On the Good Life Study Guide

On the Good Life by Cicero

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

Cicero was one of the greatest philosophers, statesmen and orators of classical antiquity. He came to great renown during the late Roman Republic and the early rule of Caesar about 60 to 40 years before Christ. He was well-known not merely for his Roman consulship but for his intellectual writings. Philosophy was not as common amongst the Romans as it was among the Greeks. Cicero was significant not only for reviving Greek thought but for developing his own philosophical ideas (although they stayed rather close to Greek thinking). He also popularized philosophy amongst the Roman elites. Cicero's influence extends far beyond his death, however, throughout the late Roman Empire, the medieval period, the Renaissance and on to the present day.

On the Good Life is not a single book written at a single time. Instead, it is a compilation of several essays that Cicero wrote over the course of his life. Many of these essays are "books" within larger works, the other books excerpted elsewhere. On the Good Life contains five chapters. The first, Book V of "Discussions at Tusculum," is a dialogue that Cicero wrote between himself and a friend on the nature of happiness. Cicero is concerned to argue in favor of the Stoic view of happiness. The Stoics held that happiness could not be disrupted in order for it to be perfect. This meant training oneself to become emotionally indifferent to the loss of any external good, including friends and family. The second chapter, Book II of "On Duties," covers the character of the statesman. Cicero is horrified at the demise of the Roman republic and writes On Duties to show that the character of the statesman must be such as to preserve stability within a regime. A tyrant cannot have this character, he argues. The third chapter, "Laelius: On Friendship," is a dialogue that Cicero claims he received from his teacher Quintus Mucius Scaevola. Cicero claims that Scaevola and Gaius Finnius had this conversation with Gaius Laelius Sapiens, who had a famous friendship with Scipio Africanus the Younger. The dialogue concerns what Laelius learned from his legendary friendship with Scipio. The fourth chapter, "On the Orator," is the longest work. It is also a dialogue, which takes place as a debate between Lucius Licinius Crassus and Marcus Antonius Orator. Crassus argues that the orator must master all subjects, while Antonius argues that oratory requires little knowledge and needs mostly the ability to persuade. The fifth chapter, "The Dream of Scipio" rounds out the book. It is quite short and concerns the dream of Scipio Africanus the younger who has a vision of his grandfather, Scipio Africanus the elder. Scipio the Elder shows him the higher spheres of reality and encourages him to focus on greatness and virtue rather than the petty things of the earth.

Introduction

Introduction Summary and Analysis

The introduction, written by Michael Grant, introduces Cicero and Cicero's writings, along with his historical influences and an account of his influence on later figures. Cicero was an individualist, who believed in human rights and the freedom to make decision without interference. He believed that every human had a spark of divinity that made them equal to one another and caused the natural law to apply to them all. Cicero is not dogmatic, and resists dogmatism in others. Cicero believed in divine providence and that the most divine thing within us is reason. We are intimately bound to our fellow humans by our common divine spark and humans cannot find peace except by serving humankind. Cicero wrote during the late sixties, fifties and forties B.C. within the late Roman republic, before Caesar took power. When Caesar took over, Cicero retired to the country. He took refuge in writing, after a divorce, fights with friends and the death of his daughter.

Cicero's work contains much Greek philosophy. He wanted to copy their ideas to capture the rigor of their thought. As a result, he was self-consciously unoriginal. Cicero believed strongly in the virtues of philosophy, that it took away "the load of empty troubles." He criticized those Romans who were too 'hellenized' and wanted Roman elites to embrace philosophy, which was then considered Greek. Many Roman elites were already interested, but their interest was superficial, while Cicero's was deep. Cicero also held that philosophy was could be practical, unlike many religious doctrines. Cicero was excellent at popularizing ideas and managed to further deepen Roman interest in philosophy. He wrote in dialogue form, in part to write in a way that many would find interesting. He was worried about the Roman republic as well, and believed that if the Roman people behaved like the "heroes of old" that the republic would recover.

Cicero's philosophy was thoroughly Greek, but he resisted identifying with any one school to avoid dogmatism. The author lists the various Greek philosophers that Cicero references: Pythagorus, Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Panaetius, Posidonius, Arcesilaus, Carneades, Philo and Antiochus. Many of Cicero's contemporaries are discussed along with the opinions of future historical figures of Cicero's work. The younger Seneca praised him but found his writings too shallow. Lactantius favored him, as did many Christian fathers, including Ambrose and Jerome. While Augustine was a critic, he admired Cicero greatly. Pope Gregory I the Great more or less banned his work for centuries, but his influence revived over time. Aquinas admired him, as did many other medieval thinkers and writers, such as Dante. Cicero came to great fame during the Renaissance and was even popular among early Protestant thinkers such as Luther and Melancthon. Erasmus and Petrarch valued him deeply. Cicero's classical background was extremely popular among humanists. He influenced the modern philosophers Locke, Hume and Kant. In the 19th century,

however, Cicero's reputation declined, in part because his lack of originality began to be held against him.

Chapter 1: Discussions at Tusculum

Chapter 1: Discussions at Tusculum Summary and Analysis

The Discussions at Tusculum is a discussion between Cicero and a friend. Their topic of discussion is one of the perennial questions in ancient ethics: what things make a good and happy life? All schools of Greek philosophy agreed that the good life was the happy life. All schools of Greek philosophy agreed that all good lives require being morally good and having the virtues. Thus, evil people are always miserable; one cannot be happy unless one is good. However, some schools, most notoriously the Stoics, argued that being morally good was necessary and sufficient for happiness. This was widely regarded as counter-intuitive. On this view, a man could be happy with no external or bodily goods - no wealth, no home, no clothes, no food. A man could be happy if exiled, tortured or happy after losing his entire family in a horrendous tragedy.

While a striking and shocking thesis, the Stoic view has a powerful motivation. On ancient ethical views, happiness is supposed to be stable, or not easily lost. If one could lose one's happiness, then it would be imperfect. If happiness is brought about by achieving certain goods, then one's happiness can only be perfected by possessing goods that are imperishable. If one pursues riches, fame and honor as means to happiness, then one's happiness will be at best imperfect as these are things that will perish. However, moral virtue is different. Once virtue is acquired it cannot be lost except by a free choice. Not even torture or tragedy can destroy virtue without one's free choice. Thus, since perfect happiness requires stability, and goods make up happiness, then the only goods that can bring about perfect happiness are goods that are imperishable - these include virtue, wisdom and knowledge. Now, the Stoics do not reject that riches, fame, family and so on have some sort of value, but they do not possess the sort of value that adds to happiness. These external goods are merely 'preferables' or worthy of choice, but they do not add to happiness. External bads are 'unpreferables' and the neutral things are 'indifferents.' Other schools challenged the meaningfulness of this distinction.

