

Basic Plot

- Julia - the narrator
 - An eleven year old girl
 - Living in an average California town
- The Slowing
 - Earth's rotation is getting longer
 - Days are getting longer
 - Affects sleep cycles, gravity, how no one shows up for work, how people act towards one another
- Needless to say, the world enters a state of panic.

At the very beginning of the story, our narrator Julia describes some of the crazy things people did immediately after the news broke:



The Passage

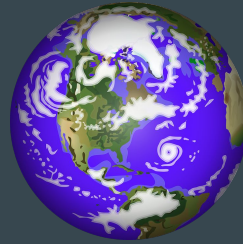
“Our days had grown by fifty-six minutes in the night.

At the beginning, people stood on street corners and shouted about the end of the world. Counselors came to talk to us at school. I remember watching Mr. Valencia next door fill up his garage with stacks of canned food and bottled water, as if preparing, it now seems to me, for a disaster much more minor.

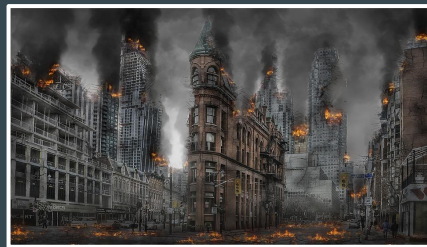
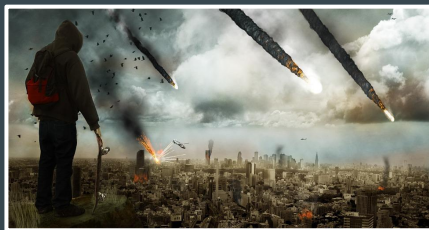
The grocery stores were soon empty, the shelves sucked clean like chicken bones.

The freeways clogged immediately. People heard the news, and they wanted to move. Families piled into minivans and crossed state lines. They scurried in every direction like small animals caught suddenly under a light.

But, of course, there was nowhere on earth to go.”



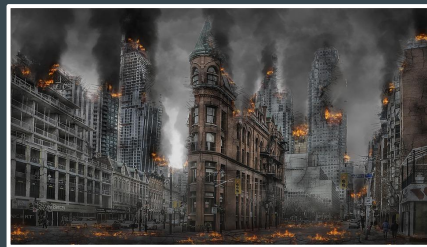
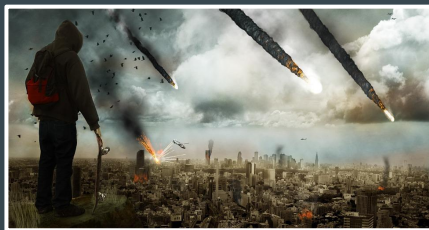
Theme



When faced with imminent disaster, humans will usually undertake goals that may be useless in order to distract themselves.

- In the novel, humans distract themselves by:
 - driving to random places
 - raiding grocery stores and stocking up on food
 - abandoning work
 - screaming about how it's the end times
 - traveling to sacred places in their religions
- In the passage, Julia describes them as “*small animals caught suddenly under a light*”
- No one can escape this great event, no matter where on Earth they go
 - The point isn't to have any effect on fixing the problem, but to be distracted from the horrific event and feel some sort of control

Theme (cont.)



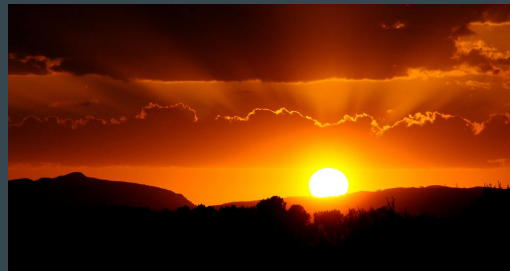
- The cataclysmic event doesn't cause the apocalypse, humanity's response does
 - A common theme often found in dystopias
 - Chaos is a basic consequence to one of our core emotions: fear

We should try to resist this impulse and act rationally, especially when getting to the solution requires people to work together.

Symbolism

The slowing and its consequences are symbols for something more monumental, something that every human being will have to experience: death itself.

- The phrase “the end of days” or “the end of the day” → the death of one or many people
- In the book “the end of days” → when the slowing has gotten so severe that the very meaning of a day breaks down
- The days only grew by 56 minutes, yet mass hysteria ensued
- They are afraid of the unknowns of the end of days
 - The same way that an individual would be afraid of the unknowns of death
- The panic represents the inner turmoils of a person approaching death
 - They might do crazy things along the way to distract themselves, but nothing can stop the heinous, unstoppable crawl of death.

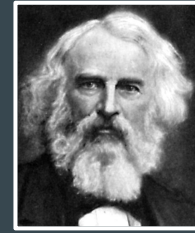


Recap

The symbolism in the story reveals the true nature of ourselves when we are approached with death and other tragedies. The hysteria that occurs when the news of a soon-to-be disaster is a very important message in The Age of Miracles. The symbolism in the story for mortality allows all readers to connect the theme to their own lives.



Nature - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,

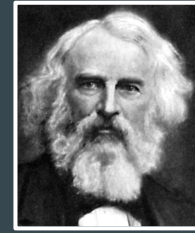
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him
more;

So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go

Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.



Nature - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Ties the poem to the novel, days slowing

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,

Leads by the hand her little child to bed,

Half willing, half reluctant to be led,

And leave his broken playthings on the floor,

Still gazing at them through the open door,

Nor wholly reassured and comforted

By promises of others in their stead,

Which, though more splendid, may not

please him more;

Promised and distracted by new toys
if he follows Nature

So Nature deals with us, and takes away

Our playthings one by one, and by the hand

Leads us to rest so gently, that we go

Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,

Being too full of sleep to understand

How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

Supplies (in the book) and toys are symbols for all distractions (new and old) created to have an objective to look forward to

The two texts almost say the same things word for word

