

# The End of the Beginning: Being the Adventures of a Small Snail (and an Even Smaller Ant)

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Avon the snail has never had an adventure. And adventure, he has heard, is the key to a happy life. So with his new friend Edward the ant, Avon sets out on a journey to find the excitement his life has been missing.

This modern fable is filled with funny--and profound--insights about the meaning of things . . . great and small.

AVI has written many acclaimed books for young readers, including *The Secret School*, *The End of the Beginning*, and *A Beginning, a Muddle, and an End*. His novel *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* was awarded the Newbery Medal, and *Nothing But the Truth: A Documentary Novel* and *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* were named Newbery Honor books. He lives in Colorado.

TRICIA TUSA has written and illustrated many wonderful picture books, including *In a Blue Room* by Jim Averbeck; *Mrs. Spitzer's Garden* by Edith Pattou; *The Magic Hat* by Mem Fox; *The End of the Beginning* by Avi; and her own *Follow Me*.

Chapter one

## In Which the Adventure Begins

Avon, a rather small snail, read a book every day. He loved to read because books told him all about the things that creatures did when they went on adventures.

Now, Avon had noticed that when creatures finished their adventures, and when the stories ended, the creatures were always happy. Because Avon had never had an adventure of his own, the more he read, the sadder he became. It was absolutely necessary, he decided, to have adventures for himself. Only then would he be happy.

He sighed. "No adventures will ever come my way."

A newt who was passing by overheard Avon's words. "Nay, lad, don't say such things."

"But don't you see," said Avon, close to tears, "the most important thing in the world is having adventures. Not only have I not had any, I don't think I ever will. And if I don't have adventures--like the ones I've read about in these books--I'm bound to be unhappy forever."

"Then go out and seek some adventures," said the newt.

"I don't know how," Avon said.

"Remember, lad," said the newt, "if it's going to be tomorrow, it might as well be today. And if it is today, it could have been yesterday. If it was yesterday, then you're over

and done with it, and can write your own book. Think about that."

Avon thought about it for a long moment, and then he said right out loud,

"Yes, I will do it. Yesterday for sure!"

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