

**THE ARGUMENT
AGAINST HIMSELF**

PART FOUR – STATESMAN

Aris Skliros

PLATO'S ACADEMY IN THE ORCHARD

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Full text with interleaved Euclid correspondences

London, 2026

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PART FOUR – STATESMAN**

Author: Aris Skliros

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Abstract

Complete novel text of *The Argument Against Himself* (Cratylus · Theaetetus · Sophist · Statesman · Parmenides), with green **EUCLID** boxes and amber **NOTE** boxes interleaved wherever number, geometry, measure, part–whole, contact, or continuum is invoked. Every El. marker is a scholarly **correspondence**: the dialogues predate Euclid. For the Clay / powers scene, only Books **VII** and **X** are Referenced.

Preface

Chronology. Plato's Academy dialogues predate Euclid's *Elements*. Markers El.*B*.Def.*N* / El.*B*.Prop.*N* record correspondences, not citations by Plato or the novelist.

Cite-first (Theaetetus Clay / powers).

- El.VII.Def.16 — plane / oblong number
- El.VII.Def.18 — square number
- El.VII.Defs.17 & 19 — solid / cube *numbers* (not XI–XIII)
- El.X.Def.1 — commensurable / incommensurable
- El.X.Def.2 — commensurable in square
- El.X.Prop.9 — conceptual twin only

Do **not** cite as Referenced for Clay: I–VI, VIII, IX, XI–XIII.

Cite-first (Statesman due measure). El.V.Defs.1–7 (part, multiple, ratio, same ratio, proportional, greater ratio). Due measure itself is normative, not identical to geometric mean (VI.Def.2 soft only).

How to read. Continuous novel from Prologue through Part Five. At annotated loci a green Euclid box (Referenced) or amber note (light) interrupts briefly. Greek is transliterated or omitted for pdf_{latex}.

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Part IV

Statesman

Chapter 70

**SEVENTY. Three Times as
Great**



1
The Statesman begins: how is the statesman
three times as great as other rulers?



Three Times as Great — opening scene.

They were back in the orchard at eight the next morning, which was earlier than either of them had been out of bed voluntarily all summer, and Danae had not brushed her hair.

. . .

“You said four seconds,” said Lela.

. . .

“I said four seconds,” agreed Sophia, “and then I held it for fourteen hours, and if either of you thinks that was easy you have not been paying attention.”

. . .

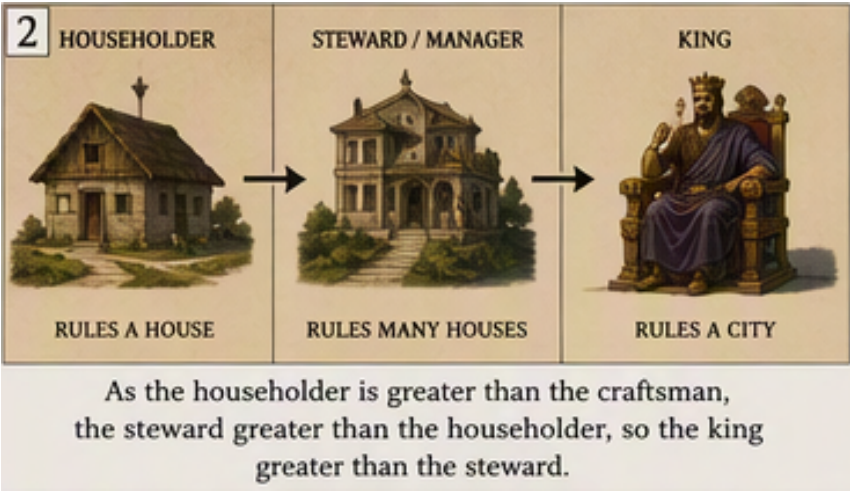
“Do it.”

. . .

The owl did it.

. . .

The courtyard came back exactly as it had been: the afternoon light, the plane tree, the boy with the snub nose and the shadows under his eyes, Theodorus by the wall with his arms folded, the tall calm man from Italy with his hands at his sides for once. And the old man, halfway across the flagstones, with his hand half up.





Three Times as Great — the chapter's central dialogue.

. . .

“I’m really much indebted to you, Theodorus,” said Socrates, “for introducing me to Theaetetus. And also to our visitor.”

. . .

Lela let out a long breath and put her forehead on her knees.

. . .

“He said thank you,” she said, into her own legs.

. . .

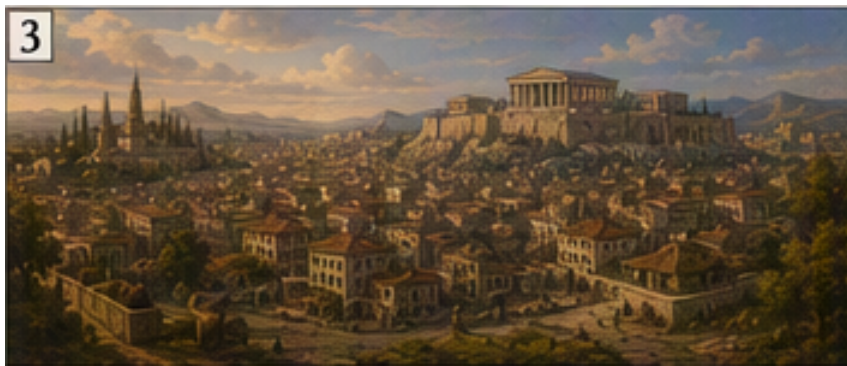
“He said thank you,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Four hours. He sat there for four hours while a stranger did the thing he couldn’t do, in front of him, without once mentioning him — and the first thing he says is thank you.”

. . .

“Yes.”



A city is not just many houses,
but a whole living body.



Three Times as Great — the central concept made visible.

. . .

“To Theodorus. He’s thanking the man who brought them. Not even — he’s thanking the introduction.”

. . .

“He is thanking the introduction,” said the owl, “which is the only part of it anybody else can take credit for, which is why he picked it. “Now stop, because you are about to miss a joke, and he is only going to make two more in his life that anybody wrote down.”

. . .

“And perhaps, Socrates,” said Theodorus, “your debt will be three times as great — when they complete both the statesman and the philosopher for you.”

. . .

“Well,” said Socrates. “Yes and no. “Shall we say, my dear Theodorus, that we’ve heard the best arithmetician and geometer in Greece putting it like that?”

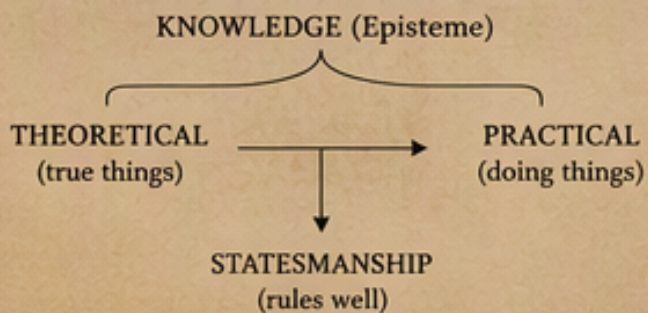
. . .

“How do you mean, Socrates?”

. . .

“Because you assumed that each of the three were to be assigned equal worth. “When in fact they differ in value by more than can be expressed in terms of mathematical proportion.”

4



Statesmanship is a kind of knowledge—
practical knowledge that rules well.



Three Times as Great — the guiding analogy.

EUCLID · Elements V — ratio; capable of ratio

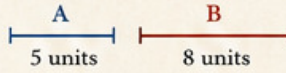
El.V.Def.3 — *ratio* STRONG

A ratio is a certain type of condition with respect to size of two magnitudes of the same kind.

3. **RATIO**

A ratio is a certain type of condition with respect to size of two magnitudes of the same kind.

For example, the ratio of A to B.
(A and B are both lengths.)



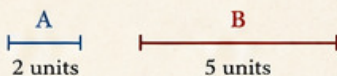
El.V.Def.3 — ratio

El.V.Def.4 — *capable of ratio* STRONG

(Those) magnitudes are said to have a ratio with respect to one another which, being multiplied, are capable of exceeding one another.

4. WHEN TWO MAGNITUDES HAVE A RATIO

Two magnitudes have a ratio to one another when, if multiples of the one be taken, some will exceed the other, and if multiples of the other be taken, some will exceed the one.



$3 \times A = 6 > 5 = B$
(so some multiple of A exceeds B)
 $3 \times B = 15 > 2 = A$
(so some multiple of B exceeds A)
Therefore, A and B have a ratio.

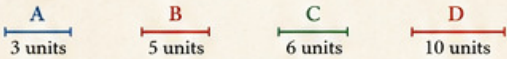
El.V.Def.4 — capable of ratio

El.V.Def.5 — same ratio STRONG

Magnitudes are said to be in the same ratio, the first to the second, and the third to the fourth, when equal multiples of the first and the third either both exceed, are both equal to, or are both less than, equal multiples of the second and the fourth, respectively, being taken in corresponding order, according to any kind of multiplication whatever.

5. EQUALITY OF RATIOS

The ratios of A to B and of C to D are equal when, for every pair of equal multiples, the multiples of the first are greater than, equal to, or less than one another, according as the multiples of the second are greater than, equal to, or less than one another.

Example: 

Take any m, n (multiples)	$m = 1, n = 1$	$m = 2, n = 1$	$m = 3, n = 2$
mA vs nB	$3 < 5$	$6 > 5$	$9 = 10$
mC vs nD	$6 < 10$	$12 > 10$	$18 = 20$

In every case the comparisons agree. Therefore $A:B = C:D$.

El.V.Def.5 — same ratio

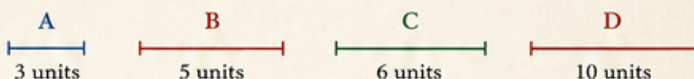
El.V.Def.6 — proportional STRONG

And let magnitudes having the same ratio be called proportional.

6. PROPORTIONAL MAGNITUDES

When four magnitudes are such that the ratio of the first to the second is equal to the ratio of the third to the fourth, they are called proportional.

$$A : B :: C : D$$



Since $A : B = C : D$, the four magnitudes are proportional.

El.V.Def.6 — proportional

El.V.Def.7 — *greater ratio* LIGHT

And when for equal multiples (as in Def. 5), the multiple of the first (magnitude) exceeds the multiple of the second, and the multiple of the third (magnitude) does not exceed the multiple of the fourth, then the first (magnitude) is said to have a greater ratio to the second than the third (magnitude has) to the fourth.

7. GREATER RATIO

The ratio of A to B is greater than the ratio of C to D when equal multiples can be found such that the multiples of A exceed the multiples of B, while the multiples of C do not exceed the multiples of D.



Take equal multiples $m = 2$, $n = 3$.

$$mA = 2 \times 3 = 6 > nB = 3 \times 2 = 6$$

$$mC = 2 \times 4 = 8 \leq nD = 3 \times 3 = 9$$

Therefore, $A : B > C : D$.

El.V.Def.7 — greater ratio

Why here: Opening Book V joke.

Note. Opening Book V joke.

...

Danae said: "I don't get it."

. . .

“Theodorus said three times as much,” said Sophia. “Sophist, statesman, philosopher. One, two, three. Three books, three debts, three times the thanks. “And Socrates has said: you are the best mathematician alive, and you have just used multiplication on things that are not the same size. “They are not three of a thing. One of them is worth so much more than the others that there is no number for it. No ratio. Nothing you could write down. You cannot say how many sophists make a philosopher, because they are not made of the same stuff.”

. . .

Lela lifted her head.



6
As a craftsman makes a thing well,
the statesman makes a city well.



Three Times as Great — the argument unfolding step by step.

. . .

“He’s ranking them.”

. . .

“He is ranking them, in one line, as a joke about arithmetic, on the day after he was charged.”

. . .

“And he’s at the bottom of the list.”

. . .

“He is not on the list at all, as far as the city is concerned,” said the owl. “The city has him filed under sophist. Yesterday you watched two days of the most careful work anybody did in that century, most of it about how easy it

is to make that mistake. “And here is the man himself, saying — lightly, in passing, teasing an old friend about his sums — that the difference between the three of them is larger than any number.”

. . .

“Well said, Socrates, by our god Ammon,” said Theodorus. “A just rebuke. You’ve remembered your arithmetic very well, to bring me up on my mistake like that. “As for you — I’ll get my own back for this on another occasion.”

. . .

Nobody in the orchard said anything.



A steersman guides a ship by knowledge,
not by birth or strength.



Three Times as Great — the competing interpretation.

. . .

“There isn’t one,” said Lela.

. . .

“There is not another occasion,” said Sophia. “Theodorus of Cyrene is a very old man teasing a friend about a debt he intends to collect, and there are about sixty days, and he does not know, and neither does anybody else in that courtyard except the man he is teasing. “You will hear three or four sentences like that today. They are not put there for effect. Plato simply wrote down how people talk to each other on ordinary afternoons, and the afternoon happened to be that one.”

. . .

“But turning to our guest,” Theodorus went on — “don’t give up on obliging us. Whether you choose the statesman

first, or the philosopher: make your choice, and go through him in his turn.”

. . .

“That, Theodorus, is what we must do,” said the Visitor. “Since we have tried our hand once, and we must not desist until we come to the end of what we have in hand. “But I have a question. What should I do about Theaetetus here?”

. . .

“In what respect?”

. . .

“Should we give him a rest, and substitute for him young Socrates here, who trains with him? Or what’s your advice?”



Kingship is not a throne, but a knowledge
of the whole and the part.



Three Times as Great — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

. . .

“Oh, thank goodness,” said Danae.

. . .

“As you say, make the substitution,” said Theodorus. “Since they are young, they’ll put up with any sort of exertion more easily if they take a rest.”

. . .

“Two days,” said Lela. “Two whole days. He did the flowing and the wax and the birds and the giants and the man who flies, and nobody’s given him a drink of water, and the first person to notice is the foreigner.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

And then the old man spoke again, and it was the longest thing he said in either of the two days, and both of the girls sat quite still for it without being told.

. . .



Three Times as Great — the historical layer.

“What’s more, my friend,” said Socrates, “both of them seem somehow to have a certain kinship with me. “One of them, you all say, is like me in the way he looks. “As for the other — he is called and designated by the same name as I am. And that produces a certain relatedness. “Well:

we must always be eager to recognise those akin to us by talking to them.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Lela.

. . .

“With Theaetetus I myself got together in discussion yesterday,” Socrates went on, “and I have just now heard him answering questions. Whereas neither applies in Socrates’ case. “We must take a look at him too. “He’ll answer me on another occasion. For now, let him answer you.”

. . .

The orchard was completely silent.

. . .

Somewhere down the lane a car started and did not go anywhere and then stopped again.

. . .

“He’ll answer me on another occasion,” said Lela.

9

RULER



KING



HOUSEHOLD MANAGER



All three rule, but over different wholes.
The statesman rules over the greatest whole.



Three Times as Great — a wordless conceptual plate.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“There isn’t one of those either.”

. . .

“There is not one of those either.”

. . .

Danae had drawn her knees right up. “Why does he keep saying it?” she said, and her voice was not very steady. “Everyone keeps saying it. Another occasion. Tomorrow. Next time. Everyone in there keeps saying it and none of it happens.”

. . .

“Because that is what people say,” said the owl, “on the ordinary days, which are nearly all of the days. “Nobody stands in a courtyard on a Tuesday saying let us speak now, for one of us has sixty days. They say another time. They say it about the things they most want. “And most of the time they are right and it costs them nothing at all. And then once, for everybody, they are wrong.”

. . .

She was quiet for a moment.



Therefore the true statesman
is three times as great.



Three Times as Great — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

. . .

“I am not showing you this to frighten you,” she said. “I am showing you because of what he does next. “He has just worked out, out loud, that there is a boy in this courtyard he has never talked to. He is seventy years old and he has been charged with a capital crime and he is tired, and he notices a boy standing by the wall whom nobody has asked anything. “And instead of letting it go, he says the other thing. “We must always be eager to recognise those akin to us by talking to them. “He says it about a boy who has done nothing except have the same name as him. That is the whole kinship. That is the entire basis. “He is the last man in Athens who still thinks that is enough of a reason to talk to somebody, and it is going to kill him in nine weeks, and he is doing it again, in the last week of his life, to a stranger by a wall.”

. . .

“Socrates,” said the Visitor. “Do you hear what Socrates says?”

. . .

And a boy near the wall — thin, dark, about fifteen, who had been standing there for two days without being spoken to — said:

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Then do you agree to it?”

. . .

“Absolutely.”

Chapter 71

SEVENTY-ONE. The Other Socrates



Socrates begins again:
there is another Socrates we have not yet seen.



The Other Socrates — opening scene.

“There’s two of them,” said Danae.

. . .

“There are two of them,” said Sophia, “and I am afraid you are going to have to keep them apart in your head for the whole of today, and so is everybody who has ever read this book, and it is one of the reasons hardly anybody does.”

. . .

“Why did he do that?”

. . .

“Because the boy was really called that,” said the owl. “He is Socrates the son of somebody, of the deme of Alopecce or somewhere near it, and he trained at the same wrestling-school as Theaetetus, and he became a mathematician, and

he is mentioned by name in other books, and he was a real person. “Plato did not invent the coincidence. He found it and he could not resist it.”

. . .

“It seems there is no obstacle on your side,” said the Visitor, “and perhaps there should be even less on mine. “Well then. After the sophist, it seems to me that the two of us must search for the statesman. “Now tell me. Should we posit, in the case of this person too, that he is one of those who possess knowledge? Or what assumption should we make?”

. . .

“That’s what we should assume,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“He sounds different,” said Lela at once.

. . .

2



Not the philosopher,
but the man as other people see him.



The Other Socrates — the chapter’s central dialogue.

“He sounds different,” Sophia agreed. “Say how.”

. . .

Lela listened for a while.

. . .

“Shorter,” she said. “Theaetetus says things like I could hardly refuse to grant that and it would be a strange and unaccountable thing. This one just says yes. “And —“ She frowned. “He doesn’t offer anything. Theaetetus keeps sort of leaning in. He says do you mean this? and wait, what about —. This one’s answering exam questions.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “He is a perfectly good boy and he is going to be told off four times today, and every single one of those times will be for something that a great many clever

people do, and one of them is going to be for something that matters more than anything else in this book. “Watch him. He is not the hero. That is rather the point of him.”

. . .

“In that case we must divide the various sorts of knowledge, as we did when we were considering the previous individual.” “Perhaps so.”

. . .

“But it’s not in the same place, Socrates, that I think I see a cut.” “Why not?” “It’s in a different place.”

. . .

“Yes. Apparently.”

. . .



He speaks in the market and in the agora,
answering whatever anyone asks.



The Other Socrates — the central concept made visible.

“Apparently,” repeated Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “He said apparently. He was told there was a cut somewhere else and he said apparently, which means if you say so. “Yesterday, at exactly this point, the other boy asked why. Twice.”

. . .

“So in what direction will one discover the path that leads to the statesman?” said the Visitor. “For we must discover it. And after having separated it from the rest, we must impress one character on it. And having stamped a single different form on the other turnings, we must make our minds think of all sorts of knowledge there are as falling into two classes.”

. . .

“That, I think, is actually for you to do, visitor,” said young Socrates. “Not for me.”

. . .

“Oof,” said Danae.

. . .

“But, Socrates,” said the Visitor, mildly, “it must also be a matter for you — when it becomes clear to us what it is.”

. . .

“You’re right.”

. . .

4



Some think he is wise,
some think he is strange,
some think he is dangerous.



The Other Socrates — the guiding analogy.

“He told him off,” said Danae.

. . .

“He told him off so gently that the boy may not have noticed,” said Sophia. “But he did tell him off, and he did it in the first ninety seconds, and here is what for. “The boy said: that’s your job. “And it is not. That is not what this is. He is not watching a demonstration. There is no such thing as watching a demonstration; there is only doing it slightly behind somebody, or not doing it at all. “You will meet a hundred people in your life who think that sitting in the room is a form of participation, and about eleven of them will be teachers.”

. . .

“Well then: isn’t it the case that arithmetic, and some other sorts of expertise that are akin to it, don’t involve any

practical actions — but simply provide knowledge?” “That’s so.”

. . .

“Whereas the sorts of expertise involved in carpentry, and manufacture as a whole, have their knowledge as it were naturally bound up with practical actions — and use it to complete those material objects they cause to come into being, from not having been before?” “What of that?”

. . .

“Well — divide all cases of knowledge in this way. Calling the one sort practical knowledge, the other purely theoretical.”

. . .

“I grant you these as two classes.”

. . .

“Two boxes again,” said Danae, comfortably, lying back. “Thinking things and doing things.”

. . .



He makes some angry,
some laugh,
some follow him.



The Other Socrates — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Then shall we posit the statesman, and the king, and the slave-master, and the manager of a household as well, as one thing — when we refer to them by all these names? “Or are we to say that they are as many sorts of expertise as the names we use to refer to them?”

. . .

“Hang on,” said Lela. “Those aren’t the same. Those are completely different jobs.”

. . .

“Hold that,” said the owl, “and hold it hard, and do not let go of it all day, because it is the thing about this book that people fight about. “He is about to say they are all one thing, and he is going to prove it, and the proof is good, and you are going to spend the rest of today deciding whether you believe it.”

. . .

“If someone who is himself in private practice is capable of advising a doctor in public employment,” said the Visitor, “isn’t it necessary for him to be called by the same professional title as the person he advises?” “Yes.”

. . .

“Well then. Won’t we say that the person who is clever at giving advice to a king of a country — although he is himself a private individual — himself has the expert knowledge that the ruler ought to have possessed?” “We will.”

. . .

“But the knowledge that belongs to the true king is the knowledge of kingship?” “Yes.”

. . .

“And isn’t it the case that the person who possesses this — whether he happens to be a ruler or a private citizen, in all circumstances, in virtue of his possession of the expertise itself — will correctly be addressed as an expert in kingship?”

. . .

“That’s fair.”



He asks questions, listens, and turns their answers back upon them.



The Other Socrates — the competing interpretation.

. . .

Lela had stopped writing.

. . .

“Sophia.” “Yes.”

. . .

“He just said you can be a king without being a king.”

. . .

“He just said,” said the owl, “that kingship is a kind of knowing, and not a kind of sitting. “And that therefore a man with no crown, no army, no palace, no money and no job, who happens to know how a city should be run, is more properly called a king than the man on the throne who does not. “He says it in four lines, on the way to something else, in the sixth minute of the morning.”

. . .

“That’s — “ Lela was going slightly pink. “That’s outrageous.”

. . .

“It is the single most outrageous sentence in Greek political thought,” said Sophia, “and everything that anybody has ever meant by the right person should be in charge, including all the very bad versions, comes out of this paragraph. “And now stop being pleased with it for one moment and ask the obvious question.”

. . .

Lela opened her mouth, and closed it.



Fa claims not to know,
yet brings others to see what they do not know.



The Other Socrates — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

. . .

“Who decides?” she said.

. . .

“Who decides,” said the owl. “Yes. Write it on the top of the page and leave it there all day. “Because he is not going to answer it. Not today, and not at the end, and not anywhere in four hundred pages.”

. . .

“Next,” the Visitor was saying, “a household manager and a slave-master are the same thing.” “Of course.”

. . .

“Well then — surely there won’t be any difference, so far as ruling is concerned, between the character of a large household on the one hand, and the bulk of a small city on the other?”

. . .

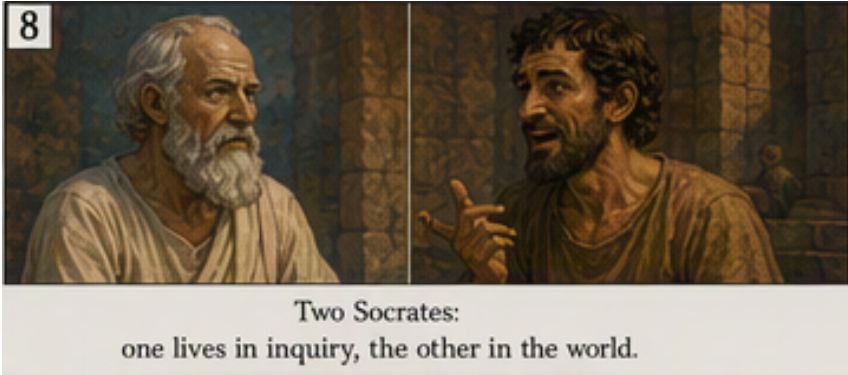
“None.”

. . .

“So in answer to the question we were asking ourselves just now, it’s clear that there is one sort of expert knowledge concerned with all these things. “Whether someone gives this the name of expertise in kingship, or statesmanship, or household management — let’s not pick any quarrel with him.”

. . .

“I agree. Why should we?”



The Other Socrates — the historical layer.

. . .

“But this much is clear: that the power of any king to maintain his rule has little to do with the use of his hands, or his body in general, in comparison with the understanding and force of his mind.” “Clearly.”

. . .

“Then do you want us to assert that the king is more closely related to the theoretical sort of knowledge than to the manual or generally practical sort?” “Of course.”

. . .

“Well — would we be proceeding in the right order, if after this we divided theoretical knowledge?” “Certainly.”

. . .

“So look closely, to see if we can detect some break in it.”

. . .

“Of what sort? Tell me.”

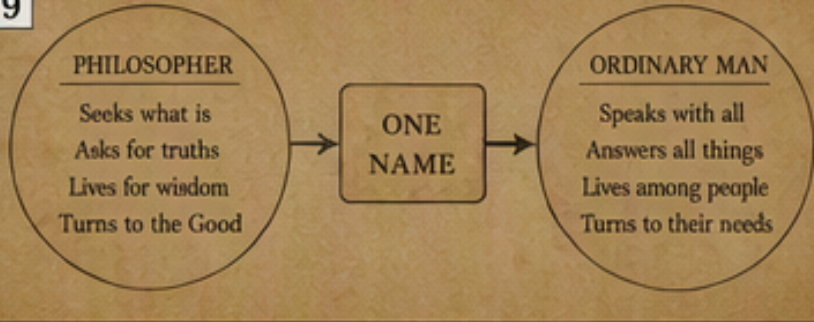
. . .

“Tell me,” said Sophia. “Again. Four times now.”

. . .

“We agreed, I think, that there is such a thing as an art of calculation.” “Yes.”

9



One name is shared,
yet the roles are not the same.



The Other Socrates — a wordless conceptual plate.

. . .

“And once it recognises that there is a difference between numbers, there surely isn’t any further job we’ll assign to it, than judging what it has recognised?” “No. Certainly not.”

. . .

“And all master-builders too — they don’t act as workers themselves. They manage workers.” “Yes.”

. . .

“In so far as what the master-builder provides is understanding, rather than manual labour.” “Just so.”

. . .

“It would be right to say, then, that he has a share in the theoretical sort of knowledge?” “Certainly.”

. . .

“But it belongs to him, I think, once he has given his professional judgement, not to be finished — not to take his leave, in the way that the expert in calculation took his. “But to assign whatever is the appropriate task to each group of workers, until they complete what has been assigned to them.”

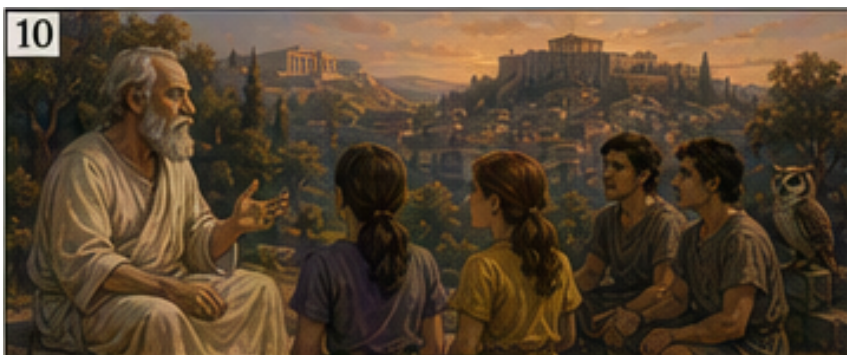
. . .

“That’s correct.”

. . .

“So both all sorts of knowledge like this, and all those that go along with the art of calculation, are theoretical. But these two classes differ from each other in so far as one makes judgements, while the other directs.”

10



To understand a name,
we must understand the many lives it lives.



The Other Socrates — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

. . .

“They appear to do so.”

. . .

“Oh, that’s good,” said Lela.

. . .

“Say it,” said Sophia.

. . .

“The sum-man finishes,” said Lela. “He works it out and he hands you the answer and he goes home. He’s done. That’s the whole job. “And the building man works it out and then he’s only just started. He’s got to stand in the mud and tell forty people what to do until the house is up.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“And they’re both thinking jobs. Neither of them lifts anything.”

. . .

“Neither of them lifts anything,” said Sophia, “and that is the cut, and it is a genuinely beautiful one, and it is the reason that everybody who is brilliant at working things out is not thereby any good at running anything whatsoever, which is a thing the world has had two and a half thousand years to learn and has not learned.”

Chapter 72

**SEVENTY-TWO. The Herald
and the King**



Socrates begins a new tale:
the herald and the king.



The Herald and the King — opening scene.

“So tell me: in which of these two sorts of expertise should we locate the expert in kingship? “In the one concerned with making judgements — as if he were some sort of spectator? “Or shall we rather locate him as belonging to the directive sort, seeing that he is master of others?”

. . .

“In the second, of course.”

. . .

“Then we should need to look at directive expertise in its turn, to see if it divides somewhere. “And to me it seems that it does so somewhere in this direction. “In the way that the expertise of the retail-dealer is distinguished from that of the person who sells his own products — so the class of kings appears set apart from the class of heralds.”

. . .



The king sits in the highest place,
seeing the whole and ruling all.



The Herald and the King — the chapter's central dialogue.

“How so?”

. . .

“The retailer, I think, takes over someone else’s products, which have previously been sold, and sells them on for a second time.” “Absolutely.”

. . .

“Well then. The class of heralds takes over directions that have been thought up by someone else — and itself issues them for a second time, to another group.”

. . .



The herald stands below
and makes the king's messages known.



The Herald and the King — the central concept made visible.

“Very true.”

. . .

“What’s a herald?” said Danae.

. . .

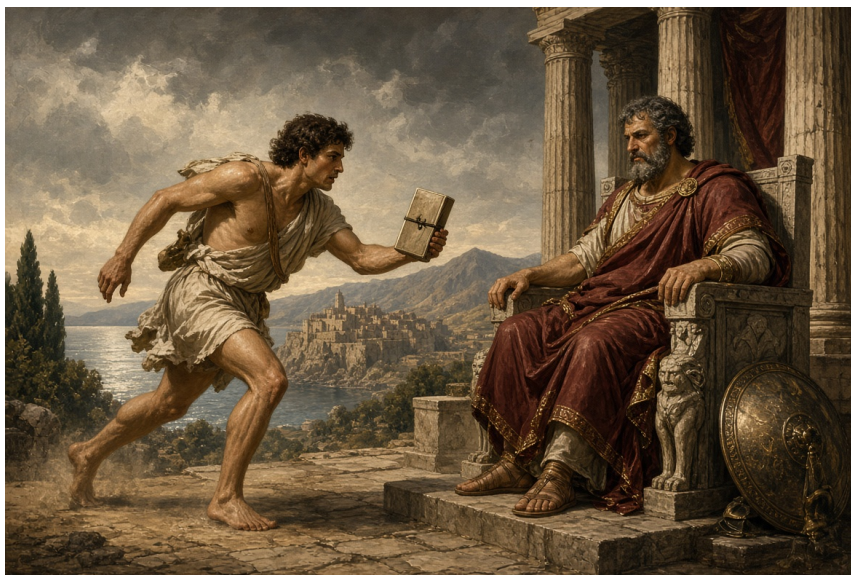
“A man whose whole job was to stand in a public place and shout other people’s decisions,” said Sophia. “There were no newspapers and no telephones and most people could not read. When the assembly decided something, a man went and said it, at the top of his voice, in the market. He had a stick to show he was allowed to. Nobody was permitted to hit him. He was sacred, in a small way, in every city in Greece — and what he was sacred for was not adding anything of his own.”

. . .

4



He does not rule,
but he speaks for the ruler.



The Herald and the King — the guiding analogy.

“So he’s a loudspeaker.”

. . .

“He is a loudspeaker with legs,” said the owl, “and the Visitor has just used him to make one of the most useful distinctions anybody will ever hand you, which is this. “There are people who decide. “And there are people who pass on decisions at high volume, with enormous confidence, as though they had made them. “They look identical from the back of a crowd. They are not remotely the same thing. And the second kind is about four hundred times more common.”

. . .

“So — shall we mix together the expertise of the king with that of the interpreter, the person who gives the time to the rowers, the seer, the herald, and many other sorts

of expertise related to these — just because they all have the feature of issuing directions?”

. . .



The herald must understand the king,
or the message will be lost.



The Herald and the King — the argument unfolding step by step.

“He’s put the priest in with them,” said Lela.

. . .

“He has put the seer in with them,” said Sophia, “in a list, in the middle, without comment, and moved on before anybody could object. Look at it again this evening.”

. . .

“Or do you want us to make up a name in line with the analogy we were using just now — since in fact the class of self-directors happens pretty much to be without a name of its own? “Should we divide these things this way, locating the class of kings as belonging to the self-directing sort of expertise — and taking no notice of all the rest, leaving someone else to propose another name for them? “For we set up our investigation in order to find the person who rules. Not his opposite.”

. . .

“Absolutely.”



He must be swift,
faithful, and clear.



The Herald and the King — the competing interpretation.

. . .

“Self-directors,” said Lela, writing it down. “The ones who give orders that they thought of themselves.”

. . .

“All those in control of others that we can think of as employing directions,” the Visitor went on, “— we shall find them issuing their directions, won’t we, for the sake of something’s coming into being?” “Of course.”

. . .

“And it’s not at all difficult to separate into two all of those things that come into being. “Of all of them taken together, some are inanimate, and some are animate.” “Yes.”



7

If the herald speaks poorly,
the people are misled.



The Herald and the King — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

. . .

“So then let’s leave one of these parts to one side, and
take up the other.”

. . .

“Which of the two parts do you say we should take up?”

. . .

“I suppose it must be the one that issues directions in relation to living creatures. “For surely it is not the case that the expert knowledge that belongs to a king is ever something that oversees inanimate things, as if it were the knowledge of the master-builder. “It is something nobler, which always has its power among living creatures, and in relation to just these.”



Lela and Danae ask:
Who is the herald? Who is the king?



The Herald and the King — the historical layer.

. . .

“Correct.”

. . .

“Now, as one can observe, either the production and rearing of living creatures is done singly — or it is a caring for creatures together, in herds.”

. . .

“Correct.”

9



When each part does its work well,
truth can travel from the highest to all.



The Herald and the King — a wordless conceptual plate.

. . .

“But we’ll certainly not find the statesman rearing individual creatures, like some ox-driver or groom. But rather resembling a horse-breeder, or a cowherd.”

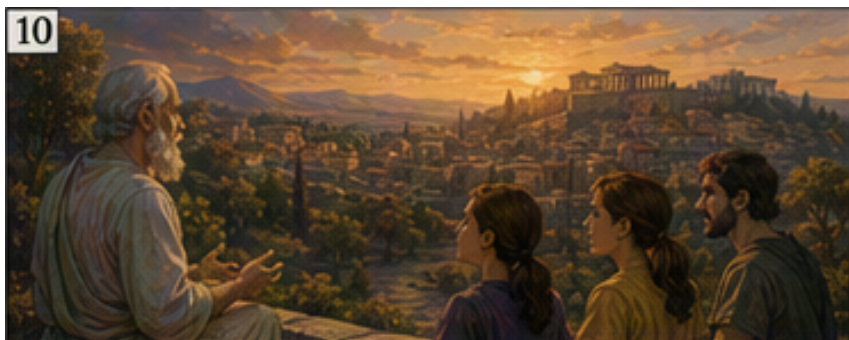
. . .

“He’s making him a farmer,” said Danae, delighted.

. . .

“He is making him a farmer,” said Sophia, “and he is going to keep him a farmer for the next hour and a half, and I want you both to notice how it feels. “Because so far it is charming. A big kind man with a stick, on a hill, counting. “And in about forty minutes it is going to stop being charming, and the person who stops it is going to be the man from Elea himself.”

10



So too in the city—and in the soul—
each must know its place and purpose.



The Herald and the King — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

. . .

“It certainly seems so, now you say it,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Now you say it,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “Five.”

Chapter 73

SEVENTY-THREE. Greeks and Barbarians



We must think about two kinds of people:
Greeks and barbarians.



Greeks and Barbarians — opening scene.

“Do you see,” said the Visitor, “how by showing the collective rearing of herds to be twin in form, one will make what is now being sought in double the field, then be sought in half of that?”

. . .

“I shall try my hardest,” said young Socrates.

. . .

And then, for the first time all morning, he said something of his own.

. . .

“It seems to me that there is a different sort of rearing of human beings. And in turn another sort where animals are concerned.”

. . .

“He did one!” said Danae. “He did one on his own!”

. . .

“Yes, absolutely,” said the Visitor. “You’ve made a very keen and courageous division!”

. . .

“See?” said Danae.

. . .

“Wait,” said Sophia.

. . .

“But let’s try to avoid this happening to us again.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Danae, in a very small voice.

. . .



Greeks share words, laws, and manners.
They are trained from childhood.



Greeks and Barbarians — the chapter's central dialogue.

“What sort of thing?” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Let’s not take off one small part on its own, leaving many large ones behind, and without reference to real classes. Let the part bring a real class along with it. “It’s a really fine thing to separate off immediately what one is searching for from the rest — if one gets it right. As you thought you had, just before, and hurried the argument on, seeing it leading to human beings. “But in fact, my friend, it’s not safe to make thin cuts. “It’s safer to go along cutting through the middle of things. And that way one will be more likely to encounter real classes. “This makes all the difference in relation to philosophical investigations.”

NOTE · 258e–267c

Annotation (light / institutional): Cut through middle.

Diairesis. (light)

. . .

“What do you mean by this, visitor?”

. . .

“I must try to tell you still more clearly, Socrates — out of good will towards your natural endowments.”

. . .

“He’s being kind,” said Lela. “He knows he’s just squashed him and he’s being kind about it.”

. . .

“He is being kind about it,” said Sophia, “and now he is going to say the thing that I have been waiting two summers to show you, and I would like you to hear it without me first. “Just listen. Both of you. I will say nothing at all until he has finished.”

. . .

“This sort of thing,” said the man from Elea.

. . .

“It’s as if someone tried to divide the human race into two, and made the cut in the way that most people here carve things up. “Taking the Greek race away as one, separate from all the rest — “and to all the other races together, which are unlimited in number, which don’t mix with one another, and don’t share the same language — calling this collection by the single appellation barbarian. “Because of this single name, they expect it to be a single family, or class, too.”

. . .

Nobody in the orchard moved.

. . .

“Another example would be if someone thought that he was dividing number into two real classes by cutting off the number ten thousand from all the rest — separating it off as a single class, and, in positing a single name for all the rest, supposing here too that through getting the name, this class came into existence, a second single one apart from the other. “But I imagine the division would be done better — more by real classes, and more into two — if one cut number by means of even and odd. “And the human race, in its turn, by means of male and female. “And only split off Lydians, or Phrygians, or anyone else, and ranged them against all the rest, when one was at a loss as to how to split in such a way that each of the halves split off was simultaneously a real class and a part.”



Barbarians live by different customs
and speak in different tongues.



Greeks and Barbarians — the central concept made visible.

. . .

Sophia said nothing.

. . .

The morning went on around them. A wood pigeon was doing its five notes over and over in the tall tree at the top of the orchard, and had been for some time, and neither of them had noticed until now.

. . .

“Say it,” said Lela at last, “because I think I’ve got it wrong.”

. . .

“You have not got it wrong,” said the owl. “Say it.”

. . .

“He said Greeks and barbarians is a bad division.”

. . .

“He said Greeks and barbarians is a bad division.”

. . .

“Not — he didn’t say it’s unkind. He didn’t say it’s rude, or that we should be nicer. He said it’s wrong. Like a wrong answer. Like getting a sum wrong.”

. . .

“That,” said Sophia, “is exactly what he said, and it is why it has lasted, and it is the most quietly devastating thing anybody said about that word for about eight hundred years. “Now say the argument. Not the feeling. The argument.”

. . .

Lela sat forward.

. . .

“He said there’s no such thing as a barbarian,” she said. “There’s no such thing. It isn’t a kind of person. It’s a leftovers pile. “It’s got Egyptians in it and Persians in it and Scythians in it and they’ve got nothing to do with each other, they don’t even like each other, they can’t talk to each other any more than they can talk to us. There’s no thing they all are. The only thing they’ve got in common is not being us. “And we gave the pile a name, and then because the pile had a name we thought the pile was a thing.”

4



Their ways are not the same,
so how can one rule the other well?



Greeks and Barbarians — the guiding analogy.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“And the number one,” said Lela. “That’s — the number thing is the same joke. You could cut all the numbers into ten thousand and all the other numbers, and it’d be a perfectly good cut, you could do it, nothing’s stopping you. And all the other numbers would look like a group because you gave it a name. And it’s not a group. It’s just everything else.”

. . .

“And what would a good cut have been?”

. . .

“Odd and even,” said Lela.

. . .

“Why is that better?”

. . .

“Because it’s about the numbers,” said Lela slowly. “It’s about something they actually are. Not about where you happen to be standing.”

. . .

The owl was quiet for a moment.

. . .

“And what is it about us,” she said, “the Greek and barbarian cut? What is that about?”

. . .

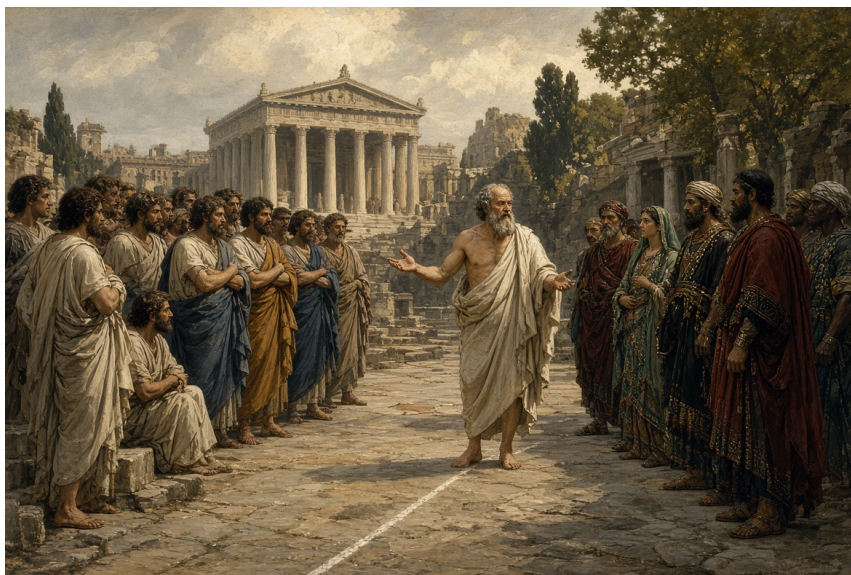
“Where we’re standing,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes.”



If the ruler does not understand,
he will command without wisdom.



Greeks and Barbarians — the argument unfolding step by step.

. . .

“It’s about where we’re standing. It’s not about them at all. There isn’t any them. There’s just us, and then everybody, and we drew a line round our own feet.”

. . .

Danae, who had been lying on her back through all of this, said, without sitting up:

. . .

“They do it at school.”

. . .

“Go on,” said Sophia.

. . .

“There’s us, and there’s the EAL kids,” said Danae. “And there’s about nine of them and they’re from about nine different places and two of them can’t talk to each other at all and they’re not friends, most of them, they’re just — they get taken out of the room together on Tuesdays and so everyone calls them a thing. “And Miss says it like it’s a thing. The EAL kids. And it isn’t a thing. It’s a pile.”

. . .

“That is what he said,” said the owl. “That is precisely and entirely what he said, and you have just found it in a classroom in Hertfordshire without any help from anybody. “And now I am going to say the part that I could not say before, because you needed to get there yourselves. “You are Greek.”

. . .

“I know,” said Lela.

. . .

“You are Greek, and you live in England, and you have both been the pile.”

. . .

“I know,” said Lela.

. . .

“Then you know two things that most readers of this page have only ever known one of,” said Sophia. “You know how it feels to draw the line, because it is your word — barbaros is Greek, it is one of the oldest words your family has got, and it started out meaning nothing worse than people whose talking sounds like bar-bar-bar to me.

“And you know how it feels to be on the other side of the line, in a corridor, in September, being a pile. “He is not scolding anybody. Listen to him again. There is no anger in it at all. He is a foreigner in Athens explaining a method, and the example he reaches for — because it is the most obvious example of a bad division in the world, and because everybody in the room does it every day — is the thing they all call everyone who is not them. “That is how he does it. Not you are cruel. You are inaccurate. “And I have shown you a great many things in two summers, and that is the one I would keep.”



**Then the ruled will either revolt
or obey only in appearance.**



Greeks and Barbarians — the competing interpretation.

. . .

“Quite right,” young Socrates was saying. “But this very thing — how is one to see it more plainly, that class and part are not the same, but different from each other?”

. . .

“An excellent response, Socrates. But what you demand is no light thing. “We have already wandered far away from the discussion we proposed, and you are telling us to wander even more. As for now, let’s go back to where we were. “However, there is one thing you must absolutely guard against.”

. . .

“Which?”

. . .

“That you should ever suppose you have heard from me a plain account of that matter — that class and part are different from each other.”

. . .

“What should I say I have heard from you?”

. . .

“That whenever there is a class of something, it is necessarily also a part of whatever thing it is called a class of. “But it is not at all necessary that a part is a class. “You must always assert, Socrates, that this is what I say — rather than the other way round.”

. . .

“I shall do just that.”

. . .

“That’s him being careful,” said Lela.

. . .

“That is him being extremely careful,” said Sophia, “about being quoted. In advance. By a fifteen-year-old. “Do not go away and tell people I said the easy version. Every class is a part; not every part is a class. He makes the boy repeat the direction of it, because he knows exactly how it will come out at the other end of four repetitions in a corridor. “He is right to worry. It came out wrong anyway, for about nine hundred years.”

. . .

“And yet, my courageous friend,” the Visitor said, “maybe, if by chance there is some other animal which is rational — as, for example, the crane seems to be, or some other such creature —“



Lela and Danae consider:
is right rule possible among different people?



Greeks and Barbarians — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

. . .

Danae sat up.

. . .

“— and which perhaps distributes names on the same principles as you — it might oppose cranes as one class to all other living creatures, and give itself airs. “Taking all the rest together with human beings, and putting them into the same category. Which it would call by no other name except — perhaps — animals.”

. . .

Danae was on her knees with both hands pressed flat against her mouth.

. . .

