

## Forking Good: An Unofficial Cookbook for Fans of The Good Place

**Valya Dudycz Lupescu**

**Stephen H. Segal**

**Dingding Hu, Illustrator**

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Are its tempting dishes heavenly, or simply bound to land you in caloric hell? Don't let such arbitrary diametrics detract you from picking up Valya Dudycz Lupescu and Stephen H. Segal's *Forking Good*, a quippy, watch-party-minded cookbook that delivers tidbits of philosophy in time with recipes for breakfast fries and bacon-wrapped dates, all calibrated with care for devotees of NBC's *The Good Place*.

The television series follows four imperfect individuals who find themselves in a discombobulating afterlife whose paradisaical elements prove to be an artifice. No matter: among them are a philosopher, a schemer, a climber, and a charming goof, and their combined skills may equal a way out.

*Forking Good* plays upon their individual areas of expertise. Chidi's philosophy lessons transfer into recipe introductions that distill Hegel, Descartes, Socrates, and Schrödinger for Jason or Eleanor-esque audiences with limited attention spans. Their clever summaries are parlayed into punny recipes: see Schrödinger's Dog with Schopenhaurkraut for corn dog bites that may or may not have meat inside, and the Pythagorean Serum, a cocktail that is the delectable sum of its perfectly proportioned parts.

Quotes from the show play upon early nostalgia, and cute sidebars put the philosophers into conversations with the recipes they inspire. Colorful cartoon illustrations up the book's visual appeal. If there are cracks, they come in the form of the book's heavy recipes. Adaptations for dietary restrictions are marked, but light dishes are less common than calorie bombs, including Candide Apples and Macaroni with Socracheese. Though they're endless fun to engage, it's hard to imagine producing these dishes for anything other than a themed binge-watching session.

An extended inside joke that show fans will delight in adding to their shelves, *Forking Good* is a comfort-food laden, lightly philosophical cookbook worth indulging in.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (November / December 2019)

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