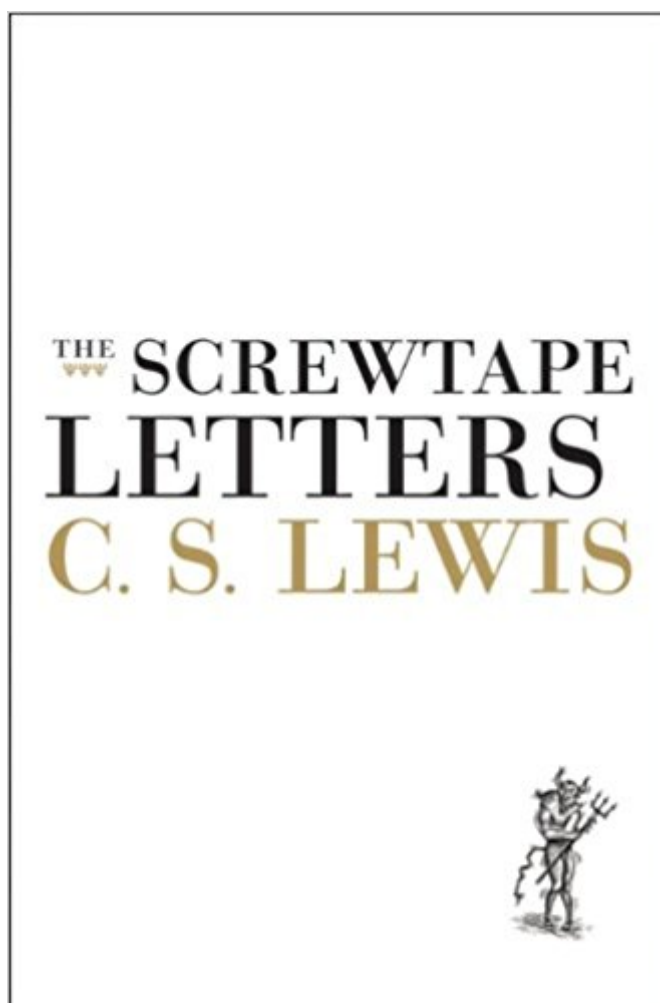


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The Screwtape Letters: With Screwtape Proposes A Toast



Synopsis

A milestone in the history of popular theology, *The Screwtape Letters* is an iconic classic on spiritual warfare and the dynamics of temptation. This profound and striking narrative takes the form of a series of letters from Screwtape, a devil high in the Infernal Civil Service, to his nephew Wormwood, a junior colleague engaged in his first mission on earth, trying to secure the damnation of a young man who has just become a Christian. Although the young man initially looks to be a willing victim, he changes his ways and is "lost" to the young devil. Dedicated to Lewis's friend and colleague J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Screwtape Letters* is a timeless classic on spiritual conflict and the psychology of temptation which are part of our religious experience.

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Customer Reviews

This adaptation of C.S. Lewis's biting satire received a 1999 Grammy nomination for best spoken-word performance, and it's easy to see why--the story fits the format perfectly. It's relatively brief (the unabridged reading takes a mere four hours), and contains only one character--the demon Screwtape, who writes letters to his novice nephew Wormwood, instructing him on how to best tempt his "patient" (a wayward soul on earth) into the bosom of "our Lord below." Obviously, the book wasn't written with former Monty Python John Cleese in mind, but it's hard to imagine a better Screwtape. Cleese's voice provides the perfect vehicle for Lewis's dry, razor-edged wit. His uncanny comic timing and ability to milk each phrase for maximum effect betray an infectious enthusiasm for the story. It's clear that he's having a great time reading, and it's impossible not to laugh along with him. This inspired pairing of two of the 20th century's greatest wits makes for a

