

Roughing It (Illustrated)

Mark Twain

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Based on Mark Twain's 1872 autobiographical novel, this made-for-cable film is presented in flashback form, as aged humorist Mark Twain (James Garner) is invited as the keynote speaker for the Bryn Mawr College graduation ceremonies of 1891. At first concerned that his reputation as a humorist will embarrass his daughter Susy (Jewel Staite), who is among the graduates, Twain decides to throw all caution to the winds by delivering an inspirational speech in which he recalls his own early days as a Missouri-bred greenhorn on the wild western frontier. Admitting that his recollections may stretch the truth a bit ("When I was younger, I could remember it, whether it happened or not"), Twain spins a tale of two brothers, Sam and Orion Clemens ("Sam Clemens" was of course, Twain's given name). Jealous over Orion's (Greg Spottiswood) appointment as secretary to the governor of the Nevada Territory, young Sam Clemens (Robin Dunne) insists on tagging along, but soon parts ways when he decides that nascent Carson City does not suit his desire for adventure. In search of fortune and his destiny, what ensues is an extended adventure which includes a rugged interlude digging for gold under the baleful eye of a brutal foreman (Eric Roberts); a wild card game during torrential rains; a bone-chilling winter; bandits and outlaws; along with an episode with Mr. Slade (Ned Beatty), a cruel man that's killed 26 men for petty reasons, and kept their ears as a "calling card". The cast also includes Jill Eikenberry as Twain's wife Livy and Adam Arkin as a "wild-eyed character" named Henry. Filmed in Calgary, the four-hour miniseries version of Mark Twain's Roughing It was presented by the Hallmark cable channel beginning March 16, 2002.



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