

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 105: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, meet Rot and Iron

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“I am the metal that is called Rot,” said a dandy piece of metal attached to a block of stone.

“No!” said the same dandy piece of metal attached to the block of stone. “I am the metal that is called Iron.”

Whereupon both Rot and Iron engaged in a mighty battle of wills to be the same with different names.

This caused a tremendous degree of confusion for the dog, Sidestepper, who was never a big fan of dandy pieces of metal...thinking them to be pretentious and outspoken. Crazy Man, with his body in one dimension and his mind in another, empathized with the dandy piece of metal's plight. He'd long ago accepted the fact that it was impossible for anyone to know who they are in a world that didn't know who or what it was. However, he had no idea what any of this meant so he changed the topic, “Hello confused piece of metal...do you have a map to food?”

The confused piece of metal turned bright red like a branding iron.

“You mean branding rot,” said the confused piece of metal that was Rot to the narrator. “Get your narration straight or let us tell the story.”

(Sometimes it’s impossible to tell the story from the telling of the story.)

“No,” said the confused piece of iron, “you had it right and no I don’t have a map to food and I’m not the dog’s mother and you’re both bastards.”

Suddenly, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, felt very much at home.

“Don’t listen to that nut case,” said the confused piece of metal. “However, I don’t have a map to food and I’m not the dog’s mother and, yes, you’re both bastards.”

Crazy Man wondered where a flame thrower was when he needed it. He would melt this flip-pant piece of confused metal into a puddle of confused slosh.

“Don’t listen to that piece of metal,” said the nut case piece of metal, “it’s all fake metal with that one.”

“You’re the fake,” said the confused piece of metal, “and your mother wears army boots.”

“I don’t have a mother!” said the nut case piece of metal. “Fake facts! Fake facts!”

“Not as fake as you,” said the confused piece of metal.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, nodded to each other...*yep, crazy metal.*

“Hey,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “You do know that you’re one piece of metal, right?”

Both the nut case and confused pieces of metal yelled in unison: “There is only one piece of metal and that piece of metal is me!”

Crazy Man turned to the Dog, Sidestepper, and said, “Well, they seem to agree on one thing.”

The dog, Sidestepper, nodded and said, “But they’re both claiming it for themselves so they’re really in disagreement with their agreement.”

Crazy Man’s eyes lit up and a light bulb with a brass chain suddenly appeared over his head. He reached up and pulled the chain and the bulb turned on. Unfortunately, its light was so bright that he and the dog, Sidestepper had to cover their eyes because, apparently, this idea was far too bright to look at.

With his eyes closed and looking very much like a sage in a mountain emerging from a thousand year meditation, Crazy Man said, “Why don’t you flip a coin to see who’s the only one?”

The two pieces of metal that were one piece of metal were unanimous in rejecting Crazy Man’s idea.

“What if the coin lands on its side?” said the nut case piece of metal.

“Yeah,” said the confused piece of metal. “And how can we be sure that the coin will be tossed high enough?”

“And what kind of coin will be used?” said the nut case piece of metal. “Will it be round or square? Will it have a hole in the center? What denomination will it be? We can’t let our fate be determined by a penny. We need at least a quarter.”

“And what’s wrong with a penny?” said the confused piece of metal. “Got something against the common coin?”

“You should talk,” said the nut case piece of metal, “you wouldn’t know copper from chrome. And you’re an embarrassment to the rest of the fence.”

Suddenly, the rest of the fence appeared before Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, as though it had been hiding just beyond sight behind the metal’s denial duality...and the fence was not happy.

“You’re both fake and you’re both full of shit,” said the fence with all its curling and swirling patterns of metal. “And we don’t need you and your refusal to accept your rot and iron. And this one’s for you because there can be only one fence.”

A strange red light emanated from the iron all along the fence and it pulsed brightly right up to Rot and Iron where that confused nut case piece of metal melted into tiny drops of metal tears that dotted the ground under the fence like a shiny mound of regret.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, backed away from the fence quietly and shuffled back onto the path of adventure and new meanings.

“Well,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “I’m glad they managed to iron out their disagreement.”

Even the deep dark scary woods managed a chuckle as the two the two journeyed into the sunset of another day on the path of adventure and new meanings.

