

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



Episode 59: Wherein Crazy Man and the Shopping Cart, Wheels, Are Granted Wishes

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A famous rock & roll band named after stones that rolled across hills, valleys and ears once said, “You can’t always get what you want but, sometimes, you get what you need.

Still...chocolate tastes better than peas, and Crazy Man was thinking about how much he’d love to have a bowl of chocolate-covered peas when he and the shopping cart, Wheels, were hailed by four cones on a branch.

“Hey guys,” said the cone at the top. “We’re four cones on a branch which makes us *wishing* cones and we want to grant each of you one wish.”

“Yeah,” said the middle cone, “beats growing and then exploding all over the place so that we can plant ourselves. We don’t get much say in where we do our own planting.”

“Sometimes we just drop right down and bury each other until we wither and turn to dust,” said the cone at the top of the branch.

In the meantime, Crazy Man was overjoyed. He’d always dreamed of things like wishes coming true. At least, he was moderately sure that he’d always dreamed of wishes coming true.

“And will our wishes come true?” said Crazy Man with unraveled excitement.

The cones were silent for a moment and seemed to be conversing heatedly before the second cone from the top said, “We’re not sure.”

“Not sure?” said Crazy Man.

“We just made up the rule about four cones on a branch being wishing cones,” said the cone. “But we’re really excited about granting wishes, making stuff happen, doing the impossible, having fun with magic and stuff.”

“So you’ve never granted a wish before?” said the shopping cart, Wheels.

“Nope,” said the cone.

“Then how do you know if they’ll come true,” said Crazy Man.

“We don’t,” said the cone.

This made perfect sense to Crazy Man and the shopping cart, Wheels, both of whom had happy visions of being the first one to have their cone-bestowed wish come true, and they pushed and shoved each other for a while to be first in line for the first wish ever granted by the four cones on a branch, whether or not it came true.

The shopping cart, Wheels, spun its coaster wheels so fast they spewed dust and dirt into Crazy Man’s eyes and while he was rubbing them, the shopping cart, Wheels, shot ahead to first place in line. Crazy Man, being a good loser, laughed but swore in the back of his mind that he would exact his revenge on the shopping cart that stole his right to be first in line. But not today. Later.

“There’s just one thing though...” said the cone at the bottom of the branch.

“What’s that?” said the shopping cart, Wheels.

“Before your wish can come true, you have to fill out form UC3432.43c.343.”

The shopping cart, Wheels, was just about to raise hell when it noticed there was something in its basket: two copies of form UC3432.43c.343. “Oh look!” said the shopping cart, Wheels. “Two copies of form UC3432.43c.343. I wonder how they got there.”

Crazy Man and the four cones on a branch snickered at the pure audacity of random events.

“So,” said the cone in the middle of the four cones on a branch. “What is your wish? Go for the top, anything you want...and let’s hope it comes true.”

Thinking back on the cone’s plight...exploding too close to home...the shopping cart, Wheels, said, “I want to fill my basket with cones and travel around the world dropping cones where they’ll grow into big healthy trees.”

The cones on a branch were in tears. They’d never heard of such generosity and commitment to the proper planting of cones. They shook and shimmered and vibrated and made funny little noises and the shopping cart, Wheels, suddenly had a full basket of smiling tree cones. A mysteriously completed copy of form UC3432.43c.343 zipped up into the tree boughs and was lost from sight.

The cart turned to Crazy Man and said, “It’s been great traveling with you, but I think I’ve found my calling,” said the shopping cart, Wheels. “I want to travel the world and plant trees far enough apart that they don’t grow into deep dark scary woods.”

Crazy Man smiled and touched the shopping cart, Wheels’, handle briefly and said, “Let me know if you see any maps to food.”

With that said, the shopping cart, Wheels, spun its rear coasters, lifted its cone-filled basket and did a roaring wheelie into an opening in the path that hadn’t been there before, proving once again the power of first wishes.

A tear worked its way out of Crazy Man’s left eye. He was alone again...deserted by dogs and shopping carts...at the mercy of mean birds and the deep dark scary woods. He clutched the key chain in his kangaroo costume pouch, felt the fur from the dog, Sidestepper, and remembered his mission to find the dog,

Sidestepper's, mother. He had no idea what he was going to say to her. The dog was 95 years old and he assumed that she had to be at least that. But a promise to self is a promise to self and breaking that promise is selfish. At least that's the way Crazy Man saw things.

"I have a wish!" he yelled.

The cones were ecstatic. They were actually granting wishes and, if the shopping cart didn't come back mauled and deformed by bad wish-granting, they were in business.

"Make your wish," said the cone at the top, "and we'll grant it."

"I wish to find the dog, Sidestepper's, mother!"

Suddenly, the form UC3432.43c.343 that was conveniently in his hand flew up into the branches and disappeared. His smile wrapped around his head three times as he waited. And waited.

And waited until one of the cones (the one at the bottom, in case you were wondering) said, "What're you waiting for?"

"I'm waiting for my wish to come true," said Crazy Man.

The cones giggled.

"You need to just move on and journey into your wish," said the cone at the bottom. "Trust the path and believe in your wish."

"And my wish will come true?" said Crazy Man.

"We sure hope so," said the cone in the middle. "Just stay on the path."

And with that, Crazy Man continued down the path of adventure and new meanings, humming and looking forward to meeting the dog, Sidestepper's, mother.

And he wondered about the key chain. Why did he have a keychain in his pocket? What would he ever need a key for? He hoped that the shopping cart, Wheels, was having a good time planting trees but he wished he had a travel companion to break the monotony of miles of pathway through the deep dark scary woods, which seemed to become even scarier now that he was alone. But that was neither here nor there...he had a dog's mother to find and he had a wish to guide him to her.

But he wondered what the blue light ahead of him was. He'd never seen anything like that before.

To be continued...

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