

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 110: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, save the world from furry animals.

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MUNCH MUNCH! CRUNCH CRUNCH!

“Hey! Watch that mud...it’s still wet!”

MUNCH MUNCH!

“Careful now. Raise the left side of that log a little to the right.”

CRUNCH CRUNCH!

“We need more of that stringy material to prop up the...”

“We need more a few tails to flatten this mud!”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were impressed. They’d never seen such an enthusiastic group of animals all working together for a common cause. It was sort of like man and dog working together for a common cause, whatever that cause was.

“What are you building?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Suddenly, all the beavers stopped and stared at Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. They murmured among themselves and made strange beaver noises with their tails...a kind of mud-packed squishiness. One of the beavers stepped forward and said, “What’s it to ya?”

“Just curious,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “You all look so industrious working together to build something I’m sure will be unique.”

“It’s a beaver dam,” said the beaver. The other beavers remained silent and nodded their heads in agreement.

“But,” said the dog, Sidestepper, “shouldn’t dams be on rivers and streams and not fountains?”

The beavers were silent for a moment and then a wave of grunts and grumbles rolled over the fountain as they discussed how to answer the dog. The beaver that had stepped forward nodded to each of them and turned to the duo travelers:

“Not this one,” said the beaver. “We’re going to build this one so high that we’ll be able to climb it right into the stars.”

The dog, Sidestepper, looked up and said, “That’s a long way up.”

All the beavers looked up at the same time and nodded in agreement. It was a long way up, but...

“Our industriousness is longer than up,” said the, apparently, boss beaver, and the others nodded agreement. Some of them snorted solemnly, confirming their confidence that up was the only way to go.

Crazy Man looked up and up and up and said, “That’s going to take a lot of mud.”

At this, all the beavers broke into a very weird and unsettling laughter that was a mirthful combination of grunts, scratchy sounds, grumbles, barks and a couple of wails that sounded like crying babies. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stepped back a little, uncertain about the meaning of all these noises.

The boss beaver said, “We are the masters of mud.”

“That’s still a long way up,” said Crazy Man.

“Which makes failure a long way down,” said the boss beaver.

The other beavers slapped their tails into the mud and made chirping sounds with their teeth.

“But why?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Because,” said the boss beaver.

“Because why?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Because we want off this planet,” said the boss beaver. “So we’re building a dam to the stars.”

“Why do you want off this planet?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

The boss beaver looked at the dog, Sidestepper, as though he were crazy. “Because this planet is no place for beavers. Forests and conservation areas are eaten by highways, malls and sub-divisions.”

“But that’s just progress,” said Crazy Man.

“Not for us,” said the boss beaver. “Try building a beaver dam on a highway. It’ll cost you your pelt or you might end up in somebody’s stew or wild meat soup.”

Crazy Man’s eyes lit up. “You wouldn’t happen to have a map to stew or soup, would you?”

“No!” said all the beavers in unison. “And we don’t know where the dog’s mother is and you’re both bastards.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, suddenly felt kind of at home but an insult is an insult.

“And you’re all beaver bastards,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

The beavers chirped and slapped their tails in the mud. They pointed at Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, and laughed.

These were mean beaver bastards and Crazy Man had a feeling there was more to their dam than a mud highway to the stars.

“What are you really up to?” he said in his most authoritative and suspicious voice.

The beavers went silent, staring at each other with wide eyes as though they’d been caught with their tails in the cookie jar. (Try not to think about that.) After a minute or possibly a day, the beavers began to growl...quietly at first and then louder. Yes, growling beaver bastards...mean ones. In unison, they slapped their tails in the mud in a frenzy of mud splashing. And then they crouched like cats on the prowl after prey.

“So you suspect our plan,” said the boss beaver. “Now you must be muddled.”

“Muddled?” said Crazy Man.

“You know our plan!” cried the boss beaver.

“What plan?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“We’re going to build a dam to the stars and change the course of the earth so that all the highways and cities and everything that isn’t beaver friendly is diverted to the stars and then the planet will be ours. Ours!”

It was obvious to Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, that these beavers had been driven insane by progress and civilization.

“You’re crazy,” said Crazy Man. “There isn’t enough mud on earth to divert progress.”

“Mud them!” cried the beavers. Whereupon they scooped mud with their tails and flung the mud at Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. “Mud them to death!”

Shards of deadly beaver mud shot through the air at sort of man and kind of dog and, fortunately for them, beavers are not good shots and every shard of mud missed.