meditation on the dark side of spiritual guidance that's as relevant and funny today as it was in Lewis's war-torn England. (Running time: 4 hours, 3 cassettes) --Andrew Neiland --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Lewis's satire is a Christian classic. Screwtape is a veteran demon in the service of "Our Father Below" whose letters to his nephew and protégé, Wormwood, instruct the demon-in-training in the fine points of leading a new Christian astray. Lewis's take on human nature is as on-target as it was when the letters were first published in 1941. John Cleese's narration is perfect as he takes Screwtape from emotional height to valley, from tight control to near apoplexy. This will be a popular in most libraries. ANann Blaine Hilyard, Lake Villa Dist. Lib., IL Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I could not find my copy, and I wanted to read it again, and I bought a copy for my sister. If you like C. S. Lewis you will love this book. It isn't difficult to read, (as I know he can be), rather, these are letters written from Screwtape, whom Mr Lewis refers to as the devil; to his nephew and pupil Wormwood. In these letters, Screwtape explains to Wormwood what he is doing wrong in trying to 'turn the patient' which is how Screwtape describes getting a Christian person to turn away from the Enemy, as he refers to God. Don't worry about reading about the devil, as I was concerned with when I started to read it. But the more you read it the better and closer relationship you can develop with God, which of course is what Mr. Lewis has intended. The author is pure genius. I have read Mere Christianity, The problem with pain and A Grief Observed. I have also read his space trilogy Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra and That Hideous Strength; which are all wonderful. Word of warning, A Grief Observed is a difficult, depressing book. DO NOT READ IT if you are grieving about anything or one. I hope this helps and helps people discover the genius, as I have, of C. S. Lewis.

C.S. Lewis brings forth a rather unorthodox look in the life and times of the world of the devil. Using only two characters being the senior Demon Screwtape and his young demonic nephew Wormwood we learn through Screwtape's letters the finer nuances of tempting the patient who is in fact the human being living his life on earth. During a series of instructional letters Screwtape gives step by step instruction to leading this human being down the path to damnation. Wormwood being an inexperienced tempter is sometimes chastised and at other times encouraged in his demonic antics. Screwtape shows to one and all that demonic acts can be cleverly disguised and will lead the faltering human to continue bad acts but without the person

feeling any guilt or sense that he is doing something wrong which will lead him down below instead of high above. Screwtape gets aggravated when Wormwood takes the easy ways of temptation which shows laziness and lack of attention to demonic detail. The forces of good are called the "Enemy" in which Screwtape has much respect for and inspires Screwtape to be even more devious and hard on his young trainees such as Wormwood. His letters showed herein reinforces the forces of the devil are still very much among us.

One of C.S. Lewis' greatest. As it says on the back cover, "A Masterpiece of Satire on Hell's Latest Novelties and Heaven's Unanswerable Answer. Inside flap "wildly comic yet deadly serious". For the unfamiliar, Screwtape (assistant to the Devil) is writing instructions to Wormwood (novice demon in charge of securing the damnation of an ordinary young man by setting up temptations which are triumphed over. As a Christian, it was humorous to see the satire while being a participant observer from the pew and the world how hard the devil works (often very successfully) to pull Christians (me too) away from "The Enemy" (God). A bonus, perhaps even better, is another essay "Screwtape Proposes a Toast" (In Hell at the annual dinner of the 'Tempters' Training College for young Devils. This is a must read for all Christians and even non-Christians. Note: The sexual content is not explicit, but only to show how sex is used as a temptation to draw people to the dark side.

(Remember C S Lewis is of Narnia fame)

I really enjoying how The Screwtape Letters was laid out. The preface pointing out that things in these letters can't be trusted because of the author and the reality of time put me in a mind set to trust nothing. I'm constantly going back and forth trying to see half truths and true lies. It can be a bit dizzying. But it shows the reality of what side these letters are coming from. With that in mind, as well, the constant use of 'the Enemy', if not constantly monitored can put you in a mindset of being on Screwtape's side. It's the whole them and us mentality, and enemy always means evil (at least in my mind) so it is easy to forget which side is 'evil'. Often I have wondered how the other side spins their version of events and what interpretation of these actions they are assuming. Every side always assumes they are on the right and it was interesting to see what Screwtape's "right" was. The way they all seem to struggle with understanding the 'Enemy' is captivating.

Our church "book club" usually chooses stiffly theological books to read, so we were pleased to find something a little lighter on the schedule for summer. We are captivated by the "Bad is good and Good is bad," idea behind all of Uncle Screwtape's letters to his nephew Wormwood as the

apprentice trains to be an effective demon. Between that and unravelling Lewis's Criticisms, we are moving slower than one would expect from such a slender book. What really stalls us is that we are Missouri Synod Lutherans trained to examine every turn of phrase for theological variations and inconsistencies to Biblical teaching of anything not Lutheran. (And we debate the solidness of Lutheran works too.) However, we're pleased to find that for a majority of the time, Lewis manages to follow our Lutheran line of thinking more closely than he does his own Anglican Church. But maybe it's that convolution of bad and good that has us slightly discombobulated. We like Lewis, anyway, and are generously giving him the benefit of the doubt. KL

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