



## The Slip

*Mark Sampson*

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**The Slip** Mark Sampson

**In this wickedly funny novel, one bad afternoon and two regrettable comments make the inimitable Philip Sharpe go viral for all the worst reasons.**

Dr. Philip Sharpe, absentminded professor extraordinaire, teaches philosophy at the University of Toronto and is one of Canada's most combative public intellectuals. But when a live TV debate with his fiercest rival goes horribly off the rails, an oblivious Philip says some things to her that he really shouldn't have.

As a clip of Philip's "slip" goes viral, it soon reveals all the cracks and fissures in his marriage with his young, stay-at-home wife, Grace. And while the two of them try to get on the same side of the situation, things quickly spiral out of control.

Can Philip make amends and save his marriage? Is there any hope of salvaging his reputation? To do so, he'll need to take a hard look at his on-air comments, and to conscript a band of misfits in a scheme to set things right.

## The Slip Details

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Author : Mark Sampson

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## From Reader Review The Slip for online ebook

### Corrina says

This was definitely an interesting read, especially in light of our current culture of public apologies and shaming for misbehaviour. The protagonist, Dr. Philip Sharpe, is a politically centrist philosophy professor with a specialty in ethics. While appearing on a tv spot, he says something in a heated moment about a company that recently crumbled, that he thinks everyone is angry with him about. He genuinely thinks that everyone is badly overreacting, and he ignores all online comments and attempts by the people in his life to discuss what he said. It's not until over 200 pages and six days later when his teenage stepdaughter sits him down, plays him the video, and forces him to face what he actually said. People are not angry with him because of an abstract legal and ethical point. They are angry because what he said sounded like a rape threat against the woman he was arguing with. He didn't mean it that way, his opponent didn't interpret it that way, but a lot of the public did hear it that way. Philip is a very defined character- 50's, highly educated, white, technophobic, high-functioning alcoholic, and liberal but not at all woke. He's a little racist and a lot sexist. His 14 years younger wife is a stay-at-home mom and a writer, with a monthly column and a few failed children's books. He is very resentful of her not working and contributing financially to the household, while he doesn't recognize or value the work she does do in the home. Everything she does to take care of their two daughters he refers to as "motherwork," which is a particularly irritating term, especially when she's doing something like tending to their 3 year old who just scalded herself on a broken faucet she has asked Philip to have fixed.

This isn't my usual style, but I did enjoy it. Well, perhaps not enjoy, but I found it very interesting. I found Philip to be dislikeable on a personal level but understandable. He has basically never had a functioning relationship of any kind with a woman in his entire life- even his mother left when he was very small- and while he's a sexist jerk, to a degree he really doesn't know any better. Of course, I'm also reading this from a perspective of a woman several years his junior, which is definitely not a perspective he would have ever considered. Philip is a representation of a lot of middle-aged white men who say something horrific in public who need to have it explained to them exactly what they said and why it was wrong before they understand. It depends on your own perspective if he is just stupid for not knowing, or ignorant and in need of education. One is willful, and the other is something that can be corrected with effort. Philip, being conveniently fictional, is properly aghast and genuinely remorseful when he finally understands what he said, and the reader can hope that he will be a little more aware of his words and actions and his relationships with his family and friends in the future. Shame real life isn't always so tidy.

It is a thoughtful book that could encourage a lot of discussion. This could be a great choice for a book club that enjoys debate.

And the thing that every Canadian will be able to relate to, no matter your age, gender, or political viewpoint, is Philip's vain attempts to keep his poppy from getting lost multiple times. The struggle is real.

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### Rebecca Rosenblum says

Read in manuscript because the author is my husband. Insightful and funny, because the author is talented.

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## **Paul O'Neill says**

Sooo bogged down with details. The slip up isn't even that bad, although he does make it worse for himself and that's very comical but I don't care. The main characters an asshole.

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## **Jennifer Rose says**

WOW! Some days I am amazed by my own literary stubbornness...I wanted to put this book down a few too many times. It took me double the time it should have to read. That being said, I also must say that I am so glad that I stuck with it. In the end, I think this book will end up being one I think about often, revisiting the characters in my mind, making up new experiences, and furthering their stories in my mind.

Philip Sharpe, a well known philosophy teacher at the University of Toronto, has a bit of a bad day to start the book. His wife lays into him prior to an important televised debate. He needs to be at the top of his game to face his bitter rival, Cheryl Sneed. However, his thoughts are divided as he prepares for the verbal battle. Then he falters, he says things he doesn't mean and everything spirals out of control. Unfortunately, it's broadcast for the world to see. In this day and age of social media, his gaffe becomes everyone's hot topic. The aftermath of his controversial words is devastating to his life in every realm. Intended or not, I couldn't help thinking of the opening episode of one my husband's favorite cancelled shows "The Newsroom", if you follow me!

