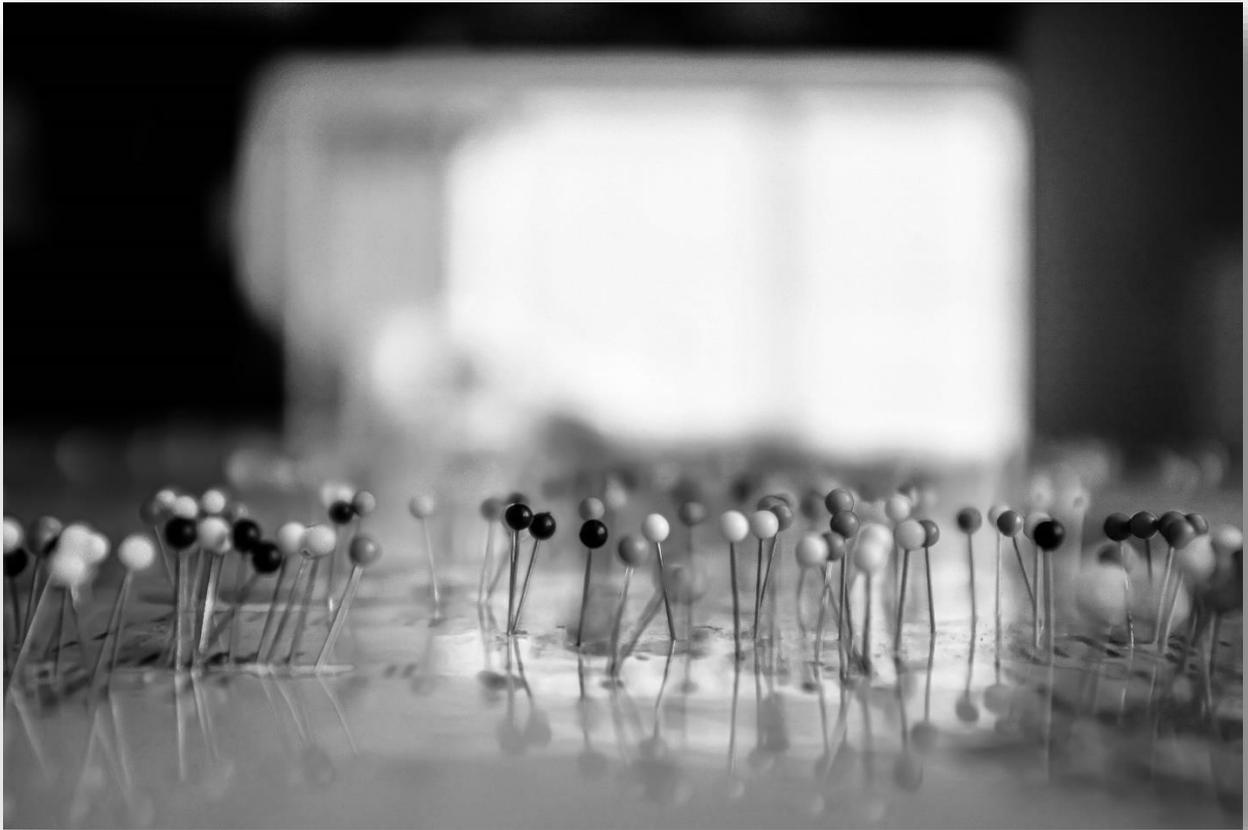


## The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 118: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, get complicated.

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The only way to complete a jigsaw puzzle is to have faith that the parts fit together as they should. Just the slightest doubt will send the player to the closest available crossword puzzle.

Or bar.

The dog, Sidestepper, was becoming mentally adroit at ignoring this strange narrative that seemed to haunt the air above the path of adventure and new meanings and he wasn't having any of this jigsaw puzzle crap. However, the bar part did sound good and he wondered if there might be a bar or two along the path. This, of course, was a foolish thought because everyone knows that dogs are not allowed in bars without their owners and Crazy Man was not the dog, Sidestepper's, owner. In fact, it might've been the other way around.

"What's your favorite drink?" he said loud enough to drown out his crazy thoughts.

Crazy Man wasn't sure how to answer the question because he couldn't remember if he'd ever had a drink other than water and he was having a hard time remembering what that tasted like. He tried to contact the other side of himself (given that his body existed in one dimension and his mind in another) but he wasn't sure which part of himself was in which dimension so he didn't know where to direct the contact. But he valued his travel buddy's questions no matter what dimension they came from so he decided it was important to pop up an answer: "The free ones," he said.

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for exactly the amount of time required to come to a conclusion: “So, you don’t know what your favorite drink is?”

No way was Crazy Man going to admit that. He was certain that somewhere in his being there was at least a shred of pride that needed to be protected against difficult questions on what his favorite drinks were so he changed the subject: “Have you ever noticed how complexity begins with simplicity?”

Shit. Wrong question. He’d meant to say, “Have you ever noticed how complexity *rhymes* with simplicity.”

The dog, Sidestepper, suspecting that Crazy Man had just said something profound opened his little doggie mouth to toss a barrage of his theories about complexity and simplicity at his travel mate but before he could get out the word “I” he was cut off by a strange scene the likes of which no path of adventure and new meanings had presented before...at least not in this episode.

A box full of light spilled strange looking tacks over the sides of the deep dark scary woods. One of them said, “Hi! We’re pinheads, not tacks. We can tack, we can pin, but mostly we just thrash around on every surface that we think is too still and stable. But your buddy has a point...you see, complexity starts with simplicity...until a bunch of people say, “That’s too easy...let’s make it dance.”

