

THE 48 LAWS OF

P
O
W
E
R

ROBERT GREENE

A JOOST ELFFERS BOOK



NATIONAL
BESTSELLER

Contents

TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	31
Interpretation	32
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	33
Interpretation	34
KEYS TO POWER	34
REVERSAL	37
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	39
Interpretation	42
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	42
Interpretation	44
KEYS TO POWER	45
REVERSAL	49
PART I: USE DECOYED OBJECTS OF DESIRE AND RED HERRINGS TO THROW PEOPLE OFF THE SCENT	51
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	51
Interpretation	53
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	54
Interpretation	55
KEYS TO POWER	55
PART II: USE SMOKE SCREENS TO DISGUISE YOUR ACTIONS	58
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	58
Interpretation	61
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II.....	62
Interpretation	64
KEYS TO POWER	65
REVERSAL	67
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	69
Interpretation	71
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	72

Interpretation	73
KEYS TO POWER	74
REVERSAL	76
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	77
Interpretation	79
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II	80
Interpretation	81
KEYS TO POWER	82
REVERSAL	85
PART I: SURROUND YOUR NAME WITH THE SENSATIONAL AND SCANDALOUS	87
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	87
Interpretation	90
KEYS TO POWER	91
PART II: CREATE AN AIR OF MYSTERY	94
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	94
Interpretation	95
KEYS TO POWER	96
REVERSAL	100
TRANSGRESSION AND OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	102
Interpretation	104
KEYS TO POWER	105
REVERSAL	108
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	109
Interpretation	110
KEYS TO POWER	111
REVERSAL	115
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW	117
Interpretation	119
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	120
Interpretation	121

KEYS TO POWER	122
REVERSAL	125
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	127
Interpretation	131
KEYS TO POWER	132
REVERSAL	134
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	135
Interpretation	136
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	136
Interpretation	138
KEYS TO POWER	139
REVERSAL	143
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	144
KEYS TO POWER	146
REVERSAL	149
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	151
Interpretation	153
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	154
Interpretation	154
KEYS TO POWER	155
REVERSAL	158
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	159
Interpretation	160
KEYS TO POWER	161
REVERSAL	164
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	166
Interpretation	169
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	170
Interpretation	171
KEYS TO POWER	172

REVERSAL	174
TRANSGRESSION AND OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	176
Interpretation	179
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	180
Interpretation	181
KEYS TO POWER	182
REVERSAL	185
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	186
Interpretation	188
KEYS TO POWER	189
REVERSAL	192
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	194
Interpretation	196
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	197
Interpretation	198
KEYS TO POWER	199
REVERSAL	202
JUDGMENT.....	204
TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE LAW	207
Transgression I	207
Interpretation	208
Transgression II	208
Interpretation	209
Transgression III.....	210
Transgression IV.....	211
Interpretation	212
KEYS TO POWER	212
REVERSAL	213
PART I: DO NOT COMMIT TO ANYONE, BUT BE COURTED BY ALL	214
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	214

Interpretation	215
KEYS TO POWER	216
PART II: DO NOT COMMIT TO ANYONE STAY ABOVE THE FRAY	220
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	220
Interpretation	224
KEYS TO POWER	224
REVERSAL	228
JUDGMENT.....	229
Interpretation	232
KEYS TO POWER	233
REVERSAL	235
JUDGMENT.....	237
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	237
Interpretation	238
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	239
Interpretation	241
KEYS TO POWER	242
REVERSAL	245
JUDGMENT.....	246
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	246
Interpretation	248
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	248
Interpretation	250
KEYS TO POWER	251
REVERSAL	253
COURT SOCIETY	254
THE LAWS OF COURT POLITICS	256
SCENES OF COURT LIFE: Exemplary Deeds and Fatal Mistakes	260
Scene I	260
Scene II	260

