Adam & Lisa Murphy's

CORPSE TALK

DEAD, FAMOUS & VERY CHATTY

THE PHOENIX COMIC BOOKS

An imprint of FICKLING

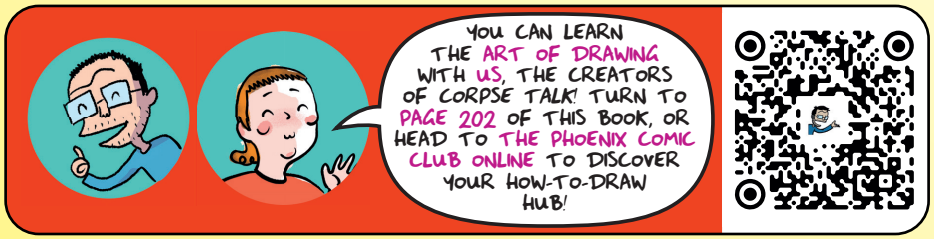
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THESE COMICS FIRST APPEARED IN

THE PHOENIX

HOME OF

THE PHOENIX COMIC CLUB



Corpse Talk: Dead, Famous & Very Chatty
is a **PHOENIX COMIC BOOK**

First published in Great Britain in 2026 by The Phoenix Comic Books,
an imprint of David Fickling Books, 31 Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2NP
www.davidficklingbooks.com

EU Rep: Authorised Rep Compliance Ltd., Ground Floor, 71 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, D02 P593, Ireland.
www.arccompliance.com

Text and illustrations © Adam & Lisa Murphy, 2026

Adaptation by Asimina Hollingworth
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Cover design by Paul Duffield & Asimina Hollingworth

978-1-78845-409-4
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

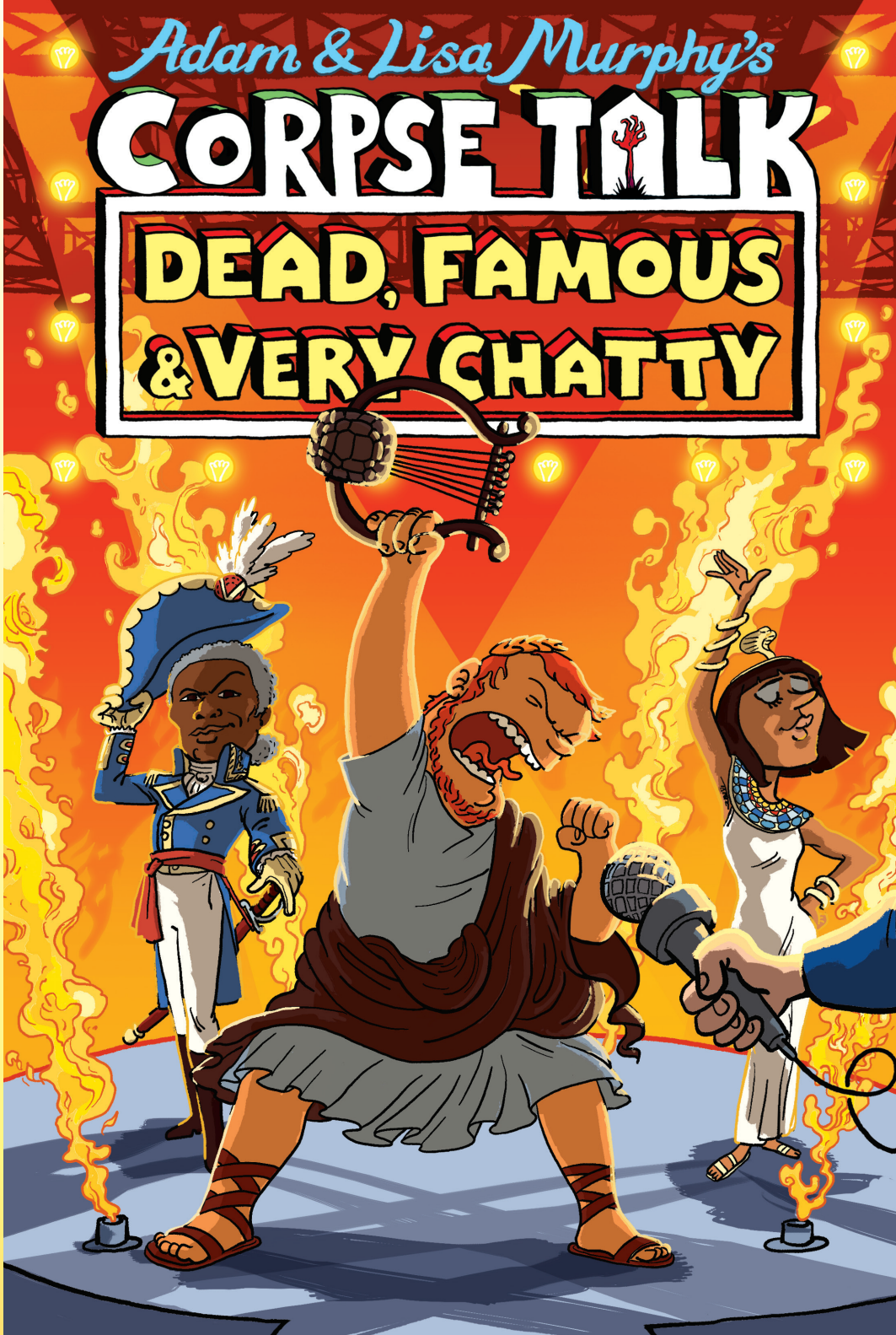
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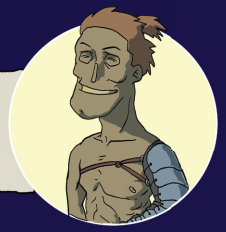
Printed and bound in China by Toppan Leefung.



