



## Nothing But The Truth

*Avi*

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## Nothing But The Truth Avi

This Newbery Honor Book by acclaimed author Avi is available again through Scholastic--in an After Words paperback edition!

In this thought-provoking examination of freedom, patriotism, and respect, ninth-grader, Philip Malloy, is kept from joining the track team by his failing grades in English class. Convinced that the teacher just doesn't like him, Philip concocts a plan to get transferred out of her class. Breaking the school's policy of silence during the national anthem, he hums along, and ends up in a crisis at the center of the nation's attention.

## Nothing But The Truth Details

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Author : Avi

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# **From Reader Review Nothing But The Truth for online ebook**

## **Lara says**

Avi is one of my favorite writers. So this book is presented like a file for a crime. This even happened at this time and place. There is really no narration. No persuasion. Just a very stark, neutral telling of events. A young boy refuses to stand for the national anthem or refuses to say the Pledge of Allegiance or something like that (it's been awhile). The school wants to discipline him. He claims he has the right to not do it. But as the facts come to light, you see that the boy's defense may be a bit fabricated. It's really, really interesting. More of the way the story is told. Yay for Avi!

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## **Jayanni says**

Nothing But the Truth by Avi is a realistic fiction novel pointed at several characters, rules, or documents perspective. The author displays a stronger message than patriotism. He shows through a realistic scenario how little lies can spiral out of control.

In the book, Harrison High School plays a recorded tape of the national anthem each morning. It is requested that all students stand in silent and respectful attention. But when Philip Malloy decides to hum along in Ms Narwins homeroom, he receives a contradicting two day suspension. The author encourages the reader to explore the truth in his motives for getting kicked out; whether it was patriotism or a result from his hatred against the teacher. An interview from Philip Malloy was published, exploding the situation across the nation, ending in angry americans, economic damage towards the school, and personal difficulties for both Philip and Ms Narwin.

Personally, I enjoyed the book because of its format. Nothing But The Truth was written in a documentary form. I have to admit though, I got extremely frustrated when I witnessed how the story changed throughout each person's perspective because I knew it was purposefully. The characters would not bluntly fib, but not reveal the whole truth. The author really displayed how individuals perspective of the truth can be used to their advantage. If you're a person who loves books with narration, Nothing But The Truth isn't for you. Although you can assume there's a main character, the story isn't told from that perspective. In fact, the book isn't told in just one, but multiple perspectives and scenarios. This book is also for readers who enjoy putting the pieces of the story together themselves.

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## **Tiffany says**

DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME AND READ THIS BOOK! If you want to try your luck and see if you like it, by all means. But from someone who was forced to read this book, and I love reading all types of books so that's not the issue, I am personally suggesting you do not. The different styles of writing can leave you confused, it would go by fast if it were not so boring and over all it really has not point. It does teach you a lesson about lying but in my personal opinion it is the fact that Philips dad pushed him into going to that reporter that things got out of hands. Plus, the reporter made every thing seem bigger than it was. This book is mostly based on exaggeration.

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## **Erin says**

Nothing But The Truth This book honestly, is good for that kid who believes that school is no good and the adults are out to bring down kids. Honestly. The objective exposition of information and surprise ending makes this a good read for the younger set. I found it annoying, but I think that's because as a faculty member, it really bugged me how everyone failed to research the facts and the administration was all about covering its tracks.

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## **Rob says**

Nothing but the Truth is a subversive little Young Adult novel that takes on educational hypocrisy, personal accountability, and freedom of speech. 9th grade Phillip Malloy, banned from the track team for his poor grade in English, decides to get booted from class in order to transfer to another teacher and improve his grade. Defying the school's rule of respectful silence during the morning playing of "The Star Spangled Banner," Phillip hums along, only to find himself suspended from school for disruptive behavior. What follows is a national firestorm, with Phillip being held aloft as a martyr for free speech, and his teacher, Miss Narwin, accused of anti-patriotism.

Writer Avi weaves together multiple genres, incorporating memos, letters, interview transcripts, dialogue, and journal entries to provide the reader with a multi-faceted, Rashomon-like version of the story, and by the end, he has somehow managed to convince us that everyone involved in the scandal is simultaneously guilty and innocent. It's a subtle, nuanced, sophisticated tale that doesn't have an easy – or clear – moral, and which gracefully and convincingly transcends its Young Adult label.

