setting. What do readers find in the exposition of *Station 11?* What does the title, “The Theater,” reveal about the story that is to follow?

Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 2: “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” (35-67)**

1. What are the possible thematic implications of the following quote? “People want what was best about the world” (38).
2. Chart the occurrence of light and color in this section.
3. “… survival is insufficient” is a major theme in this text (58). Discuss the validity of the claim. List what would help make life “sufficient.”

**Post Reading Homework**

At the end of this section: What does the title of this section, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” represent in terms of the section as a whole (explain the title)?

Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 3: “I Prefer You with a Crown” (71-115)**

1. Interpret and discuss the following quote: “The fake moon, which has the advantage of being closer and not obscured by smog, is almost always brighter than the real one” (100).
2. Look at page 107. The sentence beginning with “In four months Miranda will be back in Toronto…” is over 20 lines long. This fast narrative pace creates a certain mood. Discuss.
3. Take a moment to map out the structure of the novel so far. There is the “present” (20 years after the Georgia Flu), the several pasts (Miranda’s, Arthur’s, Kirsten’s), and the interviews. How do they connect?

**Post Reading Homework**

Explain the title of this section of the novel, “I Prefer You with a Crown.” Who is speaking-and to whom? (Who is the “I”? Who is the “you”? See chapter 15)  
Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 4: “The Starship” (120-164)**

1. An aphorism is a brief statement stated as truth. Discuss the effect of ending a section with the aphoristic statement: “Hell is the absence of the people you long for” on page 144.
2. In a letter to his childhood friend, Arthur writes that he’s been thinking about a quote from Yeats, “Love is like the lion’s tooth.” (page 158). What does this mean, and why is he thinking about it?
3. Kirsten wonders if it would be better or worse not to have known the world before the Georgia Flu. If you were a teacher in the years after the flu, would you tell the children about the world before or not? How much? Why?

**Post Reading Homework**

Explain the importance of the quote, “Survival is insufficient,” and discuss a few things that you would want in life beyond pure survival needs.

Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 5: “Toronto” (168-196)**

1. Time as a motif is exemplified in this section. Can we construct a linear timeline for the events in the novel? Does it matter? What effect does the non-linear structure have on you?
2. Explain the following statement: “…Jeevan found himself thinking about how human the city is, how human everything is” (178).
3. What is your opinion of Frank? How is he characterized?

**Post Reading Homework**

This section is entitled “Toronto”—why? (Consider the idea of home in terms of a theme for the novel.)  
Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 6: “The Airplanes” (200-228)**

1. Make a list of all the times the word (or idea of) beauty is mentioned in this section. What possible thematic connection/claim do they make?
2. Miranda “thought the CN Tower was ugly up close, but unexpectedly lovely when viewed from an airplane window” (205). Write about something that is “ugly” up close but “lovely” from far away (or vice versa).
3. Copy the passage from page 228 (“Miranda opened…burning into sky”). Underline the verbs. Circle the adjectives. Box the adverbs. What does this dissection of the text reveal? Write a passage “mad libs” style using this pattern.

**Post Reading Homework**

Explain the lines from page 227: “…she looked at him instead—I see you, I see you—and hoped this was enough.

Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 7: “The Terminal” (231-280)**

1. The word “surreal” means strange or unusual; having the quality of a dream. Choose a passage or image from this section and describe why it’s surreal.
2. Choose a passage, image, or phrase from this section that contains humor (there isn’t much of that in this novel, but it pops up now and again) and discuss it.
3. How does Kirsten’s brother die and why is this ironic?

**Post Reading Homework**

Look over this section, “The Terminal”—how does it fit into the novel as a whole? What point is being made about people’s behavior, about survival, about a sense of home/community?

Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 8: The Prophet (283-313)**

1. What was the most surprising part of this section? Why?
2. What was the most beautiful image in this section? Why?
3. What, if anything, was unexpected in this section?

**Post Reading Homework**  
The prophet is scary—how has he gained control of his people? What point is being made about human nature?  
Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

**Section 9: Station Eleven (318-333)**

1. Thinking about structure and theme, why is this section titled “Station Eleven?”
2. Are there any main characters in this novel? Who? Why?
3. Describe the tone at the end of this section and cite as passage as proof.

**Post Reading Homework**

Considering structure and theme, why is this section titled “Station Eleven?

Quote: Looking over this section, state the most significant quote and explain why it is important (include page number).

Characters

Arthur Leander

Kirsten Raymonde

Jeevan Chaudhary

Frank (Jeevan’s brother)

Miranda (*The Tempest* reference)

Elizabeth

Tyler

Dieter

Clark

1. <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/20170404-station-eleven> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)