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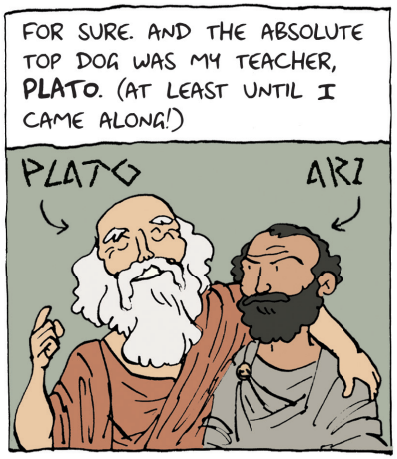
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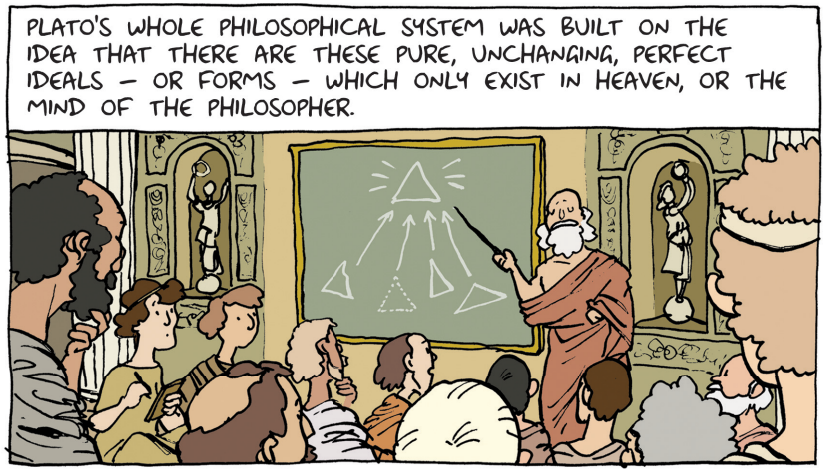
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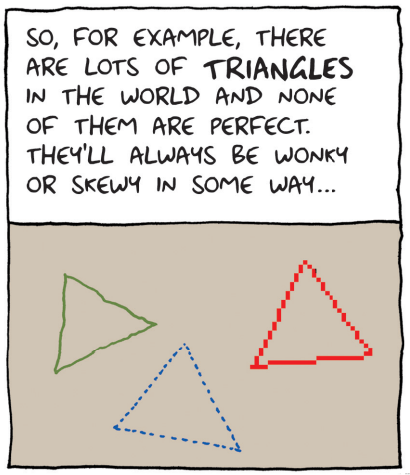


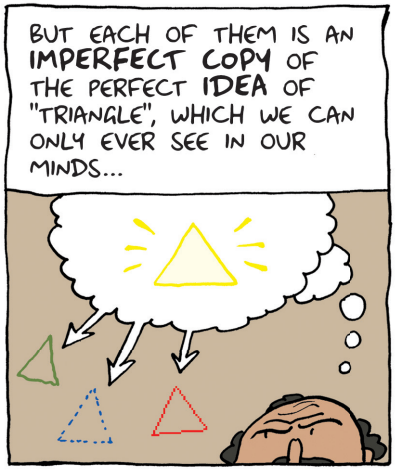

MY FIRST GUEST IS QUITE POSSIBLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THINKER OF ALL TIME! WHEN HE WASN'T BUSY DEFINING THE GROUND RULES OF PHILOSOPHY, HE WAS OFF INVENTING A LITTLE THING CALLED SCIENCE, WHICH YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD OF.
HE'S A THINKER SO IMPORTANT, THEY JUST CALLED HIM "THE PHILOSOPHER" – THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S...
ARISTOTLE!
ARISTOTLE
PHILOSOPHER
384–322 BCE


