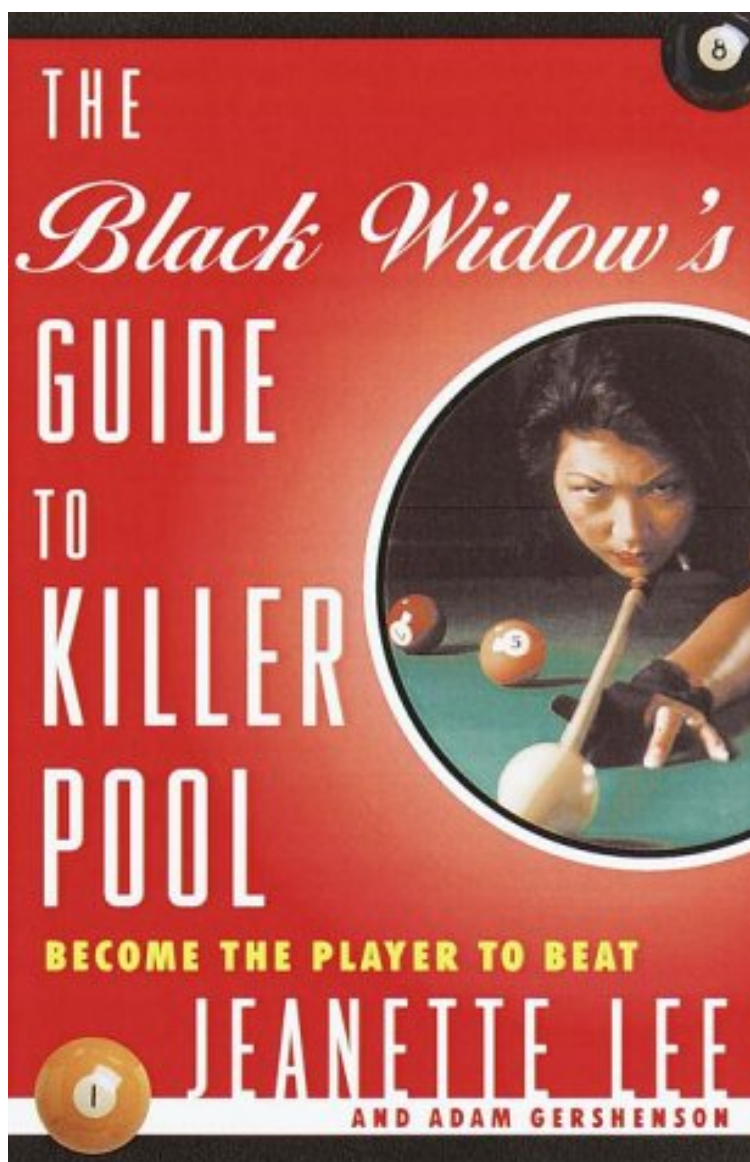


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The Black Widow's Guide to Killer Pool: Become the Player to Beat



Par Jeanette Lee, Adam Gershenson
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurPool-playing legend Jeanette Lee--"the Black Widow," who wears only black during tournaments and devours her opponents--explains every aspect of playing to win, from holding the cue to performing combination, kiss, and trick shots. Lee shows wannabe winners of every level how to compete intelligently, lose gracefully, win frequently, stay focused, and achieve goals in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. This hip, engaging guide to the game is designed to turn you into the player to beat--in basements, bar leagues, local tournaments, and beyond.From the Trade Paperback

