

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 15 Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, confront an unlikely pair of weirdoes in the deep dark scary woods

“The deep dark scary woods seem to be encroaching in a threatening way,” said Crazy Man, Fear flickered like disco balls in his round eyes. “Look at the shadows creeping across the path.”

It was too much for the dog, Sidestepper. He screamed. He screamed from the pit of his canine soul as he stepped sideways along the path of adventure and new meanings, screaming from his little doggie mouth until he collapsed into a pool of legs and dog fur. But that didn’t stop the screaming.

Crazy Man stared at his travel buddy in a manner that suggested disapproval at various levels of socially acceptable behaviour. The disco balls in his eyes flickered out. He was confused. “Should I be screaming too?”

The dog, Sidestepper, stopped screaming and pondered deeply on Crazy Man’s question. His little pointy ears wiggled as he thought. His tail wagged. He said, “Why not?”

So Crazy Man sat down beside the dog, Sidestepper, and they screamed. They screamed for the path and the journey and all the unwanted surprises awaiting them. They screamed their fear of the deep dark scary woods and they screamed for each other...pals in the mutual grip of wood fear.

But their screams did nothing to stop the encroaching darkness, the creepy shadows, the cloud things rolling in to cover what light remained in the sky. So they stopped screaming and just lay on the path, relaxing...waiting for certain doom.

“You’ve been a good friend,” said Crazy Man, disco balls replaced by tears.

“And so have you,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “And if we survive this...I hope you find something to eat...and your kitchen.”

“And I hope you find your mother.”

Just then, movement appeared on the path ahead of them, movement in the claw-like shadows, dark figures seeming to float through the semi-light towards them.

“I think I’m going to pee,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Good thing you’re not wearing pants,” said Crazy Man, shifting uncomfortably in his ARMY Surplus dungarees.

The shapes in the shadows moved closer and began to take on loosely familiar forms. The doomed buddies gawked as the forms stepped into the remaining light. Crazy Man jumped to his feet and pulled the dog, Sidestepper, up by his tail.

“OUCH!” said the dog, Sidestepper, but the two were standing, facing a sight that shivered them to the cores of their existential beings.

“Hello,” said a man who looked strangely like Crazy Man, except he wore a three piece suit under a head much like Crazy Man’s...and he had a terrifying clown nose. “My name is Bland Man and this is my traveling companion, the dog, Straightstepper.”

And sure enough, beside him walked a tiny dog on obscenely long legs, but walking straight, nose and eyes straight ahead.

“We have no character,” said the dog, Straightstepper. “This is why we’re walking up the path of adventure and new meanings instead of down the path. It doesn’t matter which way we go because we’re normal. And boring.”

“Are you my mother?” said the dog, Sidestepper, hopefully.

“No,” said the dog, Straightstepper, nonchalantly, “and you’re a bastard.”

“Do you know where we can find some food?” said Crazy Man to Bland Man. His eyes spun for a second or two, reflecting the serious nature of his question.

“No,” said Bland Man in a flat, lifeless voice. “And you’re a bastard too.”

Crazy Man’s head spun for seven seconds and stopped abruptly, causing his left eye to pop out of its socket for three seconds before popping back in. “I don’t like you tone,” he said, somewhat feverishly, “I might have a kitchen.” He thought for a moment. “And a pizza pan.”

Bland Man’s face flushed with puzzlement and his head almost spun, but didn’t, and his eyes almost popped out of their sockets, but they didn’t, and he almost jumped up and down, but he didn’t. He just stood there like a being constructed of porridge without brown sugar, a saltless cracker with no topping. Looking into the eyes of Bland Man and the dog, Straightstepper, Crazy Man failed to detect even a trace of kitchen and pizza pan fear...and these two were sure as hell never going to find food.

“You’re still bastards,” said Bland Man.

With that, they walked right past Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, and melted into the darkness of their path.

After a few moments or hours of stunned silence, Crazy Man said, “Did that really happen?”

The dog, Sidestepper, lifted a rear paw attached to something that looked vaguely like a crane and scratched the back of his ear. (Try not to visualize this...you'll never go near dogs again.) "Does it matter?" he said. "They're going the wrong way."

"They weren't very nice."

The dog, Sidestepper, smiled a menacing canine tooth smile and said, "They're heading straight for the mean birds." He snickered. Crazy Man snickered. They snickered until they were engulfed in darkness and all that emanated from the night were the sounds of their snickering.

Crazy Man nudged the dog, Sidestepper, in the darkness, hoping that he wouldn't be nudging in any places that might spark rumours of crazy men and dogs. "Are you noticing that?" said Crazy Man.

"Noticing what?"

"Can you hear anything?"

The dog, Sidestepper, perked his tiny ears and listened for seventeen and a half seconds. "Nope."

Not a sound. Not an insect, bird or family of bobcats looking for their evening meal. Silence on the heavy side of darkness...the cusp of a deadly attack. They turned their heads slowly to the side of the path of adventure and new meanings and their eyes widened as...

To be continued...

(Thanks again to my bestie, Stephanie, for Bland Man and the dog, Straightstepper.)

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