What is the relationship between fear, danger, and the law? Cass Sunstein attacks the increasingly influential Precautionary Principle – the idea that regulators should take steps to protect against potential harms, even if causal chains are uncertain and even if we do not know that harms are likely to come to fruition. Focusing on such problems as global warming, terrorism, DDT, and genetic engineering, Professor Sunstein argues that the Precautionary Principle is incoherent. Risks exist on all sides of social situations, and precautionary steps create dangers of their own. Diverse cultures focus on very different risks, often because social influences and peer pressures accentuate some fears and reduce others. Instead of adopting the Precautionary Principle, Professor Sunstein argues for three steps: a narrow Anti-Catastrophe Principle, designed for the most serious risks; close attention to costs and benefits; and an approach called "libertarian paternalism," designed to respect freedom of choice while also moving people in directions that will make their lives go better. He also shows how free societies can protect liberty amidst fears about terrorism and national security. *Laws of Fear* represents a major statement from one of the most influential political and legal theorists writing today.

Cass R. Sunstein is Karl N. Llewellyn Distinguished Service Professor of Jurisprudence, Law School and Department of Political Science, University of Chicago.
The John Robert Seeley Lectures have been established by the University of Cambridge as a biennial lecture series in social and political studies, sponsored jointly by the Faculty of History and the University Press. The Seeley Lectures provide a unique forum for distinguished scholars of international reputation to address, in an accessible manner, themes of broad and topical interest in social and political studies. Subsequent to their public delivery in Cambridge the University Press publishes suitably modified versions of each set of lectures. Professor James Tully delivered the inaugural series of Seeley Lectures in 1994 on the theme of *Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*.

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LAWS OF FEAR
Beyond the Precautionary Principle

CASS R. SUNSTEIN
University of Chicago
For Richard Thaler
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