Cicero initially appears concerned to defend the Stoic thesis to his friend who remains skeptical. In fact, much of the Discussions at Tusculum is an extended defense of this position. However, towards the end of the dialogue, Cicero hedges and argues that the distinction between the Stoics and the followers of Aristotle - the Peripatetics who argued that external goods added to happiness - is merely a semantic one.

We will now review the argument of the text. The setting of the argument is at Cicero's country villa in Tusculum, near Frascati, thirteen miles from home. Cicero appears to be the first speaker, although this is not entirely clear. We do not know who the student is. The argument begins with Cicero speaking to his friend Brutus. He introduces the Stoic thesis that happiness only derives from morally right action. The gods can be happy with mere moral goodness, but humans are subject to risk and misfortune which

appears to threaten their happiness. The cure for this misfortune, Cicero argues, is philosophy. Cicero decries that more people are not philosophical. He praises philosophy as a method of freeing one from pain and suffering. He sends Brutus a record of conversations on this topic he has with a friend, who remains nameless. In the dialogue, Cicero questions his friend about the nature of goodness. They establish that the virtues are great goods and make for a happy life. But do the virtues make for a supremely happy life? Can a man be happy when tortured on the rack? They agree that "violent commotions and upheavals of the soul" threaten happiness because happiness necessarily involves tranquility. The key issue then is whether moral goodness is sufficient for supreme happiness, or a happiness to which nothing can be added. Since external goods can always be lost, they can always cause "violent commotions" and so cannot add to supreme happiness because they involve risk and thereby disruption. Thus, happiness must be achievable through moral goodness alone.

One argument for the Stoic thesis is that the human good must consist in using a faculty unique to humans, and that faculty is reason, not sensation or life which humans share with the animals (this argument derives from Aristotle and Plato). The only goods intrinsic to reason, however, achievable by mere reason, are virtue and wisdom. The next argument Cicero gives for the Stoic thesis is that the only goods that lead to happiness are moral goods, for one can possess all the external goods in the world and still be miserable. Moral goods are the only goods that guarantee happiness. Cicero then hedges the implausibility of the conclusion by emphasizing that the Stoics still think that external achievements are 'preferable' or choiceworthy even if they cannot add to happiness. Cicero proceeds to illustrate the unhappiness of those with external goods and the happiness of those without them. He discusses the case of Dionysius, the dictator of Syracuse, in great detail. Dionysius had wealth, fame and power and ruled with an iron fist, but he constantly feared for his life, refusing to let anyone shave him with a blade save his daughters. Cicero then compares Dionysius to the great philosophers like Plato and mathematicians like Archimedes. These men were happy merely due to their own wisdom. Cicero reports that Socrates was never interested in wealth, only wisdom, and was happy. For "an acute first-class brain is the finest asset anyone can have - and, if we want to be happy, it is an asset we must exploit to the uttermost." Intellectual goods can bring happiness and they are of three types: knowledge of the universe and nature, knowing the good and the knowledge of logical consequences and incompatibilities.

Next Cicero critiques the Epicureans, who held that happiness was the enjoyment of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Their goods, as we saw before, are too unstable. However, didn't Epicurus have a point? Shouldn't the wise man fear pain? First Cicero gives cases of Indians and Egyptians who endure great pain to follow their conceptions of moral goodness. He then reviews the fact that philosophers are happy even with few external goods. Next, he argues that lacking money, fame and honor are not necessary for happiness. Cicero pushes the Stoic thesis to the wall, arguing that blindness, deafness and even the combination of the two do not prevent one from being supremely happy. He gives several historical examples, including Homer who was thought to be both blind and happy.

Oddly, Cicero does not conclude that the Stoics are correct. Instead, he refuses to identify with any one school, and argues that the Peripatetics basically agree with the Stoics. Even though external goods are required for happiness, they are simply a drop in the bucket compared to moral goodness. Besides, Cicero argues, the difference between goods and 'preferables' is simply semantic and not genuine. It appears that Cicero throws away the entire argument of the dialogue at the end.

Chapter 2: On Duties

Chapter 2: On Duties Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 1, Cicero is in a period of great grief in his life. He has been divorced, lost his daughter and been exiled. While writing "On Duties," though, Cicero returns to political life, in large part to oppose the dictatorship of Caesar. The books of "On Duties" are a series of arguments against tyranny that continue to be influential to this day. Only Book II is reproduced in this selection of readings. It concerns civic virtue, or the proper character of statesmen. One of the aims of Book II is to develop a theory of civic virtue that will prevent statesmen from becoming tyrants and prevent the people from hating and rebelling against their rulers. This book represents Cicero's practical turn as it is immediately applicable to the present day crisis, the decay of the Roman republic into Caesarism. Cicero, while still loving pure philosophy, now sees it as a kind of luxury, for if the people are not free and have a ruler that terrorizes them, there will be no time for philosophy.

Book II begins by arguing that if we decide to become morally good, we will have immediate knowledge of our duties. So he hopes to offer a general account of good character for the statemen, so that statesmen may thereby come to know their duties. Cicero prefers a system of government where men voluntarily elected their rulers; but when the government is dominated by a single will, statesmanship is destroyed, because the opportunities for statesmanship are destroyed.

Cicero cites five principles that govern the performances of our obligations. Two cover what is right, two concern the means, resources and influence of life and the last concerns the right method of deciding among conflict values. Cicero has already dealt with the first two questions in Book I and will leave the last for later. The third and fourth principles concern expediency, but Cicero emphasizes that the concepts of expediency and rightness are connected and must not be separated.

Before expounding on the right character of the statesman, Cicero describes the nature of society. Men need resources and they need one another to cooperate and develop those resources. Trade within a nation and between nations is essential, as is a division of labor (although this emphasis is less explicit). Men must have rulers to resolve conflicts, for protection and so on, but they must also have rulers of a certain kind, ones that rule with virtue, enforce justice, protect the weak from the strong, and protect private property rights.

Cicero argues that moral goodness is comprised of three virtues - wisdom (the knowledge of right and wrong), temperance (the ability to govern one's passions with reason) and justice (the right treatment of others). A good ruler must have all of these elements. If not, then his subjects have only prudential reasons to obey their ruler, because they fear him or find it temporarily profitable to obey him. A ruler without virtue

will inspire hatred in his subjects and they will seek to destroy him. This will undermine the regime. Tyrannies are therefore unstable.