Now, Philip is an interesting fellow, he is confident, egotistical, pompous, and kind of an A-hole throughout the book, but he grew on me like a fungus. I wanted to not like his character, but he was so ridiculously funny and bumbling that I just ended up loving him and feeling ultimately sorry for him. His staunch stance of innocence in the face of such lunacy made me laugh. His propensity to blame his wife and separate himself from his family in crisis was so true to character. Why do some people choose to alienate those who love them when they are struggling? So common, so silly! For a large portion of this book I wanted to pop Philip in the back of his head, or offer to pull his head out of his rump. I think that was the point though...he had to experience all realms of the experience to ultimately grow. I personally am so glad that his daughter stepped in when she did. Just ask your kids, they often know more than you, and they will give you the truth pure and straight from the heart.

I felt the author did a wonderful job of giving us a glimpse into the Sharpe family's daily life with thoughtful dialogue and interactions between the main characters. The story was well developed, and I especially liked the introduction of Rani. She plays an important part in Philip's past and potential future. In the true nature of not giving anything away about the direction of the book...I will end with this, I hope that Philip Sharpe figures his way out of this situation! His family, his career, his future, and his life depends on it...Now, I don't know about you but I'm going to buy me a red poppy to wear and have a Bloody Joseph, and soon! Yum!

Thank you to NetGalley, Dundurn Publishers, and the author Mark Sampson himself, for making this available for me to read and review in exchange for my honest opinion.

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## **DubaiReader says**

Annoying.

I really enjoyed Mark Sampson's *Sad Peninsular* (5 stars), so I leaped at the chance to preview another of his books, *The Slip*. Unfortunately they couldn't have been more different and this one really infuriated me.

The premise was fine, a well known philosophy professor is invited on to live TV to discuss the collapse of a huge Canadian financial institution, that he had written about in one of his studies. Alongside him on the panel is Cheryl Sneed, his rival of many years. He knows she is going to try to wind him up, but he's had a bad day and loses his rag, making a ridiculous comment about the company they are discussing and then compounding it by insulting Cheryl with a misogynistic remark that the world's feminists immediately pounce upon. Social media goes into full swing and his life is hell for the next several days.

What really annoyed me about this book was that it wasn't really about the nonsense that is social media these days - it was a good 3/4 of the way through the book that Philip actually realised that he'd made anything more than a blunder regarding the company. He had no idea (because he deleted all relevant messages) that the world was upset about the misogynistic comments that he hadn't even realised that he'd made.

I did enjoy the bits about his background, his childhood, how he'd met his wife, his student life and his relationship with an Indian student. These episodes were a breath of fresh air. I also smiled at his hopeless ineptitude with the many remembrance poppies that he lost along the way.

Counterbalancing that were the huge number of unnecessarily intellectual words used by Philip, I don't think my Kindle dictionary has ever worked so hard. Really, he was such an irritating boffin, I could have thrown his own book at him!

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## **Josee Sigouin says**

Committing career suicide, whether deliberately or accidentally, has figured in all three of Mark Sampson's novels to date. In the very serious and aptly titled *Sad Peninsula*, first-person narrator Michael finds himself teaching English to children in Korea after knowingly sabotaging his livelihood as a journalist back home in Eastern Canada. In *The Slip*, first-person narrator Philip Sharpe shares with us, his dear readers, the gaffe he unknowingly commits on live TV and the week-and-a-bit of mayhem, both hilarious and sad, that ensues.

The University of Toronto professor knows that he comes across as a pompous ass but what can he say? He's brilliant. He's also, like the rest of us, lacking and insecure, by turns lucky and cursed, the latter especially true when it comes to those darn plastic poppies he has to pin to his lapel as Remembrance Day approaches, only for said poppy to jump ship at the slightest provocation.

Philip takes us through the series of misadventures that compound his initial slip, making illuminating detours to the events that have shaped his life. After finishing the pages recounting his student days in Oxford, to take one example, I found myself echoing the woman in *When Harry Met Sally's* diner scene, after Meg Ryan goes through her fake orgasm act: "I'll have what he's having," I thought. It's hard to come up with a fresh take on the relationship but Mark Sampson succeeds and for all the right reasons as far as I'm concerned.

