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Klaus Hammer, ed.: Der Holzwurm und der König. Märchenhaftes und Wundersames für Erwachsene

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be most appealing to those scholars who are interested in getting an overview of modern poetry in the GDR and who are interested in young East German poets, many of whom are still relatively unknown.

Jeffrey B. Gardiner
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Der Holzwurm und der König: Märchenhaftes und Wundersames für Erwachsene. Ed. Klaus Hammer. Halle and Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1985. 324 pages. M 13.50.

Following decades of neglect in favor of more realistic, i.e., more socio-politically oriented works for children, fairytales in the late 60s and 70s finally enjoyed widespread acceptance in the GDR. The resurgence of fairytales is particularly strong today, in part because of the pioneering work of such well respected authors as Franz Fühmann and Jurij Brezan; in addition, the dedication of younger writers such as Rainer Kirsch or Dieter Mücke was essential if the form were to continue to thrive, as it indeed has. One indication of the fairytale's current popularity and official recognition is the government's national commemoration of the Grimm brothers in 1985-1986.

With both traditional tales from Germany's past and contemporary tales by the GDR's own authors now in vogue, the present collection of twenty-six modern fairytales by twenty-five of the country's finest authors comes as little surprise. Fully half of the collection's works, in fact, have previously appeared elsewhere in print. Still the collection is a welcome one, since it is one of the first to bring traditionalists in the genre such as Franz Fühmann (Der Drache und der Schmetterling) and

Di Napoli, Klaus Hammer, ed.: Der Holzwurm und der König: Märchenhaftes und Wundersames für Erwachsene (Gerechtigkeit) together with talented writers of children's literature such as Manfred Jendryschik (Die Königskinder) or Helga Schubert (Das Märchen von den glücklichen traurigen Menschen). Included as well are several authors normally thought to write primarily, if not exclusively, for adults: Peter Hacks (Armer Ritter and Der Wichtelprinz), Christoph Hein (Wie Schnauz der Esel mit dem Clochard nach Paris reiste, um Professor zu werden), Rainer Kirsch (Der geschenkte Tag oder Der kleine lila Nebel), and Irmtraud Morgner (Die Heiratsschwindlerin oder -- Warum muß Barbara auf ihren Prozeß warten).

From a thematic point of view, the collection is too diverse to permit easy categorization. Rather, the stories run the gamut of human experience in their treatment of such universal themes as self-identity, social integration, love, and death -- themes that are of timeless concern to both children and adults. It is this fact which perhaps prompted the editor to subtitle the collection "Märchenhaftes und Wundersames für Erwachsene." For although children are clearly the primary target of these stories, grownups too will derive enjoyment and insight from this varied collection.

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Einmal war Frost in die Blüten gefallen. Von Hildegard Zander, Hinstorff Verlag, 1984. 277 Seiten. Keine Preisangabe.

Hinter diesem sentimental klingenden Titel verbirgt sich eine Geschichte, die sich zwar zum überwiegenden Teil in der trockenen Arbeitswelt eines DDR Fahrzeug-Betriebes abspielt, aber vor allem von den Emotionen Christines, einer jungen Frau in den ersten Ehejahren, handelt.