The Prince

Letter:
- He opens by saying that he is happy to see the way Francesco Vettori is ruling. He warns him that rulers who inconvenience themselves to make other people happy will inconvenience himself.
- His day: he wakes up and goes to his wood lot where people are cutting down trees. He then checks his bird nets and reads. He comes back for dinner and writes in the evening.
- He sends him the transcript and hopes that the Medici family will take him on because he is running out of funds.

Intro to The Prince:
- He writes that most people give rulers gifts to gain their favor. He has nothing of great value to give him, so he offers him the book. He tried to write the book using examples of past rulers. He says that rulers must understand the habits of those he rules to be most effective.

Ch. 1: On Types of Principalities and how they are acquired
- All states and forms of government fall into two main categories: Republics and Principalities.
- Principalities: Two types- 1. Hereditary- Rulers pass down control of the territory to the next of kin. 2. New Principalities- Land that is won after a battle, or from a treaty.
- The lands that a ruler takes are either used to being free or used to living under one ruler; they are either acquired with one’s own armies or with the help of mercenary or auxiliary armies.

Ch. 2: On Hereditary Principalities
- He argues that it is easier to hold on to principalities that are used to being ruled than new acquisitions. A resourceful ruler will not lose his hereditary principality unless he faces extreme circumstances.
- Ex: Duke of Ferrara- He held his territory from attacks against the Venetians and Pope Julius. His family had held the territory for a while and the people respected his rule.

Ch. 3: On Mixed Principalities
- A mixed principality as a principality that adds on a new piece of land acquired through acquisition.
- People willingly will take up arms against the new ruler, but they do not have the foresight to see that their actions will not help them in the long run.
- A ruler offends the people over which he rules and he offends those who are loyal to him because he cannot keep his promise to give them power.
- It is easier to keep power in rebellious territories because it gives the ruler an excuse to take strong measures to keep the territory under his rule.
- It is also easier to hold onto territories that are in the same geographical region and speak the same language. All he has to do is kill off the members of the old ruling class.
- For territories with different cultures and language, it is best if the ruler moves to the territory. Also, you must send people and armies to the new territories to tie them into the existing territory.
- Do not give powerful rulers in surrounding territories the occasion to intervene, because they like to attack areas of civil unrest.
- Example: The Romans- They settled colonies, were friendly towards the weak rulers and broke the powerful to prevent unrest. They were always ready to fight, because waiting on war only gives your opponent the advantage.
- Men will naturally want to claim territory, and if they do it successfully, they will be praised.
- You should never let anyone get too powerful- the person that you let rise to power will be the agent of your destruction.

The Prince Outline: Chapters IV-VII

Chapter IV: Why Alexander’s Successors Were Able to Keep Possession of Darius’ Kingdom after Alexander’s Death
Distinctions between kinds of rule:
1.) The first involves a prince and appointed ministers. While the ministers help govern, everyone remains subservient to the prince. In France, the king governs and everyone else is a slave. In this case, there is bound to be someone that is unhappy.
   - Holding onto a state with ministers is much easier, because it merely requires killing off the one prince and his family.
2.) The second way involves a prince and nobles. Nobles are not appointed by the prince, but they benefit from their ancient lineage and have subjects of their own. In France, the King governs but he rules through barons. In this case, it is easier to conquer but harder to hold.
   - Of both these scenarios, the prince is regarded as being much stronger if he uses ministers, since he is the only ruler in the country.
   - It is easier to conquer a country governed with the cooperation of nobles, because finding a discontented noble eager for change is always possible.

Chapter V: How to Govern Cities and Principalities That, Prior to Being Occupied, Lived Under Their Own Laws

Holding the Republic is hardest of all. No matter how you hold them, the people are bound to desire their natural liberties.
- Three modes to hold states that are acquired and are accustomed to living by their own laws and in liberty:
Chapter VI/ Chapter VII: Concerning New Principalities Acquired by One’s Own Arms and Ability & Concerning New Principalities Acquired with the Arms and Fortunes of Others
(Both chapters are closely related thematically):

