



## A Pocket Mirror for Heroes

*Baltasar Gracian*

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# A Pocket Mirror for Heroes

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## **A Pocket Mirror for Heroes** Baltasar Gracian

*A Pocket Mirror for Heroes* is a mirror because it reflects "the person you are or the one you ought to be." It is a pocket mirror because its author took the time to be brief. And it is a mirror for heroes because it provides a vivid image of ethical and moral perfection to which all can aspire. *The Art of Worldly Wisdom* by Baltasar Gracian was all but forgotten for three hundred years, until its republication in 1992 turned this lost classic into a *New York Times* bestseller. Now Gracian, the Spanish Jesuit considered Machiavelli's better in strategy and insight, sets a new standard on the art of living and the practice of achieving. That new standard is the art of heroism--how to be "the consummate person, ripe and perfect: accurate in judgment, mature in taste, attentive in listening, wise in sayings, shrewd in deeds, the center of all perfection."

Gracian teaches the reader to be "a giant"--"the greatest person possible, a miracle of perfection, a king." Wit, wisdom, courage, elegance, grace, humility, spontaneity--these are the qualities needed to reach heroism in any occupation. But it is not enough to be wise or graceful: one must learn as well how to manage that talent, how to distinguish a quality from its shadow. *A Pocket Mirror for Heroes* provides "a politics for governing oneself, a compass for sailing toward excellence, an art for reaching distinction with just a few rules of discretion," and it will be wise and witty company for anyone who recognizes--and relishes--the challenges of daily life.

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