

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle



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Age Range: 8 and up Avi's treasured Newbery Honor Book. Thirteen-year-old Charlotte Doyle is excited to return home from her school in England to her family in Rhode Island in the summer of 1832. But when the two families she was supposed to travel with mysteriously cancel their trips, Charlotte finds herself the lone passenger on a long sea voyage with a cruel captain and a mutinous crew. Worse yet, soon after stepping aboard the ship, she becomes enmeshed in a conflict between them! What begins as an eagerly anticipated ocean crossing turns into a harrowing journey, where Charlotte gains a villainous enemy ... and is put on trial for murder! Editorial Review From Publishers Weekly Told in the form of a recollection, these "confessions" cover 13-year-old Charlotte's eventful 1832 transatlantic crossing. She begins her trip a prim schoolgirl returning home to her American family from England. From the start, there is something wrong with the Seahawk : the families that were to serve as Charlotte's chaperones do not arrive, and the unsavory crew warns her not to make the trip. When the crew rebels, Charlotte first sides with the civilized Captain Jaggerty, but before long she realizes that he is a sadist and--the only female aboard--she joins the crew as a seaman. Charlotte is charged with murder and sentenced to be hanged before the trip is over, but ends up in command of the Seahawk by the time it reaches its destination. Charlotte's repressive Puritanical family refuses to believe her tale, and the girl returns to the sea. Charlotte's story is a gem of nautical adventure, and Avi's control of tone calls to mind William Golding's 1980s trilogy of historical novels of the sea. Never wavering from its 19th century setting, the novel offers suspense and entertainment modern-day readers will enjoy. Ages 11-13.

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