- Machiavelli moves to highest and greatest of the themes: An altogether new prince in an altogether new principality. This is the most difficult thing.
  - If you fail or overreach, you are a traitor; but if you succeed, the benefits will be yours.
- If you depend on fortune and the arms of others, security is unsure. As Machiavelli states, “He who has relied less on fortune has maintained himself more.” (pp 22)
  - EX: The duke (Cesare Borgia) took various measures to raising measures to raising his own forces and consolidating his rule—nonetheless, Machiavelli praises him (look at 3rd and 4th paragraph of Ch 7 for further info on Borgia).
    - Machiavelli praises one measure of Borgia, when he killed Remirro and “the ferocity of this spectacle left the people at once satisfied and stupefied.” (30)
  - On the other hand, Machiavelli points out big mistake: Borgia depends too much on the good nature of others. Machiavelli talks a lot about the importance of being self-reliant; and yet, Borgia makes that mistake of not being self-reliant enough (harder than it seems).
    - Borgia tried to make himself loved and feared by his subjects. He wiped out disloyal troops and established a loyal army, and he maintained a friendly yet cautious relationship with other kings and princes.
    - Despite all his efforts, he was unable to complete the consolidation of his power when his father died, and his good fortune was reversed. He did, however, lay a strong foundation for future rule, as only a man of great prowess could.

- Princes should strive to imitate the examples set by great rulers of the past, even if that means setting lofty goals. This way, if a prince fails to meet these lofty goals, at least he will enhance his reputation as a great or powerful ruler.
  - A state acquired by ruler’s natural skill will prove easier to maintain control over.
    - A prince who relies on his own prowess and can “force the issue” will usually succeed. At times, “forcing the issue” might literally mean the use of force. This can be dangerous, but if the ruler succeeds in his use of force, he will become strong, secure, and respected.
  - Nothing is much more dangerous or difficult than introducing a new order, because of two main reasons:
    - This is because those who benefited from the old order will fiercely oppose the prince who tries to introduce a new order, whereas those who stand to benefit from the imposition of a new order will offer only lukewarm support.

- Existing order of modes—to bring about the new order is hard—element of unease.
- Armed prophets are the ones that succeed, such as Moses. Saganova is an example of an unarmed prophet who failed.
  - Many references to the problem of religion in politics—such as ‘armed prophets.” Yet, it plays an important role, though not enough according to Machiavelli. Religion can get people to believe but it cannot stabilize that belief, thus the need for arms to ensure stabilization.

- To summarize, two best ways to become prince:
  1.) Through crimes
  2.) Through the support of the people

I. Chapter VIII: Of Those Who Have Attained a Principality through Crimes

A. In Chapter VIII, Machiavelli continues his description of the ways in which a man may become a prince. In addition to fortune and virtue, criminal acts or through support of his fellow citizens may facilitate his rise to power (“when one ascends to a principality by some criminal and nefarious path or when a private citizen becomes prince of his fatherland by the support of his fellow citizens”). While Machiavelli discusses the use of cruelty, it should be noted that he only advocates the use of cruelty as a mode for obtaining some goal. Nevertheless, he characterizes the use of cruelty as “evil.”

B. He does not hesitate to acknowledge the necessity for cruelty and crime in establishing power and even explains how to use cruelty most effectively. He argues that cruel acts must be committed as necessary – all at once and then ceased – so that the populace will forget them. Whether a prince uses cruelty or benevolence to obtain that support is secondary to the necessity of gaining the support itself.

1. On obtaining power through criminal acts:
   a. Those who come to power through crime systematically kill fellow citizens and betray friends. While they may obtain power, they will never obtain glory. “Yet one cannot call it virtue to kill one’s citizens, betray one’s friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; these modes can enable one to acquire empire, but not glory.”
   b. First example: King Agathocles of Syracuse is offered as an example of a man who rose to power through crime. He was a common citizen who, after joining the militia, rose to a leading rank in the army, and soon after, assembled a meeting of the senate at which he ordered his men to kill all the senators and to install him in power. Once in power, Agathocles proved to be as competent as any eminent commander, but the severity of the crimes he committed during his ascension precludes his being considered a great prince.
   c. Second example: Liverotto da Fermo is offered as a modern example of a man who used deception to murder his maternal uncle and fear to “establish a government of which he was made prince.”
II. Chapter IX: Of the Civil Principality
A. The other way in which a prince may obtain power, besides through the use of cruelty, is through the favor of his fellow citizens.
B. Machiavelli argues that every city is populated by two groups of citizens: the common people and the nobility (“the great”). The opposition between these two groups results in the establishment of: principality, liberty or license.

