



The Princessa: Machiavelli For Women

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Argues that women should settle for nothing less than greatness. This title outlines the strategy women should adopt in order to achieve successful relationships with bosses, clients, lovers and parents. It also discusses how to become powerful without becoming a man.

The Princessa: Machiavelli For Women Details

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Marsha says

It's difficult to know what to make of this book. While some of what Ms. Rubin states would seem to be sound advice (Use your body as a weapon—well, why not? Women have been doing that since time immemorial), other bits contradict each other. Some parts of her book seem like wishful thinking. Believing that Stalin will be forgotten while a woman by the name of Anna Akhmatova [who?] will be remembered for her poetry or that Marcus Aurelius's fame will outlast that of Julius Caesar doesn't sound the slightest bit plausible. Then, in another part of the book, she points out how certain famous women wouldn't even be remembered if it weren't for their attachment to powerful men!

Contradictory and often unclear, "Machiavelli for Women" doesn't seem as if it could really work, although some tactics do seem enticing enough for me to consider trying.

Michelle Cristiani says

Slated to be a feminine version of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, this book goes through detail of the mindset and actions required for women to be at the top of their game. It profiles a handful of women who displayed these virtues, which was my favorite part - I learned about some interesting women I hadn't heard of before. Time to look into some new biographies!

A few things bothered me about this book. Overall, it was pretty gimmick-y. She stuck to historical figures while writing off modern power-women like Madonna, as if anyone in the past few decades simply couldn't live a la Princessa. Also, it wasn't 'tight;' her writing strays. Shouldn't staying on topic be a top goal of a Princessa? But most of all, it was full of business-speak. Machiavelli's talk of enemies is translated here into potential clients, or work competitors. As my line of work has neither of these, I was left feeling that this manifesto was not for all women.

Overall, Rubin touts a combination of love and war, and the sharing of power (in small doses) which is indeed much more feminine than the book it was based on. I agree with her tactics and her philosophy - I just wish she'd broadened the scope and specified her words.

Jill Barrett says

This is the second time I've read this book. First time was in my twenties. I didn't have a clue - the book was entirely over my head and I thought it unnecessary. Now that I'm in my late thirties with some real world experience, I get it. It's brilliant. Rubin shares strategies and tactics that leverage unique feminine qualities so women can get what they want out of life. No apologies. The key to the power of the princessa, according to Rubin, is "you don't control another person; you can only take command of yourself in the situation you find yourself in." Essentially, when you look inside yourself, you see your desires clearly and these desires are more powerful than any command and control actions you want to use on others.

Dale says

I loved parts of this book, didn't like others. The challenge is to figure out which is which. Excellent (though brief) analyses of various women of power and success in history; I thought that was must useful. Not much discussion about collaboration. Seemed like a model from a different time in some ways. Depending on your organization, it may also be operating in a different time! If you are trying to "win", this book has good advice. If you are trying to create, I am not so sure. Just reading the acknowledgements suggests a different strategy than the rest of the book purports.

So, some five star, some one star, I'll settle on three stars. A good challenge to sort this one out.

Inggita says

i forgive her for using "Machiavelli" to describe the author's concept in his "The Prince" - furthering misunderstanding - since she put an effort in explaining and use "princessa" in addressing the readers. this is a good guide to strategize and to use some elegant tactics such as "besting" - but the rest are just one great story after another, without really mapping out the hows (too feminine an approach!). since it's directed towards women, some of the tips will be men's "duh" moment.. to not take some things too seriously and move on..

Scribble Orca says

Good grief. This woman must have been paid by masculinists to write this tripe. No self-respecting reader of either gender could fail to see what a load of apologetic, drowning-in-cliches and pandering-to-the-ego codswallop this comprises. Avoid.

Lady Entropy says

This book lost me the moment it told me the tale of "Sun Tzu and the concubines", (according to the author, his only defeat) -- the variant that the author thought she should censor to fit her pretty picture of a book:

A king of China wanted Sun Tzu to prove that he could make a soldier out of anyone, so he handed him his concubines, had them lined in multiple rows in the courtyard, and told him to get to it. With Sun Tzu barking orders, the concubines giggled, and refused to do what he told them to -- unresisting power, or somesuch tripe according to the author. And, alas, Sun Tzu could do nothing in face of such wymin powah and had to admit defeat.

Except the author deliberately keeps out an important detail of the story -- the ending.

When the concubines start giggling, Sun Tzu calls the guards in attendance -- and proceeds to have the entire first row of concubines slaughtered, for failing to follow orders.

There are several versions, some say he needed to slaughter a few more rows, some say that one was enough, some say that only two of the concubines (the favourites of the King) named as leaders were killed, but the truth is that, in the end, the Concubines were jumping hoops, bending backwards and doing everything Sun Tzu ordered them.

So, this wasn't even a moral victory for the women, who preferred to do as they were told rather than dying. And the man, with his man-tactics, still won in the end against the "female way to do things".

Also, the author clearly never realized (or learned) that *The Prince* was written SARCASTICALLY. Machiavelli did not want to write the book, was pretty much forced to do it, and thus the entire book is a massive "fuck you" to the ruler, and pretty much is the opposite of the views of Machiavelli on how a proper ruler should act.

Krista says

I read this book nearly a decade ago, at which time it helped give me the courage to change my life into what I had envisioned. I took some huge risks and had some great adventures. I find myself in transition again and I have returned for a second dose of inspiration.