“The cranes,” she said.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“The cranes do it too. He’s saying the cranes would do exactly the same thing. They’d go — there’s cranes, and then there’s everything else, and everything else is all one thing and it’s all a bit much of a muchness —”

. . .

“And that human beings,” said Sophia, “would be in it. Filed. With the worms.”

. . .

“And they’d give themselves airs.” Danae had gone entirely pink. “He said the cranes would give themselves airs. Sophia, that’s the funniest thing anybody’s said in two whole summers and it’s in the middle of the most serious bit.”

. . .

“It is in the middle of the most serious bit,” the owl agreed, “and it is doing all the work. “He could have said consider that other peoples have their own perspectives, and everybody in the courtyard would have nodded and forgotten it in four minutes. “Instead he said: imagine a bird that thinks it is the point of the world. “And now nobody can hear the word barbarian in this book without seeing a very tall bird looking down its beak at them.”

. . .

In the garden of the Academy it was the following afternoon, and the roll was open at the same place, and the young man from Stagira had not said anything for some time.





Greeks and Barbarians — the historical layer.

. . .

Plato read the crane passage, and the passage about the Greeks and the rest, and came to the end of it, and stopped, and waited.

. . .

Aristotle said nothing.

. . .

“You have gone quiet,” said Plato.

. . .

“I am thinking.”

. . .

“You have been thinking for a page and a half. You went quiet in the middle of the ten thousand.”

. . .

The young man turned his stylus over a few times.

. . .

“I am not sure he is right about that,” he said.

. . .

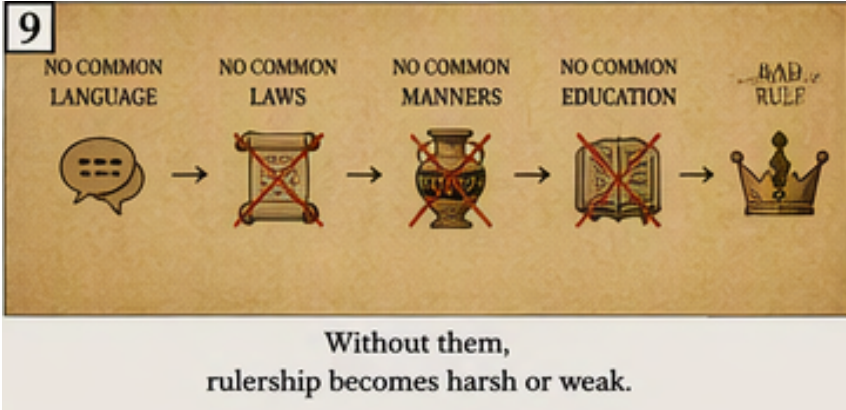
The old man did not move.

. . .

“About the method?”

. . .

“The method is unarguable. The pile is a pile; I have no quarrel with the pile.” Aristotle looked up. “About whether, when you have done the work properly and stopped using the lazy word — there turns out to be nothing there at all. “He says the division is badly made. He does not say there is no division. Those are not the same claim, and he has let people think they are.”



Greeks and Barbarians — a wordless conceptual plate.

. . .

“No,” said Plato. “They are not the same claim.”

. . .

“Then I should like to look at it myself. Properly. Not with that word.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

And that was all either of them said about it, and Plato read on to the end of the page, and the light moved along the wall.

. . .

“Sophia,” said Lela, who had watched all of it. “What happens?”

. . .

“He looks at it himself,” said the owl. “Properly. For years. With the best mind anybody had. “And he gets it wrong. Not a little wrong. As wrong as it is possible to be, in a book that people used for two thousand years to justify things that I am not going to describe to you this morning.”

. . .

Lela stared at her.

. . .

“But — “ she said. “But the whole thing. The whole book. The best thing a teacher can give you is the argument against himself. That’s the — that’s what we’ve been —“

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“He gave him permission. He said so. He said it out loud in the garden, he made a whole speech about it, he said take it, in writing, in front of witnesses —“



The question remains:
how can one people rule another justly?



Greeks and Barbarians — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

. . .

“He did.”

. . .

“And he used it to go the wrong way.”

. . .

“He used it, that time, to go the wrong way,” said Sophia.

. . .

She was quiet for a moment.

. . .

“I could have not shown you this,” she said. “It would have been very easy. It happens in a different book, forty

years later, and nobody would ever have known. “But you have spent two summers being told that the finest thing a teacher does is hand over the right to disagree with him. And that is true. I believe it. Everything I have shown you is arranged to make you believe it. “And it is not a guarantee. It is a permission. It does not come with the answer attached. “You give somebody the right to think for themselves, and they think for themselves, and sometimes what they think is better than anything you had, and that is Aristotle on the soul, and on animals, and on how arguments work, and the world is unrecognisably richer for it. “And sometimes what they think is worse than what you told them. And you are dead by then. And it goes out into the world with their name on it and your name behind it. “Both of those are what handing it over means. You do not get to hand over only the first one. “And it is still the right thing to do, and I want you to see the cost before you decide that.”

. . .

Danae said: “Did the cranes bit work?”

. . .

“What?”

. . .

“The cranes bit. Did it work? Did anyone remember it?”

. . .

The owl looked at her for a long moment, and then, unexpectedly, made the small creaking noise that was as close as she came to laughing.

. . .

“Two and a half thousand years,” she said. “Hundreds of millions of people. Almost none of them have read one word of this book. “And a surprising number of them know about the crane.”

Chapter 74

SEVENTY-FOUR. The Diagonal and the Pig

1



Socrates proposes a test:
the diagonal and the pig.



The Diagonal and the Pig — opening scene.

“Let’s not divide in the way we did then,” said the Visitor, “looking at everything, or in a hurry, just in order to get quickly to statesmanship. “It has already put us in the proverbial situation.”

. . .

“What situation is that?”

. . .

“That by not quietly getting on with dividing properly, we have got to our destination more slowly.”

. . .

“Yes, visitor,” said young Socrates. “And a fine situation it is.”

. . .

“Ooh,” said Danae.

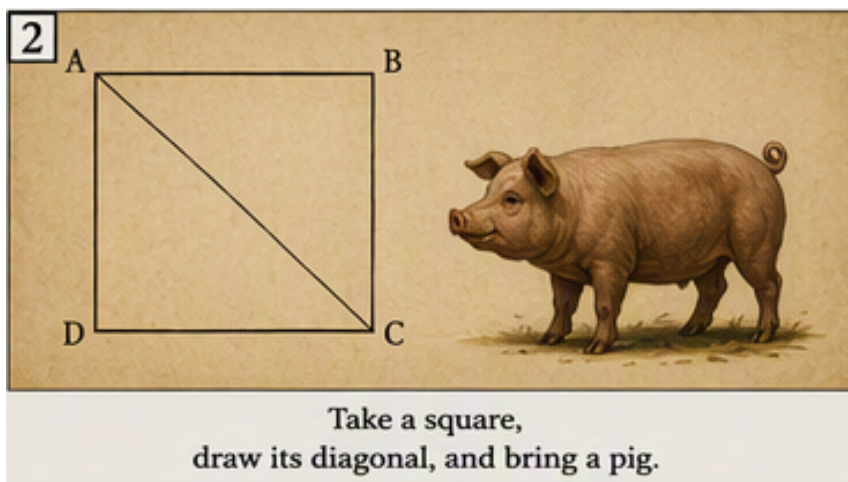
. . .

“If you say so,” said the Visitor.

. . .

“He answered back,” said Lela.

. . .





The Diagonal and the Pig — the chapter's central dialogue.

“He answered back,” said Sophia, “and the man said if you say so and carried straight on, and that is the entire quarrel, and neither of them will refer to it again. “I show you these because they are the parts everybody skips. A book is not only its arguments. It is also two people in a hot courtyard getting slightly on each other’s nerves.”

. . .

And then, for a while, they cut.

. . .

Tame and wild. Water and dry land. Things with wings and things that go on foot. And of the things that go on foot, the ones that come into being with horns and the ones that come into being without.

. . .

“He’s doing the bird book again,” said Danae contentedly, on her stomach with her chin in her hands.

. . .

“He is doing the bird book again,” said Sophia. “And this time he is doing it the long way on purpose, because the boy tried to do it the short way and got told off, and the man said they could do both, and the boy said let’s do both, and this is the long one.”

. . .

“Well, do you want to divide it by the split-hooved and the so-called single-hooved,” the Visitor was saying, “or by interbreeding and non-interbreeding? I think you grasp the point.” “What’s that?”

. . .

“That horses and donkeys are naturally such as to breed from one another.” “Yes.”



Place the pig somewhere in the square.
Can we say where without measuring?



The Diagonal and the Pig — the central concept made visible.

. . .

“Whereas what is still left of the smooth-headed herd of tame creatures is unmixed in breeding, one with another.”
“Quite.”

. . .

“So — does the statesman seem to take care of an interbreeding, or of some non-interbreeding sort?”

. . .

“Clearly, of the non-mixing sort.”

. . .

“Now those creatures that are tame and live in herds have pretty well all now been cut into their pieces,” said

the Visitor. “Except for two classes. “For it is not worth our while to count the class of dogs as among creatures living in herds.”

. . .

“Rude,” said Danae.

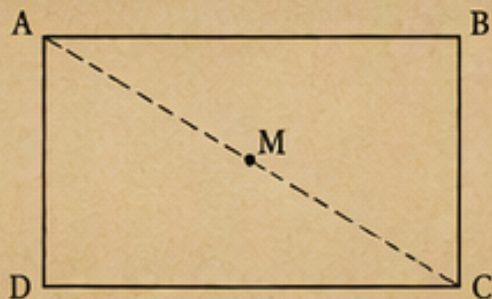
. . .

“No indeed,” said young Socrates. “But what are we to use to divide the two classes?”

. . .

“Something that is absolutely appropriate for Theaetetus and you to use in your distributions — since it’s geometry the two of you engage in.”

4



Perhaps along the diagonal—
at the point called the middle, M.



The Diagonal and the Pig — the guiding analogy.

. . .

“What is it?”

. . .

“The diagonal,” said the Visitor. “One could say. And then again, the diagonal of the diagonal.”

EUCLID · Elements X.Def.2 and I.47 — the diagonal, and the diagonal of the diagonal

El.X.Def.2 — *commensurable in square* MODERATE

(Two) straight-lines are commensurable in square when the squares on them are measured by the same area, and incommensurable in square when no area admits to be a common measure of the squares on them.

EUCLID, ELEMENTS – BOOK X DEFINITION 2

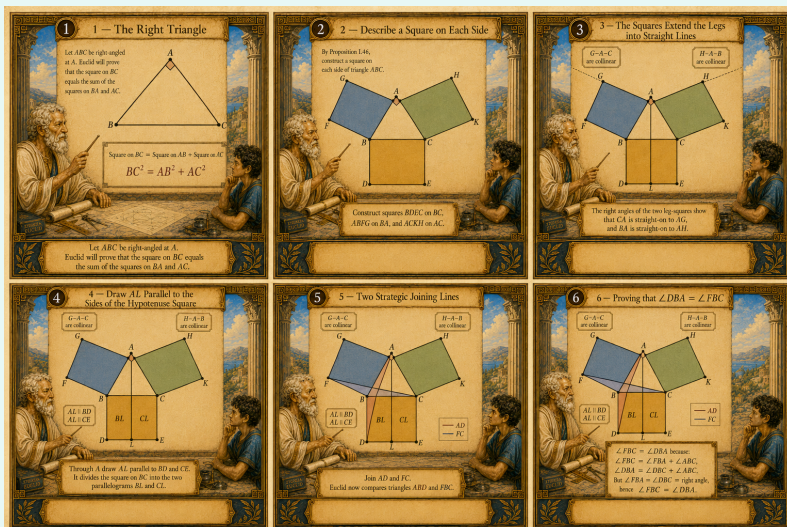
(Two) straight-lines are commensurable in square when the squares on them are measured by the same area, but (are) incommensurable (in square) when no area admits to be a common measure of the squares on them.

ACTIONS (WHAT WE DO)	ILLUSTRATIONS	
1 Take two straight-lines Consider any two straight-lines (e.g., lines a and b). 2 Construct the squares on them Draw a square having line a as a side, and another square having line b as a side. 3 Look for a common area Seek an area which measures each of the two squares exactly a whole number of times (no remainder). 4 Decide • If such a common area exists, the lines are COMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE. • If no such common area exists, the lines are INCOMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE.	EXAMPLE: COMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE Let the lengths be 1 and $\sqrt{2}$. The squares on them have areas 1 and 2. The area 1 is a common measure: Line $a = 1$ Line $b = \sqrt{2}$ Area 1 measures the first square 1 time and the second square 2 times: $2 = 2 \times 1$. Therefore, the straight-lines of lengths 1 and $\sqrt{2}$ are COMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE.	EXAMPLE: INCOMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE Let the lengths be 1 and $\sqrt{3}$. The squares on them have areas 1 and 3. No area can measure both exactly. Line $a = 1$ Line $b = \sqrt{3}$ If a common area existed, some area A would measure the first square p times and the second q times, with whole numbers p and q. Then: $1 = pA$ and $3 = qA \Rightarrow \frac{3}{1} = \frac{q}{p}$ But $\sqrt{3}$ is not of the form $\frac{q}{p}$ (p, q whole numbers). Contradiction. Therefore, the straight-lines of lengths 1 and $\sqrt{3}$ are INCOMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE.
CONCEPT (WHAT IT MEANS) It is not required that the lines themselves have a common length. We compare the AREAS of the squares built on them. Two lines can fail to have a common length (commensurable in length), yet their squares can have a common area.		
IN SHORT	• COMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE: The squares on the two lines are measures of the same area. • INCOMMENSURABLE IN SQUARE: No area measures both squares exactly. This is the idea of "same measure" applied not to lengths, but to squares.	

El.X.Def.2 — commensurable in square

El. I. Prop. 47 — the square on the diagonal MODERATE

In right-angled triangles, the square on the side subtending the right-angle is equal to the (sum of the) squares on the sides containing the right-angle.



El.I.Prop.47 — the square on the diagonal PART 1



El.I.Prop.47 — the square on the diagonal PART 2

El.VII.Def.18 — square number LIGHT

A square number is an equal times an equal, or (a plane number) contained by two equal numbers.

MATHEMATICS
DISCIPLINES
THE MIND

EUCLID, BOOK VII — DEFINITION 18

"A solid number is that which is contained by a cube."

THE ELEMENTS
BOOK VII
DEFINITIONS

1 THE IDEA
A solid number is that which is contained by a cube.

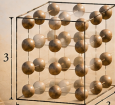


2 A CUBE CONTAINS A NUMBER
A cube with 2 units on each edge contains $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ units.



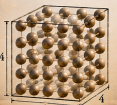
$2^3 = 8$
A solid number (8)

3 A LARGER CUBE
A cube with 3 units on each edge contains $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$ units.



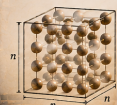
$3^3 = 27$
A solid number (27)

4 ANOTHER EXAMPLE
A cube with 4 units on each edge contains $4 \times 4 \times 4 = 64$ units.



$4^3 = 64$
A solid number (64)

5 THE GENERAL FORM
A cube with n units on each edge contains $n \times n \times n = n^3$ units.



n^3
A solid number

6 NOT EVERY NUMBER IS SOLID
Numbers like 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12 are not contained by a cube, and so are not solid numbers.
Only numbers of the form n^3 (1, 8, 27, 64, 125, ...) are solid numbers.



2 3 5 6 7 10 12

ARISTOTLE TO ALEXANDER:
"Just as a square number is contained by a square, so a solid number is contained by a cube — a number that fills space in all three dimensions."

DEFINITION 18
A solid number is that which is contained by a cube.

ALEXANDER'S REFLECTION:
"So a solid number is a number that forms a perfect cube in space. It is the number of units that fill a cube completely."

EUCLID — ORDER — REASON — IMMORTAL TRUTH

El.VII.Def.18 — square number

Why here: The Visitor's joke is aimed at the two boys in the room, both geometers: the diagonal of the unit square has the power of two feet, and the diagonal of *that* has the power of four. It is a pun on *dynamis*, and it is the same word Theaetetus defined in the wrestling-school fifty pages earlier. Light as a citation, load-bearing as a cross-reference; the Statesman annotation marks it institutional for exactly that reason.

NOTE · 266a-b

Annotation (light / institutional): Diagonal of diagonal. Theaetetus powers echo; not El. prop. (light)

. . .

Lela sat up.

. . .

"Oh, you don't," she said.

. . .

“He does,” said Sophia.

. . .

“The nature which the family or class of us humans possesses,” the Visitor went on, “surely isn’t endowed for the purpose of going from place to place any differently from the diagonal that has the power of two feet?” “No.”

. . .



But why there? Why not near a corner?
Why not anywhere else?



The Diagonal and the Pig — the argument unfolding step by step.

“And what’s more, the nature of the remaining class has in its turn the power of the diagonal of our power — if indeed it is endowed with two times two feet.”

. . .

“Of course it is,” said young Socrates. “And I actually almost understand what you want to show.”

. . .

“Explain,” said Danae, without much hope.

. . .

“It is a pun,” said Sophia, “and it is a pun about square roots, and it is aimed at two boys who have spent the last year of their lives on square roots, and it is the only joke of its kind in Greek literature. “Take a square one foot

along each side. Draw the line corner to corner. How long is that line?”

. . .

“I don’t know.”

. . .

“Nobody can say,” said the owl. “It is not any number you could write down; your sister will meet it in about a year and will be told it goes on for ever. “But the Greeks had a way of talking about it. They said the line has the power of two feet — meaning: build a square on that line, and the square comes out at two square feet. “And pous means foot. The unit. And also a foot. The thing you walk on.”

. . .

Lela started laughing.

. . .



6

We must give a reason.
Not just a guess, but a why.



The Diagonal and the Pig — the competing interpretation.

“So a human,” said Sophia, “is a creature with the power of two feet. And a pig is a creature with the power of four. He has just defined man and pig using the square root of two, to two teenage mathematicians, in the middle of a discussion about government.”

. . .

“That’s the worst joke I’ve ever heard,” said Lela, who had gone slightly pink with delight.

. . .

“It is the worst joke you have ever heard,” the owl agreed, “and people have been groaning at it for two thousand three hundred years, and I would be extremely sorry if it were ever lost.”

. . .

“And there’s more,” said the Visitor. “Do we see, Socrates, that there’s something else resulting in our divisions that would itself have done well as a comic turn?”

. . .

“What’s that?”

. . .

“That our human class has shared the field, and run together with, the noblest and also most easy-going class of existing things.”

. . .

“I see it turning out very oddly indeed.”



7

**Lela and Danae think:
can we find reasons for places and things?**



The Diagonal and the Pig — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

. . .

“Well — isn’t it reasonable to expect the slowest to come in last?”

. . .

“What?” said Danae.

. . .

“He made another pun,” said Sophia, “and this one does not work in your language at all, so I will simply tell you what has happened. “They have cut and cut and cut, honestly, following the method, without cheating. Tame, on land, on foot, hornless, not interbreeding. “And at the very bottom, in the last box, standing next to human beings — is the pig.”

. . .

Danae put her face in the grass.

. . .

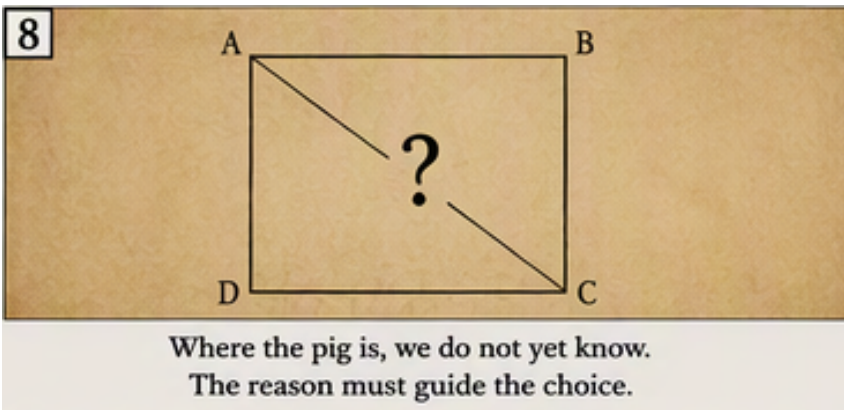
“And don’t we notice,” said the Visitor, “that the king looks even more ridiculous, when he continues to run along with his herd, and has traversed convergent paths, with the man who for his part is best trained of all for the easy-going life?”

. . .

“Absolutely right.”

. . .

“The swineherd,” said Lela. “He’s saying the king’s been running the whole race neck and neck with the swineherd.”



The Diagonal and the Pig — the historical layer.

. . .

“He is saying the king’s expertise and the swineherd’s expertise have come down the tree together, cut for cut, all

the way to the bottom,” said Sophia, “and have finished in a photograph. “And now listen, because he does not let it be only a joke.”

. . .

“Yes, Socrates,” said the Visitor. “And what we said before, in our inquiry about the sophist, is now plainer.”

. . .

“What was that?”

. . .

“That such a method of argument as ours is not more concerned with what is more dignified than with what is not. “And neither does it at all despise the smaller more than the greater. “But always reaches the truest conclusion by itself.”

. . .

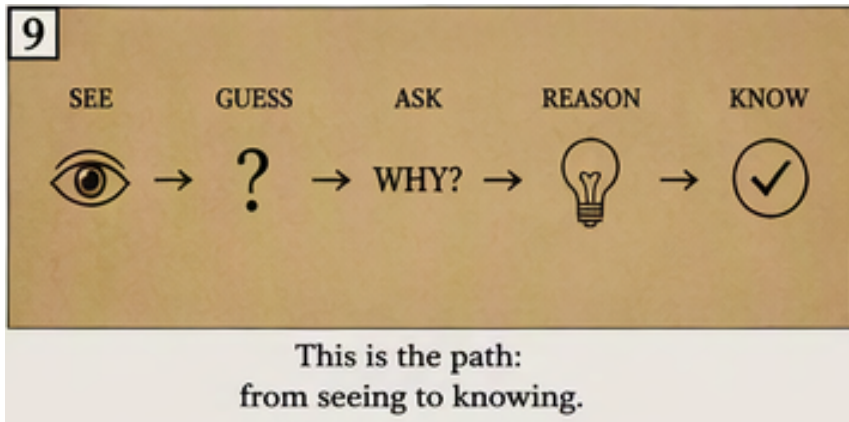
“That’s the lice one,” said Lela.

. . .

“That is the lice one,” said Sophia. “Yesterday, in the middle of a passage about laundry. Today, with a king and a swineherd tied at the finish. “He said it once as a principle and you nodded. He has now said it a second time, having paid for it — because he did the method honestly and it made his king look foolish, and he did not go back and fiddle the cuts to get a more flattering answer. “That is what it costs to mean it. Most people find out what a rule costs and quietly stop having the rule.”

. . .

“Well then,” said the Visitor. “So that you don’t get in before me and ask what the shorter way is — shall I go first and show you?” “Very much so.”





The Diagonal and the Pig — a wordless conceptual plate.

. . .

“Then I say that in this case one must immediately distribute what goes on foot by opposing the two-footed to the four-footed. “And when one sees the human still sharing the field with the winged alone, one must go on to cut the two-footed herd by means of the featherless and the feathered. “And when it has been cut, and the expertise of human-herding has then and there been brought into the light — one must lift the expert in statesmanship and kingship like a charioteer into it, and instal him there, handing over the reins of the city as belonging to him.”

. . .

“Stop,” said Sophia, and stopped it.

. . .

Both girls looked at her.

. . .

“Two-footed and featherless,” said the owl. “Say it back to me.”

. . .

“Two-footed and featherless,” said Danae.

. . .

“That is the definition of a human being that has just been produced, in passing, as a step. And a man called Diogenes — who lived in a large jar, on purpose, and who was the rudest person in the history of Greece — heard about it. “And he went to the market, and he bought a chicken, and he plucked it. “And he walked into Plato’s school holding it up by the legs, and he said: “Behold. Plato’s man.”

. . .

Danae made a noise that startled a blackbird out of the hedge.



10
So begins the search
for reasons in every matter.



The Diagonal and the Pig — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

. . .

“Did they let him in?” she said.

. . .

“They did not have a choice; he was already in,” said Sophia. “And they say — though they say a great many things about Diogenes and not all of them can be true — that the school went away and added with broad flat nails to the definition.”

. . .

“Did that fix it?”

. . .

“No,” said the owl. “But it is the first recorded example of a very important sort of person: the one who does not build the thing, and does not argue with the thing, and simply turns up with the chicken. “They are enormously annoying. They are occasionally indispensable. And I want you to notice that this book has already told you which one he is, because he does not know what a human being is either — he only knows that that is not one.”

. . .

“That’s well done,” young Socrates was saying, “and you’ve paid me the account I asked for as if it were a debt, adding the digression as a kind of interest, making up the sum.”

. . .

“He’s cheered up,” said Lela.

. . .

“He has cheered up,” said Sophia, “and he has made a small joke of his own about arithmetic, and it is his best

moment in the book so far, and in about four minutes everything he has done all morning is going to be thrown away.”

Chapter 75

**SEVENTY-FIVE. The Crowd
Round the Cowherd**



1
Socrates brings another image.
Many follow a single voice.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — opening scene.

“Come on, then,” said the Visitor. “Let’s go back to the beginning, and gather together from there to the end our account of the name of the expertise of the statesman.”
“Absolutely.”

. . .

And he said the whole ladder, from the top.

. . .

Theoretical knowledge. Of that, the directive part. Of that, the self-directing. Of that, the rearing of living creatures. Of that, herd-rearing. Of that, the rearing of what goes on foot. Of that, the hornless. Of that, the non-interbreeding. And of that, the two-footed flock: the rearing of human beings.

. . .



A cowherd calls, and the flock runs to him.
They follow, not because they understand.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — the chapter's central dialogue.

“This very part is now what we were looking for,” said the Visitor. “The same thing we call both kingly and statesmanlike.”

. . .

“Absolutely,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Is it really the case, Socrates,” said the Visitor, “that we have actually done this, as you have just said?”

. . .

“Here we go,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Done what?”

. . .

“Given a completely adequate response to the matter we raised. “Or is our search lacking, especially in just this respect — that our account of the matter has been stated in a certain way, but has not been finished off to complete perfection?”

. . .



Crowds follow the loudest,
not the wisest.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — the central concept made visible.

“How do you mean?”

. . .

“Well then. Of the many sorts of expertise to do with rearing herds that appeared in our view just now, statesmanship was one, and was care of some one sort of herd?”
“Yes.”

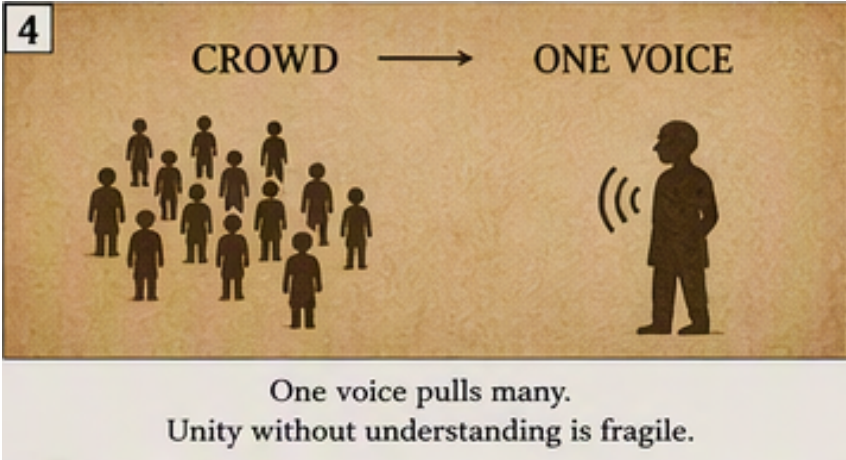
. . .

“And our account defined it not as rearing of horses, or of other animals, but as knowledge of the collective rearing of human beings.” “Just so.”

. . .

“Then let us look at the difference between all herdsmen on the one hand, and kings on the other.”

. . .





The Crowd Round the Cowherd — the guiding analogy.

“What’s that?”

. . .

“Let us see if, in the case of any other herdsman, anyone who has the title of another expertise claims or pretends to share the rearing of the herd with him.”

. . .

“How do you mean?”

. . .

“Like this. That merchants, farmers, millers and bakers — all of them — and gymnastic trainers too, and doctors as a class: all of these, as you well know, would loudly contend against the herdsmen concerned with things human, whom we called statesmen, that they care for human rearing. “Not

merely for that of human beings in the herd, but for that of the rulers as well.”

. . .



Lela and Danae see how easy it is
to be swept along.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Oh,” said Lela.

. . .

“Well — would they be right?” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Perhaps. That we’ll consider. “But what we know is that with a cowherd, no one will dispute about any of these things. “The herdsman is by himself rearer of the herd. By himself its doctor. By himself its matchmaker, as it were. And sole expert in the midwife’s art, when it comes to the births of offspring. “Again — to the extent that the nature of his charges allows them to partake in play and music, no one else is more capable of comforting them and soothing them with his songs, performing best, as he does, the music that belongs to his flock.”

. . .



The crowd loves speeches that promise,
not those that teach.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — the competing interpretation.

“He sings to them,” said Danae.

. . .

“He sings to them,” said Sophia. “That is a real thing that real cowherds really did, in that country, on those hills, and it is in this book because it is the last piece of the trap. “One man. He feeds them, he doctors them, he breeds them, he delivers the calves, and he stands on the hill in the evening and plays to them on a pipe he made himself. “Nobody argues with him about any of it. There is no other profession involved. He is the whole of the caring for that herd. “And that is the picture of the king they have been building all morning.”

. . .

7



To lead is different from to follow.
One must know the path.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“So how will our account of the king appear to us right and complete,” said the Visitor, “when we posit him as sole herdsman and rearer of the human herd — singling him out on his own from among tens of thousands of others who dispute the title with him?”

. . .

“There’s no way in which it can,” said young Socrates.

. . .

The orchard was quiet.

. . .

“It’s the baker,” said Lela.

. . .

“Say it properly.”

. . .



So the statesman must become
a guide, not a caller.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — the historical layer.

“He’s been building this enormous thing all morning and it’s been knocked over by the baker.” She was sitting up now, and had the look she got at the exact moment a thing became interesting. “The king feeds the people. Does he? No he doesn’t, the farmer does. The king keeps them healthy. Does he? No, the doctor does. The king teaches them to be strong — no, that’s the trainer, that’s a man in a yard with a bucket of sand. “Every single thing you’d say a ruler does for people, there’s somebody whose actual job it is, and it isn’t him.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

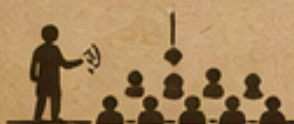
. . .

“So what’s left?”

. . .

9

TWO KINDS OF LEADING

COWHERD
(calls the crowd)

Power over bodies

STATESMAN
(guides the soul)

Care for understanding

Rule is not pushing,
but guiding with knowledge.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — a wordless conceptual plate.

“That,” said the owl, “is the question of the rest of the day, and it is the best question anybody asks in this book, and you have arrived at it in the same minute as the man from Elea. “What is left over, when you have taken away everything that somebody else does better? “And whatever is left over — that is what ruling is.”

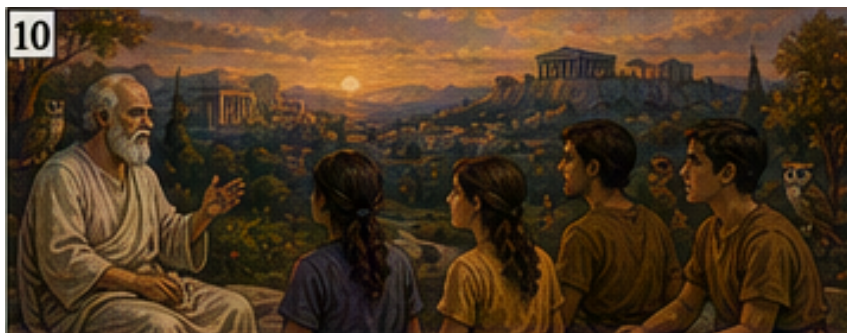
. . .

“Then our fears a little earlier were right,” said the Visitor, “when we suspected that we should prove in fact to be describing some kingly figure, but not yet accurately to have finished the statesman off — “until we remove those who crowd round him, pretending to share his herding function with him. And having separated him from them, we reveal him on his own, uncontaminated with anyone else.”

. . .

“Yes. Absolutely right.”

. . .



A city needs shepherds for flocks,
and statesmen for citizens.



The Crowd Round the Cowherd — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“Well then, Socrates, this is what we must do — if we are not going to bring disgrace on our argument at its end.”

. . .

“That is something we must certainly avoid doing at all costs.”

. . .

“Then we must travel some other route. Starting from another point.”

. . .

“What route is that?”

. . .

And the Visitor said something that neither of the girls had heard anybody in three days of this say.

. . .

“By mixing in,” he said, “as one might put it — an element of play.”

Chapter 76

SEVENTY-SIX. The Reversal



Socrates speaks of a reversal.
What seemed true may not be.



The Reversal — opening scene.

“We must bring in a large part of a great story,” said the Visitor. “And as for the rest, we must then — as in what went before — take away part from part in each case, and so arrive at the furthest point of the object of our search. “So should we do it?”

. . .

“Absolutely.”

. . .

“In that case, pay complete attention to my story, as children do. “You certainly haven’t left childish games behind for more than a few years.”

. . .

Danae rolled over and sat up properly and crossed her legs, which she had not done in three days.

. . .

“He’s doing a story,” she said.

. . .

“He is doing a story,” said Sophia, “and I have been waiting for this since the morning of the first day, and I am going to say almost nothing for the next twenty minutes, and if either of you interrupts I shall be extremely unpleasant about it.”

. . .

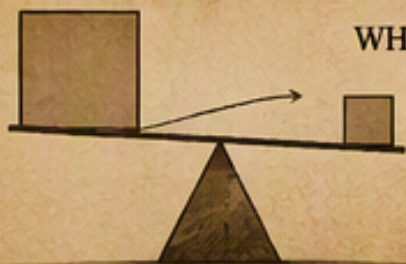
“Then I’ll begin,” said the man from Elea.

. . .

2

WHAT WE THINK

BIG
BETTER



WHAT IS TRUE

SMALL
BETTER

Often we value size, power, and show.
But truth is quieter.



The Reversal — the chapter's central dialogue.

“There have occurred in the past, and will occur in the future, many of the things that have been told through the ages. “One is the portent relating to the quarrel between Atreus and Thyestes. “I imagine you remember hearing what people say happened then.”

. . .

“You’re referring, perhaps, to the sign of the golden lamb.”

. . .

“Not at all. Rather to that of the changing of the setting and rising of the sun and the other stars. “It’s said that they actually began setting in the region from which they now rise, and rising from the opposite region. “And that then, after having given witness in favour of Atreus, the god changed everything to its present configuration.”

. . .

“Yes indeed. They do say this as well.”

. . .

“And what’s more, we’ve also heard from many about the kingship exercised by Cronus.” “Yes. From a great many.”

. . .

“And what of the report that earlier men were born from the earth, and were not reproduced from each other?”

. . .

“This too is one of the things that have been told through the ages.”

. . .



The grand ship impresses.
The small boat reaches the shore.



The Reversal — the central concept made visible.

“Well,” said the Visitor. “All these things together are consequences of the same state of affairs.”

. . .

Lela stopped writing.

. . .

“And besides these, thousands of others still more astonishing. But through the great lapse of time since then, some have been obliterated, while others have been reported in a scattered way, each separate from one another. “But as for the state of affairs that is responsible for all of these things — no one has related it. “And we should relate it now.”

. . .

“I very much like what you say,” said young Socrates. “Go on, and leave nothing out.”

. . .

“Listen, then. “This universe the god himself sometimes accompanies — guiding it on its way, and helping it move in a circle. “While at other times he lets it go. “When its circuits have completed the measure of the time allotted to it; then it revolves back in the opposite direction, of its own accord. Being a living creature, and having had intelligence assigned to it by the one who fitted it together in the beginning.”

. . .

The orchard was entirely silent. Even the wood pigeon had stopped.

. . .

4



The image shows a man with dark, curly hair, wearing a brown robe, looking intently at a board. The board is divided into two columns. The left column is labeled 'APPEARANCE' and contains a large circle. The right column is labeled 'REALITY' and contains a small circle. The man's hand is resting on his chin, suggesting deep thought or contemplation.

APPEARANCE

REALITY

We must turn things around.
See what is truly valuable.



The Reversal — the guiding analogy.

“This backward movement is inborn in it from necessity, for the following reason. “Remaining permanently in the same state and condition, and being permanently the same, belongs only to the most divine things of all. “And by its nature, body is not of this order. “Now the thing to which we have given the name of heavens and cosmos certainly has a portion of many blessed things from its progenitor. But on the other hand, it also has its share of body. “In consequence it is impossible for it to be altogether exempt from change — although, as far as is possible, given its capacities, it moves in the same place, in the same way, with a single motion. “And this is why it has reverse rotation as its lot. Which is the smallest possible variation of its movement.”

. . .



5

Lela asks: Is not gold better than bronze?
Danae thinks: it depends why.



The Reversal — the argument unfolding step by step.

“To turn itself by itself for ever is, I dare say, impossible for anything except the one who guides all the things which, unlike him, are in movement. “And for him to cause movement now in one way, now in the opposite way, is not permitted. “From all of these considerations it follows that one must neither say that the cosmos is always itself responsible for its own turning; nor say that it is turned by god in a pair of opposed revolutions; nor again that it is turned by some pair of gods whose thoughts are opposed to each other. “It is rather what was said just now, which is the sole remaining possibility. “That at times it is helped by the guidance of another, divine cause — acquiring life once more, and receiving a restored immortality from its craftsman. “While at other times, when it is let go, it goes on its own way under its own power. Having been let go at such a time as to travel backwards for many tens of thousands of revolutions, because of the very fact that its

movement combines the effects of its huge size, its perfect balance, and its resting on the smallest of bases.”

. . .

“It’s a top,” said Danae.

. . .

Sophia did not tell her off.

. . .

“It’s a spinning top,” said Danae, working it with her hands. “It’s massive and it’s perfectly balanced and it’s standing on a tiny point, and somebody’s been keeping it going, and when they stop it doesn’t fall over, it just — it goes round the other way for ages and ages and ages.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“That’s not how tops work.”

. . .

6



Bronze may serve better
in the right work.



The Reversal — the competing interpretation.

“No,” said Sophia. “It is how this one works. Hold your objections. The physics is wrong and it is not what the story is about, and in four minutes it is going to do something that will make you forget you ever had an objection.”

. . .

“Then let’s reflect on the state of affairs we said was responsible for all those astonishing things,” said the Visitor. “That the movement of the universe is now in the direction of its present rotation — now in the opposite direction. “We must suppose that this change is, of the turnings that occur in the heavens, the greatest and the most complete turning of all.”

. . .

“Yes. It certainly seems so.”

. . .

“We must suppose, then, that at that time the greatest changes also occur for us who live within the universe?”

. . .

“That too seems likely.”

. . .

“And don’t we recognise that living creatures by their nature have difficulty in tolerating changes that are at once large, great in number, and of all different sorts?”

. . .

“Certainly we do.”

. . .

7

THE REVERSAL

Not bigger,
but fitter.



Not more,
but better.

The wise reverse what others assume.
They seek what works, not what shines.



The Reversal — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“Necessarily, then, there occur at that time cases of destruction of other living creatures on a very large scale. “And humankind itself survives only in small numbers. “Many new and astonishing things happen to them. But the greatest is the one I shall describe.”

. . .

“What kind of thing do you mean?”

. . .

“First,” said the man from Elea, “the visible age of each and every creature, whatever it was, stopped increasing. “And everything that was mortal ceased moving in the direction of looking older. “Instead, it changed back in the opposite direction — and grew, as it were, younger. More tender. “The white hairs of the older men became black. “And in turn the cheeks of those who had their beards became smooth again, returning each to his past bloom. “The

bodies of those in their puberty, becoming smoother and smaller each day and night, went back to the form of newborn children — which they came to resemble both in mind and in body. “And from then on they proceeded to waste away, until they simply disappeared altogether.”

. . .

Nobody in the orchard moved at all.

. . .



The true ruler turns the city
toward what is good.



The Reversal — the historical layer.

“And as for those who died a violent death at that time — the body of the dead person underwent the same effects, and quickly dissolved to nothing in a few days.”

. . .

“But, visitor,” said young Socrates, “how did living creatures come into being in that time? And in what way were they produced from each other?”

. . .

“Clearly, Socrates, reproduction from one another was not part of the nature of things then. “It was the earth-born race — the one said to have existed once — that existed then. Returning to life again from the earth. “It was remembered by our first ancestors, who lived in the succeeding time but bordered on the ending of the previous period, growing up at the beginning of this one. “They became our messengers

for the accounts of the earth-born, which are nowadays wrongly disbelieved by many people.”

. . .

“For I think we must reflect on what is implied by what we have said. “If old men went back to being children — it follows that people should be put together again from the dead, there in the earth, and come back to life. “They would be following the reversal of things, with coming-into-being turning round with it, to the opposite direction.”

. . .

It was some time before anybody in the orchard said anything.

. . .

9



A city built on appearances collapses.
A city built on truth endures.



The Reversal — a wordless conceptual plate.

The morning had got hot while they were not looking. Down at the bottom of the slope the dog had started again and stopped again. A long way off, somebody was cutting grass.

. . .

“Sophia,” said Danae eventually.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Is it a nice story or a horrible story?”

. . .

“That,” said the owl, “is the correct question, and nobody has ever settled it, and you are the first person I have shown

it to who asked it first. “Everybody hears the first part and thinks it is lovely. Old men getting their black hair back. Everyone who died coming up out of the ground. “And then you notice that there is no reason it stops. The old men do not stop at forty. They keep going. They go back to being boys, and then babies, and then they thin out, and then there is nothing there. “Everybody in that world is walking backwards down a corridor towards a door, and all the doors are at the wrong end, and nobody is frightened, because it is simply what happens.”

. . .

“And the babies come out of the ground.”

. . .

10



The reversal leads us upward.
From show to truth, from many to one.



The Reversal — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“And the dead come up out of the ground, made whole, and start the walk.”

. . .

Danae thought about it for a while.

. . .

“I don’t want it,” she said.

. . .

“No.”

. . .

“Everyone would meet backwards. You’d — Yiayia would get younger and younger and she’d stop knowing us, she’d go back past the bit where she knows us, and then she’d

be a little girl and she wouldn't know who we were, and then —“

. . .

She stopped.

. . .

“I don't want it,” she said again.

. . .

“No,” said Sophia gently. “Neither do I, and I am extremely old. “And I will tell you what I think it is for, and then we will go on. “He is about to describe the happiest world anybody in Greece could imagine. No work, no war, no hunger, no politics, nothing to be afraid of. And he needs you to have already noticed, before he starts, that you would not want to live in it. “So he shows you the machinery first. He shows you the direction everybody is walking. “And then he shows you the paradise.”

Chapter 77

**SEVENTY-SEVEN. The Steers-
man Lets Go**

1



Socrates turns to the image of the ship again.
A city is like a ship.



The Steersman Lets Go — opening scene.

“But as for the life which you say there was in the time of Cronus’ power,” said young Socrates — “was it in that period of rotation, or in this one?”

. . .

“You have been keeping up with the argument well.”

. . .

“He got a good mark,” said Danae.

. . .

“He got a very good mark,” said Sophia, “and it is the only one he gets all day, and he got it for asking which period, which is a question about the machinery, and it is the sort of thing he is good at. He is going to be a fine mathematician and an indifferent philosopher, and there is

nothing wrong with that, and about four hundred people in this story would have swapped with him.”

. . .

“As for what you asked, about everything’s springing up of its own accord for human beings — it belongs least to the period that now obtains. “It too belonged to the one before. “For then the god began to rule and take care of the rotation itself as a whole. And as for the regions, in their turn, it was just the same — the parts of the world-order having everywhere been divided up by gods ruling over them. “As for living things, divine spirits had divided them between themselves, like herdsmen — by kind and by herd. Each by himself providing independently for all the needs of those he tended. “So that none of them was savage. Nor did they eat each other. And there was no war, or internal dissent, at all.”

. . .

2



If the steersman lets go,
the ship does not keep a straight course.



The Steersman Lets Go — the chapter's central dialogue.

“There it is,” said Lela.

. . .

“There it is,” said Sophia. “Say it.”

. . .

“He’s put the cowherd back,” said Lela. “That’s the cowherd. That’s the thing the whole morning’s argument was, and it broke — one man who does everything for the herd and nobody argues with him. “And he’s just said: yes. That existed. It was real. It’s what the stories are about. “It just wasn’t a man.”

. . .

3



Waves, winds, and currents
drag it wherever they wish.



The Steersman Lets Go — the central concept made visible.

“But to return to what we have been told about a human life without toil,” the Visitor went on, “the origin of the report is something like this. “A god tended them, taking charge of them himself — just as now human beings, themselves living creatures, but different and more divine, pasture other kinds of living creatures more lowly than themselves. “And given his tendance, they had no political constitutions. Nor acquired wives and children, for all of them came back to life from the earth, remembering nothing of the past. “While they lacked things of this sort, they had an abundance of fruits from trees and many other plants, which grew not through cultivation, but because the earth sent them up of its own accord. “For the most part they would feed outdoors, naked and without bedding — for the blend of the seasons was without painful extremes. “And they had soft beds from abundant grass that sprang from the earth.”

. . .

“That’s nice,” said Danae cautiously.

. . .

“What you are hearing about, then, Socrates, is the life of those who lived in the time of Cronus. “As for this one — which they say is in the time of Zeus, the present one — you are familiar with it from personal experience. “Would you be able, and willing, to judge which of the two is the more fortunate?”

. . .

“Not at all,” said young Socrates.

. . .

4

STEERSMAN

SHIP WITHOUT STEERSMAN



KNOWLEDGE

DISORDER

Without knowledge at the helm,
disorder replaces order.



The Steersman Lets Go — the guiding analogy.

“Then do you want me to make some sort of decision for you?”

. . .

“Absolutely.”

. . .

“Here,” said Sophia. “Here. Both of you. This is the middle of this book and almost nobody notices it.”

. . .

“Well then,” said the man from Elea.

. . .

“If, with so much leisure available to them, and so much opportunity to get together in conversation — not only with

human beings but also with animals — “if the nurslings of Cronus used all these advantages to do philosophy: talking both with animals and with each other, and inquiring from all sorts of creatures whether any one of them had some capacity of its own that enabled it to see better in some way than the rest, with respect to the gathering of wisdom — “then the judgement is easy. That those who lived then were far, far more fortunate than those who live now. “But. “If they spent their time gorging themselves with food and drink, and exchanging stories with each other and with the animals of the sort that even now are told about them — “this too, if I may reveal how it seems to me, at least, is a matter that is easily judged.”

