



The Book of Five Rings from SmarterComics

Miyamoto Musashi , D.J. Kirkbride , Mark Dos Santos , Cullen Bunn

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What can you learn from a 17th century samurai? Plenty, if that samurai happens to be Miyamoto Musashi, the master strategist who started fighting at age 13 and never lost a fight in his sixty match career. His insights on how to defeat any opponent are still relevant 400 years later in a world where winning isnt just a resume builder, but an absolute necessity.

Musashis expertise extends beyond the technical how-to of swordplay into the deeper philosophy of successful combat. His emphasis on mastering not only your environment but yourself ultimately empowers you in all aspects of life. Success is not a fluke; it is a way of being.

No matter what obstacles you face or enemies you encounter, youll be able to emerge victorious once you understand that conflict isnt just about crossing swords: its about matching wits and following through on a larger plan.

A favorite among generals, businessmen and other contemporary warriors, the lavishly illustrated SmarterComics edition of The Book of Five Rings is a guide to the underlying principles of triumph. Whether youre dueling with corporate accountants or muscled muggers, this book teaches you that a great strategy trumps any cutting remark or hollow-tipped blade.

The Book of Five Rings from SmarterComics Details

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Author : Miyamoto Musashi , D.J. Kirkbride , Mark Dos Santos , Cullen Bunn

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From Reader Review The Book of Five Rings from SmarterComics for online ebook

Sean says

SmarterComic's adaption of the Book of Five Rings is a quite good introduction to this important Japanese work. The art flits between samurai and other, mostly modern, imagery to show the universal nature of the advice but it is also somewhat distracting. Still, a very good effort and an excellent way to introduce younger readers to Miyamoto Musashi's philosophy.

Brie says

An illustrated version that summarizes the Book of Five Rings and makes it easy to follow the concept. I can totally see how you could apply this to work situations.

Megan says

I won this book in a Goodreads Giveaway.

To be honest, I don't even remember entering to win this book. I have a feeling I was trying to enter one above or below it, and hit the wrong button. But whatever, I won and read it.

It is a strategy guide for younger teens, at least from my perspective, because even though most of the illustrations featured adults, it was very simplistic and youthful. I appreciated it for what it was, which was a reimagining of Miyamoto Musashi's original essay about strategy and fighting. Since he won 60 life-or-death battles in his lifetime, I would say he's pretty accurate in his descriptions. And while it was for younger people, it is applicable to life as an adult.

I would recommend this as educational reading, but I would not have bought it myself. Overall, 3/5 stars.

Jojo says

As a martial artist (sort of), this was especially interesting to me. I've learned a few pointers myself that I will definitely keep in mind. Anyway, as a comic book, the pictures were crisp and beautiful. The writing was concise and very clear.

What wasn't as great was the attempted application to everyday life. Some of them work but there were a few that could've had a better example or didn't make sense. One of the examples was a student yawning which "passes on" to the teacher making her yawn. And the students look really happy about this...? Eh, I don't really get it.

Anyway, I would recommend this book to everyone, especially martial artists. As a teaching book, it doesn't

have a story though it does have an overarching message. This book is short and informational and everyone can learn from reading this book.

Won in a GoodReads First Reads giveaway in return for an honest review

Yvonne Stegall says

I received this book in a Goodreads giveaway and it was a great win. The art is colorful and well drawn. The story is timeless, and retold wonderfully in this graphic novel/comic. Fans of ancient arts, classic literature and comic books will all enjoy this read. (received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads)

Kristen says

This is as good as it gets for an entertaining introduction to a classic text that you know you wouldn't read otherwise.

The Book of Five Rings was a fad/underground classic for businessmen in the 1990s or maybe the early Bush years. To make its lessons work for business, you need to imagine your competitors as your enemies, and your first goal, upon picking up your long sword, is to cut them. A worldview that may or not benefit the world, eh? Other titles from SmarterComics are *The Prince*, by Machiavelli; *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu (I think he's the "shock and awe" guy); and *Fortune Favors the Bold*, by Franco Arda (SmarterComics' publisher - it's yet to be seen if his name goes into history amid the infamous ranks of Musashi, Machiavelli, and Sun Tzu).

I don't know about you, but I'm seeing a trend here, regarding these messages. Do you think they'll also do Khalil Gibran? How about *A Book of Courtesy: the Art of Living with Yourself and Others*, by Sister Mary Mercedes? Me either. My brother saw this book and declared that the idea to make a comic from it was "pure genius... with maybe a bit of evil thrown in...."

In any case, the cartoons are well done, crisp and vivid. I'm not sure how the long sword vs. the short sword relates to business (or farming or carpentry), but I'll bet it does, and I intend to get the Cliff Notes at some point, and figure that out.

One especially well done aspects of the book was how Musashi's words were illustrated by drawings of samurai warriors, and then those same few words were illustrated with modern business situations. Not all of them made sense to me, but enough of them did that I have faith that the rest do as well. It's actually a comic book to go back and meditate upon - to take a section, take your questions about it to Wikipedia, and then think about how and if you might apply them (judiciously) to your own life. One of my favorites was the allegory of how you sometimes need to set sail, even though your friends are staying back in a safe harbor. Then comes some advice on what to do should you hit stormy seas, as is likely. In other words, take some risks!

It's not a book for children. Really. Besides being bloody, with warrior's throats being cut, guts impaled upon long swords, and arms getting cut off, it's is not a narrative, but rather a book of philosophy.

