



Hans Christian Andersen Award 2008



Roberto Innocenti

 Italy

It has been amazing to discover, after years of atrocious doubts, that children understand everything and are not afraid but even love the complications, and that simplifying on their behalf does not mask a sacrifice on the author's part but a competent ignorance.

Born in Bagno a Ripoli near Florence, Roberto Innocenti left school when he was thirteen and went to work in the local steel foundry, later moving to an art shop as an assistant. By the late 1950s he had found a job in an animation studio in Rome, where he started his life as an illustrator. His talent was soon recognised by a publisher and he was invited illustrate children's books. His breakthrough came in 1983 when he was commissioned to illustrate Perrault's *Cinderella*, which became an international success. In 1985, he received a Golden Apple at the Biennale of Bratislava for *Rose Blanche* written by Christophe Gallaz. He has also received an Honor Book citation from the Boston Globe-Horn Book Prize, a Mildred L. Batchelder Award, two Kate Greenaway Medals, and won The New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year Award in 2002.

Many of the books that Innocenti has illustrated are children's classics, but he has also tackled challenging stories about the Holocaust. Innocenti uses realistic settings and characters in his illustrations making the works intensely dramatic. His illustrations are full of action and movement, with an almost theatrical use of light and shade.

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