

## The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 39: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, meet the flower that, apparently, never was.

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And there it was...a single flower without a stem just...hanging in the air, blatantly breaking all the rules of acceptable flower behavior.

Madness.

Crazy Man was the first to speak. "How do you do that?"

"Who are you talking to?" said the flower.

"I'm talking to you," said Crazy Man.

"No," said the flower. "You can't be talking to me. I'm not here."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, exchanged knowing looks. This flower was obviously out of tune with reality like the rest of the world.

"But we see you," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"No you don't," said the flower. "You must have something in your eye."

"You're in denial of the obvious," said Crazy Man.

"You're in denial of illusions," said the flower.

“You have twenty-five petals,” said Crazy Man. “Therefore, you exist and you are not an illusion and my friend would like to know if you’re his mother and I would like to know if you have a map to food.”

The flower considered his words for twenty-two and a half seconds and said, “No, I’m not his mother and he’s a bastard and where, exactly, am I supposed to keep a map. I have no pockets.”

“Ha!” said Crazy Man. “You *do* exist. You have to exist to not have pockets.”

“No I don’t,” said the flower. “If I don’t exist, then how can I have pockets?”

“But you don’t have to not exist to not have pockets,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “I exist, and I don’t have pockets.”

“Yes you do,” said the flower.

The dog, Sidestepper, scowled at the flower. “Then where are they? Do you see pockets on me?”

“You’re hiding them,” said the flower.

“But if you don’t exist, how can we be talking to you?”

“You’re not talking to me,” said the flower. “You’re talking to an illusion...or yourselves. Take your pick.”

“But you just told us that,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Nope,” said the flower. “You’re hearing things.”

The flower appeared to bounce mirthfully in the air.

“You just moved!” said Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, in unison.

“No I didn’t,” said the flower. “You moved your eyes and created an optical delusion.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, in an act of mutual wantonness conjured nasty thoughts of swatting the flower out of the air and on to the ground where they could both jump up and down on it until it admitted it was there. The only thing that stopped them was their fear that they might jump up and down on it until it was no longer there...and then the flower would be right. They weren’t going to let that happen. Instead, they huddled and worked out a plan. After four eternal seconds of intense planning:

“What’s the capital of Botswana?” said Crazy Man.

“Gaborone,” said the flower immediately.

“HA!” said Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper.

“What?” said the flower.

“Neither of us knew the answer,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “So you must exist to know the capital of Botswana.”

“But I don’t know what the capital of Botswana is,” said the flower.

“But you just told us it’s Gaborone!” said Crazy Man.

“No I didn’t,” said the flower. “You’re just making that up to negate my not-beingness.”

Jumping up and down on this crazy floating flower was increasingly gaining to appeal to the dark side of the two journeyers, even if it proved the flower was right. At least it wouldn’t be able to lie anymore.

“OK,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “If you’re not here, then where are you?”

The flower considered this from every possible ontological trap and came to the conclusion that the dog, Sidestepper’s, question was none of his business.

“That’s none of your business,” said the flower. “You just want to know where else I’m not and that will help you to use quantum calculations to determine where I am and then you’ll jump up and down on me until I’m not where I am.”

This made no sense at all to Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, and their confusion forced them onto the ground with the heaviness of futile argument. They rolled around in the mud and blood of a thousand unresolved differences until Crazy Man in a moment of existential fury accidentally kicked the flower so hard that it should have shot like a bullet through the air.

But it didn’t. It’s bullet-like trajectory was frozen by an invisible force and dropped back into its floating space.

“Hey!” said the dog, Sidestepper. “You’re being held in the air by invisible strings.”

“No I’m not!” said the flower as it swung like a petalled pendulum on its invisible strings. “That would mean that I’m here, but I’m not. I’m...”

In that instant of denial, the invisible strings that held the flower in the air jiggled it like a puppet until its petals loosened and fell onto the ground where they withered and cracked and turned into dust, leaving a pollenless bunch of stamens that the invisible strings pulled to someplace in oblivion.

And the flower wasn’t there anymore.

“OK,” said Crazy Man, “was it there or not?”

“It was,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “but now it’s not.”

“I like it better when it’s not there,” said Crazy Man. “And what were those invisible strings all about?”

“Maybe they know where my mother is,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Crazy Man thought about this for a moment and said, “I hope not.”

The dog, Sidestepper, nodded agreement and the two continued down the path of adventure and new meanings and all the truth it would reveal to those who seek it.

“Did you hear that?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Hear what?” said Crazy Man.

“That narrative that keeps...” He thought for a moment that maybe he did have voices in his head. “Nothing I guess. Have you ever had a hot dog?”

Crazy Man turned his head to the dog, Sidestepper, who was already facing him due to sidestepping and they burst out laughing. In unison.

To be continued...

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