

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 78: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, reflect on things.

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A much sought-after guru living in an abandoned bathtub once said, “There is no beauty more compelling than beauty reflected.” Hordes of people believed him, mistaking his words to symbolically mean ‘the burp tastes better than the burger.’ He lost his following shortly after he advised his followers to buy pork bellies and hang on to them. Forever.

“It almost looks like you could fall into the sky,” said the dog, Sidestepper, staring at the copse of trees reflected in the river that ran by the path of adventure and new meanings.

After their harrowing experience exiting the cavern that’s not a tavern, especially the part where they fell into the sky, Crazy Man’s mind was closed to skies and reflections. “After our harrowing experience exiting the cavern that’s not a tavern, especially the part where we fell into the sky, my mind is closed to skies and reflections,” he said.

“Chicken shit,” said the reflection in the water.

The two journeyers were astounded...and disappointed. They’d heard that reflections were polite and dreamworthy...that they were the stuff of relaxation and insight. The dog, Sidestepper, suspected that this reflection was actually the sky disguised as a reflection of itself. The thought made him so dizzy that he almost fell into it but Crazy Man grabbed his tiny canine tail just in time. They stood on the brink of the river bank, deeply offended by the reflection’s attitude.

“I may be a chicken,” said Crazy Man, “but you’re the shit.”

“I was just joking,” said the reflection as hundreds of birds perched on its boughs chirped happily. “You’re the ones who saved the planet from the alien invaders from Pluto...the aliens with the fifty heads, seventy legs, ninety reproductive organs and one ultimate purpose: Destroy Earth.”

“That’s right,” said the dog, Sidestepper, seizing the opportunity to put this reflection in its place. “We minimalized them with superior rhetoric and deep insight into the nature of alien invasions. They didn’t stand a chance.”

He tried to swagger as he said this but his long spindly legs and inappropriately tiny body were not designed for swaggering so he just looked weird...like an animal that would likely be more at home as a straw hut on towering stilts to rise above the high tide than anything that could sweat, bleed and shit.

Crazy Man, noticing the dog, Sidestepper’s, precarious disposition joined the swaggering. “We made them cry with outlandish insults and merciless references to their alien ancestry. They said they’d never come back.”

“Is that true?” said the reflection.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, shot each other guilty glances and said (in unison, of course), “No.”

Content with the truth, the reflection decided it was time to move on. “Why don’t you both come closer to the edge of the bank and see your own reflections?”

A wave of pure terror rushed through Crazy Man’s mind and body. He’d seen himself in a mirror one dark and stormy Sunday afternoon and the sight landed him in counseling for years before he realized the counseling wasn’t helping and the only way to avoid the terror was to avoid the mirror. And now this reflection with its weird sense of humor wanted to put him right back into counseling that wouldn’t work. He took an oblique response: “Why don’t you come up here and look down at your own reflection?”

Silence plopped into of the nature of the situation like a wet carpet rolling across a stone floor. Crazy Man was suddenly between a wet and a hard place. "I have no idea what I just said."

"Few do these days," reflected the reflection. "But let's give this a try." At which point the reflection climbed out of the river and stood on the bank beside Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper.

"You can't do that!" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Yes I can," said the reflection, which still reflected the sky as it stood on the river bank beside them so that they could have fallen into the sky sideways. "And nobody will ever know any better because nobody ever checks the source."

On the other side of the river, the copse of trees began to fidget. Something was wrong. Something was missing. It was confused and broken and it had no idea why.

"They'll fall into me, you know," said the reflection. "Some of them jump without looking. Some jump after they've looked and refused to understand. I devour them all with the illusion of themselves."

On that ominous note the reflection laughed like a maniac after eating a large bag of chocolate coated coffee beans and started chasing Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, around the river bank, trying to force them to fall into its reflected sky. The chase dragged on for hours until all three were laughing and giggling as though they were playing a game with no clear ending.

Surprisingly, the reflection was the first to wear down.

"OK," said the reflection. "You guys are just too fast and slippery for me."

The reflection jumped back into the river, restoring its reflection of the sky. Seeing the sky's reflection back on the river, several vain clouds admired their reflections and posed as animals, cars, mountains and familiar faces.

"It's been fun playing with you two," said the reflection. "Sorry about the map to food and the mother things but when you're bastards, you're bastards. What can I say?"

On that upbeat note, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, said goodbye to the reflection and continued down the path of adventure and new meanings.

"What do you think would have happened to us if that reflection had gobbled us up," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"I'm not sure," said Crazy Man. "Let me reflect on that a bit."

Once again, the deep dark scary woods groaned. But not as loud as the dog, Sidestepper.

To be continued...

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Check out the blog at: www.crazymanadventures.com

BTW.....

My third novel has been re-published. There's no giant ant...it's actually a computer virus called the War Bug. The artist didn't read the novel before creating the cover. Later, I wrote a short story about a cover artist who is eaten alive by one of his covers. It was published in an anthology by the same publisher.



You can buy the ebook version in a variety of formats here:

<https://doubledragonbooks.com/>

Or you can get the Kindle version here:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08W8KZZXF>

The novel is about a man trying to find his virtual wife and daughter as the internet begins to crash from a war between online city states. His only ally is the virus that started the war. In keeping with the tone of *The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper*, the novel is completely humorless.

“I highly recommend *The War Bug* by Biff Mitchell to Science Fiction fans who can stomach sexual perversion, grotesque humor and total cyber satire.”

- Charlene Austin at *The Writers and Readers Network*

“Biff Mitchell is a blessed breed of writer who mixes the real, surreal, and potentially real by fusing philosophy, science, human emotions, humor and terror. And *The War Bug* is this writer at the top of his game.”

- Susan DiPlacido, Author of *Strut* and *Suffle Up and Deal*

“I don't think humans will ever have the emotional stability to become software.”

- Cassie Mae Hayes in *The Reality Wars*