



# Crispin: The Cross of Lead

by Avi

## Teacher's Guide

Written By Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D.

**PERMA-BOUND**  
THE STRONGEST BOOKS YOU CAN BUY

**CLASSROOM  
FAVORITES**

**A Perma-Bound Production**

*This guide was prepared using the Hyperion edition, ©2002. Other editions may differ.*

## Synopsis

### Chapter 1

The novel opens in England in 1377 with the funeral of Asta. Her sole mourner is her son, identified only as "Asta's son." Told that he must relinquish his ox, Asta's son runs into the woods.

### Chapter 2

There, he witnesses a mysterious meeting between the manor steward Aycliffe and a stranger.

### Chapter 3

Asta's son reveals they are poor, shunned serfs.

### Chapter 4

His cottage is pulled down and burned.

### Chapter 5

A meeting is called in the church.

### Chapter 6

A hue and cry has been raised against Asta's son.

### Chapter 7

He hides in the woods all day.

### Chapter 8

From Father Quinel, Asta's son learns his real name, Crispin. He also learns that Aycliffe has declared him a "wolf's head," less than human, and that he should be killed on sight, because he supposedly robbed the manor house. The priest also gives Crispin his mother's cross, reveals she was literate, and urges him to flee.

### Chapter 9

Crispin gets food from the village hag, Peregrine, and sets off.

### Chapter 10

He heads toward the manor house, right into a trap.

### Chapter 11

While escaping, he discovers the body of Father Quinel.

### Chapter 12

Crispin flees for his life, with nothing to sustain him but his faith in God.

### Chapter 13

He spends two days in the woods, famished and terrified.

### Chapter 14

He finds a hanged man, which terrifies him.

### Chapter 15

He enters a village, deserted because of the plague, and pokes among the corpses, looking for food. He hears a voice.

### Chapter 16

Crispin is offered bread and quickly trapped.

### Chapter 17

The man blocks his way out.

### Chapter 18

Crispin becomes the man's servant.

### Chapter 19

The man is called Bear, and explains that they will wander and entertain.

### Chapter 20

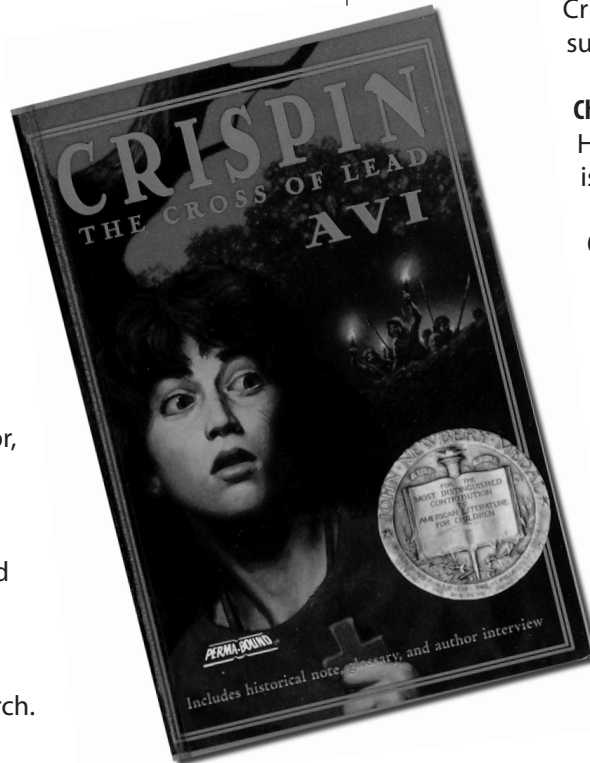
Bear doesn't want Crispin to call him "Sir," the first hint that Bear considers Crispin more than a servant.

### Chapter 21

Bear talks about his past and teaches Crispin to juggle.

### Chapter 22

They poach some meat as they make their way to the village of Great Wexley.



# Crispin: The Cross of Lead Avi

---

## **Chapter 23**

Crispin tells Bear the truth about his past.

## **Chapter 24**

Bear educates Crispin about free will.

## **Chapter 25**

Bear vows to teach Crispin about music so the boy has a trade and self-worth.

## **Chapter 26**

Crispin learns to play the recorder. Bear treats Crispin as a son.

## **Chapter 27**

They avoid a trap at Burley.

## **Chapter 28**

Bear reads the inscription on Crispin's cross but refuses to reveal what it says. He instead says, "The light is too weak."

