

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



Episode 122: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, trashed.  
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There will be trash always...it comes from the good and bad things we've got and these are the times when the package outweighs the product. This basic Yin/Yang truth of product and expiry date became painfully obvious to Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, when they encountered a trash barrel with its head knocked off and its stuffing smeared over the edge of the path of adventure and new meanings.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stopped and stared. They were mutually disgusted with everything that refused to contain its garbage within itself; however, neither of them had any idea what this meant so they toned down their disgust to a light conversation about spilled garbage.

"No sense crying over it," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"That's OK," said an unseen voice in the spilled garbage. "Cry or don't cry, it all works out the same...nobody does anything about it. I've been here, spilled all over the ground for a week or month or maybe more or less and only the crows have taken an interest in me and then only to remove a few fries and some ketchup. And btw, I have no map to food, don't know where your mother is and you're both bastards."

"That's right," said a discarded shoe beside a matching discarded shoe behind the barrel's lid. "I thought someone would have worn us away days ago, but they just walk by, feel sorry and outraged, and walk away."

“Right,” said the third food wrapper from the right of the lid. “Look how clean and unwrinkled I am. I can be used again and again but the bastards (not you bastards, the other bastards) just tossed me out like I was expendable or something.”

“You *are* expendable,” said the other discarded shoe. “Once you’re unwrapped, you’re waste.”

“I don’t want to be waste,” said a French fry with a hint of ketchup on its southern flank. It had been hiding from the crows under a wrapper.

“Me neither,” said a half-eaten hamburger bun. Or was it a half-eaten hot dog bun? It certainly wasn’t Naan bread.

“What craven misfit spilled you over?” said the dog, Sidestepper, in a moment of righteous poetic oratory.

“Nobody,” said a plastic coffee cup cover. “The can vomited.”

“Did not,” said the garbage can.

“You did, you bastard!” said the un-accumulated garbage spread around the can. “You heaved and you heaved and you heaved us out of you!”

“I burped,” said the garbage can. “All those fries and buns and artificial burger and wieners and carbonated soft drinks and coffee and...”

“You spewed us!” said a slightly crinkled wrapper with red stripes and a touch of bright yellow mustard.

“I can only do so much to withstand the never-ending onslaught of those who shed the unused and unwanted,” said the garbage can.

Neither Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, nor the garbage nor the story’s narrator had any idea what the garbage had just said so everyone and everything did the only reasonable thing: They snickered.

They snickered loud and clear and the snickering was like a blanket of shame and sorrow covering the garbage can and drowning out its excuses until both the blanket and the garbage can sank into the shame of the can’s inability to hold garbage and disappeared.

“Hey,” yelled a plastic stir stick. “That stupid can can’t just leave us here in the open. It’s embarrassing!”

“Who’s going to pick us up and put us somewhere?” said a piece of wrapper struggling to get from under a plastic burger container.

“Hey! You two!” said one of the forsaken shoes. “Pick us up. Find a place to put us. Preferably a garbage can that can hold garbage.”

Not wanting to soil skin or fur on spilled garbage, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, backed quietly away from the garbage, turned and almost ran away.

“Come back you bastards!” screamed the garbage in unison. “You needed us once!”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, slowed to a comfortable pace as soon as they were out of yelling range from the spilled garbage and it was time to change the subject.

“I’m going to change my name,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Crazy Man thought this was odd but it seemed reasonable at some indiscernible level.

“What will you change it too?” he said.

“I was thinking *OongaDog*,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

*OongaDog*, thought Crazy Man, certain now that his travel mate had lost it completely.

To be continued...

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