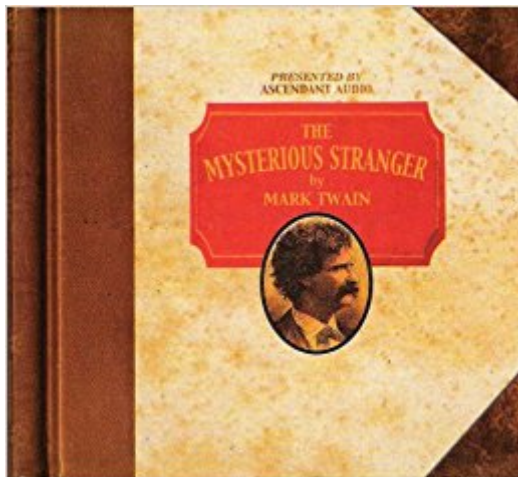


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# The Mysterious Stranger



## Synopsis

Considered one of Twain's most important short works, *The Mysterious Stranger* tells the story of the devil coming to a medieval village in the persona of a beautiful, lovable, yet exasperatingly amoral young man. Befriending a small group of boys, Satan exhibits strange charm, compassion and indifference as the tale comes to a surprising conclusion.

## Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Ascendant Audio; 1st edition (May 3, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0979036429

ISBN-13: 978-0979036422

Package Dimensions: 5.4 x 5.1 x 0.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 84 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #5,077,426 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #58 in [Books > Books on CD >](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Mark Twain was the pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (November 30, 1835 â April 21, 1910). Mark Twain was an American author and humorist. However, beyond that, he was fascinated with science, scientific inquiry, and an early adopter of science fiction. His book *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* features a time traveler from contemporary America, using his knowledge of science to introduce modern technology to Arthurian England. This type of storyline would later become a common feature of the science fiction. *The Mysterious Stranger* is a brilliant work going beyond science fiction into the religious unknown. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

A very knowledgeable friend of mine asked me not long ago about my appreciation of the writing of Mark Twain. I talked about the usual highlights: "Tom Sawyer," "Huckleberry Finn," "A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court." He asked if I were familiar with the novella, "The Mysterious Stranger." When I confessed my ignorance, he strongly recommended that I read it, and so I did. In this compilation of the novella and three short stories, this familiar writer speaks in an unfamiliar

voice. Toward the end of his life, Samuel Clemens became quite cynical and curmudgeonly. The novella "The Mysterious Stranger" was published posthumously in 1916, and reflects his later life jaundiced views of God, mankind, and the universe in general. In the story "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," the narrative is centered on a town this is renowned for the unshakable honesty of each of its citizens. A mysterious stranger comes to town, leaves a bag of money with clear instructions of what is to be done. The instructions are written in a way that is almost guaranteed to test the moral mettle of the town residents. As the possibility of getting their hands on the money dawns on some of the towns most prominent citizens, the fabric of their rectitude begins to unravel. In this tale, Twain shows a depth of understanding of human frailty and the human psyche that is disturbingly accurate. The novella "The Mysterious Stranger" treats the topic of an alluring young man who calls himself "Satan." He bedazzles a group of naive young men, and using his Angel of Light seduction sleight of hand, leads them on a merry chase across the universe. Reading this fascinating story reminded me of the oft-repeated phrase that the Devil's greatest accomplishment was convincing mankind that he does not exist. On the final page, Twain shares what appears to be his ultimate nihilistic philosophy of life, spoken by "Satan": "It is true, that which I have revealed to you; there is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream - a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you. And you are but a thought - a vagrant thought, a useless thought, a homeless thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities. He vanished, and left me appalled; for I knew, and realized, that all he had said was true." What a sad perspective upon which to end one's otherwise rich life.

Twain's book, written late in life, reveals his cynicism about society and humanity. No. 44 is also a mind-bender because some of the concepts it explores are very complex. It's rather different from his more famous works; if you're looking for something like Adventures of Tom Sawyer or Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, this book may not be for you. Although No. 44 does include some of Twain's trademark humor, it's also quite dark. I found myself feeling rather depressed at the end of this novel, but I did enjoy certain instances of Twain's wit--such as his comments about cats. Overall, No. 44 gives you an interesting glimpse into Twain's mind. Just remember that it's dark in there!

Mark Twain at his best and that's better than almost anybody. I love his paragraph on the god myth at the end of the mysterious stranger which depicts the silliness of the creator story. His common sense and humour are outstanding in this story as it always is and it was a joy to read.

I recall watching a claymation depicted version of this Mark Twain story. Having the text is nice. Overall, this is an essential story to have if you are interested in theological themes in literature. Also if you are interested in Twain's impact on American Literature. Epic.

Most definitely one of my all-time favorite books! Reading this work is like floating down a lazy river trailing your fingers in the water. Its pithy stuff this particular story, but told with such ease and sure-footedness, it requires no effort from the reader. How can that be? What a pleasure to read. I have no doubt but that I will revisit this story periodically throughout my lifetime. Thank you, Samuel Clemens!

what did you expect! One of Teslas best friends!

This edition restores the text to a more faithful representation of Twain's actual text and the result is darker, far more metaphysical version of the novel than Albert Bigelow Paine's spurious edition. This is the one to get!

I bought this book to read the last story "The Mysterious Stranger" which I enjoyed. The other selections would be good for a student first reading Mark Twain. I can see the book being assigned reading for an English class. Informative introduction by Edmund Reiss.

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