

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 135: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, play the guessing game.

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“Hello down there,” said a hole in a tree at the edge of the deep dark scary woods. “Would you happen to have time for a quick game of guess who I am or do I have to make this tree fall on your heads and kill you...just like a tree falling on your heads?”

“But it *would* be a tree falling on our heads,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Being a contemporary hole in a tree, it shed all reasonable thought and said, “I control the roots. I’ll grab your toes and pull you into the ground.”

Both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, vaguely recalled years of terror-filled nights dreaming about being pulled into the ground by tree roots. Their teeth chattered and they suddenly had to pee. It was time for a game of...

Guess What I Am. Or Die.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, hated being killed by falling trees and they would do just about anything to avoid it, even by playing the **Guess What I Am. Or Die** game.

But they weren’t sure what the rules were. How many guesses did they have? Were the odds in their favor or against them? How long did they have to make a guess? Was there really a voice coming from the hole

in the tree or were they having a flash back to the 60s? And exactly why was there a hole in *this* tree at *this* particular time? There was much to brood upon here, much to reflect upon and examine for life-changing insights and...

"You must decide," said the hole in the tree. "Who am I?"

"But what are the rules?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"There are no rules!" said the hole in the tree. "You just guess. It's a guessing game."

"How many guesses do we get?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"As many as you want," said the hole in the tree. "Just guess."

"And what if we guess wrong?" said Crazy Man.

"Then you guess again," said the hole in the tree.

"But what if we keep guessing wrong?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Then you keep guessing until you die," said the hole in the tree.

"So," said Crazy Man, suspiciously, "who decides when it's time to stop guessing and we die?"

"I do, of course," said the hole in the tree.

"So that's a rule," said the dog, Sidestepper.

"No," said the hole in the tree, "that's just the way it is."

"What if we don't want to play?" said Crazy Man.

"~~Then you die,~~" said the hole in the tree.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were beginning to lose their patience with this nasty little ultimatum-driven hole in the tree but they didn't want to die by tree. They didn't want to die, period. They'd just as soon leave that to somebody else.

"Tell you what," said Crazy Man. "We'll play your game for five guesses."

"You must guess until you guess right or die," said the hole in the tree.

Crazy Man reached deep into his Taiwanese fisherman pants pocket and pulled out a book of matches. He smiled sardonically at the hole in the tree and said, "We'll make five guesses and then leave and if you try to bonk us to death with your tree, we'll burn you down."

The hole in the tree hated matches. It had seen what they can do to fireworks and it didn't want to go exploding all over the sky. "That's not fair," it said.

"Making us play ~~Guess What I Am. Or Die~~ without sending us a formal invite isn't fair either," said the dog, Sidestepper, who had read widely on social protocols and gaming etiquette.

"But then you wouldn't come," said the hole in the tree.

"OK," said Crazy Man, "we'll play the game for five guesses and then if you try to kill us, we'll set you on fire."

"Oh...OK," said the hole in the tree. "First guess."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, thought, discussed, debated, studied and analyzed all manner of tree and hole things until they came up with the perfect answer.

"You're a window into madness" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"Nope! Wrong, wrong, wrong," said the hole in tree.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, conferred and consulted until the dog, Sidestepper, faced the hole in the tree, smiled knowingly and said, "You're a space of nothingness."

The hole in the tree laughed and snorted and said, "Wrong, wrong, wrong."

Crazy Man shook like a hen in a fox coup and said, "You're a figment of the tree's floral imagination."

"Wrong, wrong, wrong!"

The dog, Sidestepper's, eyes popped out of his head as a bolt of inspiration shot through his head, "You're a mystic portage around offensive scenery."

"Wrong, wrong, wrong!"

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were flummoxed. They had just one guess left and they were nowhere near exhausting the endless possibilities of names for this...

“Hole in the tree,” said Crazy Man.

For one entire second, the entire world stopped, just stopped. One entire second, as though something of cosmic proportions had just happened. But that happened somewhere else. Back on the path of adventure and new meanings, sort of man and somewhat dog watched the hole in the tree expand and contract like it was drowning in air. Once the spasms abated, the hole in the tree said, “That’s right. I’m a hole in the tree and not some kind of gate or portage or window. Boy, people just don’t know what they *see* anymore. I mean, a hole’s a hole no matter if it’s in a tree or a mountain.”

Crazy Man had been giving this matter much thought recently and had many questions for the hole in the tree, but it was getting late and he was sure this hole in the tree had no map to food and no idea where the dog, Sidestepper’s, lost mother might be found.

So Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, bid the hole in the tree farewell and continued their journey down the path of adventure and new meanings, laughing and giggling and making up new names for the hole in the tree.

“Holey moley hole in a tree,” said the dog, Sidestepper, and Crazy Man almost fell to his knees laughing as the deep dark scary woods frowned on the path and its travelers.

To be continued...

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