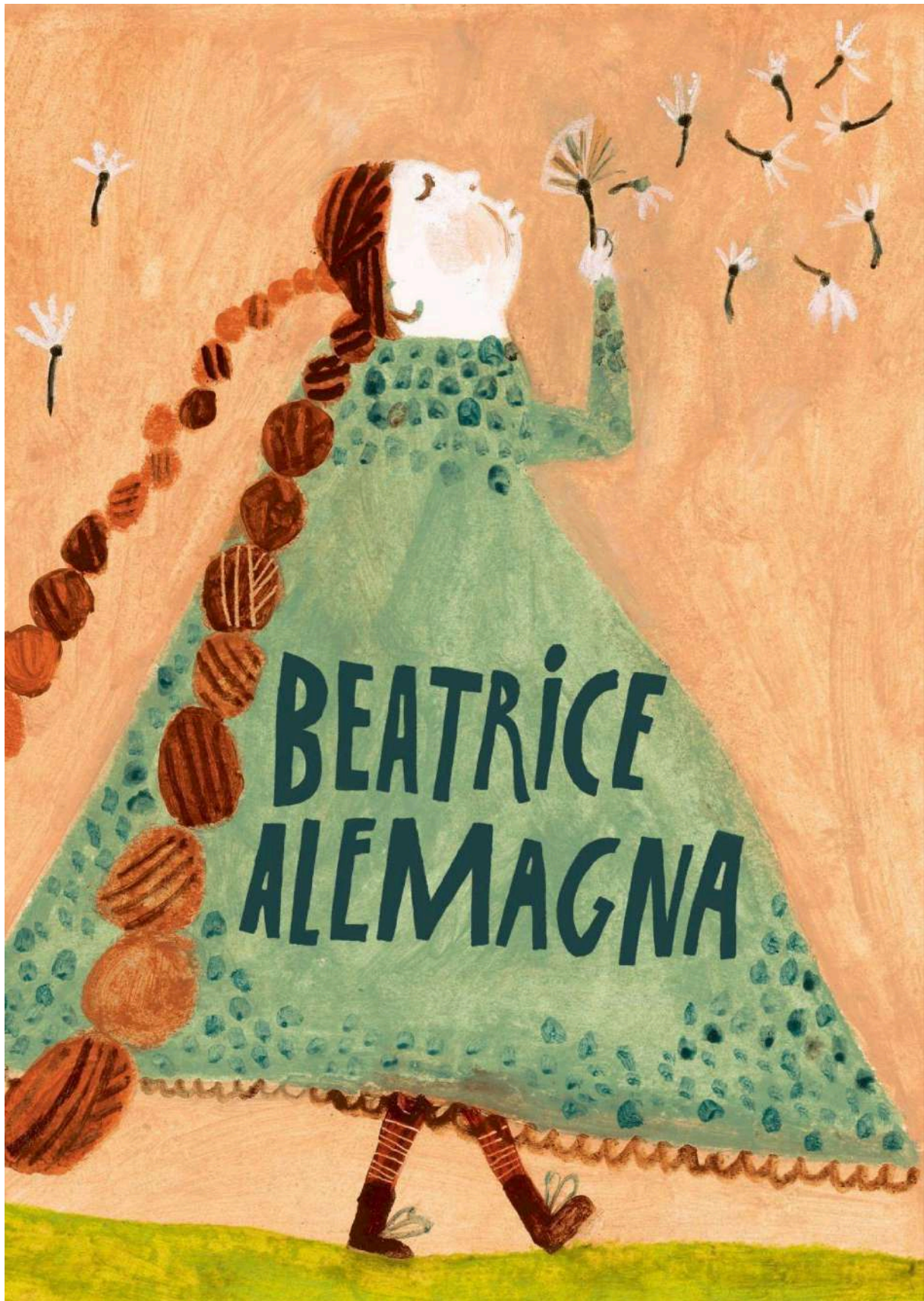




Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026



INTERNATIONAL  
BOARD ON BOOKS  
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ITALIA

Hans Christian Andersen Award  
Nominee 2026



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## 1. / 2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND A PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CANDIDATE



*I write and draw with what I have inside me. I possess simple, unpretentious means, but I have always told myself that courage is enough to start making a book. Over the years, I have learnt to consider children for what they are: fragile and powerful beings, whose attention never lasts longer than necessary. It takes the right words and generosity. Putting myself inside my*

*books has become, over time, fundamental. Always being as honest as possible. Writing and drawing children's books is a terribly political act for me: building worlds of respect and justice, where we rebel against dominant models. To always, and above all, suggest freedom. And of course, trivially, love.*

*I create books linked to reality: I am not interested in the splendours of heroes but in personal adventures full of obstacles and fears, of misfortunes, of annoying misunderstandings, perhaps even tiny ones, but always very important. I try not to trivialise, not to diminish: the child is the courageous explorer of an immense and frightening world. Reading, understanding, observing, are his first heroic acts.*

Beatrice Alemagna

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## Biography

Beatrice Alemagna was born in Bologna, Italy, in 1973.

As a child, she used to hide picture-books under her pillow. At five, she created her first book and at 8 she decided she would become a “painter of novels”.

*I always have something to say to the children, something urgent.*

When she was 14 years old she exhibited one of her illustrated tales at the Iles Exhibition at Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (France).

*To draw is to tell. Everyone who feels an emotion has something to tell. Emotions keep on changing, growing as children do. And my drawings change with them.*

She studied graphic design at ISIA - Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche in Urbino (Italy) and in 1996 she won the first prize at the International Contest *Figures Futures* at the Salon du Livre de Paris. In 1997, she moved to Paris where she still lives and works.

*I draw and redraw even 100 times the same detail, if it does not resemble how it should be inside me, it cannot fit in one of my books.*

She began her career by illustrating the posters for *L'écran des enfants*, the children's film festival organized by Centre Georges Pompidou (1998-2008), and had her first books published by Seuil Jeunesse (1998) and then by Autrement and Gallimard. She also started to regularly hold activities in French schools and prisons.

*All images impress and mark me: billboards, an X-ray, a botany magazine, the map of a city. Everything is figure.*

Since 1999, as an illustrator, she has illustrated books by highly acclaimed authors, such as: Gianni Rodari, Astrid Lindgren, Guillaume Apollinaire, Ágota Kristóf, Raymond Quenau, Antoine de Saint Exupéry and Aldous Huxley.

*I like images and books that do not tell the whole story, that leave holes and lead elsewhere. Drawer-books: depending on how you open them, you find different things.*



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Her first solo exhibitions date back to the early 2000: in Munich (Germany), in Barreiro (Portugal) and in Bologna (Italy). More recently: in New York, in Sweden and in Paris.

Since 1998, she has written and illustrated 40 books, translated in 18 languages. Among these: French, Italian, Spanish, English, Dutch, Czech, Slovenian, Greek, Taiwanese, Korean, Portuguese, Estonian, Indian, Chinese and Japanese.

Her books are published by internationally recognised publishers, such as: L'école des loisirs, Topipittori, Harper Collins, Tate Publisher, Thames & Hudson, Enchanted Lion, Frances Lincoln, Mondadori, Hélium, MoMA, Seuil, Autrement, Gallimard, Les grandes personnes, Donzelli, Didier, Phaïdon, Casterman, Raben and Sjogren, Mirando, Bonnier and Carlsen, Beltz and Gelberg, Einaudi, La partie, Albin Michel, Rotopol e Walker Books.

*To finish a book, for me, is to sit on the ground and observe the footprints left behind to understand in which direction I need to go.*

Beside her author career, she has been serving as a jury member in several illustration contests, and has given many lectures in France, Italy, Korea and UK. Since 2010, she has been the Artistic Director of the picturebooks collection "Ramin" for Réunion des Musées Nationaux de France, and in 2013 she started a toy design collaboration with the London Museum of Design and the French brand Djéco.

The prizes and recognitions she has been internationally awarded cannot be counted. Just to name the most recent ones: in 2023 she was awarded the prestigious *Grande Ourse* by the Salon du Livre de Montreuil, intended as a recognition to her outstanding lifelong work, while in September 2024 she won her second *Golden Medal*, an award given by the Society of Illustrators of New York for the illustrations of the best book of the year, for *Pepper and Me*.



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### 3. A STATEMENT DESCRIBING THE CANDIDATE'S CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Beatrice Alemagna is one of the most important Italian authors (writer and illustrator) of children's books and a world-acclaimed artist.

Alemagna shows a unique ability to catch the most impalpable nuances of that fundamental stage of life that is childhood. With a crystalline voice, Beatrice Alemagna is able to tell those little things, those small movements that shake and upset the daily life of children. She does always know how to catch that incredible foresight, proving a peculiar ability to go deeper beyond the surface and see the inner core of things. As only children can do, of course.

This unique perspective on childhood that delves deep into feelings is able to reach that universal core that speaks to everyone, children and adults alike, transcending cultural differences to address humanity itself. Her universal language has brought her wide acclaim worldwide, not after but at the same time as her country of origin, Italy.



The childhood narrated by Beatrice Alemagna is alive, thinking, and her words and pictures are an encouragement to respect and understand it.

She gives children small yet remarkable and important stories: stories which children can immediately relate with.



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#### 4. ONE OR TWO APPRECIATIVE ESSAYS, INTERVIEWS OR ARTICLES

1. "Childhood" by Giordana Piccinini, in *Alemagna's Alphabet*, Topipittori, 2023
2. *From the Workshop to the Page: Spaces for Creation* by Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maître, La Revue des Livres pour Enfants, September 2024

##### 1. "Childhood" by Giordana Piccinini, in *Alemagna's Alphabet*, Topipittori, 2023

It's no secret that Beatrice Alemagna's works are imbued with the 'issue of childhood'. If further proof were needed, one might count the number of times the word childhood appears in this glossary as a standalone concept, a form of representation, or the main character in a story. Yet the subject ought rightfully to be tackled head-on, with this entire chapter devoted to "Childhood", and upon which many others will doubtless naturally converge.

On the face of it, we can point out three levels of meaning. The first is Beatrice Alemagna's own childhood, which seeps sometimes subtly and other times stridently through her stories. Not entirely autobiographically, mind you, nor employing the hackneyed and irksome rhetoric of those who address little boys and girls that way. No, it's the nitty-gritty that occasionally materialises in the fun she has 'messing around' with materials; recollecting things she's read; relishing what the author herself calls "the priceless of the truly tiny", those little discarded things; in the tension that forms between order and disorder in collections and arrangements of objects; even in the loneliness that is deliberately experienced rather than endured.

But there's also a second level, which takes us to childhood unrelentingly viewed from afar, bewildering the observer who still senses snippets of it but eventually discovers an inexorable detachment: childhood is a form of existence that is no longer intrinsic and experienced, but rather poses a question and raises an issue. In fact, it's the title of *What is a child?*. The beginning of the book reveals how astonishing it is to cross this threshold as most unwittingly and realise that there's no going back: "A child is a small person. They only stay small for a while and then they get big. They grow up without even realising it. Slowly and silently they get taller. Children don't stay children forever. One day they just change."





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This picture book, the first one Alemagna put out directly onto the Italian market, presents an unresolved, and unresolvable, conflict between the words and the pictures. Or perhaps between children and childhood. Children are masterfully depicted in portraits and images that come alive with their familiar dishevelment, lopsided faces and awkward movements and expressions, moving the reader to laughter or tears, and bringing back long-forgotten memories. By contrast, childhood is a black hole around which words swirl. An inherently inquisitive discourse that focuses on childhood but does not pack the punch of pictures to captivate the reader and swings relentlessly from the small to the large and back again, disclosing the invariably adult viewpoint of the curious but detached onlooker, yearning to re-establish contact but always getting rejected. There's no escape, and the pointless pursuit reminds us of J.M. Barrie's Wendy. Not the Wendy in Neverland, who makes Tinker Bell jealous and is kidnapped by Captain Hook but perhaps adult Wendy the mother who, at the end of the story, recognises Peter Pan when he drops in but knows he didn't come for her. It's her little girl's turn to fly off.

The irrevocable distance separating the us from the essence of the child does not translate into resignation or bittersweet longing for an idyllic age, nor even into Romanticism's clutching at the divine nature of the "puer". Rather, it embodies a new obligation to accompany and stand by the little ones. The author takes her sense of responsibility to a new level, spelling out deep respect for childhood as the main theme of her work. Hers is a tricky position, straddling a desire to be at the same time both close and far. In the interviews that preceded this volume, what emerged frequently was a craving for clarity, along with a determination to get through to very young readers. How else can one interpret the last pages of Alemagna's picture books, which explain an outcome that the storyline and images have already made obvious but which she still feels duty-bound to reiterate. Is it a didactic drift? A hankering to impart some kind of knowledge? No, it merely reflects both the author and the reader's wish to be brought up to the same speed, to understand that "x marks the spot" by stating it aloud and ensuring absolute awareness. However, between the lines there is also an uncertainty, a fear that is the opposite of the crude cocksureness of pedagogues.

The third dimension alluded to above is that of 'little boys and girls', in other words, the childhood embodied by the protagonist and that translates into action – something that Alemagna, in some of her books, can only pose as a question. Some may raise an eyebrow to hear that an author who avowedly writes for tiny tots wrestles so hard and so long to get there, but it is yet another sign of her deep respect for her readers, and what makes the path she has mapped out for herself so fascinating.



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Still relevant, the question is no closer to being answered but has flowed into the narrative and turned the disconnect between text and pictures that gave rise to *What is a Child?* into a 'melting point'. See, for example, the way certain picture books shift from the third to the first person singular: initially the focus suggests an external point of view, as in *Child of Glass* and *Jo singe garçon*, but after *The Wonderful Fluffy Little Squishy* the protagonist(s) take over the text and the action, merging body and voice, words and pictures into one. Everything in these books becomes more dynamic and more physical, as if 'brought to life' and free to move around and find its own place on the page.

*The Wonderful Fluffy Little Squishy* opens with Alemagna stating this clearly with a quote from Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, whose adventures of Lotta and Britt-Mari she went on to illustrate, marking the start of a long and successful partnership: "It's absolutely best for little children to have a more organized life. Especially if they can organize it themselves!"

