



CHAPTER ONE



**Law 20 - do not commit to
anyone**



Chapter Summary

In Law 20, Robert Greene emphasizes the importance of maintaining independence and avoiding commitments to any single person or cause. By doing so, one can wield power over others, drawing attention and desire while avoiding entanglements that could weaken or undermine their authority. The chapter draws on historical examples, such as Queen Elizabeth I, to illustrate how detachment can enhance one's desirability.

Through cunning manipulation and strategic aloofness, a person positions themselves as a central figure in conflicts, gaining respect and power by remaining neutral. The key takeaway is that true power lies in the ability to navigate relationships without losing one's autonomy.



The Fool Rushes to Choose Sides

Many individuals feel compelled to quickly take sides in conflicts. However, this often leads to a loss of power and autonomy. Embracing neutrality can turn the dynamics to your advantage.



Maintain Independence to Hold Power

By refusing to commit, you spark desire in others, compelling them to pursue you ceaselessly. This path to power relies on creating intrigue through aloofness.

The Virgin Queen Strategy

Elizabeth I of England exemplified this law, maintaining her independence while making countless suitors yearn for her attention. She was both desired and untouchable.

"She managed to combine these goals by dangling the possibility of marriage."

The Consequences of Commitment

Committing to one party can entangle you in conflicts not of your choosing. The moment you align with one side, you risk losing your influence and autonomy.

"The moment you commit, the magic is gone."

Playing Both Sides



By staying neutral and positioning yourself between competing powers, you can maintain influence and control over outcomes. This strategy involves luring one side and keeping the other guessing.

Hide Your Intentions



Encouraging attention without revealing commitment cultivates an aura of desirability. Simultaneously, this tactic ensures that others remain unaware of your true intentions.

Let Others Exhaust Themselves



Stand back from the battles of others. By allowing them to deplete their energy and resources, you position yourself to benefit from their struggles without incurring risk.



Create an Image of Autonomy

A full-page background image of a woman in a historical, ornate gown with a lace collar and a headscarf. She is holding a bouquet of red roses. The image has a warm, sepia tone. There are white starburst graphics in the top left and bottom right corners.

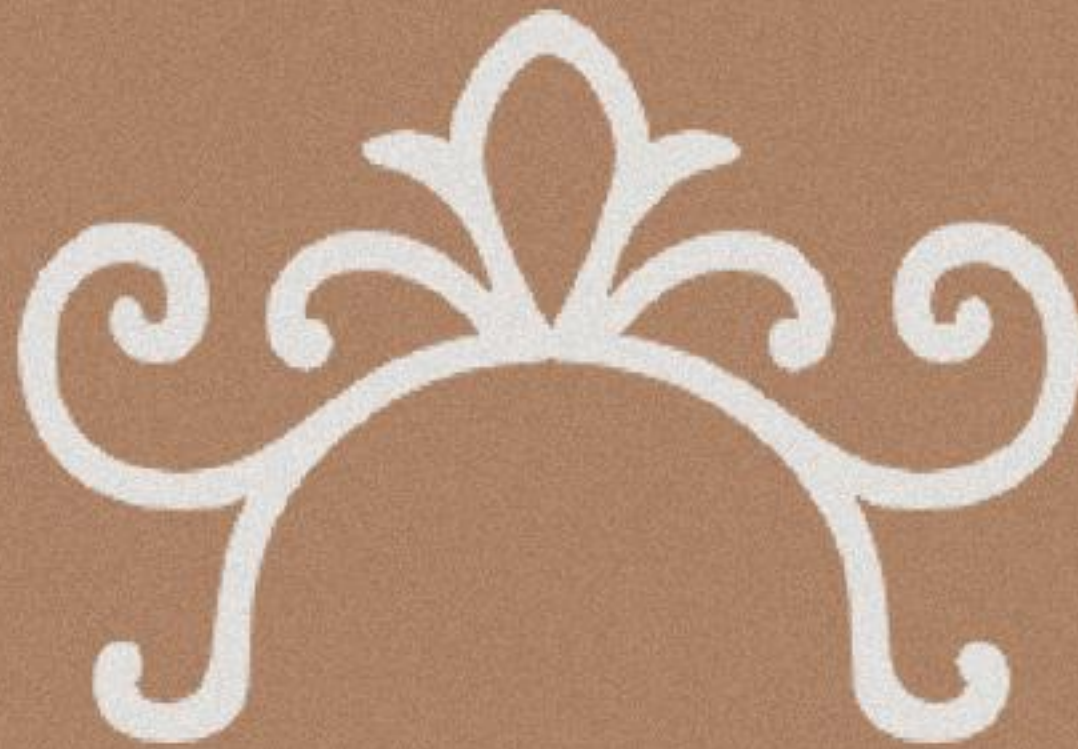
To gain respect and maintain independence, sometimes it's necessary to overtly embrace your self-reliance. This image fosters a sense of power and authority.

The Dangers of Over-Attachment

While engaging with multiple parties, be cautious not to overextend your attempts at manipulation. Doing so can lead to exposure and combined opposition against you.




Choosing to Stay Above the Fray



Mastering the art of discretion empowers you to navigate complex situations. Remaining above conflicts allows a clearer perspective and maintains your strength for strategic moves.



Recap

- "It is the fool who always rushes to take sides."
 - "By not committing your affections, they will only try harder to win you over."
 - "Put yourself in the middle between competing powers."
 - "You cannot let yourself become the lackey for any cause."
 - "You can make it a practice to stir up quarrels between other people."
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Thank You

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