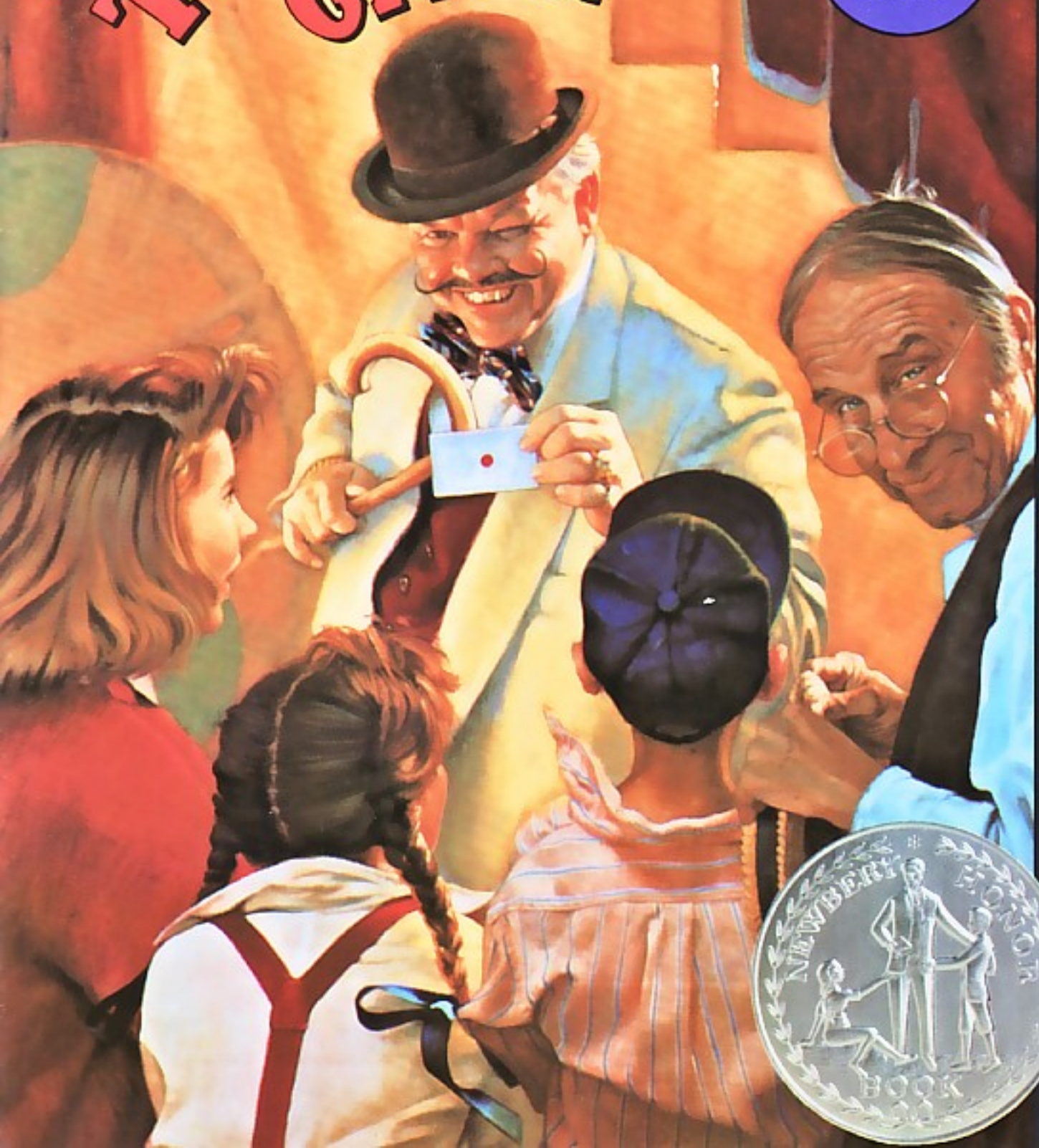




T R O P H Y N E W B E R Y

BILL BRITAIN THE WISH GIVER

A Tale
of Coven
Tree



Polly tossed and turned in her bed until late that night. She couldn't get her mind off Agatha and the torn dress. The frogs down by Spider Crick kept up their chirping and croaking. Finally in the small hours of the morning, Polly nodded off.

She woke up just shy of eight o'clock. She was still tired, and her eyes felt like they had sand in them. Polly washed herself, combed her hair, and got dressed, feeling meaner than a snapping turtle on account of not sleeping well. She trudged downstairs and into the kitchen.

Mrs. Kemp sighed and shook her head when she saw the mood Polly was in and hoped her daughter would hold off any complaining until she got to school. But Polly took one look at her toast and eggs and started in.

“Mother, the toast is just horrid. It’s all burned and—

“JUG-A-RUM!”

How on earth could a bullfrog have gotten into the house? Mrs. Kemp wondered. Why, it sounded like it was right in the kitchen.

“JUG-A-RUM!”

Mrs. Kemp’s eyes lit on Polly. The girl was sitting bolt upright with one hand at her throat. She looked like she was about to scream, but the sound that came out was:

“JUG-A-RUM!”

Polly’s mother shook her head in exasperation. “You can stop that right now, young lady,” she said. “Making frog sounds isn’t going to get you out of school today. You’ve told me you were sick too many other times, and then—”

“JUG-A-RUM! JUG-A-RUM!”

“That’s enough, Polly!”

“JUG-A-RUM!”

“All right, be a frog if you want to. But get that breakfast into you and be off.”

Before she knew it, Polly was standing on the front steps with her coat on and her schoolbooks under her arm. Her mother slammed the door behind her.

Polly shuffled down the road to school, scared to death by the croaks that come from her mouth when she tried to speak. Once or twice she tried talking to herself, unable to believe what had happened.

"JUG-A-RUM!"

When she was about halfway to school, she heard running footsteps on the path behind her. She turned around, and there was Adam Fiske. She hoped he'd just pass on without saying anything, but as he came up beside her, he slowed to a walk.

"Good morning, Polly," said Adam. "After today I've got a few days off before final tests start. What do you think of that?"

Polly didn't like it at all. The older students were lucky. She still had to go to school every day.

"JUG-A-RUM!"

"You don't have to get sassy with me, Polly Kemp," Adam told her.

"JUG-A-RUM!"

Adam stopped walking and looked carefully at Polly. "Hey, you do that real good. It sounds just like a bullfrog."

"JUG-A-RUM!"



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The people of Coven Tree are no strangers to magic. In fact, the town's very name comes from a gnarled old tree where covens of witches used to gather. Even now, imps and fiends continue to appear, frightening the townsfolk with their devilish pranks. Usually these creatures are easy to spot. They have a particular smell, or sound, or way of moving, that betrays their dark nature.

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