



The Loser Letters

A Comic Tale of Life, Death, and Atheism

by
Mary Eberstadt

Ignatius

Letter

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Dear Editor/Producer:

Religion. It is one of the topics that can divide families, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Often, the reactions that surround this word impede any reasonable discussion on the topic.

According to a 2007 Pew Research Center study, 78.4% of all adult Americans consider themselves to be Christian. In that same study, 1.6% of all adult Americans consider themselves to be atheists and 2.4% to be agnostics while 12.1% do not believe in “anything in particular.”

With such a large gap between those who consider themselves Christian and those who consider themselves atheist, agnostic or just plain nothing, why does the topic of religion consistently cause so much controversy? Why are there popularized debates among Christians and atheists, both of whom argue their points intelligently and rationally?

This division within society over religion is the subject of Mary Eberstadt’s new book *The Loser Letters*. Sixty-eight years after C.S. Lewis’ beloved classic *The Screwtape Letters* was first published, Mary Eberstadt’s *The Loser Letters: A Comic Tale of Life, Death and Atheism* chronicles a satirical series of letters written from a young adult Christian to atheists.

Eberstadt, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, and consulting editor to *Policy Review*, is quick-witted in this unique dark comedy about Christianity vs. atheism. *The Loser Letters* analyzes modern-day atheist arguments by some of the most recognized thinkers such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens.

With modern humor rivaling that of the media-lamprooning *Onion*, found on college campuses all over America, Eberstadt’s lovable and articulate tragicomic heroine A.F. Christian’s open letters to the “spokesmen of the New Athiesm” explain her reasons for rejecting God and the logical consequences that follow that choice.

Whether your audience identifies themselves as atheist, Christian, indifferent or something else, *The Loser Letters* is sure to make for a rollicking good read...and an interesting discussion topic.

Please let me know how I can facilitate an interview for you with Mary Eberstadt.

Sincerely,

Ashley Walker
Senior Communications Associate
The Maximus Group

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New Literary Tragicomedy Gives Advice to Atheist Icons Dawkins and Hitchens

Clever, serial satire about theism and atheism is a rollicking good read!

SAN FRANCISCO, March 15, 2010 – From the first letter she writes, A.F. Christian (which stands for “A Former Christian”) has her reader spellbound. *“Thanks for all Your hard work, the rest of us know once and for all that the so called ‘God’, that LOSER, is everything you say he is: the biggest fraud of all time, cosmic zero, ultimate no-show – and after all those centuries and promises too!...If this was Facebook, no one would be friending him now.”* And so the series of letters begins from a young adult, “former” Christian to the “spokesmen of the New Atheism” as a thank you for liberating the world from the superstition and prejudice of the “Biggest Loser”, aka God.

A wickedly witty satire, *The Loser Letters* chronicles the conversion of a young adult Christian to atheism. With modern humor rivaling that of the media lampooning *Onion*, found on college campuses all over America, A.F. Christian’s open letters to the likes of Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens explain her reasons for rejecting God and the logical consequences of that choice.

Says papal biographer George Weigel of the work, *“Mary Eberstadt is one smart cookie. If you don’t believe me, ask Satan.”*

Author Eberstadt, a popular social critic, focuses much of her writing on issues about American society, culture and philosophy. *The Loser Letters* is a unique response to books on atheism using brilliant writing that combines biting wit, satire and inspiring insights on innate truths about God and man.

The Loser Letters is the first major satirical work of Christian apologetics since C.S. Lewis wrote *The Screwtape Letters*. Written in an appealing writing style coupled with the discussion of many modern, relevant topics, Eberstadt, writing as A.F. Christian, tackles the argument between theism and atheism that is simultaneously a rollicking good read.

Published by Ignatius Press, *The Loser Letters* is truly unique: a black comedy about life, death and what we dare to believe or not believe.

For more information about *The Loser Letters: A Comic Tale of Life, Death and Atheism* or to schedule an interview with Mary Eberstadt, please contact Ashley Walker or Christine Schicker with The Maximus Group at 678-990-9032.

