

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 50: Wherein Crazy Man has an unsettling experience. Again.

(New here? [Click here to see what it's all about.](#))

You can escape your fantasies but you can't escape your dreams and when the roller coaster starts, there's no getting off.

But this wasn't what Crazy Man thought about as he made his lonely way along the path of adventure and new meanings. He squeezed the wad of fur tangled into his keychain and thought

about the dog, Sidestepper. He missed his quirky canine companion and he wondered what his mother would be like when he found her. He wondered if she would have long stilt-like legs, a ridiculously small body and dotty little eyes. On the other hand, maybe she'll be the exact opposite, which might explain why she abandoned her strange puppy to a life of aimless roving. For ninety-four years. Long time for a dog.

This night, the path of adventure and new meanings wound through a moonlit landscape of misty bogs and dense forest with angry eyes glaring through thick underbrush. Chills scurried across Crazy Man's spine as the woods seemed to growl at him. The air itself sweated anticipation. He wished the path would stop twisting and turning and just roll forward in a straight line so that he could see what was ahead with what little light was left. With only a few feet on each side, it was possible that anything could reach out and drag him into the deep dark scary woods. He needed to change his perceptions before his perceptions changed him.

He bloated his mind with thoughts of hot dogs smothered with mustard and relish as he stepped warily through the malignant night. His head spun in the direction of every snap and rustle in the woods. He was tired. His body was worn to the veins from the tips of his toes to the pompom topping the clown hat that terrified him. His eyelids suddenly weighted 325.5 pounds (each) and they dragged his head as they tried to sink to his knees. The stars began to pulsate as though the sky were breathing. The air vibrated at strange frequencies.

Something was afoot.

Crazy Man breathed deeply and regretted not having studied Karate. A black belt would have come in handy to deal with the potential threat of another twig snapping. What manner of animal snaps twigs in the dark? He couldn't remember a time when he wanted an armored vehicle more. He wondered if he had one in the garage that he might have...and maybe a door leading into the kitchen he might have.

He was tired. His eye lids may have had shrapnel from his adventures along the path, pulling them down and dragging him into mindless sleep, but he kept walking. It was like strolling through the mist of his own primal interior. He yawned wide enough to swallow a horde of flies. His eyes rolled mindlessly in their sockets. He air-whistled a tune from the sixties.

He stopped abruptly and gawked as the air before him spilled open like a metal slider splitting the teeth of a zipper that appeared to be holding back a terror beyond the fear factor of a smiling clown. His lungs seized and his heart beat at crazy angles as a spinning luminous shape sprang out of the split in the air and bounced onto the path before him. Insect-like blobs of it sprouted tentacles and a golden eye appeared near the top of the ghostly apparition.

Crazy Man's jaw lay somewhere on the ground. His eyes sat on his nose. His ears spun so fast they created the possibility of cross-dimensional travel. Or maybe the *certitude* of cross-dimensional travel. The apparition spoke.

“Hey Crazy Man,” said the apparition in a familiar voice. “I never thought I’d be a key chain charm. It never really occurred to me.”

Crazy Man thrust his head forward. His jaws rolled up to his chin, his eyes popped back into their sockets and his ears stopped spinning and simmered to a pleasant vibration.

“Sidestepper?” said Crazy Man.

“Nope,” said the apparition. “I’m in your pocket...on the keychain. By-the-way...think you’ll ever have a key for that chain?”

The apparition jumped back into the split in the air, zipped it up and disappeared.

It may have been moments, it may have been lots more moments before Crazy Man’s head stopped spinning in which ever dimension it was spinning and his head cleared enough to think rationally.

I need a key.

So he set off down the path of adventure and new meanings in search of a dog’s mother, a map to food, a key...and this outside thing.

And the surprises.

To be continued...

© Biff Mitchell

www.biffmitchell.com

Check out the blog at: www.crazymanadventures.com