

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



Episode 44: Crazy Man Meets the Dog, Sidestepper,

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“Look at those clouds,” said the dog, Sidestepper, as he and Crazy Man, ventured along the path of adventure and new meanings. “I’ve never seen a pattern like that before. I mean, you’re supposed to see mountains and turtles and emus and stuff like that.” He squinted his polka dot eyes into the be-clouded sky and stretched his obscenely long legs to prop his obscenely small body closer to the heavens.

“They look like ribs,” said Crazy Man who was trying desperately to ignore the terrifying tiny red teepee-like clown hat on his head. “I’m not sure if they’re pork or beef...but they’re definitely not duck. I like Peking Duck. I could eat a duck right now. Maybe they’re a sign...a map or secret set of directions to pork ribs. Or maybe...”

The dog, Sidestepper, unglued his eyes from the cloud bed (figuratively speaking...given that no one in their right mind would glue their eyes to clouds) and looked at Crazy Man, who was beginning to sound a little...crazy. As usual, he tried to assuage the craziness with reason: “You have a clown hat on your head.”

“AAAHHHHHHH!”

Failing that, the dog, Sidestepper, switched tactics and danced for Crazy Man. Imagine four giant chop sticks with knee joints stuck to the bottom of a small polka dot pin cushion with weird eyes and a little wiggly tail. He danced the watusi and Crazy Man stopped his starvation rant for nearly half a second. The dog, Sidestepper, danced the flamenco and Crazy Man was hunger-silent for several seconds. Heartened, the dog, Sidestepper, danced the night fantastic (even though it was still day) and Crazy Man howled with laughter, his unrelenting hunger forgotten and the terrifying clown hat out of mind. He rolled around on bamboo platforms that were suddenly there to be rolled upon. His eyes bulged out of their sockets at the unworldly contortions from an already unworldly canine. But Crazy Man was happy and the dog danced into the deep dark scary night as Crazy Man rolled in his own laughter on mats of dried leaves and forest chocolates.

The day finally came when it was time to stop dancing, stop laughing, stop rolling around and focus on the matter at hand, whatever that was.

“Thank you,” said Crazy Man. “I thought I was a goner.”

“You had a very nasty reality attack,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “But fortunately, reality can be danced away.”

This made no sense to Crazy Man, who had vague memories of something terrible happening to the top of his head. He started to lift his right hand to check it out but decided that ignorance was more useful than fact and much more reassuring. He looked up and noticed that it was the same time as yesterday and the clouds were still hovering over the path of adventure and new meanings...and they still looked like ribs. Maybe even barbeque ribs.

The dog, Sidestepper, saw what was coming and headed it off with, “Do you think the clouds know where my mother is?”

This was an excellent ploy. Questions require answers and answers require thought and thought requires focus and focus requires not looking at the clouds and dreaming about ribs and barbeques. Crazy Man shook his head and felt the cohesion between madness and sanity shake off the top of his hatless head like flakes of discarded dandruff. He suddenly had new purpose. He had no idea what that new purpose was...but he had it. “Maybe your mother is somewhere looking up at those clouds now and all you have to do is look in exactly the right place, see her eyes reflected in a pre-rain drop of water and wink at her so that she’ll know that you’re looking for her.”

These words seemed to trouble the dog, Sidestepper, more than cheer him. His eyes sloped into sadness and his tiny round body sagged between his chopstick legs.

“What’s wrong, little buddy?” said Crazy Man.

The dog, Sidestepper, gazed longingly into the sky for a moment before turning to Crazy Man. “What if she doesn’t want me to find her?”

The dog, Sidestepper’s, emotional predicament drove Crazy Man’s immune response to overwhelming empathy into the dust of another failed attempt to respond in a normal manner. He howled from the pit of his soul and the epicenter of his wellspring of being. He howled all day and he howled all night. He howled at the pork ribs in the sky. He howled at the Peking Duck in his mind. He howled into the void of the dog, Sidestepper’s, need to find his mother. He howled until he forgot what he was howling about and he stopped howling.

Meanwhile, the dog, Sidestepper, waiting patiently for the howling to subside, stop...just go away...had also forgotten the question and wrapped himself around a new rule: PROPOSITION? How much time is wasted asking the same question twice? CONCLUSION: Don't ask questions twice. Which, of course, means that you can only ask questions once because the second time is twice. Right?

"I could really do with some garlic duck ribs right now," said Crazy Man.

"I could do with some chocolate-coated squid," said the dog, Sidestepper, as a tiny drop of drool congealed on his lower lip. "Even though chocolate makes dogs sick."

"Must really suck to be a dog," said Crazy Man.

The dog, Sidestepper, quickly glanced Crazy Man up and down and said, "It could be worse."

The comment went where it was supposed to go...right over Crazy Man's head. "That's right. You could be a clown."

Just the mention of clowns was enough to bring all his fears to bear. He checked the path, the deep dark scary woods and the rib-eye clouds for clown spoor. He knew they were out there: clowns...with insidious smiles painted under their ping pong noses and mad eyes. "No!" he yelled. "You're not a clown!"

This seemed to cheer both of them and they continued down the path of adventure and new meanings...happy in a world where clowns kept themselves well-hidden. For the time being.

Meanwhile in the sky, a steaming globule of duck fat dripped out of the clouds and fell into the deep dark scary woods where it stirred up a din of growling and snapping. Fortunately, the two travelers didn't hear a thing, so wrapped up they were in their conversation.

"Do you think you have a barbeque?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Maybe. And maybe a set of tongs and a bottle of barbeque sauce," said Crazy Man with a fond smile.

To be continued...