

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 95: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, walk into the dawn of a new day.

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“Hello weary travelers on the path of adventure and new meanings,” said the Dawn of a New Day. “I’ve been waiting for you. I have sun and adventure for you.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were overjoyed. Finally, they were official objects of waiting (as in *I’m waiting for you*) and it appeared that the Dawn of a New Day wasn’t waiting to call them bastards.

“You don’t look like bastards,” said the Dawn of a New Day, “but you are and I’m cool with that.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were overjoyed. Finally, they were official objects of waiting even though they were bastards.

But wait!

Were they really bastards?

Had the whole world been right all along?

Was the whole world a bastard, including them?

It was time to make a stand on this...bastard issue.

“What makes you think we’re bastards?” said Crazy Man.

“What makes you think you’re not?” said the Dawn of a New Day.

“Um,” said Crazy Man, as he thought about everything related to bastardy. “I might have a kitchen.”

The Dawn of a New Day chuckled and said, “I know 745 bastards who might have kitchens and I don’t believe for a second that half of them even know what a kitchen is. Do you?”

Coincidentally, Crazy Man had been practicing the answer to this question for ages in anticipation that someday...somewhere...somebody would ask if he knew what a kitchen was. He had this one. He would show the Dawn of a New Day that he was no ordinary bastard. He was a practiced bastard with something to say. He opened his mouth with a defiant twist of his lips and said, “Aardvark.”

He had no idea why he’d said that...only that it seemed to make more sense than all the kitchen definitions in the world.

The Dawn of a New Day smiled on Crazy Man and said, “You’re a very well-practiced bastard and for that I will refrain from killing the two of you today.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, both of whom had been having feelings of foreboding about this particular new day, were relieved. Someone would die today, but it wouldn’t be them. Maybe it would be the mean birds. They could hope.

Feeling a strong sense of renewal and acceptance in the natural order of a New Day, Crazy Man said, “You wouldn’t happen to have...?”

“No,” said the Dawn of a New Day. “No maps, no mothers, just bastards and refrigerator hopes. You can go on now. I’ll kill the two of you another time.”

But Crazy Man was not to be put off so easily by the Dawn of a New Day. He said, “Why are you going to kill us? What did we ever do to you?”

“It’s nothing personal,” said the Dawn of a New Day. “It’s just that everything has an expiry date and that date isn’t always written in stone. So I get to kill people pretty much whenever I want.”

“But why do you kill people?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“It keeps the numbers down and makes things easier to handle,” said the Dawn of a New Day. “But I think I need to do more killing or more dawning because each new day is a losing one for me. I can only imagine what aliens would think of us if they ever came here to visit.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, glanced quickly at each other. The Dawn of a New Day had missed their adventure with the aliens. And it didn’t want to kill them. Today.

“So, if you’re not going to kill us,” said Crazy Man, “what do you have planned for us today?”

“Planned?” said the Dawn of a New Day. “There’s no plan. There was never a plan and there will never be a plan.”

“But you can’t just let each day happen without a plan,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Things might get out of control.”

The Dawn of a New Day dog-interrupted the dog, Sidestepper, straight to the core of his soul and said, “Things have never been in control. Every day is a crap shoot and no one’s ever been in charge...or even given a damn.”

This was news to the dog, Sidestepper, who’d always believed that some nice guy with a beard and a halo was watching over everything and coaxing life along in a mostly positive way but now the Dawn of a New Day was telling him that he’d been a wrong dog all his life. There was no longer anything to die for. And nothing to live for. There was just life...a straight line to nowhere.

With no warning, the ground shook under their feet and an ear-shattering explosion erupted throughout the Dawn of a New Day like a fleet of heavy equipment...tractors, bulldozers, graders and trucks...falling out of the sky all over the Dawn of a New Day.

A voice boomed across the horizons the Dawn of a New Day: “Building better roads to take you through the day!”

And suddenly, the Dawn of a New Day, after much noise and commotion and a few minor construction safety violations, was a ten lane highway blistering through the day.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared solemnly at the frenzy of traffic and decided they wanted to have nothing to do with this day, so they detoured around the Dawn of a New Day and decided on the Road That Doesn’t Exist. They stood and waited for it.

Suddenly, all movement and noise of the day stopped. For 2.2 seconds. Then a gentle breeze brushed across the new day. Birds filled the clouds with bird song. Squirrels in trees dropped chestnuts on ants below just for the hell of it. Sidewalks, streets and sewers rumbled with traffic somewhere in the unseen distance. A familiar shopping cart whizzed by with a full load of spider-infested bananas. It didn't stop for small talk. Thunder peeled through the sky. A flock of crows brought murder to a single crow waiting on a lamp post for the next day to begin. A man with no face sitting on a bench sprouted wings and flew off into the horizon singing Irish ballads.

It was a new day twisting through the deep dark scary woods and heading for new wonders, new meanings...and maybe a kitchen or a mother.

And there, ahead of them, lay the detour.

It didn't look all that enticing.

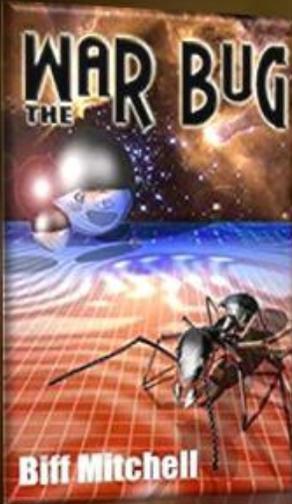
To be continued...

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BTW.....there's no giant ant. The graphic designer didn't read the book. I got him back. I wrote a short story in which he's devoured by his cover art. It was published by the same publisher. ☺



The War Bug
THE
Biff Mitchell

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 *Shuffle Up and Deal*

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