

## The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



### Episode 4: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, Run into Suddenly Winter and a Not Surprise

They gawked, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. They gawked because it was Fall when they'd started running and now it was Winter. They couldn't remember how long they'd been running and they couldn't remember why they'd been running...something to do with not having a portable flame thrower just when they'd needed one.

There was snow on the path and snow in the trees; in fact, it was impossible to count the needles in the trees because they were conjoined by snow to form white droopy swatches that looked like white droopy tree paws. Everywhere, snow smothered bushes and soil and trees. There were no wild flowers here...all smothered and drowned in frozen water. It had suddenly become a black and white world, a cold hard black and white world.

Crazy Man appeared to be in shock. The dog, Sidestepper, noticed this and said, "What's wrong?"

It took Crazy Man a few minutes to gather his thoughts around the question, his body existing in one dimension and his mind in another and all, but he finally caused his mouth to open and his lips to curl around a few words: "How am I going to count the needles in the trees? They're swatched with snow."

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for a few seconds (or was it a few days?) before determining that Crazy Man's answer was irrelevant and decided to ignore it. "I'm hungry," he said.

Crazy Man regarded the dog, Sidestepper, with a sudden reverence and respect. "Well spoken," he blurted. "The power of your words strikes deep into my soul, wherever it is, here or there, in one dimension or the other. I feel the intrinsic truth of your message." Whereupon, Crazy Man gushed tears of artistic acceptance and his head spun in the sheer joy of well-spoken words, tossing a spray of tears upon the already frozen landscape. "Yes!" he hollered. "Yes! I too am

hungry!” And having said that for at least three seconds, his head stopped spinning and he looked at the dog, Sidestepper, and thought about how much he liked hot dogs. With mustard. With relish. And just as he was about to lick his lips, he heard something. His ears perked. The dog, Sidestepper, perked his ears as well. Something strange was happening along the path of adventure and new meanings, something strange and audible, something to cause ears to perk.

“If you come any closer, we’ll eat you.”

Crazy Man was the first to see the source of the sound. In the field to the right was a herd of eight black deer with white asses. The two astounded travellers stared at the deer.

“I mean it...if you come any closer, we’ll eat you. We have mustard and relish.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, looked at each other (Crazy Man with a slice of guilt, having just thought similar thoughts) and back at the deer.

“But,” said Crazy Man, “You’re deer. You’re vegans.”

“No we’re not,” said a deer to the left of the herd.

“Yes, you are,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “No one ever invites a deer to a barbecue..unless the deer *is* the barbecue.”

“I’ve been to a barbecue,” said the deer behind the deer to the left of the herd. “We ate corn on the cob with butter and salt.”

“I went to a corn boil once,” said a deer to the right of the herd, just behind the second deer from the right. “Same thing: corn, butter, salt.”

“But none of you ate *meat* at a barbecue,” said Crazy Man. “All deer are vegans. Vegans don’t eat meat.”

“Or butter,” added the dog, Sidestepper. “Butter comes from cows and cows are meat.”

“I like cows,” said the fourth deer from the left. “But I wouldn’t eat one.”

“I would if I really had to,” said the fifth deer from the left.

“You’d eat anything,” said the fifth deer from the right.

“I saw him eating forest chocolates once,” said the deer to the extreme right (aka, eighth deer from the left). All the deer chuckled except for the fifth deer from the left who mumbled something that sounded like *bastards*.

The dog, Sidestepper, had a thought. He called to the fourth deer from the left. “Are you my long lost mother who left me when I was just a pup and thus deprived me of love and affection which eventually caused my legs to grow faster than the rest of me? You bastard.”

“No!” said the fourth deer from the left. “I’m not your mother. And you’re a bastard.”

This caused the dog, Sidestepper, to start bawling like a baby. It was infectious bawling and it spread to Crazy Man, who started draining his eyes and spinning his head again so fast and hard that tears flew through the air and sprinkled the deer who started bawling as well. They cried for a day (or was it a month?) before they forgot why they were crying and scampered into the woods, their white asses leaving the scene of the crying.

Bubbles of white that might have been mistaken for clouds floated in the big blue sky trying to figure out what they were. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stopped their crying after arriving at the conclusion, subconsciously of course, that this was not the time to be spineless little baby child, all tearful and self-indulgent. And besides, Crazy Man was beginning to look at the dog, Sidestepper, with a mustard and relish look again. “We should find food,” he said. “I’m having thoughts.”

The dog, Sidestepper, sensed something ominous lurking under the syntax of Crazy Man's words and said, "You may have a kitchen...I *do* have a portable flame thrower. Somewhere."

Crazy Man immediately forgot about hot dogs and said, "I never expected Winter to be part of this outside thing."

The dog, Sidestepper, who just happened to have had a degree in philosophy from an online university that put him through a gruelling soul-searching gut-wrenching two weeks of intense study for an entire two hours a day at a cost of \$35,000 dollars in student loans with interest that put him in bank servitude for 150 years said, "Winter will pass." With a sigh of relief, he finally felt that he'd gotten his money's worth.

"That's crap," said Crazy Man. "You don't have to have a degree in rocket science to know that. You might as well have something as useless as a degree in philosophy or English literature."

Suddenly, yes suddenly, again, suddenly, an envelope fell out of the sky and drifted across the Wintery path of adventure and new meanings right into Crazy Man's right hand. The two travellers stared at the package. They were intrigued. They were mystified. The dog, Sidestepper, said, "Are you going to open it?"

Crazy Man stared with intrigued and mystified eyes at the envelope in his right hand. It didn't really seem to be anything special. It didn't glow like some ultra-religious artifact. It didn't vibrate like some esoteric hand-off from an alien invasion. It didn't emanate celestial music like warnings of joy and not-joy from the Rolling Stones. It was just a plain old envelope...brown, square, paper, flat. But it had just fallen out of the sky. What was that all about? A message from the gods? From the Rolling Stones?

"No," said the dog, Sidestepper. "It's just an envelope that fell out of the sky. Open it."

Crazy Man, who incidentally was a big Stones fan in one of the dimensions in which he existed was deeply disappointed but nevertheless felt an overwhelming urge to open the envelope. So he let out a giant resounding "YAAAAAAAY!" And started tearing and ripping and biting and shredding the envelope until envelope parts flew all the place, some of them so high that they joined the fat little bouncy things that might have been clouds in the clear blue sky. He tore and he ripped until his hands were empty and the landscape was covered with snow and envelope. Crazy Man stared at his empty hands. The dog, Sidestepper, stared at Crazy Man's empty hands. They stared for exactly three minutes and twenty-two seconds. We know this for a fact because Crazy Man counted the seconds. However, we're not sure in which dimension he did the counting so there might have been some dimension lag in the area of 499648658 millionths of a second, depending on which dimension he did the counting.

"Well, that's a big disappointment," said the dog, Sidestepper. "All the hopes we had for that envelope...and it was empty."

Crazy Man sniffed his hands. Then he licked them. He put his hands over his ears and listened to them. He took his trusty microscope out of his pocket and examined each pore in both hands. He made notes, consulted authorities, gave three Ted Talks on the nature of nothing. They were very short...he had nothing to say.

"What a gyp," he said.

"It might have been a letter from my mother," said the dog, Sidestepper.

Crazy Man looked at him quizzically.

"She couldn't read or write."

Suddenly everything made sense and Crazy Man said, “I’ll bet those non-vegan deer had something to do with this.”

“Bastards,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Without further ado, feeling gypped but glad to have not been eaten by non-vegan deer, they set off down the path of adventure and new meanings unaware that something dark and grisly awaited them just ahead.

To be continued...

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