

[PDF] Nothing But The Truth

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Books Details:

Title: Nothing but the Truth

Author: Avi

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Pages:

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Structured as a series of journal entries, memos, letters and dialogues, this highly original novel emerges as a witty satire of high school politics, revealing how truth can easily become distorted. After Philip Malloy, a clownish, rather unmotivated freshman, is punished for causing a disturbance (humming "The Star Spangled Banner"), facts about the incident become exaggerated until a minor school infraction turns into a national scandal. Philip's parents, several reporters and a neighbor (who happens to be running for the school board) accuse the school of being unpatriotic. Philip gains fame as a martyr for freedom; his homeroom teacher, Miss Narwin, however, faces dismissal from her job. After gleaning the points of view of many characters, readers will side with Miss Narwin and will recognize the hollowness of Philip's eventual victory. It is clear that Avi (*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*) is attuned to the modern high school scene. With frankness and remarkable insight, he conveys the flaws of the system while creating a story that is both entertaining and profound. Ages 11-up.

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From School Library Journal Grade 6-9-- Ninth grader Philip Malloy finds himself unable to participate on the track team because of his failing grade in English. Convinced the teacher, Margaret Narwin, dislikes him, he concocts a scheme to get transferred from her homeroom: instead of standing "at respectful, silent attention" during the national anthem, Philip hums. Throughout the ensuing disciplinary problems at school, his parents take his side, ignore the fact that he is breaking a school rule, and concentrate on issues of patriotism. The conflict between Philip and his school escalates, and he quickly finds the situation out of his control; local community leaders, as well as the national news media, become involved. At this point, the novel surges forward to a heartbreaking, but totally believable, conclusion. Avi carefully sets forth the events in the story, advancing the plot through conversations between students, Philip's parents, school personnel, and community politicians, while Philip's point of view is revealed through his diary entries, and Margaret Narwin's through letters to her sister. Also enriching the narrative are copies of school memos and newspaper articles, transcripts of speeches delivered, and copies of letters received by both Philip and his teacher; each document provides another perspective on the conflict and illuminates the many themes that beg to be discussed--most notably the irony of lives destroyed because of the misuse of power and the failure of people to communicate. Admirably well crafted and thought provoking. --Ellen Fader, Westport Public Library, CT

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