

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 23: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, learn the true value of peaceful dialog

The path of adventure and new meanings had taken a new turn (as it did whenever it felt like messing with the heads of those seeking things it was never asked to offer) and had completely changed its tactics. On one side, the deep dark scary woods threatened to swallow the souls of anyone foolish or unlucky enough to get too close to its pine and fungus aroma...so tempting, but so full of ancient horrors. On the other side, big blue/green and its basin of tears washed gently against the sandy shores where strange objects protruded from the shallow water.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were still shaken from their unsettling experience with an angry and vengeful big blue/green, and they still weren't sure if it was blue or green.

"How many sunken relics do you think lie on the bottom of the big blue/green?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"More than one," said Crazy Man, "and less than fifty million billion trillion times four and a half."

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for a moment and decided this would be a good time to stop thinking.

"We're not *all* under the water, you know," said one of the strange objects protruding from the water. "Some of us just get to stick in the mud until we rot away from weather and neglect."

“What are you?” said Crazy Man.

“I’m a barnacle encrusted former part of a pier,” said the former pier part.

“Are you my mother?” said the dog, Sidestepper, with not a lot of hope in his voice.

“No!” said the barnacle encrusted former pier part. “I’m not your stupid mother and you’re a stupid bastard and your friend is stupid as well. In fact, I’ll bet you don’t even know what your mother looks like.”

This caused a wave of melancholia to shatter the dog, Sidestepper’s, sense of well-being and he reacted in the only honorable way. He picked up a beach-smoothed rock and threw it at the pier part...a formidable accomplishment for a dog with stilt legs so long that people with vision problems mistook him for a tall four legged demon without the demon.

“Ouch!” said the pier part. “That’s not fair! I can’t throw back!”

“Then you shouldn’t be so nasty,” said Crazy Man as he bent down and picked up the water-worn remnants of a blue bottle. “If you can give us a map to where we can find food, or even point the way, I won’t throw this glass at you.” Unfortunately, as he said this, he looked at the glass and decided that he liked the way the sun lit up it up like a neon blue sign advertising nothing. He decided that the glass was too nice to be thrown at something barnacled. He put it in his balloon trousers along with his rock collection and looked around for a rock or another chunk of sea glass.

“The weird dog threw the last rock,” said the pier part, “and now it’s come down to peaceful dialogue.”

“But you called us stupid,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “You tried to hurt our feelings.”

“Your feelings!” wailed the pier part so loud that it shed a dozen barnacles into the water. “That’s all I ever hear from you passersby. Me! Me! Me!” The pier part let out a loud snort that echoed down the line of pier parts disappearing into the big blue/green for several hundred abandoned feet. Barnacles fell like chestnuts into the swishing waters. “Nobody wants to hear my story, especially you two.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, tossed each other a knowing look. They’d been here before, listening to fabulous stories from the denizens of the path and, for the most part, they were bored by them. “OK,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “we’ll listen to your story and try to stay awake, but if you call us stupid again, we’ll rent a flame thrower and burn you down.”

“You can do that?” said the pier part.

The dog, Sidestepper, shrugged his tiny doggie ears and said with all the resolve he could muster, “Maybe.”

The pier part felt potentially threatened and said, “OK. No more names.” The other pier parts shrugged agreement in a disturbingly barnacle encrusted pier part way and the story began in a voice that echoed through ages of legend and misery.

“It was a dark and stormy...”

“Wait a minute,” said Crazy Man, “we’ve heard this story before and...”

“But this one is different!” said the pier part. “It was a dark and stormy mid-afternoon on a day that was supposed to be sunny.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, nodded their acceptance of the difference and prepared themselves to sleep while standing in an effort to convince the pier part that they might be listening.

“I’m sure the initial intentions were good,” said the pier part. “Someone with one or two or more boats wanted a place to float them even when the tide was out...”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were asleep on their feet before the pier part had reached the word ‘someone.’ After much practice on the path of adventure and new meanings, they were able to snore surreptitiously enough to pass for wakefulness. At least for now.

After a few minutes or several decades, they were awakened by...

“They planted us in the big blue/green! They planted us here in the biggest waste bin in the world! They tied their boats to us and we held them firm and fought the winds and tides and...”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, immediately went back to sleep only to be awakened possibly generations later by...

“...abandoned us! Just left us here to rot and disassemble and join the junk of the depths... except we’re not in the depths...we’re here, our humiliation and abandonment on public show to the world...”

Crazy Man decided it was time to find food and the dog, Sidestepper, decided it was time to find his mother so they picked up rocks that had somehow washed up on the shore and spent the next few days using the barnacle encrusted pier parts for target practice until they apologized for calling the dog, Sidestepper’s, mother stupid. The pier parts were so relieved that the stoning was over that they told Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, about a magic castle further on up the coast where they might my inquiries about food and mothers.

Dog, man and pier parts said goodbye and wished each other food, mommies and either a return to usefulness...or oblivion...and the they were back on the path in search of magic.

Magic.

To be continued...

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