

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 113: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, the cart that will face the storm. Alone.

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It's been said that the meek shall inherit the earth. Of course, that was said long ago...when there was an earth worth inheriting. Now, the earth will be forced on the meek and, being meek, they'll take it.

But Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, had more important things on their minds. They still hadn't found a map to food let alone food itself and the dog, Sidestepper's, mother was still lost somewhere in that big world of possibilities where she might be a scientific experiment gone terribly wrong, or maybe it was the dog, Sidestepper, who some might say was canine genetics on all the wrong drugs.

"Do you think you might have doggie treats in the kitchen you might have?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

Crazy Man stewed over this for a long or short while before saying, "Do dogs like pizza? I might have a pizza pan."

Realizing the futility of his question, the dog, Sidestepper, changed the subject. "What's that?"

He pointed his tiny black nose in the direction of an expansive field by the path of adventure and new meanings where a single shopping cart was plopped dead center in the field, facing a fast-approaching storm that filled the horizon in an unsettling way.

"I will not bend or break," yelled the cart in a booming voice reminiscent of medieval warriors. "I am the abandoned and I will not succumb to the inevitable no matter how inevitable it is."

Crazy Man took an immediate liking to this cart that sounded even crazier than he was.

"That's the spirit!" he said. "You can do it!"

The cart, suddenly aware that a sort of man and kind of dog were behind it, boomed in an un-cart-like way, "Move along, you two. Nothing to see here. Just me, tackling the inevitable, all by myself."

The dog, Sidestepper, was overwhelmed by an intense outpouring of empathy that squished a tear out of his left eye. "You're not alone, brave cart, we will help you defeat the inevitable."

The cart spun its roller wheels in the snow but stayed in place. "That's what they all say! Then they just use me and abandon me. But I sure fooled them. I abandoned myself."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were confused. They'd never heard of a shopping cart abandoning itself before and they were skeptical.

"Not to rain on your abandonment," said the dog, Sidestepper, "but maybe you've just forgotten who brought you here and left you stranded."

Crazy Man, feeling empathy and the skepticism clenching inside his stomach agreed: "Sometimes large fields can erase sad memories."

"Look!" said the cart. "Do you see any footprints leading up to me? Do you?"

And sure enough, there were no footprints left behind by shopping cart abandoners. But there were no roller wheel treads either.

"Shouldn't there be wheel marks if you abandoned yourself?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"You don't know much about self-abandonment, do you?" said the cart. Its tone was flippant and the dog, Sidestepper, was quickly becoming fed up with this shopping cart that seemed to have dropped out of nowhere. "So, you just dropped out of nowhere?"

"Exactly," said the cart. "When you're no longer needed, you're abandoned which means that you're nowhere and when you're nowhere you just sort of self-dump yourself anywhere." The cart went silent for a moment. "I self-dumped myself here...where I can do something useful...like face this oncoming great dark storm."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, gazed at the churning sky behind the cart and nodded agreement in unison. It *was* a great dark storm and this cart *was* nuts.

"But why are you facing the great dark storm?" said Crazy Man.

"Because nobody else will," said the cart. "They just sit and talk about the storm until it carries them away, opinions and all."

"But why should anyone face the great dark storm?" said Cray Man.

"Because it will take us all to a great dark place if we don't," said the cart. "And by-the-way, neither of you will find your mothers, and maps to food are a fool's dream, plus, you're both bastards."

"What was all that about?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Just carrying on the narrative," said the cart.

Crazy Man ignored the cart, fearing it might interrupt the flow of the story and said, "How do you know that it will take us to a great dark place?"

"Because I know my history," said the cart, that was apparently an expert on history. "I know that lightning is always ready to strike the same place a dozen times and history repeats itself unless we stop it."

"So..." said the dog, Sidestepper, "...you'll single-handedly stop the storm...all by yourself?"

The cart that was an expert on history said, "It's always the few who save the many."

"But all you'll be doing is facing the storm," said the dog, Sidestepper. "And then it'll carry you off to a great dark place and who's to say that it won't take everybody else as well?"

The cart reeled up on its hind wheels like a warrior cart and said, "My sacrifice will drag them out of their complacency and they will be forced to confront the storm."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, conferred on this for three and a half seconds and the dog, Sidestepper, said, "We think you underestimate the complacency of the world."

"Right," said Crazy Man, "everyone will just say 'Hey look...someone's facing the storm' and they won't even see the storm."

