

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 58: Wherein Crazy Man might make a friend.

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When all the world becomes fiction, no one knows how the story will end...and one has to wonder if the story has already ended.

For Crazy Man and the shopping cart, Wheels, the story was just beginning a new chapter in a place where it appeared that the normal rules and science that defined an orderly universe had been suspended or had never applied. It was a place where things floated, where lines and boundaries crossed at angles that simultaneously existed and refused to exist, where thoughts turned to illusion and illusion to reality. It was a project management nightmare: no end dates, no start dates, no tasks, no dependencies, no collaborations, no budgeting or scheduling. This was a place of suddenness, where randomness was the plan.

Crazy Man stared at a star-shaped flower pulsing like a heart as it floated in the air beside a tree limb that appeared to be maimed by an ancient break...and it seemed to be happy with this.

“Hey, look at me,” said the broken limb. “I’m all broken and old and disconnected from reality. Would you like me to moo for you?”

Crazy Man and the shopping cart, Wheels, weren’t all that fussy about cows and clowns and they both wished that they’d bought those machetes they might have seen in that online ad for crowd control. Crazy Man wondered if he had a computer and social media but he would much rather of had a machete or a small tastefully appointed tactical nuclear device.

“Please don’t moo,” said the shopping cart, Wheels, as Crazy Man wondered about machetes and portable atom bombs.

Suddenly, the broken tree limb was directly in front of the shopping cart, Wheels, and expanding across every horizon of its existence. The shopping cart, Wheels, was suddenly swallowed into the world of the broken limb and transported to places that existed only because existence has an open mind. The shopping cart, Wheels, started screaming and Crazy Man lunged at the broken limb, but the limb wasn’t actually there. It was something about invisible mirrors and alternate realities. Crazy Man ended up diving face first into the ground. The broken limb and the floating flower laughed at him for what seemed like the rise and fall of empires on a bumpy ocean.

“Please forgive us,” said the floating flower. “We can get really weird but, unfortunately, there’s nothing else to do around here except get weird. How’d Twiggy do? Freak you out a bit?”

Good god...a broken limb...with a name.

Crazy Man reached behind and grabbed himself by the scruff of the neck and pulled himself up from the ground, shaking off bits of forest leavings and a mysterious cigarette butt sparking ghostly memories of...

He wondered if he had a package of cigarettes in the kitchen he might have. But enough of that...he wasn’t happy with this strange place. Crazy Man craved rules of procedure and dress codes, proper introductions and maps to food.

“Do you have a map to food?” he said.

The broken limb and the floating flower replied simultaneously: “Nope. You’re a bastard. And now that we have that out of the way, how can we make your day a little weirder?”

“By giving me a map to food,” said Crazy Man, wondering maps to food make a day weirder. He hoped so.

“Not gonna happen,” said the floating flower. “But we can tell you how much we like parmesan cheese on tacos even though we’ve never had them and we’re not even really sure what a taco is.”

Crazy Man thought about this long enough to conclude: “You’re a bastard.”

The broken limb and the floating flower chuckled.

“We try,” said the broken limb.

“What are you and where is this place?” said the shopping cart, Wheels.

“This is the world behind the world,” said the floating flower. “It’s the magic and mystery that lies under the sundry surface of things.”

“And we’re part of it,” said the broken limb. “We’re magical and mysterious. And we kind of like disturbing everyone.”

“But why?” asked the shopping cart, Wheels.

“Why not?” said the floating flower. “We save you from sameness.” It suddenly sprang through the air and stopped inches before the shopping cart, Wheels, and spit orange slime on its metal frame, handle and coaster wheels. Just as the shopping cart, Wheels, was about to charge at the floating flower...everything turned upside down. The shopping cart, Wheels, the floating flower, the broken limb, the retch-inspiring landscape...everything...was suddenly in dire threat of falling into the sky. But nothing happened. Crazy Man stared into the clouds below him and wondered if the ground here came with hand grips. He saw none. Nothing could be gripped onto in this place. Just as he was about to scream, the world turned right side up and the broken limb fell, screaming and swearing, into the sky.

“Damn twig always had a tough time getting out of the upside down thing,” said the floating flower. “So, now that you’ve thrown my only friend here into the abyss, what can I do for you? But remember, I don’t have a map to food...” It fixed its stamen on the shopping cart, Wheels. “We’ve heard about you, and we’ve heard about your path rage. But it doesn’t make you any less than the bastard you are.”

The shopping cart, Wheels, wasn’t sure how to take the floating flower’s words. They seemed to be an insult but they also seemed to be the makings of myth and legend and if there’s one thing shopping carts love it’s myth and legend. It rested its coaster wheels and smiled as only a shopping cart can smile.

“Can you tell us how to get back on the path of adventure and new meanings?” said Crazy Man.

“You’ve never been off it,” said the floating flower. “Sometimes, the path needs to take a break from itself and it becomes wherever you’re standing at the moment.”

This made no sense at all to Crazy Man. He wanted to stand somewhere else. Soon. Right away.

And suddenly, he was. He and the shopping cart were back on the path of adventure and new meanings as the deep dark scary woods creaked and snapped with the scurrying of clowns with wide white smiles.



Not really.

To be continued...

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