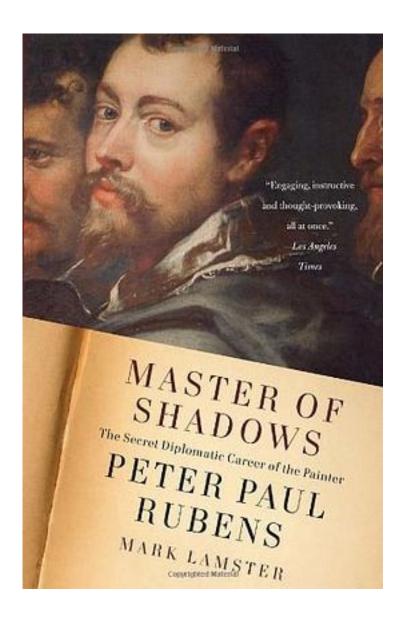
## Master of Shadows



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著者:Mark Lamster

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The true story of how seventeenth-century Europe's most famous painter doubled as a secret agent and negotiated a peace between superpowers.

Peter Paul Rubens is best remembered as the Old Master with the penchant for fleshy, pink nudes whose popularity was eclipsed by that of Rembrandt van Rijn. In his time, however, Rubens had no equal; his contemporaries revered him as the greatest painter of his era, if not in all history. His undeniable artistic genius, bolstered by a modest disposition and a reputation as a man of tact and discretion, made him a favorite among monarchs and political leaders across Europe, and gave him perfect cover for the clandestine activities that shaped the landscape of seventeenth-century politics.

In Master of Shadows, Mark Lamster tells the story of Rubens's life and brilliantly re-creates the culture, religious conflicts, and political intrigues of his time. Commissions to paint military and political leaders drew Rubens from his Antwerp home to London, Madrid, Paris, and Rome. The Spanish crown, recognizing the value of his easy access to figures of power, enlisted him into diplomatic service. His uncommon intelligence, preternatural charm, and ability to navigate through ever-shifting political winds allowed him to negotiate a long-sought peace treaty between England and Spain even as Europe's shrewdest statesmen plotted against him.

Master of Shadows weaves a gripping drama of cloak-and-dagger diplomacy with an insightful, authoritative exploration of Rubens's art and the private passions that influenced it.

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