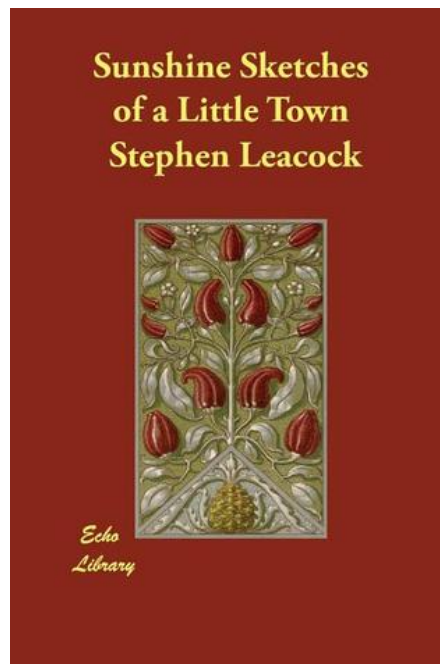




Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town

Stephen Leacock

Download now

Read Online ➞

Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town

Stephen Leacock

Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town Stephen Leacock

Twelve episodes in the everyday life of the community of Mariposa

Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town Details

Date : Published December 1st 2006 by Echo Library (first published 1912)

ISBN : 9781406814330

Author : Stephen Leacock

Format : Paperback 116 pages

Genre : Cultural, Canada, Fiction, Short Stories, Humor, Classics, Literature, Canadian Literature

 [Download Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town Stephen Leacock

From Reader Review Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town for online ebook

Liv says

I read this for a Canadian Lit class. It was okay, a sweet portrayal of a small town. I particularly liked the chapters on the town "ship" and the town's bank robbery. The sarcasm, satire and exaggerated humour here is wonderful and comparisons are wonderful. It bothered me though that there wasn't really a story. I understand that it was a collection of sketches about of the town but still, there wasn't any 'meat' to it. Still an interesting, light-hearted read though.

Lesliemae says

Coming from a small centre (Saskatoon), I appreciate the flavour of this book. At times I laughed out loud at small town antics and world view. Laughing out loud is a feat in itself for a book to accomplish. However, by the end chapters the laughter had turned bittersweet. No more laughing now that the author has made me feel as though I've lost part of my soul to the materialistic and capitalistic machine that I now operate in.

Darcy McLaughlin says

Leacock is one of those writers that as a Canadian I've heard of many many times yet never took the time to look into. I had seen many comparisons between him and Mark Twain, who is a writer I greatly enjoyed so I figured this would be right up my alley.

It was, in a way. There are certainly humorous moments in some of these stories that genuinely made me chuckle, and there is definitely an edge of satire that runs throughout. There are also many moments that were too dry for me, and I found it a bit difficult to get through. I think this might be more of a product of the times it was written in, though a lot of sentiments regarding small town Canada are still quite true a hundred years after this book was published.

For me Sunshine Sketches was an up and down affair, with some enjoyable moments surrounded by lesser ones. The highlight is the beautiful final chapter, which I would not spoil for the reader but was truly affecting for anyone who's come from a small town. It provides a wonderful resolution to the book and is definitely the best part.

Czarny Pies says

Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town is a Canadian national treasure. Like all works of this master humourist it is extremely funny. Lovers of literature might be appalled by this book for how frivolous it is. The characters are one dimensional all being essentially designed to set up the punch line at the end of the chapter. Leacock has the Panglossian outlook that his Orillia (a charming town in Southern Ontario) is the

best of all possible towns peopled by well-intentioned people with nothing but minor flaws.

In fact Orillia and Southern Ontario were indeed very sweet places in the twenty years preceding World War I because the level of general prosperity brought out the good side of people. Although given short shrift by university literature professors, Leacock is admired by university history professors who praise him for this highly accurate portrayal of the life in small town Canada at the turn of the century.

Leacock receives the most praise for being the first writer of any visibility to acknowledge that before woman's suffrage elections in Canada were essentially booze soaked brawls. I am surprised that feminists have not praised Leacock for having acknowledged that the two leading women's movements of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (i.e. the Women's Suffragette and Women's Christian Temperance Union movement) greatly transformed electoral practices in Canada and the USA for the better.

Pay special attention to the final chapter entitled the "Great Muskoka Election". Leacock's proverb that the way to secure an elector's vote was neither through policy nor through rhetoric but rather it was secured by the party being the last to stick a mickey in the voter's pocket before he (there were no shes) entered the polling station was only too true.