Wise rulers must win affection from their subjects in order to rule well. And there are many ways to pursue this. Rulers must first win affection through loyalty and honor. The good ruler must inspire three feelings in the public - goodwill, confidence and respect of high office. The ruler must win goodwill by doing services for others. He must win confidence by being thought intelligent and just. Justice is more effective than intelligence in inspiring confidence, however. One cannot be just without being intelligent. Subjects must deem their rulers worthy of high honors. The ruler must achieve this by rising above outward circumstances. Cicero then discusses all those in need of justice, such as businessmen, who will be grateful for the enforcement of justice. The ruler must maintain equality before the law. Rulers must strive also to be a person worthy of honors, not merely to be perceived as one. This is the only way to convince others, as the ruler's life will be under constant scrutiny. Character is central to good ruling. Part of being a good ruler is giving good speeches, particularly in defense of those considered upright.

A good ruler must not only have a good reputation but must be kind and possess liberality. Rulers can demonstrate these qualities through personal service or having money. The latter method is easier, but the former is nobler. One must not be too kind or liberal as the virtue will be seen as excessive and available to anyone at all, even those without merit. Money should be distributed to subjects either due to necessity or utility but moderation is still crucial. The good ruler must not give to the ungrateful, as such a practice insults the grateful. Rulers must also be hospitable, eloquent and avoid offense. When giving, wise rulers must consider character and financial resources. It is easier to be effectively generous to poor men as they will not think that the ruler's generosity was due to their wealth. In any event, the ruler must always be just and never contravene justice in the name of kindness or liberality.

Cicero next considers services for the national interest. The main method of serving the national interest is defending private property rights and only taxing when it is absolutely necessary. People find theft by the state outrageous. This will breed resentment. Rulers will win goodwill by self-restraint and self-denial. Taking private property destroys harmony within the state by pitting some against others. Politicians who seek to redistribute property aim a "fatal blow at the whole principle of justice." When property rights are violated, the whole principle of private property is undermined. Such violations are impossible to defend because no one has reason to let others use his property through coercion, where one's consent is disregarded. Private debts must not be so large as to put the nation at risk; this is crucial to a well-run polity. Anyone who does this will win great popularity.

Finally Cicero considers how to make effective tradeoffs between different values, say health and riches. Expediency may require making tradeoffs in many circumstances. This requires practical wisdom. Cicero does not say much about this except to say that rightly balancing priorities is the fourth quality a ruler must exhibit to win goodwill. If a ruler has a good reputation, is kind, liberal and effectively weights priorities, he will win

the adoration of the people, allowing for a stable regime. Cicero seems to be arguing that Caesar will destroy the republic because he lacks these virtues, for a tyrant cannot maintain a stable regime.

Chapter 3: Laelius: On Friendship

Chapter 3: Laelius: On Friendship Summary and Analysis

Cicero's essay Laelius: On Friendship was written after the assassination of Caesar, after Marcus Antonius (Marc Antony) had taken dictatorial control. Cicero left the country but Atticus reproached him. Cicero heard of a meeting of the Roman Senate and turns around to return to Rome. The previous months were miserable for Cicero and he spent it writing Laelius: On Friendship.

This piece is a dialogue. Cicero claims that it is a transcription that he heard from Quintus Mucius Scaevola, one of his teachers, who in turn heard it firsthand. Laelius, the main character of the dialogue, was born one-hundred and forty years before Cicero wrote. He was friend with a man named Scipio Africanus who had died a few years before the dialogue took place. Laelius: On Friendship concerns Laelius' meditation on his legendary friendship with Africanus and on the nature of friendship itself.

The essay begins with Cicero describing how he came to be aware of the dialogue. He decides to record it since "everyone ought to think about" friendship. Laelius speaks with Gaius Fannius and Scaevola about his friendship with Scipio. The dialogue begins with Fannius and Scaevola asking Laelius to tell them about Scipio and friendship in general. Scipio's death caused Laelius great pain. He admits this despite the fact that some philosophers condemned such grief. Laelius discusses a speech Scipio gave about whether the soul survives death or not. In either case, friendship is something of great importance. How then is friendship possible and what is its nature?

Laelius begins by arguing that true friendship is only possible between good men. Forming friendships is in accord with nature. Real friendship is more potent than kinship because kinship does not imply a non-physical bond whereas friendship relies merely on good will. Friendship is the identity of feeling "about all things in heaven and earth: an identity which is strengthened by mutual goodwill and affection." Next, Laelius argues that life is not worth living without friends because even the other great goods in life lack something important if they cannot be shared with others. Sharing makes goods like riches and fame true goods. Laelius struggles with a deep question: whether the need for friendship indicates a deficiency or weakness in humans. It threatens the value of friendship if true, for friendship would form only out of imperfection. Laelius responds that the goodwill that leads to friendship is developed through love, which must come first, before any other benefits can be enjoyed. Otherwise, the friendship is flawed. Friendship is noble and cannot have so "ignoble" an origin as weakness. Scipio Africanus did not need Laelius or vice versa. They were friends because they admired each other's qualities. Common inclination draws others together. Friendship is in accord with nature, and since nature is eternal so is authentic friendship. However, it is hard for friendship to last one's whole life. Young boys become friends through common personality and activities. However, the personalities of youth change, as do their

activities. This often causes friendships to end violently, if appropriately; but it is better that they end gradually.

Friends should not do wrong for each other, as true friendship is based on goodness. This gives rise to the rule among friends not to ask each other to do wrong. Laelius next returns to his original claim that friendship does not originate in weakness. He argues that individuals who were weakest would be most in need of friends, but that this is clearly false. Laelius then argues against the Stoic thesis that a man should not be upset by the death of a friend. The pain of being attached to friends is what makes friendship possible in the first place. Friendship always brings the possibility of pain, and since friendship is part of a good life, the Stoics must be wrong. To lose human emotions is to cease to be human. Laelius argues that friends can exchange with another and repay kindness. There is a relationship of reciprocity, but this does not mean that friendship is based on exchange. "Friendship does not develop out of advantage; the process works the other way round."