Interpretation	261
Scene III.....	261
Interpretation	262
Scene IV	262
Interpretation	263
Scene V.....	263
Interpretation	264
Scene VI	264
Scene VII	265
Interpretation	265
Scene VIII.....	265
Interpretation	266
Scene IX	266
Interpretation	267
Scene X.....	267
Scene XI	268
Interpretation	268
THE DELICATE GAME OF COURTIERSHIP: A Warning	269
Interpretation	270
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	271
Interpretation	274
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II.....	274
Interpretation	276
KEYS TO POWER	276
REVERSAL	280
PART I: CONCEAL YOUR MISTAKES— HAVE A SCAPEGOAT AROUND TO TAKE THE BLAME	282
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	282
Interpretation	283
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II.....	284
Interpretation	285

KEYS TO POWER	285
PART II: MAKE USE OF THE CAT'S-PAW	288
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	289
Interpretation	291
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II	293
Interpretation	294
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW III	295
Interpretation	297
KEYS TO POWER	297
REVERSAL	301
THE SCIENCE OF CHARLATANISM, OR HOW TO CREATE A CULT IN FIVE EASY STEPS	303
OBSERVANCES OF THE LAW	309
Observance I.....	309
Observance II.....	312
Interpretation	314
Observance III	315
Interpretation	318
REVERSAL	319
OBSERVANCES OF THE LAW	323
Observance I.....	323
Interpretation	325
Observance II.....	327
Interpretation	328
Observance III	328
Interpretation	329
KEYS TO POWER	330
REVERSAL	333
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	334
Interpretation	338
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	338

Interpretation	340
KEYS TO POWER	341
REVERSAL	344
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	345
Interpretation	348
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II	348
Interpretation	351
KEYS TO POWER	352
REVERSAL	355
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	356
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II	359
Interpretation	360
KEYS TO POWER	362
REVERSAL	365
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	367
Interpretation	370
KEYS TO POWER	371
REVERSAL	375
JUDGMENT.....	376
FINDING THE THUMBSCREW: A Strategic Plan of Action	376
Pay Attention to Gestures and Unconscious Signals. As Sigmund	
377	
OBSERVANCES OF THE LAW	380
Observance I.....	380
Interpretation	382
Observance II.....	383
Observance III	385
Interpretation	387
Observance IV	388
Interpretation	389
Observance V	390

Interpretation	391
REVERSAL	392
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	393
Interpretation	395
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	396
Interpretation	399
KEYS TO POWER	400
REVERSAL	403
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	406
Interpretation	410
KEYS TO POWER	411
REVERSAL	417
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	418
Interpretation	420
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	422
Interpretation	424
KEYS TO POWER	425
REVERSAL	430
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	432
Interpretation	433
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II.....	434
Interpretation	436
KEYS TO POWER	437
REVERSAL	441
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	443
Interpretation	444
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	446
Interpretation	447
KEYS TO POWER	449
REVERSAL	452

TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	454
Interpretation	455
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	456
Interpretation	458
KEYS TO POWER	459
REVERSAL	461
MONEY AND POWER.....	463
TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE LAW	466
Transgression I	466
Transgression II	468
Interpretation	470
OBSERVANCES OF THE LAW	472
Observance I.....	472
Observance II.....	475
Interpretation	475
Observance III	476
Observance IV	478
Observance V	479
Interpretation	480
Observance VI	481
Interpretation	481
Observance VII.....	482
REVERSAL	483
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	485
Interpretation	487
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	490
Interpretation	491
KEYS TO POWER	493
REVERSAL	498
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW I	499

Interpretation	502
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW II	503
Interpretation	506
KEYS TO POWER	506
REVERSAL	509
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	511
Interpretation	513
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	514
Interpretation	517
KEYS TO POWER	518
REVERSAL	521
MIRROR EFFECTS: Preliminary Typology	522
OBSERVANCES OF MIRROR EFFECTS	526
Observance I.....	526
Observance II.....	529
Interpretation	531
Observance III	532
Interpretation	534
Observance IV	535
Interpretation	536
Observance V	537
Interpretation	538
Observance VI	538
Interpretation	539
Observance VII.....	540
Interpretation	541
A WARNING: BEWARE OF MIRRORED SITUATIONS	542
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	544
Interpretation	547
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	547

