

# Hey, Orpheus, Don't Look Back, Dude

*by* Christian Bell

So, graduates, you've made it up the ladder and now it's time for you to keep going up into the clouds and as you do, I implore you to remember the words to Orpheus, don't look back, dude, and also to Lot and his wife, and, in this case with the ladder, said back is decidedly down. Anyway, graduates, my words to you are, don't do it, whatever it may be. You're still too young to do anything correctly. Wait until you're at least 30 before you try anything on your own. One other thing I can impart to you is that it's difficult being the god of thunder these days. That's a little joke slash pickup line I like to use, and as you can see from my list of invited guests, one that's met with painfully nonexistent success. Yes, I know, painful, a term you're meditating on right this moment, and if you think of Thor and the Norse gods, you might also think, smelly, like mushrooms or old cheeses, or may I use the word mead? People don't talk about mead much anymore, like they did back in the sixth century. They don't talk about Grendel's mother much like they used to either, if you've noticed, but if you've just finished college, which is what I suspect if you're sitting here right now listening to what I'm saying because one, why would you be here and not among the passed-out dregs of an all-night kegger if you weren't now finished college, and two, who wears these silly caps and gowns unless someone's handing you a sheepskin. Yes, I know, there are various scenarios and titillating role playing options and who doesn't like some arousing regent-doctoral student play, but again, wait until you're 30.

Anyway, you're probably thinking, here at the end of your college career, enough of the Grendel, his mother, Beowulf, Hrothschild or whatever that guy's name was and all these answers to exam

questions that I got wrong anyway and get me a freaking job already. Yes, you, Mr. Speaker Dude, get me employed, why don't you? Okay, here's a job for you—translate Beowulf back into its native Spanish. With your eyes closed. Did you know that Beowulf was originally composed in Spanish? Yeah, me neither! Well, if you can do it, I'm willing to pay you what you're going to make in the coming year as you cash in on your major-related profession, which is the grand sum of bupkis. Don't worry, though, the compensation you'll really get is the satisfaction of doing a noble deed, which will make you equivalent with the king of the Danes in my book, and when you reach my age, you'll realize is truly the definition of bupkis.

Anyway, before you climb that corporate ladder—a completely different ladder than this college ladder you just climbed up, which means you're going to have to gingerly climb down to the bottom and start anew—you're going to need a haircut. And you're going to need a haircut that's so deep that it trims those nasty bits of your conscience off. You know, the moral/ethical parts, which hopefully you've let grow a bit while you were in college and on your parents' or the federal government's dime. Graduates, I've seen the future of this world and it has had part of its brain removed. After that, you're going to need several pairs of good shoes, because you're going to keep wearing out a pair every ten thousand steps you take up that ladder, and it's only right that you drop that spent pair right on the head of the guy or girl just below you, as such behavior is the basis of capitalism and probably an economics lesson you slept through three, four, five, six years ago. So now, I'll send you forth, graduates, with this last piece of wisdom—there's going to be a huge party at the provost's place right after this, and you're not invited. But take heart, this is also one of the tenets of capitalism, that you get to have wild indulgent parties and rub it in the faces of those not invited. More appropriately for you right now, there will be wild indulgent parties, and you will not be invited.

So, if you think you've remembered enough of freshman literature and you'll be like Grendel and try to crash the party and exact revenge upon the merry noisemakers, think again. We'll be armed to the teeth. With that, you got an extra bonus nugget regarding capitalism, and, as it keeps trickling down, you'll get even another: nothing comes free unless you truly have all the money in the world and don't need it. Now for the kicker--you'll be receiving a bill for these juicy tidbits, which is going to look awfully similar to the rolled up scroll that this grey-bearded guy is about to hand you. Yes, it's quite pricey and for what, exactly? This is the same question your parents are asking themselves right now. So, again, don't look back, dude, and not because your loved one will be whisked back to Hades or turned to a mound of salt, but because your parents, they're not there anymore to foot the bill, but, man, they're laughing their asses off. Truly.