## **Chapter 29**

Revealing that he is part of a Brotherhood to get workers' rights, Bear advises Crispin to run for safety if there is any trouble.

## **Chapter 30**

In the village of Lodgecot, Bear cleverly asks the priest for permission to entertain, easily winning over the man and thus the village. They entertain and make some money and food. They hear of Crispin's "crime and escape," now inflated to include the murder of Father Quinel.

## **Chapter 31**

To Crispin's delight, Bear gives him a penny for his work.

## **Chapter 32**

Crispin loves his life with Bear. Bear teaches him how to use weapons. To Crispin's joy, Bear offers him the chance to be his apprentice rather than his servant.

## **Chapter 33**

Crispin is fascinated by the people he sees on the road. They approach the Bishop's Gate of Great Wexly, the tight security making it plain that the guards are looking for someone.

## **Chapter 34**

They dance their way in, to their great relief. Crispin is dumbfounded by all that he sees and hears.

## **Chapter 35**

Bear goes to the Green Man tavern to conduct his business. From a lady in a tavern, they learn that Lord Furnival of Stromford has died.

## **Chapter 36**

The Widow Daventry takes Bear and Crispin to their "special" room, high in the inn. It has a hiding place.

## **Chapter 37**

Crispin explores the town and is shocked to see Lady Furnival.

## **Chapter 38**

Later, he comes across John Aycliffe, who spots Crispin and orders his arrest.

## **Chapter 39**

Crispin evades capture, but is locked in the town.

## **Chapter 40**

To his great relief, Crispin runs into Bear.

## **Chapter 41**

Crispin overhears part of Bear's meeting with John Ball.

## **Chapter 42**

Crispin feels a sense of foreboding.

## **Chapter 43**

Crispin helps the Widow in the kitchen.

## **Chapter 44**

A man spies on the inn. Fearing he is out to harm Bear, Crispin disobeys Bear's order and leaves the inn to warn him.

## **Chapter 45**

Crispin sees Aycliffe and the one-eyed man whom Bear had offended in the previous town heading toward Bear and Ball's meeting.

## **Chapter 46**

Crispin warns Bear that the soldiers are coming, but in saving Crispin, Bear is captured.

## **Chapter 47**

Crispin disobeys Bear's previous order and stays in the city. Crispin returns to the inn and gets into the hiding place in their room.

## **Chapter 48**

In their zeal to find Crispin and fury when they don't, Aycliffe and his soldiers destroy the inn and beat the Widow Daventry. The Widow tells Crispin that Bear is being tortured to reveal Crispin's whereabouts, but that he loves Crispin too much to crack.

## Chapter 49

The Widow reads Crispin's cross, "Crispin—son of Furnival." Crispin now understands that Lord Furnival was his father and that Aycliffe is set on preventing him from claiming his title. The Widow reveals what Bear told her: Crispin's mother had most likely been a gentlewoman attached to the court. According to rumor, she was the youngest daughter of Lord Douglas, taken by Furnival against her will and then discarded.

## Chapter 50

Crispin now understands the conversation in the woods he had overheard very early on, ordering his death.

## Chapter 51

Crispin thinks about what Bear taught him of freedom and vows to free Bear.

## Chapter 52

Crispin leaves the inn.

## Chapter 53

The Widow hires a man to lead Crispin out of the town, but Crispin pays the man to lead him to the White Stag tavern to talk to Bear's co-conspirators. There, only one man agrees to help him.

## Chapter 54

The man leads him to the palace and then vanishes. Crispin sneaks into the palace.

## Chapter 55

In a dining hall, he sees a portrait of Lord Furnival and realizes that he bears a striking resemblance, proving that the message on the cross had been true. John Aycliffe bursts in.

## Chapter 56

Crispin admits his true identity and promises Aycliffe that if Bear is released and they are allowed to leave, he will relinquish all claims to the throne. Crispin backs up his words with action, attacking Aycliffe with his dagger.

## Chapter 57

Crispin rescues Bear from the dungeon, where he has indeed been tortured. They are taken to the gates.

## Chapter 58

Aycliffe reneges on his vow and refuses to let Bear and Crispin leave. The two men fight and Aycliffe is impaled on his own soldiers' swords. Bear and Crispin happily set off for a new life.

