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Author Emily St. John Mandel presents an engaging discussion of *Station Eleven*, her past work and her future plans. A book sale and signing follows.

**BOOK DISCUSSIONS**

Trained volunteer facilitators lead these free public book discussions. No registration required. Discussions are open to readers of all ages.

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**THANKS TO:**

**BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS**

**SANTA MONICA PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**THE FRIENDS OF THE SANTA MONICA PUBLIC LIBRARY**
about the book

“While many post-apocalypse novels focus on the survival of humanity, Station Eleven focuses instead on the survival of our culture.” – Andrew M. Butler, Arthur C. Clarke Award Judging Committee

Describing Station Eleven to new readers without revealing too much is difficult. That said, it is a post-apocalyptic novel that tracks a diverse cast of characters before, during and after a global flu wipes out much of human civilization. Straying far from the well-trodden path of following characters as they struggle to survive in the aftermath of a catastrophic event, Station Eleven looks instead into the hearts and souls of its characters and determines that “when there is nothing else, art remains.”

The novel begins in the present, as a child actress named Kirsten Raymonde watches actor Arthur Leander die onstage during a performance of King Lear. Outside, the world is being consumed by a virulent flu that will rapidly lay waste to most of humanity. As the layered novel unfolds, Emily St. John Mandel follows her characters through time, in flashbacks providing back story, in the present as characters realize what is happening, and fifteen years on as Kirsten and other survivors make their way through the broken landscape that remains.

First published in September 2014 by Alfred A. Knopf, Station Eleven was awarded the 2015 Arthur C. Clarke Award, was a finalist for the 2014 National Book Award in fiction, and made numerous year-end best lists. As Game of Thrones author George R.R. Martin observed, “One could, I suppose, call it a post-apocalypse novel, and it is that, but all the usual tropes of that sub-genre are missing here. It’s a deeply melancholy novel, but beautifully written, and wonderfully elegiac.”

about the author

“First we only want to be seen, but once we’re seen, that’s not enough anymore. After that, we want to be remembered.” – Emily St. John Mandel, Station Eleven

Emily St. John Mandel was born in 1979 in Comox, a small town on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada, and raised on the nearby Denman Island. A dancer by training, she left home at 18 to study contemporary dance at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre. After graduating, she briefly relocated to Montreal, a city where she was underemployed and did not speak the language. No longer interested in a career in dance, she chose to spend her spare time writing and began to think of herself as an author. Armed with the core of what would become her first novel, she relocated to New York with her soon-to-be husband, playwright Kevin Mandel, and began shopping her work around to publishers. The small press Unbridled Books published her first three novels – Last Night in Montreal, The Singer’s Gun, The Lola Quartet – each of them literary fiction with a noir crime edge, and Mandel began collecting fans amongst readers, librarians and booksellers. In 2012, she was signed by Random House publishing imprint Alfred A. Knopf and began writing Station Eleven.

Following its publication, Station Eleven became a finalist for a National Book Award, the PEN/Faulkner Award, and won the Arthur C. Clarke Award. In addition to her four novels, Emily is the author of numerous short stories and essays that have been published and anthologized in several collections, including Best American Mystery Stories 2015. She currently lives in Brooklyn with husband Kevin and their newborn child.

recommended reads

California by Edan Lepucki

The landscape of post-apocalyptic fiction is rife with novels that examine the impact on society at large, but this intimate, debut novel is an examination of what happens to a marriage after civilization’s collapse. In California, young couple Cal and Frida flee the crumbling metropolis of Los Angeles for a solitary life in the western wilds, but when Frida gets pregnant, they are forced to consider reentering society and all of the complications and dangers that implies.

The Dog Stars by Peter Heller

Like Station Eleven, The Dog Stars is set in a post-apocalyptic world that has been largely wiped out by a flu pandemic. In this wasteland, former pilot Hig finds himself alone except for his dog Jasper and unhinged survivalist Bangley. A dreamer with no access to star or navigation maps, Hig spends his nights renaming the constellations for dogs. When he hears a crackling, distant signal over his plane’s radio, he’s finally driven to look for life beyond the only borders he knows.

Snowpiercer, Vol. 1: The Escape by Jacques Lob, illustrated by Jean-Marc Rochette

Station Eleven derives its title from a post-apocalyptic comic book created by a character within the novel. The comic book graphic novel field is one of the strongest sources of today’s post-apocalyptic storytelling and this French release is a prime example of the genre. Set in a future world in which the planet has been frozen in an environmental accident, the story follows the few remaining survivors who live on a perpetually-moving train that circles the globe—the well-to-do living in luxury at the front of the train, the poor and unwanted barely surviving at the back.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

In this novel set in an indefinite, futuristic, post-apocalyptic world, a father and his young son make their way through the ruins of a devastated American landscape, struggling to survive and preserve the last remnants of their own humanity. A cracking, distant signal over his plane’s radio, he’s finally driven to look for life beyond the only borders he knows.

resources

Emily St. John Mandel Author Website

Find out more about Emily St. John Mandel and her novels at her website, which also includes listings of upcoming events and links to several essays by the author. emilymandel.com

To keep up with her on a more regular basis, follow the author on her Tumblr page. emilystjohnmandel.tumblr.com

And Twitter @EmilyMandel

Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

Whether it is Emily St. John Mandel’s literary take on the aftermath of an apocalyptic event, or a more speculative take such as Robert Kirkman’s The Walking Dead or Justin Cronin’s The Passage, the genre of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction has a rich history. While not complete, the Wikipedia entry on the genre offers a compelling look at the origins and various iterations of how authors and filmmakers have depicted the end of civilization and its aftermath. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocalyptic_and_post-apocalyptic_fiction

How to Survive an Apocalypse

While served up with a healthy sense of humor, the advice offered on the Wikihow website on surviving an apocalypse is practical and easy to read. From listing basic fundamentals of things you’ll want to have on hand, to offering advice on how to hunt, the website serves up its content in an easygoing fashion that won’t cramp your anxiety. wikihow.com/Survive-an-Apocalypse
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EmilyMandel.com
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Santa Monica Youth Orchestra “Traveling Symphony”
Sat, March 12 at 7:00pm | Ocean Park Branch Library
Sat, March 19 at 7:00pm | Pico Branch Library
Our own “Traveling Symphony” drops by two of our branches for outdoor concerts that celebrate the value of keeping art alive.

The Museum of Civilization and Other Coping Mechanisms
Tue, March 15 at 7:00pm | Main Library, Multipurpose Room
Join us as we plant the seeds for our own Museum of Civilization, and hear from UCLA psychologist Dr. Stephen Sideroff, author of The Path: Mastering the Nine Pillars of Resilience and Success, on the ways in which human beings cope in the aftermath of a traumatic or catastrophic event.

Twilight in the Altered World: Shakespeare on Station Eleven
Sat, March 19 at 7:00pm | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium
Actor/director Tony Cronin and members of the Theatre for a Small Space share insights on the hidden Shakespeare connections many readers might miss in Station Eleven, then perform selected scenes from King Lear and A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Screening & Lecture: Snowpiercer (2013) and Other Graphic Novels
Wed, March 23 at 6:00pm | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium
Graphic novels, an extended form of the comic book, are the source of many apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic tales. Join us as we explore the format with a brief talk, then screen the film “Snowpiercer”, based on a French post-apocalyptic graphic novel. (Film runtime: 126 min.)

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