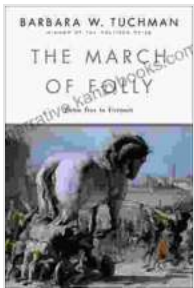


The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam



The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam

by Barbara Wertheim Tuchman

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 10153 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 582 pages



The March of Folly is a classic work of history by Barbara Tuchman. It examines how governments have repeatedly made disastrous decisions despite clear evidence of their folly. The book draws on a wide range of examples, from the Trojan War to the Vietnam War. Tuchman argues that these decisions are not simply the result of bad luck or stupidity, but rather of a set of recurring patterns. She identifies six "lessons of folly" that can help us avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

The first lesson of folly is that governments often fail to learn from the mistakes of the past. This is because they are often blinded by ideology, hubris, or wishful thinking. For example, the United States government ignored the lessons of the Vietnam War when it invaded Iraq in 2003. The second lesson of folly is that governments often fail to recognize the limits of their power. They often overestimate their ability to control events and underestimate the risks involved in their actions. For example, the British

government overestimated its ability to control the American colonies in the 1770s. The third lesson of folly is that governments often fail to take into account the consequences of their actions. They often focus on the short-term benefits of their decisions without considering the long-term costs. For example, the Nazis underestimated the long-term consequences of their persecution of the Jews.

The fourth lesson of folly is that governments often fail to listen to dissenting voices. They often surround themselves with yes-men and women who are unwilling to challenge their decisions. For example, the Soviet government ignored the warnings of its own scientists about the dangers of nuclear fallout. The fifth lesson of folly is that governments often fail to adapt to changing circumstances. They often cling to old policies long after they have become obsolete. For example, the French government refused to grant independence to Algeria until after a long and bloody war.

The sixth lesson of folly is that governments often fail to recognize their own mortality. They often act as if they will always be in power and that their decisions will have no consequences for them. For example, the Roman emperor Nero set fire to Rome and then blamed the Christians for the crime. In the end, Nero's folly led to his own downfall.

The March of Folly is a sobering reminder that governments are capable of great folly. However, it also offers hope. Tuchman argues that we can avoid the mistakes of the past by learning from them. She identifies six "lessons of folly" that can help us make better decisions in the future. These lessons are essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the history of government and avoid the mistakes of the past.

Reviews

"The March of Folly is a masterpiece of historical writing. It is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the nature of government and the dangers of folly." - Henry Kissinger

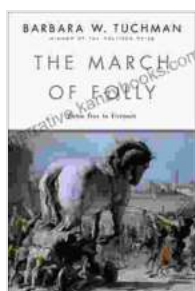
"A brilliant and timely book. Tuchman shows us how governments have repeatedly made disastrous decisions despite clear evidence of their folly. We need to heed her lessons if we want to avoid the same mistakes in the future." - Niall Ferguson

"The March of Folly is a classic work of history that is still relevant today. Tuchman's insights into the nature of government and the dangers of folly are essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the world we live in." - David Petraeus

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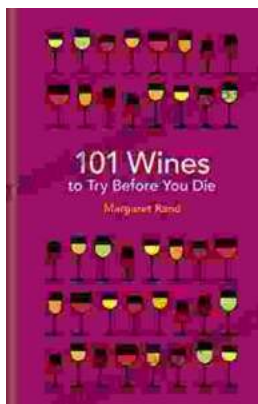
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