



A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court

Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)

Read by:	John Greenman	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	13 hours 42 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1026
Language:	English	UPC:	0684758936271
Style:	Solo	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Fiction		

Hank Morgan, an engineer living in Hartford, Connecticut in the late 19th century, gets knocked out after blow to the head and wakes up in early medieval England during the time of King Arthur. So begins the comic satire of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, published in 1889. Discovered by a knight, he is brought to court at Camelot, where he deduces that he has an abundance of knowledge unknown to the natives and so represents himself as a magician. Initially condemned by the court, notably Merlin, to be burned at the stake, he threatens to blot out the sun, knowing that a solar eclipse is imminent. Awed by his power, he is released and manages to become "The Boss" - the second most powerful person in the kingdom and an arch rival of Merlin. He proceeds to industrialize the country and educate the peasantry behind the backs of the ruling class, with whom he comes into

conflict time and again, using his wits to outdo them and become the effective leader of Camelot. The final challenge occurs when the Catholic Church tricks him unto leaving the country and publishes an Interdict causing the populace to break away and revolt, and sends 30,000 knights. He organizes a cadre of 52 teenage cadets to defend against the attack, hunkering down in Merlin's cave with electric wire, mines, and Gatling guns. Needless to say, the Catholic knights are all killed, but Hank and his rangers are trapped in the cave by the mountain of carnage and suffer disease. So it goes. Using plots and gags worthy of Mel Brooks or the Marx Brothers, Twain manages to deflate the romantic notions of chivalry and pretensions of caste that he saw informing the character of the Old South that, in turn, helped foster the tragedy of the Civil War. (Summary by Michael Hogan)

Mark Twain is the pen name of **Samuel Langhorne Clemens** (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), an American novelist, essayist, and lecturer noted for his humor and biting satire. Born in Florida, Missouri to a poor family, his father failed in business repeatedly and died of pneumonia when Sam was eleven. He went to work as an apprentice typesetter and then for brother Orion's *Hannibal Journal*. He worked as a journeyman printer in the east and started writing humorous articles and sketches to fill space. He returned to Missouri and worked as riverboat pilot until the Civil War broke out in 1861. He avoided service in the Confederate Army by journeying to Nevada with his brother Orion, then secretary to the territorial governor. After a failed attempt to strike it rich as a miner he wrote for the paper in Virginia City, where he adopted the pen name Mark Twain. He began developed a specialty as a traveling correspondent, posting pieces from Hawaii for the *Sacramento Union* and then a journal from a six month excursion to Europe and the Holy Land that formed his first book in 1869, *The Innocents Abroad*, considered the most popular travel book ever written. He followed with *Roughing It* in 1872, a portrait of life on the American frontier, and *The Gilded Age* in that same year, a satirical treatise on the follies and foibles of the emerging elite in American culture.

Twain was happily married Olivia Langdon in 1870 and settled first in Buffalo and then Hartford. In spite of his success with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), he experienced substantial financial losses as an entrepreneur with the Paige typesetting machine and then a venture established to publish the memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant. He closed shop in Connecticut and embarked on a long tour of lecturing and writing abroad, which enabled him to retire his debts and return a conquering hero in 1900. Twain was born after a visit by Halley's Comet in 1835 and predicted he would "go out with it, too". True to his word, he died the day after its return in 1910.