



The Compleat Gentleman: The Modern Man's Guide to Chivalry

By Brad Miner

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The Compleat Gentleman: The Modern Man's Guide to Chivalry By Brad Miner

At a time of astonishing confusion about what it means to be a man, Brad Miner has recovered the oldest and best ideal of manhood: the gentleman. Reviving a thousand-year tradition of chivalry, honor, and heroism, *The Compleat Gentleman* provides the essential model for twenty-first-century masculinity.

Despite our confusion, real manhood is not complicated. It is an ancient ideal based on service to one's God, country, family, and friends—a simple but arduous ideal worthy of a lifetime of struggle.

Miner's gentleman stands out for his dignity, restraint, and discernment. He rejects the notion that one way of behaving is as good as another. He belongs to an aristocracy of virtue, not of wealth or birth. Proposing neither a club nor a movement, Miner describes a lofty code of manly conduct, which, far from threatening democracy, is necessary for its survival.

Miner traces the concept of manliness from the jousting fields of the twelfth century to the decks of the Titanic. The three masculine archetypes that emerge—the warrior, the lover, and the monk—combine in the character of the "compleat gentleman." This modern knight cultivates a martial spirit in defense of the true and the beautiful. He treats the opposite sex with the passionate respect required by courtly love. And he values learning in the pursuit of truth—all with the discretion, decorum, and nonchalance that the Renaissance called sprezzatura.

The Compleat Gentleman is filled with examples from the past and the present of the man our increasingly uncivilized age demands.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

According to Miner, an executive editor at Bookspan, former literary editor of National Review and author of *The Concise Conservative Encyclopedia*, a true gentleman is a master of the art of sprezzatura. The term, as used by the Renaissance writer Castiglione, refers to a way of life characterized by discretion and decorum, nonchalance and gracefulness—or, as Miner defines it, the cool exemplified by the men in first class on the Titanic who went bravely to their deaths in evening clothes. Underneath this unflappable quality, which says is not determined by birth or class, resides a man who is at once a warrior (a readiness to face battle for a just cause), lover (he lets a woman be what she wants to be) and monk (a man possessing true knowledge). In erudite and witty prose, Miner explores these three facets of his concept of the gentleman through an engaging survey of knighthood, warfare and courtship, "compleat" with the title's archaic spelling. Beyond a liberal sprinkling of quotes from the likes of G.K. Chesterton and Edmund Burke, the author provides a learned romp through the worlds of Eleanor of Aquitaine, the Cathars (a medieval heretical sect) and Benedictine monasticism. Miner's theories are consistently entertaining, and seem pitched toward a defense of his conservative view of contemporary politics, including his endorsement (in the book) of the Iraq war. In fact, Miner believes that a pacifist can be a gentleman only if he is also a saint, and, in gentlemanlike fashion, he acknowledges his guilt about his C.O. status during the Vietnam War. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Miner wants gentlemanliness, or chivalry, revived, and since few now know what it is, he reviews its history and traits as he argues for it, beginning with the image of the knight on horseback. In reality, the mounted paladin became possible only with the invention of the stirrup, long after the supposed historical days of King Arthur. The Arthurian legends are crucial, however, because of the ethical dimensions of chivalry they portray in the personae of the knight as warrior, lover, and monk. As warrior, he is ready to fight for a good cause. As lover, he is faithful to one woman and courteous to all women. As monk, he attends above all to goodness. The gentleman subsumes all three roles and, furthermore, conducts himself with *sprezzatura*, that is, with discretion, restraint, and the artfulness that makes effort seem natural and easy. If actual men are incapable of living up to the ideal of the gentleman, only when men generally attempt to do so, Miner provocatively implies, can humane culture be fully realized. *Ray Olson*
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Review

A romp through history. . . . Recommended. -- *Library Journal*

Graceful and learned. -- *New York Post*

Miner argues that bravery, respect for women, and devotion to the truth are needed more than ever. -- *Newsday*

There's good reason to believe [Miner is] right. -- *Washington Post*

What can the word 'gentleman' have to do with 21st-century America? A lot. . . . Miner writes with wit and charm. -- *Wall Street Journal*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Hernandez:

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William Sebastian:

The ability that you get from *The Compleat Gentleman: The Modern Man's Guide to Chivalry* may be the more deep you digging the information that hide into the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to comprehend but *The Compleat Gentleman: The Modern Man's Guide to Chivalry* giving you thrill feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in certain way that can be understood simply by anyone who read this because the author of this book is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. Making it easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this specific *The Compleat Gentleman: The Modern Man's Guide to Chivalry* instantly.

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Katherine Wilcoxon:

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