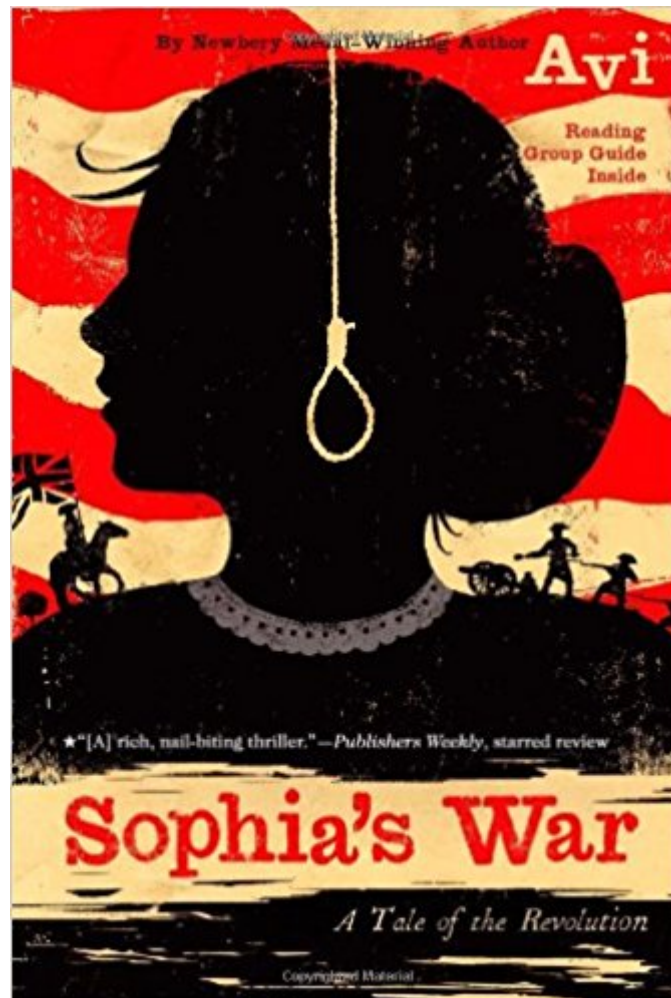




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Sophia's War: A Tale Of The Revolution



Synopsis

>In 1776, young Sophia Calderwood witnesses the execution of Nathan Hale in New York City, which is newly occupied by the British army. Sophia is horrified by the event and resolves to do all she can to help the American cause. Recruited as a spy, she becomes a maid in the home of General Clinton, the supreme commander of the British forces in America. Through her work she becomes aware that someone in the American army might be switching sides, and she uncovers a plot that will grievously damage the Americans if it succeeds. But the identity of the would-be traitor is so shocking that no one believes her, and so Sophia decides to stop the treacherous plot herself, at great personal peril: She's young, she's a girl, and she's running out of time. And if she fails, she's facing an execution of her own. Master storyteller Avi shows exactly how personal politics can be in this nail-biting thriller • (>) that is rich in historical detail and rife with action.

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

* "The book's riveting opening scene, in which Sophie watches as Nathan Hale is hanged as a spy, foreshadows the danger she knowingly accepts by engaging in espionage. Few historical novels are as closely shaped by actual events as this one during the last 100 pages. Working within the bounds of credibility, Avi manages to keep the fictional narrator on the scene for a good deal of

the action and uses real moments to bring the imagined story to its dramatic heights. A glossary of eighteenth-century terms and an author's note are appended. Pair this intriguing historical novel with Sheinkin's *The Notorious Benedict Arnold* (2010).

