

# Corybungus

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"CORYBUNGUS"

BY STEPHEN BITTRICH

SETTING:

A large, over-priced bookstore on Fifth Avenue.

AT RISE:

The RETURNS MAN is busily organizing books behind the Returns Counter. MR. WEINER comes in lugging a copy of the Oxford English Dictionary. HE steps up to the counter and begins drumming his fingers noisily.

RETURNS MAN

Yes sir, how may I help you?

MR. WEINER

I've got a defective O-E-D.

RETURNS MAN

I'm very sorry, sir. And what exactly *is* a defective O-E-D?

(MR. WEINER slams the O-E-D  
down on the counter)

RETURNS MAN (CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

Ah yes, the Oxford English Dictionary.

MR. WEINER

O-E-D.

RETURNS MAN

Yes, I see. And what exactly is the matter with your O-E-D, sir?

MR. WEINER

It's missing words.

RETURNS MAN

Really? Missing--

MR. WEINER

Missing words.

RETURNS MAN

I see. Well, what kinds of words is it missing, exactly?

MR. WEINER

All kinds of words.

RETURNS MAN

Hmmmm, well, is the book missing pages? Is that the way in which it's defec--

MR. WEINER

Just words!

RETURNS MAN

Aaaaall right, well, did you want to exchange the book, sir, or receive store cred--?

MR. WEINER

Exchange.

RETURNS MAN

Of course, of course. Allow me to just--  
(The RETURNS MAN speaks into a  
phone--)

Roger, please send up a copy of the Oxford English Dictionary-- right away.

MR. WEINER

(Under his breath)

O-E-D.

RETURNS MAN

Well, sir, that book will be sent right up.

(MR. WEINER sighs heavily and  
looks at his watch)

RETURNS MAN (CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

Well. . . if I may ask, sir, what words did you find missing from your. . . O-E-D?

MR. WEINER

I couldn't find "corybungus."

RETURNS MAN

You don't say.

MR. WEINER

Yes, I do.

RETURNS MAN

"Corybungus."

MR. WEINER

It isn't in there. Look for yourself.

RETURNS MAN

No, no, I believe you.

MR. WEINER

I mean, there's really no point of having an O-E-D if it's missing important words.

RETURNS MAN

Of course.

(Beat)

Now, what exactly does "corybungus" mean? I don't know that one.

MR. WEINER

You think I made it up?

RETURNS MAN

I believe you! I just don't know the word.

MR. WEINER

(Condescendingly)

Oh really? Well, I find it embarrassing to say.

RETURNS MAN

Oh, it's. . . it's an embarrassing word?

MR. WEINER

Well, I really don't know you well.

RETURNS MAN

No.

MR. WEINER

I find it embarrassing to say.

RETURNS MAN

Of course.

MR. WEINER

(After a beat)

Bum.

RETURNS MAN

Excuse me?

MR. WEINER

Bum! Buttocks! Butt! Derriere! Posterior! Ass! OKAY?

RETURNS MAN  
(Embarrassed; looking around  
the store)

Oh. . . I see. *That's* corybungus.

MR. WEINER

Yes.

RETURNS MAN

I never heard that one.

MR. WEINER

Well, it's a biggy.

RETURNS MAN

Yes.

(Beat)

Sir, do you suppose that corybungus will be in the dictionary they're sending up?

MR. WEINER

Why not?

RETURNS MAN

Well--

MR. WEINER

You trying to unload defective dictionaries?

RETURNS MAN

No, no, not to my knowledge.

MR. WEINER

Because I could shop some place else.

RETURNS MAN

Sir, I'm not suggesting that in the least. It's just that, I was thinking, perhaps corybungus might be considered to be too much of a . . . colloquialism to be included in the--

MR. WEINER

Colloquialism? What do I look like--some sassifersing hick?

RETURNS MAN

No sir, I didn't mean--

MR. WEINER

Corybungus! Corybungus!

RETURNS MAN

Sir!

MR. WEINER

I'll have you know Shakespeare used corybungus in Coriolanus.

RETURNS MAN

No.

MR. WEINER

Act 5, Scene 2, Line 77. Corybungus! "I beg you take withal my wanton heart/But touch you not my virgin Corybungus."

RETURNS MAN

Really?

MR. WEINER

Milton used corybungus at least twice in Paradise Lost.

RETURNS MAN

Milton?

MR. WEINER

CORYBUNGUS IS IMPORTANT!

RETURNS MAN

Please, sir, you don't need to shout.

MR. WEINER

Oh? And what makes you so blankyfrank snifferudinous?

RETURNS MAN

Snifferud--

MR. WEINER

You don't pay my disturbennents. I pay my own! I don't have to take juppers from you.

RETURNS MAN

Look, sir, I'm going to have to ask you to leave if you--!

MR. WEINER

Leave? You smelly corybungus!

RETURNS MAN

Now don't you call me that!

MR. WEINER

Corybungus! Corybungus! Your mother's got barnicrusts on her tits!

RETURNS MAN

Look you--dickhead! If you want your money back--

MR. WEINER

Trilly frilly poopopacks on her dangustrucks--

RETURNS MAN

You'll have to show me a receipt--

MR. WEINER

Receipt?

RETURNS MAN

Otherwise, I'll have security escort you out right now.

MR. WEINER

Here's my receipt.

(The RETURNS MAN snatches the receipt)

RETURNS MAN

This wasn't bought here.

MR. WEINER

I know that.

RETURNS MAN

YOU CAN'T RETURN A BOOK YOU DIDN'T BUY HERE!

MR. WEINER

Why not? You do have the O-E-D, don't you?

RETURNS MAN

THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT! YOU CAN'T EXCHANGE--

MR. WEINER

Corybungushead.

RETURNS MAN

GET OUT OF HERE! GET OUT OF HERE RIGHT NOW!

(Picks up the intercom)

SECURITY TO THE RETURNS DESK! SECURITY TO THE RETURNS DESK!

MR. WEINER

Oh, don't get your ziddles in an uproar. I'm leaving.

RETURNS MAN

I don't want to see you in here again!

MR. WEINER

(Leaving)

I would never shop here anyway.

RETURNS MAN

And there's no such word as corybungus!

MR. WEINER

"And there rose from the forbidding sea the great white Leviathan--as white as the whitest of *corybungi* in our swarthy crew."

RETURNS MAN

I don't want to hear it!

MR. WEINER

Moby Dick.

RETURNS MAN

Up yours, pal!

MR. WEINER

(Fading away as HE walks out  
the door)

"I think that I shall never see, / A corybungus as on thee-- / So  
sweet, so firm, so grand to touch, / It is the bum I dream to  
clutch."

RETURNS MAN

(Into the phone)

Roger, cancel that O-E-D. And Roger, while I've got you on,  
look up the word, "Corybungus."

(The lights fade to black)

(END OF PLAY)