

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 109: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, almost get iced.

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We eat to die. Our food kills us because all the really good stuff...the stuff that tastes good and feels good in our mouths...gives us heart attacks and bad complexions. We eat...

"Stop it!" said the dog, Sidestepper. He was sick of the lectures and doomsday memos. He wanted ice cream and a WOW gram. He wanted the voice to stop.

Amazingly, the voice stopped and the dog, Sidestepper, smiled.

"Hearing things again?" said Crazy Man.

The dog, Sidestepper, knew that Crazy Man thought he was tipping over the edge with voices in his head so he changed the subject: "Beautiful day."

Crazy Man, being easily sidetracked, immediately forgot his question and said, "It *is* a beautiful day and..."

"Beautiful for you two," said a sign with the message: PLEASE DON'T FEED THE PIGEONS.

Crazy Man suddenly had terrible thoughts about pigeons everywhere starving to death, dropping out of the skies from malnutrition, eating their own eggs and sometimes their young. Within minutes, he was the embodiment of distraught soul and nobody does distraught like Crazy Man. Tears bubbled up in his brain. A scream lingered in his esophagus trying to figure out which way was up.

"You bastard!" he said. "Why do you hate pigeons?"

“I don’t hate pigeons,” said the sign. “I love pigeons. Do you really think that I want to be this sign? Do you? No! I don’t! I want to be a pigeon and shit on signs like me.”

“So why do you say PLEASE DON’T FEED THE PIGEONS?” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Did a pigeon shit on *you*?”

“No,” said the sign. “They shit all around me. Deliberately. As though to say...they look at us, we can shit anywhere but we’re going to keep our shit just out of reach to remind you that you’re not a pigeon.” The sign let out a soul-scorching howl that rolled across the park by the path of adventure and new meanings and plunged into the deep dark scary woods where it was welcomed and honored as one of them. But the sign was a wreck. “I don’t even get shit upon. I’m less than a statue.”

Oops.

Empathy attack. Sort of man and kind of dog fell to the ground, rolling in the muck of their remorse and howling into the skies on behalf of all signs that wanted to be pigeons.

During which time, a flock of juvenile delinquent pigeons shit all over them so thoroughly that they were covered with pigeon shit from head to toe and they smelled really bad. The pigeon shit was so wet and slimy that they almost slipped out of the story and had to be brought back by a trick of narrative: They slipped into a nearby stream that just happened, magically, to be there and had their first baths since whenever and groomed themselves with imaginary combs and brushes before getting back to the sign with a more toned down sense of empathy.

“We’re really sorry that the pigeons won’t shit on you,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“And we’re really sorry that you can’t be a pigeon and shit on signs like yourself,” said Crazy Man.

The sign was suddenly overcome with gratitude and love for all things. “Would either of you have a slingshot you could use to bring down those *don’t-shit-on-me* pigeons?”

“Nope,” said Crazy Man, “but I’m planning on buying a flame thrower. And I might have a kitchen and a pizza pan.”

Not knowing what to think about this, the sign ignored Crazy Man’s answer and said, “I think the pigeons know something I don’t know.”

“What’s that?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“I don’t know,” said the sign. “But I’m sure the pigeons know.”

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for a few minutes or hours and said, “Maybe we should ask the pigeons if they know something they should be sharing with you.”

If a DON’T FEED THE PIGEONS sign could smile, then it would be curling sign lips into the sky. “Could you ask them for me,” said the sign. “I don’t think they understand sign language.”

“Sure thing,” said the dog, Sidestepper. He looked up into the sky with his most dramatic countenance which probably wasn’t a good idea with this bared lips and pointy teeth all sparkling and nefarious under the afternoon sun. “Hey you up there!” he yelled at the pigeons circling in the sky above them. “What do you know that the sign doesn’t know?”

Oops.

Both he and Crazy Man jumped, rolled, scattered, ducked, took cover and ran as hundreds gooey globs of pigeon shit rained down on them. But they were fast and remembered things about the trajectory of pigeon shit from the last pigeon shitting. They emerged from a gross landscape of wet slippery bird feces completely clean. Not a drop of organic projectile had landed on them. Out of pure joy, they danced for hours, possibly days, to have emerged shitless from a shit storm. Unfortunately, they danced in shit and they danced so hard and fast they were covered in shit again and there was no magical stream nearby for them to freshen up.

They had to wait for rain.

One day, it rained and Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were clean and happy but the sign had still not been shat upon and they still didn’t know what the pigeons knew. It was time to change tactics. Crazy Man dipped his hand into his artificial kangaroo pouch and pulled out a package of bird feed that he had been saving for a bird house he was going to build some day.

“Look what I have,” he said as he scooped a handful of seeds out of the package.

The dog, Sidestepper, and the sign were ecstatic. Finally...a way to get the attention of the pigeons without them sending down a barrage of shit. Crazy Man tossed several handfuls of seed onto the ground (which had been cleared of shit by the storm) around them and called to the pigeons, "Here you go, nice birdies...have some birdie food and please don't shit on us. At least not me and the dog, but feel free to shit on the sign."

