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Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award



 murakami

In Copenhagen, the celebrated novelist Haruki Murakami’s acceptance of the Hans Christian Andersen literary award led to a speech on confronting the inner darkness of people, society and nations.

Speaking as he received the [Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award](#), the Japanese novelist said that “just as all people have shadows, every society and nation, too, has shadows”, and “if there are bright, shining aspects, there will definitely be a counterbalancing dark side. If there’s a positive, there will surely be a negative on the reverse side.”

“At times we tend to avert our eyes from the shadow, those negative parts. Or else try to forcibly eliminate those aspects. Because people want to avoid, as much as possible, looking at their own dark sides, their negative qualities. But in order for a statue to appear solid and three-dimensional, you need to have shadows. Do away with shadows and all you end up with is a flat illusion. Light that doesn’t generate shadows is not true light,” said the novelist.

He continued: “You have to patiently learn to live together with your shadow. And carefully observe the darkness that resides within you. Sometimes in a dark tunnel you have to confront your own dark side.”

Murakami was announced as winner of the **Hans Christian Andersen** prize a year ago, but received the prize this weekend. The 500,000DKK award, for writing which “can be linked to Andersen’s name and authorship through genre similarities or storyteller-artistic qualities” has previously been won by authors including JK Rowling and Salman Rushdie. Murakami was cited for his “ capacity to boldly mix classic narrative art, pop culture, Japanese tradition, dreamlike realism and philosophical discussion”, which judges said “makes him a fitting heir to the Andersen legacy”.

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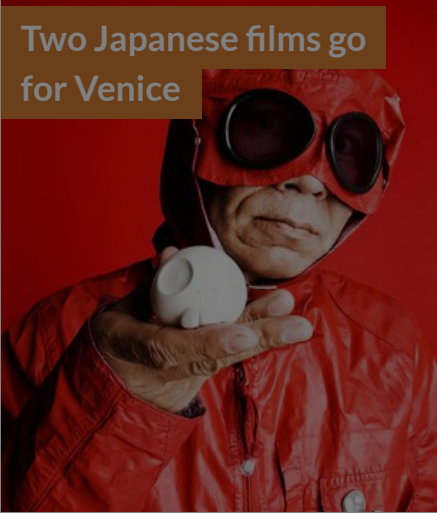
Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award is a Danish international literary prize. The purpose is to celebrate Andersen’s influence on writers throughout the world by selecting award winners, whose writings can be linked to Andersen’s name and authorship through genre similarities or storyteller-artistic qualities. It is awarded bi-annually to a living author.

Image: ‘A fitting heir’ ... Haruki Murakami outside Hans Christian Andersen’s house in Odense, Denmark. Photograph: Henning Bagger/EPA

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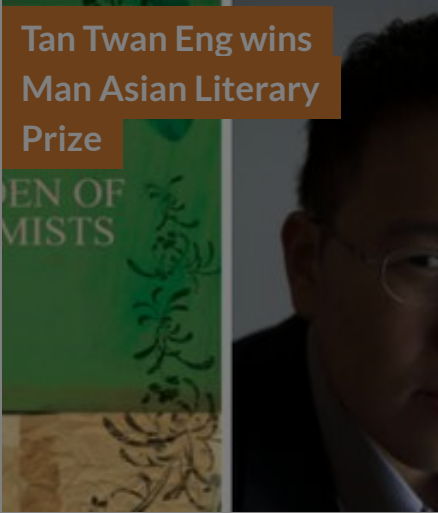
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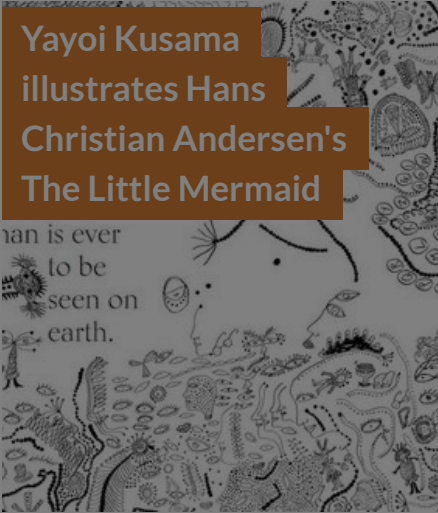
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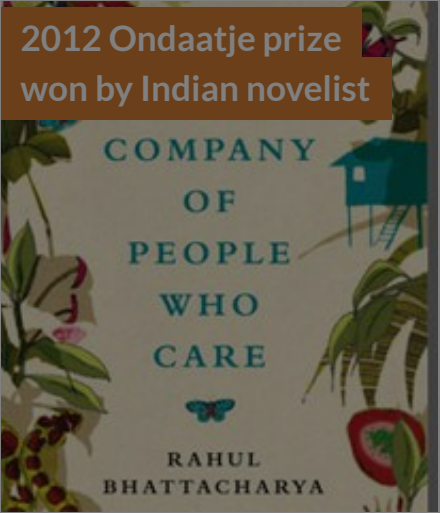
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