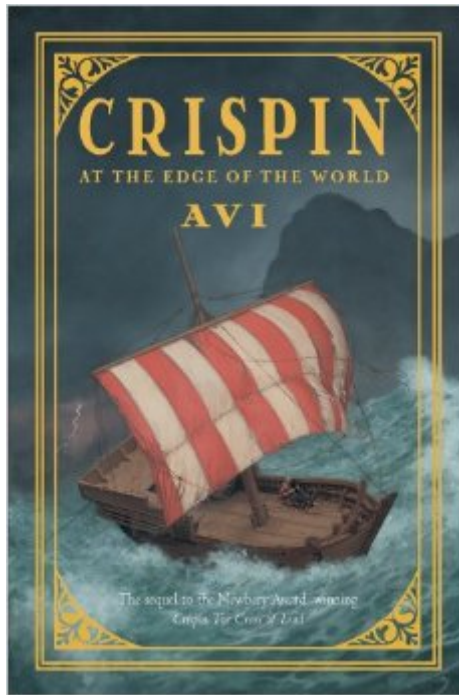


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# Crispin: At The Edge Of The World



## Synopsis

The more I came to know of the world, the more I knew I knew it not. He was a nameless orphan, marked for death by his masters for an unknown crime. Discovering his name—Crispin—only intensified the mystery. Then Crispin met Bear, who helped him learn the secret of his full identity. And in Bear—the enormous, red-bearded juggler, sometime spy, and everyday philosopher—Crispin also found a new father and a new world. Now Crispin and Bear have set off to live their lives as free men. But they don't get far before their past catches up with them: Bear is being pursued by members of the secret brotherhood who believe he is an informer. When Bear is badly wounded, it is up to Crispin to make decisions about their future—where to go, whom to trust. Along the way they become entangled with an extraordinary range of people, each of whom affects Crispin and Bear's journey in unexpected ways. To find freedom and safety, they may have to travel to the edge of the world—even if it means confronting death itself. In this riveting sequel to the Newbery-Award winning *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, the second book in a planned trilogy, Avi explores themes of war, religion, and family as he continues the adventures of Crispin and Bear.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

2006 has been a good year for Newbery sequels. First Louis Sachar comes out with, "Small Steps", his follow-up to "Holes". Then Avi does the same with the second part of his Crispin series. "Crispin: At the Edge of the World" begins at the precise moment that "Crispin: The Cross of Lead" ended.

Like its predecessor, the book is chock full of intelligent contemplations on the nature of "good" and "evil". More importantly, with this book Avi is taking the time to show that a human being is a tricky changeable thing. That said, this is the weaker of the two books and feels very much to be the middle section of a three part series. There's much to admire in Avi's writing here, but I had a hard time getting past some of the story's sadism to truly think it worthy reading. When last we saw our young hero Crispin and Bear, his stalwart fatherly companion, the two had just left Great Wexly, but not before the elder of the two had suffered some severe torture. Weakened, Bear is further wounded by members of the secretive rebel brotherhood, to whom he belonged. The brotherhood now believes that Bear has betrayed them and they will stop at nothing to seek his death. Soon the two join up with a disfigured girl named Troth who helps to heal them and keep them safe. The three decide the next course of action is to find somewhere safe to live. Unfortunately the brotherhood is not so easily dissuaded and on top of everything else, Bear is increasingly perturbed by the fate of his own soul. Apparently there are things in the man's past that haunt him still. Now Crispin must put away his idealized Bear and exchange him for something far more human. However unpleasant this change may be. I was a little shocked at the fate of Bear in this book.

"What kind of men -- I wondered -- were these that killed by day, drank by night, but prayed each morning?" If you have yet to read *CRISPIN: THE CROSS OF LEAD*, then I urge you to stop reading this review of the second book (in what will hopefully become a *CRISPIN* trilogy), and immediately buy, borrow, or steal a copy of the first book. And if you have already read *CRISPIN: THE CROSS OF LEAD*, you are in for a wonderful surprise: the second *CRISPIN* book is even more powerful and moving than the first. In fact, Avi could have chosen to write a safe and forgettable sequel to his 2003 Newbery Medal-winner, *CRISPIN: THE CROSS OF LEAD*. Regardless of such a sequel's significance, or lack thereof, school and public librarians everywhere would add to their collections an author's follow-up to a Newbery Medal-winning tale. But rather than taking that path of least resistance, Avi has, instead, crafted a breathtaking and oft-brutal medieval adventure story that is underlain with some subtle-yet-biting satire. The result is a sequel that could well stand on its own as the most exciting and thought-provoking book of Avi's long and celebrated career. "It was a June morning when Bear and I passed beyond Great Wexly's walls and left the crowded and treacherous city behind. The June sun was warm, the sky above as blue as my Blessed Lady's spotless robe; our triumphant sense of liberty kept me giddy with joy. Hardly able to contain myself, I more than once cried out, 'My name is Crispin!' for all the world to hear." With a seamless transition from the first book, *CRISPIN: AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD* picks up the harrowing adventures of Crispin

and Bear exactly where and when the first book left off.

This is a sequel to Avi's *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. This series is set in the year 1377, during a period of political and social crisis in England. The protagonist is Crispin, a poor orphan. Crispin grew up in a small village, but had to flee due to persecution from the local steward. In the first book he threw in his lot with Bear, a traveling entertainer and father figure. The second book, *Crispin: At the Edge of the World*, begins where the first book left off, with Crispin and Bear jubilantly making their way out of the city of Great Wexly, and into the world. Their happiness is short-lived, however, as they are soon attacked by a man who believes that Bear has betrayed a secret brotherhood. Bear is gravely injured. With Bear wounded and unable to take his customary charge of the situation, Crispin has to grow up quickly. The two are taken in by an elderly healer woman named Aude and her adopted daughter, Troth. Aude and Troth are not Christian, which is very difficult for Crispin to understand and accept at first. He also has trouble adjusting to Troth's cleft palate (which caused her birth parents to abandon her, and which was generally considered to be a mark of the Devil at the time). Eventually, however, Aude and Troth's kindness breaks through his barriers, and Crispin's worldview expands to accept them. Through continuing bad luck, Troth, Crispin, and Bear end up back on the road together, an unconventional but loyal family. They remain on the run from the angry brotherhood that attacked Bear, and from Crispin's enemies, and they seek refuge by the sea. The mere existence of the sea is remarkable to Crispin and Troth, who had both previously led very sheltered lives.

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