



# The Short Reign of Pippin IV

*John Steinbeck*

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## **The Short Reign of Pippin IV** John Steinbeck

Steinbeck's only work of political satire turns the French Revolution on its head, as amateur astronomer Pippin Heristal is drafted in to rule the unruly French. Enchanting comedy ensues as Steinbeck creates the most hilarious royal court ever around the brief, bold reign of the corduroy-clad Pippin, his social-climbing wife Maria, his star-struck daughter Clotilde and her Californian beau, Todd.

## **The Short Reign of Pippin IV Details**

Date : Published January 18th 2001 by Penguin Classics (first published 1957)

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Author : John Steinbeck

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## From Reader Review The Short Reign of Pippin IV for online ebook

### Mohammad Sherafati says

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### Mike Frost says

As I've continued to lap up the more obscure works in Steinbeck's catalogue, I've skipped this one more than once at the library. It just didn't look anything like a Steinbeck book, and I didn't want to be disappointed in my favorite author, especially after *Burning Bright*. Finally, as I was hurriedly packing for my recent work trip, I made a quick trip to the library, and after not finding the first 5 books I wanted, I gave in and went with this one, fully expecting to be disappointed.

I was not.

I was right about one thing -- this is not a Steinbeck book. It's more of a Vonnegut/*Confederacy of Dunces* kind of political satire. Funny, interesting and smart, I really thoroughly enjoyed it.

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### Steve Kettmann says

A thoroughly enjoyable exercise in Steinbeck trying something different, which I'd call deep satire. If he didn't set the bar so high with his best books, I'd rate this one higher, but it does have a one-chord feel. I recommend it, but not as among the first five books of Steinbeck to read.

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### Elliott says

Steinbeck's only work of political satire, and according to the Introduction by Robert and Katharine Morsberger, the least known of his novels, "*The Short Reign of Pippin IV*" is by turns playful and philosophical. While Steinbeck gently chastises human beings for their "tendency...to distrust good fortune," he cannot conceal his deep and abiding faith in humanity; a quality that is unmistakably Steinbeckian and one that characterizes all of his works.

NB: Nebraska @ UCLA. Go BRUINS!

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### Fábio Martins says

Límpido e conciso como Steinbeck costuma ser, balanceia com leveza algumas das suas preocupações

sociais e humanitárias de sempre. É um pequeno livro, tardio na sua carreira, que nem por sombras desmerece a sua tremenda obra. Não sou particularmente sensível ao humor, no sentido em que as peripécias mais ou menos pitorescas não me fazem rir. Mas a mordacidade, a sátira e a delicadeza perpassam todo o livro (que se lê num esfregar de olhos) e são ótimos condimentos. Gostei. Muito

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### **Rares Hudac says**

This one is great, light, and very entertaining.

It's worth 4 starts because of the comic story, the dialogue, the parallel with other character's life and the political satire.

It's not worth the 5th start because it could have been so much more, as it feels a bit rushed in its current state.

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### **Argos says**

Steinbeck'ın gerçekçi eserlerine alışıyan benim gibiler için bu fantastik kurgu biraz farklı geldi. Hiciv ağırlıklı hatta zaman zaman seviye sorunu yaşıyan mizah tarzıyla bambaşka Fransa ve Amerika olmak üzere global bir demokrasi/ yönetim eleştirisi yapan J. Steinbeck esas olarak kapitalist yaşam biçimi ve tekellerle dalga geçiyor. Realist romanlardan sonra biraz zayıf geldi ağırlığı.

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### **Paul Ispas says**

Steinbeck altfel. Altfel cum? Amuzant în principal. Urme de umor se găsește și în alte scrieri ale sale, însă nu la același nivel satiric ca aici. Un deliciu. Și nu pot să nu remarc cum în scurta poveste (cam cât domnia lui Pepin), Steinbeck își pune semnătura clasică: crează niște personaje memorabile. Nu înțeleg de ce a fost această scriere aleasă ca reprezentativă pentru colecția Nobel, dar apreciez curajul editurii.

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### **Karn Kher says**

It's delicate, precious even, like the protagonist. A slim touching satire, not as shocking as some other satires like Animal Farm but calmer and pleasanter. An accidental king of France tries to be the King of France. Deep in parts and humorous in large, you should give it a read.

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### **Buck says**

Well. That was unexpected. How very unsteinbeckish. His only political satire, the blurb says.

It took me a week or more to read this little novella. I kept putting off beginning to read, and then would fall asleep. Only reading ten to twenty pages at a time, until the final third, which went pretty quickly. I didn't recognize the prose as Steinbeck. It was formal, as if written in the previous century, though it seemed to

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ease a bit as the story progressed, but that might have been my becoming accustomed to it.

While the book isn't bad, neither is it noteworthy. It's mildly amusing in places and it has a reasonably happy ending, which, by the way, also isn't particularly characteristic of Steinbeck. I'm glad this is not the first work of Steinbeck I had read because I might have dismissed him as being nothing special.

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### **Mark Barrett says**

I had to keep checking the name of the author on this one. Having read and loved 'Of Mice and Men' and 'Grapes of Wrath' I could not believe that Steinbeck had this sort of book in him.

High-end political satire with some genuine laugh-out-loud moments. It makes you utter his name in the same breath as Wilde and Wodehouse. A real little gem, that works every bit as much today in its mocking of political spheres and foreign policies as it did when written.

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### **Mandy says**

A Steinbeck that had previously escaped me, thoroughly enjoyed this clever and quirky little book. A very relevant comment on the role of monarchy.