I was pleased to see that I'd won this book through a Firstreads giveaway. I received it almost immediately - making me think that the people behind SmarterComics are not only talented but also good business people. Obviously taking the lessons in *The Book of Five Rings* to heart!

Kay says

Full Disclosure: I won this as a GoodReads giveaway.

The purpose of this SmarterComics series is to take the written works of old masters, in this case Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings*, and spin it anew with illustrations to make the works more accessible to the public.

However, while I appreciated the concept behind this comic, I'm afraid the execution made me give it 1.5 stars.

The art was simple and generally clear, but the color scheme was a bit dull, especially for the action scenes, while a more vibrant red or black could have brought the images more to life.

Also, the comic itself had no development or story behind it. I guess that's understandable to an extent, as the purpose of the comic is to relate Musashi's work. However, the artwork matched itself literally to the text. For example, the text would say "Your teacher is a needle, and you are the thread" and the illustration would be of an old man with a needle and thread. Then, in the very next frame, it would say "You must practice constantly" and the illustration would be of a young samurai hitting a dummy with a wooden katana with no transition whatsoever.

Also, the chronological shifts between ancient and modern day interpretations of the text bothered me. The text would say "The carpenter uses a master plan of the building," and the frame would show a modern-day carpenter.

Overall, I think the transitions between illustrations need work. Even if there is no story, per se, the comic read like a collection of images rather than a coherent whole. I also did not like the exceedingly literal interpretation of the text. I would have pegged this book for the younger age group, but some of the content seems more adult-targeted with references that children may not get.

Overall, 1.5 stars.

Miroku Nemeth says

In general, I was expecting much more from this. From the first page of the introduction, what should be a razor-sharp katana becomes a dull butter knife. Musashi killed an accomplished swordsman at the age of 13. The illustrations have him breaking his opponent's shinai and leaving him prostrate but not dead in a dojo

match. As someone who has studied Musashi for years, I would have appreciated more respectful research and representation. There are other illustrations with blood, a bit of gore, and death, so it is not due to censorship. I liked some of the adaptation, but it did live up to my expectations. They should have abandoned the modern-day tie-in angle and just focused on explaining more of the text itself, as there was some art in some of this that was admirable. As a whole, I cannot recommend it other than as a partial introduction or review.

Mary Jean Phillips says

Having owned a traditional copy for years and years, I was pleased by the arrival of a graphic novel adaptation from Smarter Comics. This edition emphasizes the modern applicability and timeless grace of Musashi's practice through the thoughtful juxtaposition of ancient words and modern images. I would recommend this to everyone whether or not the reader is familiar with Musashi. It's a great introduction to his work, and it's also a beautiful reinterpretation for the 21st century.

Also, I won this book in one of GoodRead's giveaways! Take the time to peruse their giveaway lists; it's fun and sometimes you get a book in the mail! Hooray!

Jeffrey Getzin says

This is a graphic novel approach to the perennial classic of strategy. Illustrations are used to show the parallel between Mushashi's ancient words and modern day sports, business, and combat. While some of the analogies can be a little strained, overall this was an excellent approach. Each illustration helped drive home Musashi's points, often in multiple ways.

I found a single proofing error in the book, and like I said, sometimes that parallels are a little exaggerated, otherwise I would instantly give this book five stars. However, I unreservedly recommend this book for those interest in strategy and combat.

Trish says

This is a great comic book. There are real world lessons set in a comic book atmosphere. Very entertaining and fun. My son will love it for Christmas. Thank you very much for letting me read it.

Satia says

I received two books from SmarterComics through the goodreads firstreads program. I read them both, back-to-back, and they perfectly lend themselves to being compared. For this reason, the reviews reference one another and both can be found in a single post on my book review blog on Friday, 12 January 2012.

The Book of Five Rings by Miyamoto Musashi as adapted by Cullen Bunn, with illustrations by Mark Dos Santos, is also a look at a classic martial arts text contextualized in contemporary and real-life situations. Unlike the previous comic, more of the teachings are illustrated in feudal Japan, complete with samurai and

swords. The contemporary situations are more tightly interwoven with the classic text's teaching.

Throughout this colorful comic, the traditional teachings are predominant with none of the characters who people the frames talking. This actually proves to be more effective than how the text and contemporary context are used in *The Art of War*. Musashi's wisdom sparkles throughout and if some of his teachings aren't immediately applicable, a reflective reader will take the time to consider the text, meditate on its meaning, and try to be open to how the text can be applied in whatever situation the reader is facing.

Over all, both books are good and although the former is easier to see as useful the latter is the better comic creation. I've been wanting to read the original text for a while so, once again, I found myself inspired to read the original text. I've put in a request at the library. And I sincerely hope that other readers will want to do the same. If neither blew me away, neither comic disappointed me altogether.

Marian says

I won this book as a Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

Jim says

This graphic novel shows the strategy lessons of Musashi, a master undefeated Samurai of the 17th century, both as they were initially envisioned and as they have been adapted to modern life situations by the illustrator Mark Dos Santos. I particularly liked the illustrations on pages 45 & 46 of two methods to forestall the enemy from the Fire Book. The first was a series of shots in a ping pong game, and the second a mother bird drawing a cat away from the egg in her nest. My favorite quote is from the Water Book on page 32: "Meet any situation without tenseness and yet not recklessly." Thanks Goodreads for another First Reads win!

Noran Miss Pumkin says

This book is from Goodreads free give away.
