

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 31: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, meet the towers

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In 1918, the worst pandemic in history cancelled attacks between allied and German forces because flu was killing so many men in the trenches that there weren't enough to properly feed into the machine guns. Anywhere from twenty million to a hundred million people died from flu that year, more than all the deaths in all the wars, plagues and train crashes in history.

Some people say the human race is no better than flu...that we're a virus threatening to spoil the universe and if aliens ever find out about us, they'll cure us right out of existence.

I have a theory about this.

Viruses never turn on themselves. They may be suicidal, but they're not homicidal. They kill their host by accident and excess and take themselves down in the process, but they never turn on themselves.

We do.

We kill our own kind. We kill our host. We kill ourselves. We kill everything that's killable. We kill our children and our mates. We kill for pleasure and recreation. We kill because it feels right and we kill when it feels wrong. We kill for our gods. We kill for nations and governments and ideals. We kill because voices in our heads tell us to kill. We kill for profit and prophets. We kill to even the score and then we kill because there's nothing else to do. We kill because it's in our nature and we're damn good at it.

Trust me. No aliens are going to mess with us. They'll wait till we're finished killing and then they'll explore our garbage.

"Don't tell me you don't hear that," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Hear what?" said Crazy Man. "You're not listening to voices in your head again, are you?"

"They're not in my head," said the dog, Sidestepper. "And it's just one voice, and..."

"What're those?" said Crazy Man. He pointed into a clearing in the deep dark scary woods where two towers with strange mechanical stuff on top of each soared into the sky.

The dog, Sidestepper, stared at the towers for a few minutes that might have been a few hours and finally said, "No idea. What do you think they are?"

"We're just plain old towers," said one of the towers. "Just two lonely towers in a clearing in the deep dark scary woods."

"Right," said the other tower. "We're not aliens."

The first tower emitted a blue flash that shot across the clearing and splashed into the side of the second tower.

"Ouch!" said the second tower, and blue slush dripped down its side.

"He's been receiving too much TV," said the first tower, "and his favorites are Sci-fi and horror. Don't pay any attention to him."

The dog, Sidestepper, was immediately suspicious. He eyed the second tower closely and said, "How do you know you're not aliens?"

The two towers thought about this and then exchanged microwaves and made a lot of crackling and sparking sounds. "OK," said the first tower. "You got us. We're aliens. Please don't tell on us."

"Why would we tell on you?" said Crazy Man.

"Well," said the first tower, "you earthlings seem to have it in your heads that all we want to do is invade you and kill you in horrible alien ways."

"But that's not what we want," said the second tower. "We come in peace, but we don't want you to know that we've come."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, considered the ontological ramifications of an alien non-invasion and decided they didn't have a clue what they were thinking about.

"So, if you're not going to invade us," said the dog, Sidestepper, "why are you here?"

At some highly illogical existential level, the two towers acknowledged each other in such a way as to suggest that each wanted the other to answer the question. Sparks and blue auras surrounded the strange mechanical apparatus at the top of each tower. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, started to worry that maybe this really was an invasion and soon death rays from the towers would turn them into mist.

“Not to worry,” said the first tower as the otherworldly light show dimmed and flickered out. “That’s just what we do when we have to think deep.”

“Sorry for making you think deep,” said Crazy Man.

“That’s OK,” said the first tower, “but we can’t really tell you why we’re here.”

“Then how do we know you’re not invading us?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Maybe we should tell them,” said the second tower. “They don’t seem like the others.”

“OK, but they won’t like it,” said the first tower.

“We can take it,” said Crazy Man. “I’m all for finding out more about this outside thing.”

“OK,” said the first tower. “You asked for it. We’re never going to invade because you have nothing worth taking. Your oceans are mostly plastic. Your rivers are industrial sludge. Your forests have been paved over with streets and cities. Your air is becoming toxic. You’ve killed most of the species you’re supposed to nurture. Your...”

“OK, OK...we get it,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “So why are you here?”

“To warn the rest of the universe if you ever get out of here,” said the second tower.

And with that, the two towers pulled out of the ground with a plop plop sound, soared into the sky and disappeared within seconds.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared into the sky long after the aliens had disappeared until finally, the dog, Sidestepper, said, “If they’re so advanced, why haven’t they come up with a re-start button or something.”

“Well,” said Crazy Man, “at least the rest of the universe is safe from us.”

They thought about this for three and a half seconds.

“I guess there’s that,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “I’m glad they’re not my mother.”

Man and dog went suddenly silent for more than three and a half seconds before they both burst out laughing and continued down the path of adventure and new meanings.

To be continued...

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BTW, the voice in the woods comes from a short story called *Sleeping in Ditches* by some bald guy. [Click here to read it.](#)