1. The common people: desire to neither be commanded nor oppressed by the nobility.
   a. A prince selected by the people stands alone at the top. The people are easier to satisfy than the great and only seek to be left alone, and thus, the worst that a prince can expect from a hostile people is desertion.
   b. It is better and easier to rise and hold power when supported by the people. Regardless of the way in which a prince obtains power, the prince must befriend the people. Benevolence is the best way to maintain the mandate of the people.

2. Nobility: naturally inclined to dominate and oppress the common people.
   a. The nobility may realize that they cannot simply dominate the people, and consequently will make one of the nobles a prince. They desire to accomplish their own ends through the prince’s authority.
   b. Although, a prince placed in power by nobles may find it difficult to maintain his position, as those around him will consider themselves his equals. If the nobility is hostile, a prince may expect both desertion and active opposition – nobles are astute, cunning and always desire to safeguard their interests.
   c. A prince should be wary of ambitious nobles, as they will become his enemies in times of adversity.
   d. A prince should honor and love those nobles who become dependent on him – independent nobles present a threat. A prince created by the nobles must attempt to win over the people’s affection, as they may serve as a protection from hostile nobles.

C. Principalities often face difficulties when switching from a limited government to one which is more absolute. In order to make this transition, a prince can either rule directly or through magistrates. A wise prince should find a way to ensure that his citizens are always dependent on his authority and likewise, remain loyal.

1. Magistrates: a prince is more vulnerable, as he is dependent on the will of the magistrates, and in times of adversity, the magistrates may depose of him. Moreover, if the magistrates revolt, the prince will be unable to assume absolute power, as the people will be accustomed to obeying the magistrates rather than the prince.

III. Chapter X: In What Mode the Forces of All Principalities Should Be Measured
A. Although a prince should always aim to maintain an army of size and strength equaling that of any aggressor or enemy, it is just as important to maintain defenses and fortifications. These defensive preparations not only provide security but also deter enemies from attacking.
B. A prince who has made adequate defense preparations can actually inspire the citizenry in a time of attack.

1. To do so, he must convince the citizenry that the hardships are only temporary and, more importantly, create feelings of patriotism and enthusiasm for the city’s defense.
2. As a result, when the siege is over, the grateful and obliged people will love the prince all the more.
3. Obtaining the support of the people is not a goal in itself, but rather, a means for ensuring that the city remains fortified and resistant to foreign attack. The ultimate goal is not happiness for the people, but rather patriotism: the defense of the state and its ruler.

IV. Chapter XI: Of Ecclesiastical Principalities
A. Taking control of principalities under the control of the Catholic Church is difficult, as it requires either unusual good fortune or prowess.
B. Ecclesiastical principalities do not need to be defended and their subjects require no administration. Nonetheless, these states are always secure and happy, as these principalities “subsist by superior causes, to which the human mind does not reach… exalted and maintained by God.”
C. Machiavelli offers an account of how the Church came to have “such greatness in temporal affairs”:

1. Popes Alexander VI and Julius II greatly increased the power of the Church by using armed force to weaken other existing factions, accumulating wealth to strengthen the Church’s own position, and nurturing factionalism within any remaining factions.
2. The current Church, under the leadership of Pope Leo X, has been made strong through the force of arms.
3. Machiavelli argues that the factors which lead to the Catholic Church gaining control over Italian principalities are not essentially different than those used by other princes to gain power.

V. Chapter XII: How Many Kinds of Military There Are and Concerning Mercenary Soldiers
A. The two essential components of a strong state are: good laws and good arms. Good laws cannot exist without good arms, however, the presence of a good army indicates the presence of good laws.
B. Three types of arms:

1. A prince’s own troops
2. Mercenary troops: because their only motivation is monetary, they are generally ineffective in battle and have low morale. Mercenary commanders which are unskilled are useless and mercenary commanders which are skilled cannot be trusted to suppress their own ambition. Historically, dependence on mercenaries has ruined Italy.

