

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 49: Wherein Crazy Man meets the one who waits.

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Some folks believe that you'll never find what you seek until it lets you. It waits for you on your path. Others will say that you have only to look within yourself to discover everything you'll ever need. Still others will tell you to follow the guidance of prophets and sages because they've already found what you're looking for and can give it to you for a fee or your soul. And some will say, "Sit back and have a beer. Everything is going to be OK."

Which brings us to the matter of pelicans and all the intriguing questions they inspire: like, why is there a pelican sitting on a pier jutting up from a wharf beside the path of adventure and new meanings? How do these things happen? And since when did wisdom require clear thinking? But that's an entirely different matter.

"Hello," said Crazy Man, who'd seen pictures of pelicans in books that he might have, possibly on a shelf in the kitchen he might have.

"Hello," said the pelican. "You wouldn't happen to have a map to some food, would you?"

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What an excellent opportunity for Crazy Man to call the pelican a bastard, but he wasn't that kind of crazy guy. He was empathetic and kind...and he needed information. "No, I don't have a map to food and you're a bastard..."

Oops.

"...and would you know anything about missing mothers?"

"Nope," said the pelican. "Not my thing. Mine flew off and left me to be eaten by lizards. Big lizards. I got away. She was eaten by sharks."

Crazy Man felt a sudden powerful empathetic connection with the pelican...which, of course, caused him to fall to his knees and wail for hours about the inhumanity of life until, eventually, the source of Crazy Man's emotional turmoil was forgotten and it was time for life to continue.

"Why do you sit on that post when you could be soaring in the heavens and sitting on people in boats and other fun stuff?" said Crazy Man.

"I don't sit," said the pelican. "I wait."

"What do you wait for?" said Crazy Man.

"I wait for that which I wait," said the pelican.

Something in the pelican's words struck a sense of familiarity in Crazy Man's sensibilities. His initial reaction was to walk away and let the pelican wait but there's no escaping the path of adventure and new meanings once you're on it. "Maybe if you went to the mall or something..."

"I wait," said the pelican.

"Or Amazon..."

"I wait," said the pelican.

"But what if what you wait for never comes?" said Crazy Man.

"It will come. I will wait."

Crazy Man looked around. This part of the path of adventure and new meanings looked very big, very wide and high and very connected to the immensity of the world around the path.

"And you believe that what you wait for will find you here?"

"*You* found me."

Suddenly, Crazy Man's entire existence in both dimensions filled with tears of joy. Never had he felt so relevant to pelicans. His head bobbed up and down as his eyes spun in their sockets and his ears wiggled madly. He wanted to hug that crazy waiting-for-it bird but he wasn't clear enough on which dimension he was in to take that kind of life-changing chance. So he said, "Yes, I did, little bird. And I'm so happy that you've been found that..."

"I wait," said the pelican.

As those two words faded into vocal memory, Crazy Man was crushed. He wasn't the one the pelican was waiting for. He may just as well have been going around finding blades of grass, gobs of gum, beer cans in ditches and old tires in rivers. But he wasn't going to let this pelican-

in-waiting push his balls into the ground. He had practical advice for pelicans and it was time to declare it.

“I didn’t find you,” he said with as little malice as possible...but it was still a lot. “I chanced by you and the chances of anything ever finding you again is 234,255,988.000001 in five.”

Crazy Man’s logic and large numbers startled the pelican so much that it fell off its perch and into an ocean that was suddenly there and was eaten by sharks who had liked his mother so much they were waiting for her tasty son who wasn’t eaten by large lizards.

Back on the path of adventure and new meanings, Crazy Man wondered what waited for him, whether it was waiting to greet or waiting to pounce. He wished the dog, Sidestepper, were there to make the path less frightening as darkness settled on the deep dark scary woods. He thought about people he’d seen in the streets pushing metal shopping carts stuffed with everything they called their lives and he wondered if he had such a cart to roll him through the deep dark scary night.

He also wondered if he had a kitchen.

And a pizza pan.

To be continued...

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