

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 24: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, meet the Queen of Every Sandcastle

“There’s no magic here. Go away!” said the murky remnants of a once magnificent Queen of Every Sandcastle. “And before you ask...I’m not your mother and you’re a bastard and I don’t have a map to where you can find food.”

Needless to say, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were disappointed. They’d walked many indisputable footsteps in search of the Queen of Every Sandcastle, their hopes high that she might use her watery magic to help them find food and a mother. But she was no more than a disintegrating waif, all leathery and sea-weeded as she weathered into the ruins of her once great palace, now just a few stalagmites of their former greatness, sinking into the sand.

“Queen of the Sandcastle,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “We were wondering...”

“Queen of ALL the sandcastles!” screamed the Queen. “I am the realization and the loss of ALL sandcastle dreams. ALL!”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were so impressed they immediately fell to their knees and rolled their eyes in their sockets in an unsettling way. After a day or two, they regained control of their eyes and Crazy Man said, “What happened to your palace.” He was careful not to look at the Queen of Every Sandcastle as he spoke, fearing that she might assume she was in the same state of degenerative disrepair as her palace, which she was.

“Tides,” she said. “Tides...you just can’t get away from the tides...they’re everywhere. Take away the land, and what do you have...tides. And they never stay still. They’re always on the move.”

Desperation mottled The Queen of Every Sandcastle’s words like quills on a dead porcupine, a hint that she wasn’t finished talking. “Every sandcastle is a dream molded by hand, a wish made in fossils and micro minerals, a...”

“So?” said Crazy Man, stomach growling, nerves fraying, attention span disoriented by hunger. “You don’t have a map or directions to food?”

The Queen of Every Sandcastle glared at Crazy Man. “I am the magic that lies within the dream.”

This caught the attention of Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. This magic thing. This dream. “Can magic find food?” blubbered Crazy Man, lips frothing.

“Not anymore,” said the Queen of Every Sandcastle. “Once upon a time, wishes came true... dreams came true...”

“Can magic find my mother?” squealed the dog, Sidestepper.

“Do you two ever shut up and listen?” demanded the Queen of Every Sandcastle.

“We tend to fall asleep when we do that,” said Crazy Man. “We...”

For no particular reason, both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, burst into tears and began howling. They cried and wailed, hugged and reassured each other and when they were finished gawd knows how long later, they dried their eyes with tissue that had somehow stuck itself to the dog, Sidestepper’s, tiny tail, and allowed the Queen of Every Sandcastle to continue.

“My castles are the realization of a child’s dream, the fleeting thought of a parent, or a...”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, snored as they slept...standing, eyes open, asleep...but the Queen of Every Sandcastle continued. “Everything is a creation and victim. We are, and then we aren’t. It is, and then it isn’t. We are the lives that contain our death. We..”

At this point, the dog, Sidestepper, as dogs are want to do, emitted a loud prolonged fart that far surpassed in sound and effect the size of his almost microscopic doggie bum. The Queen of Every Sandcastle did not take this well. Plus, it woke both travelers in time to face her ire.

“Don’t you two see the sheer beauty of it!” she screamed. “The sandcastle is your life. You build it. It gets washed away. You build it again. It gets washed away again. It’s a wonderful cycle of creation and de-creation. Yes...ha ha!”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were beginning to doubt that that their sandcastle dreams of food and mothers were quickly diminished by the Queen of Every Sandcastle’s words: If they had food, they wouldn’t have food. If they had mothers, they wouldn’t have mothers. Or that’s that way they interpreted her wailings. One way or the other, there would be no food here. No mothers.

“It forces you to appreciate the fleeting moment!” Her scream shot through the air like an electrified wave that caused a flock of sea gulls to fall out of the sky and drown in the big blue/green; thus, no longer being sea gulls, unless dead sea gulls count as sea gulls.

“Once,” she continued in a milder voice, “I had armies of sea horses, hordes of snapping crabs and denizens of the deep brought me presents and other cool stuff. I was revered by young architects who formed with their tiny hands intricate terraces and battlements that would be their greatest pride and joy until the tides came in and washed their dreams away.” She sniffed and snorted and said, “Some cried when they saw the emptiness left by the tide, but all learned the transience of the moment.”

“And you never did anything to stop the tide, protect the castles?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

The Queen of Every Sandcastle cast a Davie Jones glare and said, “I make the dream come true...time and the tides determine how long the dream will last.”

“Do any of your sandcastles have kitchens?” said Crazy Man. “I might have a kitchen. And a pizza pan. And a...”

“They’re sandcastles!” yelled the Queen of Every Sandcastle. “They don’t have kitchens! They have walls, court yard, turrets.”

Crazy Man scratched his head. “All that and no kitchens. Don’t the people in the sandcastles ever eat?”

The Queen of Every Sandcastle let out a long sigh, burped, and squirmed out of the relic castle. She rolled across the sand and into the big blue/green where she sank like a rock.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared at the waves until dark. And through the night until morning. And well into the afternoon before Crazy Man turned to the dog, Sidestepper. “All that building and no kitchen.”

The dog, Sidestepper, placed one of his long stilt-like legs on Crazy Man’s shoulder and said, “None of her kitchens would have lasted long enough to feed you anyway.”

This made sense to Crazy Man at some incoherent level. “We should get back to the path between the deep dark scary woods and away from all this big blue/green that talks about food that it never shows.”

“Reminds me of the crazy spider,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“A crazy spider?” said Crazy Man. “I thought all spiders were crazy.”

“This one lived outside a window where it built the most beautiful and intricate web of all spider time. Every strand was perfectly welded with spider love and engineering. But, the man who lived on the other side of the window saw the web and destroyed it.”

“That was mean.”

“Yes, it was. But the spider re-spun the web and it was just as perfect as the first one. But, at the end of the day, the man who lived on the other side of the window destroyed it again. And the spider spun another web the next day, but this one was a little less perfect. Some of its strands drifted in the wind and others had wide spaces through which flies could fly and not be caught.”

“So, did the spider move somewhere else?” said Crazy Man.

“Nope, he stayed there and kept re-spinning the webs until they were nothing but strands of webbing floating in the breeze, unable to catch even the dumbest fly.”

“And the spider?”

“Totally insane,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Just went out each day like an arachnid on meth, laughing and crying and spewing web like slinging crap at a brick wall.” He cast a sad glance at the waves. “I guess the man of the other side of the window had become the spider’s tide.”

Crazy Man glanced back at the waves, where the Queen of Every Sandcastle had sunk and nodded knowingly. “So all those kids were crazy.”

The dog, Sidestepper, knew better than to try and make any sense of these words so he changed the subject. “Where do you think this path leads?”

Crazy Man scratched his head and thought for a moment. “Somewhere...maybe into this outside thing.”

“Or to a mother,” said the dog, Sidestepper, with a smile, “or food or a pizza pan.”

And dog and man laughed, woofed and giggled their way onto the path adventure and new meanings that cut through the deep dark scary woods.

To be continued...

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