No Parking at the End of Times

Meagan Andrus
Sixteen-year-old Abigail lives in a van in San Francisco with her parents and her twin brother, Aaron. They sold their house and everything they owned, following a pastor named Brother John, to prepare for the end of the world. After a few weeks, the apocalypse still hasn’t happened. Abigail is worried about Aaron, who disappears every night, and she’s also worried about her parents, who don’t seem to be doing anything to make a more permanent home. When she follows Aaron one night to find him meeting up with other homeless teenagers, she’s at first upset and then relieved to find some sense of normalcy. Her faith in her parents and God is failing her, and eventually she sees that her parents are failing her, too. It isn’t until Aaron is taken away in an ambulance after a street fight that her parents finally decide to choose family over the religion that has only taken away and never given.

This is a very interesting book about family, faith, and morality. The characters are complicated, especially the twins’ dad who is fully devoted to Brother John and all of his empty promises, so much so that he almost abandons his own children in order to “please God.” The writing style is clear and elegant, with many poetic lines and beautiful imagery. While this book is deep and asks a lot of important questions, it’s important to note that Abigail spends the book slowly losing her faith in God, which might be upsetting for some readers. The ending is also very abrupt, leaving the reader with no answers about Aaron and whether or not he’ll be okay or how the family makes it back home to the East Coast. Despite all that, it’s an engaging read for teens who like reading about tough situations and the kids who find the inner strength to find solutions to those situations.

*Contains severe language, mild sexual content, and moderate violence.