

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



Episode 84: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, meet the bubbling stream.

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Bubbling streams still exist in this diseased world, this world of hate and intolerance, of sickness and death, of...

“You’re sure that you don’t hear anything?” said the dog, Sidestepper. “A voice coming out of nowhere...a kind of really depressing narrative thing that makes you want to jump off high buildings?”

Crazy Man smiled knowingly. He was sure that the dog, Sidestepper, was crazy, but then, who was he to judge? “Nope, but I’ll bet it has all kinds of nice things to say if you listen between the words.”

The dog, Sidestepper, looked at Crazy Man as though he was crazy (which he was) and frowned. "It said something about bubbling streams but the rest was all doomsday and death."

"I think your voice needs help," said Crazy Man. "Or a bubbling stream...if one still exists."

"Did someone call for a bubbling stream?" said a bubbling stream that just happened to be by the path of adventure and new meanings as the duo passed by with a bubbling stream mindset. "I'm a stream. I bubble. I exist. I think I meet all the criteria."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were amazed...talking water. Who would have thought? Crazy Man was the first to recover from amazement.

"Do you have a map showing the way to food?" he said.

"No," said the bubbling stream, "and you're a bastard. But that's OK...I'll still bubble for you and for your weird doggie friend who's also a bastard and God knows where his mother is. Hey doggie...where's your mama gone?"

The dog, Sidestepper, considered peeing into the bubbling stream but settled instead for diplomacy. "If you were a bird, you would fly into a concave office window and bend your beak."

The bubbling stream stopped bubbling. Crazy Man grabbed his head in a vain attempt to stop thinking about what the dog, Sidestepper, had just said as the dog, Sidestepper, stumbled around in a field of confused thought of his own making.

"That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard," said the bubbling stream as it regained its composure and started bubbling and flowing again. "No wonder your mama left you."

"And where's *your* mama gone?" said the dog, Sidestepper. "Far, far away, I'll bet."

This was more than the bubbling stream could bear. "You have ridiculously long legs and your tiny snout is smaller than the smallest smell."

That was the freight container that broke the camel's back. The dog, Sidestepper, marched over to the stream and lifted his left hind leg. "Let's see you bubble some yellow."

"Wait!" said the bubbling stream.

"What?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"I take it back," said the bubbling stream. "There are smells smaller than your snout and your legs are normal in the context of alternate paths towards a better-evolved canine presence."

Not having a clue what the bubbling stream was talking about, the dog, Sidestepper, however, sensed a conciliatory tone in the bubbling stream's attitude and decided to save his pee for another time.

"OK," said the dog, Sidestepper, "I take back what I said about your mama...pending verification of your change in attitude."

"Cool," said the bubbling stream. "It's always good to be careful in these matters."

Crazy Man smiled and jumped up and down for seven seconds exactly to show his relief that the bubbling stream and the dog, Sidestepper, were getting along so that he wouldn't have to do any more painful thinking. "When I was a kid," he said, "I always dreamed of someday being a bubbling stream." He thought for three seconds and said, "And I was a kid once...I think. And I might have a kitchen."

"That doesn't make any sense at all," said the bubbling stream. "You lack the fluid, flowing effervescence of a stream and your bulk and solidity are testimonials to your unbending, thus, un-stream-like characteristics. You'll never bubble. You'll never flow. You'll never..." The bubbling stream stopped bubbling again. "Hey!"

It was the most unnatural of unnatural events: a long yellow stream of mythical uric proportions sprayed down on the bubbling stream from a doggie wang so small as to be invisible to the untrained eye.

"Have some yellow bubbles," said the dog, Sidestepper. "You're a mean stream and your bubbles are abrasive poppings of air."

The dog, Sidestepper, had no idea what he was talking about but he sure had to go and this seemed to him like he the perfect mix: relief *and* revenge for insulting his traveling buddy.