“Right,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “They’ll just see you and think that everything’s just fine.”

“And they’ll have another beer,” said Crazy Man.

“And switch channels,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Anything to forget,” said Crazy Man.

“And...” the dog, Sidestepper, almost said.

The storm was upon the cart, raging and pulverizing the ground under the cart. And the cart stood fast...and a sound emerged from the storm, high pitched and soul-wrenching...

I’m just a lonely cart,
Doing my lonely part,
To get through one day at a time.
I’m just a...

And suddenly, the storm dissipated into nothing along with the cart and the field, which was replaced by the deep dark scary woods, simmering with threat and danger.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared at the woods until Crazy Man said, “Did that really happen or were we dream walking?”

The dog, Sidestepper, had no idea what Crazy Man meant so he changed the subject: “So you say you might have a pizza pan in the kitchen you might have?”

Deep in the deep dark scary woods, something chuckled ominously.

To be continued...

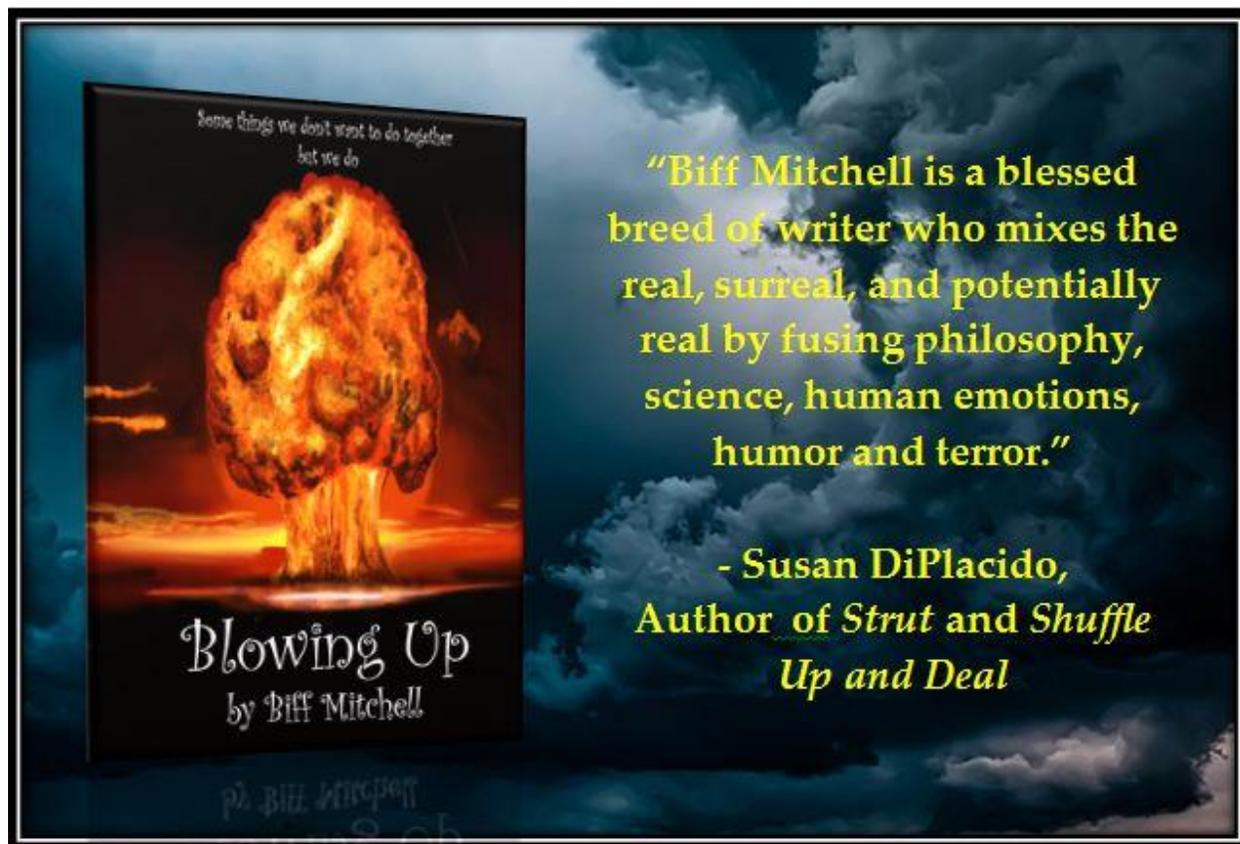
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