



The Pocket Oracle and Art of Prudence (Penguin Classics)

Balthasar Gracian

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A unique collection of advice for life and perhaps the first 'self-help' book ever written

Written over 350 years ago, *The Pocket Oracle and Art of Prudence* is a subtle collection of 300 witty and thought-provoking aphorisms. From the art of being lucky to the healthy use of caution, these elegant maxims were created as a guide to life, with further suggestions given on cultivating good taste, knowing how to refuse, the foolishness of complaining and the wisdom of controlling one's passions. Baltasar Gracian intended these ingenious, pragmatic aphorisms to challenge the mind, and recognised that few would be capable of applying them.

In Jeremy Robbins's introduction to his penetrating new translation, he examines Gracian's place in Spanish literature and his previous works. Robbins also looks at the themes, contexts and contradictions of *The Pocket Oracle*, as well as the brevity and subtlety of Gracian's cool-headed aphorisms. This edition also contains a chronology, suggested further reading and notes.

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