ARISTOTLE, IN ANCIENT GREECE, PHILOSOPHY WAS PRETTY MUCH A FULL-CONTACT SPORT, WITH NEW SCHOOLS AND IDEAS ALL FIGHTING FOR SUPREMACY.


FOR SURE. AND THE ABSOLUTE TOP DOG WAS MY TEACHER, PLATO. (AT LEAST UNTIL I CAME ALONG!)
PLATO
ARI


PLATO'S WHOLE PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM WAS BUILT ON THE IDEA THAT THERE ARE THESE PURE, UNCHANGING, PERFECT IDEALS – OR FORMS – WHICH ONLY EXIST IN HEAVEN, OR THE MIND OF THE PHILOSOPHER.


SO, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE LOTS OF TRIANGLES IN THE WORLD AND NONE OF THEM ARE PERFECT. THEY'LL ALWAYS BE WONKY OR SKEWY IN SOME WAY...

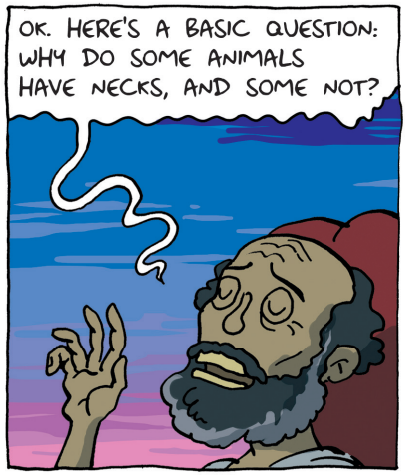

BUT EACH OF THEM IS AN IMPERFECT COPY OF THE PERFECT IDEA OF "TRIANGLE", WHICH WE CAN ONLY EVER SEE IN OUR MINDS...


AND IT'S THE SAME FOR OTHER ABSTRACT IDEALS, LIKE TRUTH OR JUSTICE OR BEAUTY; THEY MIGHT NEVER BE PERFECT IN THIS WORLD, BUT THEY DO EXIST IN A PLACE BEYOND HEAVEN...

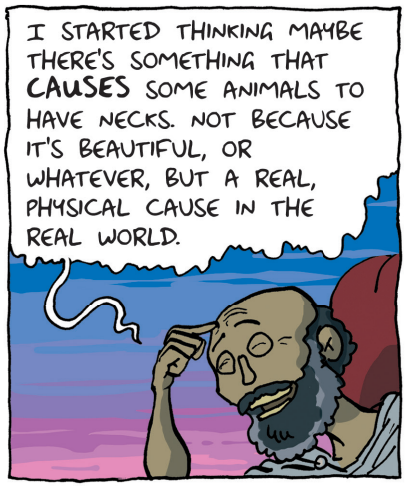

WHICH, I'LL BE HONEST, ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS A LOAD OF OLD COBBLERS.


THE WORLD'S NOT PERFECT; IT'S WEIRD AND WONKY AND DIRTY AND UGLY AND MESSY. BUT THINGS HAPPEN FOR **REASONS**.


INSTEAD OF THESE SILLY BRAIN GAMES, WHY CAN'T THERE BE **REAL** REASONS WHY THINGS ARE THE WAY THEY ARE?
UH. YOU LOST ME...


OK. HERE'S A BASIC QUESTION: WHY DO SOME ANIMALS HAVE NECKS, AND SOME NOT?


UH... DON'T THEY ALL?
NO! FISH DON'T! NOR DO OCTOPUSES!


I STARTED THINKING MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING THAT **CAUSES** SOME ANIMALS TO HAVE NECKS. NOT BECAUSE IT'S BEAUTIFUL, OR WHATEVER, BUT A REAL, PHYSICAL CAUSE IN THE REAL WORLD.


IF WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND THINGS, WE CAN'T JUST **THINK** ABOUT THEM. WE HAVE TO **STUDY** THEM.


AND SO THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID. YOU CONDUCTED DETAILED DISSECTIONS ON ALL SORTS OF ANIMALS, BIRDS AND SEA CREATURES TO TRY TO GET A CLEAR SENSE OF THEIR SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES.

