

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



Episode 131: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, meet the flower people.

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“Hey! Hey, you guys! Over here!”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stopped and looked up into a blank sky devoid of clouds, birds and Earth-bound meteors. They looked from side to side, rocking their eyes slowly and thoroughly to check every inch of a landscape devoid of voices directing their attention to “over here!” They saw nothing but the dark bushes and branches of the deep dark scary woods.

“Down here! Right by your foot!”

The dog, Sidestepper, looked down and saw nothing that wanted to talk to him. Crazy Man looked down and saw a clump of flowers that looked like bursts of light on a dark foreboding background. The flowers swayed slowly to the rhythmic tune of a creepy breeze that slowly swept across the floor of the deep dark scary woods like spilled tar.

One of the flowers yelled: “That’s right! Right here by your foot!”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were overjoyed. Their faces lit up like fireworks under low clouds and they started jumping up and down on the spot because they’d both spent many hours wondering if they’d ever meet flowers that looked like bursts of light...and here they were...looking at flowers that...

“Could you tell your narrator to knock it off bursts of light stuff,” said one of the bursts of light. “We’re flower people and we don’t burst...we bloom and blossom.”

For just a second, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, thought terrible thoughts about their narrator until he finally knocked it off and wrote: Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were besides themselves with joy, both having always been fans of blooming and blossoming. They took an immediate liking to the flower people and Crazy Man said, “You wouldn’t happen to have a map to food, would you?”

“No,” said one of the flowers.

“Or maybe you’re my long lost mother disguised as flower people,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Awe gee, Mom..”

“No,” said another flower. “We’re not your mother and you’re both bastards.”

Both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were feeling slightly less than fans of flower people and blooming and blossoming.

“Maybe we should eat you,” said Crazy Man.

“Nooooo!” said the flower people in unison, with just a touch of fear, horror, remorse, dread, angst, \_\_\_\_\_ in their collective voice.

“Why not?” said the dog, Sidestepper. “You called us bastards.”

“Everybody calls you bastards,” said one of the flower people (who wants to remain anonymous).

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, pondered this juicy piece of rumor and had more than enough meetings and consultations before concluding: “We think we should still eat you,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Nooooo!” screamed the flower people in unison. “You can’t eat us!”

“We’re poisonous!” said another flower person that wanted its identity kept really really secret.

“No!” said another flower person waving a placard that said MY NAME IS LARRY! “We’re venomous. Tell your narrator to buy a dictionary.”

Both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, had always taken care to avoid ingesting venom. They’d heard some very nasty things about the nature of venom and its role in surprising the uninitiated with death and physical mayhem. Neither wanted anything to do with venom.

“Would that be all the parts of you,” said Crazy Man, “or just the flowers? Are your roots savory? Are the useful in making flower people tea?”

Crazy Man had no idea what he was talking about and he was certain that he would never drink flower people tea, even with milk and sugar.

Well, maybe with lots of sugar.

“Just thinking about eating us could greatly threaten your mental health,” said the flower person named LARRY. “We made a bear shit in the woods after thinking about eating us.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, had heard about bears and had always wanted to be on social terms with one in the hopes they might learn more about the location of honey and they saw nothing wrong about bears shitting in the deep dark scary woods.

“We don’t want to eat you anyway,” said Crazy Man. “We have no salt, no ketchup, no Dijon mustard and you just don’t look all that tasty.”

Suddenly, the flower people were angry. No one had ever accused them of being tasteless...possibly because they were venomous...and they had carefully aligned dreams of someday putting a big smile on someone’s face while their venom shut down their nervous system and organs. They liked the idea of having a dream they could share.

“Well,” said the flower people, “we don’t want you to eat us anymore.” This thought traveled through the forest slosh that made forest beds where flower people and other forest life could grow and a new or maybe pre-used thought occurred to the flower people. “Wait a minute!” they said in unison. “We don’t want you to eat us. That’s why we lied about the ven...”

The flower people went silent. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, went silent. Clouds floating over the path of adventure and new meanings went silent.

The dog, Sidestepper, was the first to speak: “You lied to us. You’re not venomous!”

“No,” said one of the flower people who’d been uncharacteristically quiet so far. “But we might be poisonous. So back off with the teeth and saliva.”

The dog, Sidestepper, was too smart to get into a doomed fray of useless semantics with a flower person, so he lifted his rear right leg and did a terrible doggie thing until the only sounds coming from the flower people were gasp, glug and gurgle.

As he listened to the dwindling drowning sounds of the flower people, Crazy Man had a thought that swirled around in his head and generated an audio output: “Why did they call us over in the first place?”

“I think they were just lonely,” said Crazy Man. “So they wanted to poison somebody.”

“But they could have talked to each other,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Maybe they just ran out of things to talk about,” said Crazy Man.

“And maybe that’s why they called us over,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “To see if we could give them something new to talk about. And then they were going to poison us.”

“Or maybe poisoning us was what they wanted to talk about,” said Crazy Man. He noticed that the dog, Sidestepper, seemed to be deep in thought. “What’s up? You look mentally constipated.”

The dog, Sidestepper, appreciated the thought but his head was still in cerebral turmoil but he managed to push out a word or two: “Do bears really shit in the woods?”

Crazy Man almost expected the dog, Sidestepper, to laugh at having made a really dumb joke, but there was no laugh...only expectant eyes waiting for an answer. So Crazy Man dug deep into his own limited knowledge of all-that-is and said, “Are bears Catholic?”

They listened to something zig-zagging up and down the path of adventure and new meanings. They felt a flippant breeze lightly slapping their foreheads and cheeks. They watched puffy cloud things in the sky bounce off other puffy cloud things in the sky and, just as the deep dark scary woods was about to guffaw...it ate a squirrel instead.

To be continued...

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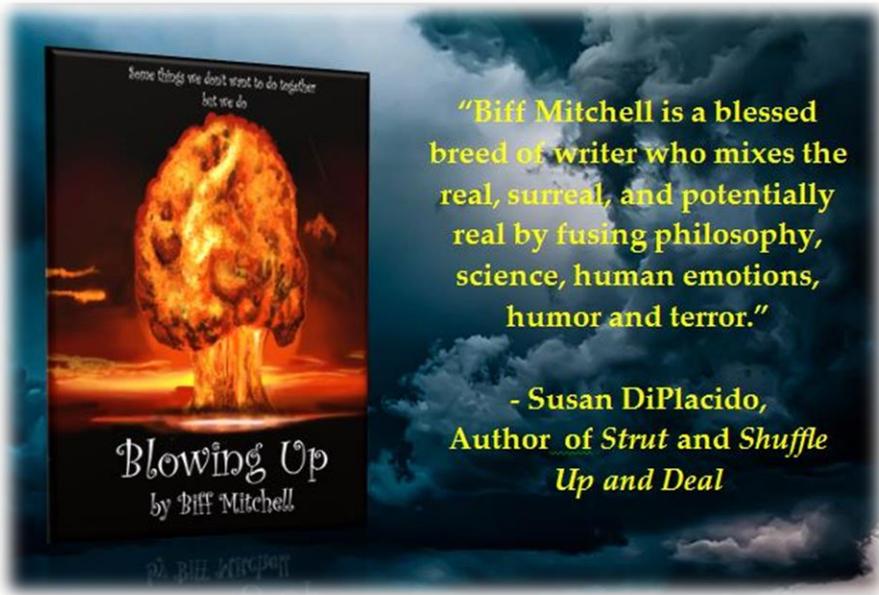
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