



BROWSE



 ***Vivian Apple at the End of the World by Katie Coyle (review)***

Deborah Stevenson

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviewed by:

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In an America where public discourse is now largely driven by the Church of America and its charismatic leader, Beaton Frick, seventeen-year-old Vivian Apple is the skeptical daughter of Believers. She's therefore stunned when they disappear on the night of the promised Rapture, along with the parents of her friend Harp and hundreds, maybe thousands of others across the country. The nation is confused, frightened, and divided, with Believers agonizing over being Left Behind and trying to purge any seeming ungodliness—gays and lesbians, sexually active single women—in hopes of a second chance, and nonbelievers known as New Orphans attempting to make sense of the situation and construct a future. Amid the growing chaos, Vivian and Harp join with Peter, who may have inside information about Church activities, on a cross-country trip to California, where they think they may find the truth and, Vivian somehow believes, her parents. This is a fascinatingly literal post-apocalyptic scenario, and where most such stories focus on the logistics, this is instead deeply immersed in the impact on human emotions and culture. Vivian's anger and grief at her parents' willingness to toss her aside is authentic and compelling, and her transformation from being a second banana to the audacious Harp to "Vivian 2.0," who makes things happen herself, realistically surprises Vivian and changes her relationship with Harp—and Peter. While keeping her tone thoughtful rather than cutting, Coyle spices her view of both Believers and their antagonists with a sprinkling of satire that allows readers some wry recognition; at the same time, she keeps readers guessing just as much as Vivian is. The story isn't without a few logic holes, but the logistics aren't really the point; it's a gripping scenario that elicits an epic road trip and that stars a conflicted and impressive heroine.

COYLE, KATE *Vivian Apple at the End of the World*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015 262p
 ISBN 978-0-544-34011-4 \$17.99 R Gr. 8-12

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CROW, MATTHEW *The Brilliant Light of Amber Sunrise*. Simon Pulse, 2015 [304p]
 Trade ed. ISBN 978-1-4814-1873-7 \$17.99
 E-book ed. ISBN 978-1-4814-1875-1 \$10.99
 Reviewed from galley R* Gr. 9-12

"If I died now," thinks fifteen-year-old Francis, who's just been diagnosed with leukemia, "it would be all that anybody remembered about me. It would be my death that mattered. Not my life." When he goes into the hospital for treatment, he's stoutly supported by his sharp-tongued dynamo of a mother (his father has long since drifted away) and his older brother; in the ward, he bonds with brazen and funny Amber Spratt, who "erupted onto the ward like Randle McMurphy in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*" and becomes Francis' first love. It's hard to pull such a story out of the shadow of *The Fault in Our Stars* (BCCB 5/12); while this British title is also deeply absorbing, it's very different. Francis' narration may verge on the preternaturally witty, but he's not wise at all; instead, he's a deeply likable, credible, and nerdy fifteen-year-old who's horrified that treatment makes him lose his pubic hair and who's often more concerned about his love life and his hurt feelings than about Amber's health. The storytelling is exuberant and at times even raucous, with swift humor in the characterizations (in particular, Francis' mother is a fierce delight) and in events ranging from first sex to first bust for attempted pot



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Vivian Apple at the End of the World by Katie Coyle, Vinogradov.

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