## Timeline

<b>1327-1377</b>	Edward III is king of England.
<b>1348-1349</b>	Plague kills nearly one-third of the population of England.
<b>1351</b>	The Statute of Labourers places a maximum limit on wages. The act is nearly impossible to enforce.
<b>1363</b>	<i>Crispin is born.</i>
<b>ca. 1365</b>	John Ball, a priest, begins preaching on social equality and justice.
<b>1369-1373</b>	English lose much of the territory they had previously captured in France.
<b>1376</b>	John Ball is excommunicated
<b>1377-1399</b>	Richard II is king of England.
<b>1377</b>	<i>Crispin's mother dies.</i>
<b>1380</b>	To finance the war with France, a poll tax is instituted.
<b>May - June 1381</b>	The Peasants Rebellion begins as English villagers refuse to pay the poll tax.
<b>June 7</b>	Rebels release John Ball from prison.
<b>June 14</b>	The rebels reach London, where they ransack many homes and kill the Archbishop of Canterbury.
<b>June 15</b>	King Richard II meets with the rebels. During the meeting, the rebel leader Wat Tyler is killed. The revolt is effectively over. Over 1,500 rebels, including John Ball, are later executed.

## Author Sketch

Avi ("Ah-vee") Wortis was born December 23, 1937, in New York, NY. His father was a psychiatrist; his mother, a social worker. Avi was educated at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he earned a B.A. in 1959 and an M.A. in 1962. In 1964, Avi earned a



Masters of Library Science from Columbia University. Avi got the nickname "Avi" when his twin sister, Emily, mispronounced his real name, Edward Irving, as "Avi." Avi is known for novels marked by colorful characters and intricate plots. Encompassing a wide variety of genres, Avi's books typically offer complex, thought-provoking, and sometimes disturbingly realistic reflections on American history and culture. A long-time champion of literary issues involving young readers, the author

## Crispin: The Cross of Lead AvI

---

summed up his writing goals this way: "I try to write about complex issues – young people in an adult world – full of irony and contradiction, in a narrative style that relies heavily on suspense with a texture rich in emotion and imagery. I take a great deal of satisfaction in using popular forms – the adventure, the mystery, the thriller – so as to hold my reader with the sheer pleasure of a good story. At the same time I try to resolve my books with an ambiguity that compels engagement. In short, I want my readers to feel, to think, sometimes to laugh. But most of all I want them to enjoy a good read."

### Critic's Corner

*Crispin* was the 2003 Newbery Award Winner and a *New York Times* best-seller. Reviews were enthusiastic. *Publishers Weekly* called *Crispin* "A page turner to delight AvI's fans, it will leave readers hoping for a sequel." Writing in Amazon.com, Paul Hughes said, "AvI tells a good story, develops a couple of fairly compelling characters, and even manages to teach a little history lesson." Cheri Estes in *School Library Journal* noted: "AvI has done an excellent job of integrating background and historical information, of pacing the plot so that the book is a page-turner from beginning to end, and of creating characters for whom readers will have great empathy. The result is a meticulously crafted story, full of adventure, mystery, and action. AvI builds an impressive backdrop for his arresting characters: a tense medieval world in which hostility against the landowners and their cruelties is increasing."

### Other Books By AvI

*Things That Sometimes Happened*, 1970  
*Snail Tale*, 1972  
*Performing Arts Resources*, 1974  
*No More Magic*, 1975  
*Captain Grey*, 1977  
*Emily Upham's Revenge*, 1978  
*Night Journeys*, 1979  
*Encounter at Easton*, 1980  
*The History of Helpless Harry*, 1980  
*The Man from the Sky*, 1980  
*A Place Called Ugly*, 1981  
*Who Stole the Wizard of Oz?*, 1981  
*Sometimes I Think I Hear My Name*, 1982  
*Shadrach's Crossing*, 1983  
*The Fighting Ground*, 1984  
*Devil's Race*, 1984  
*S. O. R. Losers*, 1984  
*Bright Shadow*, 1985