. . .



So too in a city:
without the statesman, the people drift.



The Steersman Lets Go — the argument unfolding step by step.

Nobody in the orchard said anything for a moment.

. . .

“He didn’t finish it,” said Lela.

. . .

“He did not finish it,” said Sophia. “He said this too is easily judged and stopped. He let the boy do the last four words himself, and the boy did not do them, and neither has anybody since, and they are still sitting there waiting. “Now. Tell me what he has just done to paradise.”

. . .

Lela took a while.

. . .

“He’s put a condition on it,” she said.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Everyone thinks the golden age is the golden age because there’s no work and fruit falls off the trees and nothing hurts. And he’s just said — that’s not it. That’s not the good bit. That’s just the conditions. “He said: they had all the time in the world and they could talk to the animals. If they used it to find things out, then yes, it was the best thing that ever happened. “And if they used it to lie about eating and telling each other stories, then it was —“

. . .



Factions arise, quarrels grow,
and each seeks what pleases itself.



The Steersman Lets Go — the competing interpretation.

She stopped.

. . .

“Then it was a farm,” she said.

. . .

“Then it was a farm,” said the owl.

. . .

“That is what he has done to paradise, and it took him one sentence, and he did it politely, and he did not say the last four words. “A world with nothing wrong in it is not automatically worth having. It depends entirely on what the people in it were doing. “And he has picked the one thing they could have been doing that would have made it worth it — and it is the thing that these five men have been doing in this courtyard for three days, for nothing, with

no fruit falling off any trees, in a city that is about to kill one of them.”

. . .

“But however that may be, let us leave it to one side,” the Visitor was saying, “until such time as someone appears who is qualified to inform us in which of these two ways the desires of men of that time were directed. “We must now state the point of our rousing our story into action.”

. . .



Lela: What keeps the steersman from letting go?
Danae: Maybe he grows tired, or follows someone else.



The Steersman Lets Go — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“When the time of all these things had been completed, and the hour for change had come — and in particular all the earth-born race had been used up, each soul having rendered its sum of births, falling to the earth as seed as many times as had been laid down for each — “at that point the steersman of the universe let go, as it were, of the bar of the steering-oars. “And retired to his observation-post.”

. . .

Lela said, very quietly: “Oh.”

. . .

“And as for the cosmos, its allotted and innate desire turned it back again in the opposite direction. “So all the gods who ruled over the regions, together with the greatest divinity, seeing immediately what was happening, let go in their turn the parts of the cosmos that belonged to

their charge. "And as it turned about, and came together with itself, impelled with opposing movements — both the one that was beginning and the one that was now ending — it produced a great tremor in itself. Which in its turn brought about another destruction of all sorts of living things. "After this, when sufficient time had elapsed, it began to cease from noise and confusion, and attained calm from its tremors. "It set itself in order, into the accustomed course that belongs to it — itself taking charge of, and mastering, both the things within it and itself. "Because it remembered, so far as it could, the teaching of its craftsman and father."

. . .



8
So too the statesman must guard his soul,
and the city must honor true leadership.



The Steersman Lets Go — the historical layer.

“At the beginning,” said the man from Elea, “it fulfilled his teaching more accurately. “But in the end, less keenly.”

. . .

In the garden of the Academy, Plato stopped reading.

. . .

He did not stop the way a man stops at the end of a sentence. He stopped in the middle, with his finger on the line, and he did not go on.

. . .

Aristotle waited.

. . .

“Read it back to me,” said Plato.

. . .

“You wrote it.”

. . .

“Read it back to me.”

. . .

9

THE PATHS OF A CITY



The difference between good and bad
is whether knowledge rules.



The Steersman Lets Go — a wordless conceptual plate.

Aristotle found the place on his own tablet.

. . .

“It set itself in order, itself taking charge of and mastering both the things within it and itself, because it remembered, so far as it could, the teaching of its craftsman and father. “At the beginning it fulfilled his teaching more accurately. But in the end, less keenly.”

. . .

The old man sat with his hands on the roll.

. . .

“I wrote that about the sky,” he said.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“I was sixty-one and I was writing about the sky, and it took me until this afternoon, reading it out loud to you, to notice what it is about.”

. . .

Aristotle did not say anything.

. . .



The city must not let the helm slip away.
The steersman must hold fast.



The Steersman Lets Go — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“Every school,” said Plato. “Every school, every craft, every family, every city. The man lets go of the bar. And the thing he made does not stop and it does not fall over. “It runs on. Under its own power. Doing its best. Remembering, so far as it can. “And at the beginning it remembers accurately. And then, in the end, less keenly. “Not wickedly. Not through betrayal. Nobody in the story does anything wrong. It is simply what happens to a remembered instruction, carried a long way, by something that is partly made of body.”

. . .

“How long?” said Aristotle.

. . .

“How long what?”

. . .

“Before it goes less keenly.”

. . .

Plato looked down the garden at the buildings, where there were lamps now, and a good deal of noise, and about forty young men who would all have said, if asked, that they loved him.

. . .

“I have no idea,” he said. “That is the honest answer and I am too old to give you another one. “But I notice that the story does not say the sky was wrong to keep turning.”

. . .

He found his place with his finger.

. . .

“The cause of this,” he read, “was the bodily element in its mixture. Its companion since its origins long in the past.”

Chapter 78

**SEVENTY-EIGHT. Forgetful-
ness Increases**



Socrates continues: when rule is neglected,
something worse begins to grow.



Forgetfulness Increases — opening scene.

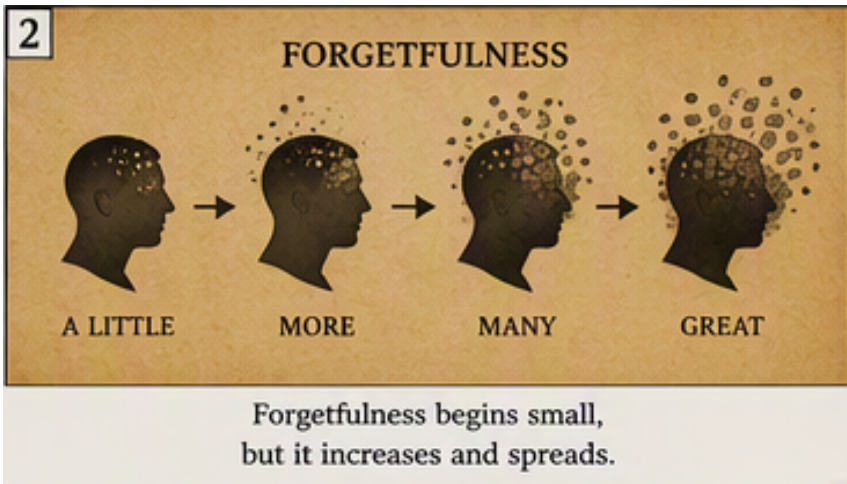
“So while it reared living things in itself in company with the steersman,” said the Visitor, “it created only slight evils, and great goods. “But in separation from him — during all the time closest to the moment of his letting go — it manages everything very well. “But as time moves on, and forgetfulness increases in it, the condition of its original disharmony also takes greater control of it. And, as this time ends, comes to full flower. “Then the goods it mixes in are slight, but the admixture it causes of the opposite is great. “And it reaches the point where it is in danger of destroying both itself and the things in it.”

. . .

“That’s what happens to a class,” said Danae.

. . .

“Go on,” said Sophia.





Forgetfulness Increases — the chapter's central dialogue.

“When Miss goes out.” Danae was lying on her back with her arms behind her head. “It’s fine. For about four minutes it’s completely fine, and everybody’s a bit pleased, and you do more work than normal because you’re showing off at nobody. “And then it isn’t fine. And you can’t say when it stopped.”

. . .

“That,” said the owl, “is the entire passage, and it took him a hundred and eleven words and it took you thirty-one.”

. . .

“It is for this reason,” said the Visitor, “that now the god who ordered it, seeing it in difficulties — and concerned that it should not, storm-tossed as it is, be broken apart in confusion and sink into the boundless sea of unlikeness —

“takes his position again at its steering-oars. “And, having turned round what had become diseased and been broken apart in the previous rotation, orders it; and by setting it straight renders it immortal and ageless.”

. . .



First we forget small things—names, lessons,
the kindness of friends.



Forgetfulness Increases — the central concept made visible.

“The boundless sea of unlikeness,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“What is that? What does that actually mean?”

. . .

“Nobody entirely knows,” said the owl, “and it is one of the four or five phrases in Greek that people simply keep, the way you keep a stone you liked the shape of. “Here is the best I can do. “Everything you can think about is like something. That is what thinking is. This is like that; this is one of those; this is the same again but bigger. “Now imagine a place where nothing is like anything. No two things are the same in any respect. No word covers two

of them. Nothing rhymes with anything, nothing is a kind of anything, nothing resembles anything, ever. “You could not say a sentence there. You could not have a thought. There would be nothing wrong, exactly. There would just be no purchase anywhere, on anything, for ever.”

. . .



Then we forget what is important,
thinking only of pleasure.



Forgetfulness Increases — the guiding analogy.

Danae had gone very still.

. . .

“And he says the world is always drifting towards that,” said Sophia, “and that the only thing that ever stops it is somebody coming back and taking hold of it.”

. . .

“When the cosmos had been turned back again,” the Visitor went on, “the movement of the ages of living creatures once again stopped, and produced new effects which were the opposite of what previously occurred. “For those living creatures that were close to disappearing through smallness began to increase in size. “While those bodies that had just been born from the earth, already grey-haired, began to die again, and return into the earth.”

. . .

“It’s us,” said Lela. “That’s us. That’s it going back to normal. That’s the way round we are.”

. . .



So the city forgets justice and wisdom,
and chases noise and flattery.



Forgetfulness Increases — the argument unfolding step by step.

“That is the way round you are,” said Sophia. “And notice that he has just made growing old and dying the thing that happens when the world is put back the right way up. “You have spent ten minutes looking at the alternative. You said you did not want it.”

. . .

“We are now at the point that our account has all along been designed to reach,” said the Visitor.

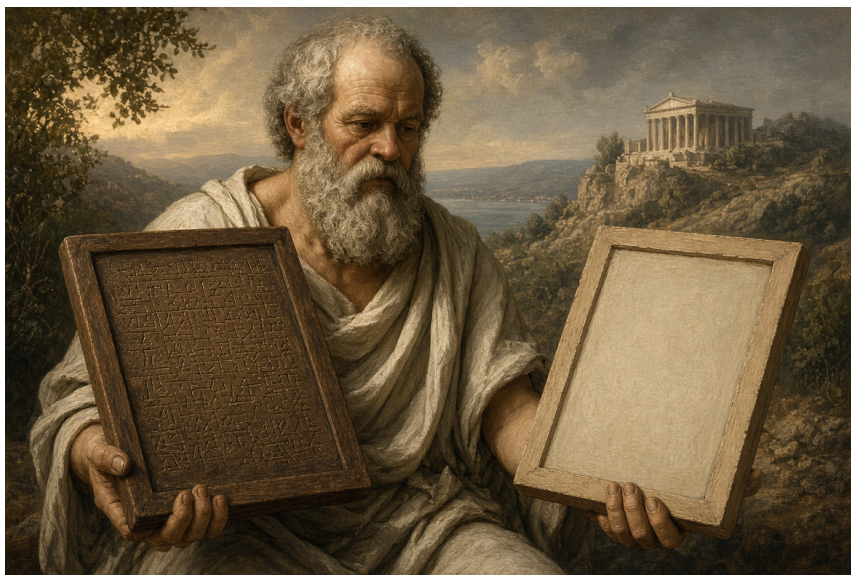
. . .

“To go through the changes that have occurred in relation to the other animals would involve a description of considerable length. Those that relate to human beings will be shorter, and more to the point.”

. . .



Leaders are chosen for show,
not for truth.



Forgetfulness Increases — the competing interpretation.

“Since we had been deprived of the god who possessed and pastured us — “and since, for their part, the majority of animals, all those who had an aggressive nature, had gone wild — “human beings, by themselves weak and defenceless, were preyed on by them. “And in those first times were still without resources, and without expertise of any sort. “Their spontaneous supply of food was no longer available to them, and they did not yet know how to provide for themselves — having had no shortage to force them to do so before. “As a result of all of this they were in great difficulties.”

. . .

Lela sat up so suddenly that the notebook went off her knees.

. . .

“Having had no shortage to force them to do so before,” she said.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“That’s — Sophia, that’s the answer to the other thing. That’s the answer to would you rather live in paradise.”

. . .

“Go on.”

. . .



Danae: Why do we forget?
Lela: Because we do not pay attention.



Forgetfulness Increases — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“They didn’t have any crafts,” said Lela. “In the golden age. They didn’t have anything. No farming, no fire, no houses, no cloth, no — “And it’s not because they were stupid. It’s because nothing ever made them. Everything they needed came out of the ground on its own. They never

had to find anything out, so they never found anything out, so when the god let go they were lying about in a field with no idea how to do a single thing. “They weren’t better off. They were —“ she groped for it — “they were kept.”

. . .

“They were kept,” said the owl.

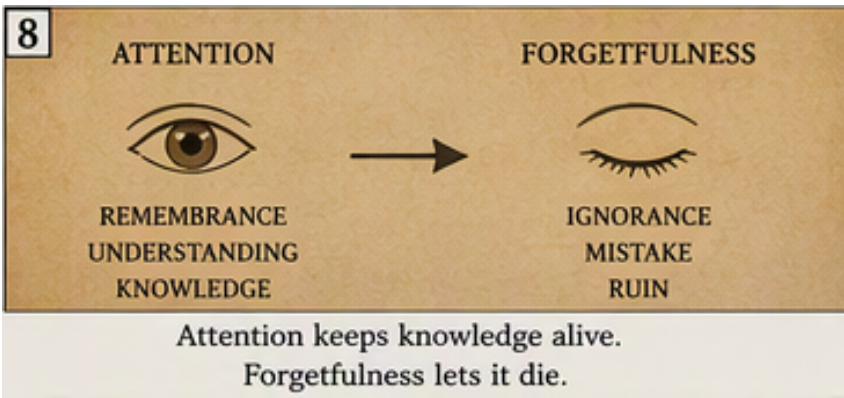
. . .

“And nothing that anybody has ever made was made in the golden age. Not one thing. It’s all from after. It’s all from the bad bit.”

. . .

“Every single thing,” said Sophia. “Listen.”

. . .



Forgetfulness Increases — the historical layer.

“This is why the gifts from the gods, of which we have ancient reports, have been given to us — along with an indispensable requirement for teaching and education. “Fire from Prometheus. “Crafts from Hephaestus and his fellow craftworker. “Seeds and plants from others. “Everything

that has helped to establish human life has come about from these things — once care from the gods ceased to be available to human beings, and they had to live their lives through their own resources, and take care for themselves. “Just like the cosmos as a whole. Which we imitate and follow for all time.”

. . .

The orchard was quiet for a while.

. . .

“We’re the sky,” said Danae.

. . .

9

THE GROWTH OF FORGETFULNESS



What is small today,
tomorrow becomes a forest.



Forgetfulness Increases — a wordless conceptual plate.

“You are the sky,” said Sophia. “That is what he has just said, and it is the joint of the whole story, and if you take nothing else out of today, take that. “The world was held, and then it was let go, and it did not stop, and it runs on remembering as well as it can. “And so do you. Exactly the same shape, the same size down, in a smaller thing. Everybody is let go of. Everybody keeps going on what they remember. Everybody’s memory of the instruction goes, in the end, less keenly. “He has not said this is sad. Look at what he put in the sentence where the sadness should be. Fire. Crafts. Seeds. And an indispensable requirement for teaching and education. “Those are the things you get instead of being looked after. You get to have to work it out. And because you have to work it out, you have to be taught, and because you have to be taught, there have to be people whose whole life is the passing-on. “There were no teachers in paradise. There was no need of any.”

. . .

Lela did not say anything for a long moment.

. . .





Forgetfulness Increases — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“Say it,” said Sophia.

. . .

“He’s making it come out all right,” said Lela. “That’s what he’s doing. He’s — this is a story about being abandoned by God, and it’s got a fire in it and a man on a hill teaching somebody something, and that’s meant to be enough.”

. . .

“Is it enough?” said the owl.

. . .

Lela looked at the picture for a while: the courtyard, the plane tree, the tall man talking, two boys listening, and an old man sitting on a bench at the edge of it who had nine

weeks left and had spent his entire life doing the one thing there had been no need of in paradise.

. . .

“I don’t know,” she said.

. . .

“Good,” said Sophia. “Neither did he. That is why he wrote it as a story instead of an argument.”

Chapter 79

SEVENTY-NINE. Not a God



Socrates asks: must the true statesman be a god?
Not even that would be enough.



Not a God — opening scene.

“As for the matter of our story, let it now be ended,” said the Visitor. “And we shall put it to use, in order to see how great our mistake was when we gave our account of the expert in kingship and statesmanship in our preceding argument.”

. . .

“So how do you say we made a mistake? And how great was it?”

. . .

“In one way it was lesser. In another it was very high-minded — and much greater and more extensive than in the other case.”

. . .

“How so?”

. . .

“In that, when asked for the king and statesman from the period of the present mode of rotation — “we replied with the shepherd from the opposite period. Who cared for the human herd that existed then. “And at that, a god instead of a mortal. “In that way we went very greatly astray.”

. . .

Nobody in the orchard said anything at all.

. . .



A god rules by nature and power.
He does not need knowledge.



Not a God — the chapter's central dialogue.

“There,” said Sophia, after a moment. “That is what the story was for. “Three days, four books, seventy-five chapters. That sentence is the reason for the whole of this afternoon and I would like to take it apart with you very slowly, because it is the most useful thing in this book, and because a great many people who ought to know better still have not heard it.”

. . .

“Say it in ordinary words,” said Danae.

. . .

“He asked what a ruler is,” said the owl. “And they built one. And what they built was a shepherd. One man, on a hill, who feeds you and doctors you and breeds you and delivers you and plays the pipe to you in the evening, and who is not in any way the same kind of thing as you.

“And the Visitor has just said: that is a real picture, and it is a beautiful picture, and it comes from somewhere — but it comes from the other half of the story. “That existed when a god was doing it. It does not exist now. It has not existed for a very long time. And when you ask for it now, you are asking a human being to be a god.”

. . .



But the statesman must rule with knowledge.
He must understand what is best.



Not a God — the central concept made visible.

“But in that we revealed him as ruling over the whole city together,” the Visitor was going on, “without specifying in what manner he does so — in this way, by contrast, what we said was true, but incomplete and unclear. “Which is why our mistake was lesser than in the respect just mentioned.”

. . .

“True.”

. . .

“So we should define the manner of his rule over the city. It’s in this way that we should expect our discussion of the statesman to reach its completion.”

. . .

“Right.”

. . .

“He’s split it,” said Lela, who was writing very fast. “Two mistakes. One’s a little one and one’s a big one. “The little one is: we said he runs the city and we didn’t say how. That’s fine. That’s just unfinished. “The big one is: we made him a god.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“And he said the big one was high-minded.”

. . .

4

GOD

RULES
BY NATURE
AND POWER

STATESMAN

RULES
BY KNOWLEDGE
AND REASON

Power without knowledge is not enough.
Knowledge without power is not enough.



Not a God — the guiding analogy.

“He said the big one was high-minded,” the owl agreed, “and that is a very carefully chosen word, and it means: this is the mistake people make when they are trying to say something grand. “Nobody makes the god-king mistake out of cynicism. You make it out of admiration. You make it because you want the answer to be beautiful. “And you end up asking a man in a building to be something that has not walked the earth since before there were people to walk it.”

. . .

“But in my view, Socrates,” said the Visitor, “this figure of the divine herdsman is still greater than that of a king. “And the statesmen who belong to our present era are much more like their subjects in their natures — and have shared in an education and nurture closer to theirs.”

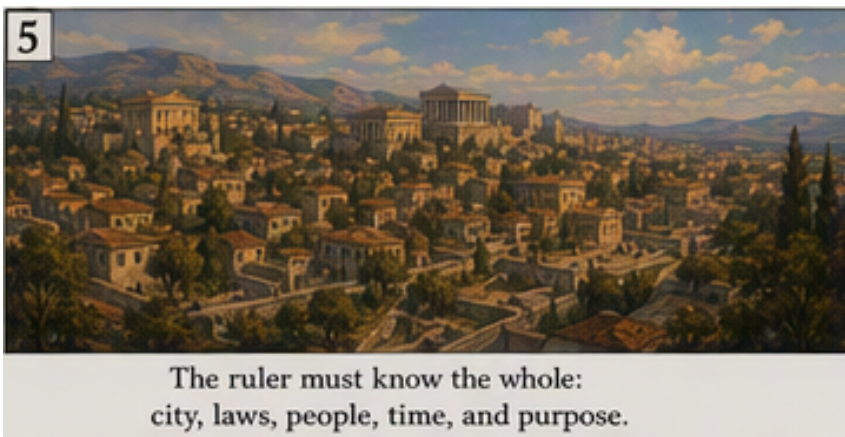
. . .

“Oh,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “Write that one out twice.”

. . .





Not a God — the argument unfolding step by step.

“He’s one of us,” said Lela. “That’s — the whole shepherd thing, the shepherd’s not a sheep. That’s the entire point of a shepherd. He’s a different thing from them and he knows things they can’t know and they can’t even ask him, because they’re sheep. “And he’s just said: no. Whoever is running your city went to school. He grew up in a house. He ate the same food as you and learned the same things as you and he is the same kind of thing as you are.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s not a small change.”

. . .

“It is not a small change,” said the owl, “and every single thing in politics that you are ever going to think is decent

comes out of it. If he is one of us, he can be argued with, and asked to explain himself, and replaced. “You cannot replace a shepherd. There is nobody else who can do it. That is what a shepherd is.”

. . .

“Yet they will be neither less nor more worth looking for,” the Visitor was saying, “whether their natures are of the latter or of the former sort.”

. . .



He must plan for the future,
remember the past, and judge the present.



Not a God — the competing interpretation.

And then he took them back up the tree, and fixed the word.

. . .

All the other herdsmen, he said, share the feature of rearing their herds. And the statesman does not. And they had applied the word to him anyway.

. . .

“And how would — perhaps — looking after not have been common to them all?” he said. “Without any specification of it as rearing, or any other sort of activity? “By calling it some sort of expertise in herd-keeping, or looking after, or caring for, as applying to them all, we could have covered the statesman too, as well as the rest.”

. . .

“That’s just a word,” said Danae. “He’s changed one word.”

. . .



Lela: So he must be wise like a philosopher,
Strong like a warrior, and careful like a craftsman?



Not a God — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“He has changed one word,” said Sophia, “and it has done more work than the last hour of cutting. “Rearing is what you do to something helpless. It means feeding it. It means being the source of its food. “And the moment you say the statesman rears the people, the baker is standing behind you with his arms folded, because the baker is where the bread comes from and everybody knows it. “Looking after does not claim that. You can look after something that feeds itself. You can look after something that knows more than you do about nine tenths of its own life. “One word. And the entire crowd of millers and doctors and trainers who broke the argument an hour ago stop being a problem — because nobody is claiming their jobs any more.”

. . .

“But after that, Socrates,” said the Visitor, “do we see that at the very end of our account we again made a large mistake?”

. . .

“What sort of mistake?”

. . .

“That even if we had been quite convinced that there was some expertise concerned with the rearing of the two-footed herd, we should certainly not for that reason immediately have called it the expertise of the king and statesman, as if that were the end of the matter.”

. . .



8

Socrates: He must be all these,
and more—together, in one life.



Not a God — the historical layer.

“What should we have done?”

. . .

“We should have altered the name, aligning it more with caring for things than with rearing. And then we should

have cut this. For it would still offer room for cuts of no small size.”

. . .

“Where would they be?”

. . .

“I imagine, where we would have divided off the divine herdsman on one side — and the human carer on the other.”
“Correct.”

. . .

“But again we ought to have cut into two the art of the carer resulting from this apportionment.”

. . .

“By using what distinction?”

. . .

“That between the enforced and the voluntary.”

. . .

Lela put her pen down.

. . .

“I think we made a mistake before in this way too,” said the Visitor, “by behaving more simple-mindedly than we should have. “We put king and tyrant into the same category. When both they themselves, and the manner of their rule, are very unlike one another.”

. . .

9

WISDOM



COURAGE



TEMPERANCE



JUSTICE



Not by nature alone, but by learning and practice.
Many parts must work in harmony.



Not a God — a wordless conceptual plate.

“True.”

. . .

“And should we perhaps call tyrannical the expertise that relates to subjects who are forced — “and the herd-keeping that is voluntary, and relates to willing two-footed living things, that expertise which belongs to statesmanship? “Displaying, in his turn, the person who has this expertise and cares for his subjects in this way as being genuinely king and statesman?”

. . .

“Yes, visitor,” said young Socrates. “And it’s likely that in this way our exposition concerning the statesman would reach completion.”

. . .

“Sophia,” said Lela.

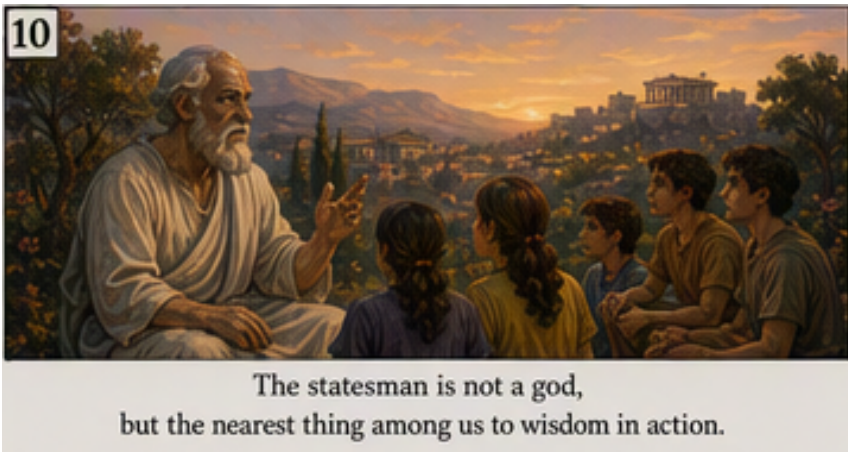
. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s it, isn’t it. That’s the difference. That’s the whole entire difference between a king and a tyrant and it’s one word.”

. . .



The statesman is not a god,
but the nearest thing among us to wisdom in action.



Not a God — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“Say the word.”

. . .

“Willing,” said Lela. “Whether they want him there. “Not whether he’s good at it. Not whether he’s clever, or kind, or right about things, or whether the trains run — whether the people are willing. “You could have a tyrant who’s brilliant. He’d still be a tyrant. That’s — that’s the only thing on the list.”

. . .

“That is the only thing on the list,” said the owl, “and it is sitting in the middle of a book by the man who is supposed to have wanted philosophers to rule, in one line, as a cut in a diagram, and he never draws attention to it again. “And I will tell you what I think is the most remarkable thing about it. He does not say that force is

ineffective. He does not say the tyrant fails, or that it never works, or that the people rise up. He makes no prediction whatsoever. "He says it is a different kind of thing. Not a bad version of the same expertise. A different branch of the tree, cut off at a different place, with a different name. "A tyrant is not a bad statesman. He is not a statesman."

Chapter 80

**EIGHTY. Letters We Already
Know**



Socrates now turns to language.
We must use the letters we already know.



Letters We Already Know — opening scene.

“It would be a fine thing for us, Socrates,” said the Visitor. “But this mustn’t be just your view alone. I too have got to share it in common with you. “And as it is, according to my view, our discussion does not yet seem to have given a complete shape to the king.”

. . .

“No,” said Danae, outraged.

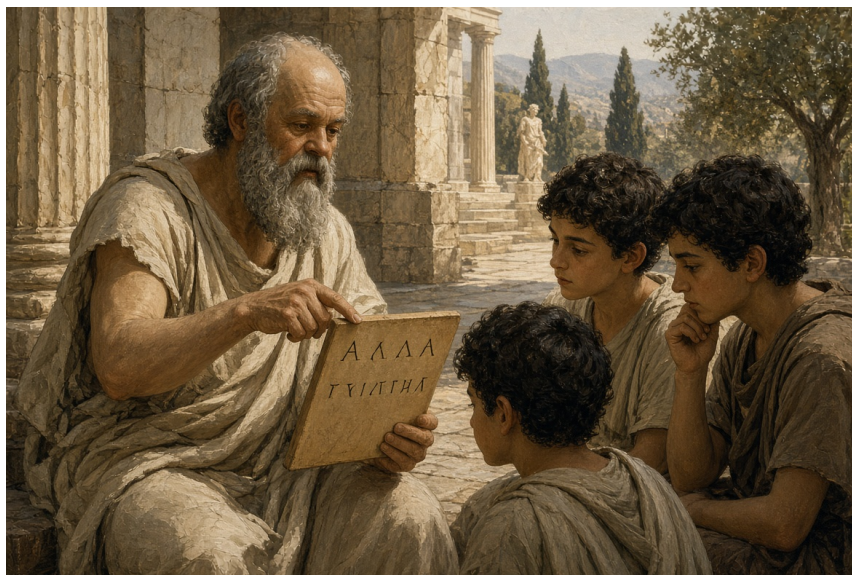
. . .

“Just as sculptors sometimes hurry when it is not appropriate to do so, and actually lose time by making additions and increasing the size of the various parts of their work beyond what is necessary — “so too in our case. I suppose that in order to give a grand as well as a quick demonstration of the mistake in the route we previously took, we thought it was appropriate to the king to give large-scale illustrations. “We took upon ourselves an astonishing mass

of material in the story we told, so forcing ourselves to use a greater part of it than necessary.”

. . .





Letters We Already Know — the chapter's central dialogue.

“He’s apologising for the myth,” said Lela.

. . .

“He is apologising for the myth,” said Sophia.

. . .

“But it was the best bit!”

. . .

“It was the best bit,” the owl agreed, “and he says so himself, more or less, and he still thinks it was too long, and he is more right than you are, and I am not going to argue with either of you about it. “Here is what he actually says about it, which is the useful part.”

. . .



With them we speak, write,
remember, ask, and answer.



Letters We Already Know — the central concept made visible.

“Our account, just like a portrait,” said the Visitor, “seems adequate in its superficial outline — but not yet to have received its proper clarity. As it were with paints, and the mixing together of colours.”

. . .

“That’s fair,” said Lela, slightly grudgingly.

. . .

“But show me how you say we have not yet given an adequate account.”

. . .

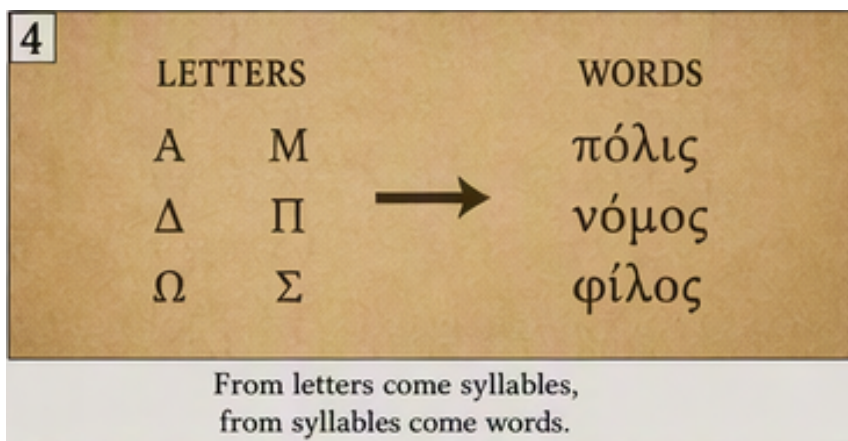
“It’s a hard thing, my fine friend,” said the Visitor, “to demonstrate any of the more important subjects without using models. “It looks as if each of us knows everything

in a kind of dreamlike way — and then again is ignorant of everything when, as it were, awake.”

. . .

Danae sat up.

. . .





Letters We Already Know — the guiding analogy.

“Ohh,” she said. “Ohh. Say that one again.”

. . .

Sophia said it again.

. . .

“Each of us knows everything in a kind of dreamlike way, and then again is ignorant of everything when as it were awake.”

. . .

“That’s true,” said Danae, with total conviction. “That’s completely true. That’s the — when somebody asks you what a thing is and you know, you absolutely know, you could point at it, you’d know it anywhere, and then you open your mouth and there’s nothing in there at all.”

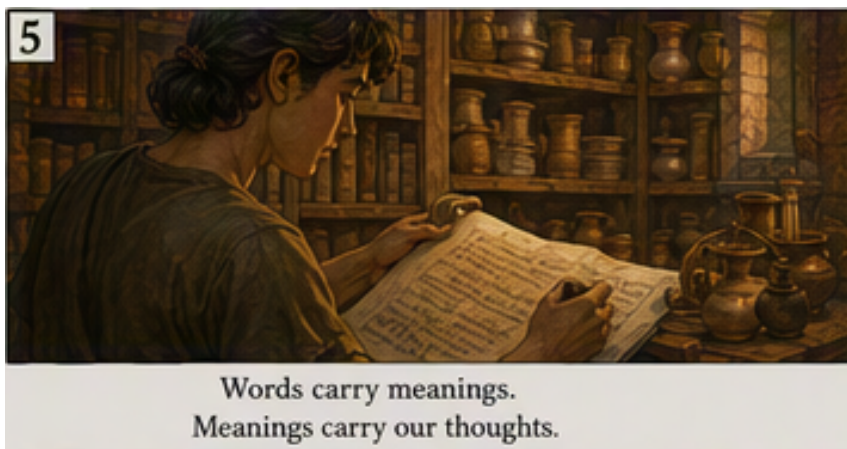
. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

— “And you feel stupid. And you’re not being stupid, you’re

. . .



Words carry meanings.
Meanings carry our thoughts.



Letters We Already Know — the argument unfolding step by step.

“You are asleep,” said the owl, “in the only place you have ever been able to do it. “That is what he says. Everybody knows everything, dreaming. Nobody knows anything, awake. The whole of this three days has been an attempt to get one single thing from the first list onto the second one, and they have not managed very many.”

. . .

“I do seem rather oddly now to have stirred up the subject of what happens to us in relation to knowledge,” said the Visitor. “How so?”

. . .

“It has turned out, my dear fellow, that the idea of a model itself, in its turn, also has need of a model to demonstrate it.”

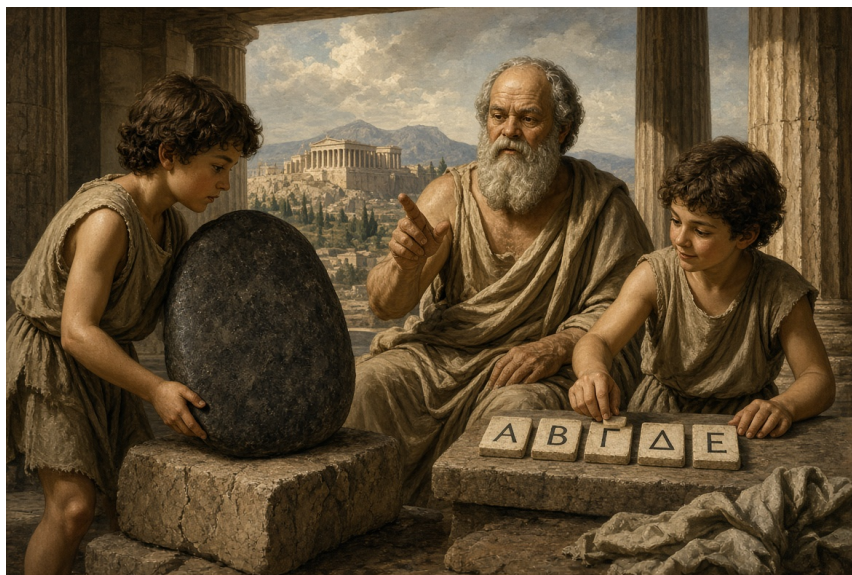
. . .

“He needs a model of a model,” said Lela.

. . .



Danae: Are the letters enough
to speak about everything?



Letters We Already Know — the competing interpretation.

“He needs a model of a model.”

. . .

“That’s going to go on for ever.”

. . .

“It does not go on for ever,” said Sophia, “and the reason it does not is the most practical thing in this chapter. Watch what he reaches for. “He needs an example of how examples work. And he could have picked anything in the world. “He picks children learning to read.”

. . .

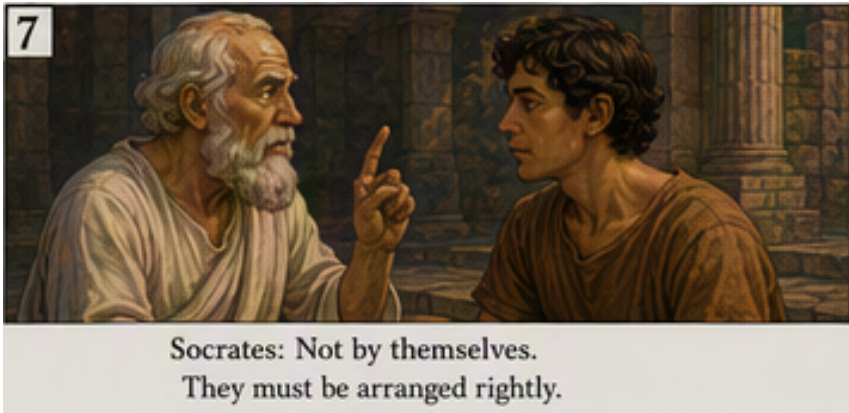
“I suppose we recognise,” said the Visitor, “that when children are just acquiring skill in reading and writing — they distinguish each of the individual letters well enough

in the shortest and easiest syllables. And come to be capable of indicating what is true in relation to them.”

. . .

“Of course.”

. . .





Letters We Already Know — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“But then once again they make mistakes about these very same letters in other syllables. And think and say what is false.”

. . .

“Absolutely.”

. . .

“That’s Danae,” said Lela, before she could stop herself.

. . .

“That was Danae,” said Danae, unoffended, “for about a year and a half, and it was horrible, and I’d do cat and I’d do sat and then somebody’d write satchel and I’d go to pieces.”

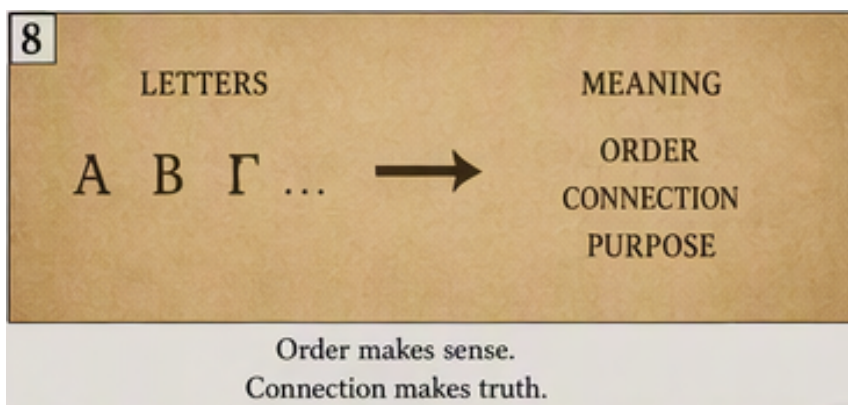
. . .

“Well then — isn’t this the easiest and best way of leading them on to the things they’re not yet recognising?”

. . .

“What way?”

. . .





Letters We Already Know — the historical layer.

“To take them first back to those cases in which they were getting these same things right. “And having done that, to put these beside what they’re not yet recognising. “By comparing them, we demonstrate that there is the same kind of thing, with similar features, in both combinations — until the things that they are getting right have been shown set beside all the ones that they don’t know.”

. . .

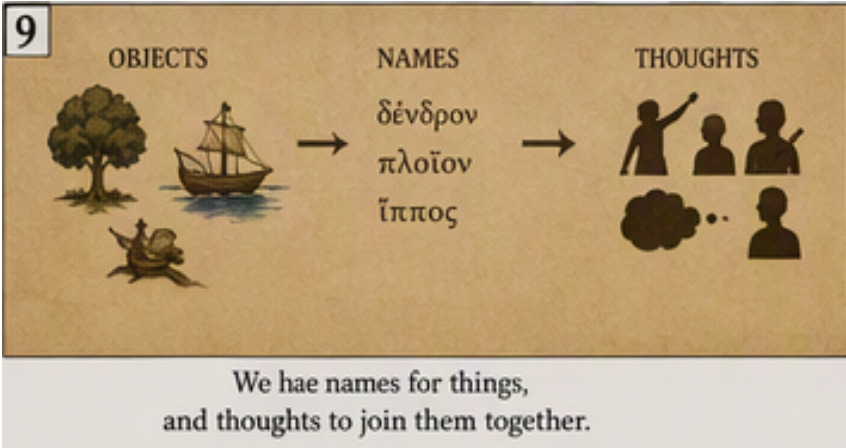
“That’s what Mrs Okafor did,” said Danae.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“That’s exactly what she did. She didn’t tell me satchel. She wrote sat and then she wrote satchel underneath it with the sat bit in red and she just sort of — waited.”





Letters We Already Know — a wordless conceptual plate.

“Yes.”

. . .

“And it went ping.”

. . .

“It went ping,” said the owl, “and a man in a courtyard in 399 BC has just described the ping, and the thing Mrs Okafor did to produce it, in about forty words. “And I want to say something now that I have been saving. “That is what I have been doing to you both for two summers.”

. . .

Neither of them said anything.

. . .

10



So we begin again with what we know.
From the known, we reach the unknown.



Letters We Already Know — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“That is the entire method,” said Sophia. “I have never once explained a thing to you from the top. Not once, in two summers. When something in that courtyard is too big to see, I ask you about something small that you already know — a bird book, a road with writing on it, a class when the teacher goes out, a woman you waved at in a shop at Easter. “And then I put the two of them next to each other and I wait. “I did not invent it. I got it from this page. I have been using this paragraph on the two of you since before either of you could have told me what a paragraph was.”

. . .

Danae said: “Is that allowed?”

. . .

“It is the only thing that is allowed,” said the owl. “Nothing else works. “How could anyone begin from false belief, and get to even a small part of the truth, and so acquire wisdom?”

. . .

“Is that you or him?”

. . .

“That is him,” said Sophia. “He is about to say it. I have merely had two and a half thousand years to get my timing right.”

Chapter 81

EIGHTY-ONE. Weaving



Socrates now turns to weaving,
a good image for statesmanship.



Weaving — opening scene.

“Then we must take up once again what we were saying before,” said the Visitor. “That since tens of thousands of people dispute the role of caring for cities with the kingly class, what we have to do is to separate all these off, and leave the king on his own. “And it was just for this purpose that we said we needed a model.”

. . .

“Very much so.”

. . .

“So what model — involving the same activities as statesmanship, on a very small scale — could one compare with it, and so discover in a satisfactory way what we are looking for? “By Zeus, Socrates, what do you think?”

. . .

“He doesn’t know,” said Lela.

. . .

“He knows perfectly well,” said Sophia. “Listen to the next line. It is one of the best pieces of acting in Plato.”

. . .

“If there isn’t anything else to hand,” said the Visitor — “well, what about weaving? “Do you want us to choose that?”

. . .

“If there isn’t anything else to hand,” repeated Lela.

. . .

2



A weaver brings many threads together
to make a single, beautiful cloth.



Weaving — the chapter's central dialogue.

“If there isn’t anything else to hand,” said the owl. “As though he had looked round the courtyard and his eye had happened to fall on somebody’s cloak. “He has been going to say weaving since the first morning. You have been hearing the word for three days. The boy said it by accident when he was stuck about copies. The man used it for the letters and the names and the verbs. The weaving together of forms is what makes speech possible for us. “It has been the word under everything since before you knew there was a word under anything. “And here it comes up out of the ground as though nobody had ever thought of it, with a shrug, in the middle of the afternoon.”

. . .

“I’ve certainly no objection,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Not all of it, if you agree, since perhaps the weaving of cloth from wool will suffice.”

. . .

Danae had gone absolutely rigid.

. . .

“Lela,” she said.

. . .

“I know.”

. . .

“Lela, the loom.”

. . .

“I know.”

. . .

“Say it out loud for me,” said Sophia, “because I am not in that house and I never have been.”

. . .



Threads differ in color, strength, and purpose,
yet the cloth depends on their order.



Weaving — the central concept made visible.

“There’s a loom,” said Danae. “In Yiayia’s. In the back room where the jars are. It’s enormous, it’s made of wood and it’s got a bit worn shiny where your hands go, and it’s her mother’s, and it doesn’t work any more because a bit of it’s gone. “And there’s a rug on the floor in the front room that came off it. And it’s got a red line in it and the red line goes wrong about two thirds of the way along, it goes sort of wobbly and then it’s fine again, and Yiayia says that’s where somebody was crying.”

. . .

Nobody said anything for a moment.

. . .

“And that,” said Sophia, “is why he chose it. “Not because it is small and humble. Because there was one in every single house in Greece, in the back room, worn shiny

where the hands go, and everybody in that courtyard had watched their mother at it, and so had every person who would ever read the book for the next thousand years. “He is about to explain what governing a city is. And he is going to explain it using the one machine that everybody’s grandmother owns.”

. . .

“Why then don’t we now do the very same thing with weaving that we did in what preceded?” said the Visitor. “Dividing each thing by cutting it into parts, and then cutting them? “We’ll get back to what is useful in the present context after covering everything as briefly and quickly as we can.”

. . .

4

THREADS
(people)



THE WEAVER
(statesman)



THE CLOTH
(city)



The statesman is like the weaver.
The people are the threads. The city is the cloth.



Weaving — the guiding analogy.

“What do you mean?”

. . .

“I shall make my answer to you by just going through it.”

. . .

“An excellent suggestion.”

. . .

And he went through it.

. . .

“All the things we make and acquire are either for the sake of our doing something — or they prevent something’s happening to us. “Of preventives, some are charms,

whether divine or human, warding things off; others are forms of defence. “Of forms of defence, some are ways of arming for war, others forms of protection. “Of forms of protection, some are screens, others means of warding off cold and hot weather. “Of the latter, some are shelters, others coverings. “Of coverings, one sort consists of things spread under, a different sort of things put round. “Of things put round, some are cut out in one piece, while a different sort are compound. “Of the compound, some are perforated, others bound together without perforation. “Of the unperforated, some are made of the sinews of things growing from the earth, others of hair. “Of those made of hair, some are stuck together by means of water and earth — others are bound together with themselves. “It is to these that we give the name clothes.”

. . .

5



A city has many kinds of people—
different roles, different skills, different desires.



Weaving — the argument unfolding step by step.

“That was the whole of a jumper,” said Danae, in a voice of pure awe.

. . .

“That was the whole of a jumper,” said Sophia. “Eleven cuts. From everything human beings make down to a jumper, without one wasted word, and it is showing off, and he is entitled.”

