



# Macchiavellian Intelligence: How Rhesus Macaques and Humans Have Conquered the World

*Dario Maestriperi*

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Judged by population size and distribution, homo sapiens are clearly the most successful primates. A close second, however, would be rhesus macaques, who have adapted to—and thrived in—such diverse environments as mountain forests, dry grasslands, and urban sprawl. Scientists have spent countless hours studying these opportunistic monkeys, but rhesus macaques have long been overshadowed in the public eye by the great apes, who, because of their greater intelligence, are naturally assumed to have more to teach us, both about other primates and about humans as well.

Dario Maestriperi thinks it is high time we shelve that misperception, and with *Macchiavellian Intelligence* he gives rhesus macaques their rightful turn in the spotlight. The product of more than twenty years studying these fascinating creatures, *Macchiavellian Intelligence* caricatures a society that is as much human as monkey, with hierarchies and power struggles that would impress Machiavelli himself. High-status macaques, for instance, maintain their rank through deft uses of violence and manipulation, while altruism is almost unknown and relationships are perpetually subject to the cruel laws of the market. Throughout this eye-opening account, Maestriperi weds his thorough knowledge of macaque behavior to his abiding fascination with human society and motivations. The result is a book unlike any other, one that draws on economics as much as evolutionary biology, politics as much as primatology.

Rife with unexpected connections and peppered with fascinating anecdotes, *Macchiavellian Intelligence* has as much to teach us about humans as it does about macaques, presenting a wry, rational, and wholly surprising view of our humanity as seen through the monkey in the mirror.

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