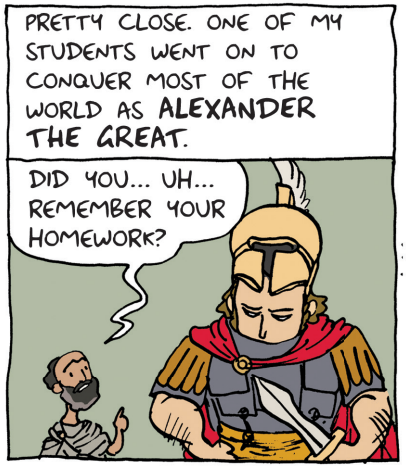

NO ONE ELSE AT PLATO'S ACADEMY WAS DOING THAT! THEY WERE TOO BUSY THINKING ABOUT TRUTH AND BEAUTY TO SPEND THEIR TIME GUDDLING ABOUT IN OCTOPUS GUTS!


AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT I FOUND?
I HAVE A FEELING YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME...
ALL ANIMALS WITH NECKS HAVE **LUNGS**!
AND VICE VERSA.


MAYBE LUNGS **CAUSE** NECKS! OR NECKS CAUSE LUNGS... HM...
SO, YOUR BIG IDEA IS TO NOT JUST MAKE UP STORIES, BUT TO LOOK AT THINGS TO SEE IF YOU'RE RIGHT?

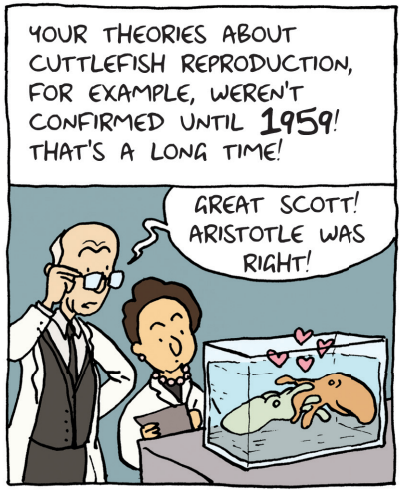

JUST SEEMS KINDA... OBVIOUS...
TO YOU, MAYBE! YOU'VE HAD **2,500** YEARS TO GET USED TO IT! I WAS THE **FIRST PERSON** TO THINK LIKE THIS!


HOLD ON, GO BACK A STEP. WHEN YOU SAY ALL ANIMALS... HOW'D YOU KNOW? DID YOU DISSECT EVERY ANIMAL THERE IS!?


PRETTY CLOSE. ONE OF MY STUDENTS WENT ON TO CONQUER MOST OF THE WORLD AS ALEXANDER THE GREAT.
DID YOU... UH... REMEMBER YOUR HOMEWORK?


AND HE ALSO HELPED ME CONQUER THE WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE, BY TAKING ALONG AN ARMY OF COLLECTORS WHO BROUGHT BACK AS MANY DIFFERENT PLANT AND ANIMAL SAMPLES AS THEY COULD CARRY.
OOH! I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT BEETLE BEFORE, HAVE YOU!?


YEAH, GOOD TIMES, GOOD TIMES...
YOUR OBSERVATIONS WERE SO AMAZINGLY ACCURATE, IT WAS THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE SCIENCE CAUGHT UP!


YOUR THEORIES ABOUT CUTTLEFISH REPRODUCTION, FOR EXAMPLE, WEREN'T CONFIRMED UNTIL 1959! THAT'S A LONG TIME!
GREAT SCOTT! ARISTOTLE WAS RIGHT!

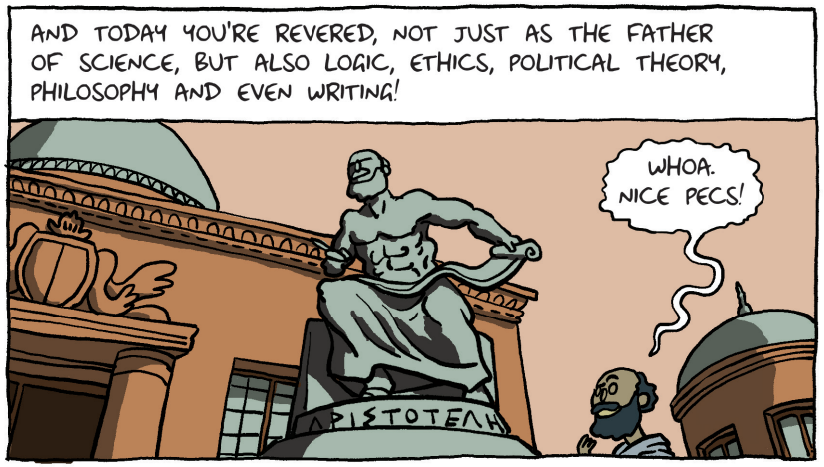

IN FACT, YOUR RESULTS WERE SO GOOD, THEY ACTUALLY HELD SCIENCE BACK FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.


