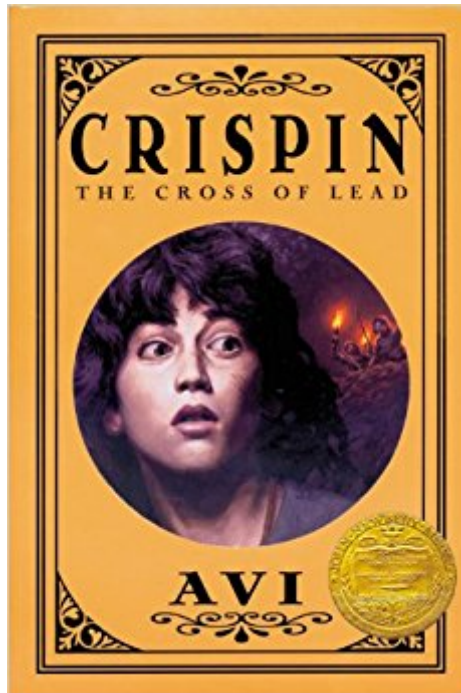




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# Crispin: The Cross Of Lead (2003 John Newbery Medal Winner)



## Synopsis

H "Avi's plot is engineered for maximum thrills, with twists, turns, and treachery aplenty. . . . A page-turner to delight Avi's fans, it will leave readers hoping for a sequel."-Publishers Weekly (starred review) H " . . . [T]he book is a page-turner from beginning to end . . . [A] meticulously crafted story, full of adventure, mystery, and action."-School Library Journal (starred review)"Historical fiction at its finest."-VOYA

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 780L (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 423 customer reviews

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Genre-jumping author Avi clocks in here with his 50th book, *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, an action-packed historical narrative that follows the frantic flight of a 13-year-old peasant boy across 14th-century England. After being declared a "wolf's head" by his manor's corrupt steward for a crime he didn't commit (meaning that anyone can kill him like a common animal--and collect a reward), this timid boy has to flee a tiny village that's the only world he's ever known. But before our protagonist escapes, Avi makes sure that we're thoroughly briefed on the injustices of feudalism--the countless taxes cottars must pay, the constant violence, the inability of a flawed church to protect its parishioners, etc. Avi then folds in the book's central mystery just as the boy is leaving: "Asta's son," as he's always been known, learns from the village priest that his Christian

name is Crispin, and that his parents' origins--and fates--might be more perplexing than he ever imagined. Providing plenty of period detail (appropriately gratuitous for the age group) and plenty of chase-scene suspense, Avi tells a good story, develops a couple of fairly compelling characters, and even manages to teach a little history lesson. (Fortunately, kids won't realize that they're learning about England's peasant revolt of 1381 until it's far too late.) (Ages 10 to 14) --Paul Hughes

Set in 14th-century England, Avi's (The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle) 50th book begins with a funeral, that of a village outcast whose past is shrouded in mystery and whose adolescent son is known only as "Asta's son." Mired in grief for his mother, the boy learns his given name, Crispin, from the village priest, although his presumably dead father's identity remains obscure. The words etched on his mother's treasured lead cross may provide some clue, but the priest is murdered before he can tell the illiterate lad what they say. Worse, Crispin is fingered for the murder by the manor steward, who declares him a "wolf's head" wanted dead or alive, preferably dead. Crispin flees, and falls in with a traveling juggler. "I have no name," Crispin tells Bear, whose rough manners and appearance mask a tender heart. "No home, no kin, no place in this world." How the boy learns his true identity (he's the bastard son of the lord of the manor) and finds his place in the world makes for a rattling fine yarn. Avi's plot is engineered for maximum thrills, with twists, turns and treachery aplenty, but it's the compellingly drawn relationship between Crispin and Bear that provides the heart of this story. A page turner to delight Avi's fans, it will leave readers hoping for a sequel. Ages 8-12. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

This book is amazing and lives up to more than the summary lives it up to be. You do have to wait till about 80% through the book till it gets super exciting . It's worth the wait for sure though.

I think Crispin and The Cross of Lead is an awesome book ,Crispin is a well formed character in a great plot. Bear is also a great supportive character towards Crispin and his journey to discover where he really belongs in the world. I think Avi did a wonderful job on research for the time period. Anyone who loves adventure and action but still wants to feel your heart get all warm and fuzzy at the end, I recommend Crispin And The Cross Of Lead.

Crispin is a well written book that begins easy and fills the young mind with the thoughts and feelings of a little boy who is yet to discover his true self. There's so much written about the uneasiness that passes through little child wanting to know so much about himself and yet finding

himself at a total loss as to how he should acquire that important information - the key of his origins. And as Crispin embarks on an adventure of his own running away from the village which wants his head on the chopping block, he finds out that life can be different and meaningful with people who care about you and he walks through his path discovering life and meeting people of all sorts including Bear who very much opens his eye to the world around him. This was a recommended read for my child who is moving to Grade 6 - while I love this book, I think it is better geared towards the Grade 5 level since the English level is rather simplified but that's just my opinion. Nice read!

"I keep asking myself if I felt different, if I was different. The answer was always yes. I was no longer nothing." What's so important about a name? Does it give you something? Does it lay out a path for you to follow? Does it tell you who you are? Crispin doesn't know his name because his father died years ago in the plague. "Asta's Son" is all anyone has ever called him. Doing their best to survive in meager conditions, he and his mother live among the poorest of the poor in fourteenth-century medieval England. Until his mother dies. Then, on a midnight trip to Father Quinel's quarters to learn the truth about his father, Crispin interrupts John Aycliffe, the steward in those parts, meeting secretly with a strange man in the forest. Next thing Crispin knows, Father Quinel has been murdered and people are trying to kill him. He is labeled a Wolf's Head, which means anyone who finds him can kill him without impunity. On the run from everything relating to his prior life, without a name or a plan, he is stopped by an enormous man who calls himself Bear. In exchange for letting him live, Crispin is forced to vow service to Bear as his Master now. Where this will take Crispin, he doesn't know, but he isn't sure he wants to find out. People are still hunting for him, but why? And how will he ever find a new life under these conditions? Avi's *CRISPIN: THE CROSS OF LEAD* tells the heartmoving story of a young boy in search for his name, and not just any name, a name he can live by. Set against the backdrop of medieval Christianity, Crispin's prayer is this: "Let me play the music well. Let me be a credit to my master. And I beg Thee, let me have a soul, that I too may sing and dance." Reviewed by Jonathan Stephens

My son was doing an independent project on the Middle Ages and we found this book, which was perfect in setting the stage, giving him the feeling of the time. More importantly, the story is riveting and beautifully written. The social history is interwoven, never feels like exposition. My son, who usually refuses to read fiction. Ha! Caught him with this! And we are on to the next book in the series!

Excellent!

I give this book a rating of 4 or of 5 stars. I really enjoyed this book, but I felt that the beginning was a little slow for me and I found it quite boring some. But once I got further on into the book, I couldn't put the kindle down! It bothered me how much Crispin escaped places when he was told to stay, which added a lot more excitement to the book. I would recommend this book to anyone! I feel that both kids and adults would enjoy this book.

My son needed this for a class project. It is a wonderful story (with two other sequels) This is great for any sixth to eighth grader that loves to read and want to read a great adventure/slice of life story.

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