

#CINCINNATUS

Cabbages Over Dictatorship

The Roman farmer who chose duty over power



In the annals of Roman history, few names shine brighter as symbols of humility, civic virtue, and selfless leadership than Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus. His story has echoed through centuries, not because of conquests or wealth, but because of a rare and admirable decision: after being granted near-absolute power as a Roman dictator, he gave it all up to return to his modest life as a cabbage farmer.

A Man of the Land
Cincinnatus was born into a patrician Roman family around the 5th century BCE, a time when the Roman Republic was still young and frequently threatened by both internal unrest and external enemies. Despite his noble roots, Cincinnatus lived a simple life and owned a small farm. He was known for his integrity and devotion to Rome, but he was not actively involved in politics when the Republic called upon him.

Called to Power in a Time of Crisis

In 458 BCE, Rome found itself in peril. An invading tribe, known as the Aequi, had trapped a Roman army in the mountains, and the Senate needed a strong, decisive leader to save them. They turned to Cincinnatus, appointing him dictator, a temporary role in the Roman Republic that granted absolute authority, but only for six months, and only during emergencies.

When the messengers from Rome arrived, they found Cincinnatus working in his field. According to legend, he was plowing his land when he was told he had been chosen to lead Rome. He put down his plow, donned his toga, and accepted the call of duty.

Swift Victory, Swift Resignation
Cincinnatus wasted no time. He took command, rallied new forces, and marched to relieve the trapped Roman

army. Within just sixteen days, he had defeated the Aequi, saved the Roman legions, and restored order.

What followed is what made Cincinnatus a legend. Rather than using his newfound power to consolidate control, extend his rule, or enrich himself, Cincinnatus resigned from his dictatorship immediately after the crisis was over. He returned to his farm and resumed life as a humble citizen.

A Model of Republican Virtue

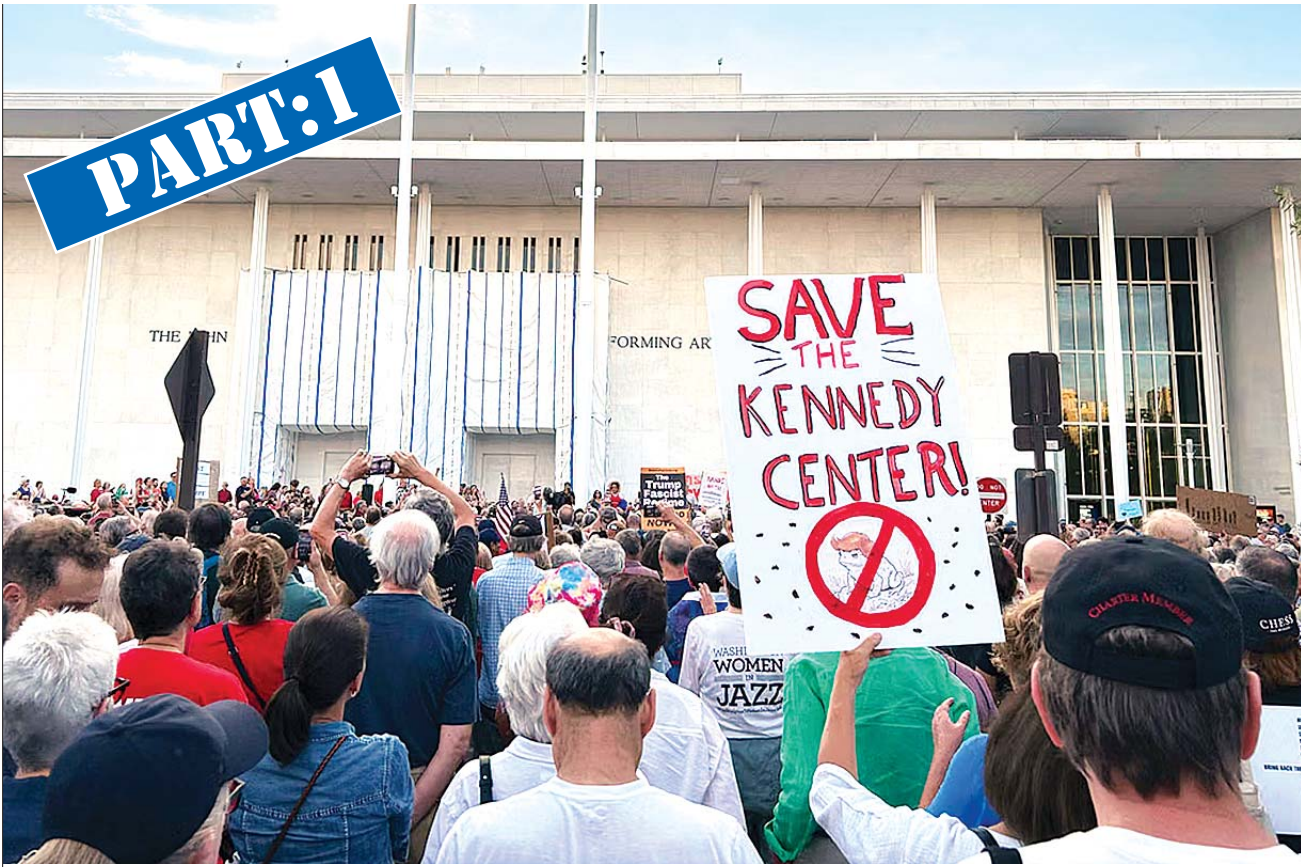
Cincinnatus became a powerful symbol of Roman ideals: self-discipline, patriotism, modesty, and the belief that power should only be used for the public good, and never held longer than necessary. His story became a lesson in leadership that true strength lies not in the ability to dominate, but in the wisdom to step aside.

