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# Mysterious Stranger and Other Stories

*Mark Twain*

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**Mark Twain : Mysterious Stranger and Other Stories** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mysterious Stranger and Other Stories:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Mark Twain In a Darker VoiceBy Alan L. ChaseA 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.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you're looking for something like *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* or *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark 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!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. 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.