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guardian books of the year 2017 longlisted for the historical writers association non fiction crown 2017 a ripping read fascinating charming enjoyably unorthodox daily telegraph was niccolò machiavelli really the cynical schemer of legend or was he a profound ethical thinker who tried to save the democratic freedom of renaissance florence as it was threatened by ruthless dynasties this revelatory biography shows us a man of fox like dissimulation a master of disguise in dangerous times a gripping portrait of a brilliant political thinker who understood the dangers of authoritarianism and looked for ways to curb them the new yorker compelling this unconventional biography questions whether the philosopher deserves his reputation as an advocate for tyranny julian baggini financial times remarkable engaging be like the fox can be read with pleasure by anyone interested in the craft of politics and the life of ideas new york times book review in the five hundred years since he wrote the prince machiavelli s name has been linked to tyranny and the doctrine that the ends justify the means but that is not what he stood for in be like the fox erica benner takes us back to renaissance florence where newly liberated citizens fought to build a free republic after the medici princes were exiled machiavelli dedicated his life to this struggle for freedom but despite his heroic efforts the medici soon swept back into power forced out of politics and prevented from speaking freely machiavelli had to use his skills of foxlike dissimulation to defend democracy in an era of tyrannical princes drawing on his letters political writings hard hitting satirical dramas and conversations with kings and popes be like the fox reveals machiavelli as an unlikely

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the modern language association s howard r marraro prize for 1988 90 this book

connects machiavelli s literary works with his political and historical writings and relates all of them to his life history his concerns with power and powerlessness and his characteristic modes of self representation

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