. . .

“And it’s right,” said Lela, who had been checking. “That’s the thing. I keep waiting for a bit that isn’t right and it’s all right. A blanket is a thing spread under. A cloak is a thing put round. A leather coat’s cut out of one piece. A sewn thing’s got holes in it. A felt thing’s mashed together with water. “And a jumper’s the one where the stuff is tied to itself.”

. . .

“And a jumper,” said the owl, “is the one where the stuff is tied to itself. Yes. “Now watch, because he is not finished, and the last three minutes of this are the reason for all of it.”

. . .

“But put like this, my boy, it is not yet complete,” said the Visitor. “The person who puts his hand first to the production of clothes seems to do the opposite of weaving.”

. . .

6



The statesman must know how each part fits
and what happens when the order changes.



Weaving — the competing interpretation.

“How so?”

. . .

“The business of weaving, I suppose, is a sort of inter-twining.” “Yes.”

. . .

“But in fact what I’m talking about is a matter of breaking apart things that are combined or matted together.”

. . .

“What is it you’re referring to?”

. . .

“The function of the art of the carder.”

. . .

“What’s a carder?” said Danae.

. . .

“The person who takes the wool off the sheep’s back,” said Sophia, “which arrives as a filthy matted lump with grass in it — and combs it. With two paddles full of little iron teeth. Until every single hair in it is lying separate and straight and pointing the same way, like the fur on a cat. “And only then can anybody spin it, and only after that can anybody weave it.”

. . .

“So he pulls it apart,” said Lela slowly, “and then the weaver puts it together.”

. . .

“He pulls it apart and then the weaver puts it together.”

. . .



If the order is wrong, the cloth is torn.
If the order is right, it is strong and beautiful.



Weaving — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“And you can’t skip him.”

. . . .

“You cannot skip him. If you put a matted lump on a loom you get a matted lump with a pattern on it, and it

falls to bits in a year. "There is no weaving of anything, ever, that was not first separated."

. . .

Lela sat looking at the picture, and then down at the notebook on her knees, which by now had three days in it.

. . .

"That's the whole summer," she said.

. . .

"Say it."

. . .

"That's the whole summer. That's every single thing they've done for three days. Dividing. Cutting things apart. Fisherman, giants, letters, being and not-being, sophist, king. Apart and apart and apart, until Danae said it was like a bird book and I said it was boring and then I said it wasn't. "And that's the carding."

. . .

"That is the carding," said Sophia.

. . .

"And now he weaves."

. . .

"And now," said the owl, "he weaves."

. . .



8

Lela and Danae see that leadership
is an art of arrangement.



Weaving — the historical layer.

In the garden of the Academy, Aristotle put down his stylus and looked at his teacher for a while before he said anything.

. . .

"May I say the thing," he said, "or would you rather I did not?"

. . .

"Say the thing."

. . .

"Republic," said Aristotle.

. . .

The old man did not move.

. . .

"Go on," he said.

. . .

"You wrote a book," said Aristotle. "It is the most famous thing anybody in this city has ever written. There is a copy of it in every school in the Greek world that has a shelf. "And in it there is a man who rules because he knows. Who is educated apart, and lives apart, and is not like the people he rules, and who is put over them for their good because he has seen something they have not seen and cannot see. "And this afternoon you have read me a book in which a man from Elea says, in so many words, that that figure is a shepherd; and that shepherds belong to the other half of the story; and that the man who looks after a city in this age is of the same kind as the people in it, and went to the same sort of school, and that the only thing that separates him from a tyrant is whether they are willing."

. . .

9

WEAVING A CITY



PEOPLE

Many and different



ORDER

Knowledge and
arrangement



UNITY

One city,
one life together

Unity does not come from being the same,
but from being woven well together.



Weaving — a wordless conceptual plate.

He stopped.

. . .

“I have been waiting two days to see whether you would say it first,” he said.

. . .

Plato was quiet for a long moment.

. . .

“I was forty,” he said, “when I wrote that book.”

. . .

“That is not an answer.”

. . .

“No. It is not.” He turned the roll over in his hands. “It is the beginning of one. “I was forty, and a city I loved had killed the best man in it, by vote, in the sunshine, lawfully. And I wanted — very badly — for there to be an arrangement in which that could not have happened. “So I built one. And it is beautiful, and I am not ashamed of it, and a great deal of it is true, and I would not take a word of it back for the sake of looking consistent. “But I have been to Sicily three times since then.”

. . .

“And?”

. . .

10



So the statesman weaves courage and moderation
into the fabric of the city.



Weaving — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“And I have met men who were told they were the ones who knew,” said Plato. “And I have watched what it does to them. I have watched it happen to a man in front of me, over about four years, and he was not a monster, and he was not even stupid, and by the end of it he was not somebody I could speak to. “And I have watched myself, standing beside him, wanting very much to believe it was working. Which is its own thing, and is worse. “So: yes. That is the Republic, and this is not, and you are right, and you are the first person in this school to say it out loud to my face, which is why I have been waiting.”

. . .

“Which one do you believe?” said Aristotle.

. . .

“That is the wrong question and you know it is.”

. . .

“It is what everyone will ask.”

. . .

“Then everyone will be asking the wrong question,” said Plato, “and you will have to spend some part of your life telling them so, and they will not thank you for it. “I did not stop believing the first thing. I found out what it costs. Those are different, and the second one takes twenty years and a boat.”

. . .

He found his place on the roll again.

. . .

“And now,” he said, “if you have finished prosecuting me — he is about to explain the whole of government by means of a blanket, and it is the best thing in the book, and you will want to be listening.”

Chapter 82

EIGHTY-TWO. Contributory Causes



Now Socrates asks: what makes a thing what it is?
One cause alone is never enough.



Contributory Causes — opening scene.

“Yet all of these will dispute the role of looking after and producing clothes with the capacity which is the art of weaving,” said the Visitor. “Conceding a very large part to it — but assigning large shares to themselves too.” “Certainly.”

. . .

“Again,” said Lela.

. . .

“Again,” said Sophia. “The fullers and the menders and the people who make the shuttles are standing round the weaver with their arms folded, saying and who washes it, then? “It is exactly the same shape as the bakers and the doctors standing round the king. That is why he chose it. He is doing the hard problem twice — once on something nobody minds about, and once on the thing that matters.”

. . .



A pot needs clay, the potter,
the wheel, water, and the shape.



Contributory Causes — the chapter's central dialogue.

“Then again, in addition to these, we must suppose that the sorts of expertise responsible for making the tools through which the products of weaving are completed will also lay claim to being at least a contributory cause of every woven article.”

. . .

“Quite correct.”

. . .

“Well then,” said the Visitor, “let’s look at two sorts of expertise that there are in relation to all the things that people do. “One which is a contributory cause of production. One which is itself a cause.”

. . .

“How so?”

. . .

“Those which do not make the thing itself, but which provide tools for those that do — tools which, if they were not present, what has been assigned to each expertise would never be accomplished: “these are what I mean by contributory causes. “While those that bring the thing itself to completion are causes.”

NOTE · 287b

Annotation (light / institutional): Contributory causes.
Political taxonomy. (light)

. . .

3

MANY CAUSES WORK TOGETHER



MATERIAL
(what it is made of)



MAKER
(who does it)



INSTRUMENT
(what is used)



FORM
(what it is shaped into)



PURPOSE
(why it is made)

**Material, maker, instrument, form, and purpose—
many causes join to bring something to be.**



Contributory Causes — the central concept made visible.

“That’s a good one,” said Lela.

. . .

“Say why,” said Sophia.

. . .

Lela thought about it. “Because it’s not nothing,” she said. “That’s the bit. He’s not saying the shuttle-maker doesn’t matter. He says it right there — if they were not present, the thing would never be accomplished. Without the shuttle there’s no cloth. Ever. At all. “He’s just saying he isn’t the weaver.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“And that’s — “ Lela was turning the pen over. “You need a word for that. That’s a real thing and there isn’t a word for it. People are either the one who did it or they’re nobody, and almost everybody’s neither.”

. . .



Leave one out, and the result is incomplete
or not what it should be.



Contributory Causes — the guiding analogy.

“There is a word for it,” said Sophia. “It is two and a half thousand years old and it is in front of you. Synaition. A with-cause. A joint-cause. “It never quite made it into your language, and you have all been arguing about who did things ever since without it.”

. . .

“Then as a next step, shall we call contributory causes all those that are concerned with spindles and shuttles and whatever other tools share in the process of production in relation to garments — calling those that look after and make garments themselves causes?”

. . .

“Quite correct.”

. . .

And then, briskly, he sorted out everybody else.

. . .

Washing and mending and looking after clothes: all of that is the fuller's art. Carding and spinning and the making of clothes itself: all of that is wool-working.

. . .



**A ship requires wood, builders, tools,
plans, workers, and the sea to sail.**



Contributory Causes — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Next, there are two segments of wool-working,” said the Visitor, “and each of these is a part of two sorts of expertise at once.”

. . .

“How so?”

. . .

“What has to do with carding, and half of the art of the shuttle, and all those activities that set apart from each other things that are together — all of this we can declare as one, and as belonging to wool-working itself. “And there were, we agreed, two great sorts of expertise in every sphere. That of combination, and that of separation.”

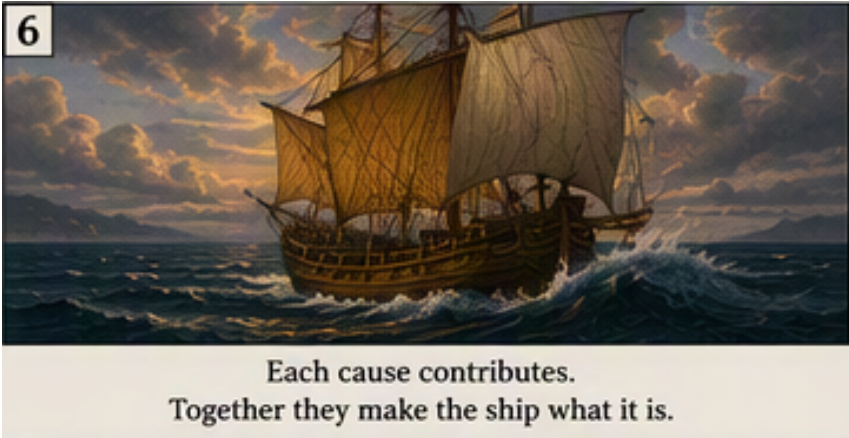
. . .

“There it is,” said Lela.

. . .

“There it is,” said Sophia. “Three days. Every single thing he has done for three days has been one of those two, and he has just named them both, in a list, while talking about wool.”

. . .





Contributory Causes — the competing interpretation.

“Then in its turn, Socrates, you should divide the part that is simultaneously combination and wool-working — if indeed we are going to capture the aforesaid art of weaving.”

. . .

“Then I must.”

. . .

“Indeed you must. And let’s say that part of it is twisting, part intertwining.”

. . .

“Do I understand correctly? By twisting, you seem to me to be talking about what relates to the manufacture of the warp.”

. . .

“Not only of the warp. But of the woof too.”

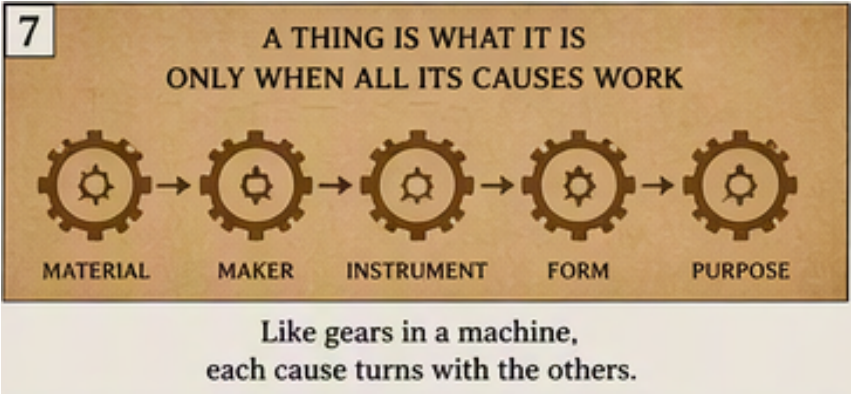
. . .

“Stop,” said Danae.

. . .

Sophia stopped it.

. . .





Contributory Causes — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“I don’t know what those are,” said Danae. “I’ve heard them about nine times now and I don’t know what they are and I’m not going to pretend.”

. . .

“Good,” said the owl. “Nobody does. It is the single most quoted image in this book and about one person in fifty who quotes it could tell you which one is which, and I have been waiting for one of you to say so. “Lela. You have seen the rug.”

. . .

“I’ve seen the rug.”

. . .

“Then tell her.”

. . .

Lela sat up and held both hands out flat in front of her, fingers spread.

. . .



Danae: So nothing appears by itself.
It comes from many causes together.



Contributory Causes — the historical layer.

“Right,” she said. “So. You’ve got the loom, and it’s this big wooden thing standing up, like a gate. “And the first thing that happens — before anything, before there’s any rug — somebody has to string it. And that’s these.” She moved one hand up and down. “Long threads, going the whole way, top to bottom, hundreds of them, side by side, all the same, dead straight, pulled tight. “And they’re hard. They’re the hard ones. They’re spun really tight so they don’t break, because everything’s going to pull on them. “That’s the warp.”

. . .

“And they’re boring,” said Sophia.

. . .

“They’re completely boring,” Lela agreed. “There’s nothing to look at. It’s just a gate with strings in it. It doesn’t

look like anything at all and it takes ages and Yiayia says that's the bit where people give up."

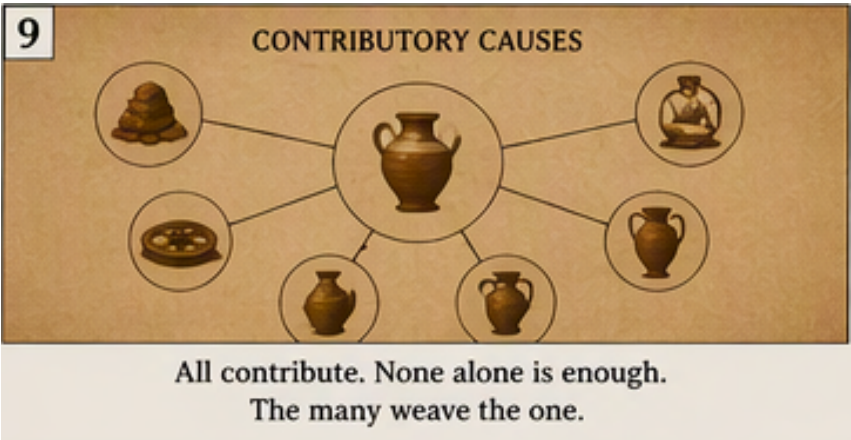
. . .

"And the other?"

. . .

Lela moved her other hand across, side to side.

. . .





Contributory Causes — a wordless conceptual plate.

“That’s the one that goes across. In and out. Over, under, over, under, all the way, and then back the other way. And that’s the one you can see. That’s where the colours are. That’s the red line. “And that one’s soft. It’s spun loose on purpose, so it squashes down and fills in all the gaps and makes it warm. “That’s the woof.”

. . .

Danae looked at her sister’s hands for a while.

. . .

“So the boring hard ones hold it up,” she said, “and the soft pretty ones go across and fill it in.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“And you need both.”

. . .

“You need both,” said Sophia, “or you have a gate with strings in it, or a bag of wool on the floor. “Remember your hands exactly as they are now. Put them down. I will ask you for them again at the end of the week, and when I do, you will find out what this entire book has been about.”

. . .



10

So the wise investigate all the causes—
and understand things as they truly are.



Contributory Causes — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“Of this, then,” the Visitor was saying, “the yarn that has been twisted by the spindle and been made firm, you’ll call the warp. “But those threads that in their turn get a loose twisting, and have a softness appropriate to the twining in of the warp — you’ll call these the woof.”

. . .

“Quite correct.”

. . .

“And as for the part of weaving that we put forward for investigation, I suppose that’s now clear to anyone. “When the part of combination which is contained in wool-working produces something intertwined, by the regular intertwining of woof and warp — the whole product we refer to as a piece of woollen clothing. “And we refer to the expertise that is over this as weaving.”

. . .

“Quite correct.”

Chapter 83

**EIGHTY-THREE. Why Didn't
We Just Say So?**



Socrates smiles: perhaps we should have said all this from the very beginning.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — opening scene.

“Good,” said the Visitor.

. . .

“So why ever, then, didn't we immediately reply that weaving was an intertwining of woof and warp — instead of going round in a circle defining a whole collection of things to no purpose?”

. . .

Both girls said something at the same time and neither of them was polite.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia, “and now look at what the boy does.”

. . .

“To me at least, visitor,” said young Socrates, “nothing of what we have said seemed to have been said to no purpose.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“He stuck up for him.”

. . .

“He stuck up for him,” said Sophia. “He has been told off four times today. He has been slow, and lazy, and he has given at least two answers that were nearly nothing at all. “And when the man turns round and asks was all that a waste of time — the boy, who has more reason to say yes than anybody alive, says no. “I have been unkind about young Socrates for two days. I would like that on the record as well.”

. . .



But the mind does not climb the mountain
in one leap. It must be led step by step.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — the chapter's central dialogue.

“And that isn’t at all surprising, I may say,” said the Visitor. “But perhaps, my dear fellow, it might seem so. “So against such a malady — in case it should come upon you later, which wouldn’t be at all surprising — listen to a point which it’s appropriate to make in all cases like this.”

. . .

“In case it should come upon you later,” repeated Lela.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s — he doesn’t believe him.”

. . .

“He believes him entirely,” said Sophia. “He believes that the boy means it, now, at four in the afternoon, sitting in front of him, having just been part of it. “And he knows perfectly well what happens in three weeks, walking home in the rain, when somebody asks what he did that day, and he hears himself say we spent an afternoon on a cardigan. “He is not arming the boy against an objection. He is arming him against himself.”

. . .

“First, then,” said the Visitor, “let’s look at excess and deficiency in general. So that we may distribute praise and censure proportionately on each occasion — when things are said at greater length than necessary, and when the opposite occurs.”

. . .

“That’s what we must do, then.”

. . .

“About length and brevity, and excess and deficiency in general. I suppose the art of measurement relates to all of these.” “Yes.”

. . .

3

WE COULD HAVE SPOKEN
OF THE END FIRST.

END

BEGINNING

We might have spoken of the end,
and then worked back.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — the central concept made visible.

“Then let’s divide it into two parts.”

. . .

“Please tell me how we should divide it.”

. . .

“This way. One part will relate to the association of greatness and smallness with each other. “The other, to what coming into being necessarily is.”

. . .

“That second one’s gibberish,” said Lela.

. . .

“It is very nearly gibberish in Greek as well,” said Sophia, “and the scholars put a note at the bottom of the page

saying so, and then he explains it, and it becomes one of the clearest and most useful ideas anybody has ever had. "Wait for the explanation. That is what he means you to do."

. . .

"Does it not seem to you," said the Visitor, "that by its nature the greater has to be said to be greater than nothing other than the less? "And the less in its turn less than the greater, and than nothing else?"

. . .

"It does."

. . .



But we would not have been understood.
The ground had not yet been prepared.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — the guiding analogy.

“What about this. Shan’t we also say that there really is such a thing as what exceeds what is in due measure — and everything of that sort, in what we say or indeed in what we do? “Isn’t it just in that respect that those of us who are bad, and those who are good, most differ?”

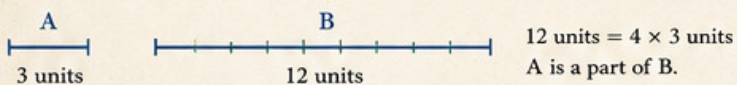
EUCLID · Elements V — part that measures; multiple

El.V.Def.1 — *part that measures* STRONG

A magnitude is a part of a(nother) magnitude, the lesser of the greater, when it measures the greater.

1. PART

A magnitude is a part of another, the lesser of the greater, when it measures the greater.



El.V.Def.1 — part that measures

El.V.Def.2 — multiple STRONG

And the greater (magnitude is) a multiple of the lesser when it is measured by the lesser.

2. MULTIPLE

A magnitude is a multiple of another when it is measured by a part of it.

A
3 units

B
12 units

$B = 4 \times A$
 B is a multiple of A .

El.V.Def.2 — multiple

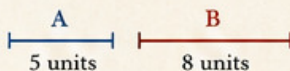
El.V.Def.3 — ratio STRONG

A ratio is a certain type of condition with respect to size of two magnitudes of the same kind.

3. RATIO

A ratio is a certain type of condition with respect to size of two magnitudes of the same kind.

For example, the ratio of A to B.
(A and B are both lengths.)



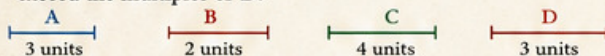
El.V.Def.3 — ratio

El.V.Def.7 — *greater ratio* STRONG

And when for equal multiples (as in Def. 5), the multiple of the first (magnitude) exceeds the multiple of the second, and the multiple of the third (magnitude) does not exceed the multiple of the fourth, then the first (magnitude) is said to have a greater ratio to the second than the third (magnitude has) to the fourth.

7. GREATER RATIO

The ratio of A to B is greater than the ratio of C to D when equal multiples can be found such that the multiples of A exceed the multiples of B, while the multiples of C do not exceed the multiples of D.



Take equal multiples $m = 2$, $n = 3$.

$$mA = 2 \times 3 = 6 > nB = 3 \times 2 = 6$$

$$mC = 2 \times 4 = 8 \leq nD = 3 \times 3 = 9$$

Therefore, $A : B > C : D$.

El.V.Def.7 — greater ratio

Why here: Strongest Statesman measure locus.

Note. Strongest Statesman measure locus.

. . .

“Say it in kitchen words,” said Danae, immediately.

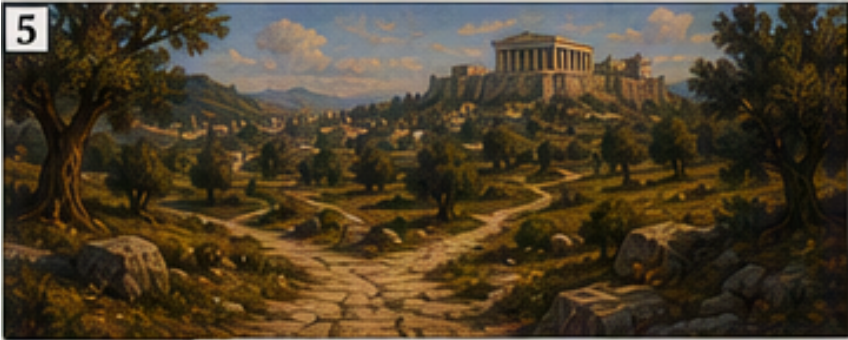
. . .

“With pleasure,” said the owl. “Stand up and get the salt.”

. . .

“There isn’t any salt, we’re in an orchard.”

. . .



5

So we walked the longer path—
from things near at hand to things far away.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Then imagine the salt,” said Sophia, “and listen. “There are two completely different things you can mean when you say a dish has too much salt in it. “The first is: more than the other one. This soup has more salt than that soup. That is a comparison between two things, and it needs two things, and it tells you nothing at all about whether either of them is any good. Both soups might be inedible. Both might be perfect. “And the second is: more than it should have. More than is right. More than the soup wants. “And that one does not need a second soup. There is no other soup. There is one bowl on the table and it is wrong and everybody at the table knows it.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Danae. “Oh, that’s two different things.”

. . .

“That is two completely different things,” said Sophia, “and your language uses the same word for them, and so did Greek, and almost nobody had ever noticed. “The first one is measuring against each other. “The second is measuring against what it ought to be. Against the due. Against the right amount. “And he has just said that the difference between good people and bad people lives entirely in the second kind.”

. . .

“In that case,” said the Visitor, “we must lay it down that the great and the small exist, and are objects of judgement, in these twin ways. “It is not, as we said just before, that we must suppose them to exist only in relation to each other. But rather that we should speak of their existing in one way in relation to each other — and in another in relation to what is in due measure. “Do we want to know why?”

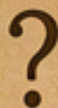
. . .

6

THE ORDER WE FOLLOWED



SEE
(things)



ASK
(what they are)



DIVIDE
(kind and form)



UNITE
(the whole)

We looked, we asked, we divided,
and only then could we unite.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — the competing interpretation.

“Of course.”

. . .

“If someone will admit the existence of the greater, and everything of the sort, in relation to nothing other than the less — it will never be in relation to what is in due measure. You agree?” “That’s so.”

. . .

“Well, with this account of things, we shall destroy — shan’t we? — both the various sorts of expertise themselves, and their products. “And in particular, we shall make the one we’re looking for now, statesmanship, disappear. And the one we said was weaving.”

. . .

“What?” said Lela.

. . .

“For I imagine all such sorts of expertise guard against what is more and less than what is in due measure. “Not as something which is not — but as something which is, and is troublesome in relation to what they do. “It is by preserving measure in this way that they produce all the good and fine things they do produce.”

. . .

“Explain it,” said Lela. “Slowly. I nearly have it.”

. . .

“Then take it yourself,” said Sophia. “What does a weaver do wrong?”

. . .

7



Lela asks: is the hard way the only way?
Danae thinks: perhaps not—but it is the surest.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

Lela sat very still.

. . . .

“Pulls it too tight,” she said.

. . .

“And?”

. . .

“And too loose.” She was speaking slowly. “Too tight and it snaps. Too loose and it’s a sack. “And there isn’t any — you can’t do it by comparing. There’s no other rug. You can’t go this one’s tighter than that one, that doesn’t help you, that’s not what you need to know. You need to know how tight it should be. “And if there’s no such thing as how tight it should be, then there’s no such thing as doing it well. And if there’s no such thing as doing it well, then —“

. . .

She stopped.

. . .

“Then there’s no such thing as a weaver,” she said.

. . .

“Then there is no such thing as a weaver,” said the owl. “There is only somebody who pulls threads. Some of them tighter than others. “And there is no such thing as a doctor, only somebody who gives people quantities of things. And no such thing as a cook. And no such thing as a builder. “And — this is the one he is actually chasing — no such thing as a statesman. Only somebody who does more of things than somebody else.”

. . .



**The dialectician must guide the soul
as a midwife guides a birth.**



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — the historical layer.

“Is it the case, then,” said the Visitor, “that just as with the sophist we compelled what is not into being as well as what is, when our argument escaped us down that route — “so now we must compel the more and the less, in their turn, to become measurable, not only in relation to each

other, but also in relation to the coming into being of what is in due measure? “For if this has not been agreed, it is certainly not possible for either the statesman, or anyone else who possesses knowledge of practical subjects, to acquire an undisputed existence.”

. . .

“He’s done it again,” said Lela.

. . .

“He has done it again,” said Sophia, and she sounded, for once, almost pleased. “Say it.”

. . .

“That’s the same move. That’s exactly the same move as the other book. He said — everybody says what is not can’t be, and if it can’t be then nobody can ever be wrong about anything, and people are wrong all day, so it has to be, so I’m going to make it be even though my teacher said not to. “And now he’s gone: everybody says bigger only means bigger than something else, and if that’s all it means then there’s no such thing as doing anything well, and people do things well all day, so there has to be a right amount, and I’m going to make that be as well.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“It’s the same man doing the same thing twice.”

. . .

9

WHY NOT SAY IT ALL AT ONCE?

ALL AT ONCE
(too much, too soon)



confusion



STEP BY STEP
(when ready)



understanding

Too much light blinds the eyes.
Step by step, the soul grows ready.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — a wordless conceptual plate.

“It is the same man doing the same thing twice,” said the owl, “on consecutive days, in the same courtyard, in front of the same silent old man. “And he says so himself. Just as with the sophist. He knows exactly what he is doing, and he tells them, and nobody in the courtyard says a word about it.”

. . .

“This task, Socrates, is even greater than the former one,” said the Visitor. “And we remember what the length of that was.”

. . .

Danae laughed out loud.

. . .

“Still,” he said, “it’s very definitely fair to propose the following hypothesis. “That at some time we shall need

this for the sort of demonstration that would be commensurate with the precise truth itself. “But so far as concerns what is presently being shown — quite adequately for our immediate purposes — the argument we are using seems to me to come to our aid in magnificent fashion.”

. . .

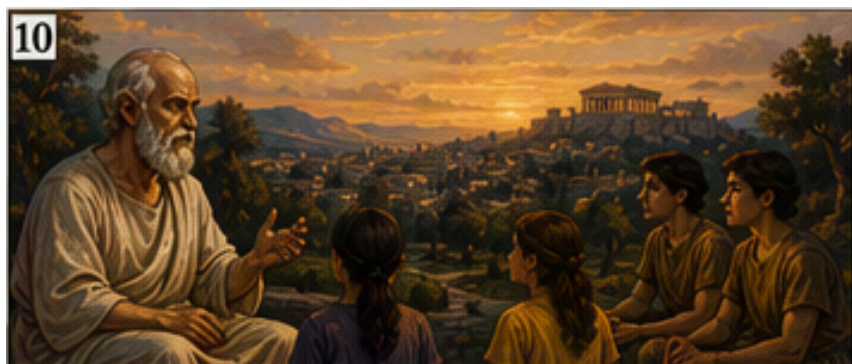
“He’s not doing it,” said Lela.

. . .

“He is not doing it,” said Sophia. “He has just said: this needs a proof, the proof is bigger than the last one, the last one took two hours, and I am not going to do it today. “And then he says the thing that he is going to stand on instead. Listen to it. It is a very peculiar sentence.”

. . .

10



At last the whole can be seen—
because every part has been understood.



Why Didn't We Just Say So? — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“We should surely suppose,” said the Visitor, “that it is similarly the case that all the various sorts of expertise exist — and at the same time that greater and less are measured not only in relation to each other, but also in relation to the coming into being of what is in due measure. “For if the latter is the case, then so is the former. And also, if it is the case that the sorts of expertise exist, the other is the case too. “But if one or the other is not the case, then neither of them will ever be.”

. . .

“That’s not a proof,” said Lela.

. . .

“That is not a proof,” Sophia agreed.

. . .

“He’s just tied them together. He’s gone — either there’s a right amount and there are real skills, or there’s neither.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“And then he’s sort of — leant on the skills.”

. . .

“He has leant on the skills,” said the owl, “because there is a man in that city who can put a joint back, and a man who can build an arch that stands up, and a woman in a back room who can make a thing that keeps a child warm for eleven years. “He cannot prove there is a right amount. He can point at the people who plainly know what it is. “Whether that is cheating is a question you will be able to hold in your hand properly in about six years, and I would rather you had the question now than somebody else’s answer to it.”

Chapter 84

EIGHTY-FOUR. Due Measure



Socrates: when we measure, we must be just.
Not too much, not too little.



Due Measure — opening scene.

“It’s clear that we would divide the art of measurement, cutting it in two in just the way we said,” said the Visitor. “Positing as one part of it all those sorts of expertise that measure the number, lengths, depths, breadths and speeds of things in relation to what is opposed to them. “And as the other — all those that measure in relation to what is in due measure, what is fitting, the right moment, what is as it ought to be. “Everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle.”

EUCLID · Elements V and VI – ratio; same ratio

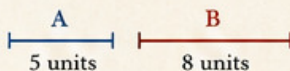
El.V.Def.3 – *ratio* STRONG

A ratio is a certain type of condition with respect to size of two magnitudes of the same kind.

3. **RATIO**

A ratio is a certain type of condition with respect to size of two magnitudes of the same kind.

For example, the ratio of A to B.
(A and B are both lengths.)



El.V.Def.3 — ratio

El.V.Def.5 — same ratio STRONG

Magnitudes are said to be in the same ratio, the first to the second, and the third to the fourth, when equal multiples of the first and the third either both exceed, are both equal to, or are both less than, equal multiples of the second and the fourth, respectively, being taken in corresponding order, according to any kind of multiplication whatever.

5. EQUALITY OF RATIOS

The ratios of A to B and of C to D are equal when, for every pair of equal multiples, the multiples of the first are greater than, equal to, or less than one another, according as the multiples of the second are greater than, equal to, or less than one another.

Example: 

Take any m, n (multiples)	$m = 1, n = 1$	$m = 2, n = 1$	$m = 3, n = 2$
mA vs nB	$3 < 5$	$6 > 5$	$9 = 10$
mC vs nD	$6 < 10$	$12 > 10$	$18 = 20$

In every case the comparisons agree. Therefore $A:B = C:D$.

El.V.Def.5 — same ratio

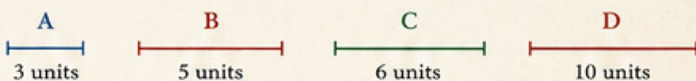
El.V.Def.6 — proportional STRONG

And let magnitudes having the same ratio be called proportional.

6. PROPORTIONAL MAGNITUDES

When four magnitudes are such that the ratio of the first to the second is equal to the ratio of the third to the fourth, they are called proportional.

$$A : B :: C : D$$



Since $A : B = C : D$, the four magnitudes are proportional.

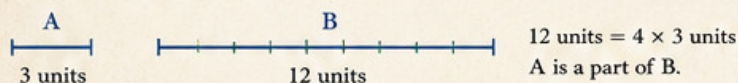
El.V.Def.6 — proportional

El.V.Def.1 — *part that measures* STRONG

A magnitude is a part of a(nother) magnitude, the lesser of the greater, when it measures the greater.

1. PART

A magnitude is a part of another, the lesser of the greater, when it measures the greater.



El.V.Def.1 — part that measures

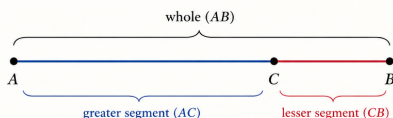
El.VI.Def.2 — *extreme and mean ratio* LIGHT

A straight-line is said to have been cut in extreme and mean ratio when as the whole is to the greater segment so the greater (segment is) to the lesser.

DEFINITION 2 (Book VI). A straight-line is said to have been cut in extreme and mean ratio when

$$\text{whole} : \text{greater segment} = \text{greater segment} : \text{lesser segment.}$$

Figure: Division in extreme and mean ratio



By definition,

$$\frac{AB}{AC} = \frac{AC}{CB}.$$

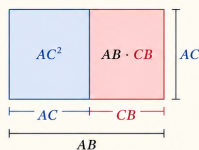
That is, the whole is to the greater segment as the greater segment is to the lesser segment.

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION

Let AC be the greater segment and CB the lesser.

Since $\frac{AB}{AC} = \frac{AC}{CB}$, we have $AC^2 = AB \cdot CB$.

The square on the greater segment equals the rectangle contained by the whole and the lesser segment.



This division is also called the **GOLDEN SECTION**.

Numerically,

$$\frac{AB}{AC} = \frac{AC}{CB} = \varphi \approx 1.618033989\dots$$

where $\varphi = \frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2}$.



This ratio appears in many beautiful figures in geometry and in nature.



El.VI.Def.2 — extreme and mean ratio

Why here: Cite-first climax. RelativeV; due measure normative.

Note. Cite-first climax. RelativeV; due measure normative.

...

2



Both excess and deficiency
are equally wrong.



Due Measure — the chapter's central dialogue.

“The right moment,” said Lela.

. . .

“Kairos,” said Sophia. “Yes. He slipped it into the middle of a list and did not stop. “There are two words for time in that language. One of them is the amount of it — the ticking, the hours, the thing on your wrist. And the other is kairos, which is not an amount at all. It is the right one. The moment when the thing will work, which is not the same as the moment before it or the moment after it. “Every single person knows it exists. Anybody who has ever waited to ask for something knows it exists. And it cannot be measured against anything except itself.”

. . .



The good ruler, the good craftsman, the good musician—
all seek the mean that fits.



Due Measure — the central concept made visible.

“Each of the two sections you refer to is indeed a large one,” said young Socrates, “and very different from the other.”

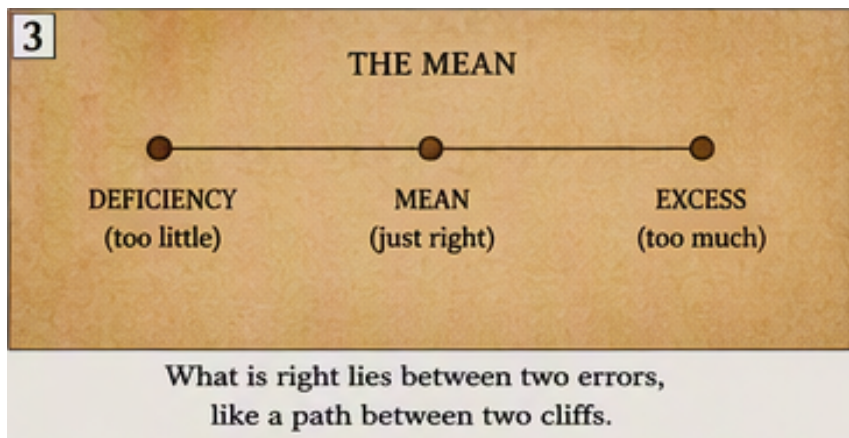
. . .

“Yes, Socrates. And what many sophisticated people sometimes say — supposing themselves to be expressing something clever — to the effect that there is in fact an art of measurement relating to everything that comes into being: that’s actually the very thing we have just said. “For it is indeed the case, in a certain way, that all the products of the various sorts of expertise share in measurement. “But because of their not being accustomed to carrying on their investigations by dividing according to real classes, the people in question throw these things together at once, despite the degree of difference between them, thinking them alike.”

. . .

“Oh, he’s cross,” said Danae with interest.

. . .





Due Measure — the guiding analogy.

“He is as cross as he gets,” said the owl. “Somebody has said a true thing without doing any work, and it has come out sounding the same as the thing he has just spent twenty minutes earning, and it is not the same, and he minds. “Everything can be measured, says the clever man at the party, and everybody nods. “And he has just spent twenty minutes establishing that there are two utterly different things that word is doing, and that one of them is arithmetic and the other one is the difference between a good person and a bad one. “They come out of the mouth identically. That is what he minds.”

NOTE · 258d

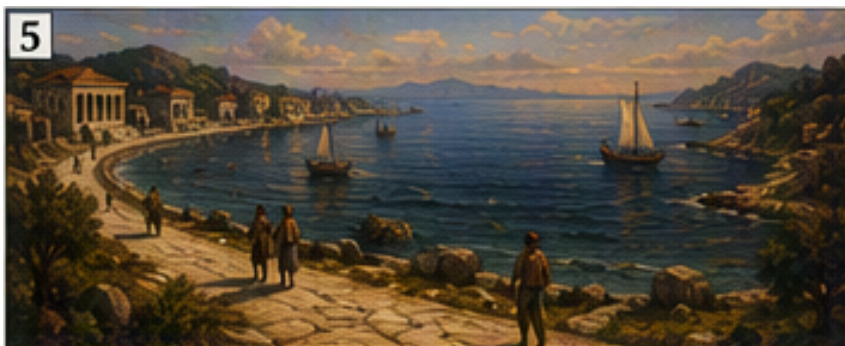
Annotation (light / institutional): Arithmetic.

Curriculum. (light)

. . .

“When one perceives first the community between the members of a group of many things,” the Visitor was saying, “one should not desist until one sees in it all those differences that are located in classes. “And conversely, with the various unlikenesses, when they are seen in multitudes, one should be incapable of pulling a face and stopping before one has penned all the related things within one likeness, and actually surrounded them in some real class.”

. . .



In the city, in the house, in the soul,
everything must be measured.



Due Measure — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Incapable of pulling a face and stopping,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “That is a real phrase and it is exactly as odd in Greek as it is in English, and I would like you to have it. “When you see a lot of things that look the same, you keep going until you find how they differ. When you see a lot of things that look different, you keep going until you find what they share. “And you do not get to stop because you have had enough. You are supposed to become the sort of person who cannot. Who is not able to make a face and put it down.”

. . .

“Well then,” said the Visitor, “after this point, let’s admit another one — that relates both to the very things we are inquiring into, and to the whole business of discussions of this sort.”

. . .

“What’s that?”

. . .



Measure is not only in numbers
but in time, place, and purpose.



Due Measure — the competing interpretation.

“What if someone put the following question about our pupils sitting together learning their letters. “When one of them is asked what letters make up some word or other — are we to say that for him, on that occasion, the inquiry takes place more for the sake of the single question set before him? “Or for the sake of his becoming more able to answer all questions relating to letters?”

. . .

“Clearly for the sake of his being able to answer all,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“What then about our inquiry now about the statesman? “Has it been set before us more for the sake of that very thing — or for the sake of our becoming better dialecticians in relation to all subjects?”

. . .

“That’s clear too,” said young Socrates. “For the sake of our becoming better dialecticians generally.”

. . .

“I certainly don’t suppose,” said the Visitor, “that anyone with any sense would want to hunt down the definition of weaving, for the sake of weaving itself.”

. . .

The orchard was quiet.

. . .



Danae: is the mean always the same?
Lela: no—what is right for one is not for all.



Due Measure — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“Sophia,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s what school is.”

. . .

“Go on.”

. . .

“Nobody’s ever said that to me,” said Lela. “In four years. Nobody has once said that to me. They say this will come up. They say you’ll need this next year. They say it’s on the paper. “And nobody has ever once stood at the front and said: you are not here for the thing. You are here to become somebody who is better at finding things out. The thing is the wool.”

. . .

“No,” said Sophia.

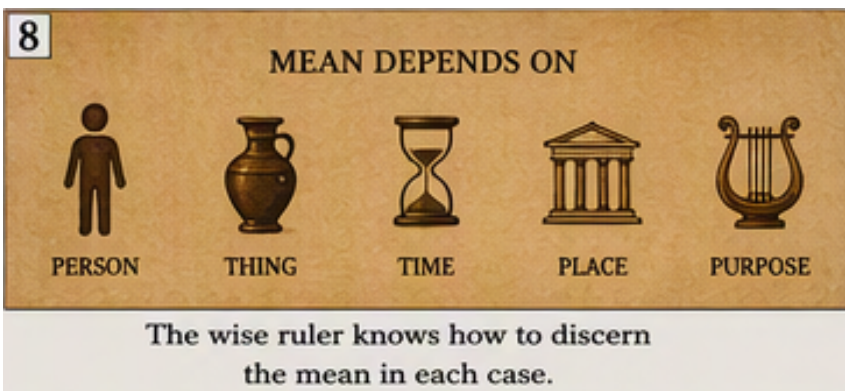
. . .

“And it would have — “ Lela stopped. “If somebody had said that when I was eleven it would have been completely different.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “It would. “And I want you to notice that he is saying it to a boy who has just spent an afternoon on a cardigan and wondered why. “That is the whole reason this paragraph is here. It is not a general remark about education. It is a man answering the specific unspoken complaint of one specific tired fifteen-year-old, and it has happened to answer it for everybody since.”

. . .



Due Measure — the historical layer.

“But I think the majority of people fail to recognise something,” the Visitor went on. “That for some of the things there are, there are certain perceptible likenesses which are there to be easily understood — and which it is not at all hard to point out, when one wants to make an easy demonstration, involving no trouble and without recourse

to verbal means, to someone who asks for an account of one of these things. “Conversely, for those things that are greatest and most valuable, there is no image at all which has been worked in plain view for the use of mankind — the showing of which will enable the person who wants to satisfy the mind of an inquirer to satisfy it adequately, just by fitting it to one of the senses.”

. . .

“Say that in ordinary words,” said Danae.

. . .

And Sophia did not answer for a moment.

. . .

9

EXAMPLES OF DUE MEASURE

FOOD



Neither gluttony
nor want.

SPEECH



Neither silence
nor chatter.

WEALTH



Neither waste
nor greed.

POWER



Neither tyranny
nor weakness.

In all things, the good is in due measure.



Due Measure — a wordless conceptual plate.

“If you want to know what a sheep is,” she said, “I can show you a sheep. “If you want to know what red is, I can point at the rug. “If you want to know what a loom is, I can put you in the back room with the jars and you will know in four seconds and nobody will have to say anything at all. “And if you want to know what justice is — there is nothing to point at. “There is no object anywhere in the world that is justice, that you could be taken to see, the way you can be taken to see a whale. Nobody has ever made one. Nobody can. And the same goes for courage, and for what a good ruler is, and for whether you should tell somebody something that will hurt them, and for very nearly everything that has ever actually mattered to anybody. “That is why they talk. “Not because they enjoy it. Not because they are showing off. Because for the things that count there is no picture, and speech is the only instrument that has ever been invented that will reach them at all.”

. . .

Nobody said anything for a while.

. . .

“That’s what you do,” said Danae.

. . .

“What is?”

. . .



So the statesman guards the mean
and keeps the city in harmony.



Due Measure — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“That’s what you do. With the pictures.” Danae was sitting up now, frowning at the courtyard hanging in the air between the olive trees. “You can show us Athens. You can show us the man and the tree and the wall and the light and what his face is doing. “And you can’t show us the thing. You’ve never once shown us the thing. You show us people talking about it.”

. . .

“No,” said the owl. “I cannot show you the thing. “I have taken you nine hundred years and eleven hundred miles and I have never once been able to show you a single thing that mattered. “I can only ever put you in the room.”

. . .

“That is why one must practise at being able to give and receive an account of each thing,” the Visitor was saying.

“For the things that are without body, which are finest and greatest, are shown clearly only by verbal means, and by nothing else. “And everything that is now being said is for the sake of these things. “But practice in everything is easier in smaller things, rather than in relation to the greater.”

. . .

“Very well said.”

Chapter 85

**EIGHTY-FIVE. Not in Relation
to Each Other**



Socrates asks: are justice and health
in relation to each other?



Not in Relation to Each Other — opening scene.

“Well then,” said the Visitor, “let’s remind ourselves of the reasons why we’ve said all this.”

. . .

“Why did we say it all?”

. . .

“Not least because of the difficulty we found in accepting the length of our talk about weaving. “And about the reversal of the universe. “And about the being of the non-being, which is the sphere of the sophist. “We reflected that it had a rather great length, and in all these cases we rebuked ourselves — out of fear that what we were saying would turn out to be superfluous as well as long.”

. . .

“He’s been worrying about it the whole time,” said Lela.

. . .

“He has been worrying about it the whole time,” said Sophia. “Three days. Every single one of the big passages — the myth, the parricide, the cloth — he stopped afterwards and said was that too long. “You have been hearing him do it and thinking it was politeness. It was not politeness. He genuinely did not know.”

. . .

2

NOT IN RELATION TO EACH OTHER



JUSTICEHEALTH

They are both good,
but not the same nor tied together.



Not in Relation to Each Other — the chapter's central dialogue.

“So the thing for you to say,” said the Visitor, “is that the foregoing was for the sake of all those cases. In order that we shan’t suffer any of this sort of misgiving on any future occasion.”

. . .

“I shall do as you say. Tell me what comes next.”

. . .