edition. Extrait YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL I walked into Chelsea Billiards on a spring day in 1989, after *The Color of Money*, starring Tom Cruise and Paul Newman, had come out. In the movie, the girl never takes a shot; she's just an accessory. Still, something about the sight of these two sexy hustlers making their living off playing this game appealed to me. At that time, Chelsea Billiards was the best room in town. It offered a cross section of society, from uptown millionaires to downtown scam artists, and everybody in between. But the player who caught my eye was an old man shooting pool by himself, over on the house table reserved for the regulars. Johnny Ervolino. He moved so gracefully around the table, like a dancer or an angel. So calm, so steady. Even from across the room, I could see him drawing long, deep, even breaths. I could see the arteries pulsing in his neck. Too shy to approach, I stared from a distance. He was an artist, it seemed to me then, a genius with a cue instead of a paintbrush. With every stroke, the patterns changed, scattering and resolving into a new image, a new world, a new puzzle to figure out. And after every shot, if I listened closely enough, I swore that I could hear in the distance the satisfying thud of another ball tumbling into a leather pocket. When I pulled a cue off the wall, I knew immediately that I lacked his touch, his feel for the game, his knowledge, and his skill. Heck, I didn't even have any idea about how to stand. I didn't know it at the time, but I was already learning my first lesson: you cannot judge a pool player's potential at a glance. It seems so easy. You walk into a place, you see two kinds of players. On one table prowls the cool cat, with the smooth, easy stroke and the attitude to match. Two tables over, an obvious hack strains and sweats beneath the lights, with chalk on her hands and a frown on her face. The cat glides around the table, displaying all the apparent signs of greatness -- creativity, concentration, and confidence. The hack is painful to watch. Her arm seems to creak with every stroke. So there you have it. The first player has a future in pool, while the second ought to get that elbow greased and oiled. But it's just not that easy. When I started playing pool, I was definitely a hack. And even though they might not want to admit it, I'm pretty sure the same is true for every other legendary pool player. None of us were born great. It's just not that kind of sport. First you have to learn how to play, and then, more important, how to win. I wish I could explain how that first day in the poolroom affected me. But how do you explain being struck by lightning? It was that powerful, that sudden a love affair. I knew right away that I wanted to be the best player that ever lived. My friends laughed, and with good reason. I was the worst player out of all of us. Meanwhile, my doctors were insisting that I not play, because they knew that the strain would eventually overwhelm the metal rod that runs the length of my spine and keeps me walking upright. And then there was the surest sign that I was no good: the guys in the poolroom lined up to play me for money. What none of us realized, though, is that true potential lies hidden beneath the surface. The player who is willing to read this book, study the game, practice correctly, and understand the mental and psychological aspects of pool will grow into a far better player than the show-off who relies on his or her natural ability. I'm not about to name names, but there are plenty of top players on the Women's Professional Billiard Association Tour with little or no natural talent. And believe it or not, they win. They win major tournaments and pull in serious prize money, because they have dedicated themselves to the sport, and they do whatever it takes to get better. Then there are others with tons of natural ability who've yet to cash a winner's check. That's part of the beauty of pool. So much of the game is mental. You don't have to be seven feet tall or three hundred pounds, and you don't have to run like the wind (unless you've tried to work a hustle that backfired). Anyone can get very good at pool. And I have to say thank God for that, because it has changed my life. When I walked into Chelsea Billiards for the first time, I felt like I had nothing going for me. I had grown up in a family with so little money that when we wanted to hold things together, we used sticky rice instead of Elmer's glue. I wasn't close with my mother or stepfather. My closest relative was my grandmother, only she spoke no English, and I spoke no Korean. My sister was the favorite child, the valedictorian with a future in international business. I was the runt of the litter, underweight and misunderstood. Bright enough to get into Bronx Science, a magnet school in New York City, but stubborn enough to drop out as soon as I could. At eighteen, I was a waitress, an aimless party girl who woke up every morning wishing I could be anybody but who I was. I went to a bunch of colleges, but I could never commit myself fully to that kind of education. Then I discovered pool. And once I did, I was not to be stopped. Looking back, I don't recommend doing what I did. I gave up everything but pool for the next few years, because I believed that was the only way to reach my goal. I am still convinced that you have to sacrifice to become the best player in the world, but I have also learned how important it is to have balance in your life. Believe me, winning your local tournament won't mean as much if you have no one to celebrate with. Back then, I played more pool than any person should ever be allowed to play. I woke up every morning with a new purpose, determined to make it to the poolroom as quickly as possible. No shower, no

makeup, no breakfast. I lived just three blocks from the hall, but I'd flag a cab anyway, figuring the minutes on the table were worth the money I would spend. Every day I played fifteen, sixteen hours in a row. Chelsea

Billiards never closed, and I rarely left. One time I played thirty-seven hours straight, until my back collapsed and my friends had to carry me home. Later that week, when I got out of the hospital, I was still obsessed. I would go to cafs and drift off in the middle of conversations, watching imaginary pool balls ricocheting off my friends' heads, against the ceiling, and back down into the garbage can in the corner. At night, when I lay down to sleep, I would play games in my head. I would shoot my imaginary break and follow the balls as they scattered around the table. Then I would visualize every shot. Even in my imagination, I could not make all of them. In fact, it took me months before I could run a rack, even in my dreams. I admit, I may have been deranged -- but I was happy. For the first time, I had found my passion, found what I was meant to do with my life. I honestly don't think it matters whether your passion is pool or business or building a family or all three -- what matters is that you find the strength and the courage and the means to achieve your goal. You may not want to dedicate your life to pool. Chances are, you just want to beat your father-in-law next Thanksgiving, or your boss at the next corporate event. Part I of this book, which stresses fundamentals and shot making, will teach you the basics of how to play. Maybe you want to dominate the table at the neighborhood pub, or perhaps you're dying to take home the trophy from the local league. Part II, which explores the mental aspects of competition, will teach you how to win and how to play like a professional. No doubt some of you have dreams of joining the pro tour. Part III takes you behind the scenes, so you can see what life is really like on the professional tour. Of course, you won't get anywhere without a little ambition and a dream. So please, dream big. Because there's one thing I have discovered over the last ten years: people become who they believe they are. There will be people -- there are always people -- who will tell you your dreams are not realistic. But what is realistic? Twenty years ago, if I said you could send messages instantaneously around the world, you might have locked me up. Now it seems like everybody has E-mail. Ten years ago, if I told you that women playing pool in silk and satin would be watched by a million people once a week on ESPN, you would have said I was crazy. So don't be confined by someone else's version of reality. There is always another side, a hidden, personal side that comes out only when you make it come out. It is your job to transform the reality that everyone else sees into the reality that only you can create. When I first joined the tour in 1990, people said it wasn't realistic to think that I could beat established top-ranked professionals like Ewa Mataya Laurance and Loree Jon Jones. After all, they had been playing for twenty years. They had more knowledge, more experience, more refined games. But there was another side to that reality. I knew, each time I went for a shot, that I could make that one shot. And when the next one came up, I could make that one, too. And so, shot by shot, I managed to make my vision come true. The reality that everyone else saw, the image of a rookie in over her head, didn't really matter anymore. I had created my own universe, in which I was a pool player, making smart decisions, searching for sinkable shots. Before that year was over, there was a new reality in the tour rankings -- I was number one. So if you're not afraid to dream, and you're willing to work, believe me when I say that anybody can become a champion. I'm not asking you to play all the time like I did. But I will say this: no matter what you devote yourself to, don't hold back, and don't cheat yourself. Anyone can make excuses, and it is easy to say "I would have been great if only I had tried."