



## *Nothing But the Truth* by Avi

**Subjects:** High schools—Juvenile fiction; Schools—Fiction

**Awards:** Newbery Honor Book, Boston Globe–Horn Book Honor Book, Horn Book Fanfare

**Book Lists:** America, Grade 7, North America

**Props:** Newspaper with article



Philip Malloy didn't like his 9<sup>th</sup> grade English Class. No, that's not it. It's really more that he just had no use for it. His teacher, Miss Narwin, had been teaching English for 21 years and she was way too serious. She couldn't take a joke at all. And the stuff they had to read—the same stuff his mother read when she was in high school. Hadn't anyone written anything good since then?

All Philip wanted out of high school was to be on the track team. The coach had actually stopped him in the hall and asked him to try out for the team. Said he'd heard about him, how fast he could run, thought the team could be State Champs with him on it. Philip was thrilled. That's exactly what he had in mind—first high school, State Champs, then college, setting records, then the Olympics. He and his dad talked about it all the time.

It never occurred to him that his grades mattered, really mattered, that they could keep him off the team. And then he got a D in English. The coach said couldn't he do some extra work, talk to Miss Narwin, get it moved up to a C? But he said no, he couldn't talk to her. He didn't talk to anyone, he just made his own plans to get transferred out of Narwin's English and her homeroom too.

Homeroom started with morning announcements. The Principal came over the intercom and told them what

had happened on that day in history. Then she said, "Please all rise and stand at respectful silent attention for the playing of our national anthem." While "The Star-Spangled Banner" was playing Philip hummed quietly. That's all he did. Narwin heard him and told him to stop. The next day he hummed again and got sent to the Principal's office. Next day, same thing. Each time, he begged to be transferred out of Narwin's classes. Said she had it in for him, and a transfer would solve this. Instead he got suspended for 2 days. His dad was outraged and told their neighbor who was running for the school board. He notified the local paper who ran a story with the headline, SUSPENDED FOR PATRIOTISM. (*Bring out newspaper and read from it*) It read, "According to Harrison School superintendent Dr. A. Seymour, there is no rule against singing the anthem. Indeed in every other class Philip did just that. His new homeroom teacher, Ms. Margaret Narwin, however, changed the rules. Every time Philip lifted his voice to sing she threw him out of class, insisting "a disturbance was being created." Newspapers all over the country picked up the story and soon reporters were calling everyone involved.

All Philip wanted was to be on the track team! How did things get so crazy? What next? (*Hold up book*) *Nothing But the Truth* by Avi.