Laelius turns to three theories on the limits and restrictions on affection between friends. He rejects all three theories. The first theory is that we should feel the same about our friends as we do about ourselves. We should, however, often do things for our friends that we wouldn't do for ourselves. The second theory is that our goodwill towards our friends should be equal to their attitude towards us, but this theory fails as well. It views friendship like an exchange, a view Laelius has already rejected. The third theory is that we should value friends as they value themselves. One's assessment of oneself still might be inaccurate. Laelius's view is that friends who are of good character should share all their concerns and aims with one another without reservation.

What kinds of friends should we select? They must be sound, stable and reliable, but friends cannot be selected except through practical experience; there are no hard and fast rules. You can only know which friends are worthwhile after the fact. True friends do not enjoy criticizing you, but will do so if it is to your good. Pretense and hypocrisy must be avoided. Friends must also be pleasant in conversation. One cannot have too much friendship from one's good friends. Superior friends must make themselves equals to inferior friends, such as if one friend is more famous than another. Decisions about which friends to have and keep should only be made once in full physical and intellectual maturity. In these cases, similarity of aim and purpose must hold friends together. Good men and bad men cannot be friends but breaking off friendships can bring disaster and should only occur immediately if necessitated by an evil action. To avoid disastrous ends to our friendships, we must work to ensure our friendships contain no rifts and be careful not to form attachments too quickly. Good friends must earn one's devotion and be similar in goodness of character. We often think that friends should give us what we lack in ourselves, but Laelius thinks the opposite true. Similarity helps to ensure permanence of friendship. Friends will be willing to do anything for one another. This willingness will produce mutual respect. To be happy, we must strive to be the best people we can, and this will produce the best friendships. We cannot neglect our friends and must have friends to live even a halfway decent life.

Friendships offer many chances for causing our friends pain and suffering, and vice versa. The greatest danger is a friend who is a chameleon, constantly changing his behavior according to the situation. True friends are constant with one another and inside themselves, as they must be honest when bearing their souls to one another. Friends must also be willing to draw boundaries, being honest when they agree or disagree. Otherwise, the agreement is a sham.

Laelius ends by arguing that the root of friendship is moral goodness. The best friendships are one that last one's whole life. And while friendships with the young when one is old can be very fulfilling, friendship matures over time, so that older friendships have a richness that younger friendships lack.

Chapter 4: On the Orator

Chapter 4: On the Orator Summary and Analysis

On the Orator is the longest work of the book. It concerns the role of the 'orator' or statesman, not merely a speaker. Cicero is known as one of the great orators of history, and the dialogue concerns a debate between Lucius Licinius Crassus, his teacher, who at his time had no superior, and Marcus Antonius Orator, another prominent orator and Crassus's competitor. The debate concerns the sort of thing that oratory is and what subjects the greater orator must master.

Oratory was a high art form in the ancient world. It required not merely speaking well, but knowing many subjects such as speech writing, proper gesturing, vocal control, literary references, emotional tone and memorization. Many of the great Greek and Roman thinkers thought about the skill of oratory and rhetoric. Cicero is no exception.

Cicero argues that this dialogue took place in 91 BC, during a great time of crisis. Crassus hosts the other men involved in the dialogue at the Tusculum. Besides Crassus and Antonius, the dialogue includes Publius Sulpicus Rufus, Gaius Aurelius Cotta, and Quintus Mucius Scaevola. Cicero aims, in this book, to determine what kind of man the orator must be to rule the Roman republic. It is widely considered an artistic masterpiece in Latin.

Cicero opens the book with a letter to his brother Quintus. He writes this book in part to help save his country from decay during a time of turmoil. He also hopes to teach his reader about the ideas of the great orators of the past generation. The dialogue will cover a debate that Cicero has with his brother, whether great oratory requires "wide theoretical knowledge" or whether good oratory is "entirely independent of systematic learning, and merely depends on a special kind of natural gift, supplemented by practice." He notes further that the art of oratory is possessed by only a few. He speculates as to why this is, and argues that great orators are hard to find because oratory requires the mastery of many distinct arts - because of "the incredible vastness and difficulty of the subject."

Cicero illustrates his view through the words of Crassus. Antonius, Crassus, Cotta, Scaevola and Rufus meet at the Tusculum. The younger men - Cotta, Scaevola and Rufus -ask Crassus to tell them about the nature of oratory. Crassus notes that being a great orator is a difficult task. It is hard to wield such power effectively. Crassus argues that orators founded the first human communities and that the orator cannot restrict himself to the Forum and the courts but must have many excellencies. Scaevola challenges both views with historical counterexamples; for instance, he names great orators with few masteries and poor orators with many masteries.

In response, Crassus focuses on developing and defending his second point, in part by asking "How can anyone be a good speaker unless he understands what he is talking

about?" Without this understanding, the speech will be worthless and the orator will be a mere demagogue. Even if a crowd is in favor of the orator, he must know enough about life to illustrate his points, and he must display this expertise to properly impress his audience. He must (a) display sound knowledge (b) properly arrange his material, (c) possess a good style, (d) a retentive memory and (e) an impressive delivery. The orator must master the entire sphere of philosophy that concerns the life and behavior of human beings. He must tie these skills together, must as a great sportsman ties many skills together.

Scaevola responds that if someone had mastery of many subjects, he would no doubt be a great individual, but he still might be a poor orator. However, Crassus argues that we are discussing the perfect orator. Next Antonius steps in and argues that the great orator does not need mastery of all these subjects, despite the fact that they would improve him. He then canvasses the oratorical philosophies of many great Greek thinkers that, for instance, only philosophers can train great orators or that oratory can be learned simply through skill and practice. Sulpicius Rufus asks Antonius and Crassus to continue debating.

Crassus begins to speak again, addressing the question of whether there is one 'art' known as oratory. Crassus argues that there is no one such art and Antonius agrees. Crassus notes Antonius's position that great orators simply have an innate gift, and he admits that many features of a great orator are innate. Antonius argues that orators must approach their speeches nervously, as the great orator will be faced with high expectations. He must not err or the crowd will suspect that he is not up to his game. He next argues that the orator requires many skills to be effective, including the "acuteness of a logician, the profundity of a philosopher, the diction virtually of a poet, the memory of a lawyer, the voice of a performer in tragic drama," and so on. Sulpicius

Rufus and Cotta ask whether they are worthy to be great orators. Antonius and Crassus think so. They merely need the enthusiasm to train properly. They then both advise the younger members of the group on how to become great orators, by reviewing the five major skills of the orator. The apprentice orator must practice in front of groups, read great speeches and memorize them, learn important references and turns of phrase, among other things. Crassus describes the art of oratory on analogy with the art of the law, as it requires many distinct masteries and great training in many different settings. Also, oratory and legal practice have similar consequences, as both can greatly affect the lives of others. Knowledge of the law, then, is essential for the orator.