## **2. From the Workshop to the Page: Spaces for Creation by Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maître, La Revue des Livres pour Enfants, September 2024**

Beatrice Alemagna recently left Paris to settle in Avon, near Fontainebleau. Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maître, artistic director of La Revue des Livres pour Enfants, visited her in her home and workspace to discuss her creative spaces: the physical spaces of workshops and the inner spaces where imagination begins to take shape before materializing on paper. Beatrice Alemagna shows us how the exploratory space of sketchbooks leads to the final form of a book, the culmination of a process.

*Thank you for welcoming us into your new studio. Have you always had a studio at home?*

Yes, always. It's a space I can access at any moment—I need to be able to work spontaneously, even in the middle of the night! If I had to commute to a workspace, I'd feel disconnected from something that's with me daily, even if it's not always easy to have your workspace where your family lives. In Paris, I had a small 25-square-meter studio on the same floor as my apartment. I'd close one door and open another. Here, when my daughters come home from school, they immediately come upstairs. Of course, it makes me very happy, but sometimes it's not so easy to stop and start again.

*Is moving to a new studio disruptive? Does it take time to find your rhythm again?*

Very disruptive! Even though I was lucky to double my workspace when I moved here. I've



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never had my computer close to where I draw, nor so many tables to move between depending on the light or my mood. What's most unsettling in this studio are the skylights. I can't see outside unless I lean out. In Paris, I loved my little street and watching people pass by—it was also a source of inspiration. Here, there are other inspirations: trees, changing seasons... I feel more connected to nature and less to humanity.

*Does the light from above feel special or inspiring to you?*

Yes, there's a different relationship to light here, and how it changes. For instance, in the morning, I can't work at this table because the light is too blinding, so I move to another one. When it rains, and the sun comes out, you can see rainbows. It's truly beautiful. When I lived in Marseille, I had a huge home studio with 4-meter-high ceilings and large windows. It was a beautiful space, but the overwhelming brightness of the sun didn't inspire me at all. I need light that feels softer. It's the same in my drawings—if you look at how I work with light, it's always concentrated in one specific spot. I don't like very intense, all-encompassing light; it feels too oppressive, like an atomic bomb.

*You mentioned your daughters, aged 13 and 8. Do you show them your works in progress?*

I love doing that! When you work in creation, since it comes from within your own universe, there's a point where you need an external perspective; otherwise, you risk losing your way. So, I call my daughters, and they come running because they love it when I ask for their opinions. They're sometimes enthusiastic but also critical. They give me very intelligent feedback that helps me move forward, notice things I hadn't seen, and fix certain mistakes. It's incredibly important to me.

*Having a workspace of your own protects your solitude and intimacy. Do you ever feel the need to invite others in to discuss your work?*

Yes, I have friends I consult regularly, who sometimes help me just by pinpointing what's not working. There's my partner, and friends who've known my work for a long time and have seen its evolution. I need people to come here, almost like stepping into Pinocchio's whale. And other times, I just want to have conversations about drawing or the craft. For example, the other day, a colleague said, "I'm 65—will I be making children's books my whole life? It's almost becoming morbid..." That got me thinking about the role of children's books as we age, when kids grow up, and our concerns about childhood change.

*Is making children's books always about connecting with children?*

Not necessarily, but increasingly for me. I wouldn't have said this twenty years ago! Since my daughters arrived, what I do has taken on a very different direction. I was tired of making



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books just for myself, so if I wanted to stay in the world of children's books, I needed to truly address them. I also began to see the political side of this work: creating worlds truly connected to childhood, with respect for others, freedom, and self-discovery. From that perspective, yes, it's very important for me to be surrounded by children, to observe and draw inspiration from them.

*Does that include reading your stories aloud to them?*

I place great importance on reading my stories aloud: there has to be precision in the rhythm, a kind of melody, a tempo. I'm increasingly enjoying reading my books in public. The way a text can be delivered orally is part of its power. A book isn't just a private space where a child sits alone with images and words—it's often also a form of communication between adult and child. That communication works if the rhythms are right and there's a genuine musicality. My daughters can read on their own, but they still love it when I read to them aloud. These readings also justify—or not—a text's existence when I see where they lose interest, where they become captivated or lit up...

*In your studio, what do you need most? Your drawing tools? Specific kinds of paper? You have many small objects and images here—have they traveled with you from studio to studio?*

Yes, absolutely. I love surrounding myself with things that inspire me. I often say I'm "objectopathic." I have an almost physical reaction to objects: bird feathers that evoke something, old jars I've had since childhood, images that follow me from studio to studio, characters... Picasso isn't very popular right now, but he's always been my idol, along with Astrid Lindgren, Tove Jansson, and, of course, Tomi Ungerer. These objects are like reminders. As for tools, the more I can improvise, reinvent, and disrupt the techniques I use to make them my own, the better I feel. I find freedom in anything non-academic. For example, I dislike noble materials or high-end papers. A few years ago, I bought 350g Arches paper for €15 per sheet, but I can't use it because its preciousness intimidates me—I'm afraid to ruin it. I need to feel free to throw things away, to feel almost like a child with materials that feel unimportant. That gives me freedom and a sense of space to breathe.

*Is your studio a place where, more than anywhere else, something floats in the air – characters, images? Or is imagination everywhere, all the time?*

Not at all! In fact, here, sometimes there's nothing floating, it's just very dead and very anxiety-inducing. I've also learned with age that creation is never linear, at least for me. There are significant peaks and valleys. When I'm in a downward phase, I even try to avoid going into the studio because I know it'll almost make me nauseous not being able to draw, not seeing anything. Thanks to some friends, like Paul Cox, who told me, "Every day, try to



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do something, even if you feel blocked, completely dried up, even if it's just grids of lines," I've learned to push myself, and sometimes I've found paths I didn't expect. But it can also float intensely when I'm in a creative phase.

*When you're in this research phase, does it start with a story being told or images?*

It often starts with a desire, an idea that becomes a text. This text might seem perfect to me just after I've written it, but it will never be the one in the book because I'll rewrite it dozens, scores, hundreds of times! The images will sort of grow on their own from this foundation and will go on to change the text. It's really a dance between words and images. For the book I'm currently working on, just this morning, I tore up at least ten versions. For example, in the story, two characters were supposed to go underwater and, in my head, take a bike – an incredible, strange bike. But in the process of drawing, I saw a sort of carriage pulled by rabbits and completely changed the text! My editors are used to it; they have me sign a contract for a text that will be totally different in the end. I always try to avoid banality, to be as sincere as possible in my writing. It's a whole process of finding myself inside what I write.

*We've talked about light, but in the studio, there's also sound. Today, we heard the rain, the church bells... Does sound play a role in your creative process as well?*

A huge one. For example, it's impossible for me to listen to the radio or hear people talking while I draw. I also can't listen to people singing. I couldn't draw while listening to Jacques Brel; I wouldn't truly be inside my own head. I look for soundscapes that carry and inspire me. Sometimes I realize I'm no longer focused on what I'm doing and understand that it's tied to the music I'm listening to, which bores me.

*Do you hear your characters speak?*

Yes, often, I hear them speak, with their voices, their intonations. I don't know why, but the little girls in my books often have raspy voices. I'm very sensitive to the sounds of voices, and when the voice of one of my daughters' friends fascinates me, I immediately want to draw. I'm very auditory, musical... I sing, I play the guitar.

*If we talk about the drawing sheet, do you have format preferences?*

I hate square formats or working on oversized children's books. When I'm faced with a very large sheet, I feel a sort of agoraphobia – too much space to fill overwhelms me immediately. On the other hand, tiny formats, anything meticulous, microscopic, really appeals to me.



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*Weren't the original drawings for Adieu Blanche Neige large formats?*

Medium-sized. And my tools were brushes. [Beatrice pulls out the originals from a folder.] The Blanche Neige format, for me, is really the maximum. When I draw with a pencil, it's different. I'll show you a very laborious drawing I made in pencil for my next book. It's not a very large format, but I wanted to create an overwhelming accumulation of objects, and I spent days trying to figure out how to proceed; it was very stressful for me.

*Being both an illustrator and an author gives you freedom. Is it hard for you to share the book's space with another author?*

I don't really like illustrating other people's work. Unless it's Gianni Rodari or Astrid Lindgren, it's very rare for me to feel inspired by someone else's text. Sometimes I like them, and then I think, "But why does it end like this? I don't want it to end like this!" I also feel more constrained, with a kind of mental tension and a huge responsibility that I struggle to handle. Whereas with my own texts, I feel more comfortable. When I started, twenty-four years ago, I remember a publisher telling me, "You're both an author and an illustrator? Here, we don't believe in that at all. You can't be a good writer and a good creator of images. You must be one or the other." That made me reflect a lot... and doubt myself! Fortunately, I'm not the only one doing both. When I look at books written and illustrated by the same person, it seems to me that an entire world, a coherent universe, unfolds... An author who doesn't draw will struggle more to have a precise identity.

*How do you feel about the more structured space of a book, which imposes a rhythm and certain organization?*

Oh, if only I could make books without having to plan the format and number of pages from the beginning... For a long time, I tried to stay completely ignorant about this: I really advocate for ignorance in art! I love outsider artists, mad people, those who are unconscious... At first, I didn't want to know much about how a book is made, but I had to learn, even though it annoys me terribly to have to fit into a precise framework. But, like all constraints, in the end, they also allow me to trim, to let go of certain things.

*And making a book outside of publishing, an artist's book—would that appeal to you?*

I would love that, but who would offer me such an opportunity? I try to make books as free and artistic as possible, but a real artist's book, where I could, for instance, add phrases to my drawings without telling an actual story, I would adore that. In the 1990s, it seems publishers were less concerned about profitability, and things were freer. I often think of this phrase from the Czech artist Květa Pacovská: "The illustrated book is the first art gallery a child can visit."



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*Do you still need publishers to seek you out?*

Yes, being an author is a very childlike position. We need a loving gaze, someone to pat us on the head a little because we've spent so much time working alone. What I struggle with a bit now is that sometimes, all it takes is for me to propose a project for it to be accepted, whereas I long to be critiqued, to learn, to evolve. In fact, I almost have too much free rein!

*You now have the image of someone who is fully in control of her work...*

Yes, but I'm not in control at all! And I'm happy about that... when you're too much in control, boredom inevitably sets in. I never thought I'd say this, but I hope to always keep doubting and struggling, actually, so I can keep moving forward. I realized not so long ago that the way my hand moves on paper really changes my drawing. Music also plays a role: if I listen to a piece that evokes gentleness, I can draw in a much freer, looser way than if I listen to something that tenses up my thoughts. Or when I'm tired, my hand hesitates; it's rigid.

*And your sketchbooks—what kind of space are they for you?*

A space of schizophrenia! I pour everything that comes to mind into them. Sometimes they're true work sketchbooks, with storyboards and specific requests from publishers, and other times they're just chaotic spaces where I jot down all sorts of things, almost like diaries. When I gave them to the Hamelin association for the 2023 exhibition in Bologna, I made them promise not to share or display certain phrases, certain thoughts I had written down. In one old sketchbook, there's the entire process of choosing my children's names. There are also moments of distress I've written or drawn. It's both an intimate space and a study space where I often work on the human figure because I'm very interested in the accuracy of the body. For example, just now, you were in a position I found very beautiful, and I would have loved to draw you. Inspiration can come just like that.

*Are storyboards the beginning of visual storytelling?*

As much as I dislike making preparatory sketches, I absolutely love working on storyboards. Trying to set the rhythm we talked about earlier. I have so many in my sketchbooks. This one is for my next book. It feels like an endless search until one day I say, "There, that's it," and I stumble upon it after all that searching.

*But your sketchbooks still show many sketches!*

I try not to do too many, but for some publishers, seeing preparatory sketches is essential—they need to be able to say yes or no. Sometimes I even make sketches after completing the final drawings to make it seem like I did proper work beforehand! Štěpán Zavřel, a Czech illustrator better known in Italy than in France, once told me, "You should



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always redraw your work at least once, even if you love it.” That taught me how important it is to have something to compare to. Choosing between two versions of a drawing is a way to find the best one.

*Is that why there are so many technical variations and explorations of lines?*

It’s mostly because I always feel the need for change. I know that if I’m bored, I won’t produce anything worthwhile, so I try new techniques, new formats, new ways of storytelling. I hope I’ll always be able to open up new paths. I’m very afraid that one day this might stop, that I’ll no longer feel enthusiastic. Without that passion, I know the book won’t be good.

*Does the computer play a role in your work?*

I’ve tried... I have a graphic tablet. But there’s something, in my opinion, that dies behind the screen—it becomes sterile and lifeless. However, I do enjoy reworking my drawings on the computer afterward. I would love to use it more to adjust the lighting in different ways, highlight a detail... but I’m not skilled enough technically. The computer allows for everything—there are no constraints anymore. I feel lost in the face of so many possibilities. I prefer truly artisanal techniques; everything about accidents and limitations fascinates me.

*Is there a specific space-time for creation?*

Time in my work is a bit like a rollercoaster—it’s compressed, stretched, then very compressed again, and then stretched once more. When I work, I sometimes go at such speed! But before that, I can spend a torturous week unable to get anything done... It’s as if I’m accumulating little things inside me, and then suddenly, I manage to pour them out onto the page very quickly. Thankfully, I have these moments of compressed time, or else I’d only make one book every six years!

*You’ve made about forty books—surely you could trust yourself by now?*

Thank you for saying that word—I never trust myself enough! Even when I’m three-quarters through a book, I think, “Will I be able to finish it? Will I manage to create the last images?” It feels like it’s the first time with every book—I forget everything I’ve already done. Sometimes I even look at my books and think, “Did I really do that? Impossible! I’m not capable of drawing like that—it’s amazing!” It’s as if the drawing detached itself from me. Sometimes I even feel like I’m being guided by a force. I’m not religious or mystical, but everything becomes so clear in my mind, as if someone is leading me. In those moments, drawing is almost orgasmic—everything is in the right place, exactly where, for me, it has to be!