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## **Xarii Sky says**

Absolutely terrible. I haven't even finished the book yet and it's just bad. It's basically about a snotty kid who doesn't like English or the teacher that teaches English and thinks she's so mean and terrible to him while everyone seems to like her. He thinks she has something against him which is not the case, she finds him to be nice and just wishes he'd try better, but he makes rude comments and class. When he not only has her for English but homeroom too, he is outraged. When the morning announcements come over the school intercom and the song, "The Star Spangled Banner" plays like it does every morning, he hums it to himself and the teacher tells him to stop because the school rules require a moment of silence while its playing. This happens 3 times and she sends him to the office twice. He gets suspended for disrupting the class, not singing or humming the song but that's what he thinks to be true and what he tells everyone until it turns into a huge mess becomes national news.

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## **The Aquamarine says**

I had to read this book for summer reading. I heard from others who read it before that it is really, really bad and confusing. This was the only book that the teachers had for us, so I started reading it. This book really bored me and I hated how the poor teacher had to resign because of one student who just kept on exaggerating and partly lying to make other people dislike her. I feel that this is just a waste of my time

reading and for other students to read.

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### **Michelle says**

My 13 year old daughter was given this book as a Christmas present. She read it in 2 days (a clue that she liked it). I picked it up a few days ago and finished it quickly as well.

We had an interesting discussion about the book at dinner tonight. I was surprised by her support of the teacher character (I expected her to side with the student). We talked about how one incident can escalate into a huge problem, and how gossip can destroy people.

I admit that I didn't like Phillip very much, but I also disliked his parents and some of the school board members and administrators. But I kept reading because the situation was so real to me--I have seen people exactly like this firsthand.

Although I didn't read every review of this book, I found the negative ones interesting, especially those folks who didn't like the characters. Maybe they don't want to admit that there ARE people like that out there (all too many of them)? And since when do you have to like a character for a book to make a point? Maybe you aren't supposed to like them. To me, their flaws are what makes them real.

This was a great book for discussion with my daughter, and I'm grateful that there are writers like Avi who will write thought provoking material for this age group.

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### **Barbara Radisavljevic says**

The main character, Philip Mallory, is entering high school. He wants desperately to be on the track team, but he's not so interested in studying -- especially literature. And he's not about to read *The Call of the Wild*. Kid stuff. ('What can you say about a dog?') He's somewhat interested in girls, and strikes me as the typically unmotivated learner who lives for sports.

Philip has a habit that his homeroom teacher, Mr. Lunser, has tolerated in spite of the school directive that when the national anthem is played over the PA system, students will stand at respectful quiet attention. Philip likes to hum along to it. Mr. Lunser has never made an issue of it. In fact, Mr. Lunser reminds me of some teachers I've had who like to joke around a lot. He makes jokes between the principal's Today in History comments that immediately precede the playing of the national anthem. In fact, Mr. Lunser actually talks to Phillip during the national anthem, telling him to put his book away.

The book flips back and forth between the school directives as published, letters Philip's English teacher Miss Narwin writes to her sister, and conversations between Philip and his coach, Philip and his friends, and Philip and his teachers and parents. The real thorn in Philip's side is Miss Narwin. He's sure she has it in for him because he doesn't do any work for her class. She is constantly trying to find a way to motivate him. She is conscientious, but she is compelled to give him a D in English.

And then Philip finds out that will keep him from trying out for the track team. Then the homeroom classes all change teachers, and Philip winds up in Mrs. Narwin's homeroom.

Mrs. Narwin is not anything like Mr. Lunser. When Philip begins to hum to the national anthem instead of standing in respectful silence, she calls him on it and tells him to stop. They argue about it. Philip finally stops humming. When he goes home he tells his parents Mrs. Narwin would not let him sing the Star Spangled Banner, which he claimed to do from patriotic feeling. His parents say he should stand up for his right to express his patriotism in this way. So the scene repeats itself the next day in homeroom, except Philip doesn't stop this time and Miss Narwin sends him to the principal. This happens again the next day, and over Mrs. Narwin's protest, the principal suspends Philip for two days, and his mother has to leave work to come get him.