Legacy in the Modern World

Cincinnatus's legacy lived on well beyond Rome. During the Enlightenment and the founding of modern republics, his example was often cited as the ideal leader, someone who serves the state selflessly and gives up power voluntarily. Most notably, George Washington was often compared to Cincinnatus for resigning his military commission after the American Revolution, and again, after serving two terms as U.S. President.

In fact, the American city of Cincinnati, Ohio, is named in Cincinnatus's honour, reflecting how deeply his values resonated with the architects of democracy.

In an age when power is often clung to, the story of Cincinnatus stands as a timeless reminder of what leadership can be at its best. He proved that greatness doesn't always come from conquest or control, sometimes, it comes from knowing when to step back, hang up your sword, and return to your cabbage field.



All About Trumptropy



A little science first

In science, entropy is, roughly, a measure of disorder. The second law of thermodynamics says that in an isolated system, one that exchanges nothing with the world outside, entropy never decreases. Things fall apart; they never tidy themselves up. Every Indian mother already knows this law. She has seen a teenager's room.

Note the word 'isolated.' A refrigerator can keep its interior cold and orderly, but only by pushing heat into the kitchen. Order needs exchange. Cut a system off from the world, and nothing can tidy it. Remember that the next time a country slaps tariffs on its friends. The physicist Ludwig Boltzmann wrote a formula for it, and it is carved on his tombstone in Vienna: $S = k \log W$. Put simply, the more possible states a system can be in, the greater its disorder.

Which brings me to a man whose every sentence can be in a great many possible states. I propose a new unit of measurement: Trumptropy, the amount of disorder that one statement from the President of the United States adds to the world. By Boltzmann's logic, it grows with the number of things he could mean. On a good day, that number is very large indeed.

And a little karma

In India, we are raised on a second law of our own: whatever you sow, you shall reap. It works reliably for ordinary people. Skip the gym, and your knees will remind you. Be rude to the maid, and she will not come on Monday.

