

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 93: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, meet the censor boards.

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A friend of mine once said, "Stories begin in the womb and end in the tomb." But it's possible that I just made that up or heard it from someone else who wasn't a friend. It's a grim way to let people know that everyone has a story but some would take issue with the expiry date. Some would say the story goes on after the tomb and some might be audacious enough to say that the true story starts in the tomb.

This thought was racing through the dog, Sidestepper's, mind as he and Crazy Man crossed a metal bridge with wooden beam rails and one of the beams said, "Would you please set Nancy on fire."

The dog, Sidestepper, thought this was an odd request, especially coming from a wooden beam.

"Who's Nancy?" he said.

"She's right beside me," said the beam. "I need you to set her on fire."

"Don't listen to her," said the beam named Nancy. "She's a heathen."

"Set her on fire before she poisons your mind," said the beam not yet named.

The dog, Sidestepper, didn't feel like burning beams today and he was sure that no heathen beam with poisonous thoughts was going to mar his day. "I'm not setting anyone on fire today." And with that he wagged the pitiful stump of fur perched over his ass and began to strut away...until Crazy Man said to Nancy, "If we burn her, will you give us a map to food?"

"Do I look like a tour guide?" said Nancy the beam. "And you're a bastard if you don't burn her."

Crazy Man heard the dog, Sidestepper, snarl and was tempted to do the same, but he couldn't help asking, "And if I set her on fire, will I still be a bastard?"

"You'll always be a bastard," said Nancy the beam. "Now set that heathen bitch on fire."

Crazy Man turned to the other beam and said, "Am I a bastard?"

The other beam, that just happened to be named Olivia after some long lost hardwood cousin, said, "The whole world's a bastard. Why should you be any different?"

This made sense to Crazy Man and he pondered the act of setting Nancy the beam of fire for being such a stinker but he wasn't all that thrilled with Olivia the beam either, so he decided it was time to explore some personal boundaries and he said, "Why do you want each other set on fire?"

This question intrigued the dog, Sidestepper, as well and he nodded in such a cute doggy way that both beams melted into puppy love and spilled out the story of their lives. When they were finished, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were deeply asleep...but not snoring...and exactly on cue, they woke as soon as the sob stories were done.

"So," said Nancy the beam, "that's why you need to set Olivia on fire."

"No," said Olivia the beam, "that's why you need to set Nancy on fire."

At this point, both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, wished they had a clue why the two beams wanted the other to be set on fire but they had no regrets about the snooze time.

"If you don't set her on fire, she'll spread dangerous ideas," said Nancy the beam. "She'll infect the souls of others with her venom."

"No!" said Olivia the beam. "She has ideas that will affect the way we feel about ideas. Burn her."

"See!" said Nancy the beam, "She's poison! Poison! Set her on fire!"

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, huddled for a moment or more and very carefully planned a course of action that would be both politically correct...and fun.

They approached the two beams with smiles of great emotional gratification and Crazy Man took out his barbeque lighter with one hand and held out his other hand, palm up. Gleaming in the center of his palm was a shiny new nickel with no particular national meaning. "We'll flip the coin to see which one of you is set on fire."

"Who gets to call it?" said Nancy the beam.

"Yes!" said Olivia the beam. "Let's flip to see who gets to call it."

"Right," said Nancy the beam. "I call heads."

"No!" said Olivia the beam. "I get to call it to decide who gets to call."

"Not with all those crazy ideas," said Nancy the beam. "No water supply in the world will be safe."

"Don't listen to her!" said Olivia the beam. "She'll alter your diet in a thousand unnatural ways."

Crazy Man had pretty much all he was going to take from these two beams, so he tossed the nickel into the air. It spun and glittered as it rose into the sky past birds and clouds and satellites. It plummeted down like a meter on its way to an extinction level event and just before it landed in his palm, he looked at the dog, Sidestepper, and said, "Call it for Nancy."

"Tails!" said the dog, Sidestepper, just as the nickel bounced off Crazy Man's palm and landed on the surface of the bridge...balanced perfectly on its side.

The decision had fallen out of the sky with the coin.

He had no choice.

He set the bridge on fire.

The beams, Nancy and Olivia, weren't at all happy with his decision but it did stop them from spreading whatever it was that neither wanted the other to spread, so it was with an attitude of quiet resignation that the two beams turned into cinders along with the rest of the bridge...which was dearly happy to be rid of Olivia and Nancy and not have to listen to them ever again.

"Kind of sorry about the rest of the bridge," said Crazy Man.

"I wouldn't worry," said the dog, Sidestepper. "I don't think that bridge was leading anywhere but to the other side."

Crazy Man tried not to think about this so he changed the subject. "The more I think about it, the more I think I have a kitchen."

"And maybe you have a refrigerator in your kitchen," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"And maybe I have a map to food in my refrigerator," said Crazy Man.

"And maybe you have a garage," said the dog, Sidestepper.

“And maybe I have a car in the garage,” said Crazy Man.

“And maybe we can take the map from the refrigerator and ride in the car to find the food,” said the dog, Sidestepper, and he burst out laughing.

“What?” said Crazy Man with a silly smirk wrapping his face.

“What if the map leads right back to the refrigerator?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Crazy Man thought about this until his head hurt so bad that he stepped suddenly into a new era of thought that seemed strangely like the old era of thought and he said, “I might have a kitchen.”

And the pair strode silently into the night, ignoring the deep dark scary woods on either side of the path of adventure and new meanings.

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:
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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.