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### **Jay says**

An interesting political satire. This is my fourth Steinbeck novel in a short time, ranging over a great deal of different styles. This one was the funniest, satirizing not just the French, but also Americans, British, and the people of many other nations. Most of the story is moved by plot and ideas, rather than character, but King Pippin is not a flat character. He wants to do well at the job he never wanted to do.

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### **jeremy says**

in what clearly must have been an enjoyable writing experience for him, *the short reign of pippin iv: a fabrication* marks steinbeck's only work of political satire. with characters and a plot reminiscent of italo calvino's fiction, this short novel makes a caricature of the french revolution, and, more broadly, of politics in general. while lacking in the moral impetus so prominent in his other works, *pippin* may well be one of steinbeck's more humorous books.

*"i've never understood america," said the king.*

*"neither do we, sir. you might say we have two governments, kind of overlapping. first we have the elected government. it's democratic or republican, doesn't make much difference, and then there's corporation government."*

*"they get along together, these governments?"*

*"sometimes," said tod. "i don't understand it myself. you see, the elected government pretends to be democratic, and actually it is autocratic. the corporation governments pretend to be*

*autocratic and they're all the time accusing the others of socialism. they hate socialism."  
"so i have heard," said pippin.  
"well, here's the funny thing, sir. you take a big corporation in america, say like general motors  
or du pont or us steel. the thing they're most afraid of is socialism, and at the same time they  
themselves are socialist states."*

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## Wayne Barrett says

This is Steinbeck's only satirical work and if I may say so, he pulled it off quite nicely. It's a political piece, a subject in which he is knowledgeable, but instead of the darker, dramatic side of the topic that he has always portrayed, John gives us the scenario in a way that we can laugh at. Which, to me, is the only way we can sometimes survive the bullshit.

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## Octo says

Clever satire on the nature of politics, royalty, marriage, youth, and Franco/American relations. It's amazing that Steinbeck is able to fit so much in this short light-hearted affair. But, hey, that is why I like Steinbeck so much. He just seems to get so much out of simple words and simple sentences.

This little tale is about an ordinary man that reluctantly accepts the throne of King of France. He struggles with what this means and what his powers actually are and how he should use them. Ultimately he follows his heart (and an old man by a lake) and does what he thinks is right. And the cycle of history repeats....

Interesting and funny.

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## Asunlectora says

A pesar de las reseñas que había leído, esperaba (quizá sería mejor decir deseaba) una novela ligera, fresca y divertida, casi sin más trascendencia que el puro entretenimiento. No ha sido así.

Me he encontrado una novela bien escrita y con un claro trasfondo de crítica social, que oscila entre una fina ironía y un sarcasmo gamberro y que a veces incluso tiende al absurdo. De una manera divertida no deja títere con cabeza.

Me lo he pasado pipa imaginándome toda la historia como una película de los Monthy Phyton en sus mejores momentos (tipo la vida de Brian) e incluso como una "epopeya musical" de mis queridos Luthiers.

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## James F says

I'm not quite sure what to make of this short novel. The premise is that the French government is deadlocked between parties, and decides to re-establish monarchy. They choose an ordinary person who happens to be

descended from Pepin (or Pippin as he spells it) to be king. (Actually not so ordinary; he doesn't work and lives in a mansion off the rent of some vineyards somewhere.) He's intended to be a figurehead, but wants to accomplish something. His program is frightfully radical (actually it's pretty tame liberalism.) The blurbs call the book a satirical comedy, but it doesn't have enough "bite" to be satire; more like a farce. There is some mild humor; he points out (in 1957) that Americans are obsessed with royalty and all the little American girls want to be princesses. There's some nonsense about how American corporations are "socialist" because they give the workers health insurance. After *Grapes of Wrath* and *In Dubious Battle*, or even his more comic works like *Cannery Row*, this is a real decline; and most unlike Steinbeck, the characters are not well-drawn.

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## **Karlyflower \*The Vampire Ninja, Luminescent Monster & Wendigo Nerd Goddess of Canada (according to The Hulk)\* says**

My musings on *The Short Reign of Pippin IV* by John Steinbeck.

This was a different type of Steinbeck for me, having read both *Of Mice and Men* and *Cannery Row* in the last year or two, I got a feel for the general atmosphere of those novels. This political satire has an entirely different feel to it.

One thing I will make note of here is that I am not a politics girl, at all. Politics by turns bore me and enrage me. A Political satire is perfect in that regard for me. However, I can not speak of particular points in this story as I don't know the structure of which Steinbeck was making jest.

I do know that making reference to "Christian Atheists" made me snort so hard that Chris turned around - from making me a delicious dinner - and ask me what was so amusing. The satire in this story is rich and overdone in a beautifully complex way, also, I probably missed some key points by not being much of a French history buff and all. Alas, I love Steinbeck, he is so charming and witty and warm within his writing.

The ex-"chorus girl"-seductress-with-flat-feet-who-is-now-a-nun Sister Hyacinthe character was wonderful. As was King Pippin himself. So much golden fun-poking happens in here. And all of it with the venerated rawness of Steinbeck's other prose.

*No, Sister, I am not brave. Perhaps, I am stupid, but I am not brave. I do not want to be a sacrifice. I want my little house, my wife, and my telescope - nothing more. If they had not forced me to be king I would not have been forced to be kingly. It was a series of psychological accidents.*

Ha! I love Steinbeck!

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## **Chris Dietzel says**

This is Steinbeck's only satire as well as the only book where he doesn't write about the 'every-man.' The combination doesn't work very well. Steinbeck is at his best when he's writing about people agonizing over their place in the world in a straight forward and sincere way. The satire is not executed as well as other notable authors and you never connect with Pippin the way you connect with all of Steinbeck's other main characters. A must read if you're a huge fan of the author, but a pass for anyone else.

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