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*You mentioned movement and sound... Would you like to move beyond the page and explore animation? For example, we could imagine the little bat Pascaline moving around.*

It would need the right context—I couldn't just launch into such a project like that—but I would love for someone to approach me about it. When I draw, I practically see my characters moving on the page, and it's so frustrating to have to freeze them. Sometimes I draw a character in multiple positions in the same drawing or create sequences. In *Adieu Blanche Neige*, there are two pages with sequences because I couldn't decide how the queen should eat the entrails the hunter brought her, or how she should die while dancing... "La Cabane à Histoires" created animations from two of my books, and it was magnificent—it amazed me. Yes, one of my dreams is to make my drawings move!



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Hans Christian Andersen Award  
Nominee 2026



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

## 5. LIST OF AWARDS AND OTHER DISTINCTIONS

2024 - A monographic on her *opera omnia* curated by Bibliothèque Nationale de France (La Revue des Livres pour Enfants) is released

2024 - Golden Medal at The Original Art Exhibit of the Society of Illustrators of New York for *Pepper and Me*

2024 - *Pepper and Me* is selected by the New York Times among the best children's books

2023 - *La Grande Ourse* by Salon du Livre de Montreuil (France)



2022 - The monograph *Alfabeto Alemagna* (Alemagna's Alphabet) is published in Italy by Topipittori, in France by La Partie (2023) and in China-Taiwan by Abula press (2024)

2022 - The extraordinary award for an extraordinary artist by Bologna Children's Book Fair (Italy)

An extraordinary award to Beatrice Alemagna, a special recognition for the extraordinary talent of an illustrator who has always had a strong connection with Bologna Children's Book Fair.



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

In 2022, the Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF) has chosen to celebrate the event's return to an in-person format with a special, or rather Extraordinary, award to an artist who fully embodies the essence of the Children's Book Fair. Like BCBF, in fact, Beatrice Alemagna was born in Bologna, but she has gone on to become a true citizen of the world and one of the most esteemed illustrators on the international scene. With her work *Vi går till parken* (Let's go to the park), published by the Swedish publisher Mirandobok soon after the pandemic and written by Sara Stridsberg, she offers stunning proof of how art can represent a period of global crisis, such as the prolonged pandemic emergency, through a style that is both poetic and enlightening, without any trace of bombast.

The extraordinary award for an extraordinary artist is the accolade that the Bologna Children's Book Fair is awarding to Beatrice Alemagna and was presented during the customary prize-giving evening held on the first day of the Fair. This special, unique award is bestowed by BCBF on particularly deserving recipients, such as the extraordinary career and work of Beatrice Alemagna, who has always been an important presence at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, where she has been selected several times for awards and exhibitions, serving also on the jury for the Illustrators Exhibition in 2021.



The Bologna Children's Book Fair took the opportunity of the release of *Vi går till parken* to award the prize. After two years of restrictive measures and lockdowns, and with children confined to their domestic spaces between walls that have never seemed so claustrophobic, a young child's request to go to the park – the title of the book itself – together with the text by Sara Stridsber is poignant and touching, conveying a strength and legitimacy that we may not otherwise have been able to recognise. This compelling and categorical text is reflected in Beatrice Alemagna's illustrations, enhanced to the maximum by an art catalogue format with very thick card pages. The image rendered is not that of a stereotypical moment of carefree childhood happiness: these are depictions of poignant melancholy, with dark and spent tones, like the drained atmosphere of a place that no longer welcomes crowds of

children but only a couple, a single one, or none at all. A book that is a veritable manifesto of childhood loneliness and that rises up like a scream, testifying to a period that has weighed on children in ways that are yet to be fully understood.

2020 - Le Prix des Sorcières (France) for *Things That Go Away*



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2019 - Val de Marne Prize (France) for *Things That Go Away*

The book is given to all the newborns

2019 - Huckepack Prize (Germany) for *On a Magical Do-Nothing Day*

2019 - *Child of Glass* is selected by the New York Times & New York City Library among the ten best children's books of the year

2018 - English Association Book Award (England) for *On a Magical Do-Nothing Day*

2017 - *On a Magical Do-Nothing Day* is selected by the New York Times & New York City Library among the ten best children's books of the year

2017 - Golden Medal at The Original Art Exhibit of the Society of Illustrators of New York for *On a Magical Do-Nothing Day*

2017 - Grand Prix de l'Illustration for *On a Magical Do-Nothing Day* from Musée de l'illustration, Moulins (France)

2017 - Landerneau Prize (France) for *On a Magical Do-Nothing Day* as Best book of the year 2016

2015 - *The Wonderful Fluffy Little Squishy* is selected by the American Society of Illustrators among the best picture books

2016 - Mildred L. Batchelder Award (USA) for *The Wonderful Fluffy Little Squishy*

2016 - Best album Prize at Italian Andersen Award for *Lotta combinaguai (Lotta on Troublemaker Street)*

2015 - Baby readers Prize from Ville de Nanterre (France) for *Bon voyage, Baby!*

2015 - *A lion in Paris* features in the Huffington Post list of the greatest children's classics

2015 - *Child of Glass* and *Jo singe garçon* features in the prestigious *100 Great Picture Books for Children* by Martin Salisbury



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2015 - *What is a Child?* selected for "the world through picture book" IFLA (International Federation of Libraries Association, Netherlands)

2014 - *The Wonderful Fluffy Little Squishy* is selected for Pépites de Montreuil

2015 - Liber Prize (Italy) for *The Five Misfits* as Best book of the year 2014

2015 - First Prize of Salon du livre de Gaillac (France) for *The Five Misfits*

2015 - Baby readers Prize from Ville de Nanterre (France) for *Bon voyage, Baby!*

2013 - First Prize of Région Ardèche Les bébés aiment les livres (France) for *Bon voyage, Baby!*

2013 - *What is a Child?* is distributed for free by the Mexican government to every school child in Mexico; in 2018, it is given as a gift at the end of the school year in every elementary school in Hiroshima (Japan)

2011 - Sélection prix Baobab - Pépité de l'album du salon du livre de Montreuil (France) for *The Big Little Thing*

2011 - Prix du meilleur album pour la revue brésilienne Crescer (Brazil) for *What is a child?*

2010 - Italian Andersen Prize as "Illustrator of the year" (Italy)

2010 - Best book by Nati per Leggere (Italy) for *A lion in Paris* at the Salone internazionale del libro di Torino

2007 - Special mention at Bologna Ragazzi Awards (Italy) for *A lion in Paris*

2007 - Best album Prize at Salon de Rueil-Malmaison (France) for *A lion in Paris*

2007 - Best book award Taiwan libraries (Taiwan) for *A lion in Paris*

2007 - Selected for the White Ravens (Germany) for *A lion in Paris*



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- 2006 - Selected for Baobab Prize of Salon de Montreuil (France) for *A lion in Paris*
- 2006 - Best Illustrator Prize in Rueil (France)
- 2005 - Selected at Prix Baobab, Salon du livre de Montreuil (France) for *I wanted a turtle*
- 2004 - Italian Andersen Prize (Italy) for *Uccelli Notturni* by Tormod Haugen
- 2002 - Selected for Baobab Prize of Salon de Montreuil (France) for *Child of Glass*
- 2002 - *Après Noël (After Christmas)* Prix Octogones (France)
- 2000 - Prix Attention Talent-Fnac (France) for *Clara's Treasure*
- 1999 - Chronos Prize (France)
- 1998 - Octogones Prize (France)
- 1996 - First Prize Figures Futures in Montreuil (France)
- Selected five times for the White Ravens Selection by the International Youth Library (Germany)

## Exhibitions

2024

*Bambini*, Struwwelpeter Museum in Frankfurt on the occasion of the 2024 Frankfurter Buchmesse (Germany)

2024/23

*On va au parc*, at Little Villette in La Villette (France)

2023

*Le cose preziose. The obstinate research of Beatrice Alemagna* at the Fondazione del Monte (Bologna, Italy) and in Bordeaux (France) during the Festival Gribouillis



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The cultural association Hamelin dedicated a large, important solo exhibition to Alemagna: a tale of Beatrice Alemagna's art, *Le cose preziose. The obstinate research of Beatrice Alemagna*.

The exhibition brings together the secret side of the author's work: not only the most widely read and award-winning albums, but also a great deal of unpublished material that has composed a complete portrait of Alemagna and the deepest nodes of her poetics. Childhood, the city and nature, identity and the search for the answer to a great question: what is a child?



2023/22

*Vi går til parken*, Kalmar Konst Museum (Sweden)

2021/22

*Adieu Blanche Neige*, Arts Factory gallery in Paris (France)

*Vi går til parken*, Swedish Institute of Paris (France) and Wanås Konst Foundation (Sweden)



Visit of the exhibition by the Crown Princess of Sweden, Victoria and Sara Stridsberg.



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2021

*On va au parc*, Institut suédois, Paris (France)

2018

Retrospective at Cultural Centre C'era una volta, Bastia (France)

2017

*Face à face*, Salon du livre de Montreuil (France)

*The Zoo inside of Beatrice Alemagna*, Zoo Gallery Bologna (Italy)

*A World of Colour* (w/Chris Haughton), Dublin (Ireland)

2015/16

The American Society of Illustrators, New York (USA)

2015

*Eccellenze Italiane* by Bologna Children's Book Fair, Italian Cultural Institute in Madrid (Spain), Berlin (Germany), Abu Dhabi (UAE), Sofia (Bulgaria), Beijing, Canton and Shenzhen (China), Cairo (Egypt), Teheran (Iran), Santiago de Chile (Chile), Athens and Salonicco (Greece), Lima (Peru), Moscow, (Russia) São Paulo (Brasil) and Taiwan.

2014/15

*Facce d'infanzia*, Italian Cultural Institute of Stockholm (Sweden)

2013

Retrospective at Lucca Comics, Lucca (Italy)



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2011

*Show and tell, the picturebook makers*, Cambridge (England)

2010

Guest of Honour at the International Illustrator's Exhibition of Sarmede (Italy)

2009

*Au pays des petits poux*, Librairie Artazart, Paris (France)

*Metafore d'infanzia*, Sala Borsa Library, Bologna (Italy)

*Rodari fullcolor*, Fondazione del Monte, Bologna (Italy)

2008

*Expositions Clac-Clac*, Salon du livre jeunesse de Montreuil, Paris (France)

*Che cos'è un bambino?*, Giannino Stoppani Bookshop, Bologna (Italy)

2007

*Original Illustrations*, Galerie Dojunkay, Omotesando, Tokyo (Japan)

*L'autre chemin de Beatrice Alemagna*, Bibliothèque Elsa Triolet, Bobigny, Paris (France)

2006

*A arte nà pagina*, Auditorium Cabrita, Barreiro, Lisbon (Portugal)

*Portraits*, Bibliothèque Municipale de Reims and Bibliothèque Prévert, Cherbourg-Octeville (France)

*Pensieri illustrati di una bambina di vetro*, Museo Civico Comunale, Bologna (Italy)

*Une rétrospective de Beatrice Alemagna*, Médiathèque de Roubaix, Lille (France)

2004

*Histoire courte d'une goutte*, Galerie Autrement, Paris (France)

*Beatrice Alemagna: une rétrospective*, International Jugendbibliothek, Munich (Germany)

2003

*Beatrice Alemagna: une rétrospective*, Centre d'études en littérature jeunesse, Charleville (France)

*Mon amour: exposition d'originaux*, Mollat, Bordeaux (France)



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## Special projects

2022

*Era ora* (a Netflix movie by the Italian director Alessandro Aronadio) was inspired by *Things That Go Away*

2021

Theatrical Play *Il libro di tutte le cose* from the text by Guus Kuijer (Bam-Bam teatro-Pan production)



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## 6. / 7. COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BY THE CANDIDATE AND THE LIST OF TRANSLATED EDITIONS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE LANGUAGES

*Sua Altezza Poltiglia, Principessa di Fango* (to be released in March 2025)

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2025

French edition by L'école des loisirs, 2025

German edition by Rotopol, 2025

Spanish and Catalan edition by A Buen Paso, 2025

USA edition by Astra Publishing, 2025

Chinese edition by Abula Press, 2025

*In mezzo a un milione di rane e farfalle* (*Among a million butterflies*)

(author: Concita De Gregorio, illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Feltrinelli, 2024



*Io e Pepper* (*Pepper and Me*)

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2023



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USA edition by Astra Publishing, 2024

French edition by L'école des loisirs, 2024

*Le top du Top (Top of the Top)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by L'école des loisirs, 2023

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2023

Chinese edition by Abula, 2023

German edition by Rotopol, 2024

USA and UK edition by Thames and Hudson, 2024

Catalan edition by Combel Editorial, 2024

Brazilian edition by Companhia das Letrinhas, 2024

Korean edition by Booklight, 2024

Greek edition by Patakis, 2024

Swedish edition by Bonnier Carlsen, 2024

Czech Republic edition by Host, 2024

Russian edition by Samokat, 2025

Spanish edition by Combel Editorial, to be released on 1 March 2025

*La Luna di Kiev (The Moon of Kyiv)*

(author: Gianni Rodari, illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by EL edizioni, 2022

Galician edition by ¡Álbum!, 2022

UK edition by Walker Books, 2022

*This book is a Non-Profit book, each sale will be donated to the Italian Red Cross for the Ukrainian Crisis. It has been published in Spain, Greece, Georgia, Romania, Basque Country, UK and Japan with the same non-profit conditions.*

*Il Piccolo Principe (The Little Prince)*

(author: Antoine de Saint Exupéry; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Mondadori, 2022

Korean edition, 2023

*Vi går till parken (We Go to the Park)*

(author: Sara Stridsberg; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)



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Swedish edition by Mirando Bok, 2021

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2022

French edition by La Partie, 2023

USA edition by Unruly (Enchanted Lion), 2024

*Même pas en rêve (Never Not Ever)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by L'école des loisirs, 2021

