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Niccol Machiavelli (May 3, 1469 - June 21, 1527) was a Florentine political philosopher, historian, musician, poet, and romantic comedic playwright. Machiavelli was also a key figure in realist political theory, crucial to European statecraft during the Renaissance.

A prince must be prudent enough to know how to escape the bad reputation of those vices that would lose the state for him, and must protect himself from those that will not lose it for him, if this is possible; but if he cannot, he need not concern himself unduly if he ignores these less serious vices.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Since it is difficult to join them together, it is safer to be feared than to be loved when one of the two must be lacking.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

States that rise quickly, just as all the other things of nature that are born and grow rapidly, cannot have roots and ramifications; the first bad weather kills them.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

The promise given was a necessity of the past: the word broken is a necessity of the present.

A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

I consider it a mark of great prudence in a man to abstain from threats or any contemptuous expressions, for neither of these weaken the enemy, but threats make him more cautious, and the other excites his hatred, and a desire to revenge himself.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Tardiness often robs us opportunity, and the dispatch of our forces.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

The one who adapts his policy to the times prospers, and likewise that the one whose policy clashes with the demands of the times does not.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Men shrink less from offending one who inspires love than one who inspires fear.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.

Men in general judge more from appearances than from reality. All men have eyes, but few have the gift of penetration.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Men are more apt to be mistaken in their generalizations than in their particular observations.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Men in general judge more by the sense of sight than by the sense of touch, because everyone can see, but only a few can test by feeling. Everyone sees what you seem to be, few know what you really are, and those few do not dare take a stand against the general opinion.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

There are three kinds of intelligence: one kind understands things for itself, the other appreciates what others can understand, the third understands neither for itself nor through others. This first kind is excellent, the second good, and the third kind useless.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Men sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony.

Men nearly always follow the tracks made by others and proceed in their affairs by imitation, even though they cannot entirely keep to the tracks of others or emulate the prowess of their models. So a prudent man should always follow in the footsteps of great men and imitate those who have been outstanding. If his own prowess fails to compare with theirs, at least it has an air of greatness about it. He should behave like those archers who, if they are skilful, when the target seems too distant, know the capabilities of their bow and aim a good deal higher than their objective, not in order to shoot so high but so that by aiming high they can reach the target.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Many have dreamed up republics and principalities that have never in truth been known to exist; the gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done learns the way to self-destruction rather than self-preservation.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Of mankind we may say in general they are fickle, hypocritical, and greedy of gain.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Hatred is gained as much by good works as by evil.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

The wish to acquire more is admittedly a very natural and common thing; and when men succeed in this they are always praised rather than condemned. But when they lack the ability to do so and yet want to acquire more at all costs, they deserve condemnation for their mistakes.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Benefits should be conferred gradually; and in that way they will taste better.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Princes and governments are far more dangerous than other elements within society.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

It should be noted that when he seizes a state the new ruler ought to determine all the injuries that he will need to inflict. He should inflict them once and for all, and not have to renew them every day.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

One change always leaves the way open for the establishment of others.

Ambition is so powerful a passion in the human breast, that however high we reach we are never satisfied.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

The fact is that a man who wants to act virtuously in every way necessarily comes to grief among so many who are not virtuous.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

It is not titles that honor men, but men that honor titles.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

A wise man will see to it that his acts always seem voluntary and not done by compulsion, however much he may be compelled by necessity.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

God is not willing to do everything, and thus take away our free will and that share of glory which belongs to us.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be great.

The main foundations of every state, new states as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms you cannot have good laws without good arms, and where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

There is no avoiding war; it can only be postponed to the advantage of others.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

Because just as good morals, if they are to be maintained, have need of the laws, so the laws, if they are to be observed, have need of good morals.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

From this we learn that a wise prince sees to it that never, in order to attack someone, does he become the ally of a prince more powerful than himself, except when necessity forces him, as I said above. If you win, you are the powerful kings prisoner, and wise princes avoid as much as they can being in other mens power.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

No one should be astonished if in the following discussion of completely new princedoms and of the prince and of government, I bring up the noblest examples.

Because, since men almost always walk in the paths beaten by others and carry on their affairs by imitatingeven though it is not possible to keep wholly in the paths of others or to attain the ability of those you imitate a prudent man will always choose to take paths beaten by great men and to imitate those who have been especially admirable, in order that if his ability does not reach theirs, at least it may offer some suggestion of it; and he will act like prudent archers, who, seeing that the mark they plan to hit is too far away and knowing what space can be covered by the power of their bows, take an aim much higher than their mark, not in order to reach with their arrows so great a height, but to be able, with the aid of so high an aim, to attain their purpose.

-Machiavelli, Niccolo