The orator has great power. Even in battle, oratory is more effective than a weapon as the orator can move soldiers and suppress dissenters. Scaevola responds that Crassus must have experienced this power first hand. Sulpicius appreciates the advice but wants to know more about the actual practice of oratory. Crassus invites Antonius to speak and also to reply to his arguments.

Antonius thinks that the successful statesman is one "who knows and employs the means of securing and promoting the interests of his country." This does not require the kind of extraordinary mastery that Crassus believes is necessary. Antonius thinks

Crassus is being extreme and that a great orator can be a good or a bad man, so long as he is effective at convincing others, possesses vocal power, good delivery and some wit. The art of administration and law is separate from the art of oratory as are many other arts. The orator is an exaggerator and not necessarily virtuous. He attacks Crassus for engaging in some of this demagoguery himself, implying that Crassus knows better than to elevate oratory as he has. For Antonius, we are to seek virtue and oratory often undermines virtue because of its temptations and effects on others. He attacks Crassus for not learning from the philosophers to not use poor arguments design to please the crowd. He describes an event where Crassus defended Publius Rutilius as an example of his view. Eloquence, then, is separable from philosophy. And as for the lawyer, he is often merely a trickster as well. The orator does not need to know the law, however, as most legal issues are not directly relevant to oratory. He says that Crassus has not won renown due to his knowledge and mastery of many subjects but "by sheer wit and charm - and by some very good jokes." He continues to attack Crassus for arguing in favor of a view of oratory that is contrary to his practice. Instead, the best orators hire help in putting together a speech with the necessary knowledge. Antonius suggests that money alone might make a good orator. Oratory is mere entertainment, the "gratification of the ear."

Crassus is disappointed that Antonius makes "the orator into nothing better than an unskilled laborer." He doesn't respond to the personal attacks, but instead argues that Antonius is being disingenuous as he does not have this view of perfect oratory. Crassus was never speaking of the ordinary practice of oratory in the first place, but again, he was outlining the abilities of the perfect orator. There the conversation ends and the group dissolves with each individual leaving to tend to his own concerns.

Chapter 5: The Dream of Scipio

Chapter 5: The Dream of Scipio Summary and Analysis

The Dream of Scipio is brief and was lost to history for centuries until discovered in the medieval period. The excerpt is part of a larger work, most of which is still lost. The dream described is the dream of Scipio Africanus the Younger. He has a dream that his grandfather visits him and takes him to a heavenly place, setting life and its aims in a "cosmic perspective." The elder Scipio reveals the structure of the universe to him. The dream illustrates the theological doctrine of 'selective immortality' which holds that only great and virtuous persons are given eternal life and Cicero's view that patriotic service is the way to the gods.

The dream opens while Scipio is in a military tribune that travels to Africa. He greets his friend, King Basinissa, who embraces him in tears. They discuss current affairs. The king entertains him and asks him about his grandfather, Scipio Africanus the Elder. Scipio Africanus the Younger retires to bed and has a dream that his grandfather Africanus is there. Africanus encourages him not to be afraid. He asks his grandson to remember what he tells him. They 'zoom out' from Scipio's current troubles to a heavenly realm, where they can look down upon the earth.

Africanus tells Scipio his future: he will win many battles and become dictator of the empire; the fate of the whole country will lie in his hands. Africanus encourages him to rule virtuously, so that he will earn immortality. The Supreme God will reward virtuous rule. Africanus summons his son, Scipio's father, Paullus. This sends Scipio into tears. Scipio wishes to join them in the afterlife, but Paullus tells him that God wants him to tend to the earth, the center of the universe. Scipio was brought into being to inhabit the earth and reflect the soul of the heavens in the earthly sphere. Scipio is advised to "cherish justice and devotion" to family, friends and one's country for "that is the life which leads to heaven and to the company of those who, having completed their lives in the world, are now released from their bodies ..." and dwell in the "Milky Way."

Scipio can look down upon the earth and is mesmerized by it but Africanus encourages him to not be so focused on it and instead focus on the heavenly reality. The universe is made up of nine concentric spheres. The largest one is where the Supreme God exists in person, the lower spheres are contained by the orbits of the planets, and the smallest and central sphere is earth. The spheres, the orbits of the planet, produce a constant, cosmic harmony that fills the earth, although people cannot realize it. The harmony contains seven tones (Mercury and Venus were thought to have the same speed, so they produce one tone; other tones are produced by Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune). Scipio is filled with delight, but he still focuses on the earth. Africanus tells him that the earth is insignificant. Mankind cannot give him happiness through praise or glory. Scipio cannot even control the whole earth, only a small region of it. His earthly conquests amount to little. And an 'earth year' is only a small part of a cosmic year,

which lasts between thirty thousand and three hundred thousand generations (a cosmic year is the rotation of the entire cosmos).

Africanus encourages Scipio not to abandon hope of returning to the heavenly realm. This higher plane "offers great and eminent men their authentic reward." He encourages Scipio to contemplate this place for ever and "let Virtue herself ... summon you to a glory that is genuine and real." Scipio has a piece of God within him and he must reflect that in reality. There is a God, Africanus argues, and He is eternal. The soul is a piece of the Supreme God and it is eternal as well. Africanus will live forever, but if he lives life without virtue, his soul will remain close to the earth and undergo a long purgation before he can ascend to a higher sphere. Instead, his soul must serve the country to return directly to the heavens. Africanus then vanishes and Scipio wakes up.

Characters

Cicero

Cicero is one of the greatest statesmen, intellectuals, philosophers and politicians of classical antiquity. He was born in 106 B.C. just prior to the birth of Julius Caesar. Cicero grew up rich. During this time, wealthy families usually played a role in politics, but not Cicero's. He had an elite education in Rome where he studied philosophy and rhetoric. He also studied in Athens and Rhodes. He became a lawyer, garnering his first fame there and was elected to the Senate in 76 B.C. In 63 B.C. he was elected to a consulship. During his consulship, he achieved fame in uncovering and thwarting what was known as the "conspiracy of Catiline." He ardently defended the governmental structure of the Roman republic and decried the dictatorship of Casear. However, his influence vanished when Caesar took control. He was happy when Caesar was assassinated and came back into public life to attack Mark Antony. Cicero was killed during a period of assassinations for opposing Mark Antony.

