

'DESPITE HIS DEATH IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF STATION ELEVEN, ARTHUR LEANDER PLAYS A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE NOVEL'. DO YOU AGREE?

Emily St John Mandel uses the post-apocalyptic genre as a base for her to express ideas on a number of themes in her novel, *Station Eleven*, through multiple character's lenses. Arthur's significance is paramount in the novel, although he ultimately dies in the introduction of Mandel's book. Arthur may not be present through the evolution of the novel's post-apocalyptic storyline, however, the connections he makes in the old world are vital to the narrative, each character's development, and their actions in the new world. Miranda, Kirsten and other characters become very evidently examples of his connectivity and importance.

Arthur's significance is most obvious through Miranda, as his marriage to her is what connects her work to go on and greatly impact the events of the new world of other main characters. She was the person who provided Arthur with a sense of his belonging, as she too grew up on Delano Island and the two instantly connected. Even after their divorce, their significance in each others lives did not cease as her work transcended not only their time apart, but also the world after a destructive end of civilisation. Here Mandel makes an important point about the power of art and his ability to withstand all as long as humans survive. The importance of this comes from Arthur's decision to reconnect with Miranda only two weeks before his death, where her comics were ultimately given to him who was able to share them with others and go on to have a much larger impact than she had ever intended. Readers can conclude that this meeting was an act of fate as it was those very comics that can be connected to Kirsten's survival later in the book as it provided common ground between the psychotic Prophet, and the young woman. Had Arthur never seen Miranda so soon before the Georgia Flu, the events of the new world would most certainly have played out incredibly different. Mandel highlights that it is not only the characters who survive that have the largest impact, but the characters that were left behind as their actions inadvertently continue to leave an imprint on the world, regardless of any destructive events that might occur.

Although Kirsten's time with Arthur was limited due to her young age at the time of his death, his recurring significance in her life is highlighted by Mandel, who implies a strong connection between the two through her depiction of Kirsten's actions and attitudes. Although readers are introduced to Kirsten's inability to remember the trauma of the first year after the collapse, her memory of Arthur and his significance in her life seems to linger, aside from the fact that she believed "the more you remember, the more you've lost". This may be the reason for her selective memory which ultimately leaves Kirsten with constant feelings of emptiness and longing to collect fragments of the old world, particularly magazines of Arthur. Mandel through the characters small actions, further encourages readers to see how death doesn't erase a person's significance in the world they left behind. In addition, she shows that either one can preserve their sense of identity by piecing together their old life or choose to forget and move on. Readers see hints of both in Kirsten's character, portraying her three-dimensional role in the novel. Many more parallels can be drawn between Arthur's character and Kirsten, as both spend their lives expressing their passion for art and reinforcing Arthur's role in unintentionally interconnecting the old with the new. Kirsten ultimately continues his legacy by not only replicating his career in performance, but also collecting his memorabilia as a way of holding onto her fonder memories of the pre-collapse era and her ongoing fascination with her old mentor.

However, it can be argued that Arthur was only central to a limited extent, as readers are introduced to Jeevan's life post-apocalypse who is driven more by personal desires, rather than the desires or connections of his old life, unlike the other characters.

Mandel presents a contrasting idea to those previously discussed as Jeevan who also had a personal connection with Arthur, wasn't as affected by his death unlike the other characters. Readers assume then that his life after the collapse is unlikely to have changed much, regardless of his connection to Arthur. Although it was the actor that did solidify Jeevan's decision to become a paramedic, had he not tried to save Arthur's life in the introduction to the novel, it is likely that this revelation could've come from another event in the journalist's life. This is because he had identified his passion and wanted to live in a way that fulfilled those desires, rather than recreating memories of an old life and old relationships. Mandel therefore argues that Arthur's significance doesn't alter the lives of all the characters in the novel, but some are instead impacted by events, rather than people.

Though Arthur Leander comes and goes quite early on in the novel, his impact does not have the same impermanence in the novel as his relationships seem to transcend time through characters like Miranda and her novels, as well as Kirsten. Although we see some characters not as phased by these kinds of relationships, like Jeevan, it is clear that Mandel leverages Arthur's character as a way to interconnect different characters, events and behaviours. In doing so she makes a strong point about the enormous chain linking humans to each other, even after their time has ended in the world, reinforcing Arthur's central role in the novel.