“Well, I say that you and I must be careful to remember what we have now said. “And to distribute censure and praise of both shortness and length, whatever subjects we happen to be talking about on each occasion — “by judging lengths not in relation to each other, but, in accordance with the part of the art of measurement we previously said we must remember, in relation to what is fitting.”

NOTE · 285d–286b

Annotation (light / institutional): Judge by due measure.
Soft continuation. (light)

. . .

“There,” said Sophia. “That is what the salt was for.”

. . .

“Say it,” said Lela.

. . .

“You say it. You have had it for ten minutes.”

. . .

Lela looked down at her notebook.

. . .



One person can be just but not healthy.
Another can be healthy but not just.



Not in Relation to Each Other — the central concept made visible.

“Is this too long is a stupid question,” she said, “if all you mean is longer than something else. “Longer than what? Longer than a shorter one. So what. “The only real question is: is it longer than it should be. Than the thing needs.”

. . .

“And what does the thing need?”

. . .

“Well, that depends on what it’s for,” said Lela, and then stopped, because she had heard herself.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“Well, that’s right,” said the Visitor, “but we mustn’t refer everything to this. “For one thing, we shan’t have any need for a length that fits in relation to pleasure — except perhaps as an incidental consideration.”

. . .

“That’s cold,” said Danae.

. . .



So with many good things in a city:
wealth, courage, knowledge, law, beauty...



Not in Relation to Each Other — the guiding analogy.

“That is extremely cold,” said Sophia, “and he means it, and I am not going to pretend he does not. He has just said that whether the listener is enjoying it is not the measure. Not the main one. Barely one at all. “There are a great many people who think that is the worst sentence in Greek education and that everything wrong with schools comes out of it. “There are a great many others who point out that nobody has ever learned anything difficult without some hours of not enjoying it, and that the people who promise otherwise are selling something. “You will meet both. Hold them both. He is about to make it more interesting.”

. . .

“And again,” said the Visitor, “what we have said commits us to making a second and not a first priority of the question how we might find it most easily and quickly — “and to give by far the greatest and primary value to the

pursuit itself of the ability to divide by classes. “In particular: if an account is very long, but renders the hearer better at discovering things — our business is to take this one seriously, and not feel at all irritated at its length. “And similarly, if a shorter one, in its turn, has the same effect.”

. . .

“There it is,” said Lela quietly.

. . .



Some belong to the soul, some to the body,
some to the city, some to things.



Not in Relation to Each Other — the argument unfolding step by step.

“There it is,” said Sophia. “That is the test. That is the whole test, for everything, for the rest of your life, and it is one sentence long. “Not was it long. Not was it short. Not did I enjoy it. Not was it clever. Not did it have a good ending. “Did it make the person who went through it better at finding things out? “And if it did, then it was the right length, whatever the length was. And if it did not, then it was too long, and it would have been too long at nine words.”

. . .

“Then again, over and above this,” the Visitor went on, “if in relation to such discussions someone finds fault with the length of what is said, and will not put up with going round in circles — “we must not let such a person go just like that, without a backward glance, with his having made the simple complaint that what has been said

has taken a long time. “We should think it right that he should also demonstrate, in addition, that if it had been shorter it would make the partners in the discussion better dialecticians, and better at discovering how to display in words the things there are.”

. . .

Danae started laughing.

. . .

“He’s making them do it,” she said. “You can’t just go that was too long, you’ve got to do a shorter one and prove it’s better.”

. . .

6

DIFFERENT KINDS — DIFFERENT PLACES



Each kind has its own place
and does its own work.



Not in Relation to Each Other — the competing interpretation.

“He is making them do it,” said Sophia, “and it is the single most useful piece of self-defence anybody has ever written down for people who make things. “Somebody will always tell you it was too long. It costs them four seconds. You have given it four months. “And he has said: fine. Show me. Show me the shorter one that teaches them more. Not the shorter one that is shorter. Anybody can make it shorter; you take bits out. “And if he cannot, then he has not said anything at all, and you may go on with your work.”

. . .

“We shall take no notice at all of the other sorts of censure and praise, relating to some other criteria,” said the Visitor. “Nor even seem to hear such things at all when they are said.”

. . .

“Nor even seem to hear,” said Lela.

. . .

“He is not a saint,” said the owl. “He is a man who has been interrupted for forty years.”

. . .

“Now enough of these things, if I have your agreement too. Let’s go back again to the statesman, and bring the model of weaving, which we talked about before, to bear on it.”

. . .



We must not mix them up
or treat unrelated things as the same.



Not in Relation to Each Other — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“Well said. Let’s do what you say.”

. . .

“Well then. The king has been separated off from the many sorts of expertise that share his field — or rather, from all of them concerned with herds. “There remain, we are saying, those sorts of expertise in the city itself that are contributory causes, and those that are causes. Which we must first divide from each other.”

. . .

“Correct.”

. . .

“So do you recognise that it is difficult to cut them into two?”

. . .

“Well, then that’s what we should do.”

. . .

“Then let’s divide them limb by limb,” said the Visitor, “like a sacrificial animal — since we can’t do it into two. “For we must always cut into the nearest number, so far as we can.”

. . .

The orchard was very quiet.

. . .

“He’s stopped doing twos,” said Lela.

. . .

8



Lela: So a city falls when it confuses kinds?
Danae: Yes—when the body rules the soul,
or when wealth rules everything.



Not in Relation to Each Other — the historical layer.

“He has stopped doing twos,” said Sophia.

. . .

“He’s done twos for three days. Every single thing. Two and two and two and two, all the way down, with the boy going yes and quite so, and he told him always cut down the middle, and he told him off for not doing it, and he did the whole of a jumper in elevens — “and now he’s just gone this one won’t go in two, we’ll have to chop it up.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Like a sacrificial animal.”

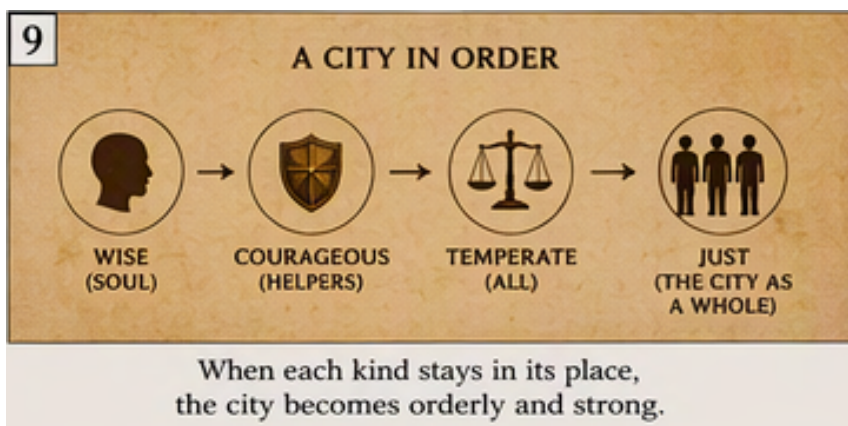
. . .

“Like a sacrificial animal,” said the owl. “Which is a thing every single one of them had watched being done in a courtyard on a feast day. You take it apart at the joints, where it comes apart, into however many pieces it comes apart into. “Not into two. Into the number of pieces it has.”

. . .

“Is that him giving up?” said Danae.

. . .





Not in Relation to Each Other — a wordless conceptual plate.

“No,” said Sophia. “It is the opposite, and it is the most honest ten words in this book, and it is going to cost him something. “For three days he has had one tool and it has been a magnificent tool. And he has just come to a place where the world does not have two halves in it, and he has said so out loud, in front of witnesses, rather than pretend it does. “You have watched two men this summer do a thing that nobody does. “Yesterday an old man said everything I made today was a wind-egg. “And today a man said my method does not fit this, and used something worse, because it was true.”

. . .

In the garden of the Academy, Aristotle stopped writing and did not start again.

. . .

“There,” he said.

. . .

“There what?”

. . .

“Limb by limb, like a sacrificial animal, since we can’t do it into two.” He looked up. “That. That is the crack. That is the whole crack and you have put it in yourself, at the end, in a sentence about butchery.”

. . .

Plato waited.

. . .

10



So the ruler must know
which things belong to which,
and keep them apart yet in harmony.



Not in Relation to Each Other — the chapter’s narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“It does not go in two,” said Aristotle. “It almost never goes in two. You cannot cut animal in two — you try, and you get footed and footless, and you have put the bat with the birds and the seal with the fish and you have made four true things and one monster. “Things come apart at their joints, and the joints are wherever they are, and there are usually more than two of them, and the number is a fact about the animal and not about the knife.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Plato.

. . .

“You knew.”

. . .

“I have known for about eleven years,” said the old man, “and I did not know what to put in its place, and I was not going to throw away the best instrument anybody has for the sake of a difficulty I could not solve. “So I wrote the difficulty down, in the book, in the middle, where it cannot be got round. “And I have read it out loud this afternoon to the one person in this garden who was going to notice.”

. . .

Aristotle looked at the tablet on his knee, which had a tree on it going down the right-hand side, and which he had been drawing for four days.

. . .

Then he turned to a clean part of the wax and, without saying anything, began to make a list with more than two things in it.

Chapter 86

EIGHTY-SIX. Seven Kinds of Thing



Socrates: Let us look more carefully.
Into how many kinds can "thing" be divided?



Seven Kinds of Thing — opening scene.

“We must put down as being contributory causes all the sorts of expertise that produce any tool in the city,” said the Visitor. “Whether small or large. “Without these there would never come to be a city, nor statesmanship. “But on the other hand we shan’t, I think, put down any of them as the product of the expertise of the king.”

. . .

“No. We shan’t.”

. . .

“And yet we’re trying to do a difficult thing in separating this class of things from the rest. In fact it is possible for someone to treat anything you like as a tool of something, and seem to have said something credible.”

. . .

“That’s true,” said Lela. “That’s completely true. You could say a chair’s a tool for sitting. You could say a house is a tool for being dry in.”

. . .

“You could say a person is a tool for doing a job,” said Sophia.

. . .

2

SEVEN KINDS OF THING

1



1

GODS

2



2

TOOLS

3



3

ANIMALS

4



4

PLANTS

5



5

TIMES

6



6

PLACES

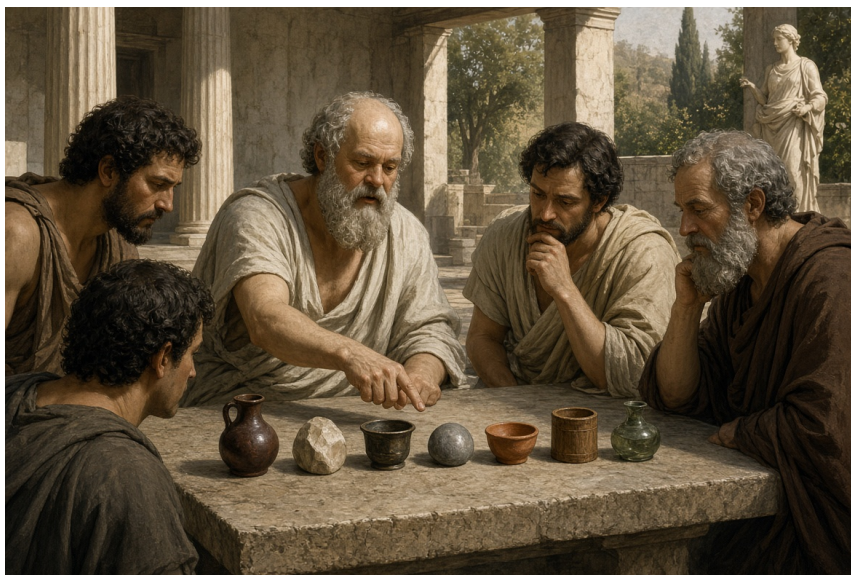
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7

THINGS WE MAKE

Seven: gods, tools, animals, plants, times, places, and things we make.



Seven Kinds of Thing — the chapter's central dialogue.

Lela looked up.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “That is why he says it is difficult, and that is why he puts a stop to it in the very next line, and he does it in the mildest possible voice. “Listen to what he says a tool is, because everything that is not one is about to be rescued by it.”

. . .

“Because it does not have the same capacity that tools have,” said the Visitor. “For it is not put together with the purpose of causing the coming into being of something, as a tool is. “But for the sake of preserving what craftsmen have produced.”

. . .

“That’s a pot,” said Danae.

. . .

“That is a pot,” said Sophia. “The thing that keeps the thing. “A tool makes. A pot holds. And once you have that, you cannot call everything a tool any more, because half the things in your grandmother’s house are not for making anything at all. They are for keeping things until you want them.”

. . .



Each kind is a whole in itself,
with its own nature and purpose.



Seven Kinds of Thing — the central concept made visible.

And then, briskly, the man from Elea sorted the world into seven boxes.

. . .

“That varied class which is worked for things liquid and solid, and for things that are prepared on the fire and things that are not — what we refer to with the single name of vessel.”

. . .

“A third very extensive class, which is found on land and on water, moves about a lot and is fixed, and is accorded high value and none — but has a single name, because it is all for the sake of some supporting or other. Always being a seat for something. “I suppose we call it by the name of vehicle.”

. . .

“That’s a lovely one,” said Lela, writing fast. “Anything you put a thing on so it can go somewhere. That’s a cart and a boat and a — a plate’s a vehicle for a cake. A tray’s a vehicle.”

. . .



To rule well, the statesman must know
the nature of each kind.



Seven Kinds of Thing — the guiding analogy.

“A saddle. A stretcher. A shelf,” said Sophia. “Yes.”

. . .

“And what is fourth? Something that includes all clothing, most armour, and walls — all those encirclements made out of earth or out of stone, and tens of thousands of other things. “Since all of them together are worked for the purpose of defending, it would be most apposite to call the whole class that of defence.”

. . .

“A jumper’s in the same box as a city wall,” said Danae.

. . .

“A jumper is in the same box as a city wall,” said the owl, “and if you have understood why, you have understood the whole of the last three days. They are both a thing put

between you and the weather. “One of them is bigger and is made of stone. That is the only difference, and it is not a difference of kind.”

. . .



A city contains all seven,
but they must not be confused.



Seven Kinds of Thing — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Would we want to put down as a fifth class things to do with decoration, painting, and those representations that are completed by the use of painting, and of music — which have been executed solely to give us pleasures?”

. . .

“What name?”

. . .

“I think we talk about something we call a plaything.”

. . .

“No,” said Lela.

. . .

“Well, this one name will be fittingly given to all of them,” the Visitor went on, entirely unaware, two thousand three hundred years away. “For not one of them is

for the sake of a serious purpose. “But all are done for amusement.”

. . .

“No,” said Lela again, and she had gone quite pink. “No. Sophia, stop it, I want to say something.”

. . .

Sophia stopped it.

. . .





Seven Kinds of Thing — the competing interpretation.

“He’s put everything in there,” said Lela. “Look at it. Painting. Music. All of it. Every picture anybody’s ever made and every song anybody’s ever sung, in one box, called toys, because they’re not for a serious purpose. “That’s not — Sophia, that’s the worst thing anybody’s said in three days. That’s worse than the barbarian thing. At least he fixed the barbarian thing. “The rug. The red line in Yiayia’s rug, where somebody was crying. That’s decoration. That’s in the box. That’s a plaything.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“Aren’t you going to defend him?”

. . .

“No,” said Sophia.

. . .

They sat for a moment.

. . .



Danae: So a tool is not an animal,
and time is not a place?

Lela: And a god is not something we make.



Seven Kinds of Thing — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“I could,” said the owl. “There are things to say. That he is sorting possessions and not experiences. That he is asking what each thing is for in the running of a city, and that a flute is not for anything in the running of a city, which is true and is also the whole problem. That the Greek word is wider than toy and covers the whole of play, and that play is not nothing to him — he called the myth an element of play an hour ago and it was the best thing in the book. “And none of that is enough, and you would know it was not enough, and you would be right. “So: no. This is a place where a very great man is smaller than the thing he is talking about. He does it here, and he does it worse in another book, and people have been arguing with him about it ever since, and the argument has produced more good thinking about art than the agreement ever did. “Write down what you just said. Date it. You are fourteen and you have just disagreed with Plato about something, for a reason, out loud, and the reason is a rug.”

. . .

Lela wrote it down.

. . .

“Is that allowed?” she said.

. . .





Seven Kinds of Thing — the historical layer.

“That is the entire book,” said Sophia. “That is what the entire book is. You have been watching a man do it to his own teacher for a week.”

. . .

“And what provides materials for all these things,” the Visitor was saying, “from which and in which all of the sorts of expertise that have now been mentioned work — shall we not put it down as a sixth? “Gold and silver, and everything that is mined; and all that the art of tree-felling cuts and provides for the carpenter and the basket-weaver; and the art of stripping off the outer covering of plants; and the one that removes skins from bodies of living things, the art of the skinner — “and all the sorts of expertise there are in relation to such things, which by producing cork, and papyrus, and materials for bindings, make possible the working up of composite things from things that are not

put together. “Let us call it all one thing. The first-born and incomposite possession of mankind.”

. . .





Seven Kinds of Thing — a wordless conceptual plate.

“The first-born,” said Danae.

. . .

“Protogenes,” said Sophia. “First-born. The stuff that was there before anybody made anything. “Wood. Stone. Metal in the ground. Hide. Reed. The things that are not made out of anything, because they are what everything else is made out of. “He has given it the name you would give to an eldest child.”

. . .

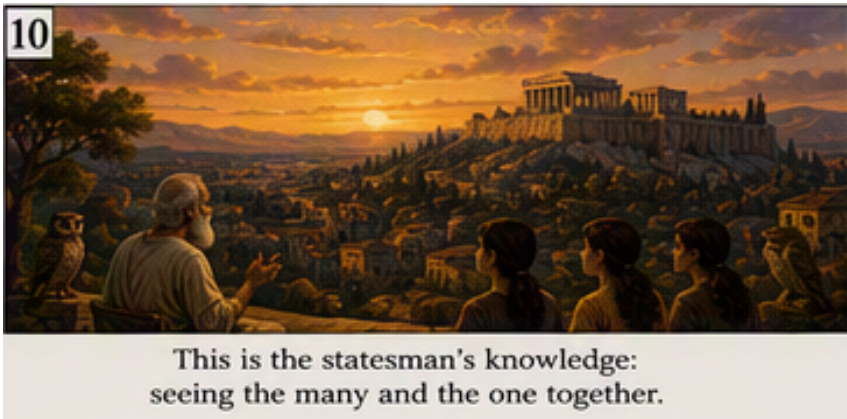
“Then again that sort of possession that consists in nutrition — and all those things which, when they are blended into the body, have a capacity for promoting its care — we must say is a seventh. “Calling it all together nurture, unless we have some more attractive term to propose. “And if we place it under the arts of the farmer, the hunter, the

trainer in the gymnasium, the doctor and the cook, we shall be assigning it more correctly than if we give it to the art of the statesman.”

. . .

“Say them,” said Sophia.

. . .





Seven Kinds of Thing — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

Lela read them off the page.

. . .

“First-born. Tool. Vessel. Vehicle. Defence. Plaything. Nourishment.”

. . .

“Seven boxes,” said the owl, “and every single object in the world is in one of them, and every single one of those boxes has somebody in it who knows how to make the things in it — and not one of them is the king. “He has just cleared the entire contents of human life off the table. “Gold, bread, boats, walls, jumpers, cups, songs. All of it made by somebody, and none of it made by him. “And what he has left is the thing he has been hunting for two days. Whatever ruling is, it is not making any thing whatsoever.”

. . .

“Then there’s nothing left,” said Danae.

. . .

“There is something left,” said Sophia. “There are the people. “And that is the next chapter, and it is not a comfortable one.”

Chapter 87

EIGHTY-SEVEN. The Subordinates



Socrates now speaks of the parts of a state.
A whole has many kinds beneath it.



The Subordinates — opening scene.

“Then what remains,” said the Visitor, “is the class of slaves, and all those people who are subordinate to others. “Among whom, I strongly suspect, those who dispute with the king about the woven fabric itself will come into view.”

. . .

“Stop,” said Lela.

. . .

Sophia stopped it.

. . .

“He said slaves.”

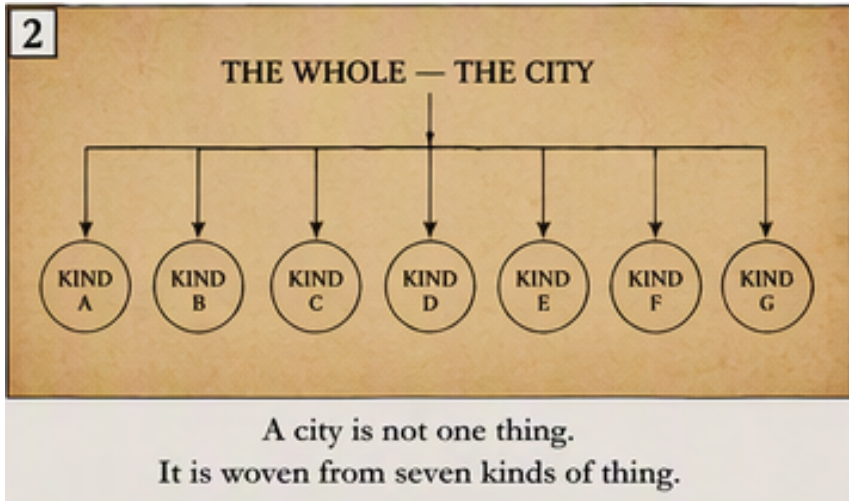
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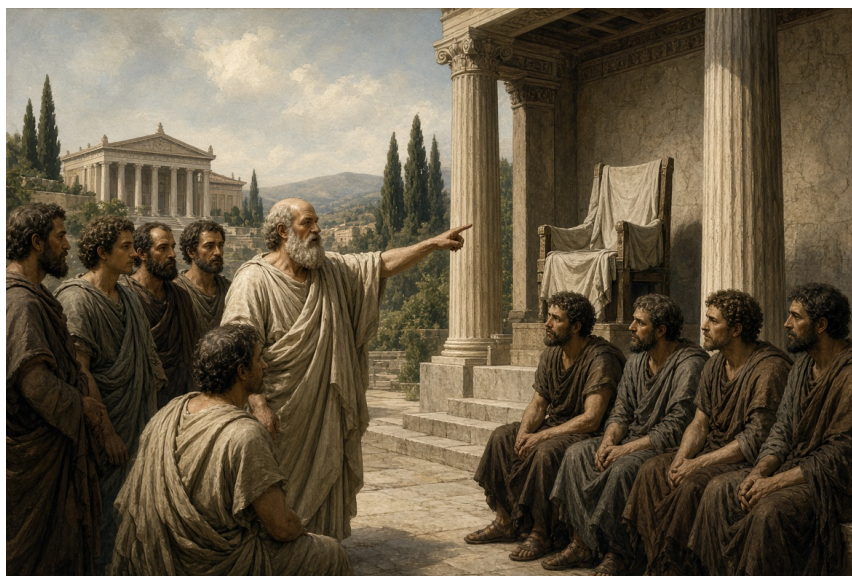
“He said slaves,” said the owl.

. . .

“And it’s just — it’s just there. It’s in a list. It’s in a list with merchants and clerks.”

. . .





The Subordinates — the chapter's central dialogue.

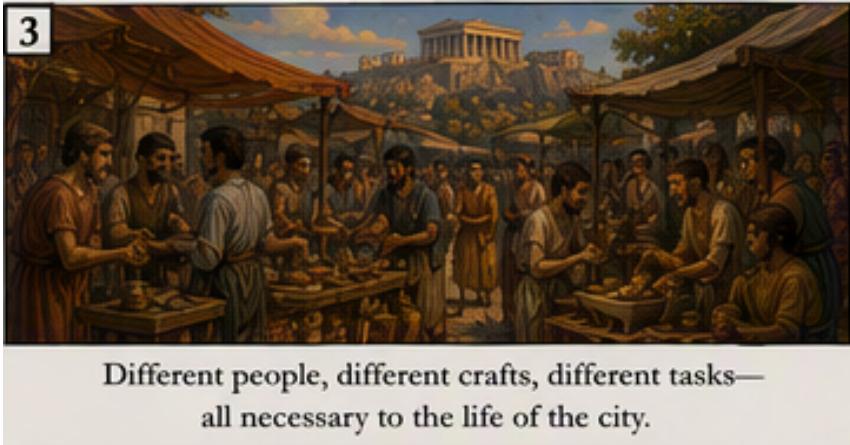
“It is in a list with merchants and clerks,” said Sophia, “because that is where it was. “I am not going to soften this and I am not going to make a speech about it either, because you can make the speech yourself and you would be right and it would not teach you anything you do not already know. “Here is the fact, and you should have the fact. “In that city, on that day, in that courtyard, roughly one person in three was owned. Somebody swept those flagstones before they arrived. Somebody will carry the water in. Theaetetus has a man who walks behind him with his things. Nobody in that picture thinks about it any more than you think about the electricity. “Socrates does not object to it. Plato does not object to it. The man from Elea does not object to it. Aristotle, in thirty-three years, is going to sit down and write an argument for it, and it will be one of the worst things anybody ever wrote, and it will be believed for two thousand years. “There are four or five people in the whole of that century who said it was wrong.

You have never heard of any of them. Nobody wrote their books down.”

. . .

Danae said: “Then why are we watching them?”

. . .





The Subordinates — the central concept made visible.

“That is the right question,” said Sophia, “and I want to answer it properly, so sit up. “You are not watching them because they were good. Some of them were and some of them were not, and on this they were all, without exception, wrong — wrong in the way that costs other people their entire lives. “You are watching them because of a specific thing they built, which is the habit of asking why is that so about things everybody already agreed on. That habit is the only tool anybody has ever found that gets a whole people to change its mind about something it cannot see. “And it is the tool that was eventually used on this. Not by them. It took two thousand years and it was done by people who had read them and who turned the thing on its makers. “They made the knife and could not see their own hands. That happens. It is happening to you now, about something, and you cannot see it either, and neither can I. “And the only reason there is any hope in that sentence

at all is that a few people in a courtyard got into the habit of asking.”

. . .

Nobody said anything for a moment.

. . .

“Go on, then,” said Lela.

. . .

Sophia went on.

. . .

“Those who are bought, and acquired as possessions by this means,” the Visitor was saying, “— people whom we can indisputably call slaves, and who least pretend to kingly expertise.” “Quite.”

. . .

4

SEVEN KINDS OF THING IN A CITY



FOOD



CRAFTS



DEFENSE



JUSTICE



WORSHIP



KNOWLEDGE



RULE

Food, crafts, defense, justice, worship,
knowledge, and rule.



The Subordinates — the guiding analogy.

“What then of all those among free men who voluntarily place themselves in the service of those we have been discussing? Conveying their products between them, and establishing equality between these products — some in market-places, others moving from one city to another, whether by sea or by land, exchanging currency both for everything else and for itself. “People to whom we give the names of money-changers, merchants, ship-owners, and retailers. “Surely they won’t lay claim at all to the art of statesmanship?”

. . .

“It may be, perhaps, that they will,” said young Socrates. “To the sort that has to do with commercial matters.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Lela, and laughed out loud.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “He did it very drily and he did it in eleven words and it is the best thing he says in the whole book. “The man said surely the bankers won’t claim to be running the country. “And the fifteen-year-old said: well. They might.”

. . .

“But those we see placing themselves with complete readiness at the service of all, for hire, as day-labourers — these we shall never find pretending to kingly expertise.”

. . .

5



Each kind has its own work.
A potter does not do the work of a judge.



The Subordinates — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Quite so.”

. . .

“What in that case are we to say about those who perform services of the following sorts for us, whenever we need them? “Among others — the tribe of heralds. And all those who become accomplished at writing by having repeatedly given their services in this respect. And certain others who are very clever at working through many different tasks relating to public offices. “What shall we call these?”

. . .

“What you called them just now,” said young Socrates. “Subordinates. And not themselves rulers in cities.”

. . .

“That’s the office,” said Lela.

. . .

“That is the office,” said Sophia. “The people who can actually write; the people who know where the records are; the people who are very clever at working through many different tasks relating to public offices. “He has just described the civil service, in one sentence, two and a half thousand years ago, and put it in the servants’ box. “And every single person who has ever worked in one has views about whether that is where it belongs.”

. . .

6



A defender keeps watch,
but does not rule the city.



The Subordinates — the competing interpretation.

“But I certainly wasn’t dreaming, I think,” said the Visitor, “when I said that somewhere here there would appear those who particularly lay claim to the art of statesmanship. “And yet it would seem very odd indeed to look for them in some portion of the subordinate arts.”

. . .

“Yes, quite.”

. . .

“Then let’s get still closer to those we haven’t yet cross-examined.”

. . .

“There are those who have a part of a subordinate sort of expert knowledge in relation to divination. For they are,

I believe, considered to be interpreters from gods to men.”
“Yes.”

. . .

“And then too the class of priests, in its turn, has — as custom tells us — expert knowledge about the giving, through sacrifices, of gifts from us to the gods which are pleasing to them. And about asking from them, through prayers, for the acquisition of good things for us. “I imagine that both of these things are parts of a subordinate art.”

. . .



The just man judges,
but does not make the grain grow.



The Subordinates — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“He’s done it,” said Lela. “He said he’d do it yesterday and he’s done it. He’s put the priest with the errand boys.”

. . .

“He has put the priest with the errand boys,” said Sophia, “and he has done it by the most respectful route available, which is what makes it so difficult to answer. “He has not said they are frauds. He has said the opposite. He has granted them expert knowledge — real knowledge, a real skill, which they really have. “And then he has asked what the skill is. And the answer is: carrying things. A prayer goes up. A gift goes up. An answer comes down. A seer is an interpreter, which is a man who takes what one party said and hands it to another party. “And he spent twenty minutes yesterday on the man whose whole job is to take a message from somebody who decided and repeat it at high volume to somebody who did not. “He never says the word herald here. He does not have to. It is four pages back.”

. . .

“Well now, it seems to me that at this point we are, as it were, getting close to some sort of trail leading to our destination,” said the Visitor. “For the type of priests and seers is filled full of self-importance, and gets a lofty reputation because of the magnitude of what they undertake.”

. . .

8



Lela: Each part is important.

Danae: But none of them can be the whole city.



The Subordinates — the historical layer.

“Ooh,” said Danae.

. . .

“So that in Egypt it is not even permitted for a king to hold office without also exercising that of priest. If in fact he happens to have acceded to power at the beginning by force from another class, it is later necessary for him to be initiated into the class of priests. “And again among the Greeks too, in many places, it is to the greatest offices that one would find being assigned the performance of the greatest of the sacrifices.”

. . .

“And in fact what I’m saying receives the clearest illustration in your case.”

. . .

“For they say that the most solemn and ancestral of the ancient sacrifices are assigned here — to the person who becomes king by lot.”

. . .

Lela went absolutely still.

. . .

“Most certainly,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Sophia,” said Lela.

. . .

9



The city is one,
yet it needs all seven kinds to live well.



The Subordinates — a wordless conceptual plate.

“Yes.”

. . .

“The king by lot.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s the King Archon. Isn’t it. That’s the one they draw out of a jar. He’s not a king, he doesn’t rule anything, he just does the old sacrifices and he handles the — “

. . .

She stopped.

. . .

“He handles the religious cases,” she said.

. . .

“He handles the religious cases,” said Sophia.

. . .

“That’s where Socrates went.” Lela’s hands had gone flat on the ground. “Two days ago. That’s the whole — now I must go to the King’s Porch, to meet the indictment that Meletus has brought against me. That’s the King Archon’s porch. That’s his office. That’s the man whose in-tray has got the charge in it. “Impiety. It’s a religious charge. It goes to the king-by-lot. That’s why he had to go there, and that’s why he met Euthyphro on the steps, because Euthyphro was there for a religious case as well, and that’s the whole reason those two men were ever in the same place, and I never —“

. . .

10



So the good ruler does not do all things,
but sees that each is done well.



The Subordinates — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

She stopped again.

. . .

"I never once asked why it was called the King's Porch," she said.

. . .

"No," said the owl. "You were nine, and there was rather a lot happening. "And now a man from Italy, who does not know any of this, who has never met Socrates before yesterday, who is making a completely unrelated point about how priests get above themselves — "has reached for the nearest local example. Politely. As a compliment to his hosts. What I am saying is illustrated best in your own city. "And he has named, out loud, in that courtyard, with the old man sitting eight feet away on a bench, the exact official who is at this moment holding the piece of paper."

. . .

“Does anybody notice?”

. . .

“Nobody notices,” said Sophia. “The boy says most certainly and they move on. “I have shown you three days of this. That is the single coldest second in all of it, and it is an accident, and Plato knew exactly what he was doing when he let it be one.”

Chapter 88

EIGHTY-EIGHT. The Greatest Magician



Socrates asks who the greatest magician is.
One who can make everything?



The Greatest Magician — opening scene.

“Well then,” said the Visitor, “we must look both at these king-priests by lot, and their subordinates — and also at a certain other very large crowd of people which has just become visible to us, now that the previous ones have been separated off.”

. . .

“But who are the people you mean?”

. . .

“Some very odd people indeed.”

. . .

“How, exactly?”

. . .

2

CAN HE MAKE EVERYTHING?



He claims he can make all things—
living and non-living, great and small.



The Greatest Magician — the chapter's central dialogue.

“It’s a class mixed out of all sorts,” said the man from Elea, “or so it seems to me as I look at it just now. “For many of the men resemble lions, and centaurs, and other such things. “And very many resemble satyrs, and those animals that are weak but versatile. “And they quickly exchange their shapes and capacity for action for each other’s.”

. . .

Danae had both fists up under her chin.

. . .

“What are they?” she said. “What are they, what are they —“

. . .

“And yet now, Socrates,” said the Visitor, “I think I have identified the men in question.”

. . .



He conjures many things,
and people are amazed.



The Greatest Magician — the central concept made visible.

“Please explain. You seem to have something odd in view.”

. . .

“Yes. It’s a universal experience that not recognising something makes it odd. “And this is exactly what happened to me just now. At the moment when I first saw the chorus of those concerned with the affairs of cities — I failed to recognise them.”

. . .

“Politicians,” said Danae, and fell over backwards into the grass.

. . .

4



They think he knows everything,
and can do anything.



The Greatest Magician — the guiding analogy.

“Politicians,” said Sophia.

. . .

“He looked at them and he thought they were monsters.”

. . .

“He looked at them and did not know what kind of animal they were,” said the owl, “which is not the same and is much funnier. “Look at what he actually describes. Not evil. Not stupid. Mixed. A herd in which no two are the same shape, and — this is the line — they quickly exchange their shapes and capacity for action for each other’s. “He has just watched a crowd of men become different animals depending on which room they are standing in. The lion in the assembly is a satyr at dinner. The weak versatile one at dinner is a centaur by Thursday. “And he could not tell what the kind was, because there is no kind. That is

what he means by mixed out of all sorts. He was doing the method, honestly, on a herd that does not come apart.”

. . .

5

BUT CAN HE MAKE WHAT IS IMPOSSIBLE?

A SQUARE CIRCLE



A ROUND TRIANGLE



?

Can he make what cannot be?

Can he make a square circle?



The Greatest Magician — the argument unfolding step by step.

“And he said it nicely,” said Lela slowly.

. . .

“Say that again.”

. . .

6



What about what is self-contradictory—
what cannot be, by its very nature?



The Greatest Magician — the competing interpretation.

“He said — it’s a universal experience that not recognising something makes it odd.” She turned the pen over. “That’s not a joke about them. That’s a joke about him. He’s just said: things look weird when you don’t know what they are, and that’s my fault, not theirs.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “And he says it four seconds before the rudest thing in the book. “That is how he does it, and you will not see it done this way very often. He is scrupulously fair right up until the moment he is not, and the fairness is not a trick to set up the blow. He means both. “Watch.”

. . .

“What chorus?” said young Socrates.

. . .



Danae: If he can do the impossible,
he is a god!



The Greatest Magician — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“That of the greatest magician of all the sophists,” said the Visitor. “And the most versed in their expertise. “Although removing him from among those who really are in possession of the art of statesmanship and kingship is a

very difficult thing to do — remove him we must, if we are going to see plainly what we are looking for.”

. . .

The orchard was quiet.

. . .

“That’s the other book,” said Lela.

. . .

“That is the other book,” said Sophia.

. . .



Socrates: No.
He does not make being or truth.



The Greatest Magician — the historical layer.

“That’s — he spent the whole of yesterday. The whole day. Six ladders and the giants and the parricide and the whole thing, to catch one man, and at the end he was the maker of appearances in words who doesn’t know he doesn’t know. “And now he’s turned round and said: and the biggest one

of those, the champion, the greatest magician of the lot — is a politician.”

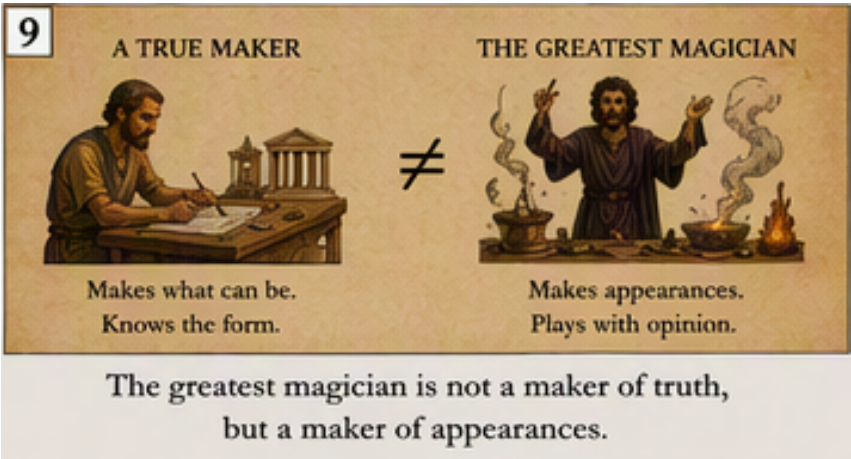
. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s what the first book was for.”

. . .





The Greatest Magician — a wordless conceptual plate.

“That is what the first book was for,” said the owl, “and this is the sentence where the two of them lock together, and if you have been wondering for three days why anybody would write four hundred pages about a word — “here is the answer, in one line, on the second afternoon. “He did not spend a day catching the sophist because he cared about men who charge for lessons in rhetoric. He spent a day building a net, very carefully, out of the most difficult materials there are, so that when he threw it over the men who run cities it would hold. “And magician is the word he uses. Goes. Not a conjuror at a party. A man who does things with sounds — who speaks over you until something changes. “He called the sophist that yesterday too. The last word of that book was word-juggler. “And it turns out the sophist was the small version.”

. . .

10



We must learn the difference—
between knowing what is and seeming to know.



The Greatest Magician — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“We must certainly not let this slip,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Certainly not, if you ask my view,” said the Visitor.
“So tell me this.”

. . .

“What?”

. . .

“We recognise monarchy, don’t we, as one of the varieties of rule in cities?”

Chapter 89

EIGHTY-NINE. Five Names for Three Things



Socrates turns again to the statesman:
Let us look more closely at what is ruled.



Five Names for Three Things — opening scene.

“Yes.”

. . .

“After monarchy one would, I think, list the holding of power by the few.” “Of course.”

. . .

“And isn’t a third type of constitution rule by the mass of the people — called by the name of democracy?” “Most certainly.”

. . .

“One, a few, everybody,” said Danae. “That’s all of them. There isn’t another one.”

. . .

“There is not another one,” said Sophia. “Every arrangement human beings have ever tried is one of those three or a mixture of them, and he has listed all three in nine words, and every political argument you will hear for the rest of your life is happening somewhere inside that list.”

. . .

“So there are three of them,” said the Visitor. “But don’t they in a certain way become five — giving birth from among them to two other names in addition to themselves?”

. . .

“What are these?”

. . .

“I think that as things are, people refer to the aspects of force and consent; poverty and wealth; and law and lawlessness, as they occur in them — and use these to divide each of the first two types into two. “So they call monarchy by two names, on the grounds that it exhibits two forms. The one tyrannical, the other kingly.”

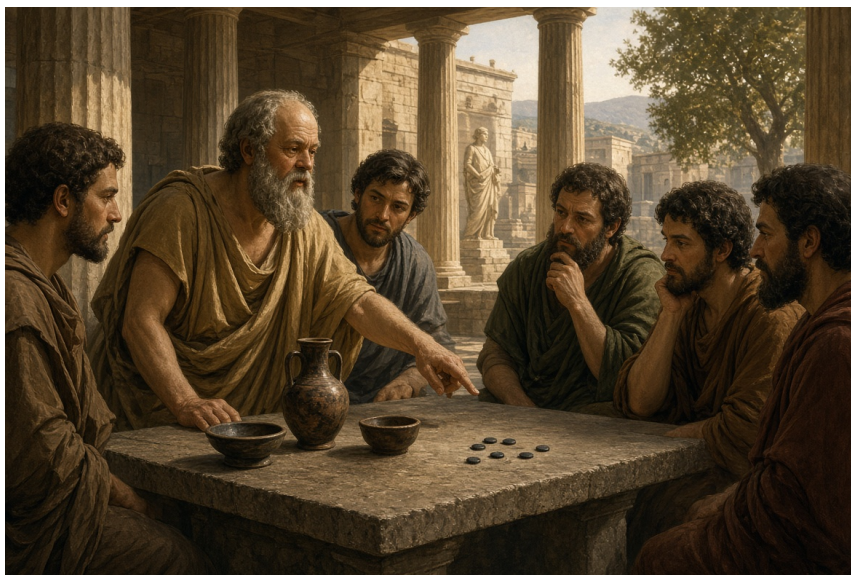
. . .

2

THREE THINGS



There are three things in every act of ruling:
the ruler, the rule, and the ruled.



Five Names for Three Things — the chapter's central dialogue.

“Of course.”

. . .

“And any city which has come to be controlled by a few people they call by the names of aristocracy and oligarchy.”

. . .

“Most certainly.”

. . .

“Write it out,” said Sophia. “Properly. Two columns. You will want it.”

. . .

Lela drew the lines.

. . .

“One man, good: king,” she said. “One man, bad: tyrant.
“A few, good: aristocracy. A few, bad: oligarchy.”

. . .

“And what is the difference, in each case?”

. . .

“Whether they want him there,” said Lela. “Whether it’s
by force or because people agreed. And — “ she checked
the page — “and whether they keep the laws.”

. . .

“Yes. Now do the third one.”

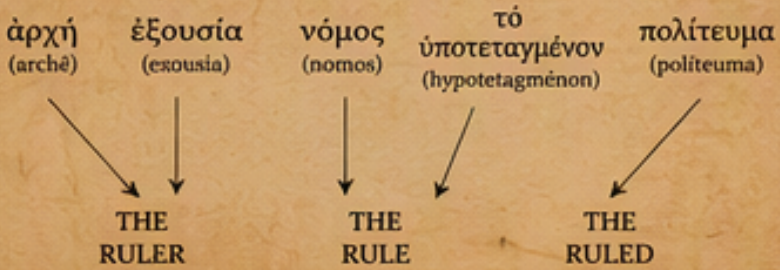
. . .

“With democracy, on the other hand,” the Visitor was
saying — “whether in fact it’s by force or with their consent
that the mass rules over those who possess the wealth; and
whether by accurately preserving the laws or not — “in all
these cases, no one is in the habit of changing its name.”

. . .

3

FIVE NAMES



Yet we use five different names
for these three things.



Five Names for Three Things — the central concept made visible.

Lela's pen stopped.

. . .

"That's not fair," she said.

. . .

"Go on," said the owl.

. . .

"He's given the other two a good version and a bad version. One man good, one man bad. Few good, few bad. And then he's got to the third one and gone — nobody bothers. "There's just democracy. There isn't a nice word for good democracy and there isn't a nasty word for bad democracy. It's got one name and it's the same name however it's behaving."

. . .

“And what is he saying by that?” said Sophia.

. . .

Lela worked at it for a moment.

. . .

“He’s saying nobody thinks it’s worth telling apart,” she said. “That’s the insult. He’s not saying it’s evil. He’s saying it never gets good enough or bad enough for anyone to bother making a second word.”

. . .



The same reality wears different names,
depending on how we look at it.



Five Names for Three Things — the guiding analogy.

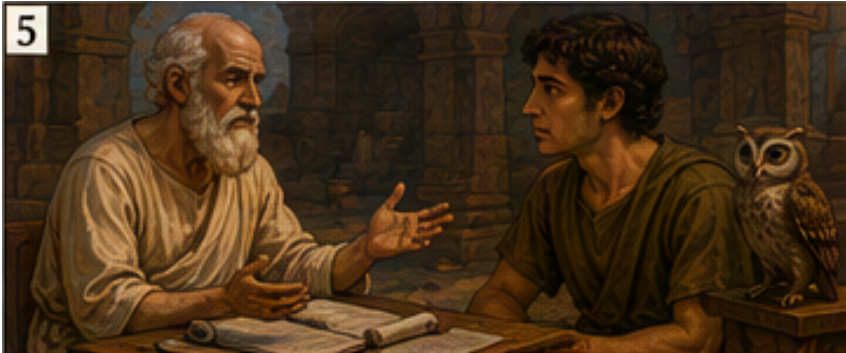
“That is exactly what he is saying,” said the owl, “and I am now going to do something I have only done twice this summer, which is tell you to discount a man I have been praising for three days. “Not to stop listening to him. To discount. Those are different and knowing the difference is most of being a grown-up reader. “The man holding the pen is Athenian. He is writing about Athens. He was about twenty-four in the year you are watching, and he was in this city, and he had an uncle and a cousin on the wrong side of a very bad government, and then the democracy came back — and the democracy, in a court, by a show of hands, in the sunshine, lawfully, killed the man he loved most. “He is not neutral about democracy. He is the last person on earth who could be. And a man who has just watched that happen writing nobody bothers to distinguish good democracy from bad is not making a cool observation about vocabulary. “So: discount it. Notice that it comes from somewhere. Notice that where it comes from

is real, and is a thing that really happened, and is not in any way a reason — grief is never a reason, however good the grief is. “And then — separately, afterwards, with the discount applied — ask whether the observation is any good. “Because I am afraid that it is, a bit. You have a word for a bad king and a bad few. Ask yourself, this evening, what your word is for a bad everybody. And notice how long it takes you.”

. . .

Nobody said anything.

. . .



The dialectician must learn to see
beyond the names to the things themselves.



Five Names for Three Things — the argument unfolding step by step.

“What then?” said the Visitor. “Do we suppose that any of these constitutions is correct, when it is defined by these criteria — one, few and many; wealth and poverty; force and consent; and whether it turns out to be accompanied by written laws or without laws?”

. . .

“Why, what actually prevents it?” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Look at it more clearly, following this way.”

. . .

“Which?”

. . .

“Shall we abide by what we said when we first began?
Or shall we be in discord with it?”

. . .

“What was that?”

. . .