In the distance, a crow smelled the feed and heard the invitation. It arrived with its friends and they began murdering the pigeons in mid-air until the pigeons shit themselves out of fear and flew away. A lone glob of pigeon shit tumbled through the air as the crows descended on Crazy Man and beaked him until he gave them the package of bird seed. The lone glob of shit streaked through the air and splattered onto the sign. The crows flew away with the bird seed, laughing. One of them said, "Was I imagining it, or was that guy really dressed in a kangaroo suit?" The crows laughed their beaks off. (Metaphorically. No crows were harmed in the writing of this episode.)

Meanwhile back at the sign, something strange unfolded. The glob of pigeon shit bubbled and splattered on top of the sign. It began to glow and sprout appendages and spread over the top of the sign and down its sides. The sign moaned and said, "Boy that's..."

The sign twisted and turned and transformed into a mini cyclone which transformed into a mini tropical storm which transformed into a giant crow-killing pigeon that took off after the crows and the bird seed with a murderous look in its eyes.

"Glad that's all over with," said Crazy Man.

"Yeah," said the dog, Sidestepper. "After all that, I'm pooped."

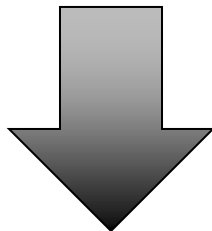
In the sky above them, several white puffy things training to be clouds heard the dog, Sidestepper, and laughed themselves into a hurricane that streaked off in the direction of the crows as the journeying duo continued down the path of adventure and new meanings in search of a mother, a map to food and this glorious outside thing.

To be continued...

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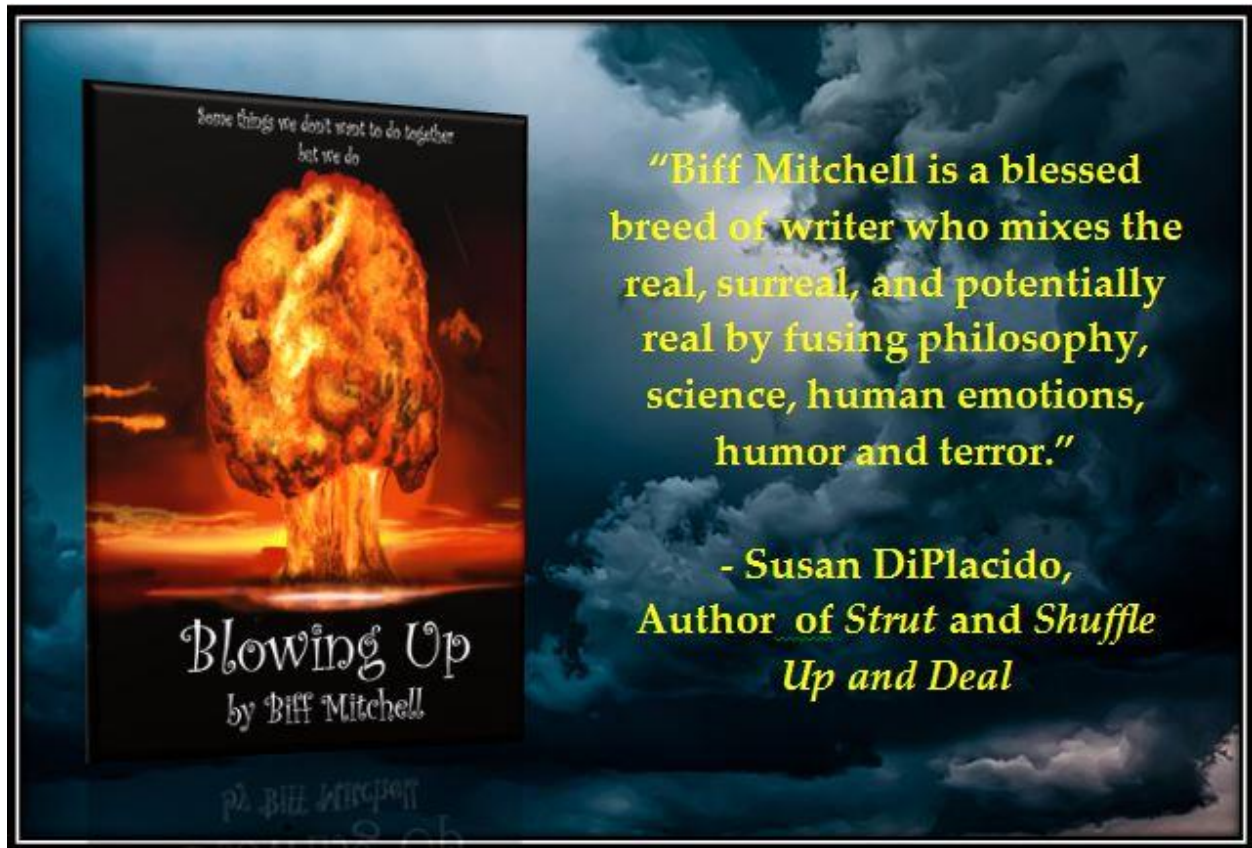
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About the picture at the top of this article: the Westmoreland Street bridge in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. (Has absolutely nothing to do with this article.)

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