Mikki Ibarra says

Okay so I really wanted to love, love, love this book. I love *The Prince*, and there are too many people in my life that already call me Machiavellian, so I really wanted to love it. So I read...nothing much new that most life coaches don't preach...then I continued to read...her section on tactics was wonderful. Honestly, had she shortened the uplifting first eight-five pages, I would have loved the book. Sometimes simplicity works best, and I think that this is true for something like this book, where Harriet Rubin is schooling women in the art of 'war' and I feel that the flowery message might have been best left to another book with another message. I would have given this five stars had I just read the tactical section...unfortunately I read from cover to cover. I do have to say that it is a wonderful interpretation of *The Prince* though!

Virginia Li says

This book is one of my favorite books of all time. My mom gave this book to me, dog eared and underlined, and I could tell from the pen markings and notes that this had been something that had helped her immensely when she was young.

Sure, I agree with some people that this book strays in some ways and not everything she says is necessarily true, but first of all, this book was written a long time ago and might have some biases, and second, even though I did not agree with everything I feel like the parts that I did agree with was extremely helpful and wise, she provides insight that I have never heard before and was extremely inspiring.

This book's title contains the words "For woman" but I do not feel that it applies to woman alone, rather every person in spite of sex, age, position in life, will benefit immensely from some of the things said in this

book.

Harriet Rubin tells you how to stay in control, and stay in the right mindset towards the world and towards success. It provides excellent words and advise for how to treat your desires, a quote I love from the book is: "A lover is any fighter who believes her desires are shared by the world. A lover feels the sun shines for her. She lives in a dream world where everything is possible. Most people live in their dreams but don't make them real. They act as if there is some dividing line between the two. There is none."

I agree immensely with these statements, and have found great inspiration in them.

This book also teaches you how to take control of your life and desires: not to teach you to oppress them, but rather teach you how not to be oppressed by them. When you go after something that you absolutely desire, be it in business or in health, etc, you can want it, want it with all your might, and fight for it. but afterwards, you don't obsess with it, you are not controlled by it, you do not internalize any of them. "Your master is he who controls that on which you have set your heart or wish to avoid. This is extremely wise and has helped in in immense, immense measures.

Overall, this book is not like any normal, cliche self help books these days that focus on the shallow and appearance. in contrast, as shown in previous examples, it is extremely wise and authentic, giving you the truth in life, that help you gain, success, happiness, strength, power, control (of yourself) , and freedom.

I strongly recommend you and anyone to read this book, no matter who you are- student, teacher, business man/woman, etc.

J says

Taking what I can use and leaving the rest.

Kater Cheek says

This was recommended to me by a friend of a friend, and since it was short and easy to read, I put it to the top of my reading queue. It's a philosophy book, sort of, and a how-to book, sort of, and a self-help book, sort of.

I haven't ever read Il Principe by Machiavelli, though of course I've heard it referred to. This book seeks to provide a feminine counterpoint to that. Machiavelli says basically that you have to be cruel, that nice guys finish last, that it's better to be feared than loved, etc. This book says that love is your (you being the female reader) greatest weapon, that you shouldn't try to diminish other people, but bond with them and then make them better than they were.

On one hand, Rubin has some interesting ideas that make a lot of sense. I like the idea that you don't win by playing the game, you win by subverting the rules of the game so that you get what you want without making anyone lose. If you're philosophically minded, I can see why you might like to keep this book around and reread it for insight.

The thing is, if I believed everything she said, I this would be an awesome guidebook for life. But I don't believe everything she says. Some of the role models she holds up as being paragons are ones that I don't necessarily admire (Ayn Rand, eg.) Others she criticizes for being flawed, when I don't see their decisions as flaws (Hillary Clinton, eg.) I just don't trust her ideas to work. Also, it waxed a little poetic (ie. incomprehensible) on occasion.

That said, it wasn't unreadable, and best of all, it was a diversion from my normal reading fare, so for that reason I found it interesting.

queen esther says

simply put, this book changed my life.

it's a deceptively small slim book (i read it in a day and have reread it many times since), and if you're a woman, it's essential reading for three reasons: 1. the basic premise is that everything is war and as a woman, you are as strong if not stronger than a man, not by behaving as he does, but by being your own feminine self, as fully and as completely as you know how to be and on your own terms; 2. you win not by destroying your opponent but by besting them; 3. when you go to war, you have your own history from which to draw your strength to accomplish this -- and you also have your own female tools.

after i read this book, the rose colored glasses came off -- and i never put them back on again. i looked at men and women and the way they interacted with each other differently. i looked at myself differently. i carried myself differently. i was more aware of who i am, what i have, what its worth, and i never again took any of it for granted.

all of a sudden, i looked at women differently. i began to carefully observe, all while paying close attention to my own behavior. watching certain women simply be their feminine selves taught me a LOT.

i could tell by the way that some of them behaved that they had already figured all of this out on their own, somehow -- or they hadn't and were defeated, for the most part. the ones who knew their own power had carefully honed their skills over time. and because the men they dealt with weren't used to being on the receiving end of this velocity of estrogen, there were moments when they were genuinely flummoxed. powerful stuff.

this is a book that i reread passages of periodically. i use it to sharpen my tools every so often and to remind me of a basic truth that has become something of a mantra in my life: to be as powerful as a man, i don't have to turn myself into one. in this day and age, that's quite a revelation.

Julia Dawson says

Incredible for me personally right now.

Velvetink says

total mash up=====> no meat

(one of 24 books found today at 2nd hand shop...24 for \$10!)