USA edition by Haper Collins, 2021

German edition by Rotopol, 2021

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2021

Catalan edition by Combel Editorial, 2021

Spanish edition by Combel Editorial, 2021

UK edition by Thames & Hudson, 2021

Swedish edition by Bonnier Carlsen, 2022

Czech Republic edition by Host, 2022

Russian edition by Samokat, 2022

Brazilian edition by Companhia das Letrinhas, 2023

Korean edition by Booklight, 2023

Chinese edition by Ronshin, 2023

Chinese edition by Abula, 2023

Greek edition by Patakis, 2023

Romanian edition by Cartego, 2024



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*Addio, BiancaNeve (You Can't Kill Snow White)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2021

French edition by La Partie, 2021

Basque edition by Txalaparta, 2022

USA edition by Unruly (Enchanted Lion), 2022

Spanish edition by Combel Editorial, 2023

*A sbagliare le storie (Getting the Stories Wrong)*

(author: Gianni Rodari; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Emme Edizioni, 2020

Korean edition by Booklight, 2020

Belgian edition by Versant Sud, 2022

USA edition by Enchanted Lion, 2022

*Annie Lumsden, the girl from the sea*

(author: David Almond; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

UK edition by Walker Books, 2020



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*Le confidenze di Britt-Mari (Britt-Mari's Confidences)*

(author: Astrid Lindgren; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Mondadori, 2020

Cover for *Children's Picturebooks: the Art of Visual Storytelling*

(author: Martin Salisbury/Morgan Styles; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

UK edition by Laurence King Publishing, 2020

*Les choses qui s'en vont (Things That Go Away)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Hélium, 2019

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2019

Spanish edition by Combel Editorial, 2019

UK edition by Thames & Hudson, 2019

USA edition by Abrams, 2020

Swedish edition by Mirando bok, 2021

*Il disastrosissimo disastro di Harold Snipperpott (Harold Snipperpott's Best Disaster Ever)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2018

French edition by Albin Michel, 2018

Chinese edition by Dandelion, 2018

USA edition by Harper Collins, 2019

UK edition by Thames and Hudson, 2019

Portuguese edition by HarperKids, 2021

Basque edition by HarperKids, 2022

Catalan edition by HarperKids, 2022

Netherlander edition by Boycott, to be released on 11 March 2025

*Lotta combinaguai sa fare tutto (Lotta's Christmas Surprise)*

(author: Astrid Lindgren, illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Mondadori, 2018

Galician edition by Kalandraka, 2023

*Picasso & Lump*



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(author: Nancy Lim; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Australian edition by Thames & Hudson, 2015

USA edition by MoMA, 2016 (Never released)

*Un grand jour de rien (On a Magical Do-Nothing Day)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Albin Michel Jeunesse/Trapèze, 2016

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2016

Swedish edition by Rabén & Sjögren, 2017

USA edition by Harper Collins, 2017

UK edition by Thames & Hudson, 2017

Spanish edition by Combel Editorial, 2017

Greek edition by Kokkino, 2017

German edition by Beltz & Gelberg, 2017

Chinese edition by Ronshin - 2017/Lelequ Picture book, 2019

Korean edition by Media Changbi, Inc, 2017

Turkish edition by Aylak Kitap, 2018

Romanian edition by Signatura, 2019

Russian edition by Samokat, 2020

*Lotta combinaguai (Lotta on Troublemaker Street)*

(author: Astrid Lindgren; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Mondadori, 2015

*Le merveilleux dodu velu petit (The Wonderful Fluffy Little Squishy)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Albin Michel, 2014

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2015

Swedish edition by Rabén & Sjögren, 2015

USA edition by Enchanted Lion, 2015

English edition by Thames & Hudson, 2015

Spanish (Castilian) edition by Combel Editorial, 2015

Spanish (Catalan) edition by Combel Editorial, 2015

Korean edition by Neungyule, 2015

Taiwanese edition by Abula Press, 2017

Polish edition by Wytwórnia, 2017



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Turkish edition by Aylak Kitap, 2018

German edition by Beltz & Gelberg, 2019

*Little big Boubo*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

English edition by Tate Publisher, 2014

Swedish edition by Mirando bok, 2014

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2014

Swiss French edition by La joie de Lire, 2014

Spanish (Castilian) edition by Corimbo, 2017

Spanish (Catalan) edition by Corimbo, 2017

*I cinque Malfatti (The Five Misfits)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2014

French edition by Hélium, 2014

Brazilian edition by Martins Fontes, 2014

Spanish (Castilian) edition by A buen paso, 2014

Korean edition by Hyunbooks, 2014

UK and USA edition by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2015

Polish edition by Wydawnictwo Tibum, 2015

Swedish edition by Mirando Bok, 2016

Basque edition by Txalaparta, 2021

Chinese edition by Beijing Cheerful

Turkish edition by Nobel Academic

*Bon voyage, Bébé! (Bon voyage, Baby!)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Hélium, 2013

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2013

Portuguese edition by Orfeu Negro, 2014

Spanish (Castilian) edition by A buen paso, 2015

Spanish (Catalan) edition by A buen paso, 2015

Chinese edition by CCPPG, 2019

Russian edition by Samokat, 2024



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*La gigantesque petite chose (The Big Little Thing)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Autrement jeunesse, 2011

Italian edition by Donzelli, 2011

Greek edition by Kokkino, 2011

Spanish edition by SM, 2012

Portuguese edition by Bags of books, 2012

Brazilian edition by WMF Martins Fontes, 2014

Korean edition by Hyunbooks, 2017

Chinese edition by Guangxi NUPG Co., Ltd, 2017

UK edition by Tate Gallery Publisher, 2019

*Jo singe garçon (Jo monkey boy)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Autrement jeunesse, 2010

Korean edition by Better Books, 2010

*The Bug's Books (4 books: Bugs in the garden, Bugs in a blanket)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

By Phaidon England, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Japan, 2009-2013

*Oméga et l'ourse (Oméga and the bear)*

(author: Guillaume Guéraud; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Editions du Panama, 2008

Spanish edition by Kokinos, 2008

French edition by Editions Le grandes personnes, 2012

*Che cos'è un bambino? (What is a Child?)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2008

French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2009

Korean edition by The Choice Maker, 2009

Spanish edition by SM, 2009

Brazilian edition by WMF – Martins Fontes, 2010

Greek edition by Kokkino, 2010

Netherlander edition by De Eenhoorn, 2011



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Taiwanese edition by Abula Press, 2011  
Swedish edition by Mirando Bok, 2013  
UK and USA edition by Tate Publishing, 2016  
French edition by Casterman, 2017  
Japanese edition by Kijitora Publishing, 2017  
Flemish edition by The Eenhoorn, 2010  
Chinese edition by Trustbridge  
Romanian edition by SC Propublic  
Arabic and jewish edition by A. Azulay  
Polish edition by Natuli  
Estonian edition by Draakon & Kuu, 2023  
Turkish edition by Nobel Academic  
Peruvian edition by Universida Cesar Vallejo  
Catalan edition by Editorial Eccomi S.L., 2025

*Karl Ibou*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)  
Japan edition by Editions Skyfish graphix, 2007  
French edition by Autrement jeunesse, 2008

*Un lion à Paris (A Lion in Paris)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)  
French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2006  
Italian edition by Donzelli editore, 2009  
Spanish edition by SM Infantil, 2007  
Taiwan edition by Magicbox, 2008  
Indian edition by Katha, 2009  
Greek edition by Kokkino, 2010  
UK edition by Tate Gallery Publishing, 2014  
Polish edition by Wydawnictwo Tibum, 2016  
Lithuanian edition by Mazojo Princo Fondas, 2017  
Chinese edition by Guangxi NUPG Co., 2017

*Les Corbeaux de Pearblossom (The Crow of Pearblossom)*

(author: Aldous Huxley; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)



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French edition by Gallimard jeunesse, 2005

Italian edition by Il Castoro edizioni, 2007

Portuguese edition by par Dom Quixote, 2007

Brazilian edition by Record, 2007

*Je voulais une tortue (I wanted a turtle)*

(author: Beatrice Alemagna and Cristiano Mangione; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by éditions du Panama, 2005

Argentinian edition by Fondo de cultura economica, 2008

*La promenade d'un distrait (A Daydreamy Child Takes a Walk)*

(author: Gianni Rodari; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Seuil Jeunesse, 2005

Spanish edition by SM, 2006

USA edition by Enchanted Lion, 2023

*Histoire courte d'une goutte (Short story of a drop)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2004

Italian edition by Donzelli editore, 2010

Portuguese edition by Bags of Books, 2010

French edition by Tom Poche, 2013

French edition by Albin Michel Jeunesse, 2018

*Portraits*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Seuil Jeunesse, 2003

*Gisèle de verre (Child of Glass)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Seuil jeunesse, 2002

Korean edition by Better Books, 2003

Japanese edition by Kuu, 2004

French edition by Albin Michel Jeunesse, 2019

USA edition by Enchanted Lion, 2019



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Italian edition by Topipittori, 2020

Spanish edition by Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2020

Chinese edition by Shan XI Ren Min Mei Shu Chu Ban She, 2021

*Mon amour (My love)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2002

UK, German and Netherland editions by North-South, 2004

Chinese edition by China Renmin University, 2005

Slovakian edition by Didakta, 2005

Korean edition by Gimm Young Publisher, 2005

Polish edition by Nastza Ksiegarnia, 2005

Spanish edition by Los Primerisimos, 2006

Portuguese edition by Bags of Books edições, 2010

French edition by Flammarion, 2015

French edition by Hélium, 2015

*Un et sept (One and Seven)*

(author: Gianni Rodari; illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Seuil Jeunesse, 2001

Spanish edition by SM, 2002

USA edition by Mariuccia Iaconi, 2002

Korean edition by JEI, 2003

*Après Noël (After Christmas)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2001

Portuguese edition by Bags of Books edições, 2010

*Petit bestiaire de Guillaume Apollinaire (The Small Bestiary of Guillaume Apollinaire)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Gallimard Jeunesse, 2000

Korean edition by Idolpan publishing, 2002

*Le secret d'Ugolin (Ugolin's Secret)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)



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French edition by Seuil Jeunesse, 2000

*Le trésor de Clara (Clara's Treasure)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2000

Taiwanese edition by 3&3, 2003

*Une maman trop pressée (A Too Stressed Mom)*

(author and illustrator: Beatrice Alemagna)

French edition by Seuil Jeunesse, 1999



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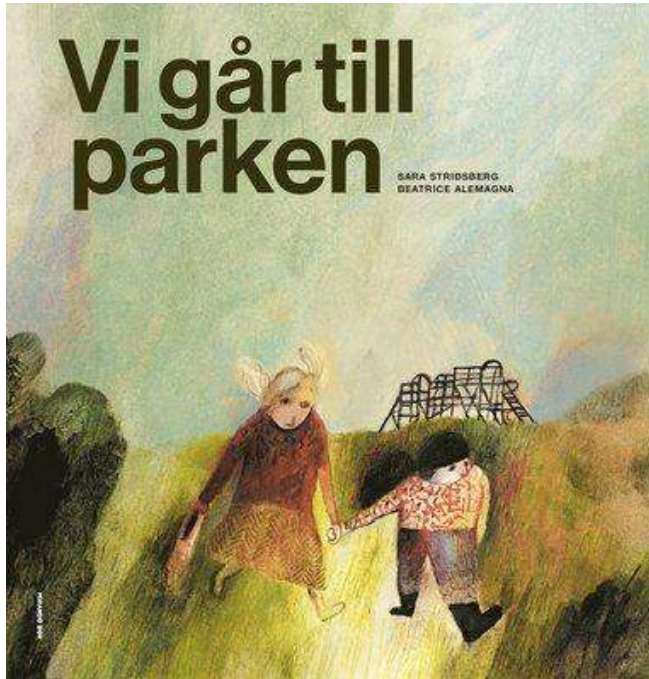
Hans Christian Andersen Award  
Nominee 2026



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

## 8. TEN OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TITLES BY THE CANDIDATE

### VI GÅR TILL PARKEN (We Go to the Park)



Swedish edition by Mirando Bok, 2021

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2022

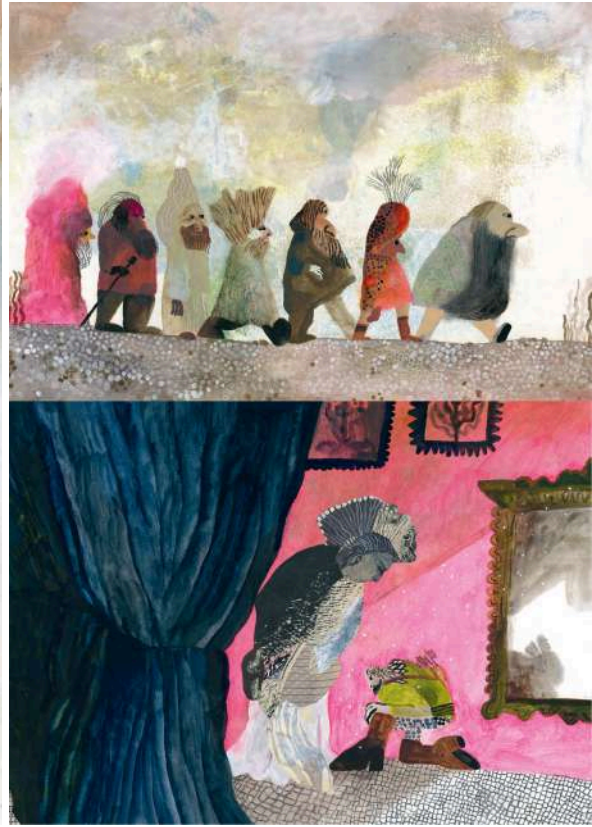
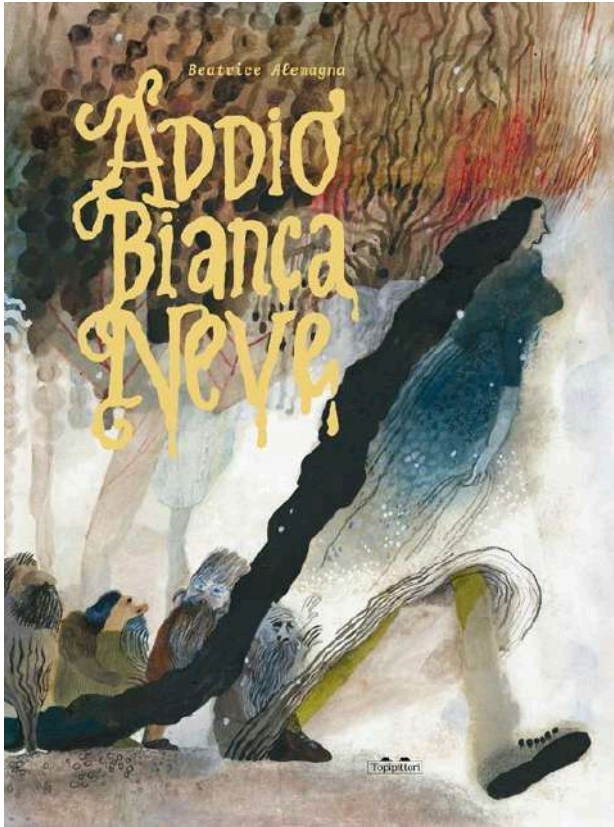
USA edition by Unruly (Enchanted Lion), 2024

The park beckons us to leave our daily routines behind and enter its zone of endless possibility. In the park, the usual rules don't apply. In the park, what matters most is the moment, and losing track of time to the timelessness of imagination, invention, observation, and chance. In the park, there are risks, of course, but also the deepest rewards, to be found in the freedom experienced through play that is both embodied and participatory. It is not the lone "I," but the "we" that goes to the park, where chance encounters might suddenly become moments of deep connection—however fleeting—with others, nature, and ourselves.