But for some people, karma appears to have opted for EMIs. Trump has lost an election, been impeached twice and been convicted on 34 counts. He survived an assassin's bullet and turned it into a fist-pump photograph. And yet, here he is at 80, richer than ever, sulking over a theatre's nameplate. Perhaps, he simply read the Gita upside

This year, I discovered that world politics happens in the kitchen. On 28 February, America and Israel attacked Iran. Iran shut the Strait of Hormuz, a strip of sea only about 35 kilometres wide at its narrowest, roughly the distance from Jaipur to Chomu. Nearly 90 per cent of the cooking gas that India imports sails through it.

So, here is the puzzle of 2026. Entropy is working overtime. Karma seems to be on leave. down. Lord Krishna told Arjuna that we have a right to our actions, never to their fruits. Trump seems to believe that he has a right only to the fruits, preferably a Nobel Prize with his name engraved on it.

Where Trumptropy lands

This year, I discovered that world politics happens in the kitchen. On 28 February, America and Israel attacked Iran. Iran shut the Strait of Hormuz, a strip of sea only about 35 kilometres wide at its narrowest, roughly the distance from Jaipur to Chomu. Nearly 90 per cent of the cooking gas that India imports sails through it. When the ships stopped, the gas agencies were filled with queues and the gap between bookings went up from 21 days to 25. Hostels served lemon water instead of chai. For a nation that runs on chai, that is a national emergency.

In the seventies, Shashi Kapoor silenced Amitabh Bachchan with 'Mere paa maa hai' (I have mother). In March 2026, the proudest line in any Indian home was 'Mere paa gas hai' (I have gas).

I did what Indian women have always done in a crisis. I found a 'jugaad' (a workaround) and bought an induction cooker. It was meant to be a stand-by. Months later, I use it more than the gas. My cylinder depends on a ship crossing a sea at war. My induction cooker depends on electricity made mostly at home. Without meaning to, I had done in my kitchen what whole nations are now scrambling to do. I had stopped depending on one road.

In 1973, after another war involving Israel, Arab producers cut oil supplies and prices quadrupled. Papa tells me that in those days, they simply went everywhere on

#TRUMPTROPY



cycles. I have always believed history moves in cycles. In 1973, so did my father. So, where does all this disorder come from? After careful study, I have identified its laws.

The Zeroth Law: Friends of friends are not friends

In physics, if A is in balance with C, and B is in balance with C, then A and B are in balance with each other. In 'Trumptropy', India is Trump's friend. Pakistan is Trump's friend. India and Pakistan are still not friends. Trump has claimed, countless times, that he stopped last year's war between India and Pakistan. India has replied, just as many times, that he did not. Pakistan nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize, and this April, it hosted his peace talks with Iran in Islamabad. The talks failed. The next day, America announced a naval blockade of Iran. But the photographs were lovely.

The First Law: Conservation of name

In physics, energy can neither be created nor destroyed. It only changes form. In Trumptropy, Trump's name can neither be created nor destroyed. It only moves from one building to another.

In July, Palm Beach International Airport in Florida became President Donald J. Trump International Airport. In August, even its three-letter code changed, to DJT. In December, the US Institute of Peace became the Donald J. Trump Institute of Peace. Within three months, America was bombing Iran. Nobody can say that the man lacks range.

Then came the Kennedy Center. America's national theatre, renamed the Donald J. Trump and John F. Kennedy Memorial Center. Please note the order: Kennedy was assassinated in office, and he still had to take the second seat. A court

ordered the name removed, and in June, the letters came down. On 15 September, after a judge refused to let them go back up, Trump said that the building would stay shut, unpaired, unless his name returned. The law holds. The name did not disappear. It simply moved into a sulk. I live in Jaipur, a city named after its founder, Sawai Jai Singh, so, I am in no position to lecture anyone about names. I will only point out that Jai Singh built the Jantar Mantar to study the stars. Trump is building a ballroom.

The Second Law: Disorder always increases

In Trumptropy, disorder increases with every post on Truth Social. Take the great Russian oil serial, which I have followed more faithfully than any saas-bahu show.