The author of short story collection, *The Secrets Men Keep*, is no stranger to the shifting gender assumptions men – and women – are struggling to make sense of. His latest exploration, *The Slip*, is funny and self-skewering, while brimming with echoes of every dear reader's ordinary life, our moments of defeat and our moments of, if not triumph, at least of knowing we've done the best we could under the circumstances.

Most highly recommended!

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## David Sealy says

Who wants to read about the travails of privileged white male academics these days? The author is quite aware of the current literary landscape and has some fun with the character of Philip Sharpe, who isn't quite as incorrigible as he appears by the end of the book. Not a world-shaking read, but an enjoyable work nonetheless.

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## Evelina | AvalinahsBooks says

I was very excited about this book, when I got it on NetGalley. A lovely cover, a great premise. But... ***It could have been so much better!*** Although I ***do*** feel like maybe this time I was just not the intended reader. Or maybe I ***was*** the intended reader, but I just... didn't feel like reading something so tedious. ***I felt like being entertained. Not doing a chore.***

*Well, you win some, you lose some.*

(If you have trouble viewing images, read this post here on my blog)

***So let me fill you in about this book.*** Philip is a philosophy professor (*I'm not entirely sure what kind of philosophy now – although I read this book just last week! One of those things you forget in a heartbeat.*) He writes a lot of boring, but somewhat popular books on tough subjects and sometimes gets invited to talk about it on TV. He is just going on for one of those right at the moment we join him. Unfortunately, he happens to have a fight with his wife about *"pointless home matters"* before leaving (*which is his daughter scalding her hand on the tap he has failed to fix...*) And doubly unfortunately, he will be ***meeting his nemesis on TV*** for the talk, ***who happens to be a woman.*** And Philip isn't quite aware of the fact that he ***can be*** misogynistic, although he doesn't mean to.

In the end, stressed out about the fight, he ends up saying something very bad on TV that is interpreted as a verbal sexual assault proposition, and has to deal with the fallout. The saddest thing about this, though, ***is that he is utterly unaware that he said that,*** and for the entire course of the week keeps thinking it's because of something he said about corporate ethics. One misunderstanding leads to another, and Philip ends up being pretty much the most hated man of Canada of the week.

So the book is generally about Philip realizing what happened and growing up as a person. *Well, maybe a little.* I do agree that this is an *immensely important topic*, but... Gosh. Half the book is Philip remembering his childhood. His previous relationships. The fights he had with his wife. (*Is this what therapists feel like..?*) Essentially, most of it is about the slow unraveling of his marriage. I felt like it was not necessary to the story at all... Or maybe I felt that it was going to tell a different kind of story? Sure, it sheds some depth on why the stuff that is going on *is* going on, *but... gosh, is it boring.*

*Another super tedious thing was that the author did a splendid job, writing in the voice of a detached, oblivious middle-age professor.* So, that should be a good thing, right?

As well as it portrays the personality of the main character... It's just... I'm sorry, just so boring. All the long words, all the dry logic and reasoning just killed me. I am someone prone to philosophize, I *do* read literary, but I'm just *not amused* reading this. It was a chore.

I think it could have been done more elegantly. It might have not been the intention to write something like The Rosie Project, but I think the book could have been much better if it had a similar voice.

Oh yes, and I must warn you – it includes spoilers for Life of Pi. Just a heads up, if you haven't read that one yet.

*I have received this book from the Publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest opinion.*

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## Kathleen Gray says

Interesting premise but goodness how could anyone in this day and age have missed that political correctness and just plain saying something dumb will cause a cascade of problems. This is a good effort at looking at the inner thoughts of Phillip, who just didn't get it but the problem for me was that I found it to be whiny. Thanks to net galley for the ARC.

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## Kristen says

One line review of Mark Sampson's "The Slip": Clever, hilarious, and timely.

When Philip Sharpe, a philosophy professor at the University of Toronto, gets into a verbal sparring match with a female rival during a television debate, he loses his cool and makes some angry, sexist comments that light up social media – and the rest of the world.

Before he even leaves the studio, friends and colleagues begin shunning him, people on the street stare at him in scorn as the gaffe goes viral, and friends and strangers alike flood his social media pages. In the

hypersensitive university climate where he teaches, students, administrators, and colleagues turn hostile, organizing rallies against him and demanding apologies.

Philip seems baffled by the outcry, especially when his young wife Grace begins to question him. As the pressure outside mounts, the already strained marriage is stretched to the limit.

Author Sampson makes it all fun as the read sees the story through clueless, often pompous, Philip's eyes.

The story is a brilliant send-up of over-the-top political correctness and the power of viral media. Adding to the fun is a great twist at the end. A fun read!