*Wolf Rider: A Tale of Terror*, 1986  
*Romeo and Juliet—Together (and Alive!)—at Last*, 1987  
*Something Upstairs: A Tale of Ghosts*, 1988  
*The Man Who Was Poe*, 1989  
*Seahawk*, 1990  
*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, 1990  
*Nothing but the Truth: A Documentary Novel*, 1991  
*Blue Heron*, 1992  
*Who Was That Masked Man, Anyway?*, 1992  
*Windcatcher*, 1992  
*Punch with Judy*, 1993  
*City of Light, City of Dark: A Comic Book Novel*, 1993  
*The Barn*, 1994  
*Shadrach's Crossing Smuggler's Island*, 1994  
*The Bird, the Frog, and the Light: A Fable*, 1994  
*Tom, Babette, and Simon: Three Tales of Transformation*, 1995  
*Poppy*, 1995  
*Beyond the Western Sea*, 1996  
*What Do Fish Have to Do with Anything?: Short Stories*, 1997  
*Finding Providence: The Story of Roger Williams*, 1997  
*Poppy and Rye*, 1998  
*Perloo the Bold*, 1998  
*Beyond the Western Sea, Book II: Lord Kirkle's Money*, 1998  
*Amanda Joins the Circus*, 1998  
*Ragweed*, 1999  
*Midnight Magic*, 1999  
*Ereth's Birthday*, 2000  
*Christmas Rat*, 2000  
*Secret School*, 2001  
*Prarie School*, 2001  
*Good Dog*, 2001  
*Don't You Know There's a War On?*, 2001  
*Things That Sometimes Happen*, 2002  
*Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, 2002  
*Silent Movie*, 2003  
*Never Mind! A Twin Novel*, 2004  
*End of the Beginning: Being the Adventures of a Small Snail (And an Even Smaller Ant)*, 2004  
*Book Without Words: A Fable of Medieval Magic*, 2005  
*Poppy's Return*, 2005  
*Best Shorts: Favorite Short Stories for Sharing*, 2006  
*Crispin: At the Edge of the World*, 2006  
*Strange Happenings: Five Tales of Transformation*, 2006



## Bibliography

- Behind The Covers: Interviews With Authors And Illustrators Of Books For Children And Young Adults*, Libraries Unlimited, 1985, pp. 33-41.
- Bloom, Susan P., and Cathryn M. Mercier, *Presenting Avi*, Twayne (New York City), 1997.
- Bulletin Of The Center For Children's Books*, June 1984, p. 180; October 1989, p. 27.
- Markham, Lois, *Avi*, Learning Works (Santa Barbara, CA), 1996.
- New York Times Book Review*, September 11, 1977; March 1, 1981, p. 24.
- School Library Journal*, March 1978, p. 124; May 1980, p. 64; November 1980, p. 68; September, 1984, p. 125; October 1984, p. 164; December 1986, pp. 111-12.
- Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*, St. Martin's, 1989, pp. 45-46.

## General Objectives

1. To analyze the social structure of medieval England
2. To recognize ambition
3. To recognize the themes of loyalty and acceptance
4. To analyze the significance of a strong father figure
5. To understand the novel's title
6. To probe the importance of freedom and self-determination
7. To find examples of friendship
8. To understand power struggles
9. To describe the novel's mood or atmosphere
10. To predict what the future holds for Crispin

## Specific Objectives

1. To explore why Crispin is powerless and illiterate
2. To analyze why Aycliffe wants to kill Crispin
3. To probe the relationship between Bear and Crispin
4. To understand how Bear trains Crispin to be self-reliant
5. To recognize Crispin's birthright
6. To trace how Crispin begins to appreciate free will
7. To understand the story's theme
8. To compare and contrast Crispin at the beginning and end
9. To learn more about life in medieval England
10. To identify the novel's structure, especially its climax

## Literary Terms And Applications

For a better understanding of Avi's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

**foreshadowing:** clues that hint at what will happen later on in the story. Writers use foreshadowing to create suspense and link related details. For example, Avi foreshadows the novel's climax—the revelation of Crispin's royal identity—when he refuses to reveal what the cross says in Chapter 28.

**suspense:** the feeling of tension or anticipation an author creates in a work. Authors create suspense by unexpected plot twists. This keeps readers interested in the story and makes them want to read on to find out what will happen. Avi builds suspense by having Aycliffe hunt Crispin throughout the novel.

**figurative language:** words and expressions not used in a literal sense. Writers use figurative language to create layers of meaning, reinforce their themes, and suggest intriguing relationships. Avi's style is highly figurative, with beautiful metaphors such as this one that Crispin says in Chapter 1: "Seeking to escape my heart's cage of sorrow, I rushed off toward the forest."

