

Main Symbols

Airplanes

- "Station Eleven" uses airplanes to symbolize several important concepts. Their primary meaning is **isolation and being in limbo**. Being unable to go back to their previous lives and uncertain of what lies ahead, the characters stranded at Severn City Airport are essentially torn between two worlds. The planes themselves, remnants of a vanished world, are stuck in time. The abruptness of the collapse is another thing they symbolize. People were traveling when the pandemic struck, underscoring how society was upended and divided. As air travel, a representation of advancement and connection, comes to an abrupt end, the grounded planes can also represent **lost potential and dreams**.

The Paperweight

- The paperweight is a potent representation of a **confined and idealized world**, especially the one Miranda owns. It stands for the pre-pandemic period, which was a period of stability and order but has since been upended. Additionally, the paperweight's delicate design alludes to the **fragility of civilization** and how readily it can be upended. The little, lovely things that are frequently overlooked are brought to light by this. In addition, it symbolizes a sort of **control** for Miranda—a tiny, ideal world that she can grasp in her hand in contrast to the chaos that surrounds her.

Books

- Throughout "Station Eleven," books serve as a powerful symbol for **the preservation of culture, knowledge, and history**. They serve as comforting reminders, tools for reconstruction, and connections to the past in the post-apocalyptic world. The Traveling Symphony's Shakespearean productions demonstrate the timeless value of art and narrative. Books also represent **hope and the continuity of human experience**, implying that the human need for beauty and knowledge endures even in the wake of a calamitous disaster. They are observable expressions of legacy and memory.

Tattoos

- In the book, Kirsten's tattoo in particular represents **memory and the lasting impact of experience**. Acquired over time, Kirsten's tattoos serve as a sort of personal history inscribed on her skin, commemorating important moments in her life. They stand for **resilience and the ability to carry the past with you**, both the positive and negative aspects of the past. Getting a tattoo is a means of taking back control of one's identity and narrative in a world where a lot has been lost. Additionally, they represent **belonging** to the Traveling Symphony, a visual representation of their common experience and dedication to the arts.

Snow

- When discussed in the post-apocalyptic world, snow can represent **isolation, stillness, and the harsh beauty of nature**. The pandemic's **blanketing effect**, which covers the entire world and erases most of the past, can also be represented by it. In the post-pandemic world, where survival is uncertain, the **fragility of life** can also be reflected in the silence and stillness that come with snow. Nevertheless, snow can also represent **renewal and the cyclical nature of life**. Similar to how snow blankets the ground in winter, indicating the arrival of spring, the post-pandemic world offers the possibility of reconstruction and rebirth.
- Snow also acts as a direct and consistent symbol of **death and the ever-present threat of mortality**

Other Symbols

The Traveling Symphony

This nomadic group of musicians and actors represents the enduring power of art and the importance of human connection in a post-apocalyptic world. They symbolize hope, resilience, and the preservation of beauty and culture amidst devastation.

"Station Eleven" Comic Books

These rare and intricately drawn comics symbolize a connection to the past, the power of imagination, and the search for meaning in a changed world. They represent a form of escapism, but also a way to process trauma and loss.

The Severn City Airport

This location, transformed into a settlement and a Museum of Civilization, symbolizes a place of transition and adaptation. It represents the attempt to rebuild and preserve the memory of the past while creating a new community in the present.

The Prophet

This enigmatic and dangerous figure symbolizes the dark side of human nature, the allure of extremism, and the abuse of power. He represents a twisted form of faith and the manipulation of hope and fear in a world of uncertainty.

Electricity

This now-absent force symbolizes the lost world of technology and convenience. It represents progress, connection, and the comforts of modern civilization.

The Play "King Lear"

The play performed at the start of the novel, mirroring the themes of loss, family breakdown, and societal collapse. The storm in the play foreshadows the pandemic. The play within the novel also emphasizes the enduring power of art, even amidst chaos.

Ships

The container ships anchored off the coast of Malaysia, where Miranda is at the time of the collapse, symbolize isolation, the remnants of the pre-pandemic world, and the possibility of escape or survival. They are also a reminder of the globalized trade that has ceased to exist.

The Museum of Civilization

Established by Clark at the Severn City Airport, it symbolizes the attempt to preserve the memory and knowledge of the past. It represents a bridge between the pre- and post-collapse worlds, and the desire to learn from history.

The Georgia Flu

The pandemic itself is a symbol of chaos, the fragility of human life, and the destructive potential of nature. It represents a turning point in history, dividing the world into a before and an after.