“Mud them again!” screamed the boss beaver like a furry banshee.

Again, a deadly barrage of mud filled the skies and missed the targets at which point a meteor plunged out of the clouds, screaming, “We don’t want your malls and highways in our stars!”

And the meteor slammed into the beavers, the mud and the fountain so hard it drove them deep into the ground smack into a giant artesian well that spewed up to the surface, creating a natural fountain that would puzzle the city water engineers for years to come.

Back on the path of adventure and new meanings, Crazy Man said, “Do you think that maybe nature is getting as crazy as us?”

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for a short while, possibly a long while, and said, “It appears that the stars think so.”

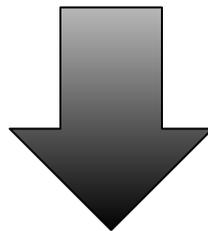
Around them, the deep dark scary woods seemed less scary than approximately dog and obscurely man...for exactly .09008 seconds...and then was back to being scarier and maybe scarier than ever.

To be continued...

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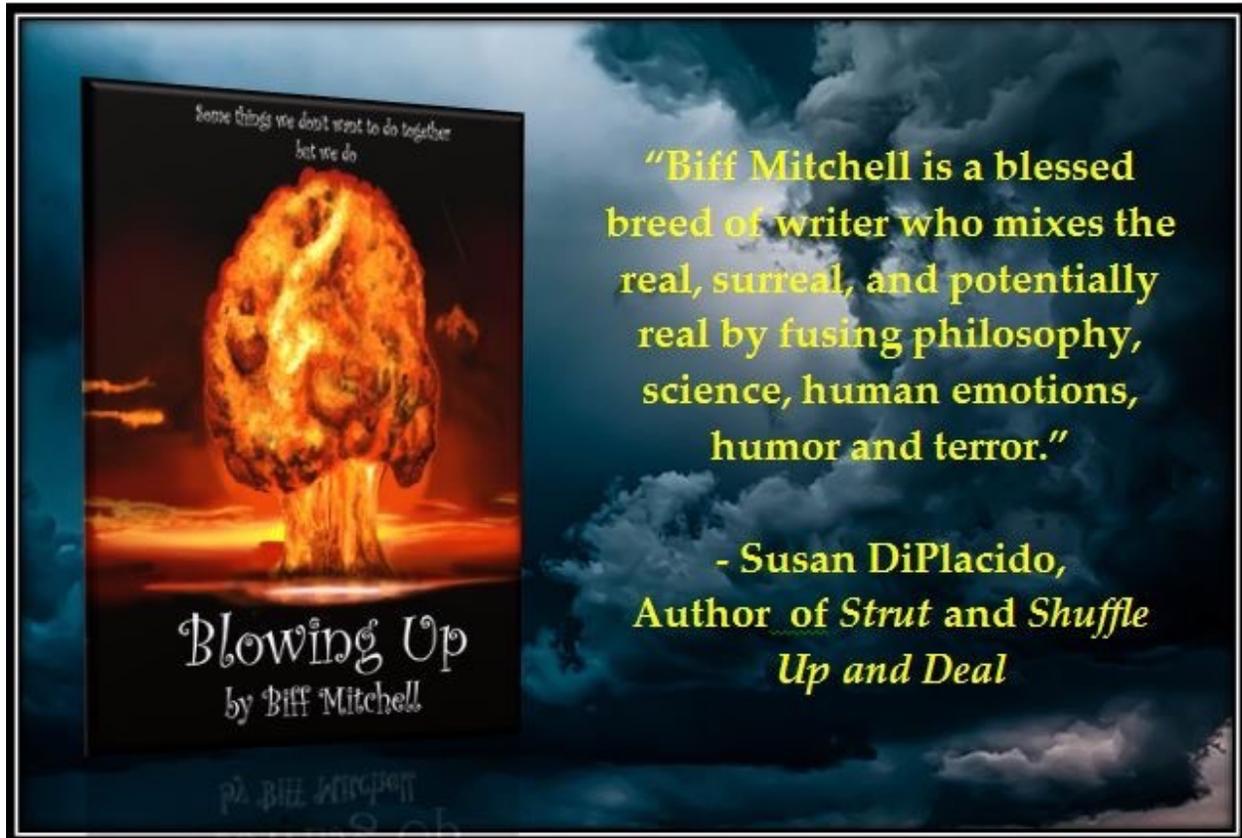
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