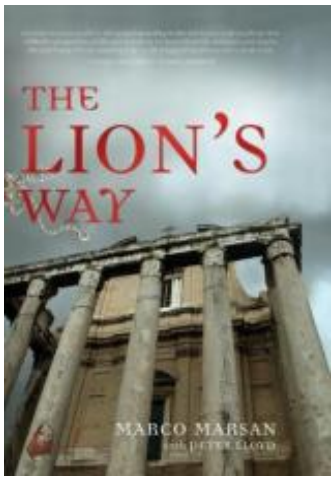
The Lion's Way

by Marco Marsan and Peter Lloyd



About the Book

With richly imagined settings and fast-paced action, *The Lion's Way* leads readers on a spellbinding trip through what might have been. Juve, a member of the government's secret police, scents the rot behind the faÃ§ade of the modern Roman Republic's greatness--a corruption of the democratic principles that enabled the Republic to survive and thrive for thousands of years. Ruthless politicians oppress the people. Propaganda poisons the public against those who speak out. But Juve, leading a double life, recruits a gang of revolutionaries to bring down the dictatorship. It seems that one sure strike could spark the rebellion that frees Rome. But at the crucial moment, Juve learns a shattering truth, a revelation that destroys everything he loves and believes in. Juve escapes to the past in a desperate attempt to change history. He must find the man whose teachings formed the foundation for the Republic's strength and power--Juve has to save the man some say was the son of God. With a visionary eye fixed on the the implications for our own time and place, Marco Marsan and Peter Lloyd deliver an unforgettable novel, examining questions of freedom, love, morality, and truth in the context of a thrilling struggle between might and right.

Discussion Guide

1. The Lion's Way takes place in the future and in the past. Yet it speaks so clearly to the present. Discuss how this was achieved?

Author?s Answer: You can?t write about anything without reflecting something about your present circumstances. So we allowed the events that we imagined taking place in the future as well as those we imagined happening in the past to unfold naturally. We did not set out to create a story like **The Wizard of Oz**, in which each character stands in for a contemporary figure. But we couldn?t help letting some of our characters show surprising similarities to people we know or know of. But remember, **The Lion?s Way** is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, organizations, places, events, and incidents are either a product of our imaginations or are used factitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons,

living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

2. The story involves futuristic marvels including time travel, yet the authors don't call it science fiction. Why not?

Author?s Answer: Because it?s not science fiction. For example, we have a high-tech device called a wayfone?a wafer you slip behind your ear and use as a hands-free cell phone. We quickly describe it and let our characters use it. A science fiction writer would give you the wayfone with a whole lot more technical detail?how it works neurologically. The wayfone in a sci-fi story might also do more to drive the plot. The science fiction writers want to make your mouth water over exactly how certain high-tech, other-worldly things work. They have to do that to satisfy the sci-fi reader. While we welcome science fiction readers, it would be unfair to pitch our story to them as science fiction.

3. The Lion?s Way takes us to an invented future and a liberally altered past. Where do fact and fiction meet in the story?

Author?s Answer: If history repeats itself, our story is always true, probable, and believable. It?s about the struggle between taking forceful action to achieve your goals or incorporating the needs and feeling of others into your plans. It?s force v. cooperation with empathy as the key to getting out of the blind that makes it impossible to see that there might not be anything to fight about.

Juve and Maria

4. The hero Juve goes from hired assassin to political prankster to someone who makes the ultimate sacrifice in the hope of improving the world. Talk about his dramatic transformation.

Author?s Answer: It certainly is dramatic but entirely probable. Juve burns with the reformer?s passion. His parents were torn from him at a young age. He was orphaned into an austere military institution, trained to the limits of human endurance, and sent off to do dirty work of a corrupt government. He found in the father of his first girlfriend a mentor, who schooled them both in political dissent. His life as a dissident satisfied him immensely until at a turning point in his career, everything came crashing down around him. When offered the opportunity to make right everything that he had ruined, he agreed to undertake and odyssey stranger and more challenging than he ever could have dreamed. Juve?s life sweeps in an epic arch for which he has been more than adequately prepared. We think his performance is outstanding and well worth reading.