INSTEAD OF STUDYING THE WORLD AROUND THEM, PEOPLE JUST TOOK YOUR WORD FOR IT!
WHAT!? BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I TOLD THEM NOT TO DO!


AND I NEVER CLAIMED I'D GOT EVERYTHING RIGHT...
LIKE THE WHOLE INSECTS-APPEARING-OUT-OF-NOWHERE THING?
AH, NUTS. NOT THE INSECTS THING...


I OBSERVED YOUNG INSECTS HATCHING OUT OF FRESH POOP, EVEN WHEN I'D BEEN VERY CAREFUL TO MAKE SURE NO ADULT INSECTS HAD LAID THEIR EGGS IN IT.

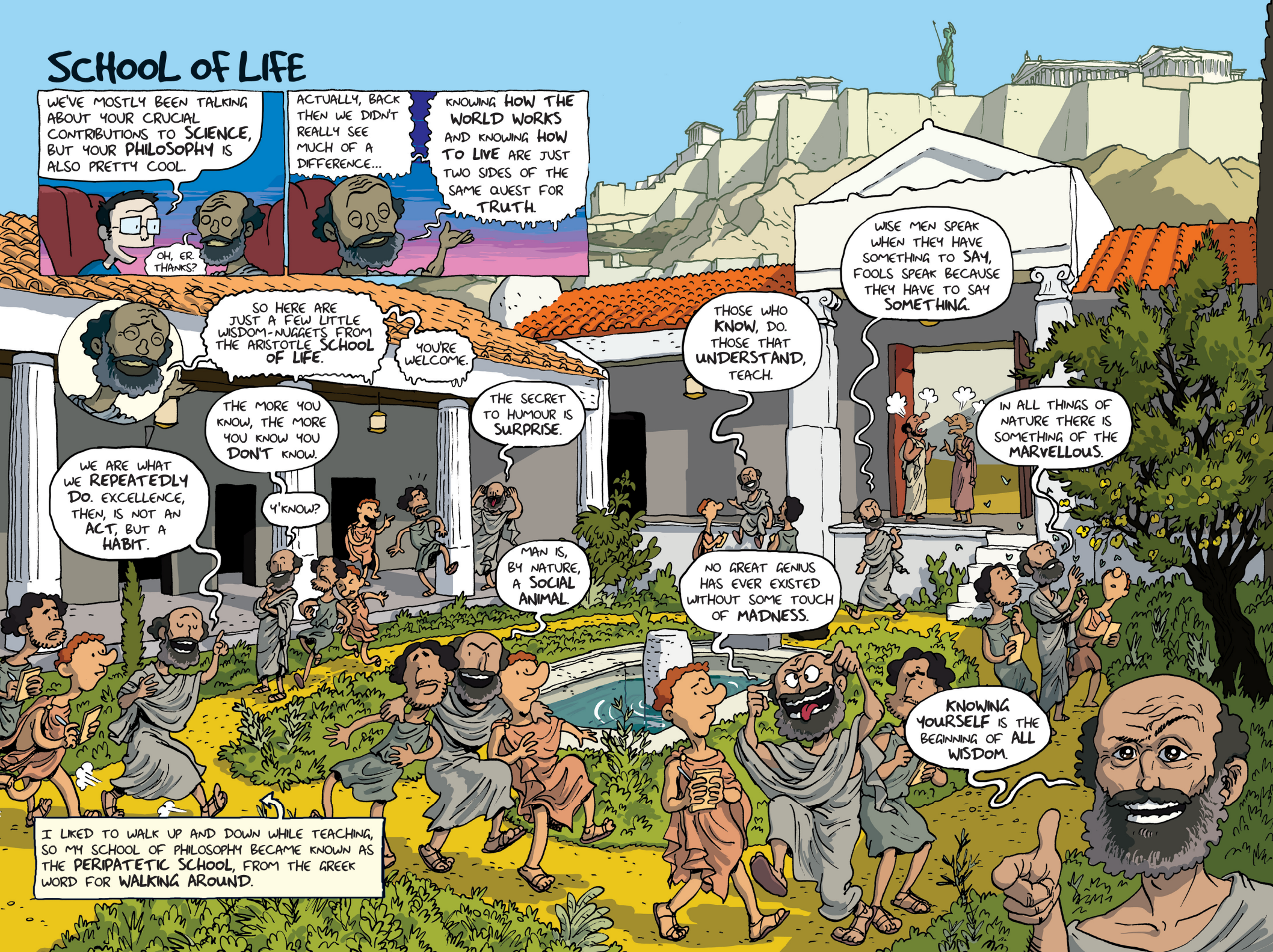

AH, BUT THERE COULD HAVE BEEN EGGS ALREADY IN THE POOPING ANIMAL'S DIGESTIVE TRACT!
BAH. DIDN'T THINK OF THAT...
THE TRUE STORY WASN'T DISCOVERED UNTIL MARIA SIBYLLA MERIAN IN THE 17TH CENTURY!
BUT HEY, DON'T WORRY. WE CAUGHT UP EVENTUALLY!


AND TODAY YOU'RE REVERED, NOT JUST AS THE FATHER OF SCIENCE, BUT ALSO LOGIC, ETHICS, POLITICAL THEORY, PHILOSOPHY AND EVEN WRITING!
WHOA. NICE PECS!
ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΗ


HOLLYWOOD SCRIPTWRITERS STUDY YOUR BOOK ON DRAMA LIKE IT WAS THE BIBLE FOR TIPS ON HOW TO STRUCTURE THE STORIES OF THEIR MOVIES!
HM... WHAT DID ARISTOTLE SAY?


JUST THE DRAMA? WHAT ABOUT MY BOOK ON COMEDY?
NOT ALL OF YOUR WRITINGS SURVIVED—IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, AFTER ALL...


BUT SINCE YOU'RE HERE, YOU DON'T HAVE A FUNNY ENDING, BY ANY CHANCE...?
HEY, IT'S YOUR COMIC...


SCHOOL OF LIFE
WE'VE MOSTLY BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOUR CRUCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE, BUT YOUR PHILOSOPHY IS ALSO PRETTY COOL.
