

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 85: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper,

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The night sky over Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, blazed with color and explosions that illuminated the path of adventure and new meanings and showered the deep dark scary woods with flashes of incandescent light causing a piqued grumble to worm through its bushes and trees.

Man and dog stopped abruptly and stared into the sky. They'd never seen anything like it before. The sky was farting color and noise...and twisting clouds of smoke.

"Fireworks," said the dog, Sidestepper. "I've heard of these."

Crazy Man, being a man of the path and privy to important knowledge with the exception of his past and whether or not he had a kitchen and a pizza pan, agreed with the dog, Sidestepper, even though he really wasn't certain about this fireworks thing. It looked more like Armageddon to him and he was ready to fold up into a ball of fright and roll wherever the situation took him.

Fortunately, the dog, Sidestepper, was right; it was fireworks and not the End of Times. The End of Times would come later... at the end.

"Hey, you two!" said a burst of fireworks. "I'm your celebration!"

This took the traveling duo by surprise. They were all for celebrating at every possible opportunity but they had no idea what the celebration was about so Crazy Man decided to stay in his firefighter's uniform and not change into his blue and green celebration robes with the Groucho Marx mustache.

"So?" he said. "What are we celebrating?"

Both he and the dog, Sidestepper, were almost blown off their legs by a resounding boom on the heels of burst of light that lit the horizons for a split second.

"We're celebrating your victory over the aliens!" said the burst of light. "The ones with green fangs and hundreds of bearded heads and mile-long tails and big creepy eyes that spill blood on their scaly cheeks."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, looked at each other knowingly and smirking the old here-we-go-again smirk.

Before the dust from that burst of light had cleared, three more bursts filled the sky with light.

"I've also heard that the aliens don't pick up when they walk their dogs," said the bursts. "Is this true?"

Crazy Man had no more patience with the alien rumors. It was time for payback. If the world wanted to believe that he and the dog, Sidestepper, had saved it from an alien invasion... then so be it.

"That's right," he said. "Only they don't walk dogs. They walk Ogfors and they don't pick up."

"What's an Ogfor?" said the bursts of light just before they fizzled out.

Another brilliant burst filled the night sky and said, "Yeah... what's an Ogfor?"

Crazy Man smiled mischievously and said, "It's a cross between an Ogfir and an Ogfir."

"Oh," said he burst of light. "Right." And it melted into the night.

There was a moment of silence as smoke drifted under the low laying clouds and then the sky lit up with dozens of simultaneous explosions of light.

"Tell us about it," said the bursts of light. "Tell us how you sent the aliens scampering back into space with their mile long tails between their lizard hunches. What are your super powers?"

The dog, Sidestepper, caught on to Crazy Man's ploy immediately: "We used the power of standing and sleeping boredom to throw them off their game."

A dozen more bursts in red, blue and green flashed in the night.

"Then we called upon the power of our terrifying experience with the mean birds," said Crazy Man.

"And we sent a wave of empathy right into their alien consciousness and they screamed for merci."

"But we were merciless," said the dog, Sidestepper. "We opened a portal into a cosmic conflagration of political correctness and they had to second guess every move they made... every word they said."

"It slowed them down just enough so that we could kick dirt from the path of adventure and new meanings into their eyes," said Crazy Man.

"They cried," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"They begged for merci," said Crazy Man.

"They offered us money," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"They offered us the key to eternal free stuff," said Crazy Man.

"We were tempted," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"But we couldn't let them destroy the earth," said Crazy Man. "I might have a kitchen on earth."

"They called us bastards," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Everybody calls us bastards," said Crazy Man.

"Calling us bastards is like throwing air at us," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"We threw archaic terminologies and never-ending Gantt charts at them," said Crazy Man.

"We shamed them for not picking up after their Ogfors," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"They cried some more and then they took off like comets back into space," said Crazy Man. "And that's exactly what happened."

"Really?" said a blistering blaze of rainbow explosions. "Wow. You did all that?"

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, exchanged guilty glances.

“Well,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Not really.”

“Not really?” said the blistering blaze.

“Yep,” said Crazy Man. “Not really.”

“Not really,” said the faltering blaze.

“We made it all up,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“They actually left on their own,” said Crazy Man.

And suddenly, the sky was empty. No fireworks. No adulation from explosions in the sky; in fact, the sky over the path of adventure and new meanings was quiet, lifeless and as uneventful as dark skies tend to be. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stood quietly, gazing up into a starless sky, wondering what the hell had just happened.

“Does this mean we’re not fearless vanquishers of aliens anymore,” said Crazy Man.

“We never were,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Right,” said Crazy Man. “That. So we’re not famous anymore?”

“Fame is fickle,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Crazy Man thought about this for three and a half seconds and said, “Do you think those fireworks might have given us a map to food if they still thought we were Earth-saving heroes?”

“Probably not,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “they would have just exploded our fame all night on their expectations of us and then fizzled out in the morning with no map and not a word about my mother.”

“Fireworks are bastards,” said Crazy Man.

“But they were kind of pretty,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Maybe someday we really will be heroes,” said Crazy Man.

“And have our own serialized story,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Something to do with existentialism,” said Crazy Man.

“And adventure,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“And exploration of new meanings,” said Crazy Man, “and....”

And the two continued down the path of adventure and new meanings, tossing out ideas for stories about a man and his canine buddy venturing into a world of new meanings.

To be continued...

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BTW.....

Team Player has been re-printed. This novel was written when malware and associated nuisance software was just a small dot on the internet horizon. Shows how fast science fiction and cyberpunk can become historical fiction in a world rushing into the future. This was also a time when neutrinos were thought to have no mass. But since then, they do. Go figure. Neutrinos with mass.

You can get the Kindle version here:
<https://tinyurl.com/547dmju9>

The story is set in an uncomfortably close future where the world is run by homicidal marketing managers who kill for love, company, and the almighty promotion.

Aside from the talking brain cells and the rampaging neutrinos, the angry Italian ghosts and the Bolshevik computers...the thirty naked pagan women who save the universe with help from a man who thinks he's a tree aside from all that: this story could actually take place in any global IT company headquartered in the tallest building in the world, which might be built as an amplified replica of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