5. Falling in love totally transforms Juve. What?s the role of human love in **The Lion?s Way**.

Author?s Answer: True love can be truly transformational. It is the ultimate expression of empathy. Soon after falling in love, Juve is forced to choose between loyalty to his cause Forza Facia and loyalty to his love Maria. Everyday people face this very choice many times during their everyday lives, typically on a smaller scale in terms of consequences. We framed Juve?s choice in the grand scheme of things. Juve can have the heroic satisfaction of eliminating a depraved tyrant or the fulfillment of a young love that has already begun to completely enthrall him. Either choice promises momentous consequences. And he must choose in a second. So love in **The Lion?s Way** is a choice offered as an alternative to glory.

6. Juve was raised as an Indomitable Lion, a member of an elite military force not unlike Hitler's Gestapo or Saddam

Hussein's Revolutionary Guard. Should we draw any other parallels from the Indomitable Lions?

Author?s Answer: There?s nothing new about elite arms of powerful agencies. So it?s fair to compare the Indomitable Lions to whomever you want. We did not model them after any one such organization. Yet it?s no surprise that they resemble any number of them.

7. Maria's father is a top government official. Talk about the problems that arise when she falls in love with a political activist.

Author?s Answer: When Maria realizes her father and her lover are locked in each other?s mortal sights, she has little trouble choosing whom to support. Once her choice is made, however, she still has to keep one from killing the other. Then one of the two gives her the choice of saving the others life in exchange for compromising him. She makes a deal.

Forza Facia

8. Juve leads Forza Facia, an urban guerilla group bent on disrupting established social order in the interests of social reform. Describe Forza Facia and its role in the story.

Author?s Answer: Our band of insurgents is loosely organized and completely underground. Its activities inspire imitation, so it is not burdened with unwieldy administration. This ad hoc structure presents problems, however. In one scene, Juve runs into a couple of Forza Facia imitators who threaten him, not knowing that he is the undercover head of the organization they?re imitating.

9. Juve's Forza Facia sounds an awful lot like the insurgent groups that threaten the United States and other Western democracies. This could be interpreted as condoning such groups. What is your reaction?

Author?s Answer: In **The Lion?s Way** we introduce an insurgency that plays pranks on prominent leaders of the corrupt Roman Republic. It robs the rich to give to the poor. And when we meet them, they are planning their first assassination attempt aimed at a very despicable tyrant. Hardly the kind of people who threatens us today. However, as Forza approach assassination, the book raises the question of when is violence appropriate? In the face of tyranny? All tyrants? Who decides who?s a tyrant?

On Jesus and Christianity

10. In **The Lion?s Way**, Jesus is used to help create a more compassionate Roman Empire. Discuss the suggestion that Christian ideas would serve us better in government than they do in religion?

Author?s Answer: The US Constitution forbids the mingling of government and religion in the first sentence of its First Amendment. However, the United Kingdom has a state religion. Oddly enough, the United States seems to have a more religious population. Either way, it seems impossible to separate the religious beliefs and sentiments of a population from the intent of its government. In **The Lion's Way** a government based on the empathetic principles of Jesus Christ and others works quite well for a while. Then gradually the Roman Republic gives in to corruption. It is difficult to look at the history of any government or religion and not find corruption. So it would seem that whether a great set of principles resides in government or religion, it?s up to the people to maintain the integrity of those principles.

11. The authors introduced us to a very sexually liberated woman named Mayam, obviously patterned after Mary Magdalene. Discuss your view of Mary Magdalene as more of a liberated woman than a prostitute?

Author?s Answer: Just as Jesus is a historical mystery, so is his close friend Mayam, no matter whom she represents. By running with a pack of men, Mayam flaunts the conventions of her day. Yet she is embarrassed when Juve breaks the convention of carrying her provisions when they travel together. She merges Jesus?s message of love with her own feeling about the way men and women should behave with respect to each other. Such an unconventional woman might very well be scorned as a prostitute in Judean society.