## Cross-Curricular Sources

### Fiction

- Karen Cushman, *Catherine, Called Birdy and The Midwife's Apprentice*
- Allen French, *Lord Baron: A Story of England in the Year 1200 and The Story of Rolf and the Viking Bow*
- Eleanore Jewett, *The Hidden Treasure of Glaston*
- Barbara Willard, *If All The Swords In England: A Story of Thomas Becket*
- Barbara Willard, *Son of Charlemagne*

### Nonfiction

- John Green, *Life in a Medieval Castle and Village*
- Kathryn Hinds, *The Church (Life In The Middle Ages)*
- Andrew Langley, *Eyewitness: Medieval Life*
- Tony McAleavy, *Life in a Medieval Abbey*
- Phillip Steele, *The Medieval World*

### Audio

- Crispin*, narrated by Ron Keith

# Crispin: The Cross of Lead Avi

## Videos/Films

*History of the World – Part 1* (1981)

*In Celebration: 125 Years at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*  
(Glories Of Medieval Art: The Cloisters) (2001)

*Living in the Past: Life in Medieval Times* (2000)

*Secrets of the Lost Empires II: Medieval Siege* (2000)

## Themes And Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Avi's *Crispin* should include these aspects:

### Themes

- determination
- bravery
- poverty
- illiteracy
- fear
- alienation
- friendship
- loyalty
- murder
- suspense

### Motifs

- rebelling against an unfair social system
- standing up for what you believe
- learning a trade
- traveling and widening your experiences
- having a father figure
- dealing with being different
- growth and change
- self-awareness and maturity
- helping others get ahead
- the importance of human rights

## Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. "Am I to act immediately?" (Chap. 2, p. 9)  
(*Crispin overhears a meeting in the woods, which sets off the novel's suspense. With Furnival's impending death, Crispin is no longer under his protection and so must be killed to protect the throne from his claim and to secure Aycliffe's power.*)

2. "A wolf's head!" I gasped, horrified. (Chap 8, p. 36)  
(*Crispin has been declared inhuman and so anyone can kill him with impunity. This increases the suspense.*)
3. "I'll tell you about your father." (Chap 8, p. 39)  
(*Father Quinel promises to reveal Crispin's fatherhood when it is safe for the lad to return. Readers thus know that Crispin's paternity must be the device upon which the plot turns.*)
4. He did not reply. (Chap 28, p. 134)  
(*Bear reads the cross and realizes that Crispin is Lord Furnival's illegitimate son. To shield the child from the danger he faces, Bear refuses to reveal what the cross says.*)
5. "Ah, Crispin, you could do worse. Far worse."  
(Chap 31, p. 150)  
(*Bear has called Crispin his son. When Crispin questions it, Bear affirms that it's not a bad deal at all. We see how Bear has become a father by teaching and sheltering his "son" Crispin.*)
6. "And we're free men." (Chap 31, p. 151)  
(*Bear works for freedom for the downtrodden and is teaching Crispin the importance of self-determination.*)
7. "He has no legal heirs... although it's rumored there are some illegitimate ones" (Chap 35, p. 176)  
(*Bear learns that with Furnival's death, everyone wonders who will assume the throne. By now, readers suspect Crispin's claim and the danger he faces as a result.*)
8. "It says, 'Crispin—son of Furnival.'" (Chap 49, p. 245)  
(*The Widow Daventry reveals the words on the cross and Crispin's paternity.*)
9. For the first time, I began to think upon John Bull's words. (Chap 51, p. 253)  
(*Crispin realizes that no person should be enslaved to another but stand free and equal. This is one of the book's themes.*)
10. "Crispin... I do love you like a son." (Chap 57, p. 283)  
(*Bear is terrified that he betrayed Crispin while being tortured. He did not, but we see that true fatherhood is far more than genes: it's also love and self-sacrifice.*)

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. When and where does the story take place?  
*(The story is set in 1363 in England.)*
2. What does the “wolf’s head” put on Crispin mean?  
*(This means Crispin is no longer human so anyone can kill him. Aycliffe wants to eliminate Crispin’s claim to the throne.)*
3. Why does Crispin leave his home?  
*(He knows he is in mortal danger after his mother’s death.)*
4. What does Bear teach Crispin?  
*(In addition to juggling and music, Bear teaches Crispin about freedom and how to use weapons.)*
5. How does Aycliffe die?  
*(He is impaled on his soldiers’ swords during a battle with Bear.)*

### Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. How would you describe the medieval social structure?  
*(It is highly stratified: everyone has a set place and is supposed to stay in that place, never to aspire for more.)*
7. In what ways is Bear like a father to Crispin?  
*(Bear loves, protects, and teaches Crispin. He places Crispin’s safety above his own.)*
8. How does Crispin change as a result of his experiences?  
*(He comes to appreciate freedom and the importance of determining his own fate and making his own life.)*