"I'm sorry!" said the bubbling stream. "I take it all back. Your buddy is a bubbling stream in the sense of having a bubbly and effervescent personality that flows like water and..."

The dog, Sidestepper, stopped peeing into the stream and said, "Aren't you supposed to be relaxing? Aren't you supposed to emit negative ions to generate creativity and well-being?"

"I can do that," said the bubbling stream. "In fact, I'm really really really sorry for my contrary attitude. There's so much plastic in the rain these days, it's hard to be as I was but that's a thing of the past now that you've been a mirror into my altered being."

“So,” said Crazy Man, “you’re going to give us a map to food?”

“Better,” said the bubbling stream. “I’m going to give you tranquility and a general lightening of your spirits.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, looked at each other and nodded. They needed tranquility and they needed a general lightening of spirits. “Wouldn’t mind a map to food,” said Crazy Man, “but some down time would be nice.”

“Great!” said the bubbling stream. “Just sit cross-legged with your hands in your laps and close your eyes.”

For the next millennia, scientists and mathematicians will be studying the laws of physics, biology and randomness to figure out how the dog, Sidestepper, managed to sit cross-legged and one after the other, they’ll go insane with the disturbing images their studies will plant in their minds. But there they were... man and dog, sitting crossed-legged, hands and paws in their laps and eyes closed.

“Now,” said he bubbling stream. “Breathe in slowly through your nose right down to your tan dien.”

Neither of them knew what a tan dien was so they breathed down into their stomachs just behind their belly buttons.

“Breathe out through your noses,” said the bubbling stream. “Inhale relaxation and exhale stress.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were suddenly transported to another reality...one in which Crazy Man followed a map from one trove of food to another and wallowed in filling his gullet with all manner of pastries and fried foods. The dog, Sidestepper, cried as his mother wrapped her paws around him.

“Time to drown,” said the bubbling stream.

“?” thought Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. They opened their eyes just in time to see a tidal wave of almost mythical proportions rise into the sky and rush at them. Suddenly, the path of adventure and new meanings along with Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were underwater. Three plump rainbow trout swam by Crazy Man’s mouth and laughed as they pointed their fins at him. The dog, Sidestepper, had a recurring nightmare about baths even though he was awake and, apparently, drowning.

“How’s this for a bubble bath, bastards!” said the bubbling stream. Its voice surrounded them with the wetness of its evil message. “And now I’m gonna...”

However, much to the dismay of the bubbling stream and to the relief of Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, far upstream a crazy wild-eyed beaver named Andy had just completed the beaver dam of all beaver dams and it completely cut off water to the bubbling stream which had just become a tidal wave full of plump rainbow trout with offensive fins. The tidal wave splashed onto the path of adventure and new meanings and was absorbed into the soil of potential travel. The mean trout flapping about on the path were swooped up by a murder of crows. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stood facing the dry bed of a once bubbling stream that sparkled in the sun and spit trout at bugs.

It’s uncertain how long they stared. It’s uncertain whether the murder of crows barbecued the trout or deep fried them but it’s likely best not to think about that. At some point in the travelers’ lives, they stopped staring at what was no more and decided to get on with what was to be. They continued down the path of adventure and new meanings.

As night approached, Crazy Man turned to the dog, Sidestepper, who was already turned toward him (sidestepping and all) and said, “Do you think the bubbling stream was right about the rain being wrapped in plastic?”

The dog, Sidestepper, considered Crazy Man’s question for the precise amount of time it takes to come to considered opinion and said, “I think it meant that the plastic is wrapped in rain.”

“Nope,” said Crazy Man. “Seems more like plastic wrapped rain.”

“No way,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Rain wrapped plastic.”

“Nope,” said Crazy Man...

And the two strolled into the night oblivious to the deep dark scary wood’s take on things: Rain water in bubble wrap.

To be continued...

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Check out the blog at: [www.crazymanadventures.com](http://www.crazymanadventures.com)

BTW.....

Team Player has been re-printed. Team Player 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.

Or 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.