Paul Gaya Ochieng Simeon Juma says

This is a very unique novel. It tells the tale of some of the people living in the small town of Mariposa. I would have enjoyed this book if it was not for some troubles of my own that I was going through at the time. I actually was reading it because I wanted to calm down.

Stephen Leacock is a Canadian author. There are few of them that I have read. I believe they are brilliant except Margret Artwood with whom I never quite enjoyed. The present book has been compared to Mark Twain's novel due to its satirical prose. Personally, I object to that comparison. However my judgement is based on my subjective assessment of the few books I have read from both authors.

My favorite character in the present novel was Pupkin and Mr. Smith. I especially enjoyed the quote on page 109 about suicide being a thing that ought not to be committed without careful consideration. He further talks of its effect which not only affects the individual but also others within his circles. Come to think about it, the novel deals with some of the social challenges normal people undergo everyday. We all see how our careers affect our behaviors in our lives from the lives of some of the lawyers, bankers, judges, business men whom we find in the novel. I would highly recommend the novel.

Sonia Jarmula says

I first noticed this book in Chapters because of its beautiful design by the wonderful Seth, and was interested by the inside flap calling Leacock "the Canadian Mark Twain". A tall order, if there ever was one. And then I was wandering around the library with an armload full of books that were threatening to topple, but then again, this book was prominently displayed and I couldn't wait to get through the stack and read it, and my, was it wonderful.

Very soon after starting it, I knew I had to own this book, and that I would have to read it again. And

probably again. And a time again after that. I'm certain that most people I know don't know about Leacock, but they should. He should be remembered. I'm in awe of his ability to compose such a clear portrait of a person and a town in just a few sentences. Even though I have lived in a big city all my life, somehow I felt that I knew the characters and the town of Mariposa very intimately. And yet, there was so much going on below the surface, passages I returned to a few times just to dig deeper. Leacock is brilliant in his subtlety and in his satire. He made me laugh, and especially at the end, in "L'Envoi. The Train to Mariposa" I found myself very moved by the haunting nostalgia that he conveyed so beautifully. I think that story was one of the most beautiful things I have read in a long time. There are so many things that I want to think about again and I wish that I could articulate my admiration for this book and this author more fully, but at the very least, this edition had a lovely afterward by Seth that said everything I want to.

I truly look forward to revisiting this town in the sunshine once more.

Rhys says

Masterful storytelling.

Raymond Bial says

My daughter gave this book to me for Christmas and what a treasure it is. I had never read of any of Stephen Leacock's work, and his writing is delightful. As a humorist, Leacock has been described at the Mark Twain of Canada—but he is that and more. He is not as acerbic as Twain and some other American humorists. Leacock's humor is sweet, loving, refreshing, and refined. The illustrations in this edition are amusing as well and the book design is lovely. Most of Leacock's works are also readily available, and I'm looking forward to reading more.

Marvin says

A remarkable little book -- nothing, absolutely nothing, comes anywhere near it in terms of accurately capturing life in small-town Canada. It's also laugh-out-loud funny, but yet also at times poignant and bittersweet. And though written over a century ago now, it still has a very modern sensibility and point of view.

Since 1947, the annual winner of the Canadian award for humour writing has been awarded the Stephen Leacock medal. This book is the best place to find out why.

Susan says

This gently humorous portrait of a small Ontario town is more loving than satirical, but the author invites the reader to share with him the knowledge that Mariposa is a little less special than its inhabitants believe. The best minds of Mariposa may not know what happened the night of the bank robbery, but Leacock and his readers can figure it out. This is gently whimsical rather than laugh-out-loud funny, but you will enjoy the quiet non-events of these old-fashioned Canadians.

Devin Bruce says

I have a hard-to-explain love of the writing of Stephen Leacock. It started when I read a short story of his when I was nine or ten, and fell in love with the way he wrote. Stephen Leacock is decidedly NOT something the average ten-year-old would normally like. But he could write about the most banal thing, like going to the dentist, and make it seem like an exciting adventure, **and** that's part of the joke. That style is put to good use in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, where the narrator waxes rhapsodically about the goings-on in Mariposa, a small Canadian town at the start of the 20th Century. Leacock populates the town with a host of interesting characters, and then has the narrator tell their banal adventures as though they were the stuff of high drama. The result is well worth a read, and chuckles abound. But my favourite chapter was the final one, a surprisingly touching cap on the whole exercise. The humour can get a little old and hokey sometimes, but when Leacock is on there are very few who can match his wit.

