

New this winter from

Slightly Foxed

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 40

Erich Kästner, *When I Was A Little Boy*

Erich Kästner, journalist, screenwriter and author of the immortal children's book *Emil and the Detectives*, was born at the end of the nineteenth century in Dresden – that 'wonderful city full of art and history' which was razed to the ground by the Allies in 1945.

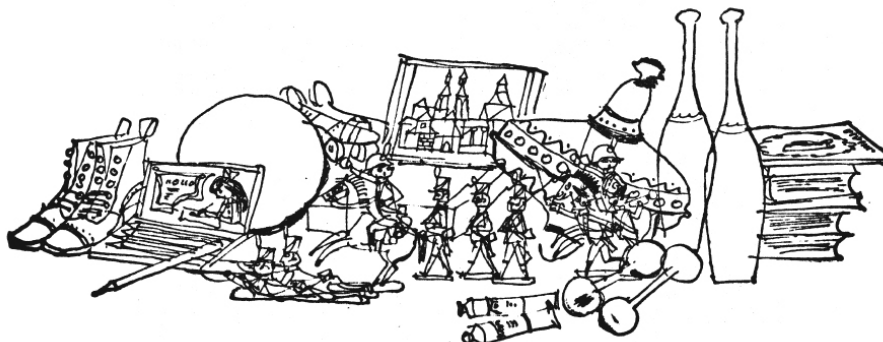
'To this day the Governments of the great Powers are disputing with each other as to who murdered Dresden', he writes. 'Ah, what is the use of quarrelling about it. You will not bring Dresden back to life by so doing – neither its beauty nor its dead.' Yet that, in a sense, is what he does in this delightful memoir, first published in the 1950s, recreating for us the city of his childhood where 'past and present lived in perfect unity', where he could 'breathe in beauty as foresters' children breathe in woodland air'.

Erich's gentle father Emil, a master-saddler, and his mother Ida, an intelligent woman who set up as a hairdresser, had come to Dresden from small-town Saxony. Times were tough, and Erich grew up in a tenement flat at the shabby end of a long street called the Königsbrücker Strasse, which ran down to the river Elbe. Yet the book shines with the everyday happiness of a young boy's life in a close-knit, hardworking family, set against the backdrop of the ancient city with its baroque buildings, its parades before the Kaiser, its trams and glittering Christmas shops.

It was an upbringing full of colour, warmth and love, but it was a love that could be suffocating. Erich's mother, who suffered periodically from depression, lived for her only child, and he had no option but to be perfect. Both parents vied for his affection, especially at Christmas when there was terrible competition over presents. For a sensitive boy who couldn't bear to hurt either of them it was agonizing – 'Even now when I think of it,' he writes, 'my heart is in my mouth.'

He captures all this with delicacy and gentle humour. *When I Was a Little Boy*, delightfully illustrated by Horst Lemke, is an affecting picture of both Erich's childhood and the city he never ceased to mourn.

Published December 2017 • Cloth-bound hardback limited edition of 2,000 • £17.50
256 pages • Silk headband, tailband and ribbon marker • 170 x 110mm



In addition to the Slightly Foxed Editions series of classic memoirs, Slightly Foxed is the publisher of *The Real Reader's Quarterly* literary review magazine, the Slightly Foxed Cubs reissues of classic children's books, and the producer of other literary goods. For extracts and review copies of the quarterly or any of our titles, contact:

Steph Allen & Jennie Harrison press@foxedquarterly.com / 020 7729 9368

Slightly Foxed Ltd, 53 Hoxton Square, London N1 6PB
Find us on Instagram, Twitter & Facebook @FoxedQuarterly
Visit our online shop and the Foxed News blog: www.foxedquarterly.com