### Questions 9-10 (Critical Level)

9. Do you agree with Crispin’s decision to give up his claim to the throne? Why or why not?  
*(Those who agree can argue that Crispin is demonstrating self-determination and achieving freedom, the novel’s theme; those who disagree might argue the advantages of being a king.)*
10. Is Asta a victim of her time and place or a hero in spite of it? Explain your answer.  
*(Possible answer: She is a victim because females had no rights*

*and Furnival destroyed her life. Further, she had no control over her fate and was bitter about it.)*

### Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. List examples of hardships that Crispin faced. Then rank these hardships from most to least difficult.
12. Would you have taken the throne if you had been in Crispin’s place? Argue your point.

## Across The Curriculum

### Language Arts

1. *Crispin* shows the power of a name. Explain how your name reflects your identity and heritage.
2. The novel opens with a riddle. Explain the riddle and write another one that relates to the novel.
3. Draw up Crispin’s family tree.
4. Explain the Great Chain of Being, the philosophy that governs the social system in medieval England.
5. In a brief essay, explain how the novel would change if told from a different point of view.
6. How is the book’s subtitle a metaphor for Crispin’s life?

### Music And Drama

1. *Crispin* received the Newbery award. In a speech, explain why the book did or did not deserve this honor.
2. Learn how to juggle. Demonstrate your skill for the class.
3. Learn how to play the recorder. Play a song for some classmates.
4. Write and deliver a eulogy for Asta.

### Art And Music

1. Design a poster for a movie version of *Crispin*.
2. Create a cartoon version of the novel in which you use art and captions to summarize the plot.
3. Make a model of Crispin’s hovel.

4. Draw a portrait of Furnival, like the one Crispin saw.
5. Write a song that Bear and Crispin might sing in a town.

### Geography And History

1. *Crispin* tells the story of England's peasant revolt of 1381. Find out more about this historical event. Share your findings.
2. Create a family tree for England's monarchs in the 14th century.
3. Explain the system of serfdom.
4. Describe the pilgrimages that people took during the medieval time period.
5. Explain the role and power of the Catholic church in medieval England.

### Science And Math

1. Explain the plague. What causes the disease? What are the symptoms and treatments? Is the plague around today?
2. Make a chart or graph showing the number of people killed by the plague in England during the medieval period.
3. Explain the old-fashioned measurements used in the novel, such as leagues, rods, and furlongs. Give their modern equivalents.
4. Describe the medical belief in "humors," the underpinnings of medieval medicine.
5. How is alchemy, the theory concerning changing "lead to gold" of scientific use? (Hint: modern jewelry can use cubic zirconias rather than diamonds).

## Alternate Assessment

1. Make a character list and briefly describe each character.
2. Retell the events in this novel from Aycliffe's point of view.
3. Compose an extended character sketch of Crispin and Bear, in which you compare and contrast their personalities.
4. Write a critical review of the novel for publication in the school newspaper.



## Vocabulary

Complete each sentence with a vocabulary word from the novel. Use each word only once. You will have words left over.

apprentice	dexterity	liberties	stench
bulk	forage	malevolence	taunted
clamor	frail	mission	transgression
curfew	garment	pallet	treason
deign	jibe	shroud	welt

1. Crispin was upset that his mother's corpse was placed in the ground without being covered by a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The village children \_\_\_\_\_ and teased Crispin because his father was unknown.
3. Lord Furnival would not \_\_\_\_\_ to visit the poor village himself; a Lord would never stoop that low.
4. Crispin was delighted when Bear asked him to be a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ rather than his servant. Now Crispin knew that he would learn a trade.
5. Bear had a large \_\_\_\_\_ on his head from the terrible beating he had received.
6. The town closed for the night and everyone had to be in before \_\_\_\_\_ or they would be locked out.
7. Due to lack of food, many people in the medieval world were weak and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the town was so loud that Crispin had to put his hands over his ears.
9. People convicted of \_\_\_\_\_, crimes against the state, were put to death.
10. For a \_\_\_\_\_, Crispin wore a simple tunic.
11. The horrible \_\_\_\_\_ in the town, caused by piles of trash, made people gag.
12. It takes great \_\_\_\_\_ to be able to juggle.
13. Aycliffe looked at Crispin with \_\_\_\_\_, pure hatred.
14. The \_\_\_\_\_ was intended to be a joke but it was not funny and no one laughed.
15. Bear was on a \_\_\_\_\_ to bring freedom to the serfs.