While in exile, and in the times surrounding it, Cicero wrote most of his philosophical works. He had many goals. First among them was to increase the philosophical literacy of the Roman elites. He translated and commented on many classical Greek works. He also wrote some original works defending the Stoic philosophy. Cicero wrote on rhetoric, oratory, friendship and many other topics. Many of these topics had a distinctly practical bent, and focused on the character of the statesman. Cicero criticized dictatorship openly and developed a distinctive philosophy of government that was a precursor to later natural law theories. His theory of the statesman was that a good statesman must have a good civic character in order to avoid forcing people to do his will. Cicero is also one of the first figures of classical antiquity to introduce the modern ethical concept of duty. In this collection, we have excerpts from several of Cicero's most famous works, Discussions at Tusculum, On Duties, Laelius: On Friendship, On the Orator and the famous (but partially lost) The Dream of Scipio.

Scipio Africanus the Younger

Scipio Africanus the Younger figures into two of the chapters of the book, Laelius: On Friendship and The Dream of Scipio. He is the grandson of Scipio Africanus the Elder, who famously defeated Hannibal. His full name was Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Numantinus and he lived from 185 to 129 B.C. He was a renowned general and politician in the late Roman republic and is responsible for the Roman destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C. His father, Paullus, conquered Macedonia. Scipio the Younger was widely regarded as an excellent orator and was famous for his opposition to Tiberius Gracchus.

At the time of Cicero's writing, Scipio the Younger figures prominently in the culture of the Roman Republic. He was a well-known orator, conquerer and statesman, and was

also known as an excellent and cultured member of the Roman elite. His death is regarded as a tragedy, as it was a murder. Cicero famously accused Carbo, a follower of Gracchus, for his murder. Scipio looms large in Cicero's mind specifically. He features in Laelius: On Friendship rather prominently as Laelius's best friend. Laelius considered himself to have had a near perfect friendship with Scipio, which he argued was made possible by their deep mutual admiration for one another. Scipio is heavily lauded in the piece because he was so near and dear to Laelius. In fact, Laelius uses his grief over Scipio's death as an example of true and proper grief, a grief that directly contradicts the Stoic thesis that the virtuous man never suffers bad emotions.

The Dream of Scipio is Cicero's most famous work. Scipio is the work's main character. The dream of Scipio is a dream he has of his grandfather, Scipio the Elder, taking him through the heavens, showing him the ultimate structure of reality. His father Paullus also makes an appearance. The point of the Dream of Scipio is to show Scipio that his place in the world is small and that his conquests and fame were nothing in comparison to the magnitude of the heavens and the perfection of God. Scipio the Elder tells him that if he has great virtue and serves his country rightly, that he will achieve immortality and earn a place in the high heavens. He has an eternal soul that will not face purgation should he avoid vice and disservice to his country. The Dream of Scipio not only illustrates the Roman view of the cosmos but also contains a rather explicit theism, a doctrine of salvation and purgatory and a theory of the human person as one capable of virtue and made in the image of the divine.

Julius Caesar

The famed destroyer of the Roman republic and first Caesar of the Roman Empire. Cicero was a fierce critic of his contemporary, preferring the republic to an autocracy. Cicero cheered Caesar's assassination.

Cicero's Son

Cicero's son, to whom On Duties is dedicated.

Quintus Mucius Scaevola

The Augur, who was a teacher of Cicero, and member of the famous Scaevola family. He features prominently in Laelius: On Friendship and On the Orator as a member of both dialogues. He related the conversation with Laelius to Cicero, who then wrote it down.

Gaius Fannius Strabo

A Roman Historian who takes part in the discussion with Laelius.

Gaius Laelius Scaevola

The famed friend of Scipio Africanus the Younger, who tells of his friendship with Scipio the Younger in Laelius: On Friendship

Lucius Licinius Crassus

The greatest Roman orator prior to Cicero and Cicero's teacher. He is the main figure in On the Orator, defending the view that great oration requires mastery of many topics.

Marcus Antonius Orator

Another great orator, who challenges Crassus on the nature of oratory, arguing that oratory is mere persuasion and wit, not requiring mastery of many areas of study.

Publius Sulipicus Rufus

A student questioner of Crassus and Antonius.

Gaius Aurelius Cotta

A student questioner of Crasses and Antonius, along with Sulpicius and Scaevola.

Scipio Africanus the Elder

Scipio the Younger's grandfather, a famous conquerer who defeated Hannibal and was held in high regard in the Roman republic. He appears to Scipio the Younger in the Dream of Scipio, and takes Scipio to the heavens and teaches him to think on great things, like virtue and public service, rather than focus on petty matters. The road to immortality, argues Scipio the Elder, comes from virtue and deeds of renown.

Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus

Scipio the Elder's son and Scipio the Younger's father, he was the famed conqueror of Macedonia.

Objects/Places

Tusculum

The site of Cicero's home in exile from Rome, and where the Discussions at Tusculum takes place, along with On the Oratory (although On the Oratory took place prior to Cicero's birth).

Rome

The center of the Roman Republic and later the Roman Empire. It is the heart of Roman Civilization and where the political intrigue that animated Roman political life takes place.

The Heavenly Spheres

The ultimate structure of the universe, the cosmos is structured by seven concentric spheres of reality, with the sphere of God at the highest sphere, and Earth located in the center, with each of the major planets in between (Mercury and Venus comprise one sphere, along with Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune).

On Duties

Cicero's work, composed of several books, which outlines the structure of duty, virtue and the good statesman. It also contains a detailed critique of Caesar's dictatorship.

Stoicism

One of the animating philosophies of Cicero's life, the Stoics held that the happy life was purely one of moral goodness. External goods could add nothing to human happiness and happiness consists in virtue and tranquility. Because of the Stoic emphasis on uninterrupted tranquility as part of happiness, they argued that the happy man must not be attached to any external goods, even friends and family. Cicero appears to agree with this view in Discussions at Tusculum, but appears to disagree in Laelius: On Friendship.

The Forum

The public square of Rome where many public debates took place, along with public votes.

The Dream of Scipio

Not only Scipio to Younger's dream of his grandfather's heavenly advice, but the name of Cicero's most famous essay.

On the Orator

A series of works on the nature of oratory and statesmanship. Like On Duties, it is focused on outlining an ideal of civic virtue for the statesman.

Laelius: On Friendship

A dialogue with Laelius about the nature of friendship, which was communicated to Cicero by one of the participants, Scaevola.

