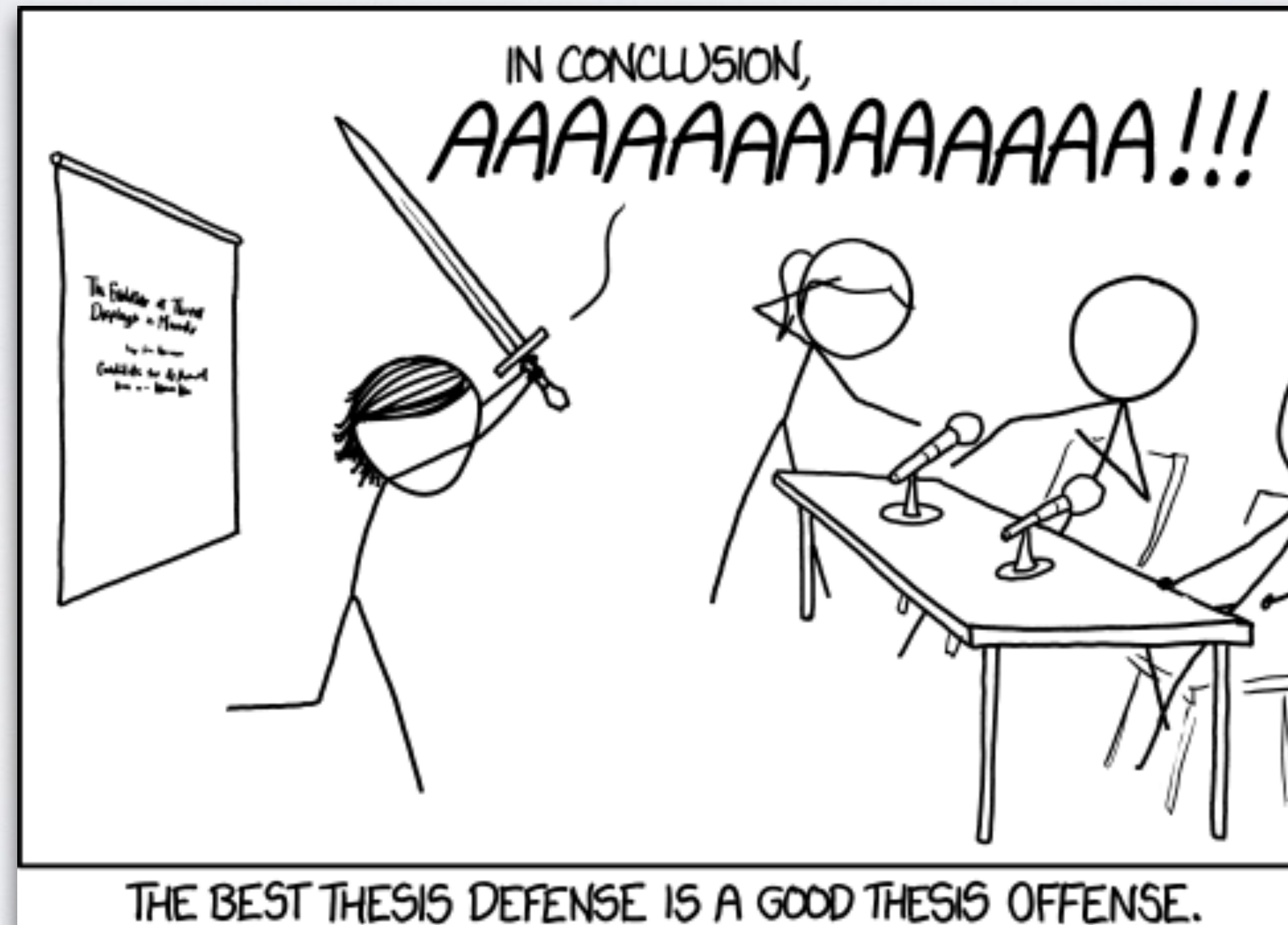


SURVIVING YOUR VIVA



Ian's preparation

- Aim to know the thesis back to front
 - Know the arguments, and *where* they are
- Prepare answers to likely questions
 - “Explain your research in a few sentences”
 - “Why is it unique?”
 - “What is it good for, *and where does it not work?*”
- Know the weaker areas of the thesis
 - I spent a long time defending a model that I had used. I should have prepared this defence beforehand.

Jim's preparation

- Make summaries:
 - 1 minute thesis; 5 minute thesis; chapter summaries
- Print thesis to take into viva. Annotate with useful reminders/triggers. Annotate weaker parts with triggers for defence
- “Nasty PhD Viva Questions”
[<http://pages.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/~saul/wiki/uploads/Chapter1/NastyPhDQuestions.html>]
- Ask supervisors what they would ask; where are the weakest parts
- Broke arm four days before viva

Ian's viva

- 3 hours
- Three participants – two examiners and me
- A few initial starter questions
- Went through page by page covering:
 - Clarifications
 - Justifications
 - Corrections
 - Analysis (“is this like other work?”)

Jim's viva

- 2 hours
- Three participants – two examiners and me
- Morning: Tried to take my mind off things - had lunch with supervisor
 - 4 hour delay...
- The typical starter question to warm me up
- Internal focused on the “big picture” questions
- External focused on technical detail
- Page by page

Ian's advice

- Almost everyone has *imposter syndrome*:

Despite external evidence of their competence, those with the syndrome remain convinced that they are frauds and do not deserve the success they have achieved. Proof of success is dismissed as luck, timing, or as a result of deceiving others into thinking they are more intelligent and competent than they believe themselves to be.

- Wikipedia

- Remember that b

*The exaggerated
feel compelled to*

- Albert Einstein

Google

impostor syndrome in

impostor syndrome in **academia**

impostor syndrome in **relationships**

impostor syndrome **academia**

imposter syndrome in **nursing**

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Ian's advice

- They are trying to challenge you. Don't get disheartened!
- Know when to argue
 - Only important points need to be fought heavily
- Get to know your external (and internal). They are likely to quiz you on work similar to their own
- Use your supervisor

Jim's advice

- Speak to people - supervisors, friends, other PhDs, family, strangers
- Don't break your arm
- Get a good night's sleep
- Take your time, be calm
- Turn it from a Q&A session into a discussion
- Have a mock viva (also be an examiner in a mock viva)

Jim's advice

- The things I prepared for (stressed over) weren't really focused on...
- ...but the preparation was still useful!
- (You know your thesis better than anyone)
- When asked "is there anything you think we should have asked you?", stay quiet!

ENJOY IT!

(you won't)

(but it'll be fine)

