

The Prince, By Nicolo Machiavelli

Chapter 1:

- All states are either principalities or republics
- Principalities are either new or hereditary
- The new principalities are either “entirely new” or acquired under a new prince by either “the arms of the prince himself”, “fortune”, “or by ability”

Chapter 2:

- Clarifies that the book is only about a state ruled by a prince, not a republic
- It is easier to hold power by family than by usurping it because you will have to offend less, and you will be more loved.

Chapter 3:

- New princip. arise because people are not happy with the current rule, so they take arms against their own ruler and install a new prince. Usually, their experience goes from “bad to worse”.
- The new prince faces many hardships. You have enemies in all of those who you injured in seizing the principality. You cannot keep your friends because you cannot satisfy them all, and you cannot take measures against them because you feel bound to them.
- Analogous to: You occupy a province with a strong military, but you still need the cooperation and goodwill of the natives to be successful.
- A prince should use rebellion to his advantage: punish the delinquents, clear out the suspects, and strengthen your weak spots.
- It is much easier to annex and hold a state that is of the same language/culture, especially when they are not used to sovereignty because they will assimilate easily. All you have to do is cut off the head—destroy the prince and his family.
- To successfully annex a state with similar culture and or language, first, destroy the family of the old prince; second, do *not* change their taxes or laws.
- “Great” luck and energy are required to acquire states that have a different language, culture, or laws.
- A way to acquire these states is to live there because then you can deal with problems as they come up; otherwise, you can only hear of problems when they are great. Also, the subjects are content with the efficiency of the prince, and outside invaders will also have a greatly difficult time invading with the prince within the borders.
- The “better” way to acquire these states is “to send colonies to one or two places”. These colonies are not expensive, and they only offend a minority of the population—those whose land and houses are taken—and these people are usually “poor and scattered”, so they cannot be a threat. The unaffected people will live in fear of having their own land usurped, so they will be quiet. Colonies are inexpensive, faithful, and effective.
- “Men ought to be treated well or crushed”. If a man is injured slightly then that man stands for revenge, but if he is crushed, then he will be completely wiped out and forgettable.
- Do not maintain armed men instead of colonies because they are costly, make enemies, and injure the state.

- Do not let foreign countries rule your acquired state. Become the head and the defender of any less powerful neighbors and then limit the power of the most powerful among them. Usually, the inhabitants of a state will call in foreigners to rule because of their hatred for the current ruling. You cannot stop this; just make sure the foreign country does not get too much power and authority—use the goodwill of your forces.
- The Romans did the above well
- Troubles regarding affairs of state are best dealt with early on, when they are hard to detect. When you don't catch the problem early on, and you let it blossom, then it is out of your hands.
- "The wish *to acquire* is very natural and common"; when men can and do acquire, they are praised; however, when they cannot and wish to, they're blamed and ridiculed.
- War is not to be avoided but is deferred to your disadvantage. (???)
- A rule that never, or rarely fails: "He who is the cause of another becoming powerful is ruined" because he will be distrusted by the more powerful individual as "astuteness and force" - that of he—are distrusted.

Chapter 4:

- Principalities are either governed by a prince with a body of servants who assist him ministers and serve at his pleasure, or it is governed by a prince and barons (nobles), who hold that position because of their blood and are not in grace of the prince.
- Barons have their own subjects and states. Some may hold them in higher regard than the prince. No one will recognize the ministers in the first type of principality superior to the prince.
- The first type of princip—the one with a body of servants, not barons—will be harder to conquer initially because it will be a united force. The invading force will find it very difficult to turn the ministers on their side (and if they do turn over, they will not have the people with them); however, the barons have their own interests in mind, so they are easily corruptible.
- However, it is easier to hold the first type of princip. Because all you have to do is exterminate the family of the prince, plus you likely relied on no one to conquer, so you are not in debt to others.
- It is easier to conquer the second type of princip because all you have to do is gain over barons. However, to hold the state is far more difficult because you are in debt to those barons, and if you do not satisfy them, then they can start fresh movements against you.
- For the above reasons, Alexander the Great's successors could easily maintain the Kingdom of Darius.

Chapter 5:

- When holding states that live under their own laws and have freedom, the safest way to maintain them is to "destroy" them or to reside there; otherwise, they will come for revenge because they will never forget their past freedom.

Chapter 6:

- Imitate great people because even if you can't attain their stature, you can get close.
- Those of great ability require opportunity—a form of fortune—to succeed. Example: "It was necessary, therefore, to Moses that he should find the people of Israel in Egypt enslaved and oppressed by the Egyptians"

- Those who acquire a principality with “valorous ways” have great difficulty in acquiring and ease in holding.
- The difficulty is because they have to introduce a new order, new rules to establish a new government. And nothing is more difficult than to “take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things” because you will have fierce opponents who have done well under the old conditions and lukewarm defenders who may do well under the new.
- Use force to establish the new order.
- People are easily persuaded, but that means they do not stay fixed, so it may be possible to use force to make them believe.
- After using arms or ability to ascend and after getting rid of those who envy, the prince will be respected and maintain the state securely.

Chapter 7:

- If a prince uses good fortune or another’s arms to acquire—for example, the state is given for money or as a favor—then it will be easy, but maintaining the state will be incredibly difficult if the prince is not of great ability.
- Those types of states stand on the goodwill and fortune of the giver—the two most unstable things.
- The prince usually does not know how to lead, and they do not have forces because they are not faithful to him; they are faithful to the giver, or the previous prince.
- If a prince rises suddenly, then he has to lay his foundations after he becomes prince.
- New benefits do not cause great people to forget old injuries.

Chapter 8:

- One can acquire a principality not only by arms, ability, or fortune, but also by wickedness. Agathocles, after ranking to be a high office in his military, called all the elite citizens of Syracuse, including senators, to meet, and he slaughtered them.
- It is not talent to “slay fellow citizens, to deceive friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; such methods may gain empire, but not glory.”
- Agathocles’s cruelty does not allow “him to be celebrated among the most excellent men.”
- Wickedness can be used “properly” if it’s necessary to one’s security and it’s in one blow.
- Badly employed wickedness grows with time and doesn’t shrink.
- Injuries should be inflicted in one blow, as to lessen the offense, and benefits should be given little by little, so their flavor lasts longer.

Chapter 9:

- A civil principality is when a prince comes to power by the favor of the citizens; either the people or the nobles.
- There are two parties: the people and the nobles. These two parties have contradicting goals: the people do not want to be ruled and oppressed by the nobles, and the nobles want to rule and oppress the people.
- Eventually, these two contradictions cause either a principality, self-government, or anarchy.
- A principality formed by the nobles goes like this: the noble can’t withstand the people, so they make one of themselves prince, and then they are his puppet masters, venting their ambition.

- Princes who acquire from the people are better off than those who acquire from nobles because the nobles believe they are equals and are harder to make obey, while the people are usually prepared to obey.

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