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ADDIO, BIANCANEVE  
(You Can't Kill Snow White)



Italian edition by Topipittori, 2021  
French edition by La Partie, 2021  
USA edition by Unruly (Enchanted Lion), 2022  
Spanish edition by Combel Editorial, 2023

Once upon a time, a child was born with skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony: the princess Snow White. She is possessed of beauty and innocence, but there in the shadows lurks a queen who will remarry her widower father, a queen who is as empty and envious, as narcissistic and fractured as is every life that gets stuck in the endless reflecting pool or mirror of the self. Void of love, it is hatred that animates her.

But like all true fairy tales, this story doesn't ask us to judge and condemn the queen and her hatred, but rather to consider the kinds of behaviors and situations that invite evil, and where true innocence or goodness might lie. Following the first-person account of the





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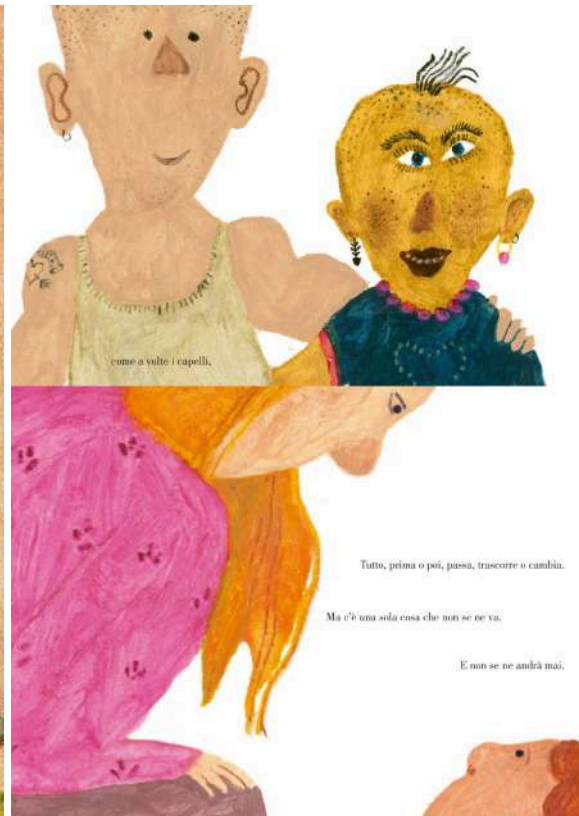
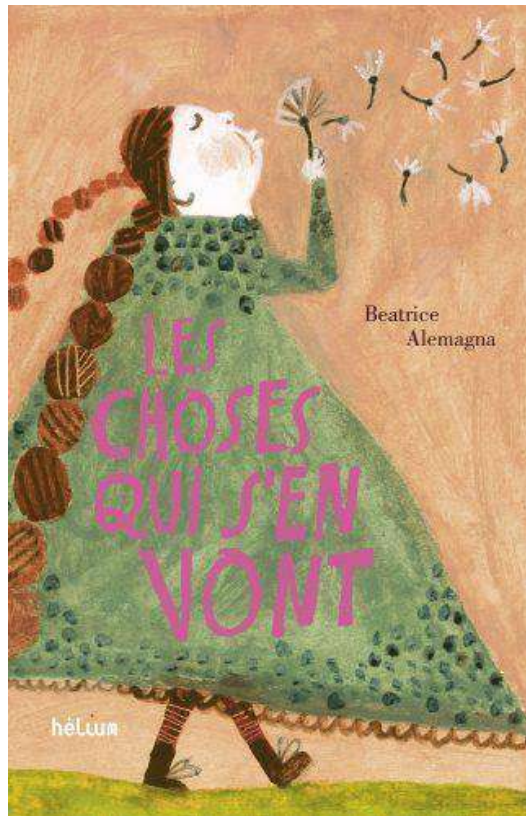
queen, this picture book for older readers illuminates her blinding obsession and insatiable jealousy, right up to the point of her violent undoing.

This large format picture book is made up of a repeating pattern of text and image: each double spread of text is followed by four striking full-spread paintings, which are as riveting as they are unsettling. A bold adaptation of the Grimm's original text, this version of Snow White brilliantly puts us all in touch with the messy, shadowed, fraught, and fragile inwardness we each possess.



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## LES CHOSES QUI S'EN VONT (Things That Go Away)



French edition by Hélium, 2019

USA edition by Abrams, 2020

Italian edition by Topipittori, 2019

Spanish edition by Combel editorial, 2019

UK edition by Thames & Hudson, 2019

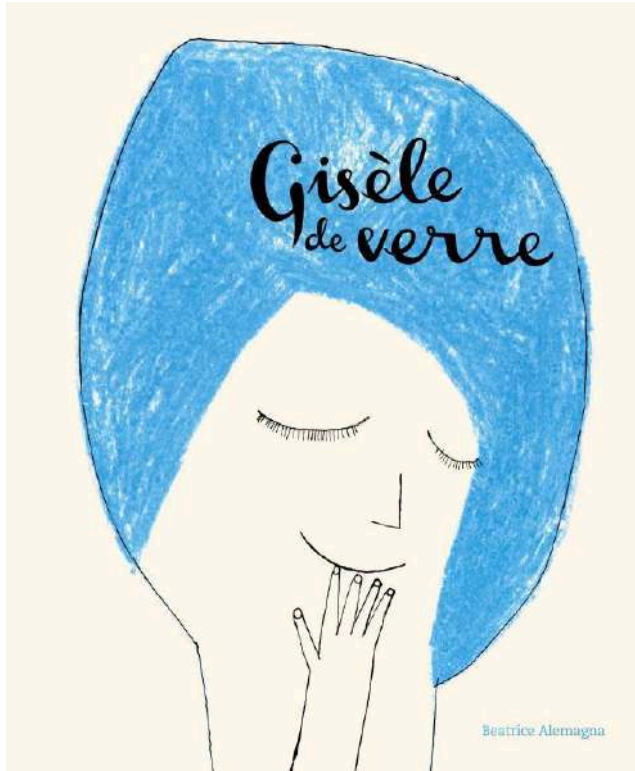
There are many things that go away: leaves fall, tears dry, music lasts only for a few moments, and bubbles pop, vanishing without a trace. Everything in life passes, moves on, or transforms—except one thing that never fades.

With her signature warmth, playfulness, and beautiful illustrations, Beatrice Alemagna reminds us that in a changing world, the love between parent and child remains constant.



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

GISÈLE DE VERRE  
(Child of Glass)



- French edition by Seuil jeunesse, 2002
- Korean edition by Better Books, 2003
- Japanese edition by Kuu, 2004
- French edition by Albin Michel Jeunesse, 2019
- USA edition by Enchanted Lion, 2019
- Italian edition by Topipittori, 2020
- Spanish edition by Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2020
- Chinese edition by Shan XI Ren Min Mei Shu Chu Ban She, 2021

*Child of Glass* follows Gisèle, a fragile yet resilient girl who was born entirely made of glass. Sparkling and luminous, she attracts awe and attention from across the world. But as she is also completely transparent and her innermost thoughts and feelings are always on display, she also faces rejection and alienation. Gisèle must, therefore, embark on a journey to find her place in the world. In sparse, poetic language marked by insight and realism, *Child of Glass* reminds us of the inner courage and capacity for self-realization we all possess.



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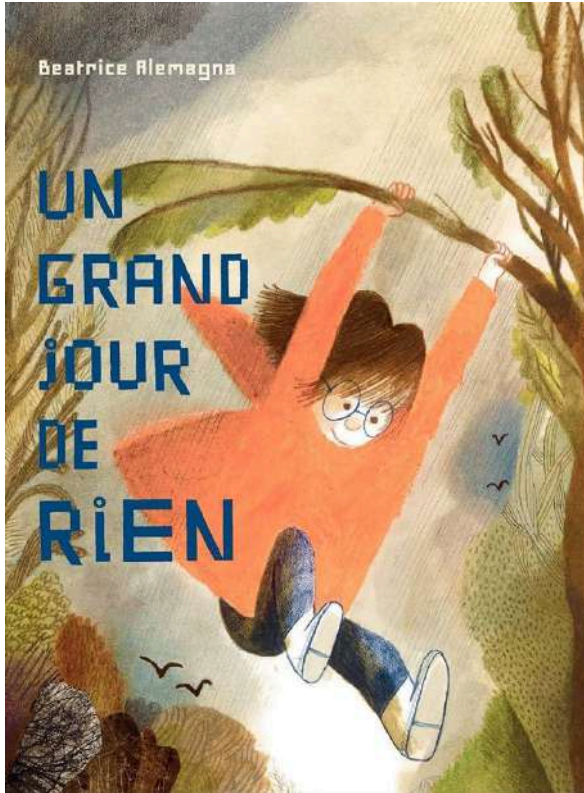
ITALIA

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Nominee 2026



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## UN GRAND JOUR DE RIEN (On a Magical Do-Nothing Day)



- French edition by Albin Michel jeunesse/Trapèze, 2016
- Italian edition by Topipittori, 2016
- Swedish edition by Rabén & Sjögren, 2017
- USA edition by Harper Collins, 2017
- English edition by Thames & Hudson, 2017
- Spanish edition by Combel Editorial, 2017
- Greek edition by Kokkino, 2017
- German edition by Beltz & Gelberg, 2017
- Chinese edition by Ronshin - 2017 / Lelequ Picture book, 2019
- Korean edition by Media Changbi, Inc, 2017
- Turkish edition by Aylak Kitap, 2018
- Romanian edition by Signatura, 2019
- Russian edition by Samokat, 2020



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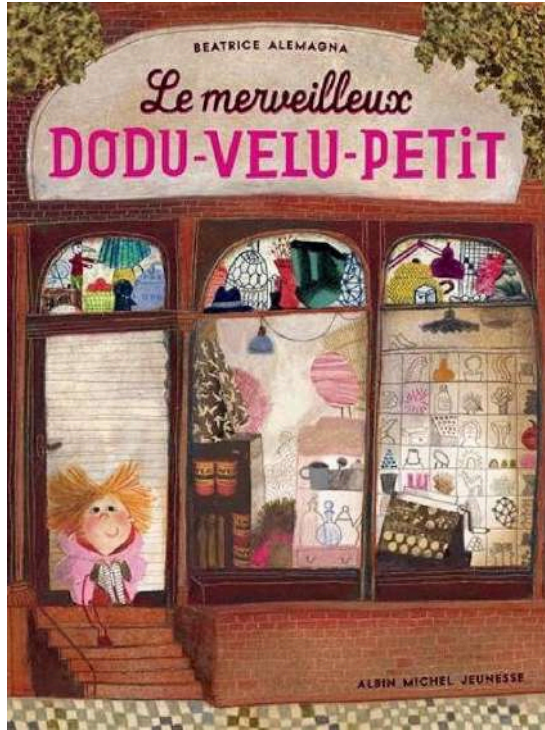
A day of nothing, on holidays. A far away place, with mom working and no one else but a videogame. Bored, lazy and angry, the boy gets out of the house in the rain, not knowing what to do, and accidentally loses his videogame. That's how the book starts and an unexpected adventure in the woods unfolds. Another little masterpiece by Beatrice Alemagna about the inner world of children and the wonder they can find anywhere.

*All I want to do on a rainy day like today is play my game. My mom says it's a waste of time, but without my game, nothing is fun! On the other hand, maybe I'm wrong about that...*



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LE MERVEILLEUX DODU VELU PETIT  
(The Marvellous Fluffy Squishy Itty Bitty)



Ma niente di niente.  
In ogni caso, questo era quello che pensavo.

- French edition by Albin Michel, 2014
- Italian edition by Topipittori, 2015
- Swedish edition by Rabén & Sjögren, 2015
- USA edition by Enchanted Lion, 2015
- English edition by Thames & Hudson, 2015
- Spanish (Castilian) edition by Combel Editorial, 2015
- Spanish (Catalan) edition by Combel Editorial, 2015
- Korean edition by Neungyule, 2015
- Taiwanese edition by Abula Press, 2017
- Polish edition by Wytwórnia, 2017
- Turkish edition by Aylak Kitap, 2018
- German edition by Beltz & Gelberg, 2019

Everyone as a child must have been looking for a very special gift for their mum once! In this story Eddie, a little girl dressed up in fuchsia who believes she's not good at anything, starts wandering to find the best present in the world. But all she finds is a funny, strange creature which she rescues from the bin before finding out that... Great unexpected ending.



