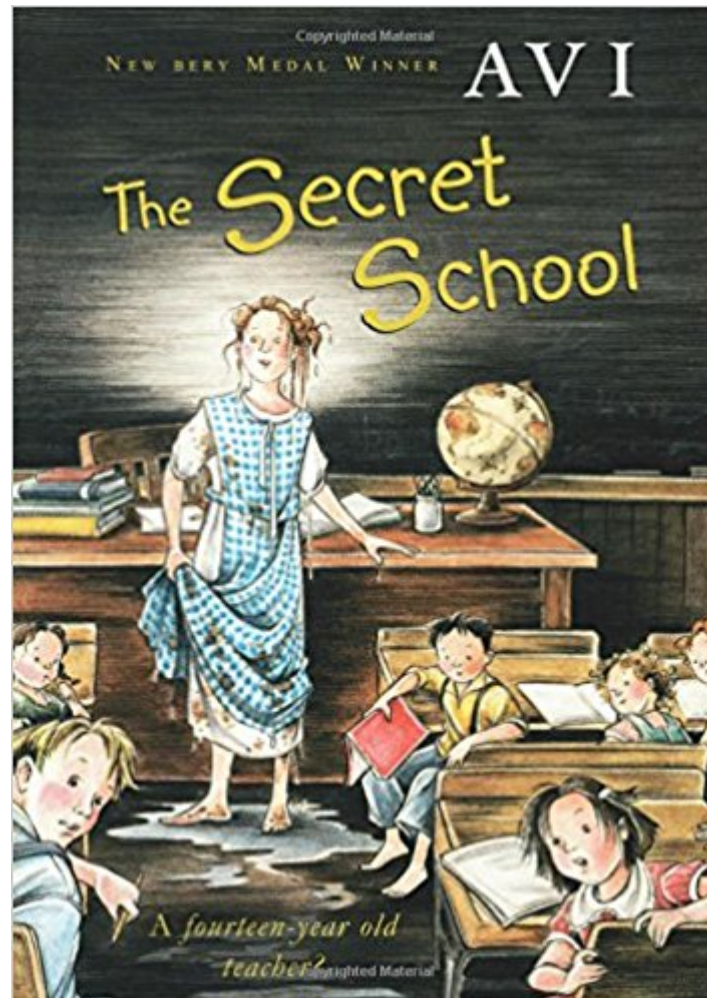




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The Secret School



Synopsis

More than anything, Ida Bidson wants to become a teacher. To do that, she must finish eighth grade, then go on to high school. But her dream falters when the one-room school in her remote Colorado town shuts down. Her only hope is to keep the school open without anyone finding out. Yet even a secret school needs a teacher. Ida can't be it. . . . Or can she? In the spirit of *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, Newbery Medal winner Avi creates an inspiring story of a headstrong girl determined to control her own destiny.

Book Information

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; 1 edition (August 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0152046992

ISBN-13: 978-0152046996

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.5 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 91 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #77,646 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #110 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s](#) #502 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Girls & Women](#) #916 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > School](#)

Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

Customer Reviews

Weaving together a fast-moving plot, solid characterizations, sharply tuned dialogue and a wealth of detail, Avi (*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*) offers another satisfying historical novel, this time evoking rural Colorado in 1925. When the teacher at the one-room schoolhouse in Elk Valley must depart unexpectedly, the head of the school board decides to end the academic year right then, a month and a half before the summer break. To his surprise, 14-year-old Ida Bidson protests, because without exit exams, she cannot proceed to high school in the fall. "I'm not so sure a girl needs a high school education," Mr. Jordan retorts, undeterred. Then Ida's friend Tom comes up with a plan: "You're such a gravy know-it-all," he tells her. "You could take over the school when

Miss Fletcher leaves." And so she does, swearing the students to secrecy. It's no easy task "Miss Bidson" has to learn self-confidence, and she must keep up with her farm chores and with her own studies. To compound the challenge, the county examiner discovers the secret and agrees to keep it only if all the students take a final exam. Right from the opening scene showing resourceful Ida and her seven-year-old brother driving the family's Model T to school Ida at the wheel hollering directions ("Brake and clutch!") while Felix pushes the pedals with his hands Avi wittily up-ends the usual roles assigned adults and children. A crowd-pleaser. Ages 8-12. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr 3-6-"I'm not so sure a girl needs a high school education," the head of a rural Colorado school board tells 14-year-old Ida Bidson in 1925. The one-room schoolhouse that she and seven other children attend is to be closed early, and if Ida and her friend Tom don't finish eighth grade and take their exams, they'll lose their chance to attend high school. Without a diploma, Ida will never fulfill her dream of becoming a teacher and seeing the world beyond the mountains. After Tom suggests that she could conduct the classes, the secret school commences and is subsequently threatened by a county administrator, the local school board, and an angry parent. Avi ably conveys an evocative sense of life in a poor, remote farming community just before the start of the Great Depression. He skillfully creates interesting, fully developed main and secondary characters. Ida's struggles with the difficulties of being both teacher and student and carrying out her duties at home, as well as her worry about whether or not the students will pass the exams, are suspensefully portrayed. Humorously effective descriptions, as in the Bidsons' old car "hiccuping like a damp firecracker," enliven the sense of hardships. The importance of education and dreaming of one's future are imparted in an entertaining way. This carefully plotted, enjoyable, old-fashioned tale of children taking control of a bad situation is a welcome addition to the literature of empowerment.B. Allison Gray, South Country Library, Bellport, NYC
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14-year-old Ida wants to be a school teacher, and she undertakes the temporary task of being the schoolmarm for her entire town when the teacher unexpectedly leaves. Without finishing the year, she can not be accepted into high school, so she and the other students make a secret agreement to continue having school with Ida as the teacher. This book shows the pull between desire and duty. It's a good book for characters and giving personality insights... but not much action takes place. The non-standard English makes this fun to read out loud. The children drive their parents'

old jalopy to school -- that's fun. We liked this book as a family. The family relationships within the book are very strong. Ida's friend Tom is a great boy character -- clever, inventive, light-hearted and well-meaning.

Five stars! I choose this rating for this book because it has so much things that I would say are funny, sad or maybe even angry, this book has so much I can't explain all of it. If anyone is thinking of reading a book I would recommend this book. I like this book because this book has so much in it I will only say a few things of what I like, first I like the part when Herbert visits Ida at a pond, she says to him that she likes as a friend and he said even better than Tom, then she splashed water and says Sho, and he laughs and runs away. I would recommend this book to anyone that likes to read.

This is a simple and fun story about a childhood and a simple life. Written with the typical masterful flow of Avi, it is a delightful and quick read. I highly recommend it for all ages.

I'm reading this book as a whole class read with my third graders! If this is any indication-"Can we PLEASE read another chapter?" That should tell you how they are enjoying this delightful story. A fourteen-year-old girl taking over as teacher of a one room school house in the mountains of Colorado! The teaching potential is endless!! My children are having FUN and learning- what a concept!!

My ten year old son and I read this together, and we were both hooked on the first page. This is a wonderful book for young readers. The author paints a very good picture with his words.

Not one I would have chosen on my own, but was a Book Club selection. Did enjoy it. Story of a young girl who is trying to finish up school in order to move on to higher education and finds the teacher quits early and the town is closing the school early. In order for her to get the needed credentials, she takes over.

I love this "secret school" it's so entertaining Thank you Avi for this amazing book it's super super good I mean amazing

Cute story about a girl's determination at a very young age to fulfill her lifelong dream. Courage and determination are found in these pages with a lot of humor and love as well.

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