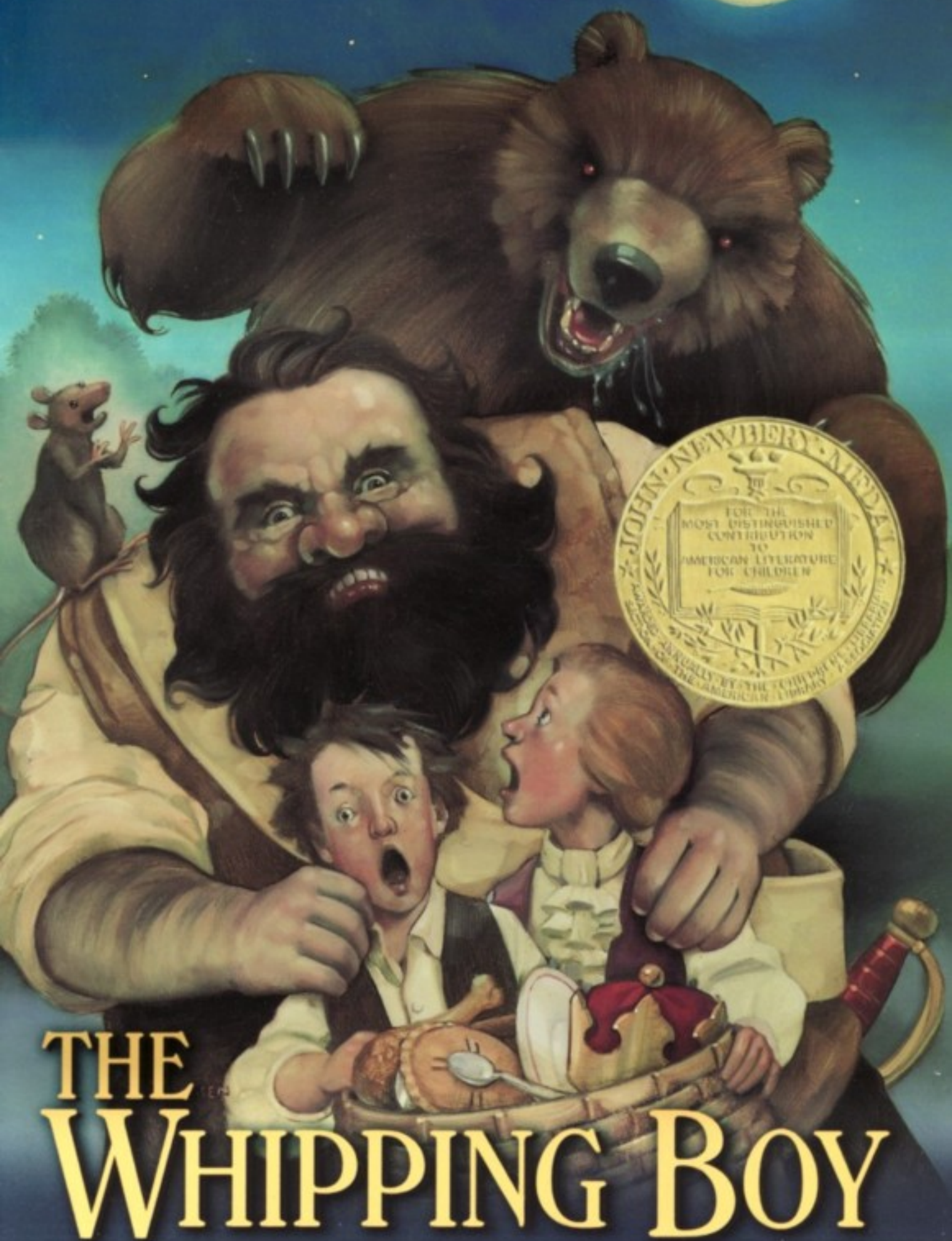


SID FLEISCHMAN

BLACK-AND-WHITE ILLUSTRATIONS BY CALDECOTT HONOR ILLUSTRATOR PETER SÍS



THE WHIPPING BOY



CHAPTER 1

*In which we observe
a hair-raising event*

The young prince was known here and there (and just about everywhere else) as Prince Brat. Not even black cats would cross his path.

One night the king was holding a grand feast. Sneaking around behind the lords and ladies, Prince Brat tied their powdered wigs to the backs of their oak chairs.

Then he hid behind a footman to wait.

When the guests stood up to toast the king, their wigs came flying off.

The lords clasped their bare heads as if they'd been scalped. The ladies shrieked.

Prince Brat (he was never called that to his face, of course) tried to keep from laughing. He clapped both hands over his mouth. But out it ripped, a cackle of *hah-hahs* and *haw-haws* and *hee-hee-hees*.

The king spied him and he looked mad enough to spit ink. He gave a furious shout.

“Fetch the whipping boy!”

Prince Brat knew that he had nothing to fear. He had never been spanked in his life. He was a prince! And it was forbidden to spank, thrash, cuff, smack, or whip a prince.

A common boy was kept in the castle to be punished in his place.

“Fetch the whipping boy!”

The king’s command traveled like an echo from guard to guard up the stone stairway to a small chamber in the drafty north tower.

An orphan boy named Jemmy, the son of a rat-catcher, roused from his sleep. He’d been dreaming happily of his ragged but carefree life before he’d been plucked from the streets and sewers of the city to serve as royal whipping boy.

A guard shook him fully awake. “On your feet, me boy.”

Jemmy’s eyes blazed up. “Ain’t I already been whipped twice today? Gaw! What’s the prince done now?”

“Let’s not keep the great folks waitin’, lad.”

In the main hall, the king said, “Twenty whacks!”

Defiantly biting back every yelp and cry, the whipping boy received the twenty whacks. Then

the king turned to the prince. "And let that be a lesson to you!"

"Yes, Papa." The prince lowered his head so as to appear humbled and contrite. But all the while he was feeling a growing exasperation with his whipping boy.

In the tower chamber, the prince fixed him with a scowl. "You're the worst whipping boy I ever had! How come you never bawl?"

"Dunno," said Jemmy with a shrug.

"A whipping boy is supposed to yowl like a stuck pig! We dress you up fancy and feed you royal, don't we? It's no fun if you don't bawl!"

Jemmy shrugged again. He was determined never to spring a tear for the prince to gloat over.

"Yelp and bellow next time. Hear? Or I'll tell Papa to give you back your rags and kick you back into the streets."

Jemmy's spirits soared. Much obliged, Your Royal Awfulness! he thought. I'll take me rags, and I'll be gone in the half-blink of an eye.

A PRINCE AND A PAUPER



Jemmy, once a poor boy living on the streets, now lives in a castle. As the whipping boy, he bears the punishment when Prince Brat misbehaves, for it is forbidden to spank, thrash, or whack the heir to the throne. The two

boys have nothing in common and even less reason to like one another. But when they find themselves taken hostage after running away, they are left with no choice but to trust each other.

“A rollicking tale of adventure and mistaken identity, written in a style reminiscent of 19th-century melodrama.”

—Kirkus Reviews

“Eminently satisfying.”—ALA Booklist

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