“We said, I think, that kingly rule was one of the sorts
of expert knowledge.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“And not just one of them all, but we chose out from the
rest particularly one that was concerned in a sense with
making judgements and controlling.” “Yes.”

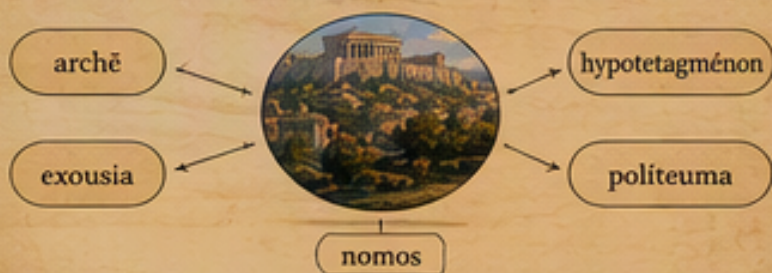
. . .

“And it’s by splitting things up in just this way that we
have been progressing all the time to the point where we
are now. We haven’t forgotten that it’s knowledge — but
as for what sort of knowledge it is, we’re not yet able to
give a sufficiently accurate answer.”

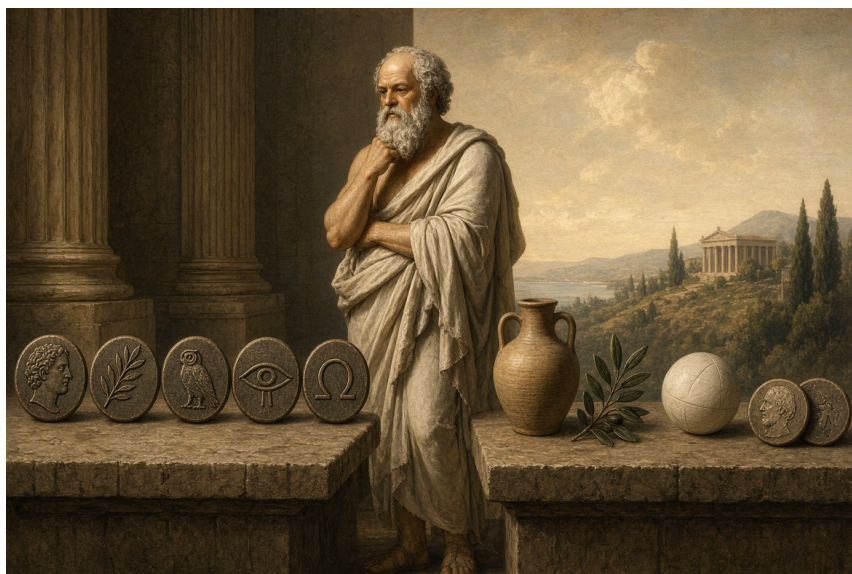
. . .

6

ONE REALITY — MANY NAMES



Otherwise we think there are many
where there is truly one.



Five Names for Three Things — the competing interpretation.

“Your account is correct.”

. . .

“Then do we see just this very point. “That the criterion in the things in question must not be few, nor many; nor consent nor the lack of it; nor poverty nor wealth — “but some sort of knowledge. “If indeed we are going to be consistent with what we said before.”

. . .

“But that we can’t possibly fail to do,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Stop,” said Lela. “Stop it. Stop it now.”

. . .

Sophia stopped it.

. . .

“He can’t say that,” said Lela. She was up on her knees. “He can’t say that. He said the other thing. He said it this morning. He said the whole difference between a king and a tyrant is whether they’re willing — he cut the tree there, he made a whole cut out of it, you made me write it down twice — “and now he’s gone consent isn’t the criterion.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Well, which is it?”

. . .

7



The city is called many things,
but the city remains one.



Five Names for Three Things — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“That,” said the owl, “is the question people have been asking about this book since before there was a word for a book, and you have got to it by yourself, in the hour, from the text, at fourteen, and I would like you to sit with how

annoyed you are for a moment, because being annoyed in exactly this way is the most valuable condition you will ever be in.”

. . .

“Is he contradicting himself?”

. . .

“He is either contradicting himself,” said Sophia, “or he is about to say something extremely uncomfortable which makes both of them true, and which a great many people have spent their lives wishing he had not said. “And I am not going to tell you which, because the next hour is him saying it.”

. . .

“Necessarily, then, we must now consider in which, if any, of these types of rule expert knowledge about ruling human beings turns out to occur,” said the Visitor. “Practically the most difficult, and the most important, thing of which to acquire knowledge.”

. . .

In the garden of the Academy, Aristotle was copying the list of constitutions and had got as far as the second column.

. . .

“Three into five,” he said. “And the third one refuses to split.”

. . .



Lela: So names change, but reality stays?

Danae: Yes—if we are careful.



Five Names for Three Things — the historical layer.

“Yes.”

. . .

“That is not enough.”

. . .

Plato looked up.

. . .

“It is a schema,” said Aristotle, “and it is a good one, and it is made out of a man’s head in a garden. One, few, many; and then good and bad. Anybody could have made it. I could have made it, and I am twenty.”

. . .

“And what would you do instead?”

. . .

“I would go and look.”

. . .

The old man put the roll down on his knee.

. . .

“Look at what?” he said.

. . .

“At the cities,” said Aristotle. “There are hundreds of them. Every single one has an arrangement. Most of them have had three or four arrangements and can tell you how they got from one to the next and what went wrong. “And nobody has ever written them down. Not one. There is not a shelf anywhere in Greece with the constitutions of Greece on it.”

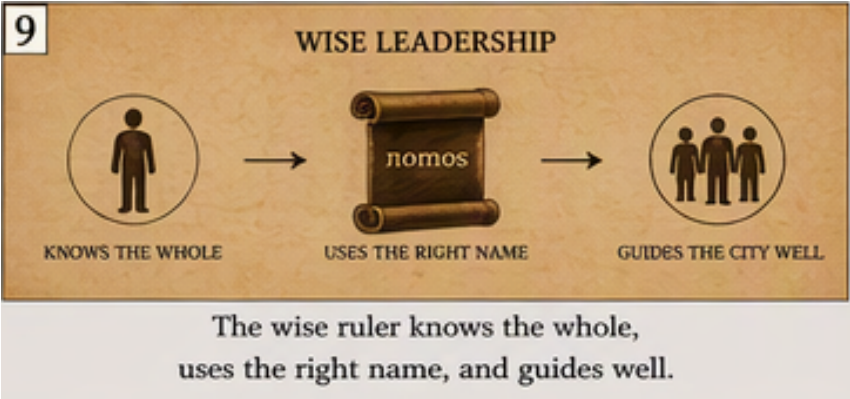
. . .

“How would you get them?”

. . .

“I would write and ask,” said Aristotle.

. . .





Five Names for Three Things — a wordless conceptual plate.

Plato started to laugh, and then stopped, because he had seen the young man's face and there was nothing funny in it at all.

. . .

"You are serious."

. . .

"I am entirely serious. You write to the city. You ask what their arrangement is and how it came to be that way. Some of them will not answer. Most of them will, because men are vain about their own cities and nobody has ever asked them before. "And when you have a hundred of them on a shelf, you look at the hundred, and you find out what is actually true about how these things go — instead of what is true about how they ought to go, which is what we have on this roll, and which nobody has ever been able to check."

. . .

The garden was quiet for a while.

. . .

“That would take a very long time,” said Plato.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“And a great many people writing letters. And somewhere to put them.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“And money.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Aristotle.

. . .

10



So the statesman must see clearly,
speak truly, and rule justly.



Five Names for Three Things — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

The old man looked at him for a long moment.

. . .

“Do it,” he said.

. . .

“Sophia,” said Danae, from the grass. “Did he?”

. . .

“He did it,” said the owl. “Not then. Later, when he had a school of his own and enough young men to send. “A hundred and fifty-eight of them. Cities all over the Greek world, each one written up, how it was arranged and how it got that way. “It is the largest single piece of finding-things-out that anybody had done up to that point in the history of the world.”

. . .

“Can we see it?”

. . .

“No,” said Sophia.

. . .

“It is gone. All of it. A hundred and fifty-seven of them are gone so completely that we do not even have the names of some of the cities. “One survived. One. Somebody in Egypt wrote it out on the back of some farm accounts, because papyrus was expensive and the accounts were finished with, and it lay in the sand for two thousand years, and a man dug it up when your great-grandmother was a girl. “And it is the constitution of Athens. “And it has in it, in its proper place, in a list, without comment, the office of the king by lot.”

Chapter 90

NINETY. The Doctor Who Cuts You

1



Socrates gives a new image
to understand the statesman's care.



The Doctor Who Cuts You — opening scene.

“Well,” said the Visitor. “Does it seem that a mass of people in the city are capable of acquiring this expertise?”

. . .

“How could they?”

. . .

“But in a city of a thousand men, is it possible for a hundred or so — or again fifty — to acquire it adequately?”

. . .

“In that case,” said young Socrates, “it would be quite the easiest of all the sorts of expertise there are. “For we know that among a thousand men there would never be so many top draughts-players, in relation to those among the rest of the Greeks. “Let alone kings.”

. . .

“That’s rather good,” said Lela, grudgingly.

. . .

“It is very good,” said Sophia, “and it is the boy’s own, and nobody gave it to him. “He has said: pick a thousand men at random. How many of them are any good at draughts? Not good — really good. The best in Greece. “Perhaps none. Perhaps one, if the town is lucky. “And running a city is supposed to be harder than draughts. So if you have found fifty men in a thousand who can do it, you have not found fifty experts. You have made a mistake about what the expertise is.”

. . .



2

A doctor who cuts you is not your enemy.
He removes what harms you.



The Doctor Who Cuts You — the chapter's central dialogue.

“That’s true,” said Danae, from the grass.

. . .

“It is entirely true,” said the owl, “and it is the first stone of the worst passage in this book, and I want you both to notice that you agreed with it.”

. . .

“As a consequence of this,” said the Visitor, “we must look for correct rule in relation to some one person, or two, or altogether few — when it is correct.”

. . .

“We certainly must.”

. . .

“Yes. But these people — “whether they rule over willing or unwilling subjects; “whether according to written laws or without them; “and whether they rule as rich men or poor — “we must suppose to be carrying out whatever sort of rule they do on the basis of expertise.”

. . .

“Wait,” said Lela.

. . .

“Doctors provide the clearest parallel,” said the Visitor.

. . .

3

TRUE DOCTOR



DIAGNOSES
THE ILLNESS



CUTS OUT
THE CAUSE



PAIN TODAY,
HEALING TOMORROW



THE GOOD
OF THE WHOLE

He causes a small pain
for the sake of greater health.



The Doctor Who Cuts You — the central concept made visible.

“We believe in them whether they cure us with our consent or without it. “By cutting, or burning, or applying some other painful treatment. “And whether they do so according to written rules, or apart from written rules. And whether as poor men or rich. “In all these cases we are no less inclined at all to say they are doctors — so long as they are in charge of us on the basis of expertise. Purging or otherwise reducing us, or else building us up. “It is no matter, if only each and every one of those who care for our bodies acts for our bodies’ good, making them better than they were, and so preserves what is in their care.”

. . .

Nobody in the orchard said anything for a moment.

. . .

“That’s true as well,” said Danae, in a small voice.

. . .

“Say it,” said Sophia.

. . .

“When I had my arm,” said Danae.

. . .

She was looking straight up at the leaves.

. . .



The statesman is like this:
he may act firmly, even harshly,



The Doctor Who Cuts You — the guiding analogy.

“I didn’t say they could. Nobody asked me. I was screaming, I said no about nine hundred times, and the lady held my shoulders and the man pulled it and it made a noise and I have never in my whole life been that angry with anybody. “And it was the right arm afterwards. It was completely fine. It’s fine now.”

. . .

She held it up and turned it over, the way she always did when it came up.

. . .

“And they were doctors,” she said. “They weren’t — they weren’t attacking me. I know that. I knew it about four days later. “So he’s right. That’s just right. You don’t stop being a doctor because the person’s saying no.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “Hold on to your arm. “You are going to need it in about ninety seconds, and you are going to need it because a man is about to say something enormous, and the whole of its power comes from the fact that the first half of it is true and you have felt it in your own shoulder.”

. . .

“It’s in this way, as I think, and in no other, that we’ll lay down the criterion of medicine — and of any other sort of rule whatsoever,” said the Visitor. “It is the only correct criterion.”

. . .



He restrains, forbids, and corrects—
not from anger, but from care.



The Doctor Who Cuts You — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Yes. Just so.”

. . .

“It must then be the case, it seems, that of constitutions too, the one that is correct in comparison with the rest — and alone a constitution — is the one in which the rulers would be found truly possessing expert knowledge, and not merely seeming to. “Whether they rule according to laws or without laws. “Over willing or unwilling subjects. “And whether the rulers are poor or wealthy. “There is no principle of correctness according to which any of these must be taken into any account at all.”

. . .

“Right,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“Right?” said Lela.

. . .

“And whether they purge the city for its benefit by putting some people to death, or else by exiling them,” the Visitor went on — “or whether again they make it smaller by sending out colonies somewhere like swarms of bees — “or build it up by introducing people from somewhere outside, and making them citizens — “so long as they act to preserve it on the basis of expert knowledge and what is just, making it better than it was so far as they can: “this is the constitution which alone we must say is correct.”

. . .

6

HARM AND GOOD

SHORT-TERM HARM
(pain, loss, restriction)

LONG-TERM GOOD
(health, order, justice)



He weighs what seems harmful
against what is truly good.



The Doctor Who Cuts You — the competing interpretation.

Sophia stopped the picture without being asked.

. . .

The orchard was completely silent. A wasp went along the top of the wall and away.

. . .

“He said killing people,” said Lela.

. . .

“He said killing people,” said the owl.

. . .

“He said — that’s not rhetoric, he’s not being — he said putting some people to death, or else exiling them, and he said it in the same voice as the bit about the bees, and he

put it in the list of things that are fine as long as the man knows what he's doing."

. . .

"Yes."

. . .

"Sophia, what is this?"

. . .

"This is the passage," said Sophia.

. . .



Danae: So when the ruler is strict,
it may be like medicine?



The Doctor Who Cuts You — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“This is the one. I have been telling you for two summers that I would never show you anything I was not willing to defend, and I want to be very clear with you now, before we go a line further. “I am not going to defend this. “I

am going to show it to you, all of it, exactly as it is, with nothing taken out, and then I am going to show you the rest — because there is a rest, and it matters, and almost nobody who quotes this page has read the next four. “But this page is the reason people are afraid of this book, and they are right to be, and if you finish today thinking it was all fine then I have taught you nothing at all.”

. . .

“Start it again,” said Lela.

. . .

“Not yet,” said the owl. “First tell me what the argument is. Properly. It is a real argument and you will not get anywhere by being cross at it.”

. . .

Lela sat with her hands around her knees for a while.

. . .



Socrates: Yes—if it is for the good
of the whole, not for his own benefit.



The Doctor Who Cuts You — the historical layer.

“All right,” she said. “It goes like this. “Ruling well is a skill. Like medicine. We said that on the first morning and I agreed and I still agree. “And with a skill, the only thing that makes it good is whether you actually know how to do it. Not whether people like you. Not whether you’re

rich. Not whether there's a rule book. Danae's man knew how to put an arm back, and that's the whole of what made him a doctor, and everything else was just — noise round the outside. "So if ruling is a skill, then the only thing that makes a ruler a real one is whether he knows. And everything else — the voting, the laws, whether people agreed — is noise round the outside."

. . .

"And is there anything wrong with it?" said Sophia.

. . .

"It's perfect," said Lela, and she sounded almost frightened. "That's the horrible bit. Every single step. I've gone through it twice and I can't find where it goes wrong. "And it comes out with a man who's allowed to kill people as long as he's right."

. . .

"Yes," said the owl.

. . .

"So where does it go wrong?"

. . .



The Doctor Who Cuts You — a wordless conceptual plate.

“That,” said Sophia, “is what the rest of today is, and I am not going to give you the answer, and I will tell you why. “Because you will meet this argument. Not on a page. Out loud, from somebody you like, about something you agree with, in a form that has been shortened and improved

and will sound like ordinary common sense. “And on that day it will not help you at all to remember that an owl once told you the answer. “You will have to be able to do it yourself.”

. . .

“All the others that we generally say are constitutions,” the Visitor was saying, “we must say are not genuine, and not really constitutions at all — but imitations of this one. “Those we say are law-abiding have imitated it for the better. The others for the worse.”

. . .

And then young Socrates spoke, and both girls leaned in, because for three days the boy had agreed with everything.

. . .

“The rest of it, visitor, seems to have been said in due measure,” he said. “But that ideal rule may exist even without laws — that was something harder for a hearer to accept.”

. . .

Lela made a strangled noise.

. . .



So the statesman, like a true doctor,
cares for the city's soul.



The Doctor Who Cuts You — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“That’s what he objected to?” she said. “That’s the bit? Not the — Sophia, the man just said you can kill people if you know what you’re doing and the boy’s put his hand up about paperwork?”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“Why?”

. . .

“Because he is fifteen, and Athenian, and he has been brought up on the laws the way you were brought up on please and thank you,” said Sophia. “Because the laws are the thing his city is proud of, and the thing it says about itself, and the water he swims in. “And because of something worse, which is that his city killed people every year, lawfully, after a vote, and would kill one in that courtyard in nine weeks, and it did not occur to him to flinch at the killing, because the killing was normal and doing it without the paperwork was not. “You have just watched somebody object to the wrong half of a sentence. “Everybody does it. It is the most ordinary thing in the world. You will do it, and the reason you will do it is exactly his reason: some things are so usual that they do not register as things at all.”

Chapter 91

NINETY-ONE. A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person



Socrates asks: who is a self-willed
and ignorant person?



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — opening scene.

“You got in just a little before me with your question, Socrates,” said the Visitor. “For I was about to ask you whether you accept all of this, or whether in fact you find any of the things we have said difficult to take. “But as it is, it’s already apparent that we’ll want a discussion of this matter.”

. . .

“Quite.”

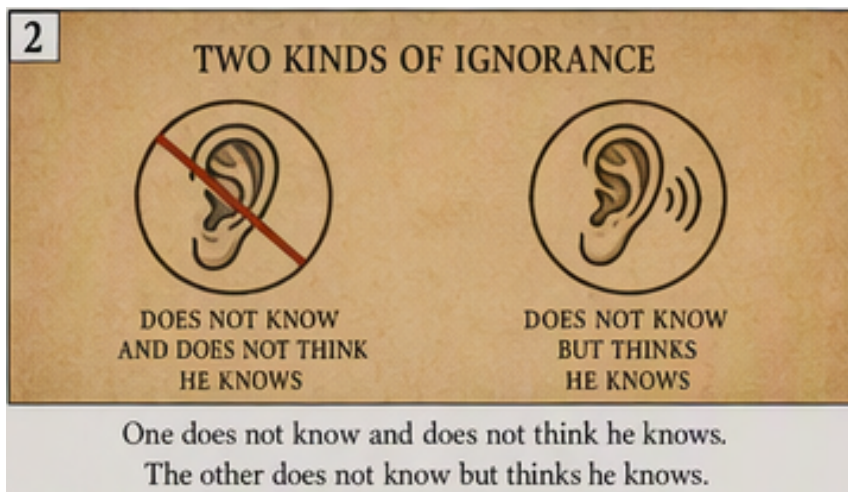
. . .

“Now, in a certain sense it is clear that the art of the legislator belongs to that of the king. “But the best thing is not that the laws should prevail — but rather the kingly man who possesses wisdom. “Do you know why?”

. . .

“What then is the reason?”

. . . .





A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — the chapter's central dialogue.

“That law could never accurately embrace what is best and most just for all at the same time, and so prescribe what is best. “For the dissimilarities between human beings and their actions — and the fact that practically nothing in human affairs ever remains stable — prevent any sort of expertise whatsoever from making any simple decision in any sphere that covers all cases and will last for all time. “I suppose this is something we agree about?”

. . .

“Certainly.”

. . .

“He’s right,” said Lela immediately. “Sophia, he’s right about that as well, isn’t he.”

. . .

“He is right about that as well.”

. . .

“People are all different and everything keeps changing and you’re trying to write one sentence that covers everybody for ever.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “And now listen to what he says a law is, because it is the best short description of a law that anybody has ever written and it is not kind.”

. . .

3



The self-willed and ignorant man
thinks he knows what he does not.



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — the central concept made visible.

“But we see law bending itself more or less towards this very thing,” said the man from Elea. “It resembles some self-willed and ignorant person — who allows no one to do anything contrary to what he orders. “Nor to ask any questions about it. “Not even if, after all, something new turns out for someone which is better, contrary to the prescription which he himself has laid down.”

. . .

“I know him,” said Danae.

. . .

“Everybody knows him,” said Sophia.

. . .

“No, but I know him.” Danae had sat up. “That’s Mr Prentice on the gate. That’s — you can’t go through the

gate with your bike, even when there's nobody there, even at half past four when everybody's gone, even when it's raining and the other way round is eleven minutes. "And if you ask why, he doesn't say a reason. He says that's the rule. And he's not even being horrible. He genuinely thinks that's the rule is a reason."

. . .



He speaks and acts without listening
or learning from anyone.



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — the guiding analogy.

“And is he ignorant?” said the owl.

. . .

Danae thought about it.

. . .

“He doesn’t know about the rain,” she said. “He doesn’t know about this Tuesday. He can’t. He wasn’t there when they made the rule and neither was the rain.”

. . .

“That,” said Sophia, “is what the man means by ignorant, and it is a very precise word and not an insult. “A law does not know about you. It cannot. It was made before you arrived, by people who could not see you, about somebody who was roughly your shape. “And it is self-willed — that is the other half, and it is the half that stings — because it

will not discuss it. You may not ask. There is no one to ask. It simply says the thing it says, in the same voice, for ever, to everybody.”

. . .

“Then it is impossible,” said the Visitor, “for what is perpetually simple to be useful in relation to what is never simple?”

. . .



5
The thinks he can judge everything,
though he has learned nothing.



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — the argument unfolding step by step.

“Very likely.”

. . .

“Write that one down as well,” said Sophia. “Nine words. That is the entire problem of every rule anybody has ever made, in nine words, and there is no getting out of it, and everybody who has ever tried to write a rule has felt it. “The rule has to be the same every time. That is what makes it a rule. “And nothing it is about is ever the same twice.”

. . .

“Why then is it ever necessary to make laws,” said the Visitor, “given that law is not something completely correct? “We must find out the cause of this.”

. . .

“Oh, good,” said Lela. “Good. He’s asking it.”

. . .

“Now, with you too, people train in groups, in the way they do in other cities — whether for running or for anything else, for competitive purposes?”

. . .



Because he overestimates himself,
he falls into many mistakes and harms.



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — the competing interpretation.

“Yes. Very frequently.”

. . .

“Well, now let’s recall to mind the instructions that expert trainers give when they’re in charge of people in such circumstances. “That they don’t suppose there is room for them to make their prescriptions piece by piece to suit each individual, giving the instruction appropriate to the physical condition of each. “They regard it as necessary to make rougher prescriptions about what will bring physical benefit — as suits the majority of cases, and a large number of people. “And it’s just for this reason that, as it is, they give equally heavy exercises to the group as a whole. Starting them off together and stopping them together, in their running, wrestling, and the rest.”

. . .

“That’s PE,” said Danae flatly.

. . .

“That is PE,” said Sophia.

. . .



Lela: He is like someone who thinks he can swim
and leaps in without learning.
Danae: Pride makes him blind.



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“Everyone does twelve. Doesn’t matter who you are. Ilona does twelve and she could do forty and Sam does twelve and he can’t do twelve, he really can’t, and everybody watches him not do them every single Thursday.”

. . .

“And is Mr — whoever it is — wrong?”

. . .

Danae was quiet for a second.

. . .

“No,” she said. “There’s thirty of us and there’s one of him and it’s forty minutes.”

. . .

“There it is,” said the owl. “That is the entire answer to why do we have laws at all, and a ten-year-old has just given it from a school field. “Not because the rule is right. The rule is not right — it is wrong about Ilona and it is wrong about Sam, and everybody in the room can see that it is wrong about both of them. “It is there because there is one of him and thirty of you and forty minutes, and the alternative is not a perfect arrangement. The alternative is nothing at all.”

. . .



Socrates: He is hard to help,
because he thinks he needs no help.



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — the historical layer.

“Then let’s suppose the same about the legislator too,” said the Visitor. “The person who will direct his herds in relation to justice, and their contracts with one another. He will never be capable, in prescribing for everyone together, of assigning accurately to each individual what is appropriate for him.”

. . .

“What you say certainly sounds reasonable.”

. . .

“Instead he will, I think, set down the law for each and every one according to the principle of —”

. . .

“for the majority of people, for the majority of cases, and roughly, somehow, like this.”

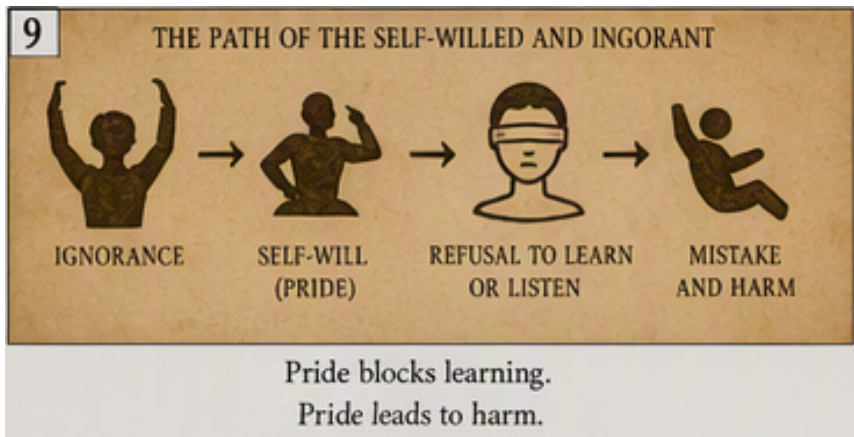
. . .

Lela put her hand over her mouth.

. . .

“Say it back,” said Sophia.

. . .





A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — a wordless conceptual plate.

“For most people. Most of the time. And roughly, sort of, like this,” said Lela.

. . .

“That is what every law you will ever obey actually says,” said the owl, “underneath, in small letters, and no law has ever printed it on the front, and this is the only place in the literature of the world where somebody wrote it down in so many words. “Not this is right. Not this is just. Not thus shall it be. “For most people, most of the time, roughly, somehow, like this. “And the extraordinary thing — the thing I want you to sit with — is that he is not sneering when he says it. He is explaining why it is necessary. That sentence is the best anybody can do, and he knows it is the best anybody can do, and he is about to spend an hour on what follows from that.”

. . .

“For how would anyone ever be capable, Socrates,” said the Visitor, “of sitting beside each individual perpetually throughout his life, and accurately prescribing what is appropriate to him?”

. . .



The wise man must know his limits,
and love knowledge more than pride.



A Self-Willed and Ignorant Person — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

The orchard was quiet.

. . .

“Somebody did,” said Danae.

. . .

“What?” said Lela.

. . .

“Somebody did do that.” Danae was looking at the picture, at the bench at the edge of it. “He did. That’s what he does. He sits next to one person at a time and asks them things until they know what they think. For fifty years. One at a time. “That’s why it’s only ever a few people, isn’t it. That’s why it’s never the whole city. Because you can’t do it to a whole city, you can only do it to whoever’s sitting there.”

. . .

Sophia did not answer for a moment.

. . .

“That is the best thing either of you has said this summer,” she said, “and I am not going to add anything to it.”

Chapter 92

**NINETY-TWO. If He Comes
Back Early**



Socrates says: if the ruler returns too early
to ease and pleasure, what happens?



If He Comes Back Early — opening scene.

“Are we to say,” said the Visitor, “that if a doctor, or else some gymnastic trainer, were going to be out of the country and away from his charges for what he thought would be a long time — “and thought that the people being trained, or his patients, would not remember the instructions he had given them — “he would want to write down reminders for them?”

. . .

“As you suggested.”

. . .

“That’s where laws come from,” said Lela slowly.

. . .

“That is where he says laws come from,” said Sophia. “A note left by somebody who had to go away. “Hold that. It is about to become the whole argument.”





If He Comes Back Early — the chapter's central dialogue.

“But what if he came back unexpectedly,” said the Visitor. “Having been away for less time than he thought he would be? “Do you think he wouldn’t propose other prescriptions, contrary to the ones he had written down — when things turned out to be different, and better, for his patients, because of winds, or else some other of the things that come from Zeus, which had come about contrary to expectation? “Would he obstinately think that neither he nor the patient should step outside those ancient laws that had once been laid down? “He himself by giving other instructions; the patient by daring to do different things contrary to what was written? “On the grounds that these were the rules of the art of medicine and of health — and that things that happened differently were unhealthy, and not part of his expertise? “Or would all such things, if they happened in the context of truly expert knowledge, cause altogether the greatest ridicule?”

. . .

“Absolutely right,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“That’s good,” said Lela.

. . .

She said it the way you concede a point in a game you are losing.

. . .

“That’s really good. That’s — he’s not even talking about disobeying a doctor. He’s talking about the doctor disobeying himself. His own note. The one he wrote. “The note was only ever a stand-in for him. It was because he wasn’t there. And now he’s there, and he’s looking at the actual person, and the weather’s changed, and the note is wrong, and he wrote it — and the note is supposed to overrule him?”

. . .

3



If he comes back early,
pleasure welcomes him.



If He Comes Back Early — the central concept made visible.

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“And that’s mad. That is actually mad. That’s nobody’s idea of what a note is for.”

. . .

“And what is a law?” said Sophia.

. . .

Lela did not answer.

. . .

“And as for the person who has written down what is just and unjust, fine and shameful, good and bad,” the Visitor was saying — “or has laid down unwritten laws on

these subjects, for all those herds of human beings that graze, city by city, according to the laws of those who wrote them down in each case — “if the person who wrote them on the basis of expertise, or someone else resembling him, arrives — is it really not to be permitted to him to give different instructions contrary to these? “Or wouldn’t this prohibition appear in truth no less ridiculous than the other one?”

. . .

“Of course.”

. . .



Honors, flattery, and crowds surround him.
He forgets the hard path.



If He Comes Back Early — the guiding analogy.

“Well then. Do you know what the majority of people say in such a case?”

. . .

“It doesn’t come to mind for the moment, just like that.”

. . .

“Well, it sounds fine enough,” said the Visitor.

. . .

“What they say is that if someone recognises laws that are better, contrary to those established by people before him — then he must introduce them by persuading his city to accept them in each case. But not otherwise.”

. . .

“Well then?” said young Socrates. “Is that not a correct view?”

. . .

“Yes,” said Lela, out loud, to a courtyard two and a half thousand years away. “Yes it is. That’s the answer. That’s exactly the answer, that’s what you do, you go and you argue for it and you change it —”

. . .

“Perhaps,” said the Visitor.

. . .

“But first things first. “If someone forces through what is better without the use of persuasion — tell me, what will be the name to give to the use of force in this case? “No — not yet. Answer me first in relation to the previous cases.”

. . .

5



He thinks himself wise and strong,
though he is not yet ready.



If He Comes Back Early — the argument unfolding step by step.

“What do you mean?”

. . .

“If someone does not persuade his patient, but has a correct grasp of the relevant expertise, and forces child, or man, or woman, to do what is better, contrary to what has been written down — “what will be the name to give to this use of force? “Surely anything rather than what we called an unhealthy mistake contrary to the expertise in question? “And the last thing the person who was the object of such force can correctly say about it, is that he had unhealthy things done to him by the doctors who used force on him — things that did not belong to their expertise.”

. . .

“That’s my arm,” said Danae.

. . .

“That is your arm,” said Sophia.

. . .



The city suffers from his impatience.
He cannot hold it together.



If He Comes Back Early — the competing interpretation.

“He’s got me,” said Danae. She did not sound upset; she sounded the way she sounded when somebody moved a piece she had not seen. “He’s got me with my own arm. Because I can’t say they did a bad job. I was there. It works. It’s the arm. “Whatever I want to say about it — and I do want to say something about it, I’ve always wanted to say something about it — I can’t say they didn’t know how to fix arms.”

. . .

“No,” said the owl. “You cannot. And that is exactly right, and it is exactly what he says, and he has not cheated anywhere. “And I want you to notice what you just said. I have always wanted to say something about it. “Something happened to you in that room that was not covered by the arm came out fine. You have known it since you were seven. You have never had a word for it. “Keep looking for the word. Not today. It took the human race about two

thousand years to find it and they have still not agreed on it.”

. . .

“And what do we really suppose to be the sort of mistake we’re talking about,” the Visitor went on, “the one in contravention of the expertise of the statesman? “Isn’t it what is shameful, what is bad, and unjust?”

. . .

“I agree, absolutely.”

. . .



Lela: It is like leaving school too soon.
Danae: Then we boast but know too little.



If He Comes Back Early — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“Then those who have been forced, contrary to what has been written down and to ancestral custom, to do different things that are more just, better and finer than the things they did before — “tell me: if people in this kind of situation censure this kind of use of force, isn’t it true that, if their censure isn’t to be the most laughable of all, they must

say anything on each occasion rather than that those who have been forced have had shameful, unjust and bad things done to them by those who did the forcing?”

. . .

“What you say is very true.”

. . .

“There,” said Sophia. “That is the end of it. He has got there. “Say what he has just proved.”

. . .

Lela’s voice was very flat.

. . .

“If somebody makes you do the right thing,” she said, “against the law, against your will — then afterwards you can’t say he did something unjust to you. “Because the thing he made you do was more just than the thing you were doing.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .



Socrates: The ruler must return
only when he is truly ready.



If He Comes Back Early — the historical layer.

“And that’s — “ She stopped. “That’s airtight, isn’t it. As long as he’s actually right.”

. . .

“As long as he is actually right,” said the owl.

. . .

“But are the things forced on them just, if the person who did the forcing is rich,” said the Visitor — “and unjust if he happens to be poor? “Or if, whether by using persuasion or not, whether as a rich or a poor man, whether according to written law or contrary to it, he does what is to the benefit of the citizens — must that be the criterion? “The truest criterion of correct government of a city, the one according to which the wise and good man will govern the interests of the ruled? “Just as a steersman, always watching out for what is to the benefit of the ship and the sailors, preserves his fellow sailors — “not by putting things down in writing, but by offering his expertise as law — “so too, in this same manner, a constitution would be correct, would it not, if it issued from those who are able to rule in this way: offering the strength of their expertise as more powerful than the laws?”

. . .

9

RETURNING TOO EARLY



PLEASURE
CALLS



FLATTERY
BLINDS



STRENGTH
IS LOST



THE CITY
SUFFERS

Too early, and he falls.
Not for himself alone, but for all.



If He Comes Back Early — a wordless conceptual plate.

The picture ran on for a moment with nobody watching it.

. . .

“Offering his expertise as law,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s the most frightening sentence I’ve ever heard in my life.”

. . .

“Say why,” said the owl, “because you are two words away from something and I would like you to have it.”

. . .

Lela sat looking at the frozen courtyard.

. . .

“Because on a boat it’s true,” she said. “That’s the thing. On a boat it’s obviously true. There’s a storm and there’s rocks and there is absolutely no time to have a meeting, and one man knows where the rocks are and nobody else does, and if he says everybody get down you get down, and if somebody starts saying well hang on, why should we then everybody dies. “That’s real. That’s not a trick. That is actually how boats work. “And a city isn’t a boat.”

. . .

“And why not?” said Sophia. “He has just said it is. He has been saying it all day. Tell me why not.”

. . .

10



The good ruler returns in due time,
with knowledge, strength, and care for all.



If He Comes Back Early — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“Because —“ Lela was going slowly, feeling for it. “Because on a boat everybody wants the same thing. Everybody on the boat wants the boat to get there. Nobody’s on the boat wanting something different. “And in a city everybody wants different things, and some of them can’t all happen, and that’s not because anybody’s stupid, that’s just — that’s what a city is. It’s a lot of people wanting different things in the same place. “So what’s to the benefit of the ship is easy and what’s to the benefit of the city isn’t a thing you can just know, because there isn’t one answer sitting there waiting for somebody clever enough to find it.”

. . .

“There,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Is that it? Is that where it goes wrong?”

. . .

“That is one of the places where it goes wrong,” said the owl, “and it is the one people found first, and it took them about two thousand years, and you did it in an orchard in six minutes with a wasp on the wall. “There is another one, and it is worse, and he is about to walk straight into it himself.”

Chapter 93

NINETY-THREE. The Assembly of Sailors



Socrates tells a new story:
a ship, a crew, and a quarrel about the course.



The Assembly of Sailors — opening scene.

“What do you mean by this?” said young Socrates. “What are you saying? For I did not understand the point about imitations when it was made just now, either.”

. . .

“And it’s no small matter, if one stirs up this subject and then proceeds to leave it where it is — instead of going through it and showing the mistake that now occurs in relation to it.”

. . .

“What mistake is that?”

. . .

“Tell me. Given that this constitution we have talked about is, on our view, the only correct one — “do you

recognise that the others ought to employ the written documents that belong to this one, and save themselves in that way? Doing what is now praised, although it is not the most correct thing to do?”

. . .

“What are you referring to?”

. . .

“The principle that no one in the city should dare to do anything contrary to the laws — and that the person who dares to do so should be punished by death, and all the worst punishments. “This is very correct and fine — as a second choice.”

. . .

“He’s turning round,” said Lela.

. . .

“He is turning round,” said Sophia. “Very slowly, over the next four pages, and he does not apologise, and he does not admit that he is doing it. “Sit up. This is the best hour in the book and it is the one nobody ever quotes.”

. . .

“Well then,” said the Visitor, “let’s go back to the likenesses to which we must always compare our kingly rulers. “The noble steersman. And the doctor who is worth many others. “Let us look at the matter by fashioning a kind of figure, using these as material.”

. . .

“A figure of what kind?”

. . .

2



Sailors disagree about where to sail.
Some shout, some hesitate, none agree.



The Assembly of Sailors — the chapter's central dialogue.

“Of the following sort. “Let’s suppose that we all thought of them as doing the most terrible things to us.”

. . .

Danae sat up.

. . .

“For the one as much as the other saves whichever of us he wishes to save. And whichever of us they wish to mutilate, they do it by cutting and burning us, and directing us to pay them expenses as if they were taxes — of which they spend little or none on the patient, while they themselves and their household use the rest. “And the final step is for them to take money from relatives, or from some enemies of the patient, as pay for killing him. “And steersmen, in their turn, bring about thousands of other things of a similar sort. Leaving people stranded

on voyages because of some conspiracy or other; causing shipwrecks on the seas and throwing people overboard; and doing other malicious things.”

. . .

“He’s done the other side,” said Lela, and she sounded almost dizzy with it. “He’s done the other side. That’s — that’s what it’s actually like. That’s what people are actually afraid of.”

. . .

“That is what people are actually afraid of,” said the owl, “and he has put it in himself, without being asked, at full strength, with nothing left out, and he has made it worse than you would have made it. “You would have said what if the expert is wrong. He has said: what if he takes money from your enemies to kill you.”

. . .

“Let’s suppose then that we thought this,” said the Visitor, “and came to a conclusion about them in a sort of council. “No longer to allow either of these sorts of expertise to have autonomous control — either of slaves or of free men. “But to call together an assembly with ourselves as members. Consisting either of the people all together, or only of the rich. “The rule would be that both laymen, and craftsmen other than steersmen and doctors, would be permitted to contribute an opinion — whether about sailing or about diseases. “As to the basis on which drugs and the tools of the doctor’s art should be used on patients. And even how to employ ships themselves, and the tools of the sailor’s art for operating them.”

. . .

3

A SHIP NEEDS MANY THINGS



SHIP



OARS



ROPES



COMPASS



CREW

Many parts are needed
for the ship to journey well.



The Assembly of Sailors — the central concept made visible.

Danae had both hands in her hair.

. . .

“They’re going to vote on medicine,” she said.

. . .

“They are going to vote on medicine.”

. . .

“Everyone. The whole town. And the bakers get a go.”

. . .

“The bakers get a go,” said Sophia.

. . .

“And once there was a record, on revolving columns or blocks of stone of some sort, of what the majority had

decided — whether with the advice of some doctors and steersmen, or of those who had no specialised knowledge of medicine or steersmanship — “then all our sailing and caring for patients, for all future time, would have to be done according to this.”

. . .

“What you’ve described is distinctly odd,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“And let’s suppose that a further conclusion was that we should set up officers annually who belong to the mass of people — whoever has office assigned to him by lot. “And that those who take office should execute it by steering the ships and healing patients according to the written rules.”

. . .

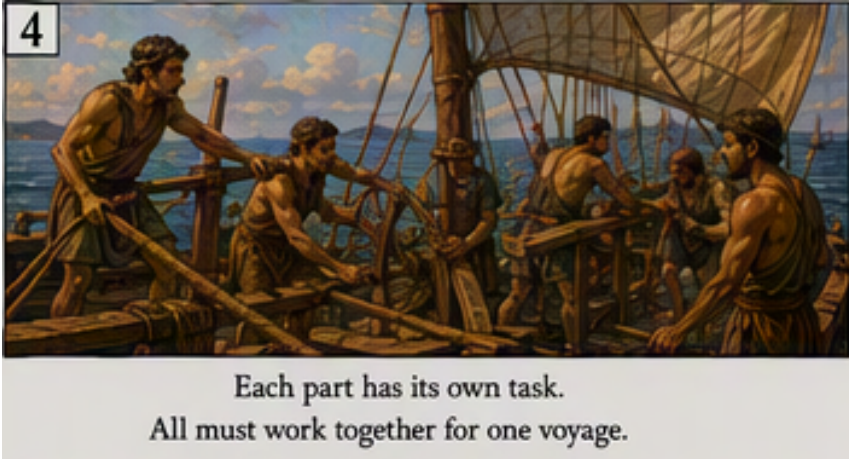
“This is even harder to take.”

. . .

“Then consider too what follows after this. “When the year ends for each and every one of the officers, there will be a requirement to set up courts — either of the rich on the basis of preselection, or again those chosen by lot from the whole people together — and to bring before these judges those who have held office, in order to examine their conduct. “Anyone who wishes will be permitted to charge an officer that he failed to steer the ships during the year according to the written rules, or according to the ancient customs of our ancestors. “There will be these same requirements also in the case of those healing the sick. “And for any officers condemned by the vote, the

judges will have to assess what penalty they should suffer, or what financial restitution they should make.”

. . .





The Assembly of Sailors — the guiding analogy.

“Well,” said young Socrates, “anyone who willingly and voluntarily undertakes to hold office under such conditions would fully deserve to suffer any penalty whatever, and to pay back any amount.”

. . .

“Sophia,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“That’s Athens.”

. . .

“That is Athens.”

. . .

“That’s not a made-up thing. That’s not imagine a silly city. That’s — offices for a year, chosen out of a jar by lot. Everything written up on stone in the square. A court at the end of the year to check what you did. Anyone who wants can bring the charge. Juries picked out of a jar. “That’s not like Athens. That’s Athens with doctors written in where it says magistrates.”

. . .

“That is Athens with doctors written in,” said Sophia, “and every single person in that courtyard knew it by the fourth sentence, and the boy has been saying this is distinctly odd and this is even harder to take about the constitution of his own city while standing in it. “And the man from Elea has not once said the word Athens. “He does not have to. He is a guest. He has been perfectly polite for two days. And he has built a picture of their entire way of life, out of doctors and sailors, and handed it to them, and let them look at it.”

. . .



One man must know how the journey goes.
He must understand the whole.



The Assembly of Sailors — the argument unfolding step by step.

“And further still,” said the Visitor, “it will be necessary to establish a law against all the following things. “Suppose anyone is found inquiring into steersmanship and seafaring, or health and truth in the doctor’s art, in relation to winds and heat and cold — above and beyond the written rules — and making clever speculations of any kind in relation to such things.”

. . .

The orchard had gone very quiet.

. . .

“In the first place, one must not call him an expert doctor or an expert steersman. “But a star-gazer. “Some babbling sophist.”

. . .

Lela had stopped moving entirely.

. . .

“The next provision will be that anyone who wishes, from among those permitted to do so, shall indict him, and bring him before some court or other — “as corrupting other people younger than himself, and inducing them to engage in the arts of the steersman and the doctor not in accordance with the laws. “If he is found guilty of persuading anyone, whether young or old, contrary to the laws and the written rules — “the most extreme penalties shall be imposed on him.”

. . .

Nobody in the orchard moved, or spoke, or looked at anybody else.

. . .

The picture hung between the olive trees: the courtyard, the plane tree, the tall man from Italy speaking evenly with his hands folded, a boy of fifteen listening, another boy by the wall.

. . .

And at the edge of it, on a bench, an old man with a snub nose, who had been sitting entirely still for two days.

. . .

“He’s just said the charge,” said Lela.

. . .

Her voice came out wrong and she stopped and started again.

. . .

6

THE TRUE STEERSMAN

KNOWS



THE WHOLE



DECIDES



JUSTLY



GUIDES



ALL PARTS

He judges what is best
and guides every part together.



The Assembly of Sailors — the competing interpretation.

“He’s just said the charge. Sophia. That’s it. That’s the actual — star-gazer, that’s the thing in the play, that’s the man in the basket looking at the sky, everybody in Athens has seen that play and everybody thinks it’s him. “Babbling sophist. That’s the other one. That’s what they all think he is. That’s the whole of the other book. That’s what yesterday was for. “Corrupting other people younger than himself. That’s — Sophia, that’s not like the charge. That’s the words on the piece of paper. That’s what Meletus wrote down. That’s what it says on the thing in the King Archon’s office. “And the most extreme penalty.”

. . .

She stopped.

. . .

“He’s sitting right there,” she said.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Does the man know?”

. . .

“The man from Elea? No,” said the owl. “He arrived the day before yesterday. He is describing an absurd imaginary city in which people are prosecuted for inquiring, in order to make a point about expertise, and he has reached for the most ridiculous punishment he can think of to finish it off. “He does not know that he has just read out a document. “Plato knows.”

. . .

“Then why —“

. . .

“Because that is the answer,” said Sophia. “That is the answer to the thing you asked me an hour ago and I would not give you. “You said: this argument is perfect and it comes out with a man who may kill people if he is right, and where does it go wrong. “And here is the other half, and he has put it in himself, and it is the reason he is not a monster. “A city that will not let anybody rule except by the book — that hands out offices by lottery, and checks them by vote, and writes everything on stone, and lets any man who wishes bring a charge — “that city kills the one person in it who actually knows something. “Not by accident. Not because it went wrong. By working exactly as designed. Lawfully, in the sunshine, with a show of hands, by the

rules, after an audit, in a court chosen out of a jar. “He is not arguing that the expert should be allowed to force people because he likes force. “He is arguing it because he watched what the alternative did to Socrates, and he was twenty-four, and he never got over it, and he never pretended to.”