OH, ER. THANKS?
ACTUALLY, BACK THEN WE DIDN'T REALLY SEE MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE...
KNOWING HOW THE WORLD WORKS AND KNOWING HOW TO LIVE ARE JUST TWO SIDES OF THE SAME QUEST FOR TRUTH.
SO HERE ARE JUST A FEW LITTLE WISDOM-NUGGETS FROM THE ARISTOTLE SCHOOL OF LIFE.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE MORE YOU KNOW YOU DON'T KNOW.
Y'KNOW?
WE ARE WHAT WE REPEATEDLY DO. EXCELLENCE, THEN, IS NOT AN ACT, BUT A HABIT.
THE SECRET TO HUMOUR IS SURPRISE.
MAN IS, BY NATURE, A SOCIAL ANIMAL.
THOSE WHO KNOW, DO. THOSE THAT UNDERSTAND, TEACH.
NO GREAT GENIUS HAS EVER EXISTED WITHOUT SOME TOUCH OF MADNESS.
WISE MEN SPEAK WHEN THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, FOOLS SPEAK BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING.
IN ALL THINGS OF NATURE THERE IS SOMETHING OF THE MARVELLOUS.
KNOWING YOURSELF IS THE BEGINNING OF ALL WISDOM.
I LIKED TO WALK UP AND DOWN WHILE TEACHING, SO MY SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY BECAME KNOWN AS THE PERIPATETIC SCHOOL, FROM THE GREEK WORD FOR WALKING AROUND.


MY NEXT GUEST IS NONE OTHER THAN THE MAN WHO SURMOUNTED SLAVERY TO STRIKE TERROR INTO THE HEART OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.
IT'S THE REBEL WITHOUT AN ESCAPE CLAUSE, THE HARD CASE FROM THRACE...
SPARTACUS!
SPARTACUS
GLADIATOR
111–71 BCE

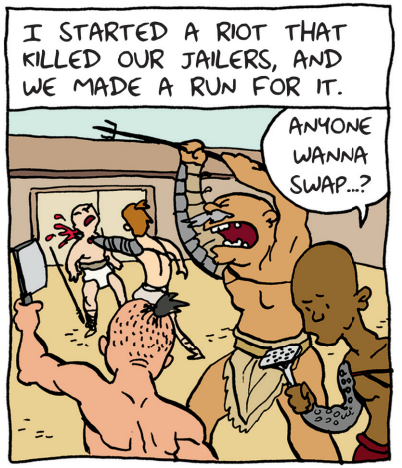

SPARTACUS, YOUR FREEDOM FIGHT AGAINST THE UNDEFEATED MIGHT OF ROME BEGAN IN GLADIATOR SCHOOL. WHICH, YOU MUST ADMIT, SOUNDS TOTALLY AWESOME...