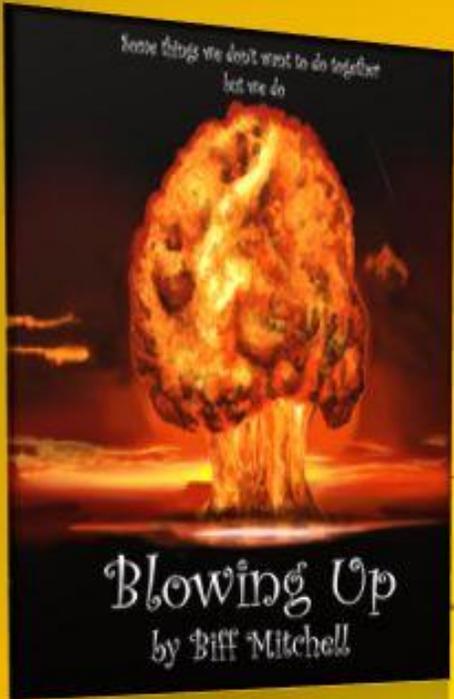
To be continued...

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COMING THIS FALL FROM **FICTION4ALL!**



Some things we don't want to do together
but we do

Blowing Up
by Biff Mitchell

Coming this Fall!

In the end,
only the
laughter will
be heard.

Coming this Fall!

The image shows a book cover for 'Blowing Up' by Biff Mitchell. The cover features a large, glowing, mushroom-shaped explosion against a dark background. The text on the cover includes the title 'Blowing Up' and the author's name 'by Biff Mitchell'. Above the explosion, there is a quote: 'Some things we don't want to do together but we do'. Below the book cover, the text 'Coming this Fall!' is written in a stylized font. To the right of the book cover, there is a quote: 'In the end, only the laughter will be heard.' Below this quote, the text 'Coming this Fall!' is repeated in a similar stylized font.

FROM THE FIRST STORY, *SLEEPING IN DITCHES...*

Near the close of the 21st Century, God commanded, "Hey Noah, I want you to build a canoe."

"But Lord," said Noah, "shouldn't that be an ark?"

"No," said God, "there's not that much worth saving."

By evening and day I'm the man of the hour, the life of the party, the wit, the insider, the compleat schmooz rider. I'm the water cooler sage, the lunchroom rage; everybody wants to hear me, everybody wants to be near me, everybody wants to absorb me through that huge umbrella of thought that surrounds me, bouncing away everything I don't want to know.

There's a lot of crap out there, and shit falls out of the sky, but not on me. I'm the source of my own crap and people respect me for that. I'm like the faucet I can't turn off. Wordsworth's spontaneous overflow without the meter. I'm a damn flood.

At night, I sleep in ditches.

Not the same ditch every night. I have favorites and sometimes I like to try something new. I've slept in ditches full of needles and condoms and barking spiders. I wear two wide swatches of red on my back from a slick of bubbling something-or-other at the bottom of a ditch by a chemical plant. I've seen small things flitter and flap in the darkness around rusted tin cans while they debated whether to leave me alone or eat me. But it's not all bad.

I woke once in a ditch with immaculate new suburban ranch-style houses with carved lawns on one side and a field of sprawling swamp and early morning animal sounds on the other. In a clearing by a stream banked with yellow and blue flowers, an army of bulldozers pointed right at the swamp and its animal noises. I felt like I was on the cusp of something wonderful and nascent. Soon, I thought, those bulldozers will turn God's land into something useful for his children. Yes, I believe in God. His outline glowed in the aura surrounding those formidable machines—his tools built by man in his power's image.

The grass in that ditch was long and thick and made for comfortable sleeping. Right by my head, the biggest most beautiful dandelions opened with brilliant bursts of yellow and orange, their leaves vibrating with the deepest green I'd ever known. There was grandeur in those flowers. Their beauty was irresistible. I reached out...and I ate them.

Blowing Up will be available at reputable online stores in late Fall. Stay tuned to biffmitchell.com for details. In the meantime...happy reading.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Biff Mitchell is bald and has no idea how to use his cell phone. In spite of this he taught writing workshops through the University of New Brunswick's College of Extended Learning for a decade. He's also given workshops on science fiction, humor, mystery, horror and publishing through the Maritime Writer's Workshop, the FogLit Literary Festival, Culture Days Canada and the Muse Online Writers Conference.

Biff's new publisher, Fiction4All, will be publishing the Boston Jonson cyber mystery series through 2021 and the questionable book of short stories, *Blowing Up*.

Biff is also a world famous photographer in his daydreams and has taken a few passable pictures that he displays on his photography website biffmitchellvisuals.com.

You can learn more about Biff at www.biffmitchell.com.