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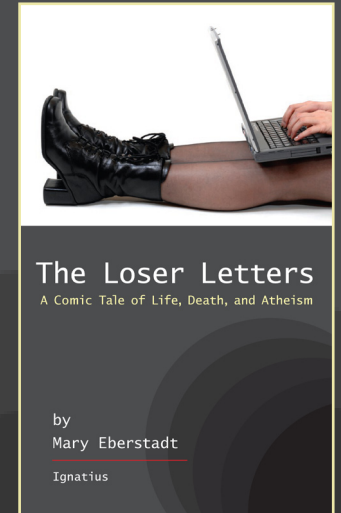
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The Loser Letters: A Comic Tale of Life, Death and Atheism is a wickedly written satire that chronicles the conversion of a young adult Christian to atheism. With modern humor rivaling that of the media lampooning Onion, found on college campuses all over America, A.F. Christian's open letters to the "spokesmen of the New Atheism" explain her reasons for rejecting God and the logical consequences of that choice. Along the way, she offers pithy advice to famous atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, in the hope of helping them win over more Christians.

The Loser Letters is the first major satirical work of Christian apologetics since *The Screwtape Letters*, by C.S. Lewis. Amid the many current books arguing for or against religion, social critic and writer Mary Eberstadt's *The Loser Letters* is truly unique: a black comedy about theism and atheism that is simultaneously a rollicking defense of Christianity.

Echoing C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Eberstadt takes aim at bestsellers like *The God Delusion* and *God Is Not Great* with the sexual libertinism their authors advocate. In her lovable and articulate tragicomic heroine, A. F. Christian, Dawkins, Hitchens and the other "Brights" have met their match.

Title:	<i>The Loser Letters: A Comic Tale of Life, Death and Atheism</i>
Author:	Mary Eberstadt
Publisher:	Ignatius Press
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About the Author

Mary Eberstadt is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and consulting editor to *Policy Review*, the Hoover Institution's bimonthly journal of essays and reviews on American politics and society.

Focusing on social and cultural issues, Eberstadt has written widely for various magazines and newspapers, including *Policy Review*, *The Weekly Standard*, *First Things*, *American Conservative*, *The American Spectator*, *Los Angeles Times*, *London Times*, *Newark Star-Ledger* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

She is the author of *Home-Along America: The Hidden Toll of Day Care, Behavioral Drugs and Other Parent Substitutes* (Penguin/Sentinel, 2004). She is also the editor of *Why I Turned Right: Leading Baby Boom Conservatives Chronicle Their Political Journeys* (Simon and Schuster/Threshold, 2007).

Between 1988 and 1990, she was executive editor of the *National Interest* magazine. From 1985 to 1987, she was a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the U.S. State Department, a speechwriter for Secretary of State George P. Shultz, and a special assistant to Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. She was also managing editor at the *Public Interest*. A four-year Telluride Scholar at Cornell University, Eberstadt graduated magna cum laude in 1983. She is an associate member of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.



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Ignatius Press, named for Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order, is a Catholic publishing house based in San Francisco, California. It was founded in 1978 by Jesuit Father Joseph Fessio, a former pupil of Pope Benedict XVI. The objective of Ignatius Press, according to Father Fessio, "is to support the teachings of the Church."

Ignatius Press is counted among the largest U.S. publishers and distributors of Catholic books, magazines, videos, DVDs, and music. It is the primary English-language publisher of Pope Benedict XVI's books. Ignatius Press publishes a wide-range of works, including popular, best-selling titles, major spiritual and theological works, and English translations of contemporary European theologians. The company publishes the magazines *Catholic World Report* and *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*.



For more information about Ignatius Press, visit their website at <http://www.ignatius.com>

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From the Foreword...

Dear Sirs,

Speaking just for this Atheist convert, congratulations, guys — You really did it! Thanks to all Your hard work, the rest of us know once and for all that the so-called “God”, that Loser, is everything You say he is: the biggest fraud of all time, cosmic zero, ultimate no-show — and after all those centuries and promises too. It’s like throwing the biggest rave ever, only to cancel at the last minute after everyone’d already bought tickets and drugs for it. What kind of deity does that, anyway? If this were Facebook, no one would be friending him now.

