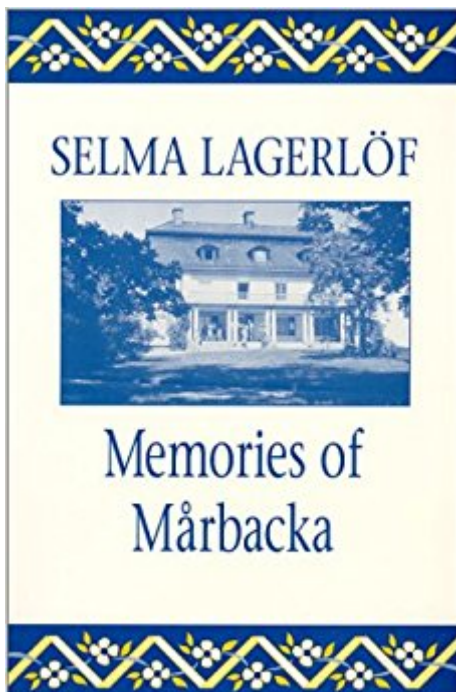


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Memories Of Marbacka



Synopsis

Selection of autobiographical writings by Selma Lagerlf. Tells of her childhood, young adulthood and the family estate Marbacka. Selma was crippled in her childhood and decided early to become a writer. Her family lost the estate, but years later, she was able to purchase it back. Today Marbacka is open to visitors. Selma Lagerlof (1858-1940) is one of Swedens best-loved storytellers. In 1909, she became the first woman-and the first Swede-to win the Nobel Prize for Literature; later she was the first woman to be inducted into the Swedish Academy. Her writings possess keen psychological insight and address the perennial struggles and joys of human existence. They are among Swedens prized possessions and the treasures of world literature.

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Customer Reviews

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Selma Lagerlof (1858-1940) is one of Sweden's best-loved storytellers. In 1909, she became the first woman's and the first Swede's to win the Nobel Prize for Literature; later she was the first woman to be inducted into the Swedish Academy. Her writings possess keen psychological insight and address the perennial struggles and joys of human existence. They are among Sweden's prized possessions and treasures of world literature.

Here's a memoir, compiled by editor Greta Anderson from several books by Lagerlof, of a household -- a residence, a family, retainers, neighbors. The children heard stories from relatives

and people who worked on the property, and they experienced the changing seasons. Something important about the formation of a child's inner world is implied. Santayana wrote that one's lifelong sensibility towards beauty depends on early experiences. "Taste is formed in those moments when aesthetic emotion is massive and distinct; preferences then grow conscious, judgments then put into words will reverberate through calmer hours; they will constitute ... habits of perception, secret standards for all other beauties. A period of life in which such intuitions have been frequent may amass tastes and ideals sufficient for the rest of our days. Youth in these matters governs maturity . . . Half our standards come from our first masters, and the other half from our first loves." (What kind of imaginative formation do our own children experience? Is the human voice not rarely a source of stories and memories for them, or do they hardly ever hear it except for instructions and complaints? -- except for the electronically recorded voice. What do we pass on to them? What beautiful things are part of their daily lives?) This book is a kind of love story. It is also a pleasing evocation of childhood perception. It's somewhat akin, as a family chronicle, to the Little House books (where there is more hardship) or Sergei Aksakov's Russian classic, *Years of Childhood* -- which is a little-known gem.

This volume has the best stories about the Nobel-Prize-winning author's Swedish childhood. They include ancestral tales passed down by her grandmother and other family raconteurs, and tales from her own childhood in the bustling, hospitable household of Mårbacka in the west-central province of Värmland. It also tells the story of a young girl's perseverance in pursuing her dream of becoming an author. Lagerlöf (1858-1940) was devoted to Mårbacka, to her family and to those who worked on the modest rural estate. Several of the stories dramatize her special relationship with her enterprising-if not thrifty-father, whom she eulogized in her Nobel lecture. When she was thirty, teaching schoolchildren in southern Sweden, the family's finances required that they sell the house and surrounding lands. Like a fairy tale come true, the success of Lagerlöf's children's books (*The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* and *The Further Adventures of Nils*) enabled her to buy back Mårbacka; then came the Nobel in 1909, enabling her to purchase the land, as well. The final essay of the collection tells of her almost instinctual yearning to return to her childhood home. Today, Mårbacka remains open to visitors. Selma became partially lame at the age of three, and never completely recovered. This experience deepened her spirituality, her compassion, and her dedication to a life of books. "The Ball at Sunne" tells the poignant story of her awkwardness as a teenager in the social world. One section of the book is devoted to her diary account of the months she spent in Stockholm, where she underwent physical therapy. Lagerlöf is

an exemplar of humanism, a champion of the world's unfortunates, as well as a captivating storyteller. Unfortunately, with her works out of print for over half a century, her eloquent writing has gone unnoticed by recent generations of readers looking for compelling female models. Penfield Press is releasing four reprints of her work this spring, including *Invisible Links* (short stories), *Memories of Mårbacka*, *Scandinavian Kings and Queens: Three Stories*, and *Girl from the Marsh Croft* and other stories. Penfield Press is also planning to bring out additional works by Selma Lagerlöf. The favorite author of everyone's grandmother, her tales are timeless classics in their themes and expression. This handsomely-bound volume, complete with chronology, notes, line-drawings and photographs, will hold a treasured place on the reader's bookshelf.

Selma Lagerlöf was the first woman to win the Nobel prize for literature and will at least in the Scandinavian countries always be remembered for her stories filled with warmth, tenderness and wisdom. Her lively imagination and her descriptions of country life and country people in Sweden more than 100 years ago is reading of pure delight. When you have a quiet moment you pick up the book and read a few pages, a chapter or a story, then you save it within yourself and think about it, let the harmony in what you have read penetrate and comfort you. It is like having had a conversation with somebody who has lived longer than you and who willingly share her wisdom and stories with you. Selma Lagerlöf's power of combining imagination and facts and her enjoyment of storytelling can hardly be surpassed.

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One might wonder what constitutes a good memoir. With biographies, it is usually the case that the biographer focuses on the details of the subject's life, trying to provide the reader with as much information as possible.

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