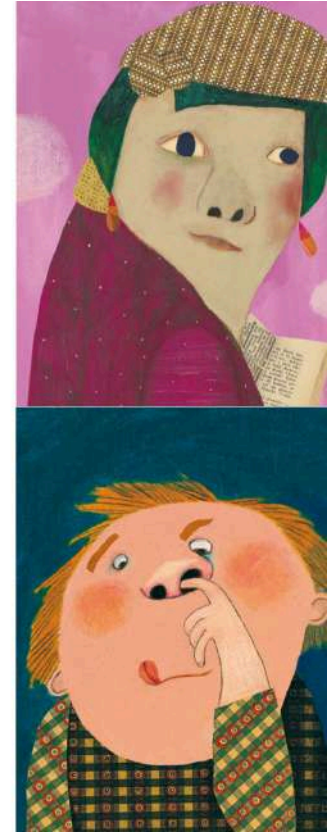
Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

## CHE COS'È UN BAMBINO? (What is a Child?)



**N**on andranno più a scuola ma al lavoro, forse saranno felici, forse avranno la barba o i baffi all'insù, o i capelli tinti di verde. Forse faranno i capricci per delle cose strane come un telefono che non suona o il traffico.

**U**n bambino ha piccole mani, piccoli piedi e piccole orecchie, ma non per questo ha idee piccole. Le idee dei bambini a volte sono grandissime, divertono i grandi, fanno loro spalancare la bocca e dire: «Ah!»



Italian edition by Topipittori, 2008  
French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2009  
Korean edition by The Choice Maker, 2009  
Spanish edition by SM, 2009  
Brazilian edition by WMF - Martins Fontes, 2010  
Greek edition by Kokkino, 2010  
Netherlander edition by De Eenhoorn, 2011  
Taiwanese edition by Abula Press, 2011  
Swedish edition by Mirando bok, 2013  
UK and USA edition by Tate Publishing, 2016  
French edition by Casterman, 2017  
Japanese edition by Kijitora Publishing, 2017  
Flemish edition by The Eenhoorn  
Chinese edition by Trustbridge



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Romanian edition by SC Propublic  
Arabic and Jewish edition by A. Azulay  
Polish edition by Natuli  
Estonian edition by Draakon & Kuu  
Turkish edition by Nobel Academic  
Peruvian edition by Universida Cesar Vallejo  
Catalan edition by Editorial Ecommi S.L., 2025

The best-selling, award-winning author and illustrator Beatrice Alemagna poses a difficult question: What is a child? More than enough to remain speechless. And here's how Beatrice answers the question, drawing from the strength of her sophisticated imagination: "A child is a person, but small", with small hands, small feet, and small ears. But his thoughts and ideas are not necessarily as small as he is. From the intertwining of crystalline words and poetic pictures, an amusing, moving and illuminating book is born: a child-sized portrait gallery that will fascinate grown-ups too. A book to read together, to help children answer the question "Who am I?" and to help parents remember what it means to be a kid.



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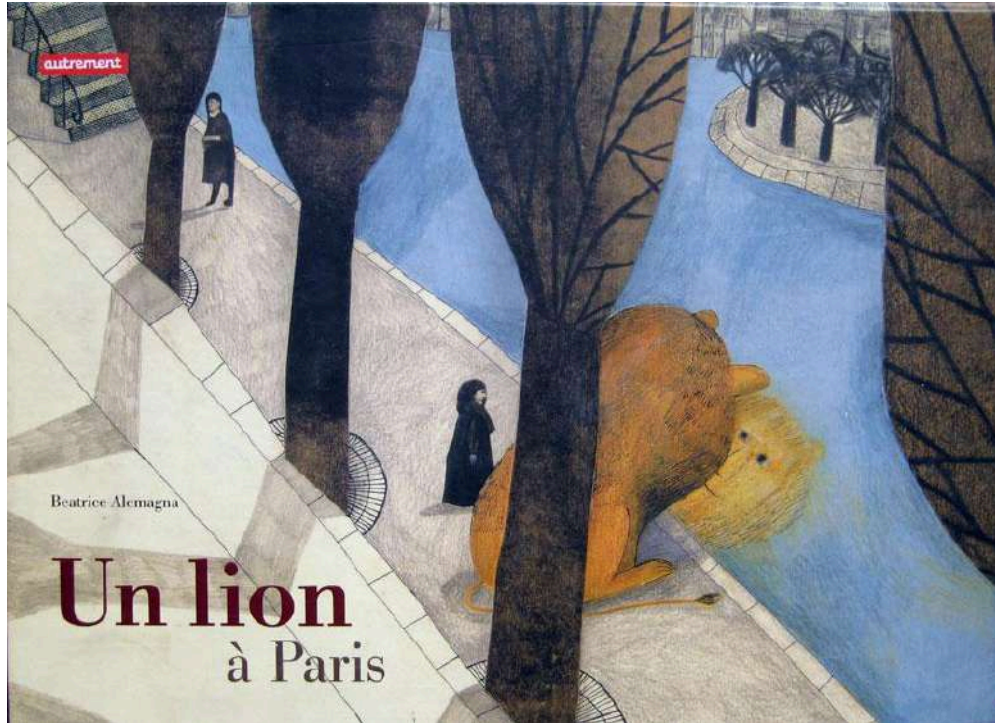
Hans Christian Andersen Award  
Nominee 2026





Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

UN LION À PARIS  
(A Lion in Paris)



- French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2006
- Italian edition by Donzelli editore, 2009
- Spanish edition by SM infantile, 2007
- Taiwan edition by Magicbox, 2008
- Indian edition by Katha, 2009
- Greek edition by Kokkino, 2010
- English edition by Tate Gallery Publishing, 2014

*A Lion in Paris* is widely regarded as the most accomplished book by multi-award-winning children's author/illustrator Beatrice Alemagna. It tells the story of a lion who, bored by his rural life in the savanna, seeks excitement and opportunity in the City of Light. Upon arriving in Paris, the lion is disappointed to find that despite his size, people barely pay attention to him, not even when he lets out a ferocious roar on the busy underground Métro. Revealing the sights and sounds of Paris from Montmartre to the Eiffel Tower, this beautifully illustrated book successfully conveys the experience of being a stranger in a new city and the process of understanding one's own identity.



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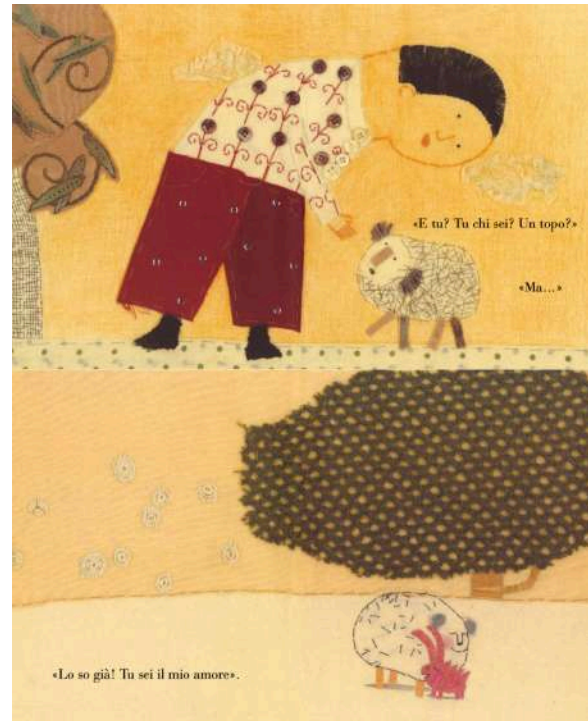
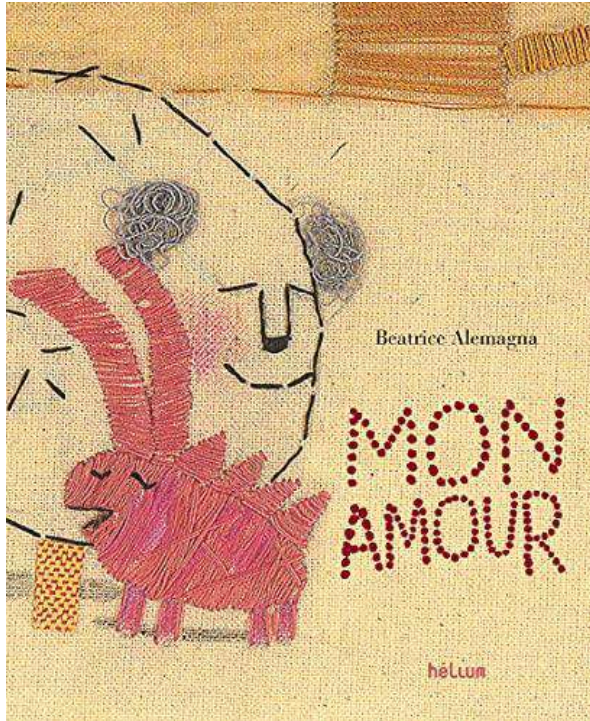
ITALIA

Hans Christian Andersen Award  
Nominee 2026



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

## MON AMOUR (My Love)



French edition by Autrement Jeunesse, 2002  
English, German and Netherland edition by North-South  
Chinese edition by China Renmin University  
Slovenian edition by Didakta  
Korean edition by Gimm Young Publisher  
Checkoslovakian edition by Nastza Ksiegarnia  
Spanish edition by Los Primerisimos  
Portuguese edition by Bags of Books edições, 2010  
French edition by Flammarion, 2015  
French edition by HéLium, 2015

There's a strange animal with a dog's hair and a pig's head. People sometimes mistake him for a cat, for a monkey, for a mouse, even for a lion... But who is him?

Answering this question is no longer important when he meets another weird, little creature, and falls in love with her. A tender love story by Beatrice Alemagna with hand-sewn illustrations, made of fabric, buttons, lace and embroidery.



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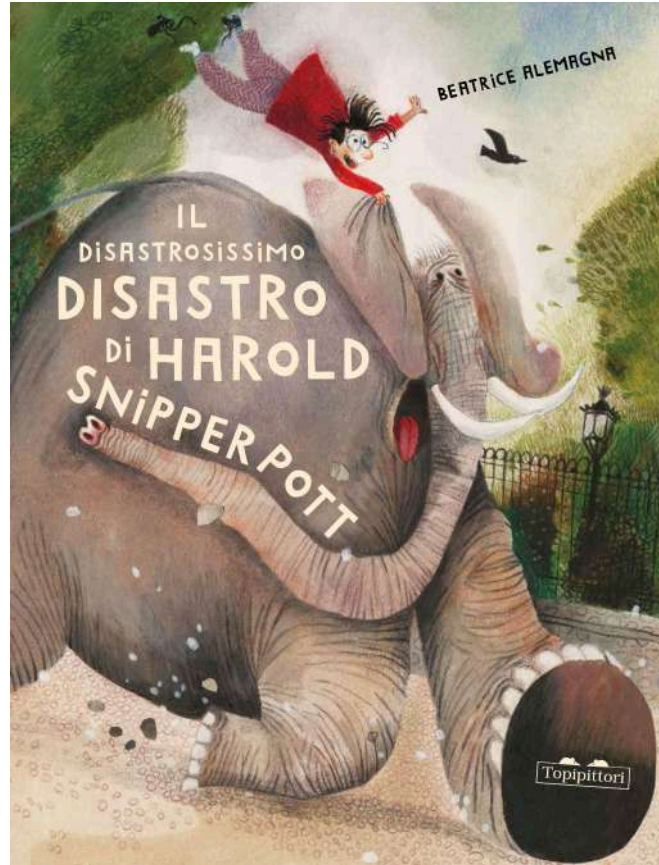
ITALIA

Hans Christian Andersen Award  
Nominee 2026



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

IL DISASTROSISSIMO DISASTRO DI HAROLD SNIPPERPOTT  
(Harold Snipperpot's Best Disaster Ever)



Italian edition by Topipittori, 2018  
French edition by Albin Michel, 2018  
USA edition by Harper Collins, 2019  
Portuguese edition by HarperKids, 2021  
Basque edition by HarperKids, 2022  
Catalan edition by HarperKids, 2022  
Netherlander edition by Boycott, to be released on 11 March 2025

*There are days when everything goes completely wrong. Days when we feel that something serious is about to happen and that, after this, nothing will ever be the same again. The story I'm about to tell you begins on a day just like this.*



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The protagonist introduces himself—his name is Harold Philip Snipperpott, he's almost seven years old, and what he wants most in the world is a birthday party. His very first birthday party, because he has grumpy parents who hate parties and guests. Harold becomes sadder and sadder, so sad that even his parents seem worried. The solution? Calling Mr. Ponzio, the greatest problem-solver in the world. Thus begins a series of disasters that, beyond involving the house and the guests, will sweep through the entire neighborhood, culminating in a surprising and delicate way, in the finest tradition of Beatrice Alemagna.



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## 9. LIST OF THE FIVE REPRESENTATIVE BOOKS SENT TO THE JURORS

1. *Il disastrosissimo disastro di Harold Snipperpott* (Harold Snipperpot's Best Disaster Ever), Italy, Topipittori
2. *Un lion à Paris* (A Lion in Paris), France, Autrement Jeunesse
3. *Un grand jour de rien* (On a Magical Do-Nothing Day), France, Albin Michel
4. *Che cos'è un bambino?* (What is a Child?), Italy, Topipittori
5. *Le merveilleux dodu-velu-petit* (The Marvellous Fluffy Squishy Itty Bitty), France, Albin Michel

Attached to the candidate submission, also the PDF version of *Alemagna's Alphabet* and of the monographic issue dedicated to her by *La Revue des livres pour enfants*.