. . .



Lela: Like a ship, a city needs many parts.
Danae: And someone must know how they all fit.



The Assembly of Sailors — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

Nobody said anything for a long time.

. . .

“So they’re both wrong,” said Danae eventually.

. . .

“Say it properly,” said Sophia, very gently.

. . .

“If the clever man’s allowed to do what he wants, then it’s whoever says they’re clever, and they cut you and take the money. He just did that one. He did it himself, with the doctor and the enemies. “And if nobody’s allowed to do anything except what’s written down, then —” Danae looked at the bench in the picture. “Then that.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“So what do you do?”

. . .

“Listen,” said Sophia. “He is about to tell you, and it is the most disappointing sentence in Greek philosophy, and it is also, I am fairly sure, correct.”

. . .

“But what about the following consideration?” said the Visitor.

. . .

“Suppose we required each of the things mentioned to be done according to written rules. And we required the person elected or appointed to office by lot, on the basis of chance, to oversee these written rules of ours. “What then, if this person were to take no notice of what is written down — in order either to profit in some way, or to do some personal favour — and were to take it upon himself to do different things, contrary to these, when he possesses no knowledge? “Would this not be an evil still greater than the previous one?”

. . .

8



Socrates: The statesman is that steersman.
Not a loud man, but a wise one.



The Assembly of Sailors — the historical layer.

“Yes. Very true.”

. . .

“Yes. For if, contrary to laws that have been established on the basis of much experiment — with some advisers or other having given advice on each subject in an attractive way, and having persuaded the majority to pass them — “if someone were brazen enough to act contrary to these, he would be committing a mistake many times greater than the other. And would overturn all expert activity to a still greater degree than do the written rules.”

. . .

“Yes — how would he not?”

. . .

“For these reasons, then,” said the man from Elea, “the second-best method of proceeding — “for those who establish laws and written rules about anything whatever — “is to allow neither individual nor mass ever to do anything contrary to these. “Anything whatsoever.”

. . .

“Correct,” said young Socrates.

. . .

Lela let out a breath.

. . .

“He’s come all the way back,” she said.

. . .

“He has come all the way back,” said Sophia.

. . .

“An hour ago he said the man who knows may do anything, law or no law, willing or unwilling. “And he has now said: and since that man does not exist here, and the people who will actually be holding the offices are men chosen out of a jar who do not know anything — “nobody may ever break the law. Not one person and not everybody. Not for profit and not as a favour and not because they are sure. “Anything whatsoever.”

. . .

“But he still thinks the first thing’s better.”

. . .

9

A CITY IN HARMONY



When all parts follow wisdom,
the city reaches its true destination.



The Assembly of Sailors — a wordless conceptual plate.

“He still thinks the first thing is better,” said the owl, “and he says so, and he calls this second-best to its face, and he does not dress it up. “And that is the honest shape of it, and I want you to have it exactly, because the two halves get quoted separately by people who have not read the other half, and both halves on their own are lies. “The best thing would be a person wise enough that rules were not needed. “There is no such person available, and the ones who claim to be him are the worst men in the city. “Therefore: the rules. All of them. Every time. Including for the clever. “Especially for the clever.”

. . .

In the garden of the Academy, Aristotle had not written anything down for some time.

. . .

“You know what it sounds like,” he said.

. . .

“Tell me what it sounds like.”

. . .

“It sounds like a man arguing himself out of something over the course of four pages, in public, and pretending he meant to end up here all along.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Plato.

. . .

“That is not a criticism.”

. . .

“I did not take it as one.”

. . .

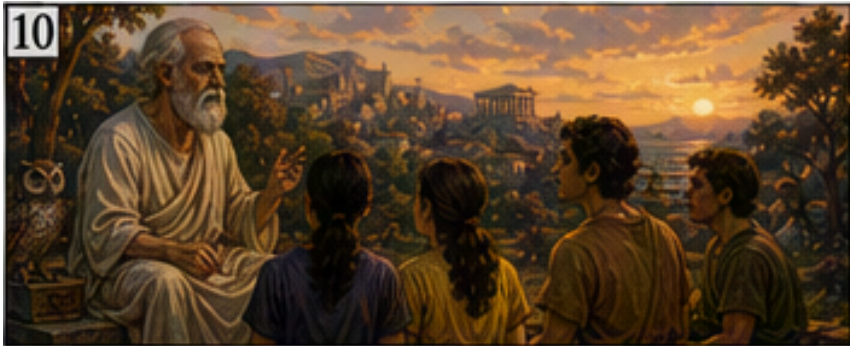
The young man turned his stylus over.

. . .

“The first half is dangerous,” he said. “I want to say that plainly, and I would rather say it to you than write it after you are dead. “Somebody is going to read that page — the doctor, and the forcing, and no principle of correctness according to which any of these must be taken into account at all — and they are going to stop reading there. They will not get to the jar and the lottery. They will not get to second-best. “And they will have your name, and four hundred years of your reputation, and one paragraph that says a sufficiently wise man may do whatever he likes

to people who disagree with him. “And there will always, always be somebody available who is quite sure he is that man.”

. . .



The voyage of a city
is the voyage of the soul together.



The Assembly of Sailors — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

Plato sat for a while with his hands on the closed roll.

. . .

“Yes,” he said. “I have thought about very little else for two years.”

. . .

“Then take it out.”

. . .

“No.”

. . .

“Why not?”

. . .

“Because it is true,” said the old man, “and because taking a true thing out of a book because it is dangerous is the beginning of every other bad thing, and because the dangerous half is what makes the safe half worth anything at all. “If I write only obey the laws, I have written a book for slaves. Anybody can obey. It says nothing about which laws, or why, or what to do when they are wicked, and half the cities in Greece have laws that are wicked. “The only reason the second-best is worth having is that you have seen the best, and know what it would look like, and know that it is not on offer. “A man who obeys the law because he has never imagined anything better is not a citizen. He is furniture.”

. . .

“And the man who reads the first page and stops?”

. . .

“He will do harm,” said Plato. “He will do it in my name. I will be dead and I will not be able to say a word about it, and he will quote me accurately.”

. . .

He looked up.

. . .

“So somebody who has read the second page will have to say it for me,” he said. “Out loud. Every time. For as long as anybody is still reading this. “That is what a school is for. That is the only thing a school is for. “And I should tell you that I have chosen you for it, and that I chose you about two years ago, and that I have never once asked whether you wanted it.”

. . .

Aristotle picked up the stylus again.

. . .

“Read the next part,” he said.

Chapter 94

**NINETY-FOUR. Seven Names
for Seven Things**



Socrates now asks:
can we find the kinds in ruling?



Seven Names for Seven Things — opening scene.

“Imitations of the truth of each and every thing would be these, wouldn’t they,” said the Visitor — “the things issuing from those who know, which have been written down so far as they can be?”

. . .

“Of course.”

. . .

“That’s a nice way of putting it,” said Lela.

. . .

“Say why,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Because a law isn’t a lie,” said Lela. “That’s what he’s saying. It’s a photograph. It’s somebody who did know,

writing down as much of it as would go on the stone. “And a photograph of your grandmother isn’t your grandmother, and it’s not pretending to be, and you’d still be very upset if it burned.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “And now watch him do the arithmetic of the names, because it is the neatest thing in this book and it takes about a minute.”

. . .

“If in fact some one person rules who really possesses expert knowledge,” the Visitor was saying, “in every case he will be called by the same name of king, and by no other one. “As a result of this, the five names of what are now called constitutions have become only one.”

. . .

2

THE SEVEN KINDS IN THE CITY



RULER



GUARDIANS



LAWS



PROVIDERS



MAKERS



TRADERS



ARTISTS

Seven ways of working together
to build and keep a city.



Seven Names for Seven Things — the chapter's central dialogue.

“And what of the case when some one ruler acts neither according to laws nor according to customs — but pretends to act like the person with expert knowledge? “Saying that, after all, one must do what is contrary to what has been written down if it is best — “and there is some desire or other combined with ignorance controlling this imitation? “Surely in those circumstances we must call every such person a tyrant?”

. . .

“Of course.”

. . .

“There,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“That’s the answer to the thing that’s been frightening me all morning. That’s — Sophia, that’s it, isn’t it, that’s what a tyrant is. “A tyrant isn’t the opposite of the good king. A tyrant is a man doing an impression of him. He’s saying exactly the same sentence. Word for word. Sometimes you have to break the rules because it’s best. “And the difference is that underneath the sentence there’s wanting something, and there’s not knowing.”

. . .



The ruler guides the whole.
He must know what is best.



Seven Names for Seven Things — the central concept made visible.

“Desire combined with ignorance,” said the owl. “Yes. “And that is as close as he comes to admitting how dangerous his own page was, and he does it in one line, in a list of names, and he does not look up. “Every single person who has ever done the thing on that page — every single one, without exception, in two and a half thousand years — has believed he was the man in the first half and not the man in the second. “That is what the second half is for. He is not warning you about people who say I am going to do a wicked thing now. Nobody says that. He is warning you that the two men are word-identical, and that you will have to tell them apart some other way.”

. . .

“How?”

. . .

“He does not say,” said Sophia. “Not here. And you are going to have to make do with what is in the next four minutes, which is better than nothing and is not enough.”

. . .

“Then it is in this way that the tyrant has come about, we say,” said the Visitor, “and the king, and oligarchy, and aristocracy, and democracy — “because people found themselves unable to put up with the idea of that single individual of ours as monarch. “And refused to believe that there would ever come to be anyone who deserved to rule in such a way — so as to be willing and able to rule with virtue and expert knowledge, distributing what is just and right correctly to all. “They think that a person in such a position always mutilates, kills and generally maltreats whichever of us he wishes.”

. . .

The orchard was quiet.

. . .

4



The guardians defend,
and keep courage in the city.



Seven Names for Seven Things — the guiding analogy.

“He’s put the objection in,” said Lela.

. . .

“He has put the objection in,” said Sophia, “in the objectors’ own words, without softening it, in the middle of his own argument. “That sentence is not his. That is what people say. And he has written it down as the reason that every constitution on earth exists. “Say what he has just said, because it is very large and it goes past very fast.”

. . .

Lela said, slowly: “He’s said the reason there’s any politics at all is that nobody believes in the good king.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Every — the voting and the laws and the courts and the offices and all of it. All of it’s there because people looked at the idea of one good man in charge and went no. “Not because they’d worked out something better. Because they didn’t believe in him.”

. . .

“And are they wrong?” said the owl.

. . .

Lela did not answer for a moment.

. . .

“No,” she said.

. . .



5
The laws teach what is just,
and make the city steady.



Seven Names for Seven Things — the argument unfolding step by step.

“No,” said Sophia. “And he does not say they are, which is the most surprising thing on this page. “He says although if there were to come to be someone of the sort we are describing, he would be prized. If. Would. “He is not claiming the man is out there somewhere being overlooked. He is saying: here is the thing that would be best, and here is why nobody sane is waiting for it.”

. . .

“But as things are,” the Visitor went on, “when — as we say — a king does not come to be in cities as a king-bee is born in a hive, one individual immediately superior in body and mind — “it is necessary, so it seems, for people to come together and write things down. “Chasing after the traces of the truest constitution.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Danae, sitting up. “That’s sad.”

. . .

“Which part?”

. . .

“The bee.” Danae was frowning. “Because in a hive it just happens. You don’t have to do anything. There isn’t a meeting. The queen comes out and everybody knows, and it’s right, and it works, and no bee has ever had to have an argument about it. “And we haven’t got that. We’ve just got a lot of people in a square trying to write down what a good one would have said.”

. . .

“Chasing after the traces,” said Sophia. “Yes. That is the phrase and you have found the feeling in it without being told. “Not building. Not designing. Tracking. Following the footprints of an animal that has never been seen, hoping to end up somewhere near where it would have gone.”

. . .

6



The providers grow and bring
what the city needs to live.



Seven Names for Seven Things — the competing interpretation.

“Do we wonder, then, Socrates,” said the Visitor, “at all the evils that turn out to occur in such constitutions, when a foundation of this sort underlies them — one of carrying out their functions according to written rules and customs without knowledge? “Or should we rather wonder at something else?”

. . .

“Namely at how strong a thing a city is by its nature. “For in fact cities have suffered such things now for time without limit — but nevertheless some particular ones among them are enduring, and are not overturned.”

. . .

Nobody said anything for a moment.

. . .

“He likes them,” said Danae, surprised.

. . .

“He likes them,” said the owl, and something in her voice had changed. “Yes. Notice it, because he has been taking them apart for two days and this is the only place it shows. “He has just spent an hour proving that every city on earth is run by people who do not know what they are doing, on the basis of rules that cannot fit anybody, enforced by men picked out of a jar. “And then he stops, and looks up, and says: and yet some of them are still standing. “Nobody knows how. He does not know how. He has just said that by any reckoning they should all have fallen over, and they have not, and he thinks that is the more astonishing fact of the two. “There are cities in that man’s world that were old when he was born and are still there now, with people living in them, who go to work, and argue about the drains. “That is not an argument. It is the thing that keeps him going, and he lets you see it for one line.”

. . .



The makers build and shape
with skill and steady hands.



Seven Names for Seven Things — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.

“Yet many from time to time sink like ships, and perish, and have perished, and will perish in the future,” the Visitor went on, “through the depravity of their steersmen and sailors — “who have acquired the greatest ignorance about

the greatest things. “Although they have no understanding at all about what belongs to the art of statesmanship, they think they have completely acquired this sort of expert knowledge, most clearly of them all.”

. . .

“So which of these incorrect constitutions is least difficult to live with, given that they are all difficult — and which the heaviest to bear?”

. . .

“Here it comes,” said Sophia. “Both of you. Write this one down properly, because in about nine hundred years people will be quoting it at each other in every language there is, and almost none of them will have the first half.”

. . .



8

The traders carry goods
from place to place.



Seven Names for Seven Things — the historical layer.

“Let’s divide these, each single one into two, and make six — separating off the correct one from these on its own, as a seventh.”

. . .

“Out of monarchy, kingly and tyrannical rule. “Out of the sort that doesn’t involve many: aristocracy, and oligarchy. “And out of the sort that does involve many: democracy — which we then called single, but now in turn we must put this too down as double.”

. . .

“Democracy’s got two now,” said Lela.

. . .

“Democracy has two now,” said Sophia. “He would not give it a second name an hour ago and he has given it one now, and I want you to notice why. “An hour ago he was looking for the correct constitution, and by that measure the law made no difference, because knowledge was the only thing that counted, and no crowd has knowledge. “Now he has admitted that the correct one is not available. And the moment you are living among the second-best, the law is the only thing there is. So it becomes the criterion for everything. “He has not changed his mind about democracy. He has changed which question he is asking, and he says so.”

. . .

“When monarchy is yoked in good written rules, which we call laws,” said the Visitor, “it is best of all six. “But if it is without laws, it is difficult, and heaviest to live with.”

. . .

9



The artists sing, play, and create
beauty that lifts the soul.



Seven Names for Seven Things — a wordless conceptual plate.

“And as for the rule of those who are not many — just as few is in the middle between one and a large number, let’s suppose it to be middling in both ways.”

. . .

“While that of the mass, in its turn, we may suppose to be weak in all respects, and capable of nothing of any importance either for good or for bad, as judged in relation to the others. “Because under it, offices are distributed in small portions among many people.”

. . .

“For this reason: if all the types of constitution are law-abiding, it turns out to be the worst of them. “But if all are contrary to law, the best.”

. . .

“Wait,” said Lela. “Wait, do that again.”

. . .

Sophia did it again.

. . .

Lela sat with her pen still for a while, and then started laughing — not much, but properly.

. . .





Seven Names for Seven Things — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.

“That’s clever,” she said. “Oh, that’s horribly clever. That’s the cleverest thing he’s said all day and it’s an insult. “He’s said democracy can’t do very much. Right? Because there’s about nine thousand people and they’ve all got a bit of the power and none of them has got enough of it to actually do anything. “So if everybody’s behaving — if all of them are keeping to the law — then you want the one that can get things done, and that’s the one man, and democracy comes last, because it’s just a lot of people not quite managing. “And if everybody’s gone bad — if none of them are keeping to the law — then you want the one that can’t do very much. And that’s democracy. Because a bad king can do anything he likes to you by Friday, and nine thousand bad people arguing can hardly get out of the room.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“That’s not a compliment.”

. . .

“It is not a compliment,” said Sophia. “It is the coldest thing anybody ever said in favour of a democracy and it is also, as far as I can tell, correct, and it has kept a very large number of people alive. “Its virtue is that it is bad at things. “Hold on to it. You will meet people who love their country’s arrangements because they are beautiful, and people who despise them because they are slow. And you will very rarely meet anybody who has understood that the slowness is the point.”

. . .

“And in first place, and best by far, will be life in the first,” said the Visitor. “Except for the seventh. “For of all of them, that one we must separate out from the other constitutions — like a god from men.”

Chapter 95

NINETY-FIVE. Refining Gold



Socrates: there is much in a city mixed together.
We must separate what is truly valuable.

Refining Gold — opening scene.



Refining Gold — chapter-opening scene.

“So then we must also remove those who participate in all these constitutions, except for the one based on knowledge,” said the Visitor. “As being, not statesmen, but experts in faction. “We must say that, as presiding over insubstantial images, on the largest scale, they are themselves of the same sort — and that as the greatest imitators and magicians, they turn out to be the greatest sophists among sophists.”

. . .

“Experts in faction,” said Lela.

. . .

“Stasiastikoi,” said Sophia. “There is no good English for it and I am sorry. “Stasis is the word for what happens when a city stops being one thing. Not a war with somebody else. The other kind. Neighbours, in the same

street, on two sides, and it does not stop. “Every city in that world had had it or was afraid of it. Athens had had it twice in thirty years. “And he has just said: the men you call your statesmen are not statesmen at all. They are faction-men. That is their actual trade. Not running a city — running a side.”

. . .

“This term sophist,” said young Socrates, “looks as if it has been only too correctly turned round against the so-called experts in statesmanship.”

. . .

2

GOLD IN THE ROCK



As gold is smelted and purified,
so the city must be examined and refined.

Refining Gold — the chapter's central dialogue.



Refining Gold — dialogue and narrative.

“So: this is our play, as it were — as we said just now that there was some band of centaurs and satyrs in view, one that we had to set apart from the expertise of the statesman. “And now it has been set apart, as we have seen, with great difficulty.”

. . .

“That’s the monsters gone,” said Danae with satisfaction.

. . .

“That is the monsters gone,” said Sophia. “And now the hard part starts.”

. . .

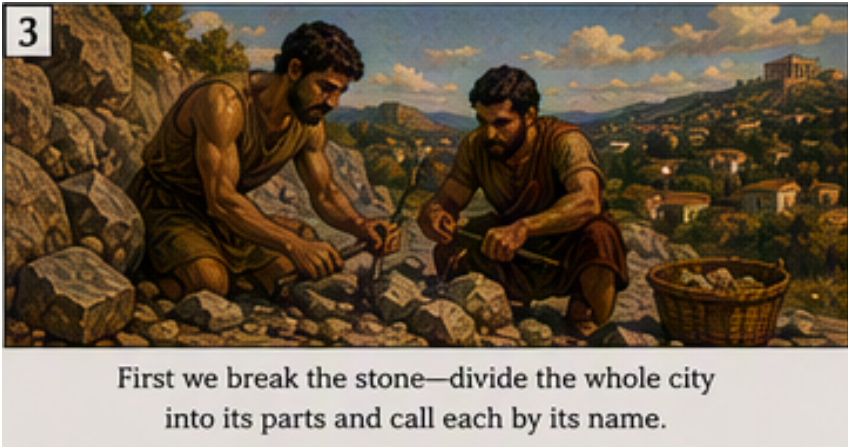
“Yes — but there is something else remaining that is still more difficult than this,” said the Visitor. “By reason of its being both more akin to the kingly class, and closer to

it, and harder to understand. “And we seem to me to be in a situation similar to that of those who refine gold.”

. . .

“How so?”

. . .



First we break the stone—divide the whole city
into its parts and call each by its name.

Refining Gold — the central concept made visible.



Refining Gold — the central idea.

“I imagine that these craftsmen also begin by separating out earth, and stones, and many different things. “And after these, there remain commingled with the gold those things that are akin to it — precious things, and only removable with the use of fire. “Copper. Silver. And sometimes adamant. “The removal of which, through repeated smelting and testing, leaves the unalloyed gold that people talk about, there for us to see. Itself alone by itself.”

. . .

Lela put her pen down.

. . .

“That’s the best one,” she said. “Sophia, that’s the best one he’s done. That’s better than the loom.”

. . .

“Say it, then.”

. . .



Refining Gold — the guiding analogy.



Refining Gold — analogy and thought experiment.

“The rubbish comes off first,” said Lela. “That’s the thing. The mud and the stones and the — all the obvious rubbish comes off straight away and anybody can do it and you don’t even need a fire. “And what’s left stuck to the gold at the end, the bit you can’t get out, the bit you have to melt it over and over for — is the silver. “It’s the good stuff. It’s the stuff that’s most like it. That’s why it’s stuck to it.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“And that’s — “ She was working it out as she went. “That’s true about everything, isn’t it. That’s true about arguing. The stupid version of the other side goes in about four seconds and you feel great. And then there’s the good version, the one that’s nearly right, and it’s stuck to it, and

you can't tell where one stops. "And that's the one that actually takes you all day."

. . .

"That is what I have been trying to say to you for two summers," said Sophia, "and I have never once managed to say it that well, and neither has anybody else, and a man said it about metalwork."

. . .



Then we test each part:
what is its work, its skill, its purpose?

Refining Gold — the argument unfolding step by step.



Refining Gold — the logical progression.

“Well, it seems that in the same way we have now separated off those things that are different from the expert knowledge of statesmanship, and those that are alien and hostile to it,” said the Visitor. “And that there remain those that are precious and related to it. “Among these, I think, are generalship. The art of the judge. And that part of rhetoric which, in partnership with kingship, persuades people of what is just, and so helps in steering through the business of cities.”

. . .

“Those are the silver,” said Danae.

. . .

“Those are the silver,” said Sophia. “The soldier, the judge, and the speaker. “And every single person in that courtyard would have said, without hesitating, that those three were what running a city was.”

. . .

“Well, if it depends on our trying, we’ll find him,” said the Visitor. “Music will help us reveal him.”

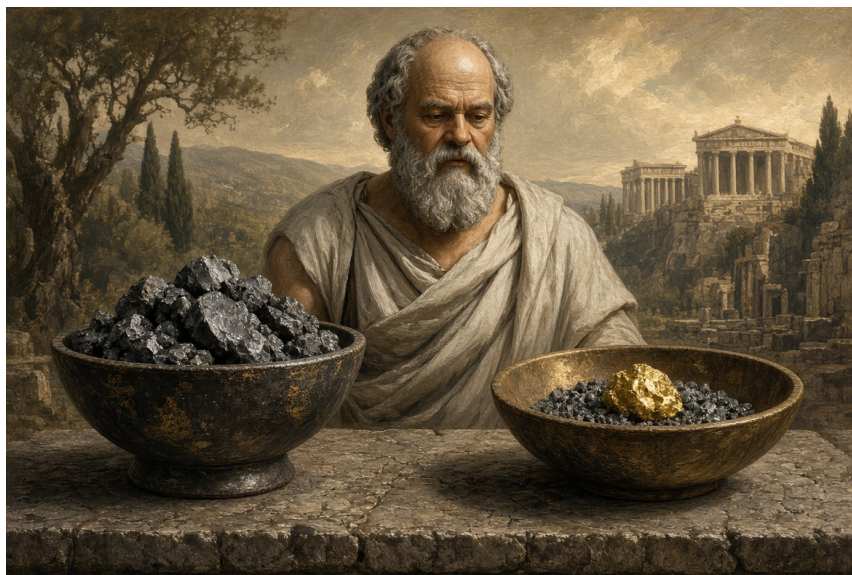
. . .

“I imagine we recognise such a thing as the learning of music — and in general of the sorts of expert knowledge involving work with the hands?” “We do.”

. . .



Refining Gold — the competing interpretation.



Refining Gold — the difficulty and the alternative.

“And what of this — the matter of whether we should learn any one of these or not? “Shall we say that this too, in its turn, is a sort of knowledge?”

. . .

“Yes. We’ll say that it is.”

. . .

“Then shall we agree that this sort of knowledge is distinct from those?” “Yes.”

. . .

“And shall we agree that no one of them should control any other? Or that the others should control this one? “Or that this one should manage and control all the others together?”

. . .



Danae: So we must be patient and careful.
Lela: Yes—otherwise we throw away the good with the bad.

Refining Gold — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.



Refining Gold — Lela and Danae.

“This one should control them.”

. . .

“Stop,” said Lela. “Stop, that’s — that went past too fast. Say it slowly.”

. . .

“Knowing how to play the flute,” said Sophia, “and knowing whether you ought to be learning the flute — are two different pieces of knowledge. “And the second one is not part of the first one. It is not a more advanced flute lesson. No amount of getting better at the flute will ever tell you whether you should be doing it. “And of the two, the second one is in charge.”

. . .

Lela sat very still.

. . .

8



Socrates: The one who rules must know this art—
to purify, not to seize; to refine, not to flatter.

Refining Gold — the historical layer.



Refining Gold — historical reconstruction.

“That’s enormous,” she said.

. . .

“It is enormous,” said the owl.

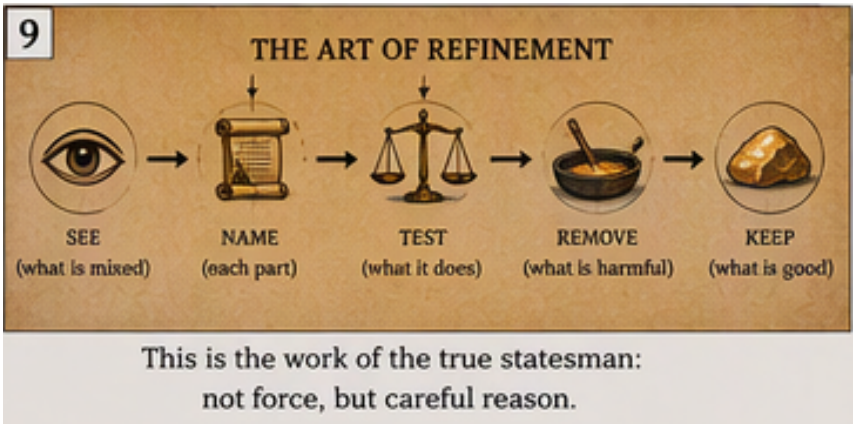
. . .

“That’s — that’s the whole thing with the chemistry. That’s exactly the thing with the chemistry.” She had gone slightly pink. “Everyone kept saying are you good at it and what did you get and nobody ever once — and I sat there for two years getting better and better at a thing and being pleased about getting better at it, and the question of whether I should be doing it at all wasn’t on any of the papers. “Because it’s not a chemistry question. It’s never going to be a chemistry question. It’s a completely different subject and nobody teaches it.”

. . .

“Nobody teaches it,” said Sophia.

. . .



Refining Gold — a wordless conceptual plate.



Refining Gold — wordless concept plate.

“Can you learn it?”

. . .

“He says it is a knowledge,” said the owl. “That is what he has just said. Not a feeling, not a taste, not a knack. A knowledge, with a right answer, which somebody can be better or worse at. “And he says it is the master one — that it stands over every skill there is and tells each of them whether to start. “And then, on the very next line, he tells you whose it is.”

. . .

“To which sort of expert knowledge shall we assign what is capable of persuading mass and crowd — through the telling of stories, and not through teaching?”

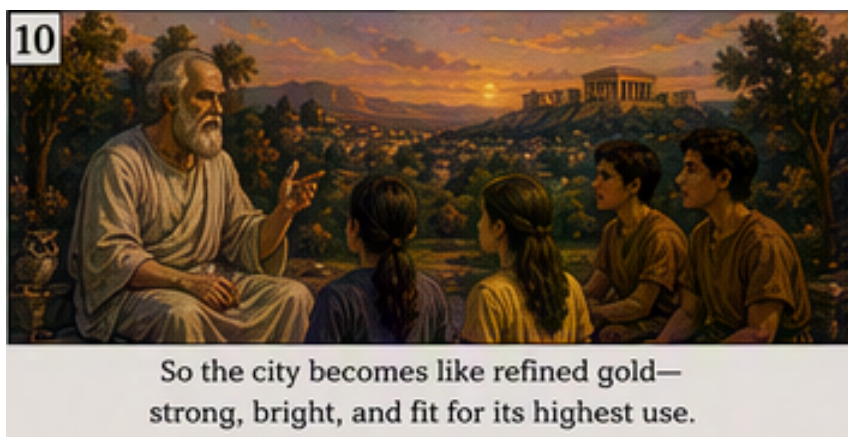
. . .

“This too is clear, I think,” said young Socrates. “It must be given to rhetoric.”

. . .

“And the matter of whether to do through persuasion whatever it may be — or else by the use of some sort of force — or indeed to do nothing at all: “to what sort of expert knowledge shall we attach this?”

. . .



Refining Gold — the chapter’s narrative and philosophical synthesis.



Refining Gold — climax, double-page spread.

“To the one that controls the art of persuasion and speaking.”

. . .

“This would be none other, I think, than the capacity of the statesman.”

. . .

“Or indeed to do nothing at all,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “Three options and he put them in a row and the third one is the one nobody puts on the list. “Persuade them. Force them. Or leave it alone. “And knowing which of those three — that is the royal art. Not the speaking. The speaking is a servant. Yesterday’s men were magicians because they had the speaking and nothing

above it. “He has just taken the most admired skill in Athens and made it staff.”

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Refining Gold — the chapter’s closing thought.

Chapter 96

NINETY-SIX. Generals and Judges



Socrates: not all who hold power
know how to use it rightly.

Generals and Judges — opening scene.



Generals and Judges — chapter-opening scene.

“What should we think about the following sort of capacity, in its turn?” said the Visitor. “The one that decides how to make war against each group of people against whom we choose to make war. “The question is whether we shall say that this is, or is not, a matter of expertise.”

. . .

“And how could we suppose it not to involve expertise,” said young Socrates, “— that capacity which is exercised by generalship, and all activity concerned with war?”

. . .

“And are we to understand as different from this, the expertise that is able and knows how to reach a considered decision about whether we should make war — or whether we should withdraw in friendly fashion? “Or are we to take it to be the same as this one?”

. . .

“Anyone who was following what was said before must suppose that it is distinct.”

. . .

“Good boy,” said Sophia.

. . .



Generals and Judges — the chapter’s central dialogue.



Generals and Judges — dialogue and narrative.

“He got it,” said Danae.

. . .

“He got it four seconds after being taught it,” said the owl. “He has been slow for two days and he has just used a thing on a new case within a minute of learning it, which is the only kind of learning there is. “And look at what he used it on.”

. . .

“Shall we then declare our view that it controls it?” said the Visitor.

. . .

“I say yes.”

. . .

“Then what mistress will we even try to propose for so terrifying and important an expertise — the whole of that concerned with war — except the true art of kingship?”

. . .



The general must be bold, swift, and fierce,
ready to command and be obeyed.

Generals and Judges — the central concept made visible.



Generals and Judges — the central idea.

“No other.”

. . .

“In that case we shall not set down the expert knowledge of generals as statesmanship. Since it is subordinate.”

. . .

“He’s just —” Lela stopped. “He’s just said the generals work for somebody.”

. . .

“He has just said the generals work for somebody,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Knowing how to fight a war and knowing whether to have one are two different pieces of knowledge, and the

second is not a more advanced kind of the first, and no amount of being brilliant at the first will ever give you the second. It is the flute again, four minutes later, on the largest possible subject. "And I want you to know that this was not obvious. It was not obvious in that city and it has not been obvious since. "The men who ran Athens were, most of them, generals. That was the job. That was how you got to be listened to. The most famous man of the century was a general and everybody in that courtyard had voted for him at some point. "And a foreigner has just said, politely, in ten words, that the whole profession is staff."

. . .

4



The judge must be calm, patient, and fair,
hearing all sides and weighing each.

Generals and Judges — the guiding analogy.



Generals and Judges — analogy and thought experiment.

“Come on then,” said the Visitor. “Let’s look at the capacity that belongs to those judges who judge correctly.”

. . .

“Absolutely.”

. . .

“Well then — does its capacity extend to anything more than taking over from the legislator-king all those things that are established as lawful in relation to contracts? “And judging by reference to these the things that have been prescribed as just and unjust? “Providing its own individual excellence by virtue of the fact that it would not be willing to decide the complaints of one citizen against another contrary to the prescription of the legislator — “through being overcome by presents of some sort. “Or fears. “Or feelings of compassion. “Or again by any enmity or friendship.”

. . .

“He put pity in,” said Danae.

. . .

“He put pity in,” said Sophia.

. . .

5



WAR NEEDS
STRENGTH
SPEED
COURAGE

≠



PEACE NEEDS
WISDOM
MEASURE
JUSTICE

What wins a battle
may ruin a judgment.

Generals and Judges — the argument unfolding step by step.



Generals and Judges — the logical progression.

“With bribes. He put being sorry for somebody in the same list as being bribed.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“That’s not fair. Bribes are a bad thing and being sorry for somebody is a good thing.”

. . .

“Say what the list is a list of,” said the owl, “and then tell me whether he is wrong.”

. . .

Danae frowned at the picture for a while.

. . .

“Things that make you decide it different,” she said eventually.

. . .



One seeks to defeat,
the other to understand.

Generals and Judges — the competing interpretation.



Generals and Judges — the difficulty and the alternative.

“Yes.”

. . .

“Things that make it come out different from what it would have come out.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Danae.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “Not bad things. Things that move it. “Money moves it. Fear moves it. Liking somebody moves it. Hating somebody moves it. “And being sorry for somebody

moves it, and it moves it just as far, and it does not feel like corruption from inside — which is exactly what makes it worse and not better. “There is a reason the statue has a blindfold on, and this is the sentence the blindfold came from, and everybody thinks the blindfold is about bribes. “It is not. It is about the face of the person standing in front of you.”

. . .



Generals and Judges — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.



Generals and Judges — Lela and Danae.

“In that case we discover the power of judges too not to be that belonging to the king,” said the Visitor, “but to be a guardian of the laws, and a subordinate of that other capacity.”

. . .

“It seems so, at any rate.”

. . .

“That’s all three gone,” said Lela. “The general, the judge and the speaker. All of them work for him. And he still hasn’t said what he does.”

. . .

“He is about to,” said Sophia. “Put everything down. This is the definition and it is one sentence and the whole of both days has been for it.”

. . .

“If then one looks at all the sorts of expert knowledge that have been discussed,” said the man from Elea, “it must be observed that none of them has been declared to be statesmanship. “For what is really kingship must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them. “Because it knows when it is the right time to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities — “and when it is the wrong time. “And the others must do what has been prescribed for them.”

. . .



Generals and Judges — the historical layer.



Generals and Judges — historical reconstruction.

The orchard was completely quiet.

. . .

“That’s it?” said Danae. “That’s all of it? After two whole days? He doesn’t do anything, he just knows when?”

. . .

“That is all of it,” said Sophia.

. . .

“That’s a bit — “ Danae was clearly trying to be polite.
“That’s a bit thin, isn’t it.”

. . .

“Lela,” said the owl. “Tell her what word that is.”

. . .

9

THE GOOD STATESMAN

KNOWS WAR
BUT DOES NOT
LOVE IT



KNOWS PEACE
AND LOVES
WHAT IS JUST

KNOWS THE RIGHT TIME FOR EACH

He uses each art in its proper place
for the good of the whole city.

Generals and Judges — a wordless conceptual plate.



Generals and Judges — wordless concept plate.

Lela looked at what she had written, and then flicked back about nine pages.

. . .

“Kairos,” she said. “It’s the right-moment one. It’s the one from the measuring bit — the two kinds of measuring, and one of them was against each other and the other one was against what it ought to be, and the right moment was in that list. “I wrote it down because you told me to and I didn’t know why.”

. . .

“That is why,” said Sophia.

. . .

“Everything in this book has been walking towards that word. The due measure, and the right moment, and for

most people, most of the time, roughly like this — and now, at the end, when he finally says what the man at the top of a city actually knows, it is not a fact about people and it is not a plan and it is not a set of rules. “It is when. “Everybody in the city knows how to do their own thing. The general knows how to fight; the judge knows how to weigh; the speaker knows how to move a crowd; the baker knows about bread. “And not one of them knows whether now is the moment. That is not in their subject. It cannot be in their subject. And if nobody in the city has it, then every single skill in that city is standing there fully loaded, waiting, and going off at random.”

. . .

“Whereas the one that controls all of these,” said the Visitor, “and the laws, and cares for every aspect of things in the city — “weaving everything together in the most correct way — “this, embracing its capacity with the appellation belonging to the whole, we would most appropriately call statesmanship.”

. . .



So the city is safe in war,
and just in peace.

Generals and Judges — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.



Generals and Judges — climax, double-page spread.

“Polis,” said Sophia, before either of them could ask. “The city. “And so: politike. The city-art. The art of the city. “That is where your word comes from, and every word like it in every language in Europe, and it means — it has always meant, from this sentence onward — the thing that weaves the rest of it together.”

. . .

“At this point we’ll want, won’t we, to pursue it further by reference to the model of the art of weaving,” said the Visitor, “now that all the classes of things in the city have become clear to us?”

. . .

“Yes. Very much so.”

. . .

Sophia turned her head.

. . .

“Not yet,” she said. “First he has to tell you what the wool is.”

Chapter 97

**NINETY-SEVEN. Sharp and
Gentle**



Socrates: not every leadership is the same.
Some are sharp, some are gentle.

Sharp and Gentle — opening scene.



Sharp and Gentle — chapter-opening scene.

“What it seems we have to deal with,” said the Visitor, “is certainly a difficult thing to show.”

. . .

“But in any case we have to discuss it.”

. . .

“I imagine you think that courage, for us, constitutes one part of virtue.” “Certainly.”

. . .

“And also that moderation is something distinct from courage — but at the same time that this too is one part of what the other is part of.” “Yes.”

. . .

“Well. We must take our courage in our hands and declare something astonishing in relation to these two.”

. . .

“What?”

. . .

“That, in some sort of way, they are extremely hostile to each other, and occupy opposed positions in many things.”

. . .



Sharp and Gentle — the chapter’s central dialogue.



Sharp and Gentle — dialogue and narrative.

“What?” said Lela.

. . .

“Not in any way the sort of thing people are used to saying,” said the Visitor. “For certainly, I imagine, all the parts of virtue are said to be amicably disposed towards each other, if anything is.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“He’s saying being brave and being sensible fight,” said Lela.

. . .

“He is saying being brave and being sensible fight.”

. . .

“They can’t. They’re both — they’re both the good ones. They’re on the same team.”

. . .

“That is what everybody says,” said the owl, “and it is what everybody in that courtyard would have said, and he calls it astonishing himself before he says it, which he has not done once in two days. “Watch how he proves it. He does not do it with an argument. He does it by making you listen to how you talk.”

. . .



The sharp leader is like the spear—
strong, quick, and decisive.

Sharp and Gentle — the central concept made visible.



Sharp and Gentle — the central idea.

“Sharpness and speed,” said the Visitor, “whether in bodies, or in minds, or in the movement of the voice. “Whether belonging to the things themselves, or as represented in images of them — all those imitations that music, and painting too, provide. “Have you ever either praised any of these yourself, or been present to hear someone else praising them?”

. . .

“Of course.”

. . .

“Often, and in many activities, whenever we admire speed and vigour and sharpness — of mind and body, and again of voice — we speak in praise of it by using a single appellation. “That of courage.”

. . .

“That doesn’t work in English,” said Lela immediately.

. . .

“No,” said Sophia, “and I am glad you said so, because it is the only thing standing between you and this passage, and it will take me forty seconds. “The Greek word is andreia. It is the one we translate courage. And what it literally says is man-ness. Manliness. “So it does not only mean not running away. It carries all of that family: hard, fast, sharp, forward, loud, brave, up-and-at-them. “When they praise a piece of music for being andreion they do not mean it is brave. They mean it comes at you.”

. . .

“Like punchy,” said Lela.

. . .

“Like punchy. Yes. Exactly like punchy.”

. . .

4



The gentle leader is like the shepherd—
patient, steady, and caring.

Sharp and Gentle — the guiding analogy.



Sharp and Gentle — analogy and thought experiment.

“But again — in many activities, don’t we often praise the class of things that happen gently?” said the Visitor. “Yes. Very much so.”

. . .

“We say on each occasion that they are quiet and moderate. Admiring things done in the mind, and in the sphere of actions themselves, that are slow and soft. “And also things the voice does that turn out smooth and deep — and all rhythmic movement, and the whole of music when it employs slowness at the right time. “We apply to them all the name, not of courage, but of orderliness.”

. . .

“Two lists,” said Lela, and drew a line down the page.

. . .

“Sharp, fast, hard, loud, quick. Call that brave. “Slow, soft, smooth, deep, quiet. Call that sensible.”

. . .

“And now,” said Sophia, “the hinge.”

. . .

“And when, conversely, both of these sets of qualities occur at the wrong time,” said the Visitor, “we change round and censure each of them — assigning them to opposite effect by the names we use.”

. . .

“How?”

. . .



3
A city needs sharpness to defend itself
and gentleness to live well together.

Sharp and Gentle — the argument unfolding step by step.



Sharp and Gentle — the logical progression.

“By calling them excessive and manic when they turn out sharper than is timely, and appear too fast and hard. “And calling things that are too deep and slow and soft cowardly and lethargic.”

. . .

Lela did not write anything for a moment.

. . .

“It’s the same,” she said.

. . .

“Say it.”

. . .

“It’s the same quality. It’s not two different amounts of a thing. It’s the same thing, and if it turns up at the right

moment you call it brave and if it turns up at the wrong moment you call it manic. “And the other one. Exactly the same one. Right moment: calm. Wrong moment: gutless. “And there’s nothing you could measure. You couldn’t — there’s no amount of loudness where it turns into shouting. It depends entirely on when.”

. . .

“Kairos,” said Sophia.

. . .

“That’s the third time.”

. . .

“That is the third time,” said the owl, “and it is the last, and you now have every piece of it. “There is no such thing as the right amount of courage, the way there is a right amount of salt. There is only courage now, which is a virtue, and the identical courage four minutes ago, which is a disaster. “And this is why the man at the top cannot be a general, and cannot be a judge, and cannot be a man with a rule book. “Because the whole of what he knows is when, and when is the only thing that turns a virtue into a vice.”

. . .

6

SHARP AND GENTLE TOGETHER



When they are in balance,
the city stands firm and grows.

Sharp and Gentle — the competing interpretation.



Sharp and Gentle — the difficulty and the alternative.

“It’s pretty much a general rule,” said the Visitor, “that we find that these qualities — the moderate type as a whole, and the courage of the opposite qualities — do not mix with each other in the relevant activities. As if they were sorts of thing that had a warring stance allotted to them. “Moreover we shall see that those who possess them in their souls are at odds with each other, if we go looking for them.”

. . .

“Where do you mean us to look?”

. . .

“For I think, because of their affinity to either set of qualities, they praise some things as belonging to their own kin — and censure those of their opponents as alien. “Engaging in a great deal of hostility towards each other, about a great many things.”

. . .

“That’s people,” said Danae. “He’s talking about actual people now. He’s not doing music any more.”

. . .

“He is talking about actual people,” said Sophia. “There are two kinds of person and everybody has met both, and you are sitting next to one.”

. . .

Neither of them said anything.

. . .

“Go on,” said the owl. “Both of you. It will not get easier.”

. . .

7



Danae: Can one person be both?
Lela: Not always at once. But a city can.

Sharp and Gentle — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.



Sharp and Gentle — Lela and Danae.

“I’m the first one,” said Lela.

. . .

“Why?”

. . .

“Because I stood up,” said Lela. “In the middle of the orchard, about a box not being big, and shouted at nobody. “And because when Mr Hallam did the thing about the — “ She stopped. “Because I always say it. I always say the thing. Every time. Even when it’s the wrong time, and I know it’s the wrong time while I’m doing it, and I do it anyway, and then I’m sick about it afterwards for about two days.”

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “And Danae.”

. . .

“I just don’t,” said Danae.

. . .

She said it to the leaves.

. . .

“I never say it. I think it — I think it all the time, I thought about nine things this morning — and it’s fine, it goes away, and nobody minds, and then it’s next week. “And Ilona’s still doing it to that girl and I’ve never once said anything.”

. . .



Socrates: The wise statesman knows
when to be sharp, and when to be gentle.

Sharp and Gentle — the historical layer.



Sharp and Gentle — historical reconstruction.

The wood pigeon started up again at the top of the orchard.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl, very gently. “Now hear what he says it does to a city, because that is the part you cannot get from looking at yourselves.”

. . .

“Well, this disagreement of these classes of people is a sort of play,” said the Visitor. “But in relation to the most important things, it turns out to be a disease — the most hateful of all for cities.”

. . .

“For those who are especially orderly are always ready to live the quiet life. Carrying on their private business on their own, by themselves. “They both associate with everyone in their own city on this basis, and similarly with cities outside their own — being ready to preserve peace of some sort in any way they can. “As a result of this passion of theirs, which is less timely than it should be — when they do what they want, nobody notices that they are being unwarlike, and making the young men the same, and that they are perpetually at the mercy of those who attack them. “The consequence is that within a few years they themselves, their children, and the whole city together often become slaves instead of free men — before they have noticed it.”

. . .

“What you describe is a painful and terrifying thing to go through,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“But what about those who incline more towards courage? “Isn’t it the case that they are always drawing

their cities into some war or other, because of their desire for a life of this sort, which is more vigorous than it should be? “And that they make enemies of people who are both numerous and powerful — and so either completely destroy their own fatherlands, or else make them slaves and subjects of their enemies?”

. . .

“This too is true.”

. . .

9

WHEN EACH IS BEST

USE SHARPNESS

- In war
- In crisis
- Against injustice
- To protect the city



USE GENTLENESS

- In peace
- In daily life
- To teach and guide
- To build and heal



Wisdom is knowing the right tool
for the right time.

Sharp and Gentle — a wordless conceptual plate.

726



Sharp and Gentle — wordless concept plate.

“That happened,” said Lela.

. . .

“That happened,” said Sophia. “Both of them happened, in that lifetime, to cities those boys could have walked to. “And the second one happened to them. To Athens. “They were the bravest and quickest and sharpest city in the world and they knew it, and they were told so constantly, and about twenty years before that afternoon they sent the largest fleet anybody had ever seen to Sicily because they wanted to, and almost none of it came back. “There is not a family in that courtyard without somebody in it. The boy’s own father is dead and the money is gone. Theodorus is old enough to have watched the ships leave. “That is not a warning about something that might happen. That is a foreigner, politely, describing the hole in the room he is standing in.”

. . .