Episode 1 (last August): America is furious that India buys Russian oil. Half of the 50 per cent tariff on

our goods is marked 'for Russian oil.' The saas has spoken: 'Beta, you will not go to your mother's house.'

Episode 2 (February): A deal. Tariffs come down, and India, we are told, will stop buying Russian oil. The bahu touches the saas's feet. The background music swells. Episode 3 (6 March): The Gulf catches fire, and the saas has a new idea. America grants India 30 days to buy the Russian cargoes already stuck at sea. 'Beta, why don't you ask your mother to send some aachaar (pickle)?'

Episode 4 (the next day): The bahu politely reminds everyone that she never needed permission to visit her mother's house in the first place. Dramatic zoom. Three reaction shots. Commercial break. Ekta Kapoor could not have written it better. Her serials, at least, follow a script. If you are confused, congratulations. You have understood foreign policy.

The Third Law: The deadline that never arrives

In physics, absolute zero can never be reached. In Trumptropy, neither can a deadline. As it approaches zero, it is extended. Trump's favourite unit of time is 'two weeks.' He promised to end the Russia-Ukraine war in 24 hours; those hours have now lasted more than six hundred days. And in June last year, when he said that he would decide on striking Iran within two weeks, he struck in two days. The only thing more dangerous than a Trump deadline is a Trump deadline that arrives early.

Every Indian knows this law. It is the plumber who says 'kal aa jaunga' (I will come tomorrow).



International Coffee Day - Celebrating the World's Favourite Brew

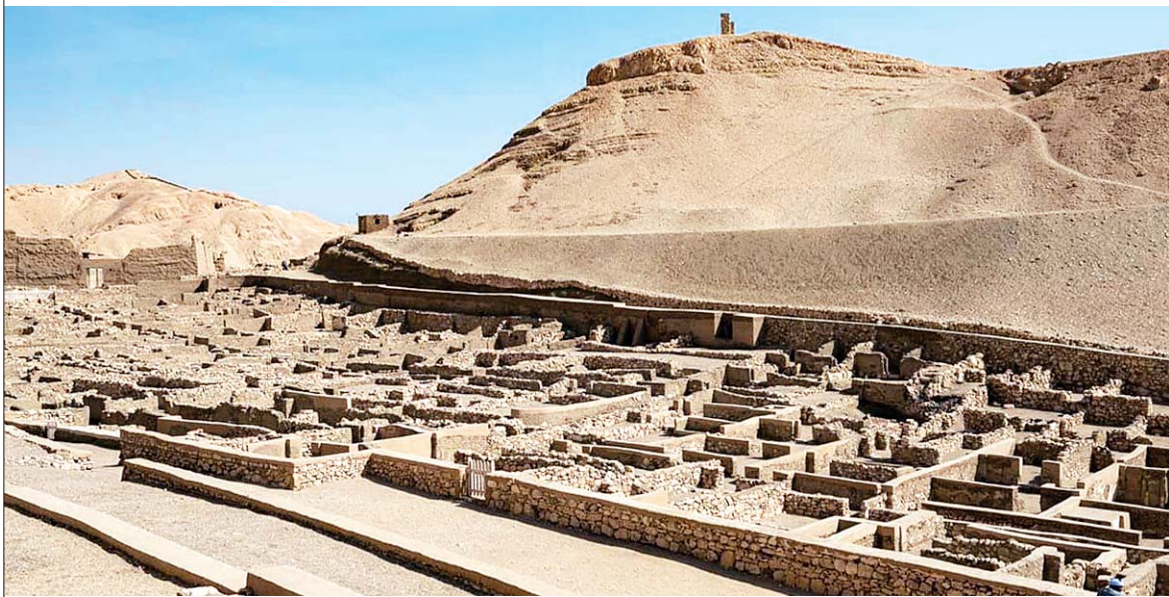
Every year on October 1st, coffee lovers worldwide celebrate International Coffee Day, a tribute to the rich aroma, culture, and history of one of the world's most beloved beverages. From cozy cafés to bustling offices, coffee fuels conversations, creativity, and daily routines. The day highlights not only the joy of sipping a perfect cup but also raises awareness about the farmers and communities behind every bean. It's a celebration of connection, culture, and craftsmanship, inviting everyone to savour, appreciate, and share the global love for coffee that transcends borders and brings people together.