In the background you have school politics. The budget is inadequate, and an election is coming soon for a new school board and to vote on the budget. Teachers are being urged to talk up the need for the funds with their neighbors and others. Administration is uptight. Then Philip is suspended, as he explains it, because he sang along, or hummed, to the national anthem. Philip's father's neighbor is running for the school board, and Mr. Mallory complains to him. This becomes an issue in the school board election. The newspaper reports on it. It gets onto the nationwide talk shows. Philip is transferred back to Mr. Lunser's homeroom and finally out of Mrs. Narwin's English class. Mrs. Narwin is put on administrative leave. Administrators keep passing the buck. It becomes a national issue.

The conflict appears to be that Miss Narwin believed Philip's humming was disrespectful and was out of line with the school rules about standing quietly at attention. She considered his humming a disruption. Philip told his parents and everyone else he was humming from patriotic feeling. By the principal's admission, Miss Narwin is one of the school's best teachers, and we see from her letters to her sister that this is true, and she's trying to find a way to reach Philip. When Miss Narwin is put on administrative leave for political reasons, even the coach and Philip's friends turn against him, because they all like Mrs. Narwin. Philip's parents finally put him in a private school where they sing the national anthem every morning. And on Philip's first day there, when he's asked to lead it, he says he can't. And if you haven't read the book, I'm not going to tell you why. But you might want to read the book. The edition I have has study questions at the back which go pretty deep. But for those of you who have read the book, I have a question. Do you think Philip was humming from patriotic feeling? Or was he trying to be disruptive?

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## **Stacey B. says**

1.5 stars

**OVERALL IMPRESSION:** I did not enjoy this book at all. The only reason I finished it was because it was short and a very quick read. The plot angered me and the story never really went anywhere. I just feel like more could have been done with the storyline. It was boring and nothing got accomplished.

**COVER:** I do like the cover of the book. I love that it's simple and that they used the word to The Star Spangled Banner in the form of a flag; I think that's pretty clever.

CHARACTERS: Philip was an okay character. I understand that he is young and doesn't fully grasp the severity of the situation, but I feel like he could have spoke up at the end of the story. I did not like Philip's dad. It seems like this whole situation could have been avoided if Philip's dad did not push him so hard to talk to their neighbor when obviously Philip was reluctant to do so. I also did not really enjoy the character of Miss Narwin. I feel like she should have tried a little harder to stand up for herself instead of just rolling over and taking it.

\*I won this book in a contest at [www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com)

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## **Darth J says**

I LOVED this book so much!

Because this book was soooo damn lame.

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## **Stephen says**

This book is complete shit. When I finished it, I just threw it across my room and picked up another book. There is absolutely nothing redeeming about this novel. First of all, for a book that's really all dialogue, why can't Avi write dialogue well at all? Everybody talks exactly the same and when they talk they sound so ridiculous. There's nothing realistic about it. He's no Elmore Leonard or David Mamet, that's for sure.

Also, the ending. One of the worst endings I've ever read simply because it doesn't make sense. Are we supposed to feel bad for the kid? Or is it supposed to be funny? Personally, I thought it just sucked major shit. That's why I threw it across my room.

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## **Greg says**

### **The Story of Some Asshole Kid who fucks up some poor teacher's life**

I gave this two stars, and then decided it's not worth two stars. The book would be crappy but innocent if it wasn't for it's Newberry Award and the blurb from the *New York Times*, about the story of the main character needing to be shouted out. This story doesn't need to be shouted out, it's a bullshit story, and if I had read this book with some of the patriotic covers I would have probably thrown the thing across the room about half way through it.

The title of this review sums up the story. The story is about some jock asshole who doesn't like to have to do any work. He thinks the world owes him something because he can run fast, and if he doesn't like something he has an unfunny little comment to make about it. He believes people should enjoy these unfunny and unintelligent things he says and let him slide through life only having to do what he wants and have everything else given to him. One teacher takes offense at his moronic ways, and when he decides to get her goat by being a nuisance by humming along with the National Anthem: this all blows up to a national

thing about him being picked on for being patriotic, he lies a lot and the poor teacher's life is made a living hell. He becomes a poster child for right wing values, and then on the last page we learn that he doesn't know the words to the National Anthem.

