

# The Dedication

*In The Dedication, Machiavelli addresses his book to Lorenzo de Medici, whom he calls magnificent, alluding to Lorenzo's famous grandfather, who was known as Lorenzo the Magnificent. Machiavelli had originally dedicated The Prince to Giuliano de Medici, one of Lorenzo the Magnificent's sons, but Giuliano died in 1516. Read The Dedication. Then, answer the questions that follow.*

To the Magnificent Lorenzo Di Piero De' Medici:

Those who strive to obtain the good graces of a prince are accustomed to come before him with such things as they hold most precious, or in which they see him take most delight; whence one often sees horses, arms, cloth of gold, precious stones, and similar ornaments presented to princes, worthy of their greatness.

Desiring therefore to present myself to your Magnificence with some testimony of my devotion towards you, I have not found among my possessions anything which I hold more dear than, or value so much as, the knowledge of the actions of great men, acquired by long experience in contemporary affairs, and a continual study of antiquity; which, having reflected upon it with great and prolonged diligence, I now send, digested into a little volume, to your Magnificence.

And although I may consider this work unworthy of your countenance, nevertheless I trust much to your benignity that it may be acceptable, seeing that it is not possible for me to make a better gift than to offer you the opportunity of understanding in the shortest time all that I have learnt in so many years, and with so many troubles and dangers; which work I have not embellished with swelling or magnificent words, nor stuffed with rounded periods, nor with any extrinsic allurements or adornments whatever, with which so many are accustomed to embellish their works; for I have wished either that no honour should be given it, or else that the truth of the matter and the weightiness of the theme shall make it acceptable.

Nor do I hold with those who regard it as a presumption if a man of low and humble condition dare to discuss and settle the concerns of princes; because, just as those who draw landscapes place themselves below in the plain to contemplate the nature of the mountains and of lofty places, and in order to contemplate the plains place themselves upon high mountains, even so to understand the nature

of the people it needs to be a prince, and to understand that if princes it needs to be of the people.

Take then, your Magnificence, this little gift in the spirit in which I send it; wherein, if it be diligently read and considered by you, you will learn my extreme desire that you should attain that greatness which fortune and your other attributes promise. And if your Magnificence from the summit of your greatness will sometimes turn your eyes to these lower regions, you will see how unmeritedly I suffer a great and continued malignity of fortune.

1. What does Machiavelli offer to "The magnificent Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici" instead of the customary treasures? Why?
2. According to Machiavelli, what is his purpose for writing this book?
3. According to the documentary you just watched, what is Machiavelli's *real* reason for writing this book?
4. Highlight all of the *tone* words in paragraph 3—the words that help establish the author's attitude. What is the overall impact of Machiavelli's diction here? Why does he select these words, and what message do they convey?
5. Machiavelli develops a metaphor in paragraph 4, comparing a prince to a landscape artist. In your own words, explain what he is saying here.
6. How would you describe the overall tone of Machiavelli's dedication? Do you think he means what he says here? Why or why not?