12. The Authors gave us a character named Yahuda the Dagger, who reads a lot like Judas. Talk about his role in the story.

Author?s Answer: Another historical mystery and one of our more revolutionary characters, Yahuda the Dagger is patterned after Judas Iscariot. ?The Dagger? is a direct translation of ?Iscariot.? There is no betrayal of Jesus from our ?Judas,? however. He plays a role that complicates matters as Jesus approaches Jerusalem, however. We use the popular conception of Judas to lead readers to expect betrayal from him.

13. In **The Lion?s Way**, Jesus is captured for instigating a riot. Do you see Jesus as a political activist?

14. In portraying Jesus and his followers, the author?s have taken great liberties with the New Testament. Do you believe this is appropriate and why?

Author?s Answer: We wrote **The Lion's Way** from the position that there is no objective and reliable historical evidence of Jesus Christ. Christians base their faith in Jesus on documents written about 60 to 150 years after his purported death and selected by the early Catholic Church from among a greater number documents.

15. Do you consider **The Lion?s Way** an anti-religious book?

Author?s Answer: The Lion's Way is certainly not a religions book. However, we?ve ventured into the period of time in which Christian religions were in their embryonic stage in order to give life to the idea of empathy.

On Roman Society

16. You've created a Roman Republic that has thrived without help from the Catholic Church. Discuss this alternate vision of the future.

Author Answer: The alternative future we present in **The Lion's Way** is a future without a crucified Jesus, therefore, without a Catholic Church and the churches it spawned. The Church is on the record as opposing the sun as the center of the solar system, women speaking in public, virgins caring for children, the study of anatomy, dissection, blood transfusion, anesthesia, surgery? the list goes on. We speculate that without the Church, not only would the Roman Republic have thrived, it would have enjoyed an acceleration of scientific progress.

While Catholic monks preserved great classical knowledge from destruction from the barbarian invasion, if Rome had progressed as we imagine in **The Lion's Way**, there would be no barbarian invasion, no monks, and no need for them to preserve anything. On the other hand, the Church in its day has argued for reason and education but only as long as the conclusions of that reason and education supported the tenets of the faith. Unfortunately, many of the tenets of the faith contradict the discoveries of science.

So in our alternative history we would have had men, as well as women, along the lines of Roger Bacon, Gregor Mendel, Marconi, and others. They just would not have been Catholic and, we believe, even less inhibited about scientific exploration and unopposed when it came to.

17. Much of the corruption in the Roman Republic reads like today's abuses of power. Discuss the relationship between the Roman Republic in **The Lion?s Way** our present day.

18. The character Barth is a scientific genius, inventor of time travel, who befriends the hero Juve. Talk more about this unusual alliance.

Author Answer: Barth and Juve easily and quickly become friends because they share similar ideals, including a passion for righting to the best of their abilities the wrongs they see in their world. Each approaches his mission with the tools at his disposal. Juve as the ultimate trained enforcer and Barth as the world?s preeminent scientist. The fact that they collaborate presents a lot of interesting possibilities in terms of the collaboration of science and social activism.

On Empathia

19. In your alternate history, the Roman emperor Tiberius kidnaps Jesus and uses his ideas to create a governing philosophy called Empathia. Explain Empathia.

Author Answer: Empathia as we imagine it is a work that lays down the rules for creating Utopia. We offer several principles in the book and leave the rest to the reader?s imagination. If we were so prescriptive as to actually create such a document, it would diminish reader participation.

20. We get to see a few principles from Empathia. What are some of those principles and the importance of each?

21. Empathia guides the Roman Empire for a long time. Eventually the government corrupts its principles. Do you see the corruption of ideals as inevitable?

Author Bio

Author, idea engineer, corporate anarchist, nationally renowned speaker, and founder of Marco Polo Explorers, Marco Marsan has been recognized as one of America's top out-of-the-box thinkers by the Mazda Corporation.

The Lion's Way

by Marco Marsan and Peter Lloyd

Publication Date: January 1, 2008
Hardcover: 256 pages
Publisher: Greenleaf Book Group Press
ISBN-10: 192977446X
ISBN-13: 9781929774463