But You have to admit: that same Loser sure has been great for the book business — including and especially all those books on the new Atheism, I’m happy to say. Almost a million volumes sold in twelve months’ time; covers in every major newspaper and magazine; publicity on all the best talk shows and Web sites and campuses; national and international book awards up the wazoo — talk about knowing how to make “something” (\$\$\$) out of “nothing” (Loser)!

It really is marvelous — sorry; I almost said “miraculous” there (I’m new to the Atheist party and hope You’ll pardon any slips) — how Your ideas have taken so much of the Western media by storm. You’d almost think Atheism had friends in some pretty high places! Whatever, You probably think we Atheists have earned the right to sit back and chill. I mean, it’s pretty clear we’ve won by now — isn’t it?

Except, well, maybe not — and that’s why I’m writing You this letter. Because there’s one thing that’s still missing from Atheism’s final victory, and it’s something that just can’t be sugarcoated. Ahem: apart from me, where is the testimony of anyone Your writings have actually convinced? After all, as one of You said somewhere and all of us want to believe, “If this book works as I intend, religious readers will be Atheists when they put it down.” So where are the rest of them, I’m starting to wonder — these other converts (like me!) to the new godlessness?

I’m not asking about the numbers to depress any of You. One of the things I love about our side — the winning side, the Atheist side! — is we get that it’s good enough just being in everybody’s face about “God” not existing, even if no one but me was persuaded despite a few million more books in circulation. And I know that it wouldn’t be the first time that Atheism fell short on the convert count. “It appears to me (whether rightly or wrongly)”, as our most illustrious Forebear Charles Darwin once put it, “that direct arguments against Christianity and theism produce hardly any effect on the public.” And He should certainly know!

Even so, as Your convert, in fact as maybe Your one and only convert, I worry for us. Sooner or later, one of the believers will come along and point out a fact he’ll think is damaging to this new

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Atheism — I mean, that it hasn't actually convinced anyone. In other words, he's going to paint our side as somehow intellectually unfit. And the idea of being called unfit, to this newly minted Atheist, is just too much to bear. Back when I was a Christian, I was taught to embrace those kind of people — You know what I mean, the maladaptives. But as an Atheist, even a new one, I've learned to despise them all as Nature's mistakes. Being put on the losing side would be what You might call a personal devolution for me, something gross and unnatural — like having an opposable thumb and not even texting with it!

This is an excerpt from the book *The Loser Letters: A Comic Tale of Life, Death and Atheism*
Click [here](#) to order.

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— Michael Novak

"Mary Eberstadt is one smart cookie. If you don't believe me, ask Satan."

— George Weigel

"As a Christian humorist, Mary Eberstadt is the rightful heir and assignee of C.S. Lewis, and her heroine in *The Loser Letters* is the legitimate child (or perhaps grandchild) of 'the patient' in *The Screwtape Letters*."

— P. J. O'Rourke

"This book is a gem. Mary Eberstadt offers a scathing satire of the new atheist's arguments and shows with great wit that they are not just wrongheaded but downright laughable."

— Fr. Peter Ryan, S.J.

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1. *The Loser Letters* is your first published work of fiction. What inspired you to write it?
2. Why did you write the *The Loser Letters* in the satirical style of C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*? Do you think the satire will be lost on some readers?
3. In *The Loser Letters*, you address the "Brights" and the "Dulls." Can you explain those terms?
4. You mention in *The Loser Letters* some well-known atheists by name: Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and more. Why was it important to you to call out these people by name? How much influence do you think they have on religion in the culture?
5. You explain the conversion of A. F. Christian in the final chapters of *The Loser Letters*. Is this your conversion story?
6. What do you hope readers will take away from *The Loser Letters*?
7. How can *The Loser Letters* serve to provide a platform for dialogue between an atheist and a Christian?
8. Why do you feel that the number of "atheists" has increased in recent years?
9. Many college and university students are influenced by the atheist views of their professors? Why do you think that so many professors in academic institutions hold these views? How can *The Loser Letters* help students to remain strong in their Christian faith when they are challenged in classes?
10. Do you feel that C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* is still applicable to readers today? What was it that made this book a classic? In what ways is *The Loser Letters* similar to *Screwtape Letters* and how does it differ?
11. Do you have plans to send the book to any of the well-known atheists you mention in the book? Can you predict their reaction if they were to read the book?

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