Interpretation	549
KEYS TO POWER	550
REVERSAL	553
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	555
Interpretation	557
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	560
Interpretation	561
KEYS TO POWER	563
REVERSAL	569
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	571
Interpretation	573
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	575
Interpretation	577
KEYS TO POWER	578
REVERSAL	581
TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.....	583
FABLES. JEAN DE LA FOMTAINE, 1621-1695	585
Interpretation	586
OBSERVANCE OF THE LAW	587
Interpretation	589
KEYS TO POWER	591
REVERSAL	599
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	600
INDEX.....	603
FOR THE BEST IN PAPERBACKS, LOOK FOR THE 	653

PENGUIN BOOKS

THE 48 LAWS OF POWER

Robert Greene has a degree in classical studies and has been an editor at *Esquire* and other magazines. He is also a playwright and lives in Los Angeles.

Joost Elffers is the producer of Penguin Studio's bestselling *The Secret Language of Birthdays*, *The Secret Language of Relationships*, and of *Play With Your Food*. He lives in New York City.

THE 48 LAWS OF

P
O
W
E
R

ROBERT GREENE

A JOOST ELFFERS PRODUCTION



PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, U.S.A.

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto,

Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R ORL, England

Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia

(a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)

Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park,

New Delhi-110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Mairangi Bay, Auckland 1311, New Zealand

(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank,

Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices:

80 Strand, London WC2R ORL, England

First published in the United States of America by Viking Penguin,

a member of Penguin Putnam Inc. 1998

Published in

Penguin Books 2000

30 29

Copyright © Joost Elffers and Robert Greene, 1998

All rights

reserved

A portion of this work first appeared in The *Utne Reader*.

CIP data available. eISBN : 978-1-101-04245-8

The scanning, uploading and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal and punishable by law.

Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage electronic piracy of copyrighted materials.

Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

<http://us.penguingroup.com>

A Treasury of Jewish Folklore by Nathan Ausubel. Copyright © 1948, 1976 by Crown Publishers, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Crown Publishers, Inc.

The Chinese Looking Glass by Dennis Bloodworth. Copyright © 1966, 1967 by Dennis Bloodworth. By permission of Ferrar, Straus and Giroux. *The Book of the Courtier* by Baldesar Castiglione, translated by George Bull; Penguin Books (London). Copyright © George Bull, 1967. *The Golden Dream: Seekers of El Dorado* by Walker Chapman; BobbsMerrill. Copyright © 1967 by Walker Chapman.

The Borgias by Ivan Cloulas, translated by Gilda Roberts; Franklin Watts, Inc. Copyright © 1987 by Librairie Artheme Fayard. Translation copyright © 1989 by Franklin Watts, Inc.

Various Fables from Various Places, edited by Diane Di Prima; Capricorn Books / G. P. Putnam's Sons. © 1960 G. P. Putnam's Sons. *Armenian Folktales and Fables*, translated by Charles Downing; Oxford University Press. © Charles Downing 1972.

The Little Brown Book of Anecdotes, edited by Clifton Fadiman; Little, Brown and Company. Copyright © 1985 by Little, Brown and Company (Inc.)

The Power of the Charlatan by Grete de Francesco, translated by Miriam Beard. Copyright, 1939, by Yale University Press. By permission of Yale University Press.

The Oracle: A Manual of the Art of Discretion by Baltasar Gracián, translated by L. B. Walton; Orion Press.

Behind the Scenes of Royal Palaces in Korea (Yi Dynasty) by Ha Taehung. Copyright © 1983 by Ha Tae-hung. By permission of Yonsei University Press, Seoul.

The Histories by Herodotus, translated by Aubrey de Selincourt, revised by A. R. Burn; Penguin Books (London). Copyright © the Estate of Aubrey de Selincourt, 1954. Copyright © A. R. Burn, 1972.

Hollywood by Garson Kanin (Viking). Copyright © 1967, 1974 by T. F. T. Corporation.

Fables from Africa, collected by Jan Knappert; Evan Brothers Limited (London). Collection © 1980 Jan Knappert.

The Great Fables of All Nations, selected by Manuel Komroff; Tudor Publishing Company. Copyright, 1928, by Dial Press, Inc.

Selected Fables by Jean de La Fontaine, translated by James Michie; Penguin Books (London). Translation copyright © James Michie, 1979.