3. Auxiliary troops

VI. Chapter XIII: Of Auxiliary, Mixed and One’s Own Soldiers
A. Auxiliary troops: a prince who calls on auxiliaries places himself in a no-win situation:
   1. If the auxiliaries fail, he is left defenseless.
   2. If the auxiliaries are successful, he owes his victory to the power of another.
B. While auxiliary troops are often skilled and organized, their first loyalty is to another ruler and consequently pose an even more dangerous threat to the prince than mercenaries.
C. It is essential for a prince to command his own troops, as depending on outside armies is essentially the same as relying on good fortune.
D. The use of auxiliaries and mercenaries is effective during prosperous times, but in times of adversity, reliance on borrowed troops, like reliance on fortune, is a perilous liability.

VII. Chapter XIV: What a Prince Should Do Regarding the Military
A. A prince should intensely study the art of war, as it is the primary discipline of a ruler. Mastery of this discipline can make even a common citizen a great ruler, as the best way to win a state is to be skilled in the art of war.
B. This study is both a physical and mental process, as the prince must train his body and learn to hunt wildlife. He must study geography and its effect on battle strategy. He must read history and study the actions of great leaders.
C. A prince must prepare rigorously during peacetime in order to be well prepared for wartime.

The Prince
Chapter XV
Of Those Things for Which Men And Especially Princes are Praised or Blamed
★ Important for a prince to learn how to not be good and to learn how to use it and not use according to necessity.
★ If a prince does what should be done rather than what is done, it will lead to his ruin. Should be able to pursue vice just as well as virtue to maintain state.
★ The following characteristics should all be within a prince’s capacity and should be employed when necessary to remain in power: liberal/mean, giving/rapacious, cruel/merciful, breaker of faith/faithful, humane/proud, hard/agreeable, grave/light, lascivious/chaste, etc.

Chapter XVI
Of Liberality and Parsimony
★ A prince should use liberality with all those from whom he does not take, who are infinite and meanness with all those to whom he does not give, who are few.
★ To not have to rob his subjects, to be able to defend himself, not to become poor and contemptible, nor to be forced to become rapacious, a prince should esteem it little to incur a name for meanness, because this is one of those vices which enable him to rule.
★ There is nothing that consumes itself so much as liberality: while you use it, you lose the capacity to use it; and you become either poor and contemptible or, to escape poverty, rapacious and hateful.
★ A prince should guard against being contemptible and hated and liberality leads you to both.

Chapter XVII
Of Cruelty and Mercy, and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved Than Feared, or the Contrary
★ Each prince should hope to be held merciful and not cruel
★ A prince must keep his subjects united and faithful and should not care about the infamy of cruelty
★ Much safer to be feared than loved, if one has to lack one of the two
★ Men are fickle, ungrateful, pretenders and dissemblers, evaders of danger, and eager for gain
★ Love is held by a chain of obligation, which because men are wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by dread of punishment
★ A prince must be feared, but also not hated. To avoid being hated, he must refrain from taking the property of his citizens and subjects and from their women.
★ If a prince must proceed against someone’s life, there must be suitable justification and manifest cause for it.
★ Must not care about cruelty, because the prince must lead the army and keep them united. Cites Hannibal as an example of a leader who was so feared by his army because of his cruelty that they stood by him in both good and bad times.
★ “…since men love at their convenience and fear at the convenience of the prince, a wise prince should found himself on what is his, not on what is someone else’s; he should only contrive to avoid hatred, as was said.”

Chapter XVII
In What Mode Faith Should Be Kept by Princes
★ A prince must be prepared for the two kinds of combat – with laws and with force. A prince must learn how to use both natures – both man and beast.
★ Men are wicked and do not observe faith with you, so you should not have to observe it with them
★ A prudent lord cannot and should not observe faith when such observance turns against him
A prince must appear to be merciful, faithful, humane, honest, and religious. By having these qualities and always observing them, a prince will do harm to himself. However, appearing to have these qualities but being able to change to the contrary is very useful and necessary for a prince to maintain his state.

Appearance is key, because “Men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given to everyone, touching to few.”

