

Name _____

Essential Question How do you keep power once you have gained it?

The Prince

Niccolo Machiavelli

Of Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved or Feared

1 I say that every prince must desire to be considered merciful and not cruel. He
2 must, however, take care not to misuse this mercifulness. [The Emperor] Cesare
3 Borgia was considered cruel, but his cruelty had brought order to [Rome],
4 united it, and reduced it to peace and fealty...

5 A prince, therefore, must not mind incurring the charge of cruelty for the
6 purpose of keeping his subjects united and faithful; for, with a very few
7 examples, [the cruel prince] will be more merciful than [those princes] who,
8 from excess of tenderness, allow disorders to arise, from [which] spring
9 bloodshed and rapine; for these [disorders] as a rule injure the whole
10 community, while executions carried out by the prince injure only individuals...

11 From this arises the question whether it is better to be loved more than feared,
12 or feared more than loved. The reply is, that one ought to be both feared and
13 loved, but as it is difficult for the two to go together, it is much safer to be
14 feared than loved... For it may be said of men in general that they are
15 ungrateful, voluble, dissemblers, anxious to avoid danger, and covetous of gain;
16 as long as you benefit them, they are entirely yours. [With words and promises]
17 they offer you their blood, their goods, their life, and their children when the
18 [need for their actions] is remote; but when it approaches, they revolt. And the
19 prince who has relied solely on their words, without making other preparations,
20 is ruined; for the friendship which is gained by purchase -- and not through
21 grandeur and nobility of spirit -- is bought but not secured... And men [are
22 more willing to offend a prince] who makes himself loved than one who makes
23 himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation which...is broken [by
24 selfish men] whenever it serves their purpose; but fear is maintained by a dread
25 of punishment which never fails.