

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 21: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, find out why forests front the big blue/green

Sometimes a journey has no destination or goal. It's a journey to somewhere for whatever. It's that moment when you pull out of the driveway and think, "I feel like driving away."

And you do.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, don't have a car (well, Crazy Man might...if he has a garage...but he's not sure if he has a kitchen or a pizza pan) but they have a path. They have no idea where the path leads but everything around the path is either deep dark scary woods or things that you make you crazy if you think about them. They were both in deep serious concentration on these concepts when the path suddenly exploded into trees and sky and something new that stretched to every horizon. The woods, though deep and dark, didn't seem so scary. In fact, they giggled.

The giggles were like gentle strokes of good humor caressing the tips of the trees like a gentle hand stroke from heaven. They came in waves, filling the air with mirth and wonder.

"Welcome to the big blue/green sea," said the trees as one, and their tops quivered playfully. "You're out of the woods for now...and into the forest."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stopped in their tracks and gawked as they did when faced with just about anything.

“You can see it just over the tops of our tree tips,” said the forest. “But we can’t let you see it all yet.”

Crazy Man pondered this for a few seconds or days before deciding on an appropriate response. “Why can’t you let us see the big blue/green?” Beside him, the dog, Sidestepper, nodded in mutual bewilderment.

“Because it’ll drive you crazy,” said the forest through a chorus of countless pine needles rubbing together. “No one can gaze upon the big blue/green fresh off the path and remain sane.”

“But why is that?” said the dog, Sidestepper. “And are you my mother?”

“No!” said the forest. “I am not your mother. You have no mother and you’re a bastard.”

Crazy Man felt that maybe the forest was being a little harsh on his travel companion, but he was more concerned about something else: “Do you know where we can find food? Do you have a map or concise verbal directions?”

“You have something even better in store for you,” said the forest. “The big blue/green is full of food and we’re sure that it’s packed with the souls of mothers who’ve walked into its waves looking for their long lost children.” The forest went quiet for a second before saying, “But not *your* mother. Sorry about that.”

“That’s OK,” said the dog, Sidestepper. His laugh was compact like his body and completely unassuming. “I get that a lot. But can you tell us more about this big blue/green?”

Something wonderful happened. The trees of the forest began to churn like heavy metal freaks worshipping an onstage deity with maybe a hint of jealously deep in their roots. “It stretches to all horizons. Once, long ago, it covered the firmament and mountains until it receded and let there be land.”

“That’s very polite of it,” said Crazy Man.

The forest giggled knowingly from a multitude of boles and said, “Yes, little wanderer, the big blue/green can be very polite...and it can be very dangerous. In fact, we’ve always thought that, if you build a raft, you should build a sail.”

This made sense to Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, and they did three somersaults to show their approval. Because of his long unnatural legs, it took the dog, Sidestepper, a day to perform each somersault. “Can we build a raft?” said Crazy Man.

“No,” said the forest. “The path of adventure and new meanings heads over that way.”

Crazy Man wondered where “that way” was, not seeing any pointing fingers or even a nudge in any particular direction, but he was too excited about this big blue/green thing that might make him crazy if he saw it too soon. “So,” he said, “can we see the big blue/green now?”

The forest shimmied. “Look just over the tops of my tips, but don’t look too intently. You’re not ready for that yet.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, squinted their eyes, nudged their heads forward and looked. They looked hard and long and, as they looked their hearts and minds filled with wonder, and Crazy Man said, “But what keeps them in the sky like that?”

The forest, though confused for a moment, giggled and said, “That’s the sky, you silly thing, look down, just above our tips. Do you see it?”

Crazy Man looked down and focused his eyes on that area just above the tree tips. He smiled. “Yes! There it is...all blue/green and big.” He looked at the dog, Sidestepper, and said, “Do you see it too?”

The dog, Sidestepper, was a little glassy-eyed and wonder struck. “Yep. It’s big.” He fell on all four knees. “So big.” His tiny pink tongue slopped over his lip and drool dripped onto his furry chin. “And it’s blue/green like no blue/green I’ve ever seen.”

“And we’re a rain forest,” said the forest. “We take bad things out of the air and put good things back into the air. We’re just that kind of forest.”

“We were told by a mushroom that we’re good people,” said Crazy Man.

“Was that a tree-side mushroom?” said the forest.

“Yes,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“We know that mushroom,” said the forest. “Well, not exactly *that* mushroom...but his brother, Ned. We know Ned and we trust him to have a brother who tells the truth...so we’ll help you on your journey.”

“So,” said Crazy Man, “you *do* have a map to the exact location of food?”

“No,” said the forest. “We actually have nothing you can use other than good cheer and a sound mind from not seeing the big blue/green too soon. Why would you want anything more than that?”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, glanced quickly at each other...just long enough to confirm what they both suspected: The forest was crazy.

However, though not overly helpful (and maybe a little crazy) it cleared a grassy, flower-lined path down to a musically gentle susurrantion emanating from white-capped waves washing onto a long bar of crystal white sand. The two Followers of the Path stared in wonderlust, barely able to breathe and grateful to the forest for not exposing them to the breath-taking greatness of the big blue/green so soon that it might have wiped out their brains. That situation would have caused serious alarm in figuring out the dimension (with his mind in one and his body in another and him never quite certain which was where) in which Crazy Man’s brain was being wiped out.

They made their way down the path to the big blue/green and as they walked the path widened into a field sloping down to the sandy shore and the wash of waves pounded onto the rocks jutting out along the beach.

As they approached the field, the dog, Sidestepper, had a thought. “If I had a raft, I’d put a fast food restaurant on it, a place to eat in style. I mean, who needs a sail when you have a restaurant?”

Crazy Man tried desperately to not think about how a drive-through would work on a raft-born fast food restaurant; in fact, he stopped thinking completely and opened himself to the gentle sway of forest meeting the big blue/green. There it was before him, stretching into distances beyond thought. “It’s so big.”

The dog, Sidestepper, who was having a hard time making his way down the slope on his stilt-like legs, smiled a toothy canine smile and said, “I wonder if my mother is on the other side of that.”

“Probably not,” said Crazy Man. “I think it flows over the side of world, washes dust off the stars and flows up the other side of the world and back into the big blue/green.

“So she might wash up on the beach some day?”

Crazy Man looked at the dog, Sidestepper, with sad eyes and said, “I hope you’ll find her before then.”

This cheered the dog, Sidestepper, which of course cheered Crazy Man for cheering his travel mate and they spent the next few days rolling and somersaulting down to the big blue/green.

To be continued...

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