

The Unlikely Disciple: A Sinner's Semester at America's Holiest University

Kevin Roose



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No drinking. No smoking. No cursing. No dancing. No R-rated movies.

Kevin Roose wasn't used to rules like these. As a sophomore at Brown University, he spent his days drinking fair-trade coffee, singing in an a cappella group, and fitting right in with Brown's free-spirited, ultra-liberal student body. But when Roose leaves his Ivy League confines to spend a semester at Liberty University, a conservative Baptist school in Lynchburg, Virginia, obedience is no longer optional.

Liberty is the late Reverend Jerry Falwell's "Bible Boot Camp" for young evangelicals, his training ground for the next generation of America's Religious Right. Liberty's ten thousand undergraduates take courses like Evangelism 101, hear from guest speakers like Sean Hannity and Karl Rove, and follow a forty-six-page code of conduct that regulates every aspect of their social lives. Hoping to connect with his evangelical peers, Roose decides to enroll at Liberty as a new transfer student, leaping across the God Divide and chronicling his adventures in this daring report from the front lines of America's culture war.

His journey takes him from an evangelical hip-hop concert to choir practice at Falwell's legendary Thomas Road Baptist Church. He experiments with prayer, participates in a spring break mission trip to Daytona Beach (where he learns to preach the gospel to partying coeds), and pays a visit to Every Man's Battle, an on-campus support group for chronic masturbators. He meets pastors' kids, closet doubters, Christian rebels, and conducts what would be the last print interview of Rev. Falwell's life.

Hilarious and heartwarming, respectful and thought-provoking, THE UNLIKELY DISCIPLE will inspire and entertain believers and nonbelievers alike.

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