The Peripatetic School

The peripatetics were followers of Aristotle, and argued, contra the Stoics, that happiness could only be completed with external goods.

The Roman Senate

The state's chief council, which had 600 members under Sulla and 900 members under Caesar. The Senate was originally a merely advisory body but it usually had great influence over the Assembly. Caesar destroyed its authority. Cicero was a Senator for a time.

The Triumvirs

A ruling elite of three co-dictators. The first triumvirate was composed of Cnaeus Pom-eois Magnus, Marcus Licinius Crassus and Gaius Julius Caesar. Caesar took over and was assassinated. The first triumvirate led to Cicero's exile and Caesar's death resulted in Cicero's praise and return. The second triumvirate, composed of Marc Antony, Octavian and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. This triumvirate led directly to Cicero's death.

Themes

Happiness Is Stable

The theme of Discussions at Tusculum is that the happy life is one of moral goodness and only moral goodness. Cicero is out to defend the Stoic thesis that moral goodness is necessary and sufficient for happiness. There are no external goods that can add to supreme happiness, not food, water, sight, hearing, wife, father, or child. All of these things are mere 'preferables' whereas bads such as pain are 'unpreferables.' External 'goods' are merely choice worthy; they do not add to or complete happiness in any way. This thesis is in contrast to the Aristotelian-Peripatetic philosophy which holds that while moral goodness is nearly sufficient for happiness, it can be completed by the possession of some external goods. Cicero's argument is that of a traditional Stoic. Happiness must be stable. In other words, it must not be something that, once achieved, can be taken away, for happiness is a state of tranquility and completion. For it to be perfect, one must not be worried about losing it. Thus, happiness can only be what a man can always achieve through his own will in any situation. The only thing that is always under a man's control is his will and goodness.

The problem with the thesis is that while it seems to have a fine motivation, it is shockingly counter-intuitive. How can one not hold that external goods like food, health, sight, hearing, wife, father and child are not great goods in themselves? How can they not be goods that make a good life better? Cicero argues that these are goods that can be lost and that the good man will be happy without them. He goes to great lengths to argue that even the loss of the senses need not prevent a happy life.

Friendship is a Necessary Risk

The major theme of Laelius: On Friendship is that friendship is (a) only possible between good persons and (b) is one of the greatest goods in life. Laelius speaks with the opinion of Cicero, but Laelius's opinion seems to oppose Cicero's earlier views. On Laelius's view, one cannot enjoy the other goods of life unless she has someone to share them with. Further, one needs friends to share life's ups and downs, to admire the character of others, and so on. However, Cicero originally defended the Stoic position, which holds that no one's happiness can be improved by external goods, including friends. Laelius argues that one appropriately grieves over a friend's pain or his death. Making friends is such a great good that it is worth the risk of pain and grief at a later time. These two ideas seem in tension with one another. While for the Stoic, friendship is 'preferable,' it does not make a good life better and it cannot improve on happiness.

Laelius argues, partly in line with the Stoics, that friends are not needed due to the weaknesses of a person. The desire for friends does not arise out of an imperfection, but instead out of moral goodness and perfection. Friends are intrinsically good, yyt one does not need friends to be happy. As Laelius claims, he did not 'need' Scipio the

Younger, nor did Scipio the Younger need him. Instead, they were friends because they admired each other's character. However, Laelius still defends the position that friendship is such a great good that it is worth risking extreme emotional turmoil to achieve it.

The Statesman Must Have Good Character

In Chapter 2, On Duties, Cicero argues against dictatorship by arguing that a dictatorship cannot produce a stable and healthy regime. The dictator, since he often does not have the support of the people, must rule with cruelty and force; but the people will inevitably oppose him, revolt against him and perhaps even assassinate him (as happened with Julius Caesar in Cicero's day). In contrast, a republican statesman must struggle to earn great renown and goodwill from the people. In this case, the statesman can rule effectively because he has the support and trust of the people.

Furthermore, a dictator must become a ruthless person and is often isolated because he cannot trust anyone not to murder him, often not even his own family. However, the good statesman has won the love of all. The argument against dictatorship is that a good man cannot be a dictator and that a regime cannot survive the rule of an evil man. On Duties describes in detail the qualities that the statesman must have. The statesman must have three virtues, wisdom (the knowledge of right and wrong), temperance (the ability to govern one's passions with reason) and justice (the right treatment of others). If the statesman lacks these qualities, then the people will not give him their allegiance for any but poor reasons. A wise ruler pursues respect and allegiance through loyalty and honor. He must acquire goodwill, confidence and respect of his office. He can win these things through performing services, being just and by rising above petty circumstances.

The Orator Must Have Mastery of Many Subjects

The major argument of On the Orator is made by Crassus, however argues that perfect oratory requires the mastery of many disparate subjects. His first argument for this position is that good orators are extremely rare. His hypothesis for why orators are so rare is that effective orators are the masters of many arts and that this is an achievement beyond the abilities of most men. He also argues that the orator must master many distinct skills because oratory is actually composed of many distinct skills. The great orator must (a) display sound knowledge (b) properly arrange his material, (c) possess a good style, (d) a retentive memory and (e) an impressive delivery (which itself includes hand gestures, facial expression, and voice quality, among other things). On Crassus's view, the orator must master the entire sphere of philosophy that concerns the life and behavior of human beings. He must tie these skills together, much as a great sportsman ties many skills together.

In On the Orator, Crassus's fellow orator and opponent in debate is Antonius. Antonius argues that the orator does not need mastery of these subjects, even though they might make him an excellent man. He gives several examples of great orators who lacked

mastery of these subjects. Antonius even argues that Crassus himself has given great speeches that were not backed by wide mastery of many subjects. Crassus responds by arguing that he is speaking of the perfect orator, the ideal of oratory.