Chapter XIX
Of Avoiding Contempt and Hatred
A prince should always maintain an opinion of himself such that no one thinks either of deceiving him or getting around him.
Prince has two fears: one within, on account of his subjects; the other outside on account of external powers
A Prince should defend himself with good arms and good friends.
The prince has the majesty of the principality, the laws, the protection of friends and of the state which defend him, so that when popular good will is added to all these things, it is impossible that anyone should be so rash as to conspire.
Princes should have anything blameable administered by others, favors by themselves.
Hatred is acquired through good deeds as well as bad, so a prince who wants to maintain his state is often forced not to be good
Princes should esteem the great but not make himself hated
If his people show good will to him, a prince should take little account of conspiracies. However, if they are hostile and bear hatred for him, he should fear everything and everyone.
Ideal situation is to be feared and revered by everyone and not hated by the army

Chapter XX
Whether Fortresses and Many Other Things Which Are Made and Done by Princes
Every Day Are Useful or Useless
New princes never disarm their subjects. When they are armed, they become yours. When this happens, those whom you suspected become faithful and those who were faithful remain so.
When you disarm them, you offend them by showing that you distrust them for cowardice or lack of faith
However, when a prince acquires a new state to add to his principality, he must disarm everyone except those who were his partisans in acquiring the state.
A prince should never divide his states (hold one with parties, one with fortresses) be when the enemy approaches, the weak party will join the enemy and the strong party won’t be strong enough to rule.
Princes find more utility in those who were suspect when he gained power than those who he trusted in the beginning.
Those who helped him seize it were unhappy with the state to begin with and the prince won’t be able to live up to their expectations, while the prince can gain friendships with those who were content with the state to begin with.
The prince who has more fear of the people than of foreigners should build fortresses, but the one who has more fear of foreigners ought not to.
“I shall praise whoever makes fortresses and whoever does not, and I shall blame anyone who, trusting in fortresses, thinks little of being hated by the people.”

Chapter XXI
What a Prince Should Do to Be Held in Esteem
A Prince should carry on great enterprises and give rare examples of himself.
Princes should avoid being at the discretion of others
Princes should be both a true friend and a true enemy – no to neutrality. Neutrality in heated times will lead to ruin.
If a Prince remains neutral, whoever wins won’t want suspect friends who wouldn’t help him in adversity and whoever loses won’t offer you refuge, since you didn’t help.
Never associate with those more powerful than himself unless necessity requires it so.
A prince should show himself to be a lover of virtues.
He should inspire his people to work, provide them with spectacles and festivals and make himself an example of humanity and munificence.

Chapter XXII
Of Those Whom Princes Have as Secretaries
Princes should choose ministers who reflect well on the prince and the principality – it will be the first choice a prince makes and the first choice the people will be anxious to judge.
The minister should always be thinking of the prince first – he should honor him, make him rich, obligate himself to him, share honors and burdens with him so that without the prince, the minister cannot stand.
The minister and the prince need to trust each other to have a fruitful relationship – if not, it will lead to ruin.

Chapter XXII
In What Mode Flatterers Are to Be Avoided
A prince should take counsel when he wants it and not when others offer it. In fact, when others are offering advice when the prince is not asking for it, he should be skeptical of their intent.
“So one concludes that good counsel, from wherever it comes, must arise from the prudence of the prince, and not the prudence of the prince from good counsel.”

Chapter XXIV
Why the Princes of Italy Have Lost Their States
Your state depends on you and your virtues
You may believe you can find somebody to pick you up, but you cannot fully rely on them. You must always rely on yourself.

Chapter XXV
How Much Fortune Can Do in Human Affairs, and in What Mode It May Be Opposed

★ Fortune is arbiter of half our actions and she leaves the other half for us to govern.
★ Princes who lean entirely on fortune will come to ruin.
★ When fortune varies and men remain obstinate in their modes, men are happy while they are in accord, and as they come into discord, unhappy.
★ Fortune is the friend of the young because she is a woman and because the young are more impetuous, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity
★ It is better to be impetuous than cautious because Fortune is a woman and “it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat and strike her down.”
★ Fortune is also won more by those who are impetuous than those who are cautious.