The Romance of the Rose by Guillaume de Lorris, translated by Charles Dahlberg; Princeton University Press.

The Complete Essays by Michel de Montaigne, translated by M. A. Screech; Penguin Books (London). Translation copyright © M. A. Screech, 1987, 1991.

A Book of Five Rings by Miyamoto Musashi, translated by Victor Harris; Overlook Press. Copyright © 1974 by Victor Harris.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, revised standard version, edited by Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger; Oxford University Press. Copyright © 1973 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Makers of Rome: Nine Lives by Plutarch, translated by Ian Scott-Kilvert; Penguin Books (London). Copyright © Ian Scott-Kilvert, 1965.

The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives by Plutarch, translated by Ian Scott-Kilvert; Penguin Books (London). Copyright © Ian Scott-Kilvert, 1960.

Cha-no-yu: The Japanese Tea Ceremony by A. L. Sadler; Charles E. Tuttle Company. © 1962 by Charles E. Tuttle Co.

Amoral Politics: The Persistent Truth of Machiavellism by Ben-Ami Scharfstein; State University of New York Press. © 1995 State University of New York.

Caravan of Dreams by Idries Shah; Octagon Press (London). Copyright © 1970, 1980 by Idries Shah.

Tales of the Dervishes by Idries Shah. Copyright © Idries Shah, 1967. Used by permission of Penguin Putnam Inc. and Octagon Press (London).

The Craft of Power by R. G. H. Siu; John Wiley & Sons. Copyright © 1979 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The Subtle Ruse: The Book of Arabic Wisdom and Guile, translated by Rene R. Khawam; East-West Publications. Copyright © 1980 English translation East-West Publications (U.K.) Ltd.

The Art of War by Sun-tzu, translated by Thomas Cleary; Shambhala Publications. © 1988 by Thomas Cleary.

The Art of War by Sun-tzu, translated by Yuan Shihing. © 1987 by General Tao Hanshang. Used by permission of Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

The History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides, translated by Rex Warner; Penguin Books (London). Translation copyright Rex Warner, 1954.

The Thurber Carnival by James Thurber; HarperCollins. Copyright 1945 by James Thurber.

The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist by Martin Warnke, translated by David McLintock. Translation © Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and Cambridge University Press 1993. By permission of Cambridge University Press.

The Con Game and "Yellow Kid" Weil: The Autobiography of the Famous Con Artist as told to W. T. Brannon; Dover Publications.

Copyright © 1948 by W. T. Brannon.

*To Anna Biller, and to my parents R.
G.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First I would like to thank Anna Biller, who helped edit and research this book, and whose invaluable insights played a critical role in the shape and content of *The 48 Laws*. Without her, none of this would have been possible.

I must also thank my dear friend Michiel Schwarz who was responsible for involving me in the art school Fabrika in Italy and introducing me there to Joost Elffers, my partner and producer of *The 48 Laws of Power*. It was in the scheming world of Fabrika that Joost and I saw the timeless-ness of Machiavelli and from our discussions in Venice, Italy, this book was born.

I would like to thank Henri Le Goubin, who supplied me with many Machiavellian anecdotes over the years, particularly concerning the numerous French characters who play such a large role in this book.

I would also like to thank Les and Sumiko Biller, who lent me their library on Japanese history and helped me with the Japanese Tea Ceremony part of the book. Similarly, I must thank my good friend Elizabeth Yang who advised me on Chinese history.

A book like this depended greatly on the research material available and I am particularly grateful to the UCLA Research Library; I spent many pleasant days wandering through its incomparable collections.

My parents, Laurette and Stanley Green, deserve endless thanks for their patience and support.

And I must not forget to pay tribute to my cat, Boris, who kept me company throughout the never-ending days of writing.

Finally, to those people in my life who have so skillfully used the game of power to manipulate, torture, and cause me pain over the years, I bear you no grudges and I thank you for supplying me with inspiration for *The 48 Laws of Power*.

Robert Greene

In addition, we would like to thank Susan Petersen and Barbara Grossman, the Penguin publishers for believing in this book; Molly Stern, editor, who oversaw the whole project for Viking Penguin. Sophia Murer, for her new classic design. David Frankel, for editing the text. Roni