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### **Emily Saso says**

I'm a big fan of one of Mark Sampson's other novels, *Sad Peninsula*, so I was excited to read this one too. Sampson has a knack for slipping into the skin of fascinating, controversial characters, and he did so again here -- to superb comic effect!

I loved *The Slip*! I was laughing out loud one second and then marvelling at the structure and the language the next. And the marital fight scenes between Grace and Philip! Such blistering passive aggression and resentment! The way Philip relates to children is particularly hysterical.

Sampson managed to take difficult and controversial topics and make an illuminating and entertaining story out of them. Even though *The Slip* is narrated by such a myopic, self-involved character, he's circling the drain of self-awareness the whole time, and it's such fun to watch him go. Philip gets it, but he also does not get it, like, at all.

If you love to laugh and appreciate expertly-executed language, this book is for you.

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### **Steven Buechler says**

Sampson is a talented writer who knows his craft well. There some serious reflections on our society in this at-times humorous story of Dr. Philip Sharpe, as readers follow his blundering attempts to salvage his reputation after a brutal slip of the tongue during a live television broadcast. But more importantly we see the profound academic realize the more important aspect of his life is not his career or his reputation but his family and as he tries to mend those broken relationships that are so important to him.

<http://tinyurl.com/y7yulrds>

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### **Amy says**

The book itself is decent, but the character was abhorrent. There really was nothing likeable about the main character, which really took away from my enjoyment of the book. The first 200 pages shows him in all his rage, showing off his intelligence while blaming everyone else for his shortcomings and issues. I didn't really find any humour in the book. Just mind-numbing frustrations. It's an okay read, but not one I would recommend quickly.



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## Simon says

A smart, biting, topical novel about our modern life in the public eye and relationships.

tl;dr at **Overall**, as always

Philip Sharpe is a balding, chubby philosophy professor, who is so oblivious to the intricacies of actual human contact that you will likely spend much of this novel screaming for him to open his eyes and get what he did wrong, what his actual "slip" was. And you will be tortured by his thick-headed ways and his incredible dickishness. And you will love it and enjoy it in the end, because Sampson writes a novel so timely, so plugged into the current (and eternal, actually) events, that's it hard not to relate to it.

Sharpe is this pathetic, unlikable half-person half-dictionary of a narrator, using big words to mask the fact that he is lost in the most basic aspects of his life. His expensive home is a mess, his beautiful loving wife is rightfully mad at him, his alcoholism is not even out in the open, it's basically half of his personality. And as you start out loathing him and his incredible obliviousness to events around him (I am still fuming at how long it takes him to get what's going on, honestly), you may think "Am I supposed to find compassion for this sad sack?". But with each flashback, each wound inflicted on his status and pride, and each stupid, misguided thought, you start to see that, perhaps, Philip is, against all odds, not that unlikeable. It's a character study that eventually turns into a study of society as a whole. The way Sampson just throws caution to the wind and starts to furiously tackle the insecurities and problems that we all face is gloriously refreshing, while also profoundly uncomfortable. It's hard not to squirm when the attention turns to something that you recognize yourself doing.

The book, after starting out as a seemingly cynical portrait of a scumbag, ends up being a cautiously optimistic look at sexism, love, media crises, and what it means to be a "good" person. And if you feel that it doesn't provide solid responses to some of the questions, well, it pushes you to think about these issues and come up with your own viewpoint. And that is a valuable quality in a book that tackles such sensitive topics. This is not just a one-man soapbox show from Sampson, it's a plea for the reader to think and turn the critical gaze inwards.

My main problems would lie with the writing style, which is regularly obnoxious, as it simulates Sharpe's haughty intellectual persona. But it's hard to take off points for something that is wholly intentional and, ultimately, serves to make the book more expressive.

**Overall**, an excruciatingly frank look at the modern society and the modern man. Funny, sad, and enraging at the same time, an original book that needs to be read. Or, alternatively, that you need to read, it could only serve to make you more aware of the current affairs.

ARC received from the publisher via Netgalley

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## Jorene says

I liked this book more than I thought I would. I picked it up on a whim and while it could have turned whiny

and preachy, it did none of those things. I laughed through the entire book. The main character, Philip, is perfectly crafted to be an intellectual who may be self-absorbed, but does not take himself too seriously. He knows his faults and lays them out for us. Mark Sampson is successful at making an unbelievable situation seem very believable and in these times of off-hand comments in the political sphere blowing up within minutes on social media, it's nice to consider that maybe we should just let some of those ridiculous comments pass without all the kerfuffle. As we see in the novel, it's just too exhausting. This is a great story about love, marriage, and knowing ourselves.

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