Crispin by Avi

A Great Read-Aloud Book

It was published by permission from Hyperion Books.

My Personal Review:
Let's see, what else can be said here that isn't already said? Crispin is easily (and consistently) summarized as it is a simple story, clearly told, that hangs an intriguing and imaginative tale on a skeleton of a few basic facts. The scene and scenery are actually quite foreign to the modern child, but Avi’s delivery renders 14th century England in the times of Edward (sounds knowledgeable, doesn't it?), feudal rule, and the Black Death accessible. Those days sucked. Against this backdrop we are introduced to a sad and seemingly helpless orphan who meets his circumstances with a mix of terror, courage, cunning, and happenstance. Crispin fights to stay alive and escape from those who would unjustly kill him, and he meets a friend and protector in the process. The two journey to the city of Great Wexley for what turn out to be a showdown. As can be expected, the plot builds to an exciting and "unbelievable" climax, and keeps the reader entertained and engaged along the way. I read this one aloud to my pre-teen kids and they loved it. I don't know if they captured the sense of how miserable life at that time was, because the book sugar coats things a bit (although the observant reader's skin will crawl with the sensation of fleas and filth). This is my first Avi book and I loved it. Highly recommended.

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