Joey says

I don't know that I expected it to be as funny as it is. The story of the riverboat and the account of the election in particular had moments that made me laugh out loud. I like that despite the often cynical tone the book still radiates affection for its little town. They should have made me read it in school. I hope they make other kids read it.

Hester says

While this is considered a classic of gentle humor in Canada, I found some of the stories quite harsh. The characters I felt the most sympathy for were Mr. Smith, the corrupt local saloonkeeper and politician with a heart of gold, and for Mr. Drone, the incompetent, pompous reverend who wished he could have been an engineer. I was struck by how people in the town of Mariposa, having little to do, loved listening to long political speeches. How different from today.

David says

This 1912 comic novel is available for free download in many electronic formats. Search by the title and the word "ebook".

Everything I know about normal life I learn from mass media. For example, if I am to believe my TV, normal friends drop by with cake and gossip. My friends, by comparison, recommend that I read Important Modern Novels (IMNs) that, being modern and important, are filled with madness, adultery, Nazis, animal cruelty, violent death, and so forth. They **never** bring cake.

I flatter myself that I can stand, noggin to noggin, with the brainiest readers of IMNs, but sometimes even I grow weary of madness, adultery, and so on. I yearn for a pleasant description of a simpler time. So, I took a break from IMNs to read this book, touted by the late lamented Common Reader catalog (Autumn 2002) as a laugh-out-loud depiction of rural life in Canada.

I must report only an occasional wry smile cracking my joyless, IMN-influenced mug. Certain portraits, like that of a blustering amoral illiterate who becomes the much-respected head of a conservative political party, probably seemed daring at the time, but now read like a documentary description of a routine occurrence. Similarly, a story in which clergy engage in insurance fraud was probably an outrageous knee-slapper 100 years ago, but considering the unfortunate hi-jinks of today's men of the cloth, insurance fraud seems a quaintly old-fashioned vice, like buggy-racing after overindulging in mead.

Still, the book is a calmingly pleasant read and our cousins in the Great White North can take pride in having this home-grown talent in their canon. Me? I've got an appointment with some Nazis.

Jane says

Never has a title captured a book more perfectly.

SUNSHINE SKETCHES OF A LITTLE TOWN!

I found that sunshine in a small, tatty orange Penguin book, still shining.

I didn't know who Stephen Leacock was when I spotted my little book but his name rang a bell, and when I investigated later I found that he had a place in Stuck-in-a-Book's 50 books you must read but may not have heard about. That was a very good sign.

A little more research uncovered the fact that Stephen Leacock was a teacher who tried a little writing, with a little humour, to supplement his salary. And that he was so successful that a medal for humour bearing his name has been presented for nearly seventy years now. Another very good sign.

But there's no better research than reading, and so I read!

The twelve sketches tell stories set in the fictional town of Mariposa. It might be based on one particular town, but it's presented in such a way that it could be any number of towns, and there are many things that will strike a chord with anyone who has lived in a small town pretty much anywhere. It did with me.

There are stories of people. Let's introduce a few of them:

There's Mr Smith, proprietor of Smith's Hotel, a man perfectly suited to the business of hospitality. There's Mr Thorpe who is a successful speculator but knows that he is still needed as the town barber. There's Dean Drone, who loves the classics but has to lift his nose out of his book to deal with church finances. There's Peter Pukin, a bank teller from out of town, who is besotted by the judge's daughter, who is far too caught up with dreams of romance to even notice his existence

They are introduced with a very natural humour, the humour of a good raconteur who knows to tell his story with warmth and wit, pointing out all of his characters quirks and foibles, and maybe exaggerating them just a little bit. It was evident that he knew and loved them.

There are stories of events too, and these have a richer vein of humour. And, I suspect, rather more exaggeration.

A bank raid where a man is killed. Or maybe seriously injured. Or maybe a bullet just whistled past his ear A whirlwind campaign that the town isn't quite ready for And best of all a boat trip that ends with a sinking in less than six feet of water and a daring rescue by the town's lifeboat crew

I don't often fall for comic stories, but I fell for these hook line and sinker.

But writing about them or pulling out quotations really doesn't seem to work. You need to read one. And once you've read one you'll probably want to read another and then another, until you've read all twelve.

There are plenty of old editions out there, the book is in print, there's a free download, and it's short.

So if you like the idea of Sunshine Sketches there really is no excuse

Josh says

Wonderful. There's something about the writing of this book that's just infused with joy. Something akin to Robertson Davies or Mark Twain. Leacock manages to turn everyday people's everyday lives to adventures. It's one of those books that should be completely boring but isn't. It's the type of book I wish was ten times longer than it is.