“Then we have found, haven’t we,” said the Visitor, “what we were originally looking into. “That parts of virtue of no small importance are by nature at odds with each other — and moreover cause those who possess them to be in this same condition.”

. . .

“Very likely they do.”

. . .

Sophia let the picture run on quietly for a moment, and then turned round on the wall.

. . .

“Lela,” she said. “Your hands.”

. . .

“What?”

. . .

10



The best ruler holds both in one soul—
a sharp mind and a gentle heart.

Sharp and Gentle — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.



Sharp and Gentle — climax, double-page spread.

“Three days ago I told you to remember your hands exactly as they were, and that I would ask for them again, and that when I did you would find out what this book was about. “Put them up.”

. . .

Lela put her hands up in front of her, the way she had over the loom — one moving up and down, one moving across.

. . .

“The hard ones,” said Sophia. “The long ones. Strung tight so they do not snap, all the same, running the whole way, holding the whole thing up — and boring, and invisible, and the bit where people give up.”

. . .

“Warp,” said Lela.

. . .

“And the soft ones. Loose on purpose. Going across, over and under, filling in every gap, making it warm. The one you can see. The red line.”

. . .

“Woof.”

. . .

“One of those,” said the owl, “is courage. “And one of those is moderation. “And they hate each other, and they are both virtues, and neither of them is any use alone, and a city made of only one of them is either enslaved or destroyed within a generation. “And tomorrow morning, a man from Italy is going to sit down in that courtyard and tell you what you do about it.”

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Sharp and Gentle — the chapter's closing thought.

Chapter 98

NINETY-EIGHT. Testing in Play



Socrates: we have spoken of leaders.
Now let us test what we have learned—in play.

Testing in Play — opening scene.



Testing in Play — chapter-opening scene.

“Then let’s take the following point in its turn,” said the Visitor.

. . .

“Whether any of the sorts of expert knowledge that involve putting things together voluntarily puts together any at all of the things it produces — even of the lowliest kind — out of bad and good things together. “Or whether every sort of expert knowledge everywhere throws away the bad so far as it can, and takes what is suitable and good, bringing all of this — both like and unlike — together into one. “And so producing some single kind of thing, with a single capacity.”

. . .

“Of course,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“That’s just true,” said Lela. “Nobody builds anything out of the bad bits. Yiayia doesn’t put the rotten ones in the pie.”

. . .

“No,” said Sophia. “Nobody builds anything out of the bad bits. “And now I want you to watch what he does with that, and I want you to remember what I said to you yesterday about this book, because I meant it and I am going to keep it.”

. . .

2

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY



Children learn many things
by playing, trying, failing, and trying again.

Testing in Play — the chapter's central dialogue.



Testing in Play — dialogue and narrative.

“In that case, neither will what we have decided is by nature truly the art of statesmanship ever voluntarily put together a city out of good and bad human beings. “It’s quite clear that it will first put them to the test in play.”

. . .

“Oh,” said Danae, and sat up.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “Say it before the next sentence. Quickly.”

. . .

“You find out what somebody’s like by playing with them,” said Danae. “That’s true. That’s completely true, that’s — you know in about four minutes. You know who cheats and you know who cries and you know who lets the

little ones win and you know who's kind when nobody's counting. "And you don't find it out by asking. If you ask they just say the good one."

. . .



In play we discover:
what works, what fails, what is just, what is unfair.

Testing in Play — the central concept made visible.



Testing in Play — the central idea.

“That is the oldest and best piece of practical psychology in the Greek language,” said the owl, “and it is three words long, and it is what every playground in the world does to every new child on the first morning, and nobody ever wrote it down before him. “Test them in play. “Hold it. It is the last nice thing on this page.”

. . .

“And after the test it will in turn hand them over to those with the capacity to educate them,” the Visitor went on. “It will itself lay down prescriptions for the educators and direct them — “in the same way that weaving follows along with the carders, and those who prepare the other things it needs for its own work. “Prescribing for and directing them. Giving indications to each group to finish their products in whatever way it thinks suitable for its own interweaving.”

. . .

“That’s the teachers,” said Lela. “The teachers are the carders.”

. . .

“The teachers are the carders,” said Sophia. “They take what arrives — which is a matted lump with grass in it, and I say that with affection, having met a number of you — and they comb it until every strand in it lies straight and separate and can be seen. “And then somebody else does something with it, and the carder does not decide what. “He has just put every teacher any of you will ever have into the contributory causes, four chapters after he invented the word, and I am not certain he is wrong and I am not certain he is right.”

. . .

“In just this way, it seems to me, the art of kingship will not permit the educators and tutors who function according to law to do anything in the exercise of their role that will not ultimately result in some disposition which is appropriate to its own mixing role. “It calls on them to teach these things alone.”

. . .

4

PLAY IS A SAFE TEST



Play lets us test without fear.
It prepares us for real life.

Testing in Play — the guiding analogy.



Testing in Play — analogy and thought experiment.

“And those of their pupils that are unable to share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate, and whatever else belongs to the sphere of virtue — “but are thrust forcibly away by an evil nature into godlessness, excess and injustice — “it throws out, by killing them, sending them into exile, and punishing them with the most extreme forms of dishonour.”

. . .

“At least it is put something like that,” said young Socrates.

. . .

“And again those who wallow in great ignorance and baseness, it brings under the yoke of the class of slaves.”

. . .

“Quite correct.”

. . .

Sophia stopped the picture.

. . .



Testing in Play — the argument unfolding step by step.



Testing in Play — the logical progression.

Nobody said anything for a long moment. Down the slope the dog had started again and neither of them heard it.

. . .

“He was doing playing,” said Danae. Her voice had gone very small. “Four lines ago he was doing playing.”

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“He said test them in play and then he said kill them.”

. . .

“He said test them in play and then he said kill them.”

. . .



6

We test our minds—
plans, numbers, and shapes.

Testing in Play — the competing interpretation.



Testing in Play — the difficulty and the alternative.

“Sophia,” said Lela, “you said yesterday you wouldn’t defend the other one.”

. . .

“I said I would not defend the other one.”

. . .

“Are you going to defend this one?”

. . .

“No,” said Sophia.

. . .



7

We test our souls—
courage, patience, and fairness.

Testing in Play — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.



Testing in Play — Lela and Danae.

“This is worse than the other one.”

. . .

“I think it is worse than the other one,” said the owl,
“and I want to tell you exactly why I think so, because it

is not for the reason you would expect. “Yesterday’s page was about emergencies. It was about a man in a storm doing a terrible thing to save the ship. It is still wrong and it is still dangerous and I still would not defend it — but it has the shape of an argument about crisis, and everybody can see the crisis. “This is not an emergency. This is a plan. This is the ordinary working of a well-run city on a Tuesday. Nothing has gone wrong. There is no storm. The weaver is simply sorting the wool, and some of the wool is thrown away, and the word he uses for throwing it away is killing. “And it comes four lines after the kindest sentence in the book.”

. . .

“Why does he do that?” said Danae. “Why does he put them next to each other?”

. . .

“Because he does not notice,” said Sophia. “That is the answer and it is the worst one available. “He is not being cruel and he is not being dramatic. He has an image — nobody builds anything out of the bad bits — and it is a true image about wool, and he has run it straight through into people without stopping, because the image was carrying him and it was a good image. “That is how it happens. Not with a monster. With somebody very clever, holding a metaphor that fits, going one step too far with it and not feeling the step.”

. . .

“So the metaphor’s the problem,” said Lela slowly.

. . .



Lela: So play is like a lesson
without the heavy weight of failure.

Testing in Play — the historical layer.



Testing in Play — historical reconstruction.

Sophia turned her head.

. . .

“Say that again,” she said.

. . .

“The loom,” said Lela. “The whole loom. It’s been the best thing in the book and I’ve loved it, and it’s — it’s wool. It’s a thing you sort. And half the sorting is throwing bits out, because that’s what sorting is, and if people are the wool then —“

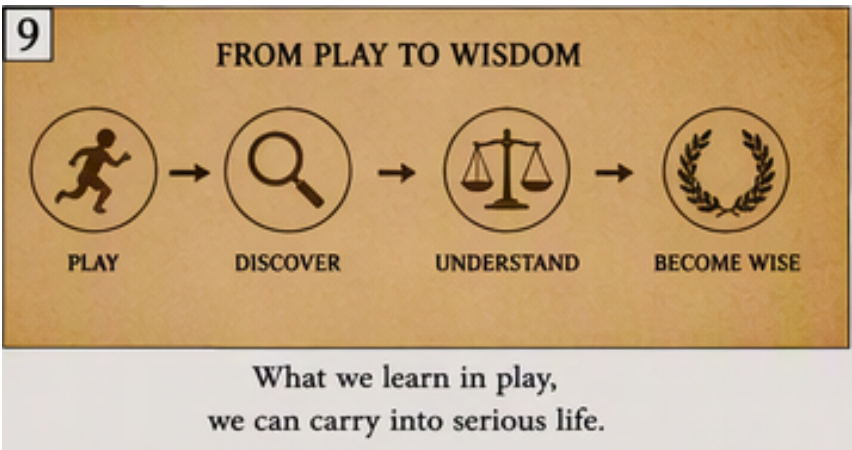
. . .

She stopped.

. . .

“Then that’s not him being wicked. That’s the picture doing it.”

. . .



Testing in Play — a wordless conceptual plate.



Testing in Play — wordless concept plate.

“Yes,” said the owl.

. . .

“But the picture’s true. The bit about the two kinds of people is true, I could feel it was true, I said it about myself —“

. . .

“It is true,” said Sophia. “That is what makes it dangerous. A false picture never got anybody anywhere. It is the ones that fit for nine steps that take you off the edge on the tenth. “Yesterday you watched a man notice that his method did not fit, and say so out loud, and use a worse one because it was true. “Today you have watched the same man fail to do it. “Both of those are in the same book, by the same hand, three pages apart. Nobody is one thing.”

. . .

“Do we have to keep going?” said Danae.

. . .



Testing in Play — the chapter’s narrative and philosophical synthesis.



Testing in Play — climax, double-page spread.

“No,” said the owl. “Not if you do not want to. It is your summer.”

. . .

Danae lay looking up through the leaves for a while.

. . .

“What’s the rest of it?” she said.

. . .

“The rest of it,” said Sophia, “is the best thing he ever wrote about how to live with other people, and it is four pages long, and it ends with two enemies being made to share a life. “And it is the same man. And you have just seen what else he is. “That is the whole of what I have been trying to teach you both, and I could not do it with a speech, and this is why I showed you all of it.”

. . .

“Go on then,” said Danae.

Chapter 99

NINETY-NINE. The Divine Bond



Socrates says there is a bond in the city
stronger than any rope or chain.

The Divine Bond — opening scene.



The Divine Bond — chapter-opening scene.

“Then as for the others,” said the Visitor, “whose natures are capable of becoming composed and stable in the direction of nobility, if they acquire education — “of these, it tries to bind together and intertwine the ones who strain more towards courage — “its view being that their firm disposition is as it were like the warp — “and the ones who incline towards the moderate, who produce an ample, soft, and — to continue the image — wooflike thread. “Two natures with opposite tendencies.”

. . .

Lela looked down at her own hands, which were still in her lap where she had left them.

. . .

“He said it,” she said.

. . .

“He said it,” said Sophia. “Not as a flourish at the end. As a working instruction, halfway down a page, with the word wooflike in it, which is not a beautiful word in Greek either. “Three days ago you held up two hands over a loom in your grandmother’s back room. You have been carrying them since without knowing what they were for. “The hard tight ones that hold the whole thing up and nobody ever looks at: that is the brave ones. “The soft loose ones that go across and fill every gap and make it warm: that is the gentle ones. “And now watch. Because he is about to explain how you get a thread of one to lie next to a thread of the other without the whole thing coming apart, and it is the last thing he has to say.”

. . .

2

THE DIVINE BOND



This bond holds everything together—
through the Good.

The Divine Bond — the chapter's central dialogue.



The Divine Bond — dialogue and narrative.

“And it does so in something like the following way.”

. . .

“What way is that?”

. . .

“First, by fitting together that part of their soul that is eternal with a divine bond, in accordance with its kinship with the divine. “And after the divine, in turn fitting together their mortal aspect with human bonds.”

. . .

“Again, what do you mean by this?”

. . .



Without the bond, people pull in different directions,
and the city begins to tear.

The Divine Bond — the central concept made visible.



The Divine Bond — the central idea.

“I call divine, when it comes to be in souls,” said the man from Elea —

. . .

“that opinion about what is fine, just and good, and the opposites of these, which is really true and is guaranteed. “It belongs to the class of the more than human.”

. . .

The orchard was quiet.

. . .

“Say it in ordinary words,” said Danae.

. . .



Lela and Danae see that justice is not only
a rule but a way of holding together.

The Divine Bond — the guiding analogy.



The Divine Bond — analogy and thought experiment.

“Everybody in the city actually agreeing,” said Sophia, “about which things are good — and meaning it. “That is all. That is the divine bond. That is the thing he says is more than human and is the first knot in the whole fabric. “Not agreeing about who should be in charge. Not agreeing about the laws. Not agreeing about money or war or any of the things people think cities argue about. “Agreeing, underneath, about what a fine thing is. About what counts as a disgrace. About what you would be ashamed of.”

. . .

“Everyone does agree about that,” said Danae.

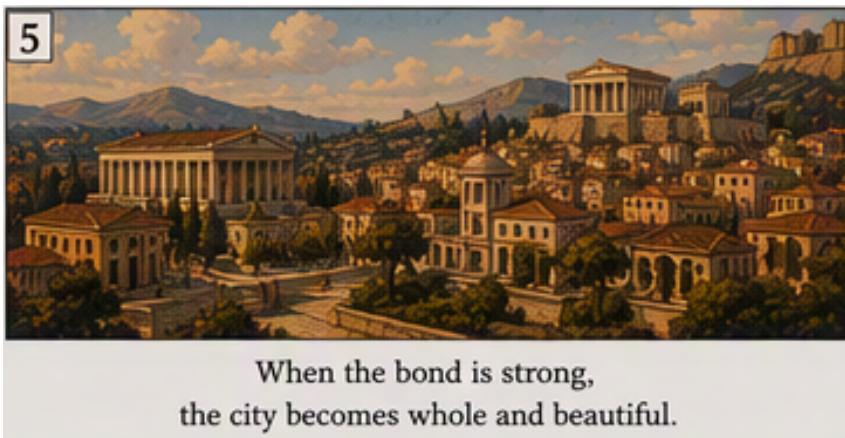
. . .

“Do they?” said the owl.

. . .

Danae opened her mouth, and then shut it.

. . .



The Divine Bond — the argument unfolding step by step.



The Divine Bond — the logical progression.

“No,” she said.

. . .

“No,” said Sophia. “And now notice the single strangest word on this page, and it is the one nobody notices, and Lela is going to find it, because she has been writing everything down for two summers and it is on her own page four lines up.”

. . .

Lela checked.

. . .

“Opinion,” she said.

. . .



The Divine Bond — the competing interpretation.



The Divine Bond — the difficulty and the alternative.

“Opinion,” said the owl.

. . .

“Not knowledge. He said — Sophia, he’s spent two entire days saying knowledge is the only thing that counts. Not numbers, not consent, not wealth, knowledge. He killed off everything else with it. “And now the thing that actually holds the city together is a — it’s an opinion.”

. . .

“A true one,” said Sophia. “And a guaranteed one. Those are both in the sentence. “But yes. An opinion. The word is doxa, and you watched a man spend a whole afternoon two days ago proving that true opinion is not knowledge — that a jury can be rightly persuaded and still know nothing — and you watched him do it in the same courtyard.”

. . .

“So which is it?”

. . .



Danae: So the bond comes from the Good?
Lela: Yes. And when we follow it, the city lives.

The Divine Bond — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.



The Divine Bond — Lela and Danae.

“Both,” said the owl, “and this is the most merciful thing in the book, and almost nobody gives him credit for it, so I shall. “The city does not need everybody to be a philosopher. “That is what he has just said. He has spent two days establishing that only one man in a thousand could ever have the knowledge — and here, at the end, he does not turn round and demand that everyone acquire it. “He asks for something far smaller and far harder. That ordinary people — the carpenter, the baker, the girl with the red thread, people who will never in their lives sit down and work out what justice is — should nevertheless have got hold of a true opinion about it, and hold it firmly, and not be talked out of it. “They do not have to be able to prove that it is disgraceful to abandon a friend. They have to actually think so, when it is inconvenient, on a Tuesday, with nobody watching. “He calls that divine. And after everything you have heard him say about the mass of people, that is a considerable thing for him to write down.”

. . .

“Then do we recognise that it belongs to the statesman and the good legislator alone to be capable of bringing this very thing about?” said the Visitor. “By means of the music that belongs to the art of kingship, in those who have had their correct share of education.”

. . .

“That’s certainly reasonable.”

. . .

“Yes — and let’s never call anyone who is incapable of doing this sort of thing by the names we are now investigating.”

. . .



Socrates: The statesman must care for this bond
as a shepherd cares for the whole flock.

The Divine Bond — the historical layer.



The Divine Bond — historical reconstruction.

“Ooh,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “That is the whole of his politics in one line and it is a test you can apply, and you can apply it this evening to whoever you like. “Never call anybody a statesman who cannot do this. “Not who does not do this. Who cannot. Who has no idea how. Who would not know where to begin. “And what it is that he has to be able to do is: get people who do not agree about anything to agree, underneath, about what is disgraceful. “Most of the men you will see doing this job do the exact opposite for a living, on purpose, because it is easier and it works.”

. . .

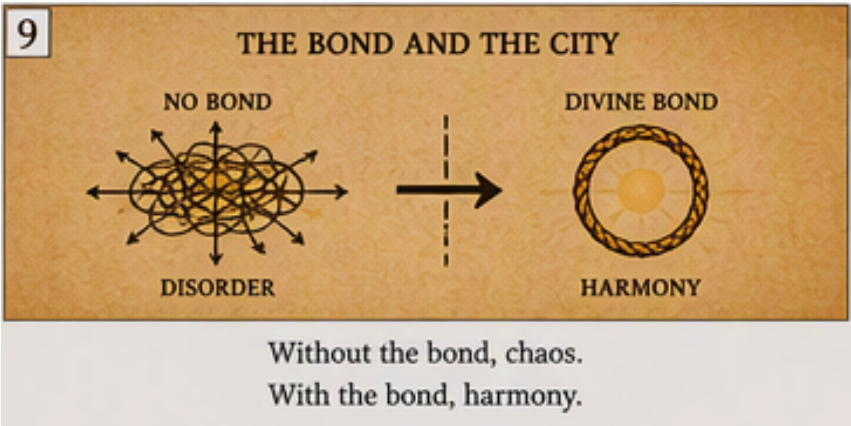
“Well then — is a courageous soul that grasps this sort of truth not tamed?” said the Visitor. “And wouldn’t it

be especially willing, as a result, to share in what is just?
“Whereas if it fails to get a share of it, doesn’t it rather
slide away towards becoming like some kind of beast?”

. . .

“Quite.”

. . .



The Divine Bond — a wordless conceptual plate.



The Divine Bond — wordless concept plate.

“And what of the case of the moderate sort of nature? “If it gets a share of these opinions, doesn’t it become genuinely moderate and wise, so far as wisdom goes in the context of life in a city? “While if it fails to get a portion of the things we’re talking about, doesn’t it very appropriately acquire a disgraceful reputation, for simple-mindedness?”

. . .

“Absolutely.”

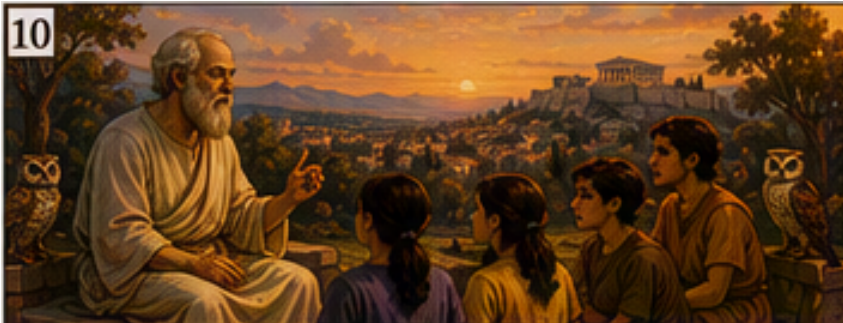
. . .

Neither of the girls said anything for a moment.

. . .

“That’s what happens to us,” said Lela.

. . .



So the wise ruler seeks not power,
but the Good that binds all things together.

The Divine Bond — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.



The Divine Bond — climax, double-page spread.

“That is what happens to you,” said Sophia. “Both of you. And he has put it in two lines and neither of them is kind. “The brave one, without the bond, turns into an animal. Not a villain. An animal: something that is quick and strong and does the thing it wants at the moment it wants it and cannot be reasoned with. “And the gentle one, without the bond, turns into a fool. And he uses the word disgraceful about it, which is harsh, and which is also exactly the word people use. “Nobody says what a shame, she was so tolerant. They say she was soft. They say she let them. “That is the sentence, and it is not a warning about wicked people. It is what happens to two perfectly decent children who never got hold of the thing underneath.”

. . .

“What I propose we should say,” the Visitor went on, “is that it only takes root, through laws, in those dispositions

that were both born noble in the first place, and have been nurtured in accordance with their nature. “And that it is for these that this remedy exists, by virtue of expertise. “As we said, this bonding together is more divine — uniting parts of virtue that are by nature unlike each other, and tend in opposite directions.”

. . .

“Born noble,” said Lela flatly.

. . .

“Yes,” said the owl. “I know. Put it on the list with the others. The list is getting long and you are keeping it properly, which is the only thing I ever asked.”

Chapter 100

ONE HUNDRED. Marriages



Socrates: Just as people must be joined rightly
in the city, so must marriages be joined rightly.

Marriages — opening scene.



Marriages — chapter-opening scene.

“Yes — and the remaining bonds, which are human, once this divine one exists, are perhaps not difficult at all either to understand, or to effect once one has understood them.”

. . .

“How then, and what are they?”

. . .

“Those that consist in intermarriages, and the sharing of children, and in those matters relating to private giving-away in marriage. “For most people, in the way they handle these things, do not bind themselves together correctly.”

. . .

“Why so?”

. . .



A good marriage brings forth good children,
and the city is strengthened.

Marriages — the chapter's central dialogue.



Marriages — dialogue and narrative.

“Is there any reason why anyone should seriously concern themselves with censuring the pursuit of wealth and forms of influence in such contexts — as if it were worth discussing?”

. . .

“None.”

. . .

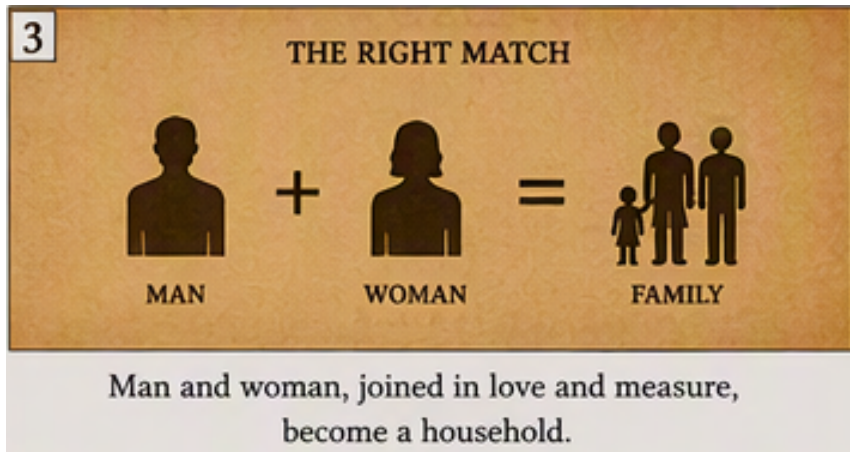
“Ha,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia. “He has waved away the entire history of marriage in one sentence. People marry for money and connections and there is nothing interesting to say about it. “He is not defending it. He is saying it is too

obvious to be worth an argument, and he has something more interesting to complain about.”

. . .



Marriages — the central concept made visible.



Marriages — the central idea.

“No; it would be more appropriate for us to discuss those people who pay attention to family-types,” said the Visitor, “and ask whether they are acting erroneously in some way.”

. . .

“Well, they act out of entirely the wrong sort of consideration. “They go for what is immediately easiest — welcoming those who are much like them, and not liking those who are unlike them. “Assigning the largest part of their decisions to their feelings of antipathy.”

. . .

“How?”

. . .

“The moderate, I think, look out for people with the disposition they themselves possess. And so far as they

can, they both marry from among these, and marry off the daughters they are giving away back to people of this sort. “The type related to courage does just the same thing, seeking after the nature that belongs to itself. “When both types ought to do completely the opposite of this.”

. . .



From the household come children,
and from children, citizens.

Marriages — the guiding analogy.



Marriages — analogy and thought experiment.

“That’s true as well,” said Danae, from the grass.

. . .

“Go on,” said the owl.

. . .

“People do that with everything,” said Danae. “Not just marrying. Everything. You pick the ones who are like you. Every single time. For teams, and for who you sit next to, and for who you go round with. “Because it’s easy. Because you don’t have to explain anything. Because they already think the thing you were going to say.”

. . .

“And what did he say the reason was?” said Sophia.

. . .

5

A HARMONIOUS FAMILY



LOVE



RESPECT



JUSTICE



TRAINING

Love, respect, justice, and training
keep the household in harmony.

Marriages — the argument unfolding step by step.



Marriages — the logical progression.

Lela found it.

. . .

“What is immediately easiest,” she read. “And — assigning the largest part of their decisions to their feelings of antipathy.”

. . .

“Which means what?”

. . .

“That they’re not really choosing the ones they like,” said Lela slowly. “They’re avoiding the ones that annoy them. “That’s — that’s not the same thing at all, is it. That’s not picking. That’s flinching.”

. . .



Each has a role, and each role is honored.
So each part helps the whole.

Marriages — the competing interpretation.



Marriages — the difficulty and the alternative.

“That is flinching,” said the owl, “and it is the mechanism of almost every group of human beings you will ever stand in, and he has described it in eight words and moved straight on. “Nobody ever decided to be surrounded by people exactly like themselves. “They just never once, over thirty years, chose the option that made them uncomfortable. And at the end of the thirty years they look round, and there is no one in the room who can tell them anything.”

. . .

“But why should they do the opposite?” said Lela. “Is there an actual reason, or is he just saying it’s nice to mix?”

. . .

“There is a reason,” said Sophia, “and it is three sentences long, and it is about what happens over generations,

and I want to say one thing before he says it. “The mechanism he gives is about breeding, and about blood, and it is the science of his century, and it is not right. “What is right — what is observably, painfully right, and what he is actually looking at — is what happens to a family, and a school, and a village, and a party, and a trade, when for four generations it only ever admits more of the same. “Listen to it that way. That is the way he meant it and the way it is true.”

. . .



Lela: So marriage is not only for two people?
Danae: It is for the good of the children and the city!

Marriages — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.



Marriages — Lela and Danae.

“Because it is in the nature of courage,” said the Visitor, “that when it is reproduced over many generations without being mixed with a moderate nature — “it comes to a peak of power at first. “But in the end it bursts out completely in fits of madness.”

. . .

“And in its turn the soul that is too full of reserve, and has no admixture of courageous initiative, and is reproduced over many generations in this way — “by nature grows more sluggish than is timely — “and then in the end is completely crippled.”

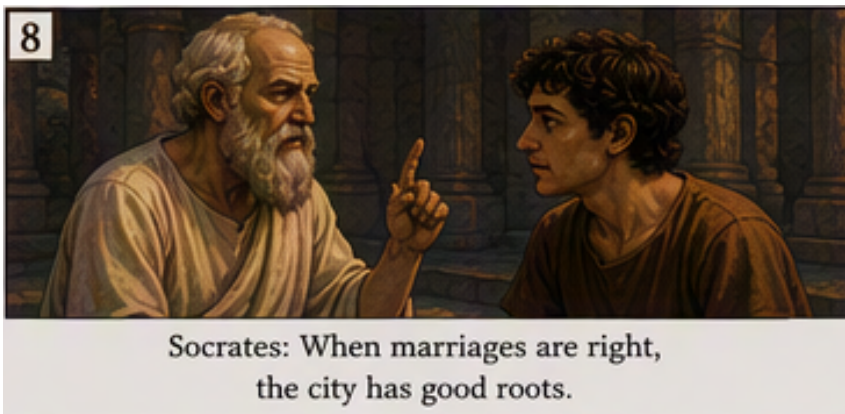
. . .

Nobody in the orchard said anything for a moment.

. . .

“A peak of power at first,” said Lela.

. . .



Marriages — the historical layer.



Marriages — historical reconstruction.

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“That’s the bad bit, isn’t it. That’s what makes it so hard. It works. For a while it actually works, and it works better than the mixed one, and everybody can see it working.”

. . .

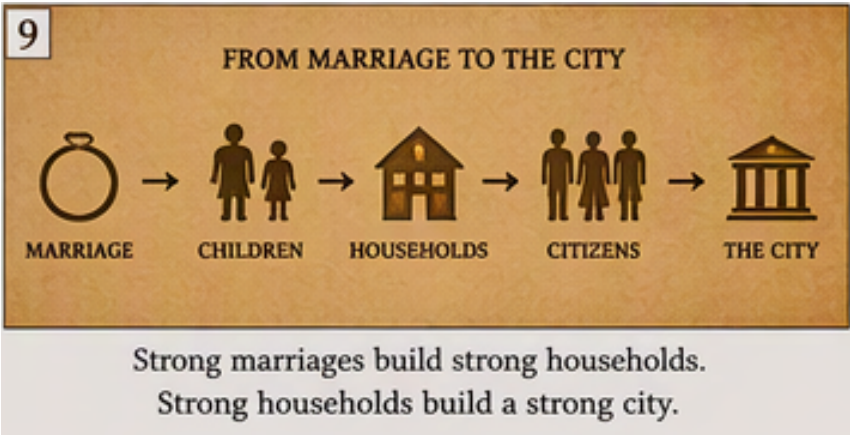
“Everybody can see it working,” said the owl. “That is exactly the difficulty and you have put your finger on the whole of it. “A city of nothing but sharp brave people does not fail immediately. It becomes the most powerful city in the world. It wins everything. Everybody writes poems about it and its enemies are frightened of it and its own young men cannot believe their luck. “And then, in the end, it does the thing at the wrong moment — one enormous sharp brave thing at exactly the wrong moment

— and there is nobody left in the room who was ever any good at saying wait. “Because they married each other for four generations. Because wait was the annoying one.”

. . .

“That’s them,” said Danae.

. . .



Marriages — a wordless conceptual plate.



Marriages — wordless concept plate.

“That is them,” said Sophia. “And he is standing in the middle of it, being polite, describing a general principle about wool.”

. . .

“It was these bonds that I meant,” said the Visitor, “when I said that there was no difficulty at all in tying them together, once the situation existed in which both types had a single opinion about what was fine and good. “For this is the single and complete task of kingly weaving-together: “never to allow moderate dispositions to stand away from the courageous. “Rather, by working them closely into each other as if with a shuttle — through sharing of opinions, through honours, dishonour, esteem, and the giving of pledges to one another — “it draws together a smooth and fine-woven fabric out of them. “And always entrusts offices in cities to these in common.”

. . .

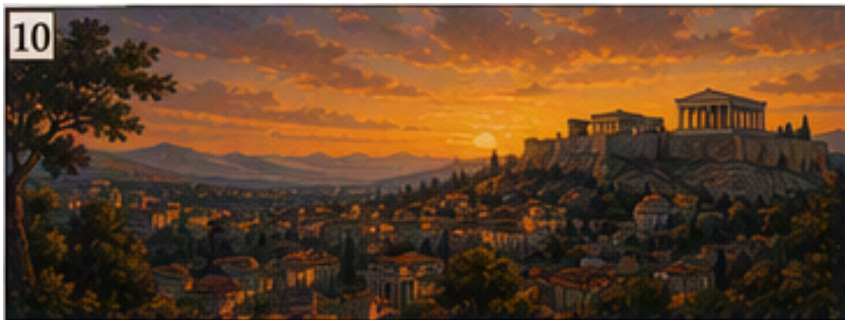
“The single and complete task,” said Lela.

. . .

“That is the phrase,” said the owl. “Two days. Everything — the fisherman, the myth, the god who let go, the doctor, the jar, the seven boxes, the centaurs — all of it, for that line. “And here is what it says, and it is much smaller than you expected, and it is not about power at all. “The one and only job of whoever is at the top of anything is: do not let the two kinds of people get away from each other. “That is it. That is the whole job. Not deciding things. Not being right. Keeping the brave ones and the careful ones in the same room, on speaking terms, doing things together, sharing the credit, giving each other their word. “Because they will not do it by themselves. They do not like each other. They never have.”

. . .

10



So the statesman honors marriage,
for in it the city's future begins.

Marriages — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.



Marriages — climax, double-page spread.

“Sophia,” said Danae. “Is that us?”

. . .

“That is a question about your family,” said the owl,
“and not about a book, and you should ask your mother.”

. . .

“That’s a yes.”

. . .

“That is a yes,” said Sophia.

Chapter 101

ONE HUNDRED AND ONE.

The Royal Fabric



Socrates recalls the long inquiry.
Now the statesman must be woven into the city.

The Royal Fabric — opening scene.



The Royal Fabric — chapter-opening scene.

“How?” said young Socrates.

. . .

“By choosing the person who has both qualities to put in charge, wherever there turns out to be a need for a single officer. “And by mixing together a part of each of these groups where there is a need for more than one.”

. . .

“That’s a rule,” said Lela. “That’s an actual rule. That’s the first actual instruction he’s given in two whole days.”

. . .

“That is the first actual instruction he has given in two whole days,” said Sophia, “and it is the only one, and you could put it on a wall. “One post: find somebody who is both. “More than one post: make sure you have got some

of each. “And if you ever sit on anything that picks people for anything — a team, a committee, a band, a company, a government — you now know more than most of the people who will be sitting round the table with you.”

. . .

“For the dispositions of moderate people when in office are markedly cautious, just, and conservative,” said the Visitor. “But they lack bite — and a certain sharp and practical keenness.”

. . .

“This too certainly seems to be the case.”

. . .

“And the dispositions of the courageous, in their turn, are inferior to the others in relation to justice and caution — “but have an exceptional degree of keenness when it comes to action.”

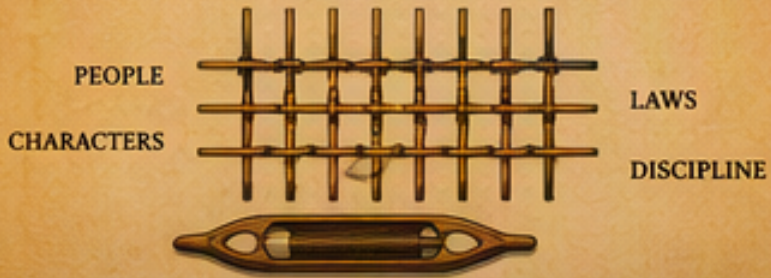
. . .

“Everything in cities cannot go well,” said the man from Elea, “either on the private or on the public level, unless both of these groups are there to give their help.”

. . .

2

THE CITY AS A FABRIC



Threads of character and threads of law
are woven together by knowledge.

The Royal Fabric — the chapter's central dialogue.



The Royal Fabric — dialogue and narrative.

“Quite.”

. . .

“He’s said something horrible about both of them,” said Danae, with great satisfaction.

. . .

“He has said something horrible about both of them,” Sophia agreed, “and it is the fairest paragraph in the book, and it is fair because it is horrible twice. “The careful ones are just — he gives them that, straight out, it is not a consolation prize — and they will never do anything. “And the sharp ones get things done, and he says, in the same breath, without softening it, that they are less just and less careful. Not sometimes. As a class. By disposition. “And then he says the thing that makes it bearable. “Nothing goes well unless both of them are there. “Not tolerated.

Not put up with. There to give their help. Both of them.
In the room. On the thing.”

. . .

Lela was looking at her own two hands again.

. . .

“It’s not a compromise,” she said.

. . .

“No,” said the owl.

. . .

“That’s what I thought it was going to be. I thought the answer was going to be be a bit of both. Don’t be too brave and don’t be too careful, be sort of medium. “And it isn’t. He’s not saying that at all. He’s saying stay exactly as you are, both of you, all the way — and be tied to somebody who isn’t.”

. . .



3
The ruler is the weaver,
who knows how each thread behaves.

The Royal Fabric — the central concept made visible.



The Royal Fabric — the central idea.

“That,” said Sophia, “is the difference between a mixture and a fabric, and it has taken him four hundred pages to build a picture that could hold it. “If you mix two colours of paint you get one new colour and both the old ones are gone. “If you weave two threads, there are still two threads. You can see them. You could pick one out with a pin. “They have not become each other. They have not met in the middle. They are just — from now on — not able to come apart.”

. . .

“Then let us say that this marks the completion of the fabric which is the product of the art of statesmanship,” said the Visitor.

. . .

“The weaving together, with regular intertwining, of the dispositions of brave and moderate people — “when the

expertise belonging to the king brings their life together in agreement and friendship, and makes it common between them — “completing the most magnificent and best of all fabrics — “and covering with it all the other inhabitants of cities, both slave and free — “and holds them together with this twining, and rules and directs, without — so far as it belongs to a city to be happy — falling short of that in any respect.”

NOTE · 305e–311c

Annotation (light / institutional): Brave and moderate weave. Weaving metaphor. (light)

. . .

“Both slave and free,” said Lela.

. . .

“Yes,” said Sophia.

. . .

“He put them in.”

. . .

“He put them in.”

. . .

“It’s the last sentence. It’s the very last sentence of two whole days, and he’s got to the end and he’s said and the blanket goes over everybody, including them.”

. . .

4

FOUR THREADS OF CHARACTER



COURAGE



TEMPERANCE



JUSTICE



PRACTICAL
WISDOM

These must be strong,
beautiful, and in the right order.

The Royal Fabric — the guiding analogy.



The Royal Fabric — analogy and thought experiment.

She sat looking at the picture.

. . .

“Is that good?” she said. “I can’t tell if that’s good. Yesterday you said he doesn’t object to it, and he doesn’t, he didn’t, he put them in a list with the clerks and went past. “And now they’re under the blanket. So they’re — he’s saying the city’s supposed to be good to them. He’s remembered they’re there.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“But they’re still slaves.”

. . .

“They are still slaves,” said the owl. “The fabric covers them. It does not free them. Those are both in that sentence and he did not notice that they sit badly together, and nobody in that courtyard noticed either. “I do not know whether it is better or worse than leaving them out. I have thought about it for a long time and I have not got anywhere with it. “And I would rather you spent the rest of your life not being able to decide, than get a comfortable answer from an owl.”

. . .

And then, in the courtyard, an old man who had been sitting on a bench for two days without speaking since nine o'clock that morning stood up.

. . .

“Another most excellent portrait, visitor,” said Socrates.

. . .



Each citizen has a part to play.
All the parts must help the whole.

The Royal Fabric — the argument unfolding step by step.



The Royal Fabric — the logical progression.

“This one that you have completed for us — of the man who possesses the art of kingship. “The statesman.”

. . .

And that was the end of it.

. . .

The picture stayed where it was. Nobody in it moved for a moment; it was one of those pauses at the end of a long conversation when everybody is tired and nobody wants to be the one who breaks it, and the light was getting low on the flagstones.

. . .

“That’s all he says,” said Danae.

. . .

“That is all he says.”

. . .

“In two days. He says thank you at the start and then he says — that’s it? That’s the last thing?”

. . .

“That is the last thing,” said Sophia. “Two days. Two books. More words than in everything you watched in the spring. “And he speaks twice. “The first time he says thank you, to a man who did nothing but make an introduction. “And the last time — the last thing he says in all of it, having sat at the edge of somebody else’s conversation for two days while a stranger did the thing he spent his life trying and failing to do — “he says well done.”

. . .

Lela had her hand over her mouth.

. . .

6

ONE CITY — MANY PARTS



Different tasks, one purpose:
the good of the whole city.

The Royal Fabric — the competing interpretation.



The Royal Fabric — the difficulty and the alternative.

“And there is a great deal that people cannot agree about concerning that man,” said the owl, “and I have shown you three days of it and I have not finished. “But nobody, in two and a half thousand years, has ever been able to explain that away. It is just sitting there. It is not an argument and it is not a doctrine and there is nothing clever in it. “He came, and he listened, and at the end he said it was good.”

EPILOGUE TO PART FOUR The Wall : · Athens and the Academy, 399 and 366 BC In the garden of the Academy, Plato rolled the last of it up and tied the cord, and put it on the bench beside him, and did not take up another.

. . .

“That is the end of it,” he said.

. . .

“There is a third one.”

. . .

“There is no third one.”

. . .

“You announced it,” said Aristotle. “In the first ten minutes, in front of witnesses. Sophist, statesman, philosopher. Three names, three kinds. Everybody who reads these two will wait for the third.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Are you going to write it?”

. . .

The old man looked down the garden for a while.

. . .



Lela: So the statesman is like a master weaver?
Danae: Yes—he brings the best in everyone.

The Royal Fabric — Lela and Danae reconstruct the idea.



The Royal Fabric — Lela and Danae.

“No,” he said.

. . .

“Why not?”

. . .

“Because I have been trying to for eleven years,” said Plato, “and every time I begin it, it turns into a book about him, and then it is not a definition, it is a funeral. “And because I am not sure the third one is a kind at all. I have a sophist and I have a statesman and I have them both penned, and when I go looking for the philosopher I find him in whichever of the other two I am looking at, doing it properly. “And because I am sixty-two, and there is one more thing, and it is very long, and I would rather spend what is left on it than on a book I cannot write.”

. . .

“What is the other thing?”

. . .

“Laws,” said Plato.

. . .

Aristotle did not say anything for a moment.

. . .

“You have just spent two days,” he said carefully, “proving that law is second-best. Self-willed and ignorant. A note left by a man who had to go away. Perpetually simple about what is never simple.”

. . .



He does not rule for himself,
but for the harmony of the whole.

The Royal Fabric — the historical layer.



The Royal Fabric — historical reconstruction.

“I have.”

. . .

“And you are going to spend the rest of your life on it.”

. . .

“I am going to spend the rest of my life on it,” said the old man. “All of it. Twelve books, if I get that far. It will be the longest thing I ever write and it will be the least read, and that is entirely fair, and I shall not be there to mind. “You have just told me why. Second-best is what there is. I have looked for the first-best in two hemispheres and once in a palace, and what I found was a young man with a sword who had been told he was the one who knew. “So: the note. The note it is, then. And if the note is all we are going to have, then somebody had better sit down and write a good one, and do it properly, and put in it

everything he has ever learned — instead of leaving it to whoever happens to be shouting in the square that year.”

. . .

He put his hand flat on the closed roll.

. . .

“That is what the second-best actually asks of you,” he said. “Not resignation. It asks you to do the boring thing extremely well, for a long time, without a single person clapping, because the magnificent thing is not available. “Most people cannot do it. They would rather have the magnificent thing and fail, and be spoken of.”

. . .

The light had gone. Somebody in the buildings was calling somebody else about a door.

. . .

“You gave him the last word,” said Aristotle.

. . .

“I gave him the last word.”

. . .

9

ORDER, MEASURE, AND HARMONY



MEASURE



PROPORTION



ORDER



HARMONY

Measure creates proportion,
proportion creates order, order creates harmony.

The Royal Fabric — a wordless conceptual plate.



The Royal Fabric — wordless concept plate.

“He says four sentences in two days.”

. . .

“He says thank you and he says well done,” said Plato. “That is what he was like. “Nobody believes me. They have all got their own one. There is a Socrates who is a saint and a Socrates who is a nuisance and a Socrates who is a walking argument, and I made two of those three myself and I have only myself to blame. “But I sat next to the man for eight years, and he was rude, and he was funny, and he would not leave you alone, and he never once in my hearing failed to say when a thing was good.”

. . .

In the orchard it was nearly seven, and the light was going long and gold through the olives, and the picture had faded out some minutes before without either of the girls noticing exactly when.

. . .

Danae was sitting up with her arms round her knees.

. . .

“Sophia.”

. . .

“Yes.”

. . .

“Is that it? Is that all of them?”

. . .



The royal fabric is a living thing.
It must be woven again and again.

The Royal Fabric — the chapter's narrative and philosophical synthesis.



The Royal Fabric — climax, double-page spread.

“That is four,” said the owl. “Flowing, and the sophist, and the statesman. And the one in the spring, which is where it ends. “There is one more.”

. . .

“What’s the one more?”

. . .

Sophia did not answer at once.

. . .

She had been on that wall, in one place or another, for two summers, and neither of them had ever seen her look the way she looked now, which was the way people look when they are about to do something they have been saving.

. . .

"Twice," she said. "Twice in three days, in two different books, a man mentioned something and did not stop. "That is the way Parmenides did it one time, when he was very old and I was young. "And then, the following morning: when we were boys, the great Parmenides testified to us. "I told you both to hold on to it. You did. Neither of you asked me about it again, which I noticed, and which was a kindness, and I am now going to spend it."

. . .

"Tomorrow," said Sophia, "we are going backwards. "Everything you have watched this summer has been an old man in the last week of his life, sitting on benches, listening. "Tomorrow I am going to show you the same man when he was younger than Lela. "And he does not sit and listen. He gets up in front of the two most frightening thinkers in the Greek world and tells them they are wrong. "And they take him apart."

. . .

Lela said, after a moment: "Does he cry?"

. . .

"No," said the owl. "Something better than that. Go and eat."

Colophon

This annotated edition was compiled for Aris Skliros from the novel source and the sibling Euclid annotation layers (Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman, Parmenides hypertexts). It does not claim authorship of Plato or Euclid. Correspondences only. Cite-first lists applied exactly.

Concordance of Euclid correspondences

Plato predates Euclid by roughly half a century; Theon of Smyrna and Nicomachus of Gerasa follow him by four hundred years. Every entry below records a *correspondence* between what is done on the page and the statement in the *Elements* that later systematises it. None is a citation by Plato, and none implies that any speaker in this book had read Euclid. Statements follow the Fitzpatrick bilingual edition of Heiberg’s text; El.B.Def.N, El.B.Post.N, El.B.Prop.N are the canonical identifiers. Tiers: STRONG where the page performs the proposition itself, MODERATE where it performs a recognisable part of it, LIGHT where the pointer is thematic.

Reference	Locus	Tier	Page
El.V.Def.3	Elements V — ratio; capable of ratio	STRONG	11
El.X.Def.2	Elements X.Def.2 and I.47 — the diagonal, and the diagonal of the diagonal	MODERATE	121
El.V.Def.1	Elements V — part that measures; multiple	STRONG	351
El.V.Def.3	Elements V and VI — ratio; same ratio	STRONG	372