- "Booklist, August 1, 2012, *STAR*
- "Newbery Medalist Avi (Crispin: The Cross of Lead) channels the mood, language, and danger of the Revolutionary War in this seamless blend of history and fiction, set in British-occupied New York City. The book is chockful of fascinating historical details, including the conditions for those stranded in New York and the failed meetings between Arnold and John André, his (real-life) British contact. Avi doesn't sugarcoat the brutal realities of war in this rich, nail-biting thriller.
- "Publishers Weekly, August 13, 2012, *STAR*
- "Sophia's War is outstanding historical fiction, bringing to dramatic life the human story behind extraordinary events. The climax is a seamless incorporation of hard fact with thrilling espionage as Avi juxtaposes scenes of André and Arnold's attempt to meet against Sophia's efforts to stop them. Rich in period detail, the atmospheric prose vividly re-creates old New York and allows readers to experience Sophia's conflicting emotions. A glossary clarifies 18th-century terms; in an author's note, Avi reflects on historical fiction.
- (School Library Journal, October 2012, *STAR)"

Avi's setting is impeccable (especially the descriptions of the prisons where rebel soldiers were kept); the intrigue on the home front, real; and the tension of living in enemy territory, intense." (Horn Book Magazine, November/December 2012)"Newbery Honor-winning author Avi offers a gripping view of the Revolutionary War through the eyes of a 12-year-old spy.... With language drawn from the period (and appended in a glossary) and historical events forming the tight framework of the tense, imagined drama, Avi offers an action-filled novel with wide classroom appeal." (Book Links, January 2013)

Avi is the author of more than seventy books for children and young adults, including the 2003 Newbery medal winner *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. He has won two Newbery Honors and many other awards for his fiction. He lives with his family in Denver, Colorado. Visit him at Avi-Writer.com.

Doesn't that gorgeous cover by Edel Rodriguez make you long to read this? It's the perfect cover for this story. (I have a "thing" for silhouettes on book covers. I don't know why, but I feel compelled to buy a book with silhouettes on the cover.) If you have never read one of Avi's books, you really need to. He writes intelligent historical fiction for young people. He never dumbs down his books, and obviously works hard to be historically accurate. In this complex, smart story Avi again tackles an aspect of the American Revolution. He did it once before in "The Fighting Ground", where the

reader is swept along in thirteen-year-old Jonathon's passion to be part of the fighting, and then his rude awakening to the realities of being a soldier. But this story isn't just a feminine version of "The Fighting Ground". It's a completely different aspect of the war, written in a different kind of narrative. The story is broken up into two different time frames. Roughly the first half takes place in 1776 when Sophia Calderwood is twelve years old. Sophia and her parents fled their home in New York City when the British invaded. Sophia's adored older brother William joined the American troops fighting to keep the British out of the city. As the book opens in September of 1776, Sophia and her mother are returning on foot to New York to try to reclaim what they can of their lives. (For safety, Mr. Calderwood must return in secret later.) In an apple orchard on the outskirts of New York, they witness a young man of "dignified bearing" being led by British soldiers to a rope hanging from an apple tree, and Sophia watches in horror as the ladder is kicked away and the young man (who she later learns was Nathan Hale) is hanged. Still reeling from that shock, they return to their home to find it looted of all their most costly possessions. As they begin the clean-up process, a small troop of British soldiers appears on their doorstep, looking for Mr. Calderwood and informing them they will be required to billet a British Officer. What follows is a tense time of eking out a living while boarding a British officer and pretending to be Loyalists. Sophia develops a reluctant crush on John Andre (oh curse Blogger's lack of language accents!) the British officer boarding in their home, even as she firmly believes in the American cause. When she learns that her brother is a prisoner of the British and housed under appalling conditions, she pleads with Andre to help. What happens next firmly sets her on the course for later events. The second half of the book takes place three years later, in 1780, when Sophia is fifteen years old. Through her work with her father's publisher friend, she meets a man who recruits her as a spy in the household of General Sir Henry Clinton. As a housemaid, she would have access to information vital to the war effort. She stumbles on to what appears to be a clandestine operation possibly involving the collaboration of the British and an American of high military rank, a man Sophia and other Americans idolized, a man who played a huge part in early American victories against the British. The implications are so shocking and suddenly Sophia is alone in her quest to bring this information to light. In the author's note at the end of the book, Avi writes that the two story threads based on historical facts "are as historically accurate as I could write them." He goes on to say that "Sophia is as true an individual as I could hope to create, and her actions provide an explanation as to what really happened in 1780." And can I tell you how much I appreciated his striving for historical accuracy, even down to the language used. So often you read historical fiction, and get jerked out of the story by an author's use of modern words and terminology. In fact, there is a very helpful glossary in the back of the book to