It's told in an episodic nature, and each episode focuses on a different character, yet all of the characters recur throughout the book and they're all highly memorable. Even in the brief time you spend with them, you begin to feel like you know the town. And if you've ever lived in a small town you probably do.

If you're Canadian, you owe it to yourself to read this book. If you've ever lived in a small town--Canadian or not--this book will probably resonate with you. And, oh lawdy, the last chapter is probably the most touching thing ever written on small town life. I've never been one for patriotism, but it makes me proud to be Canadian.

Leacock also seems to be the wittiest writer this side of Oscar Wilde. If you don't believe me, here's a typical passage out of the book (excuse the extended excerpt):

Suicide is a thing that ought not to be committed without very careful thought. It often involves serious consequences, and in some cases brings pain to others than oneself.

I don't say that there is no justification for it. There often is. Anybody who has listened to certain kinds of music, or read certain kinds of poetry, or heard certain kinds of performances upon the concertina, will admit that there are some lives which ought not to be continued, and that even suicide has its brighter aspects.

But to commit suicide on grounds of love is at the best a very dubious experiment. I know that in this I am expressing an opinion contrary to that of most true lovers who embrace suicide on the slightest provocation as the only honourable termination of an existence that never ought to have begun.

I quite admit that there is a glamour and a sensation about the thing which has its charm, and that there is nothing like it for causing a girl to realize the value of the heart that she has broken and which breathed forgiveness upon her at the very moment when it held in its hand the half-pint of prussic acid that was to terminate its beating for ever.

But apart from the general merits of the question, I suppose there are few people, outside of lovers, who know what it is to commit suicide four times in five weeks.

If you want a lighthearted introduction to Canlit, look no further. It's only some 150 pages, so even if you don't like it it's not much of a loss. It's a truly timeless piece of literature.

P.S. I just realized that 2012 is the 100th anniversary of this book. That's pretty cool.

Diane says

These are short stories, little tales about the people who live in a small town called Mariposa post WWI. Mariposa could be anywhere in Canada. Small towns aren't that different, really, from one to the next, and don't change a lot over the years, at least not in the early days of the 20th century. The stories are told looking back to the good old days, a conversation between two people who came from there. Reminiscences. The wry, dry humour for which Stephen Leacock was known. Gentle stories poking gentle fun at things like politics, religion, business owners and falling in love.

Dylan says

Only in Canada could Stephen Leacock become a renowned humorist.

That's not entirely true – Leacock was supposedly one of the most popular humorists in the English-speaking world way back in the early 1900s – but that Leacock is, to this day, considered one of the foremost Canadian humorists does not speak well of Canadian literature. As a footnote in Canadian history, I could understand Leacock, but as the paterfamilias of Canadian comedy with the most prominent national comedy award named after him? God no.

It shouldn't be surprising though. You would be hard-pressed to find a book more quintessentially Canadian than *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, a collection of vignettes which follow daily life among the citizens of Mariposa, a fictional Northern Ontario town. Bland, milquetoast, uneffacing and as biting as a sea urchin, to call Leacock's humor understated would be an understatement.

There is essentially one joke in the entirety of *Sunshine Sketches*. That joke, in its many variations, can be summed up as the narrator's hyperbolic overstatements on Mariposa and its citizens being at odds with the idyllic banality of the town itself and the irritating ignorance of the inhabitants therein.

So, for instance, the narrator will state that the hotel proprietor's promise to keep his money-losing establishment open is completely trustworthy, only to then say that the proprietor put the restaurant up for renovations and that it's still under renovation to this day.

Or the narrator will say that a couple of love-struck adults found that their writing was entirely identical, except that of the boy was messy and slanted and that of the girl was neat and straight.

Or the narrator will say that the Mariposa Judge was the most fair and wise Judge you'd ever meet, and then detail some instance where the Judge made a "fair and wise" judgment which kept himself on the bench for another prolonged period of time.

Every joke – and I don't say "every" figuratively – follows this same formula. The narrator says one thing, and the truth is the opposite. If the narrator were to say a terrible tragedy happened to rival the destruction of Pompeii, it would actually be a kid stubbing his toe. If the narrator were to say that a character is a learned scholar, it would be because he got his multiplication table correct on his first try back in elementary school. If the narrator were to say a man is a sexual dynamo, then he'd be so skilled that he finishes in all of ten seconds.

This is a very lame type of humor. Nothing funny actually happens; the supposed comedy is all in the telling, but the formula is repeated to the point where you can almost predict the punchlines before Leacock even sets the joke up.