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## 10. PUBLISHED REVIEWS OF THE BOOKS SUBMITTED TO THE JURY

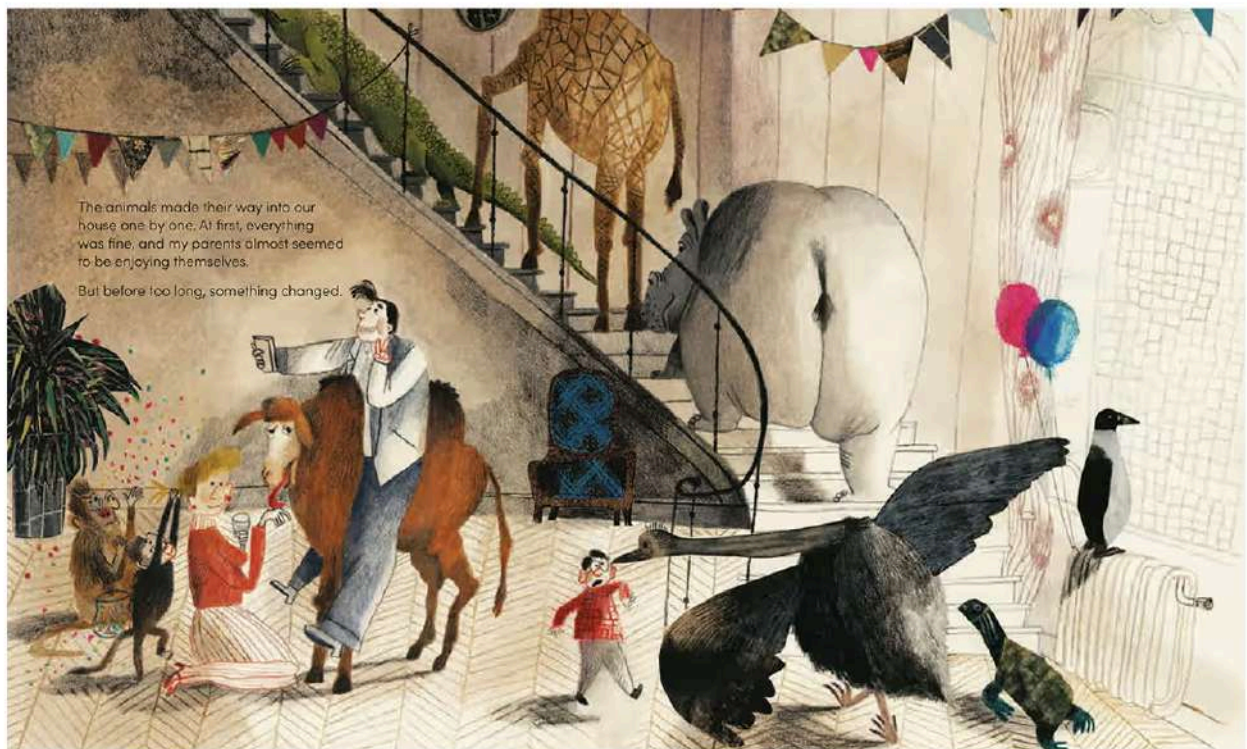
*Il disastrosissimo disastro di Harold Snipperpott* (Harold Snipperpot's Best Disaster Ever)

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/mar/12/childrens-picture-books-reviews-harold-snipperpots-best-disaster-beatrice-alemagna>

### Review

## Picture books for children - reviews

A rowdy camel, hippo and alligator unite an uptight family, while Darwin's seminal study is retold in pictures



📷 'Brilliant eye for the absurd': Beatrice Alemagna's *Harold Snipperpot's Best Disaster Ever*. Photograph: Beatrice Alemagna

**P**oor Harold Snipperpot is about to turn seven and longing for his first proper birthday party. Normally too uptight for parties, his parents relent and call up Mr Ponzio, the local problem solver, who promises something “absolutely extraordinary” to mark the day.

Into the family's pristine palace, all art deco antiques and potted plants, marches a mob of wild animals. All is fine at first: Dad snaps a selfie with a camel, a penguin gazes out of a stained glass



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

Poor Harold Snipperpot is about to turn seven and longing for his first proper birthday party. Normally too uptight for parties, his parents relent and call up Mr Ponzio, the local problem solver, who promises something “absolutely extraordinary” to mark the day.

Into the family’s pristine palace, all art deco antiques and potted plants, marches a mob of wild animals. All is fine at first: Dad snaps a selfie with a camel, a penguin gazes out of a stained glass window, but there’s a smirking alligator climbing the stairs followed by a hippo with a bottom so big and ripe for destruction that calamity is surely imminent.

The latest from Beatrice Alemagna, *Harold Snipperpot’s Best Disaster Ever* (Thames & Hudson, translated by Edward Gauvin), is further evidence of Alemagna’s brilliant eye for the absurd. Her earth-toned, intricately patterned illustrations show animals gobbling chandeliers, donning tutus and gleefully destroying the house, and kids will love the wild spirit of the crescendo where the animals play at a fountain with the whole neighbourhood. But all the chaos also provokes a proper happy ending, reminding Harold’s parents of their natural instincts. Now they kiss, howl and hug Harold. “How funny that the animals made us feel more human,” his mum says.



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### ***Un lion à Paris (A Lion in Paris)***

#### **“Beatrice Alemagna- *Un Lion à Paris* Professional Case Study”**

**By Martin Salisbury, in Martin Salisbury and Morag Style *Children’s Picturebooks: The Art of Visual Storytelling*, Laurence King Publishing, London, 2012**

Beatrice Alemagna is one of the most admired artists working in children’s picturebooks today. She has won many international awards and prizes for her work. As well as working in the field of children’s literature, she has worked as a poster artist for the Centre Pompidou in Paris for over ten years and has designed fabrics and ceramics. Her graphic work combines a rare depth of visual literacy with a gentle, poetic humanity and a fearless approach to experimenting with media and materials.

Originally from Bologna, in Italy, Alemagna is now based in Paris. Her books are published in many European and Far-Eastern languages. She is perhaps an example of the kind of artist whose language is untaught or unteachable in the sense that it seems to come so directly from the heart, in the form of a visual poetry apparently untainted by conscious technique or facility. Her educational background is interesting in this respect. Growing up in a cultured environment, she absorbed the books of Bruno Munari, Emanuele Luzzati, Leo Lionni and Tomi Ungerer amongst others. She read the fables of Gianni Rodari, Italo Calvino and the Brothers Grimm. Alemagna says that she knew that she wanted to do what she now does since she was eight years old:

*As a child, illustrated books were my private space, for me alone. I would leaf through them for hours, sniffing the smell of the paper. They made me dream.*

In adolescence she studied literature. Although the only thing she wanted to do was draw, her family encouraged her to take a broader cultural education before attending art school. Eventually Alemagna accepted a place at the Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche (Superior Institute of Industrial Arts) in Urbino. Here she found that the focus was on design, typography and editorial graphics with little attention to drawing. At the time she found this very hard. The school has since developed illustration as a subject specialism. In the summers, she was able to attend short courses in illustration, notably under the tutelage of Steven Zavrel and Květa Pacovská.

This lack of direct tuition in illustration during the main period of study once again begs the question whether there are instances where a nascent personal visual language is best protected from some elements of a traditional, formal art education. Certainly, it is possible to argue that Beatrice Alemagna’s graphic work manages to retain that element of naiveté that is so powerful when combined with sophisticated design skills. Here, a thorough grounding in typography and graphic design seems to have provided a perfect structure in which to place a highly sensitive and expressive





Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

visual language. Speaking about this, Alemagna says:

*Yes, I felt that I suffered a lot through not studying the techniques of drawing, not knowing how to use acrylics or watercolours and so on. But in the end I realized that I like to invent my own techniques, to improvise with oils or pastels, experimenting with tissue paper or wool. I do think that studying graphics gave me a sense of composition, of weight and space. In terms of my drawing, perhaps it has retained a 'purity', that's to say a closeness to my childhood. It isn't 'formatted' behind a precise style or technique. This is something that I have only recently learned to value. I know that I have a multitude of personalities that express themselves differently in my drawing. Perhaps if I had learned or acquired a particular technique I would have settled into a particular way of working and would not have fallen into this perpetual 'search'. It's a painful process but one which is intimate and personal. This is why I don't know how to illustrate texts that don't touch me personally and also why my books don't tend to resemble one another. I look back at each book as representing and reflecting a stage of my personal evolution.*

The book, *Un Lion à Paris* (Autrement Jeunesse, 2006) was awarded a special mention in the 2007 BolognaRagazzi Awards. Published in large format hardback, unusually bound on the long side, it tells of a lion's arrival in Paris, his surprise at not being feared, noticed even. He tours the city, searching for something in his melancholy state as an outsider, ultimately returning to his place on a plinth in the square. This exquisitely beautiful, poetic book is appropriately described by Anna Castagnoli ([www.lefiguredeilibr.com/?p=69](http://www.lefiguredeilibr.com/?p=69)): *Beatrice Alemagna doesn't just draw, she composes symphonies with the colours of music.*

*The idea for the story was born in a conversation with a friend who lives near the statue of the lion at Place Denfert-Rochereau and who spoke to me about how much the Parisians love this lion. I had already found inspiration in this lion, so proud in the middle of the square. I had been to look at him many times and the idea grew to use him as a way of telling the story of 'the stranger', looking and feeling different in an unknown city (this is autobiographical: the places in the book are the places that marked my arrival in the capital). I also wanted to create a character with charm in his attitude to others. The theme of identity, in its different facets, is a central one in most of my books. In making the images, I wanted to recreate the Paris that inspired me through the films of Truffaut and Goddard and through the photographs of Henri Cartier Bresson among others.*

*It's the story of a stranger, of a visitor with his shifting view of the city and the reality that surrounds him. In fact, the book is in many ways autobiographical. Each scene that the lion encounters in Paris is one that has importance for me. The Café de Flore where I would go after my meetings with a publisher, Beaubourg because of my work in creating the posters and Montmartre where I would meet a very dear friend who is the lady in the book with the white hair. L'Isle St Louis was near to where I lived in my early days in Paris and the Canal St Martin where I later came to live. The baguette under the arm is a motif that has always had great*



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

*resonance for me. There are also tiny portraits of my father, my sister and I. So when I am asked whether the little girl on the last page is me, I reply, “absolutely not. I am the lion!”*

*Graphically, in this book I feel that there is a use of space that is different in comparison to all my other books. I wanted to show real places in Paris but reinterpreted in my own way, showing the city as it is, but also as I see it. It is an ode of love, of my love of Paris - a ballad to the streets. I didn't want to make an 'infantilised' city, all jolly houses and pointy roofs. I have tried to show the real city, with its chaos, its grey buildings. I've just added my view. I wonder whether, in its realisation, 'Lion' is really a book for children, because it speaks to the child through the eyes of an adult, albeit an adult with perhaps a childlike eye.*

*Above all, I wanted to create images full of detail, full of people but retaining a regard for composition and space, not overcrowding each page.*

*I do storyboard my books but my working method is a little bizarre. If I decide on the final form of the book too soon, I lose the 'emotion' and joy. I usually prefer to just have an idea in my head, remaining a little fluid and allowing it to flow onto the paper without knowing exactly what will happen. Sometimes I tear up dozens of sheets of paper before arriving at the right image. It's not the most economical way of working!*

Such a delicate process requires a real relationship of trust between the artist and publisher. Alemagna's work in many ways exemplifies the very different attitudes to visual aesthetics in mainland Europe compared to those in the English speaking countries. Her books are enormously successful in several European countries and also in the Far East, especially South Korea but she has only just begun to break into the English language market. It is possible to speculate about the various possible reasons for this but I would venture to suggest that the longer tradition of illustration for children in the UK, with its roots in representational painting, has led to narrower perceptions of graphic 'suitability' in picturebooks.



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## *Un grand jour de rien* (On a Magical Do-Nothing Day)

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/sep/10/on-magical-do-nothing-day-beatrice-ale magna-review-alive-power-nature>

### Review

## On a Magical Do-Nothing Day by Beatrice Alemagna review - alive to the power of nature

A ramble in the woods proves transformative in this award-winning celebratory tale



‘Great fun and never preachy’: On a Magical Do-Nothing Day. Photograph: Beatrice Alemagna/Thames & Hudson

**A**nyone keen to pass on a love of the great outdoors will welcome the latest picture book from Italian-French talent Beatrice Alemagna, about a child lured away from technology to find fun in a forest. Using a beautiful earthy palette and intricate lines, loops and curls, the author/illustrator evokes a woodland world so full of textures and sights you can almost feel the shafts of sunlight on your back.

Anyone keen to pass on a love of the great outdoors will welcome the latest picture book from Italian-French talent Beatrice Alemagna, about a child lured away from technology to find fun in a forest. Using a beautiful earthy palette and intricate lines, loops and curls, the author/illustrator evokes a woodland world so full of textures and sights you can almost feel the shafts of sunlight on your back.

It’s a wet day and, in a scene familiar to most parents, a mum (herself glued to a laptop,



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

presumably working) snaps at her offspring to do something other than play computer games all day. The child, whose gender seems ambiguous (great for little readers who can decide for themselves), skulks off into the woods in a neon orange raincoat that dazzles against the foliage – the child is outdoors and out of place. But, having lost the computer console, the child grows captivated by the forest’s sensuous delights – from stroking slimy snails to slurping icy rainwater.

Alemagna’s illustrations start to lighten as the child’s heart lifts. In the tale’s turning point, the child appears to morph into the landscape, the bulbous raincoat suddenly resembling a magical toadstool, while we’re told “I knew that there was something special close by”.

In its celebration of the sights, sounds and squelchiness of the outdoors, *On a Magical Do-Nothing Day* is reminiscent of Michael Rosen’s *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt*, but it goes a step further, highlighting the transformational potential of nature. Great fun and never preachy, it’s already picked up one award (France’s Prix Landerneau); others ought to follow.



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## Che cos'è un bambino? (What is a Child?)

