



# Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography

*Justin Kaplan*

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## **Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography** Justin Kaplan

Mark Twain, the American comic genius who portrayed, named, and in part exemplified America's "Gilded Age," comes alive in Justin Kaplan's extraordinary biography.

With brilliant immediacy, *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* brings to life a towering literary figure whose dual persona symbolized the emerging American conflict between down-to-earth morality and freewheeling ambition. As Mark Twain, he was the Mississippi riverboat pilot, the satirist with a fiery hatred of pretension, and the author of such classics as *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. As Mr. Clemens, he was the star who married an heiress, built a palatial estate, threw away fortunes on harebrained financial schemes, and lived the extravagant life that Mark Twain despised. Kaplan effectively portrays the triumphant-tragic man whose achievements and failures, laughter and anger, reflect a crucial generation in our past as well as his own dark, divided, and remarkably contemporary spirit.

*Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* brilliantly conveys this towering literary figure who was himself a symbol of the peculiarly American conflict between moral scrutiny and the drive to succeed. Mr. Clemens lived the Gilded Life that Mark Twain despised. The merging and fragmenting of these and other identities, as the biography unfolds, results in a magnificent projection of the whole man; the great comic spirit; and the exuberant, tragic human being, who, his friend William Dean Howells said, was "sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature."

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