Style

Perspective

The perspective of the book is ultimately Cicero's. Cicero is the author of all five chapters, although the book's introduction is written by Michael Grant. Each chapter typically begins with a brief explanation of why the piece is written, perhaps a bit on the genesis of the piece and when Cicero wrote it. Cicero often gives his own explanations of these facts, and Grant typically does this as well. Once we enter the main body of each chapter, the perspective changes depending on the chapter we are in. In Discussions at Tusculum, Cicero composes a dialogue between himself and a friend on the nature of the good life. The friend is largely a straight man for what would otherwise simply be a soliloquy by Cicero. In On Duties, Cicero writes as he would write a treatise. Initially he writes to his son, explaining the purpose of the book, but in general he is writing to his reader directly. Laelius: On Friendship, in contrast, is an actual dialogue. Cicero begins by recalling a discussion he learned of from his teacher, Scaevola. Scaevola was present as a student when he and Gaius Finnius asked Gaius Lealius about his legendary friendship with Scipio the Younger. There is a back and forth between Laelius on the one hand and Scaevola and Finnius on the other. On the Orator is a spirited debate. Five characters play a role. There are two famous orators, Crassus and Antonius. They debate the nature of oratory by request from three of their students - Scaevola, Cotta and Sulpicius. Crassus does most of the talking, but Antonius responds at length. Finally, in the Dream of Scipio, Scipio is the primary narrator, reporting his discussions in his vision with his grandfather and father.

Tone

The tone of the book, much like the perspective, changes depending on the chapter one picks. This is, after all, a compilation of Cicero's writings that were written at different points in his life. The tone of Discussions at Tusculum is one of intellectual inquiry. When Cicero wrote this piece, he was at his most philosophical and exalts philosophy as a method of handling pain and dark desires. His friend eagerly asks him about the nature of the good life and happiness. Cicero defends the Stoic position at great length, although towards the end Cicero seems to think the difference between the Stoic and Peripatetic positions does not amount to much. In On Duties, Cicero writes with an impassioned tone. He is deeply concerned about the corrupt dictatorship of Caesar and outlines the nature of a good statesman. A not-very-implicit criticism of Caesar is at work in this chapter, an argument that only a virtuous statesman can rule a regime effectively and stably and that a dictator cannot have virtue in this way. Laelius: On Friendship has the quality of a thoughtful lamentation and reflection on the past. Laelius has lost his legendary friend Scipio the Younger. Some students ask him about the nature of friendship and Laelius teaches them based on his experience from his friendship with Scipio. Laelius lauds Scipio and deeply misses him. On the Orator is a spirited debate on the nature of oratory. The only tone is one of hardy debate between two of the

Roman World's finest orators and the eager, open minds of their students. The Dream of Scipio has a mystical and supernatural quality, as it is the description of a vision.

Structure

The structure of On the Good Life is that of a compilation of distinct writings from a single person. The book begins with a detailed introduction from the translator Michael Grant, who sets the scene of Cicero's writings, explains them, gives a brief biography of Cicero and situates his life and thought in their historical context. Next come the five chapters. Many of these chapters are 'books' within a larger work. For instance, Discussions at Tusculum is Book V of a larger series, and On Duties is Book II within a multi-volume work. On the Orator is Book I of a series. The Dream of Scipio is only one part of a larger work, the rest of which has been lost to history.

The chapters all have different styles. The Discussions is a dialogue between Cicero and his friend, although Cicero does most of the speaking. On Duties is mostly a straightforward treatise. Laelius: On Friendship is a dialogue and On the Orator is a debate. The dream of Scipio, however, is a fictional narrative. Grant includes a variety of useful resources along with the major chapters. He adds four appendices, one on Cicero's philosophical works, and the second on his rhetorical works. The third appendix concerns principal dates in Cicero's life and appendix four lists some important books about Cicero. Grant also includes some fascinating genealogical tables, and a list of maps of the Roman republic at the time of Cicero's writing.

Quotes

"Since the universe is wholly filed with the Eternal Intelligence and the Divine Mind, it must be that human souls are influenced by their contact with divine souls ..." (8)

"Therefore, since there is nothing better than reason, and since it exists both in man and God, the first common possession of man and God is reason." (9)

"Only is universal service can mankind find peace, or peace be found for the troubles of the individual soul." (10)

"And since right reason is law, we must believe that men have law also in common with the gods ... Justice is one: it binds all human society, and is based on one law, which is right reason applied to command and prohibition." (11)

"It is better to extend the frontiers of the mind than to push back the boundaries of the empire." (32)

"Philosophy! The guide of our lives, the explorer of all that is good in us, exterminator of all evil!" (54)

"Socrates, however, took the initiative in summoning philosophy down from the heavens." (57)

"But the implication that something can be right without being expedient, or expedient without being right, is the most pernicious error that could possibly be introduced into human life." (124)

"No power on earth, if it labors beneath the burden of fear, can possibly be strong enough to survive." (132)

"Here in the city nothing is left - only the lifeless walls of houses. And even they look afraid that some further terrifying attack may be imminent. The real Rome has gone forever." (135)

"People have always wanted equal rights before the law; for otherwise whatever rights they might happen to possess would not be worthy of the name." (141)

"For whatever gifts of mind and character we may possess, we only reap their finest fruits when we are able to share them with our nearest and dearest." (212)

"Remove respect from friendship, and you have taken away the most splendid ornament it possesses." (217)

"For any human being, the best support of all is a good friend." (220)

"The particular characteristic of a good speaker is a harmonious, attractive manner, marked by a certain artistry and polish." (254)

"But what we are looking for is 'the Orator'. This means that we have to envisage a speaker who is wholly flawless and endowed with every conceivable merit." (277)

"It is the duty of an orator to speak in a manner calculated to persuade." (284)

"Even on the field of battle the practitioner of oratory is able to remain unharmed - his ability to speak is more effective than a herald's staff." (307)

"A successful statesman is defined as the individual who knows and employs the means of securing and promoting the interests of his country." (310)

"Every man who has preserved or helped his country, or has made its greatness even greater, is reserved a special place in heaven, where he may enjoy an eternal life of happiness." (344)

"Contemplate these heavenly regions instead! Scorn what is mortal!" (349)

"Instead let Virtue herself, by her own unaided allurements, summon you to a glory that is genuine and real." (352)

"Your real self is not that corporeal, palpable shape, but the spirit inside. Understand that you are god." (353)

Topics for Discussion

Who is Cicero? And what is his historical significance?

What do you think about the Stoic view that moral goodness is necessary and sufficient for happiness? Is it true? Why or why not?

Do you think Cicero's arguments on behalf of the Stoic view that moral goodness is necessary and sufficient for happiness plausible? If so, why? If not, why not?

What is Cicero's criticism of Caesar in On Duties?

What are the components of a good friendship, on Laelius's view? Name at least four and explain them in detail.

What is an argument Crassus gives on behalf of his view that the good orator has mastery over many subjects? What is one of Antonius's replies? Who has the upper hand in the dispute?

What is the point of the Dream of Scipio? What is Scipio the Elder trying to teach Scipio the Younger?