Suspecting a sob story or the like, both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, prepared themselves for sleep. Life was too short for someone else’s sob story and too long to allow for a moment’s boredom.

But before either could produce the first muted snore (they were both good at muting their snoring and sleeping with their eyes open), the pinhead said, “If you sleep while I’m talking to you, we’ll pin you to death...both of you.”

Talk about your waker-upper. Crazy Man seemed to recall having a nightmare once in which he was pinned to death by killer rogue pinheads from Stationeryland and if he remembered right, it hurt.

“After all,” said the pinhead, “everybody wants to understand the nature of complexity...right?”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, not wanted to be pinned to death nodded yes yes and yes...we need to understand complexity.

Suddenly, the pinheads started swirling and bending and ducking and jumping and tossing themselves over each other and under each other and beside each other and gathering in groups and breaking up groups and chattering and singing and moaning and making insightful points that were immediately disparaged as fake misinformed opinions that spread like hot greasy under anything that looked like it was rooted in anything stable and the pinheads started drawing the deep dark scary woods into what was quickly becoming a quagmire of questions leap-frogging answers and doubts about borders and definitions faded into a mass of perceptual ticky-tacky like mixing too many tints of paint until you get mud.

“But it all starts with one pinhead,” said the pinhead.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, nodded in trembling unison. Well, not really trembling. That would only happen if the pinheads were giant spiders or coffee with too much cream but these were just pinheads, deadly pinheads, but pinheads. So they nodded politely enough to let the pinhead know they were still awake and shouldn’t be pinned to death. In fact, the dog, Sidestepper, even had a question to ask so that he would make all of this even more real.

“That’s really amazing,” he said, “but what does it all mean? What are you doing?”

Like a bucket of water on a party out of control, the pinheads stopped falling over each other in mutual complexity and stood straight with their awareness reaching out to the talking pinhead with some kind of decision on what exactly they were doing.

“Just doing what all simplicity does...” said the pinhead, “...just adding to the simplicity until it’s not simple anymore. This is what we do.”

Hearing this, the other pinheads acknowledged the pointlessness of being simple and resumed the pointlessness of being complex because simplicity is a style of thought that attracts opinions and refinement until it dances itself to death.

And that’s exactly what the pinheads did...they danced themselves right off the path and out of the deep dark scary woods and into a stray acorn where they spent the rest of the day asking each other what the hell was going on until the acorn, for no other reason than to be a dickhead, exploded, leaving a hole in the ground where both the pinheads and the box full of light had been.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, glanced at each other and glanced back at the hole in the ground and Crazy Man said, “I wonder if they were complicated enough to have a map to food.”

“I think you would have needed a microscope and a Doctorate of Physics and Geography to find your way around *that* map,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Good thing I didn’t pin my hopes on it then,” said Crazy Man.

And strange dog and weird man continued along the path of adventure and new meanings trying to out-smirk each other.

To be continued...

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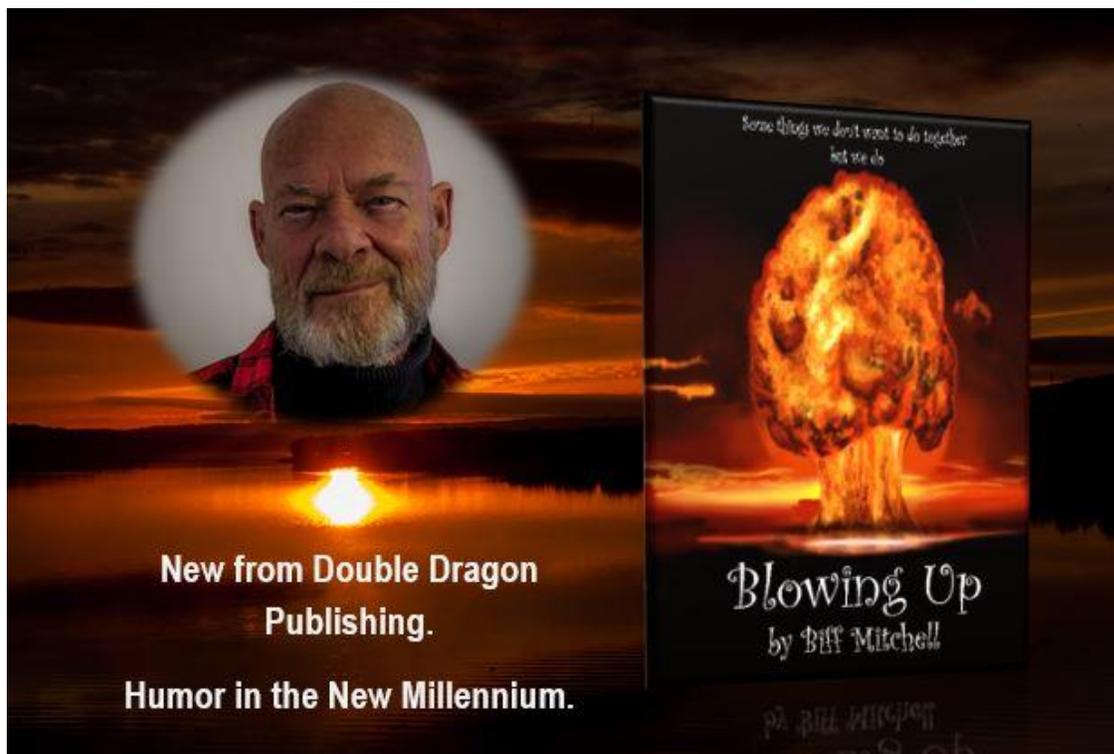
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