

Disaster looms in 'The World Ends in April'

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

I really enjoyed "The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl" by Stacy McAnulty, so when I saw she had a new book — "The World Ends in April" — I immediately added it to my list.

Then I forgot about it because I had a bunch of other books to read.

Several weeks ago, while my son, Max, was browsing the new children's books at the Baker County Library, I spied "The World Ends in April" and promptly checked it out.

Middle grade fiction, targeted for youth in grades 4-8, is one of my favorite types of reading. The stories are often complex, yet funny and usually a bit more lighthearted than adult fiction.

"The World Ends in April" is the story of Elle, who has

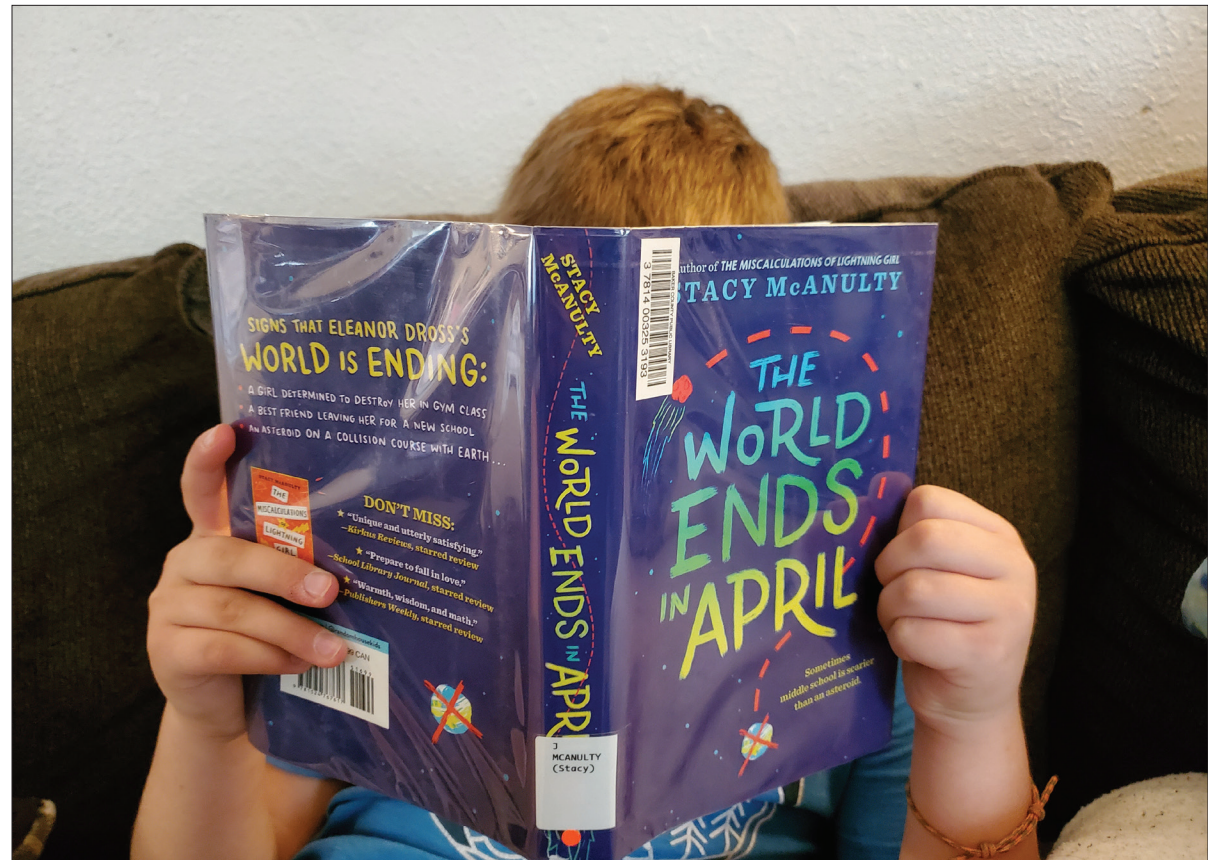
grown up with survival exercises courtesy of her grandpa Joe, who is described as a prepper and stockpiles water, MREs and everything else one would need to survive a catastrophe.

She doesn't much like these prepper exercises.

Then she happens upon a website where a scientist describes a massive asteroid hurtling toward Earth. By his calculations, the impact will happen sometime in the next April.

At first she discounts the claim. But school is not her most favorite place to be and her best friend, Mack, who is blind, may be leaving for a different school.

As she navigates the not-so-fun aspects of middle school, Elle begins to think that maybe starting over would be okay — maybe the asteroid will hit somewhere to affect Earth to the point that only the strong survive (The



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End of the World As We Know It, or TEOTWAWKI).

Mack talks her into starting a club to share her survivalist knowledge with other kids. Although its secret name is the End of the World Club, they call it Nature Club to fly under the radar.

Her classmates see the club as something fun to do after

school while Elle can only focus on the impending collision and the responsibility of preparing her friends for survival.

But here's the thing: There is only the one man who is claiming the asteroid will hit Earth. Her dad points out that NASA and other agencies are refuting his scenario, yet Elle refuses to listen.

She really wants to start over. I'll leave the ending as a surprise. (I had barely finished the book before Max snatched it up. He recommends it too.)

Past the end, though, McAnulty writes about sources, and encourages her readers to be vigilant in their research to make sure a website is legitimate — which is always good advice.

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