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The Bed of Procrustes: Philosophical and Practical Aphorisms (Incerto)

Nassim Nicholas Taleb
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FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
THE BLACK SWAN AND ANTIFRAGILE



THE BED OF PROCRUSTES

PHILOSOPHICAL AND PRACTICAL
APHORISMS

REVISED AND UPDATED

NASSIM NICHOLAS
T A L E B

"Taleb's crystalline nuggets of thought stand alone like esoteric poems."
—*Financial Times*

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Nassim Nicholas Taleb : The Bed of Procrustes: Philosophical and Practical Aphorisms (Incerto) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bed of Procrustes: Philosophical and Practical Aphorisms (Incerto):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Practical philosophy By C. D. Varn Taleb has made a living showing lack of robustness and fragility in our use of knowledge. Indeed, Taleb's discussion and prediction of the fiscal crises

of the late aughts was totally earned, and he was aptly able to show in "The Black Swan" and "Fooled by Randomness" that epistemological humility was direly needed in both science reporting and economics. This book takes these trends and turns them into aphorism. Taking cues from Georg Christoph Lichtenberg and E.M. Cioran more than Nietzsche, Taleb's aphorisms are pithy and common sensical. Indeed, perhaps, often too common sensical. This is short book, easy to read, and even when you disagree with Taleb, he is humorous enough not to lose you. Indeed, I find his aphoristic writing to be easier to read stylistically than his more journalistic and extended think piece works. In many senses, these aphorisms prove that Taleb is a practical philosopher, but not necessarily a precise or consistent one. Yet the theme of the need of epistemic humility and the robustness of moral and aesthetic visions versus knowledge claims dominate the value. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. No "Stretch of the Imagination" required! By Marsha Once again, Taleb is presenting the reader with some brilliant observations on life, process, and product! Having read "The Black Swan" and "Fooled by Randomness," "The Bed of Procrustes" offers the reader additional wisdoms, from which to draw a parallel between current challenges, hypothetical solutions, and that "grey space" in between. To wit: "The calamity of the information age is that the toxicity of data increases much faster than its benefits." Deeply reflective, subtly humorous, and thoroughly entertaining, it will become another Taleb book you can share with friends, colleagues--even relatives, on "both sides of the aisle!" 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Aphorisms Lose Their Charm Whenever Explained By Greg Linster It takes an incredible amount of skill to write aphorisms well, and Nassim Taleb undoubtedly has that skill. It's for that reason that I've read this book several times now (and the Twitter feed where many of these aphorisms originated). In the book, Taleb explains that aphorisms lose their charm whenever explained. "My best definition of a nerd:", he writes, "someone who asks you to explain an aphorism." If you don't understand an aphorism in this book, I'd suggest reading it again more slowly. While Taleb's other books are wonderful, this book will always be one of my favorites. As Karl Kraus put it: "Someone who can write aphorisms should not fritter away his time writing essays."

With fifty percent more material than the hardcover, this expanded edition of *The Bed of Procrustes* is a standalone book in Nassim Nicholas Taleb's landmark *Incerto* series, an investigation of opacity, luck, uncertainty, probability, human error, risk, and decision-making in a world we don't understand. The other books in the series are *Fooled by Randomness*, *The Black Swan*, and *Antifragile*. By the author of the modern classic *The Black Swan*, this collection of aphorisms and meditations expresses his major ideas in ways you least expect. *The Bed of Procrustes* takes its title from Greek mythology: the story of a man who made his visitors fit his bed to perfection by either stretching them or cutting their limbs. It represents Taleb's view of modern civilization's hubristic side effects—modifying humans to satisfy technology, blaming reality for not fitting economic models, inventing diseases to sell drugs, defining intelligence as what can be tested in a classroom, and convincing people that employment is not slavery. Playful and irreverent, these aphorisms will surprise you by exposing self-delusions you have been living with but never recognized. With a rare combination of pointed wit and potent wisdom, Taleb plows through human illusions, contrasting the classical values of courage, elegance, and erudition against the modern diseases of nerdiness, philistinism, and phoniness. Taleb's crystalline nuggets of thought stand alone like esoteric poems.—*Financial Times* From the Trade Paperback edition.