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blanks provided.

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| ___ 1. the red-haired giant who adopts Crispin as a son                          | A. Asta               |
| ___ 2. the woman who runs the Inn  | B. Asta's son         |
| ___ 3. the priest who is murdered because he knows Crispin's secret              | C. Crispin            |
| ___ 4. Crispin's mother  | D. Lord Furnival      |
| ___ 5. Crispin's father  | E. Bear               |
| ___ 6. Crispin's name until his mother's death                                   | F. Father Quinel      |
| ___ 7. the hag who helps Crispin on his journey by giving him food and seeds     | G. Peregrine          |
| ___ 8. one of the co-conspirators  | H. The Widow Daventry |
| ___ 9. the main character in the novel   | I. John Ball          |
| ___ 10. the man who tries to kill Crispin so he can have the kingdom for himself | J. Aycliffe           |

### Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- \_\_\_ 1. The novel opens in England in 1363 with Asta's funeral.
- \_\_\_ 2. In the woods, Crispin overhears a strange meeting between Bear and the Widow Daventry.
- \_\_\_ 3. From Father Quinel, Asta's son learns his real name, Crispin.
- \_\_\_ 4. While escaping, Crispin discovers his father's body!
- \_\_\_ 5. In the church, Crispin meets "Wolf's Head," a roving entertainer who has ties to an underground movement to improve living conditions for the common people.
- \_\_\_ 6. Bear reads the inscription on Crispin's cross but refuses to reveal what it says. He instead says, "The light is too weak."
- \_\_\_ 7. To Crispin's delight, Bear gives him a penny of his own.
- \_\_\_ 8. Bear goes to the Green Man tavern to conduct his business and learns that Lord Furnival has died.
- \_\_\_ 9. The Widow says that Bear revealed Crispin's whereabouts under extreme torture.
- \_\_\_ 10. According to rumor, Asta had most likely been a gentlewoman attached to the court, the youngest daughter of Lord Douglas, taken by Furnival against her will and then discarded.

## Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

### Part III: Motivation (30 points)

Complete each line below with a reason or explanation.

1. Aycliffe burns Crispin's cottage because \_\_\_\_\_
2. Aycliffe has declared that Crispin is a "wolf's head" because \_\_\_\_\_
3. The first village that Crispin enters is deserted because \_\_\_\_\_
4. Bear doesn't want Crispin to call him "Sir" because \_\_\_\_\_
5. Crispin and Bear travel to the village of Great Wexley because \_\_\_\_\_
6. In the village of Lodgecot, Bear asks the priest for permission to entertain because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Bear and Crispin stay in a special room in the tavern because \_\_\_\_\_
8. After Bear is captured, Crispin disobeys Bear's previous order and stays in the city because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Crispin attacks Aycliffe with his dagger to \_\_\_\_\_
10. Aycliffe dies when \_\_\_\_\_

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Is Bear a good father to Crispin? Explain your answer.
2. Provide three details from the novel that make *Crispin* seem to be nonfiction, even though it is really fiction.
3. Compare and contrast Crispin in the beginning of the novel and at the end.
4. What function does Aycliffe serve in the novel?

# Crispin: The Cross of Lead Avi

---

---

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Fill in a word or phrase to complete each of the following statements.

1. The novel opens with the funeral of Asta. Her sole mourner is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Crispin learns that Aycliffe has declared that the boy is a \_\_\_\_\_, less than human, and that he should be killed on sight, because he supposedly robbed the manor house.
3. The first village Crispin enters is deserted because of \_\_\_\_\_ and he looks for food.
4. Crispin and Bear poach some meat as they make their way to the village \_\_\_\_\_.
5. From Bear, Crispin learns to juggle and play the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. To Crispin's delight, Bear gives him a \_\_\_\_\_ of his own. It is the first he has ever had.
7. At the Green Man tavern, Bear learns that \_\_\_\_\_ has died.
8. The Widow reveals the inscription on Crispin's cross, \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Crispin promises Aycliffe that, if Bear is released and they are allowed to leave, he will relinquish all claims to the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Crispin rescues Bear from the \_\_\_\_\_ where he has been tortured.