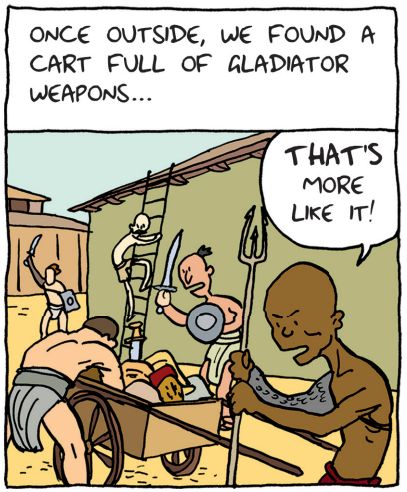

-SIGH-
OK, LET ME EXPLAIN TO YOU HOW TOTALLY NOT AWESOME IT WAS...


GLADIATORS WERE IMPRISONED SLAVES, FORCED TO FIGHT ONE ANOTHER LIKE ANIMALS FOR THE ROMANS' ENTERTAINMENT.


THE "SCHOOL" WAS A PRISON WHERE THEY TRAINED US ANIMALS TO KILL OR BE KILLED.


BUT I WAS NOT AN ANIMAL. I WAS A MAN. SO WHEN THE CHANCE TO ESCAPE CAME, I TOOK IT.


I STARTED A RIOT THAT KILLED OUR JAILERS, AND WE MADE A RUN FOR IT.
ANYONE WANNA SWAP...?

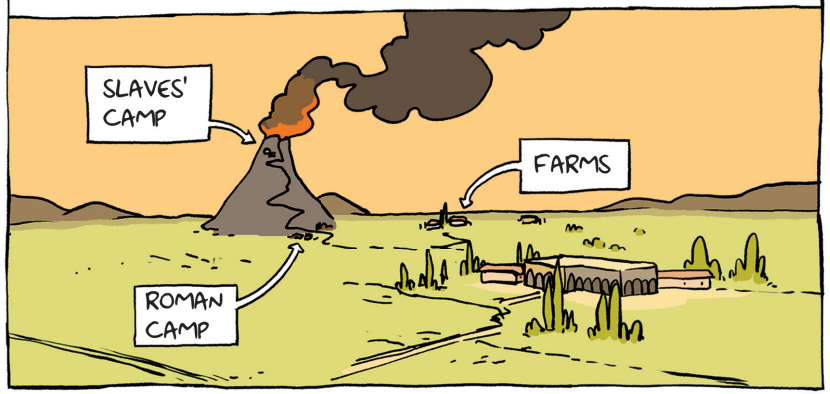

ONCE OUTSIDE, WE FOUND A CART FULL OF GLADIATOR WEAPONS...
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!


...AND THEN, WHEN A GROUP OF SOLDIERS TRIED TO RECAPTURE US, WE BEAT THEM AND TOOK THEIR WEAPONS, TOO.
AW YEAH!

WE ESCAPED TO NEARBY **MOUNT VESUVIUS**, AN ACTIVE **VOLCANO**.

THERE WAS ONLY **ONE** PATH UP AMIDST ITS SHEER CLIFFS, SO WHILE WE STAYED THERE, WE WERE SAFE.

BUT THE ROMANS KNEW WE'D HAVE TO COME DOWN FOR FOOD, SO THEY TRIED TO **STARVE** US OUT.



BUT I FOUND ANOTHER WAY. WE CUT DOWN VINES AND MADE ROPE LADDERS...

THEN CLIMBED DOWN THE STEEP VOLCANO AND KILLED THE ROMANS WHILE THEY SLEPT.

LIKE NINJAS!

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT IS.

YOU RAMPAGED UP AND DOWN ITALY, DEFEATING ROMANS, PLUNDERING FARMS AND FREEING SLAVES, TRAINING THEM TO FIGHT BY YOUR SIDE.

FROM YOUR INITIAL BAND OF JUST **80** GLADIATORS, YOUR ARMY GREW TO OVER **100,000**.

AND YOU WON VICTORY AFTER VICTORY AGAINST EVERY ARMY ROME SENT AGAINST YOU.




IT SEEMED THAT YOU WERE **INVINCIBLE**!
YES... BUT THAT WAS THE PROBLEM.


MY GUYS STARTED THINKING WE REALLY **WERE** INVINCIBLE, SO THEY REFUSED TO ESCAPE ACROSS THE ALPS TO SAFETY.