The rancid cherry on top is the sickening nostalgia that permeates the whole of *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. Beneath all the sarcastic pronouncements on the grandiosity of Mariposa is the lingering suggestion that there's actually something endearing about this small town and the people that live in it. In truth, the town sucks and the people in it suck even more. Nothing happens in Mariposa, and it's a sad day when my boring-ass daily life is actually more eventful than an entire year in a town. The characters are all belligerent shameless morons with no redeeming qualities, and there's nothing the least bit endearing about any of their despicable antics. Their cheating, lying, swindling, complete idiocy, mean-spiritedness and self-absorption transcend the bounds of endearing quirkiness. It's actually a bit disturbing to see the gulf between Leacock's nostalgia-tinted lens and the repulsive antics being played out.

Leacock was apparently an admirer of Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, and there is certainly something of their style and sense of humor in his writing. It's easy to see with Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers* the type of bumbling, lighthearted comedy Leacock was attempting. However, the absurdity and stupidity of Pickwick and his gang was tempered by their goodhearted intentions, whereas Leacock's Mr. Smith seems almost sociopathic in comparison. The entire town of Mariposa seems like some strange microcosm of everything that is wrong in the world. It's some bizarre Canadian version of Hell, where everyone is blandly repulsive and politely insidious.

Manybooks says

Now with regard to Canadian humorist Stephen Leacock's 1912 [Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town](#), I have always (and from square one so to speak) been of the distinct and unfortunate impression that for many of us who have had to meticulously and with enforced thoroughness peruse [Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town](#) for either school or university, and been forced to, been actually by our teachers and instructors often mandated to dissect Leacock's writing, his choice of words, his style of humour with a fine-toothed comb of critical analysis and in-depth interpretation, the episodic, gently satirical suggests of small town Ontario (of small town global) life have sadly also thus tended to run the risk of losing much of their inherent and potential charm in a sea of tedium, resentment and disillusionment.

However and the above criticism having been said, and with me definitely standing by this one hundred percent, I am actually and personally also happy to say, that the above mentioned school/university created and based issues have not ever really been the case with and for me. As when we read [Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town](#) in the spring of 1982 for grade nine English, our teacher actually categorically refused to engage in any and all potential overly deep analysis, focussing our teenaged attention instead on the gentle humour of Stephen Leacock's words, on his delightful descriptions and on how universal and timeless [Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town](#) truly is (but I have indeed and frustratingly also heard more than enough horror stories from friends and acquaintances whose attitudes and considerations towards

Stephen Leacock as an author of merit and renown were in many ways permanently ruined and tarnished by basically having to for weeks and months on end analyse in particular Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town with deep literary interpretation methods, sometimes even being made to artificially force Leacock into a Marxist, a feminist or a deconstructionist mould, when at its most positive and its most successful, an analysis of Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town should really focus for the most part on the novel's universality, on how Stephen Leacock's humour works and how his vignettes and episodic anecdotes do really manage to more often than not surpass both time and place and in such a sweetly entertaining, gentle and delightfully caressing manner at that).

But I do leave the in my opinion most necessary caveat that if you are in fact and indeed looking for heavy-duty, biting social criticism and satire, then Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town will or at least likely would (might) not be either an acceptable, an enjoyable, relatable reading experience or even the right type of genre for you. For while Stephen Leacock's humour, irony and wit are definitely satirical in nature and his criticisms of small town Ontario (small town global) archetypes with their at times rather comical characteristics and stereotypical shortcomings, behavioural patterns are ever present and consistently constant, as well as at times even rather obviously if not even occasionally a bit stridently depicted, this ALWAYS does very much occur in an understanding, affectionate fashion (which although at times perhaps a trifle patronising in scope and feel is also imbued with the milk of human kindness and the realisation by the author/narrator that we ALL have such foibles, that we ALL are often the mirror images of the residents of Mariposa). However, if you do tend to enjoy light, fluffy and not too in-depth and strenuous satire (which while definitely critical is also always unfailingly understanding, sweetly loving and never all too much over the top and exaggerated), Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (and Stephen Leacock's writing in general) might very well be right up your proverbial alley so to speak, provided you do (in my opinion) take both Leacock and his work for what they represent, for a pleasurable, but never too heavy-duty and philosophical reading diversion, for a fun way to spend some quality reading time, with gentle humour, gentle satire sans much if any heavy duty moralising and biting or philosophising nastiness.

Sara says

I hated this book. It was slow. It was boring. It didn't seem to have much of a point. It was a guy, telling stories as if you were sitting in front of him, going back and forth and here and there. I hated it.