### Part II: Matching (30 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided.

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| ___ 1. Crispin's name before his mother dies                   | A. The Widow Daventry |
| ___ 2. a co-conspirator with Bear                              | B. Peregrine          |
| ___ 3. the red-haired spy who works as an entertainer          | C. John Ball          |
| ___ 4. the woman whose inn is destroyed                        | D. Lord Furnival      |
| ___ 5. Crispin's father  | E. Asta               |
| ___ 6. a village hag   | F. Bear               |
| ___ 7. the novel's author                                      | G. Avi                |
| ___ 8. the priest who helps Crispin                            | H. Crispin            |
| ___ 9. illegitimate son of Furnival and Lord Douglas' daughter | I. Father Quinel      |
| ___ 10. Crispin's mother, a gentlewoman fallen on hard times   | J. Asta's son         |

## Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

### Part III: Identification (20 points)

Explain why each is important in the story.

1. the cross of lead
2. Bear
3. juggling
4. Crispin's name
5. the Brotherhood

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Who is the novel's hero? Why?
2. Trace the novel's plot. Include the rising action, climax, and denouement.
3. Analyze why Bear decides to adopt Crispin and raise him as his son.
4. What role does the novel's setting play in the story? Why is the setting so important in this novel?



# Answer Key

## VOCABULARY

- |               |             |                 |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. shroud     | 6. curfew   | 11. stench      |
| 2. taunted    | 7. frail    | 12. dexterity   |
| 3. deign      | 8. clamor   | 13. malevolence |
| 4. apprentice | 9. treason  | 14. jibe        |
| 5. welt       | 10. garment | 15. mission     |

## COMPREHENSION TEST A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. B  |
| 2. H | 7. G  |
| 3. F | 8. I  |
| 4. A | 9. C  |
| 5. D | 10. J |

### Part II: True/False (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T  |
| 2. F | 7. T  |
| 3. T | 8. T  |
| 4. F | 9. F  |
| 5. F | 10. T |

### Part III: Motivation (30 points)

1. he is trying to kill Crispin or at least drive him away
2. he wants to have Crispin killed
3. everyone has died of the plague or left because of it
4. Bear is trying to teach Crispin about freedom and self-determination, that he is no man's inferior
5. Bear has a meeting there with his fellow co-conspirators
6. he knows that the priest is the most influential person in the village
7. it has a hiding place and Bear anticipates trouble
8. Crispin wants to rescue Bear
9. prove that he is a formidable foe
10. he is impaled on his soldiers' swords

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

## COMPREHENSION TEST B

### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- |                 |                                      |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. her son      | 6. penny                             |
| 2. wolf's head  | 7. Lord Furnival or Crispin's father |
| 3. plague       | 8. Crispin—son of Furnival           |
| 4. Great Wexley | 9. throne                            |
| 5. recorder     | 10. dungeon                          |

### Part II: Matching (30 points)

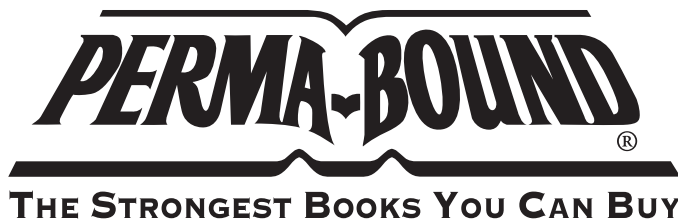
- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. J | 6. B  |
| 2. C | 7. G  |
| 3. F | 8. I  |
| 4. A | 9. H  |
| 5. D | 10. E |

### Part III: Identification (20 points)

1. The cross of lead is the key to Crispin's identity, the proof that he is Furnival's son. It also places him in mortal danger as a contender for the throne.
2. Bear functions as Crispin's surrogate father. He looks like his name suggests – large and somewhat frightening – but underneath his terrifying exterior, he is a kind, brave, and generous man.
3. Juggling is the trade that Bear teaches Crispin. With a trade, Crispin is able to earn his keep and thus be a free man rather than a serf.
4. Crispin's name represents his identity. Before he learned his name, Crispin was merely "Asta's son."
5. The Brotherhood represents one way that people can band together and work for freedom.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



#### Perma-Bound

617 East Vandalia Road • Jacksonville, Illinois 62650  
Toll Free 1-800-637-6581 • Fax 1-800-551-1169  
E-Mail: books@perma-bound.com

#### Perma-Bound Canada

Box 868, Station Main • Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7A2  
Toll Free 1-800-461-1999 • Fax 1-888-250-3811  
E-Mail: perma-bound.ca@sympatico.ca

Visit us online at [www.perma-bound.com](http://www.perma-bound.com)