

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 28: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, just for chucks

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John Lennon claimed that the only things corporations and governments can't handle are non-violence and humor. It confuses the powerful when you don't strike back and it dumbfounds them when you laugh instead. This is why great comedians are more powerful than an army when, through humor, they lead their audience to the truth.

“And you don’t hear that?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Hear what?” said Crazy Man.

“Coming from the deep dark scary woods,” said the dog, Sidestepper. He looked suspiciously into the woods on both sides of the path of adventure and new meanings. “It’s like a voice poking out of the air and trying to tap me on the shoulder.”

“Do you think it knows where you can find your mother?” said Crazy Man. “Sometimes voices carry good news.”

“Not this one,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “I have a feeling it just wants to get my attention because nobody else will listen to it.”

“Maybe you’re going bananas,” said Crazy Man. “You know what they say about people who hear voices.”

“What do they say about them?”

“They need to listen to something else.”

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for an indeterminate number of micro-seconds before arriving at the conclusion that Crazy Man’s answer didn’t make any sense at all, so he was about to change the subject when he saw something before them on the path. “Look,” he said as he stuck his head forward and pointed with his nose.

Splayed on the path was a banana peel.

“Coincidence or not,” said Crazy Man.

“Maybe it’s a sign that I *am* going bananas,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Or maybe it’s a sign that there’s food around here somewhere.” He looked around into the empty deep dark scary woods and the empty path behind and before them. “Or maybe you *are* going bananas.”

“Did you know,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “that the first code that cashiers in grocery stores memorize is the one for bananas. If they forget it after the first day, everybody laughs and points at them until they cry.”

“I could do with a banana split right about now,” said Crazy Man, “or a banana milk shake.”

“That’s right,” said the banana peel. “All the world does is cut my insides out, eat them, and throw the rest of me away.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, nearly tripped over themselves as they came to an abrupt stop. They’d never seen a talking banana peel before and they wondered what kind of juju was twisting a knife in the guts of reality. The dog, Sidestepper, certain that his mother wasn’t a banana peel still grabbed at a straw. “Did my mother eat you?”

“No!” said the banana peel. “And you’re a bastard.”

Crazy Man looked around and didn’t see anything that would pass as banana peel filler. *No food here*, he thought. And he wasn’t in any mood to eat discarded banana peels.

“And now I’m just an accident waiting to happen,” said the banana peel.

“You look pretty harmless to me,” said Crazy Man. “How are you an accident?”

“People step on me, slip, fall down and...and blame me for their misfortune,” said the banana peel. “Nobody takes responsibility for their own actions anymore. They should have looked where they were stepping. I didn’t put myself here...somebody else did.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were emotionally torn. The banana peel's plight was almost more than they could bear. They hugged each other and cried for an appropriate number of minutes before the dog, Sidestepper, said, "Banana peels aren't all that bad."

The banana peel may have wiggled a little at these words, or maybe it was the wind, but something in those words touched the banana peel very deeply. At least, that's what the dog, Sidestepper, hoped had happened.

"Don't coddle me, you bastard!"

The dog, Sidestepper, considered stepping on the banana peel and squishing it in the ground, but he managed to control his negativity and said, "A famous comedian...I think his name was Charley, defined humor as a surprise...like when a woman is walking along and sees a banana peel on the sidewalk before her. Everyone expects her to step on it and fall. But...at the last minute, she jumps over the banana peel...and into an open manhole."

Crazy Man and the banana peel thought about this but they didn't laugh. "That's a good one," said Crazy Man, trying not to be critical of his travel mate's joke.

Just then, a random Phoenix tore out of the deep dark scary woods and snagged the banana peel in its talons and took off into the sky.

"Yay!" said the banana peel. "I can fly."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared as the bird and its lunch were swallowed by the engine of a random passing jet.

Eyes following the jet, the dog, Sidestepper, said, "So what do you think?"

"About what?"

"How do you define humor?"

Crazy Man thought about this for the same amount of time it would take to read *The Comedy Writing Workbook* by Gene Perret, which varied from person to person but took a long time for Crazy Man, meaning that his answer was well thought out. "I think humor is anything that lifts the spirit so that on your worst day you and think: Yeah, all that...but for now...this."

The dog, Sidestepper, smiled and said, "We could use a little more of that."

As they started to continue down the path of adventure and new meanings, the dog, Sidestepper (who, because he was sidestepping, was looking right into Crazy Man's eyes) said, "Did you hear the one about..."

For the next few days, a bubble of laughter and guffaws rolled along the path of adventure and new meanings, even under the menacing gaze of eyes hidden in the bushes and boughs of the deep dark scary woods.

To be continued...

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