look up those unfamiliar words you come across. (A couple of years ago I read a Middle Grade novel by an author who shall remain nameless, about the Civil War era and the main character talks about being "gaga" for a certain boy! Yes, that word was actually used. Having already overlooked other words that were very obviously not historically accurate, I threw the book down in disgust and never went back to it. So I really appreciated Avi's obviously meticulous research on this book.) Sophia provides the modern reader with an emotional barometer of the life of an average citizen during that time of conflict in American history. Avi shows Sophia's -I think natural- human conflictions that come with living in a war-torn country: how morals and actions change or become ambiguous based on circumstances. Sophia, as a narrator, is very Self conscious: she narrates her story as someone aware of her audience and how they may be judging her. Her narrative never loses that awareness. There is a "buttoned up" quality to it: like she is recalling this period of time and reacting almost unwillingly to remembered emotions, and doesn't want to come across as too emotional. She tries her best to be fair and balanced in her narrative, not defending her actions and emotions so much as explaining them. And yet, despite the distancing approach to the narrative, the reader is quickly caught up in her experiences. Book published in September 2012 by Beach Lane Books. I nominated this book for the CYBILS 2012 in the Middle Grade Fiction category.

Listen, I'm only 11 when I read this book, and I must say that I didn't get board at all throughout the story! It was action packed and took very very unexpected twists, all while educating you on the revolution. It's one of those books where you read something, close the book, and think. Just think. Then you might go over to the sink and get a glass of water or something. Then you think some more. Then you continue reading. We've all had those times. Ive had them particularly a lot. This is one of those books where it requires you to do so. Avi is an amazing author, I just hope he writes more of these types of stories. Very intriguing.

I just finished reading this with my 5th and 3rd grader. We are learning about the American Revolution this year, and this has been a perfect companion to that. It tells the tale of Sophia, who becomes a spy in order to bring justice for the death of her brother. My girls loved hearing names from our history books in the story.

Not many books will give you a female perspective of the Revolutionary War. This one does. It's very accurate. I bought this for my grandchildren because I am familiar with the quaility of the author's work. It's a good story that holds your attention; accurate historically with a new point of

view. You will enjoy it.

12 year old daughter loves this book! We are studying the American Revolution right now, and this has been a fun, easy read for her to support her studies. It is so important for our girls to understand that there were strong women involved in the war effort. Even though this is a work of fiction, it offers insight into what life would have been like for a young woman during this time period.

Very engaging story that brings this period of time to life. I enjoyed the perspective of Sophia, living in British New York. Her crush on an older, charming man was quite relatable. Highly recommended.

This book was amazing. It is suspenseful and a page turner. I think I finished it in a day. I read it to add to my classroom library and the kids LOVE it. It is checked out often. I just wish the cover weren't so girly because it is not just a novel for girls. It is about Sophia who becomes a spy during the Revolutionary War. This is a great book that you won't be able to put down. It is a clean read, the only thing to consider is that a traitor is hung and that is during war, so there is some violence.

Sophia's War gives a different view point on the Revolutionary War. To often we concentrate only on the generals and the politicians - their actions and their reasoning. We forget that the most important aspect of a war is the affect that it has on the people involved - not only directly but indirectly (the families of the combatants, their friends and associates). Until recently it was assumed that only men ever had any real direct involvement in war - this book shows how it affected one individual and her response to it.

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