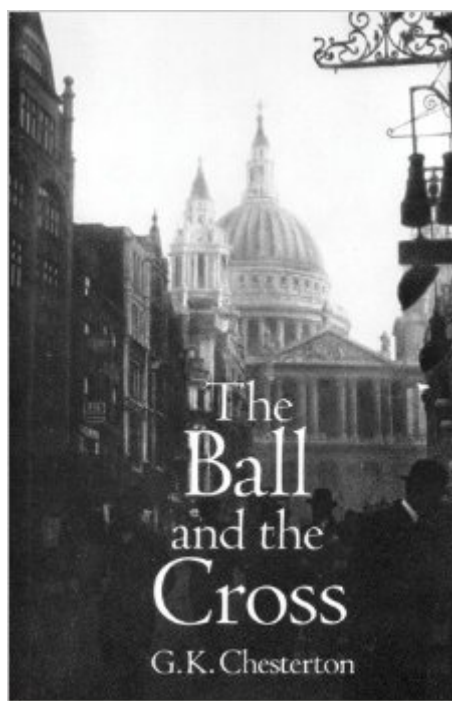


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The Ball And The Cross



Synopsis

Like much of G. K. Chesterton's fiction, *The Ball and the Cross* is both witty and profound, cloaking serious religious and philosophical inquiry in sparkling humor and whimsy. Serialized in the British publication *The Commonwealth* in 1905-06, Chesterton's second novel first appeared in book form in America in 1909, delighting and challenging readers with its heady mixture of fantasy, farce, and theology. The plot of *The Ball and the Cross* chronicles a hot dispute between two Scotsmen, one a devout but naive Roman Catholic, the other a zealous but naive atheist. Their fanatically held opinions—leading to a duel that is proposed but never fought—inspire a host of comic adventures whose allegorical levels vigorously explore the debate between theism and atheism. Martin Gardner's superb introduction to *The Ball and the Cross* reveals the real-life debate between Chesterton and a famous atheist that provided inspiration for the story, and it explores some of the novel's possible allegorical meanings. Appraising the book's many intriguing philosophical qualities, Mr. Gardner alerts readers as well to the pleasures of its "colorful style . . . amusing puns and clever paradoxes . . . and the humor and melodrama of its crazy plot."

Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (November 22, 1995)

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Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (57 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

So many people wrote great reviews of GKC's best-known books here that I'll concentrate on this one. It happens to be my favorite novel by him, but I was quite surprised that this nearly unknown book would be so good. My suggestion is don't read Martin Gardner's foreword first--read it as a backward, after the book, and then see if you agree. I am editing this review because I won't let me review the book again. The Martin Gardner introduction is in the Dover edition *The Ball and the*

Cross. There is a new, 2015 illustrated edition from Chesterton Press which is slightly abridged (very slightly from what I can tell), and has black and white full page illustrations by Ben Hatke in each chapter, along with little Chesterton-like sketches at the ends of the chapters. It's a 9 X 6 inch paperback with larger print and more white space. The blurb on the back cover calls *The Ball and the Cross* a 1909 "Steampunk novel", which is the same sense I had when I read it (and recently reread it). *The Ball and the Cross*. It's frankly dazzling. If you plan to read the physical book, these are the two editions I would recommend. Chesterton later wrote a little poem about how he didn't like this book, and how it didn't make any sense, but I found it to be the clearest thing I've ever read, and it has forever instilled lucid pictures in my brain.

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