#DEIR EL-MEDINA

Voices from the Ancient Workplace

"I cannot come to work today. I am busy brewing beer."
"I cannot work today. My mother-in-law is visiting."



In the dry Egyptian desert, not far from Valley of the Kings, lies a small ancient village called Deir el-Medina. At first glance, it looks like just another archaeological site, but the discoveries made here reveal something extraordinary: the everyday voices of workers who lived more than 3,000 years ago.

Archaeologists exploring this settlement found thousands of broken pieces of pottery and limestone flakes known as ostraca. Instead of throwing them away, the workers used them as writing surfaces, much like sticky notes or text messages of the ancient world. And what they wrote on them is surprisingly familiar.

The Ancient Office Records

The people of Deir el-Medina were skilled craftsmen and laborers who built and decorated the tombs of pharaohs during Egypt's New Kingdom period. Their work was highly organized, and like modern workplaces, they kept detailed work logs and attendance records.

But among these official notes were very human messages, complaints, excuses,

and personal explanations for missing work.

One worker wrote a message that feels remarkably modern: "I cannot come to work today. I am busy brewing beer." Another recorded his absence with a family reason: "I cannot work today. My mother-in-law is visiting." These small fragments reveal something fascinating: even in ancient times, people struggled to balance work responsibilities and personal life.

Complaints About the Boss

The pottery shards also contain workplace grievances. Some workers openly complained about management, describing their supervisors as harsh or unreasonable. One complaint even suggested that the boss himself was more terrible than the work. It sounds like something someone might post today after a difficult day at the office. The only difference is that instead of typing it on social media, they scratched it onto a piece of pottery.

Hangovers and Everyday Drama

Some notes mention illnesses or fatigue that historians suspect may have been polite ways of

describing hangovers after drinking too much beer, a very common drink in ancient Egypt. Others describe family obligations, domestic disputes, or personal problems that prevented people from showing up for work.

In other words, the workers of Deir el-Medina dealt with: • difficult bosses • workplace stress • family responsibilities • social obligations • and the occasional bad morning after a long night

Human Nature Has Not Changed

When we read these ancient notes today, one thing becomes very clear: human nature has not changed much in thousands of years.

The same struggles people faced then still exist today: • balancing work and family life • dealing with demanding managers • coping with stress and exhaustion • trying to explain why we cannot make it to work

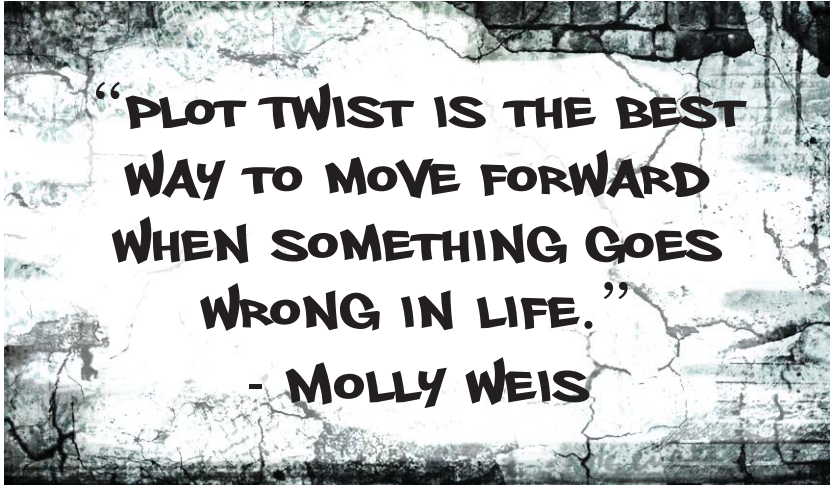
A Window into Real Lives

What makes Deir el-Medina so special is that it shows history not through kings and monuments, but through the voices of ordinary people. These pottery notes are small, informal, and sometimes humorous, but they reveal the real lives of workers in ancient Egypt.