This is the cliff notes version of the story. It's dumb. It would be harmless if it wasn't an award winning book. It basically tells kids that it's ok to stand up for yourself in any situation, especially when you're being an asshole. Every couple of weeks I get to interact with kids that have the same level of witty remarks as the narrator, I've learned the best way to deal with their middling wit is to turn around really quickly at them, glare and ask them, what did you fucking say to me? The witty one usually looks really scared and sometimes mutters some kind of really dumb apology. I don't know how people deal with teenagers everyday and not kill them. But I'm getting off the point.

This kid should have had the shit beaten out of him by someone. If anything this book is a good example of why teachers should be allowed to smack kids around.

Besides not liking the whole premise of the book, I also thought it was written like shit. I got an idea Avi, if you're going to write a book entirely with dialog why don't you go listen to how people talk in the real world. The dialog is stilted, but not in the cool David Mamet way. It's all written as if there is no difference between characters, and every character happened to have the speaking ability of a narcissistic ninth grader with the intelligence of a fourth grader. How this won an award is beyond me. I told Karen when I was about thirty pages into this that I want to be a Newberry Award Winning author, it seems like the big criteria is to come up with a eye catchy and edgy format, get a half-baked controversial topic and then just knock that shit out as fast as you can, and you'll be sitting pretty with a book being used in classes all over the country. I've said it already, but it can't hurt to say again, what a load of semi-literate shit.

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## **babyhippoface says**

Wow. I can't believe how much this book bothered me. I never have liked Avi much; I guess our styles clash. But I had heard about this title for years, so today I picked it up and starting reading. I don't yet know if I'm glad I did, or wish I hadn't.

The problem is that this scenario is more realistic than I would like to believe. In fact, an author's note at the beginning reveals that similar situations have taken place all over the country. And that is just... disturbing. So many characters only looked at the events from one point of view, squashing the "truth" into the mold they preferred. Reaction without intelligent thought. So frustrating....

The major reason I disliked this book is that the main character, Philip, is an entirely self-centered, whiny, and unlikeable smart-alec who feels entitled and thinks he's funny when he's not. I don't understand why anyone who actually spoke to Philip himself would believe his version of the "truth". And that's the trouble-- not enough people in authority actually speak to Philip. They don't read his body language or hear his snarky comments. They don't hear how his answers to questions change depending on the answer he thinks will keep him "in the clear". Was he humming, or was he singing? He can't even keep that straight.

Then those that do speak with him don't bother to speak to Miss Narwin about her motivation for sending Philip out of the room. They listen to what comes out of Philip's mouth and take that for the whole story. There are two characters who question the version of events they're being fed, though, a reporter and a radio caller: *there must be more to this story*, they think. If only the other adults would have been struck with such



common sense.

It is never stated anywhere in the book that Philip has sung along with Star Spangled Banner before. He does it in Miss Narwin's class solely as an attempt to get moved out of her classes. He baits Miss Narwin from Day 1, and the other students know it. Philip has no sense of "patriotism"--our first encounter with him shows him reading during the Anthem, and on the last page he admits he doesn't even know the words to the Anthem. And yet he is hailed as a martyr for his patriotism by people ignorant of the facts. Made me wish there'd been a security camera rolling in the classroom, so the real truth could be revealed to everyone who felt so free to spew hatred to the teacher.

I can see how this book could make for some mighty lively classroom discussions. Honestly, I really hated it. It gets 1 star on the "How Much Did I Like It?" scale. But it is compelling, so it gets 4 stars on the "Interesting" scale. (If Avi has gotten me this riled up I must have taken it just the way he intended.) So, I'll slap 3 stars on it--and that's my version of "the truth".

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### **Abbie says**

I had a very large mixture of feelings about this book. I liked the plot, I didn't like the main character. I hated the end although it probably is the best end it could have and still be realistic. What made this book awesome was its complexity. The way it made you think and the way it challenges the concept of truth. Phil told what he knew as the truth but Miss Narwin also told what she knew as the truth. Neither were wrong yet neither was right. Then of course the principal just told everything in a way that it favored him. Another interesting thing was how this one tiny occurrence spread into something larger than it was through media. I also thought it was cool how this book was told mainly through conversation.

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