

August 14th

**THIS ISN'T FOR FUN. IT'S FOR LIFE**

"Philosophy isn't a parlor trick or made for show. It's not concerned with words, but with facts. It's not employed for some pleasure before the day is spent, or to relieve the uneasiness of our leisure. It shapes and builds up the soul, it gives order to life, guides action, shows what should and shouldn't be done—it sits at the rudder steering our course as we vacillate in uncertainties. Without it, no one can live without fear or free from care. Countless things happen every hour that require advice, and such advice is to be sought out in philosophy."

—SENECA, *MORAL LETTERS*, 16.3

There is a story about Cato the Elder, whose great-grandson Cato the Younger became a towering figure in Roman life. One day Cato witnessed a fine oration from Carneades, a Skeptic philosopher, who waxed poetically on the importance of justice. Yet the next day Cato found Carneades arguing passionately about the *problems* with justice—that it was merely a device invented by society to create order. Cato was aghast at this kind of "philosopher," who treated such a precious topic like a debate where one would argue both sides of an issue purely for show. What on earth was the point?

And so he lobbied the Senate to have Carneades sent back to Athens, where he could no longer corrupt the Roman youth with his rhetorical tricks. To a Stoic, the idea of idly discussing some issue—of believing or arguing two contradictory ideas—is an absurd waste of time, energy, and belief. As Seneca said, philosophy is not a fun trick. It's for use—for life.

Trick - Truco  
 Relieve - Aliviar  
 Steering - Guiar  
 Wax - Desarrollar  
 Aghast - horrorizado  
 lobby - Presionar

idly - ocioso