

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 86: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, meet the lost ragdoll.

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Beside the path of adventure and new meanings a river might have flowed freely to the ocean if it weren't frozen solid with ice and misadventure. A tired voice with barely enough energy to attach its sound waves to currents in the air called from the ice and snagged the ears of Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. It was not a cheery voice.

"Is this Kansas?" It was a strident girlish voice, confused and exhausted.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, craned their necks to the left and to the right looking for the source of the voice and they saw it at the same time: a ragdoll face down on an ice flow on the River of Madness (being any river shrouded in ice and snow in the winter).

"No," said Crazy Man. "This is the River of Madness because it's shrouded in ice and snow and what are you doing here? Drifting on ice flows can be very dangerous. You could catch your death of cold."

"I don't know what I'm doing here," said the ragdoll. "My name is Dorothy and I live in another story, but a twist in the plot brought me here. You wouldn't happen to have a map to Kansas, would you?"

"Nope," said the dog, Sidestepper. "And I guess you don't have a map to food or a clue about where my mother is?"

“No,” said Dorothy. “And I have an overwhelming urge to call you both bastards.”

“That’s OK,” said Crazy Man, “we get that a lot.”

“How did you get here?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“I’m not sure,” said Dorothy. “I went to sleep in one story and work up here. I seem to recall lots of wind. Are you sure this isn’t Kansas?”

“Nope,” said Crazy Man. “This is a completely different story.”

“What’s it about?” said Dorothy.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were word stricken. They had no idea what the story was about except...

“Maps to food and lost mothers,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“And this outside thing,” said Crazy Man.

“And he might have a kitchen,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“And a pizza pan,” said Crazy Man. “And maybe even a garage.”

Dorothy was impressed with the stuff that Crazy Man might have. “You must be proud of all the stuff you might have.”

“I’d be prouder if I *knew* that I had it,” said Crazy Man. “Did the wind throw you face down in the river?”

“No,” said Dorothy. “It set me on my feet. I threw myself down on the river.”

“But why?” said the dog, Sidestepper, cautiously though. There was a chance that this ragdoll from Kansas wasn’t playing with a full deck.

“I thought I could chew my way out of this story,” said Dorothy.

“We’re all prisoners of our own stories,” said Crazy Man. “And no amount of chewing will change the table of contents.”

“But what if you don’t like the story?” said Dorothy.

“Then you change the character and that creates a new story,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“But I like being Dorothy,” said Dorothy. “And just who are you two?”

This provided a novel train of thought for Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. They sort of liked being themselves as well, even though neither really had a clue about who they were but they were on the path of adventure and new meanings and this meant they were...

“Journeyers!” said the dog, Sidestepper. “We’re journeyers on the path of adventure and new meanings and someday the path will lead us to our stories.”

“And those stories will have lots of food and mothers,” said Crazy Man. “And maybe a kitchen. And a flame thrower.”

“That sounds so cool,” said Dorothy. “I’ve always wanted my own flame thrower.”

“It’s something for the bucket list,” said Crazy Man.

“But the path of adventure and new meanings keeps us really busy until our stories begin,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “We met a lot of interesting...things.”

“I’ll bet you even met aliens in your travels,” said Dorothy.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, refused to be drawn into another otherworldly dialogue and ignored Dorothy’s comment. “We met mean birds and talking water,” said Crazy Man.

“And I kind of died and came back,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“And we went into a giant cave and jumped through portals and stuff,” said Crazy Man.

“Can I join you?” said Dorothy. “Your story sounds a lot more interesting than mine. I’m supposed to meet some green guy in a place called ooze or ugh.”

Never having been a big fan of ooze or ugh, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, agreed to let Dorothy join them on one condition: She was not allowed to call them bastards.

So...as the sun went down on the path of adventure and new meanings, Crazy Man, the dog, Sidestepper, and Dorothy talked about every molecule in the universe and told really bad jokes as they walked purposefully into the next chapter on the path of adventure and new meanings.

To be continued...

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Check out the blog at: www.crazymanadventures.com

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.