“A butterfly on the nose and cotton candy for breakfast, these are children’s wishes”

A review by Concita de Gregorio, *D di Repubblica*, 2008

Invece Concita di Concita De Gregorio

# UNA FARFALLA SUL NASO

## E ZUCCHERO FILATO A COLAZIONE. SONO I DESIDERI DEI BAMBINI

già da qualche settimana che ogni giorno qualcuno si avvicina e con aria contrita, alludendo senza nominarla alla situazione politica generale, bisbiglia che è venuto il momento di ritirarsi nel privato. A noi che nel privato ci siamo sempre stati (oltre che in diversi luoghi e mezzi pubblici, naturalmente, metropolitane ospedali e scuole eccetera) il suggerimento suona insensato, come se ti dicessero “bisogna andare lì”, ti volti e vedi che è il posto da cui non ti sei mosso mai. È venuto il momento, caso mai, di portare il privato in pubblico: di scambiarlo e divulgarlo, di ragionarne ad alta voce, di mescolarsi agli altri e di vedere se c'è ancora qualcosa in comune, per caso, e certamente sempre c'è. Da lì riprendere il filo. Piccole cose, per carità. Cose qualsiasi della vita di ogni giorno. Però, insomma, importanti, lo per esempio se mi capita in mano un libro magnifico mi fermo e mi rallegro per dieci minuti, pazienza se è un giorno terribile, poi mi viene voglia di chiamare mia sorella e raccontarglielo, poi lo regalo, poi ne scrivo e sono convinta che c'è sempre qualcuno, fra chi legge, che ugualmente si ferma dieci minuti e anche se era un giorno terribile sorride. Perciò ecco, un paio di sorrisi di giornata. Il primo è un librone per bambini ma lo sapete che sono molto spesso più belli e più fondi e più intensi di certi celebratissimi romanzi da quattrocento pagine che poi vai a vedere e che noia, quante frasi già lette, quante storie già sentite. L'editoria per l'infanzia, si è detto spesso, è quel che di meglio c'è oggi nel campo in Italia. È appena uscito il nuovo libro di Beatrice Alemagna, di lei abbiamo parlato spesso in questa pagina, è una giovane illustratrice di Bologna emigrata in Francia e là celebratissima, qui - come sovente capita - un po' meno. I suoi disegni sono favolosi, le sue parole anche. Questo si chiama *Che cos'è un bambino* e comincia così: “Un bambino è una persona piccola”. Una volta me lo disse mio figlio treenne di un compagno coetaneo: «Mi ha preso la macchinina quella persona piccola con la maglia rossa». Dice che “i bambini desiderano cose strane: avere le scarpe che brillano, mangiare zucchero filato come una bambina racconta la morale dei grandi classici della letteratura in una evidenza assoluta e disarmante. “Anna Karenina si butta sotto il treno e le sta bene”, per esempio, “la sua sola ambizione era diventare un rimorso, mantenere la fama di donna per bene piangendo”. “Madame Bovary non muore d'amore ma di debiti. Si paga il lusso di non vedere l'avarizia dei suoi amanti”. Il naso di Cyrano è indecente. Nel *Don Chisciotte* il vero eroe fra i due è Sancho Panza: “È lui il vero sognatore perché al servizio del sogno di un altro. Don Chisciotte ha letto i libri, certo che sogna. Ma Sancho l'analfabeta è così poeta da credere a ogni sua favola e ci rimette anche gli asini”. Infine: “Dopo la morte, talora anche in vita, il poeta viene consegnato al suo nemico naturale: la famiglia”. Che meraviglia, che quarto d'ora in giostra.

colazione, ascoltare la stessa storia tutte le sere. Anche i grandi hanno strane idee: farsi il bagno tutti i giorni, cucinare i fagiolini al burro, dormire senza il cane giallo”. Continua così fra disegni di bimbi strabici con l'apparecchio ai denti e ragazzine con gli occhiali e una farfalla sul naso: “Ci sono bimbi faticosi, odiosi, viziosi, bimbi che rompono le scodelle e tutto il resto”. Sì ci sono. Poi ci sono grandi che fanno i capricci per un telefono che non suona o per il traffico. Ci sono. Ai bambini però per addormentarsi bastano “due occhi gentili e una lucina accanto al letto”. A voi cosa serve per addormentarvi? Barbara Alberti ha pubblicato con Nottetempo un libriccino azzurro che s'intitola *Letture da treno*. Seria

C'È POSTA

lo so, so troppa: per 23 anni ho convissuto con un figlio malato di schizofrenia paranoide, per quasi 20 ho lavorato in un'associazione di familiari e volontari che ho fondato con un'altra madre, per 11 mi sono occupata dell'“ascolto”, momento di incontro con familiari di malati psichici, per lo più giovani o giovanissimi, come mio figlio. Ho 70 anni, all'incirca l'età della mamma di Sergio, credo, e sono stanca, stanca anche di descrivere la mia sofferenza, sofferenza che aprivo, offrivo ai familiari perché imparassero a scoprirsi senza vergogna e di lì ad andare oltre alla paura; sofferenza, che esibivo in pubblico ai fine di denunciare, scuotere istituzioni e opinione pubblica. Il bilancio personale di tutta questa fatica è negativo. Dopo tanti anni di consacrazione a lui, dopo anni di tentativi sterili di aiuto a lui, mi rendo conto che questi 20 anni e più di lavoro sono serviti unicamente a me, non a lui. Al momento non vive con me. Il mio iperprotezionismo aveva aggiunto delle note autistiche al suo disturbo, facendolo dipendere appunto in modo totale da me. Si doveva cambiar rotta. Il distacco per lui, per me, è stato ed è dolorosissimo. Nel caso di Sergio la conclusione è stato uno sparo, nel nostro caso un TSO, una deportazione, comunque un fallimento. Si deve cambiar rotta anche a livello istituzionale, a livello politico: l'Italia sarà all'avanguardia come assistenza psichiatrica, come asserisce Psichiatria democratica (che giustamente vuole la libertà, la centralità del malato psichico), ma intanto come vivono le famiglie che restano il “presidio” per eccellenza degli psichiatri, e come evolvono questi malati psichiatrici seguiti, quando va bene, sul e dal territorio? La libertà del malato troppe volte significa la prigionia della famiglia. Un saluto affettuoso. **Maria Luisa Gentile**

Indirizzate la vostra posta a [invececoncita@repubblica.it](mailto:invececoncita@repubblica.it)



Beatrice Alemagna (Italy) for Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026

For a few weeks now, every day someone has approached me, with a contrite air, alluding—without explicitly naming it—to the general political situation, whispering that the time has come to retreat into private life. For us, who have always been in the private sphere (as well as in various public spaces like the metro, hospitals, schools, etc.), the suggestion seems nonsensical: it's as if someone said, "You need to go there," and you turn around only to see it's the place you've never left. If anything, the time has come to bring the private into the public: to share it, to disseminate it, to reason about it out loud, to mix with others and see if, by chance, there's still something in common—and there always is. From there, we can pick up the thread again. Small things, of course. Everyday things. But still, important ones.

For example, if I come across a magnificent book, I pause and feel happy for ten minutes, even if it's a terrible day. Then I feel like calling my sister to tell her about it, then giving it away, then writing about it, and I'm convinced that someone among the readers will also pause for ten minutes, and even if it was a terrible day, they will smile.

So here you go, a couple of smiles for the day. The first is a children's book—but you know, they're so often more beautiful, deeper, and more intense than certain highly celebrated 400-page novels that turn out to be so boring, with so many phrases you've read before and so many stories you've already heard. It's often said that children's publishing is the best thing we have in Italy today.

Beatrice Alemagna's new book has just been published. We've often talked about her on this page; she's a young illustrator from Bologna, who moved to France and is celebrated there, though—as is often the case—a little less so here. Her drawings are fabulous, and her words are too. This book is called *What is a Child?* and it begins like this: "A child is a small person."

Once, my three-year-old son said something similar about a peer of his: "That small person in the red jumper took my toy car." Alemagna writes that "children desire strange things: shoes that sparkle, cotton candy for breakfast, hearing the same story every evening. Adults have strange ideas too: taking a bath every day, cooking green beans with butter, sleeping without the yellow dog."

The book continues with illustrations of cross-eyed children with braces, girls with glasses and butterflies on their noses: "There are difficult, annoying, spoiled children, children who break bowls and everything else." Yes, they exist. And there are adults who throw tantrums over a phone that doesn't ring or the traffic. They exist too.

But for children to fall asleep, all they need is "a pair of kind eyes and a small light next to the bed." What do you need to fall asleep?



## “The child ‘front-row’”

A review by Fiorella Iannucci, *Il Messaggero*, 2008



What is a child? A challenging question (and the title of a truly special book), one that calls for thoughtful, non-trivial answers. Beatrice Alemagna finds them in this large-format picture book, which plays on the intensity of its words and the beauty of its illustrations.

Elegant and amusing “close-ups” that will also appeal greatly to adults. Yes, portraits: because, as Alemagna writes, “there are strange children, short children, round children, quiet children. Children with glasses, children in wheelchairs. Children with braces that sparkle in the sun.”

And yet the profound mystery of childhood is universal, transcending times and generations. “A child has small hands, small feet, and small ears, but that does not mean they have small

ideas,” the author reminds us. With skill and sensitivity, Alemagna creates a dialogue between the adult and the child through the reading experience, playfully highlighting their differences.

So, while “children wish for strange things: shoes that sparkle, candyfloss for breakfast, or hearing the same story every evening,” it’s equally true that “grown-ups have strange ideas too: taking baths every day, cooking green beans with butter, or sleeping without the yellow dog.” Of course, “all children are small people who will one day grow up and change.” But the person who wrote and illustrated this book has not forgotten their own childhood.

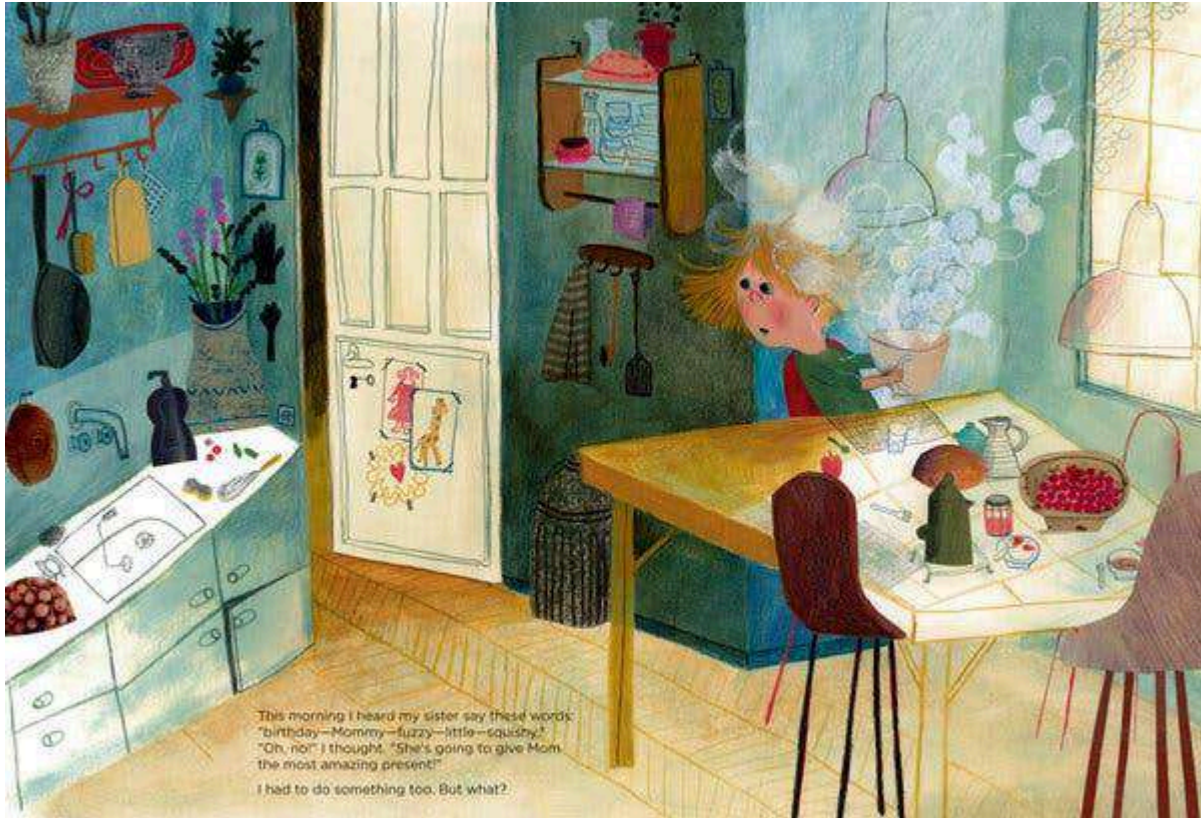
A rare privilege. For those who, as children, “needed kind eyes and a small light by the bed to fall asleep.” For those who, as adults, are moved “by the little things: a ray of sunlight or a snowflake.”



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***Le merveilleux dodu-velu-petit* (The Marvellous Fluffy Squishy Itty Bitty)**

[https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/23/books/review/small-in-size-gigantic-in-imagination.htm](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/23/books/review/small-in-size-gigantic-in-imagination.html)  
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In this stylish book first published in France, 5-and-a-half-year-old Edith — Eddie for short — overhears her big sister discussing a birthday present for their mother. She thinks she hears the words “fluffy little squishy” and is immediately propelled to action, hoping to find one herself. The only problem is that she’s not exactly sure what a fluffy little squishy is. She decides to find out, and her search takes her on an adventure around her neighborhood, where she gets help from friends including a friendly baker, a sweet florist, a stylish boutique owner and an eccentric antiques dealer. None of them has any idea what one is, either, but they give her other little gifts for her mom. Just when Eddie is ready to give up, Alemagna adds a wonderful, whimsical twist — an actual fluffy little squishy appears, and she brings the creature home. Mom thinks it’s the best gift ever.

In these days of helicopter-parented children who often seem sadly incapable of speaking to non related adults, it’s exciting to find a picture book that sets children loose in the





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community and lets them make things happen, as Eddie does. Alemagna renders Eddie's world an inviting place, without erasing all traces of danger or challenge — there's a grumpy butcher who waves a bloody knife around, and a mean garbage collector who won't let the squishy out of his smelly trash can until Eddie offers him a bribe.

But even those darker moments are presented in a visually stunning way. Alemagna's art walks a mesmerizing line between "adorable" and "gorgeous," with interesting combinations of rich, muted colors and detailed textures — a parquet floor, a cobblestone street, a pleated skirt, a row of flowering potted plants — capped off by joyful pops of bright neon pink on Eddie's cape and the fluffy little squishy itself. Taking in each page feels like walking down a casually elegant city block on a perfect day — you want to linger and keep looking.