**Avi Interview (Internet Public Library)**

**AVI**



*(Please note that the following profile was compiled by IPL staff who corresponded with this author in 1996. It has not been updated since. Those wishing to write to this author should not write to the IPL, as we do not have a way to contact him via e-mail. They should write him in care of his publisher at the following address:* HarperCollins Children's Books; 1350 Avenue of the Americas; New York, NY 10019)

Avi is well known to his readers for two very different books, both Newberry Honor Award winners, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* and *Nothing But the Truth*. Avi was born in 1937 in Brooklyn, New York. He is married and has sons. He has written mystery, adventure, fantasy and ghost stories. One message he extends to all readers is, "Listen and watch the world around you. Try to understand why things happen. Don't be satisfied with answers others give you. Don't assume that because everyone believes a thing it is right or wrong. Reason things out for yourself. Work to get answers on your own. Understand why you believe things. Finally, write what you honestly feel, then learn from the criticism that will always come your way." *AVI*

**AVI FAQ's**

1. **Where do you get your ideas?**

One gets ideas by thinking about books, and how they are constructed. That is, ideas do not come to me whole, they are created slowly by looking at things and people and situations in terms of stories. Everybody has ideas. The vital question is, what do you do with them? My wife, a college teacher, users her ideas to understand literature. My rock musician sons shape their ideas into music. My sister takes her ideas and fashions them into poems. My brother uses his ideas to help him understand science. I take my ideas and turn them into stories. Now, what do you think you'll do with your ideas?

1. **Where did you get the name, AVI?**

It was my twin sister who gave me the name avi when we were infants. Since my family tried to discourage me from becoming a writer, I decided not to put their name on my books. The fact is, Avi is the only name I use.

1. **When did you get interested in writing?**

I started to get interested in writing when I was a high school senior. I think you become a writer when you stop writing for yourself or your teachers and start thinking about readers.

1. **Did you write kids' books right from the start?**

I began as a playwright. Only when I had kids of my own did I start to write for young people.

1. **Do you enjoy writing? Is it hard for you?**

I enjoy writing and it is hard. But then it is hard for everyone to write well. I have to rewrite over and over again so that on average it takes me a year to write a book.

1. **Do you have any advice for people who want to write?**

I believe reading is the key to writing. The more you read, the better your writing can be.

1. **What did you read when you were a kid?**

Picture books, then chapter books, comic books, and I listened to lots of kids' radio.

1. **What did you like to do when you were a kid?**

I liked to read, play with my friends, listen to the radio, build models, go to the movies--but not much interested in sports.

1. **How do you know when to end a book?**

I end my books when I feel the story reaches its logical conclusion. Most times my readers agree that the ending fits. Now and again some one does not. It's hard, I guess, to please everyone.

1. **How do you write and do you need quiet?**

I write on a word processor and yes, I do need absolute quiet to work.

1. **What is your favorite book?**

The next one.

1. **Do you ever get bored with writing?**

If you do anything all the time it's nice to get away from it now and again. My hobby is photography.