AND THE ROMANS WERE **SO TERRIFIED** OF US, THEY SENT IN ONE OF THEIR **BEST GENERALS**...

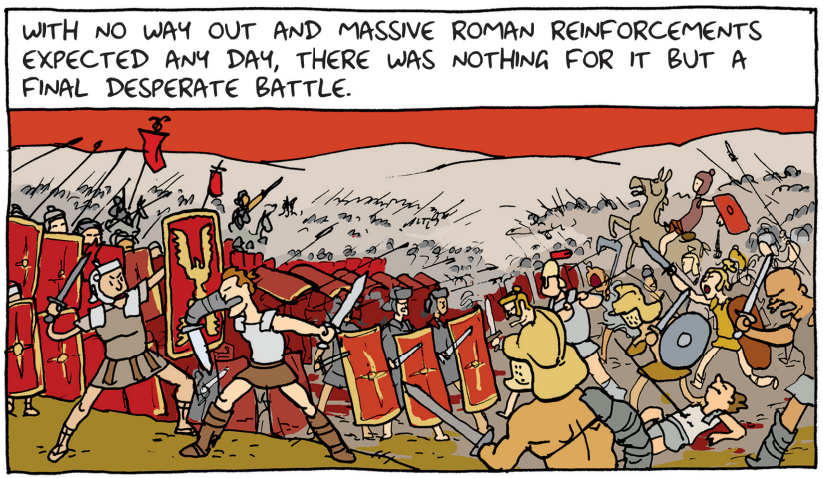

MARCUS **CRASSUS**, A MAN SO RUTHLESS HIS **OWN MEN** WERE AFRAID OF HIM.

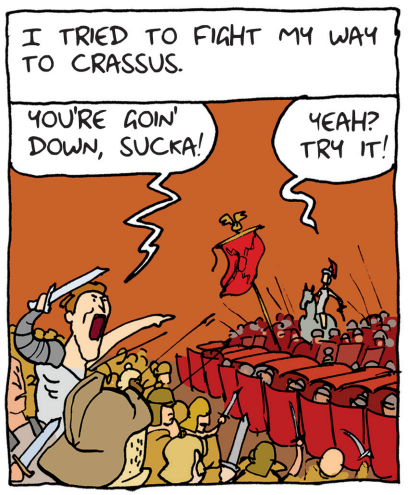

IF THEY LOST A BATTLE OR RAN AWAY, HE HAD THEM **DECIMATED**.
RANDOM **1** IN EVERY **10** SOLDIERS EXECUTED.


WITH HIS MEN INSPIRED BY **FEAR**, CRASSUS STARTED WINNING BATTLES, AND WE STARTED LOSING.
SLAVES
ROMANS
V
IV


I TRIED TO ARRANGE FOR SOME PIRATES TO SHIP US OUT OF ITALY, PAYING THEM WITH TREASURE WE'D PLUNDERED FROM THE ROMANS' FARMS.


BUT THEY BETRAYED US, TOOK THE MONEY, AND JUST SAILED AWAY...
OH, COME ON. HOW DID YOU NOT SEE THAT COMING!?


WITH NO WAY OUT AND MASSIVE ROMAN REINFORCEMENTS EXPECTED ANY DAY, THERE WAS NOTHING FOR IT BUT A FINAL DESPERATE BATTLE.


I TRIED TO FIGHT MY WAY TO CRASSUS.
YOU'RE GOIN' DOWN, SUCKA!
YEAH? TRY IT!


BUT IN THE END, I GOT SURROUNDED, SEPARATED FROM MY MEN, AND SPEARED THROUGH THE LEG.


I FOUGHT ON TO THE LAST, BUT IT WAS HOPELESS...


YOUR REBELLION WAS BRUTALLY SUPPRESSED, WITH MOST OF THE SLAVES BEING SLAUGHTERED ON THE BATTLEFIELD.


AND THE 5,000 SURVIVORS ROUNDED UP AND CRUCIFIED.
SO DON'T GET ANY IDEAS!
YES, BOSS.


BUT ALTHOUGH THE REBELLION FAILED, IN ANOTHER WAY, YOU SUCCEEDED. YOUR UNBREAKABLE DETERMINATION TO WIN FREEDOM AT ANY COST HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION THROUGHOUT THE AGES.


SO THAT, WHEREVER PEOPLE SUFFER UNDER THE OPPRESSION OF TYRANNY, THEY CAN DRAW ON YOUR EXAMPLE, TO STAND TALL AND SAY WITH PRIDE...


"I AM SPARTACUS!"
YEAH. I'D STILL RATHER HAVE SURVIVED...