

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 91: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, meet a patch of snoring plants.

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I watched a guru sitting about six inches over a parking meter... floating right over the meter and smiling. He thanked people for their quarters when they parked. He nodded amiably to passersby and winked at children and gave them apples. He threw uncooked bones to stray dogs and cats. At night, he sent astral projections to sooth those folks sleeping in cardboard boxes.

I asked him to tell me his story. He gazed at me through a ruby in his forehead and my head filled with images of sunken treasure ships, lost temples, magical caves in the highest mountains and spice caravans plying through desert sand in the twilight. It came to me that these moments of grandeur came from movies that he'd watched as a child and *his* story was the parking meter.

Did I mention that he wore sun glasses?

The dog, Sidestepper, caught himself just as he was about to scream, "Shut up!" But then Crazy Man would get on his case for listening to voices in the air again.

"Were you about to say something?" said Crazy Man.

The dog, Sidestepper, smiled a mouthful of razor sharp canine teeth and left it at that.

Crazy Man didn't pursue the matter.

Ahead of them on the path of adventure and new meanings, a patch of hibernating plant life snored peacefully until Crazy Man said, "Do you think those sleeping plants might know where to find a map to food??"

The dog, Sidestepper, considered this and decided that perhaps Crazy Man was starting to lose it.

“No,” he said, “but maybe those plants are my mother disguised as themselves.”

Crazy Man smiled in the knowledge that someone was crazier than he was.

“Morning,” said the patch of hibernating plant life that, apparently, wasn’t really hibernating after all and was just napping. “You two are losing it. There is no map to food and all lost mothers are lost and you’re both bastards.”

The patch of napping plant life snorted and went back to sleep.

For exactly 2.005 seconds and woke again.

“Still here, eh?” said the patch of plants after a robust outdoorsy yawn. “You’re the ones who beat the aliens to death with a thousand barbed sentences, aren’t you?”

Once again, Crazy Man wished he had a flame thrower. “No,” he said, “we’re the ones who tried to sell the earth to the aliens for a map to food and a mother.”

The patch of plants ignored this and began to snore.

“Not much for conversation, are you?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

The patch of plant stopped snoring and said, “Still here, are you? Go away and let me nap away the winter bleakness, nap by nap, nap by nap.”

“So,” said Crazy Man, “you’re hibernating.”

“No,” said the patch of plants, “I’m napping the winter away.”

“What’s the difference?” said Crazy Man.

“One has four more letters,” said the patch of plants.

Crazy Man suddenly realized that he’d never liked patches of plants and he sure as hell didn’t like this one. He vaguely recalled childhood nightmares of being chased by patches of plants dressed like clowns. He shuddered and changed the subject.

“If you don’t like winter, why don’t you go somewhere else?”

The patch of plants rustled slightly in the wind and said, “Because then I might miss summer here. I like summer here. It keeps me awake.”

“Then go somewhere warm for the winter,” said Crazy Man, “and come back here for the summer.”

“I don’t have a passport,” said the patch of plants.

“Then get one,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“I don’t have a picture of myself for the passport,” said the patch of plants.

Crazy Man let out an ear shattering “Whoa Baby!” He pulled a portrait camera out of his walrus suit and said, “Picture coming up.”

“No!” said the patch of plants.

“What?” said Crazy Man.

“I’m not feeling photogenic today,” said the patch of plants.

So Crazy Man, the dog, Sidestepper, and the patch of plants settled into several days of intense Qi Gong breathing after which they discussed various poses that might complement the patch of plants so that it would have the best passport picture in the world.

They failed miserably. But they got some cool social media pictures and the patch of plants seemed to be happy with them. Until it looked at them too long and reflectively.

The patch of plants was in tears, looking at the pictures. “You caught the bleakness of my soul. You’ve frozen my frigid thoughts for all seasons. You’ve depicted the colorless, odorless and humorless nature of my existence.”

Whereupon the patch of plants gave into the despair of the moment, wilted into a gooey mush as it died, squirming in the utter hopelessness of its... well. It died..

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared at the gray patch in the snow that was once a not-so-vibrant plant patch and burst simultaneously into a funeral jig that lasted until the first signs of spring...the next day.

Later, as the moon rose in the horizon while Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, continued their journey, the dog, Sidestepper, said, “Please don’t ever take my picture.”

Crazy Man nodded quietly and put the camera back into his walrus suit. It was still on with one last picture on the preview screen that displayed four long stilts with something perched on top that looked vaguely like a dog. He would never show that one to the dog, Sidestepper, lest he give into the moment.

The deep dark scary woods on both sides of the path of adventure and new meanings snarled quietly, waiting for its own moment.

To be continued...

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BTW.....

Team Player has been re-printed. Written when malware and associated nuisance software was just a small dot on the internet horizon, Team Player shows how fast science fiction becomes historical fiction in a wild wild world.

You can buy the paperback or non-Kindle ebooks here:
<https://fiction4all.com/ebooks/b16735-team-player.htm>

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

Set in an uncomfortably close future run by homicidal marketing managers, 30 naked pagan women try to save the universe with the help of man who thinks he's a tree.