They remind us that behind every grand pyramid or royal tomb were individuals dealing with everyday challenges, just like us.

Across thousands of years, the tools have changed, the workplaces have evolved, but the human experience of work, stress, family, and humor remains surprisingly the same.

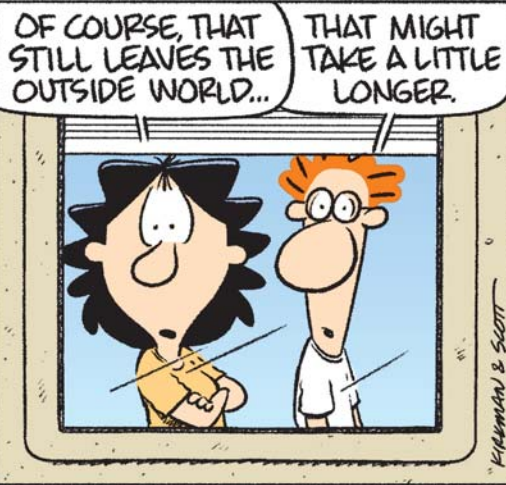
THE WALL



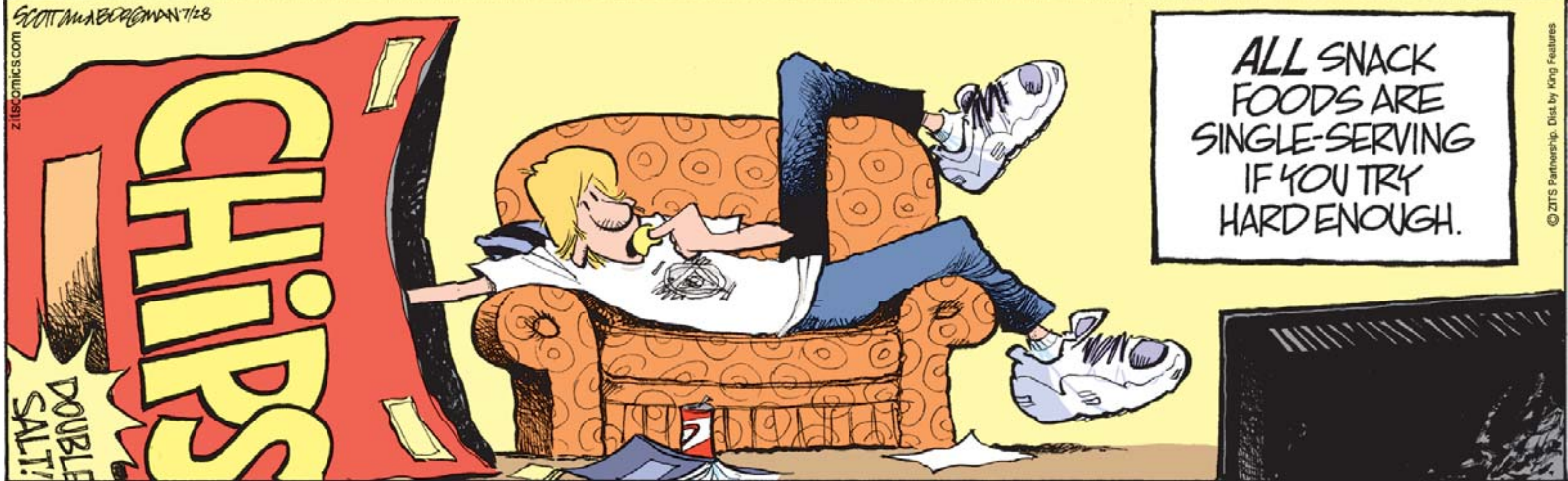
BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman