

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 140: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, another bug.

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Once upon a time, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, had a ragdoll friend named Dorothy. The three of them met a ladybug with the power to grant good luck by simply landing on them...either good luck or not-so-lucky death. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were very happily granted good luck. Unfortunately, Dorothy died as soon as the ladybug landed on her. Much thinking about bugs and luck had ensued since that day. Some had it, some didn't. But what was the difference that decided who won the raffle and who lost after buying all the tickets but one? Who knows?

Back on the path of adventure and new meanings, the journeying duo, came across a quartz formation jutting out of the ground. In its center was the biggest ladybug either of them had ever seen. It looked like an acorn with spots. They immediately thought: *This ladybug must have more good luck than any other ladybug in the whole world.*

Or more death.

They wondered if it would be a good idea to test their luck again to gain more good luck.

"I know exactly what you're thinking," said the ladybug. "You're thinking lots of luck or lots of death."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were amazed...another talking bug. And a ladybug at that!

"Well," said the ladybug, "I'm not that kind of ladybug."

"What kind of ladybug are you?" said the dog, Sidestepper.

"If I land on you," said the ladybug, "I shit on you, and my shit is very smelly and takes a long time to wash off. The good thing is, you probably won't have worse luck for the rest of the day, which sort of means that me shitting on you is good luck. Like eating the proverbial frog in the morning."

"But what if a thousand pound rock falls on our heads after you've shit on us?" said Crazy Man.

“That wouldn’t be good luck,” said the ladybug. “Even if I shit on you, you might want to keep your eyes open and your heads up.”

The dog, Sidestepper, was no fan of being shit upon, even if that meant the rest of the day would be better. Maybe the rest of the day would be better anyway. And maybe the rest of the day would be worse than shit. And no way was he going to let a ladybug the side of an acorn shit on him.

“I think we’ll pass on the good luck,” he said.

“Fine,” said the ladybug. “Then maybe you’re ready for the truth.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were overjoyed at the thought of hearing the truth. They just hoped it wouldn’t be a sob story that would inevitably put them to sleep.

“Luck doesn’t come from ladybugs, rabbit feet or four leaf clovers,” said the ladybug. “It just happens.”

Crazy Man fiddled around in his pocket to see if his lucky rabbit’s foot was still there. It was. In fact, it was attached to a live rabbit. He patted the rabbit and pulled his hand out of his pocket.

“And...?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“That’s it,” said the ladybug.

“That sounds more like an opinion,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Anything can just happen...good luck or bad luck.”

“That’s right,” said the ladybug. “At least, that’s my humble opinion.”

The dog, Sidestepper, eyed the ladybug suspiciously. Something wasn’t quite right about this big spotted bug. It wasn’t giving them the whole story. There was something going on here that didn’t fit the whole ladybug thing.

“Are you really a ladybug,” he said, “or are you an acorn disguised as a ladybug?”

The ladybug laughed and coughed and gagged and spun in circles around itself and, with a tiny pop, turned into an acorn.

“Guess you saw right through me,” said the acorn.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, looked at each other and nodded. They’d long since learned that nothing was what it seemed unless it *was* what it seemed and that seemed to be almost never.

“Why?” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Why would you disguise yourself as a ladybug? Especially one that gives good with its shit.”

The acorn made a sob-like sound and said, “One day I was lying down on the ground waiting to somehow become a tree when a ladybug landed on me and told me I would need a tap root to dig into the soil and grow into a tree. I told the ladybug that somehow someone or something forgot to give me a tap root and the ladybug laughed and said “Good luck with that,” and flew away. Laughing.”

The acorn’s story ended just before the duo were about to fall asleep, which was their response to anything that sounded like a sob story and there were too many sob stories for their liking.

“Ladybugs can be bastards,” said Crazy Man. “And we should know.”

The acorn suddenly twitched excitedly and said, “Wait a minute! Are you the two who saved the earth and all of us from the aliens?”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, rolled their eyes; in fact, Crazy Man’s eyes began to roll out of control and almost rolled out of their sockets before he slapped himself on the side of the head to put the brakes on them. As soon as the rolling stopped and whatever reality returned, the dog, Sidestepper, said, “More like the aliens saved themselves from us.”

“But weren’t they trying to destroy the earth?” said the acorn.

“Nope,” said Crazy Man. “But they were afraid we might destroy life everywhere else in the universe so they sort of put us in quarantine until we smarten up.”

“You mean like off limits signs in space and stuff like that?” said he acorn.

“You seem to be very much aware of the consequences of being a galactic threat,” said the dog, sidestepper.

“I have my moments,” said the acorn. “Maybe we could send the aliens a bag full of ladybugs for good luck, the ones with *just* good luck.”

“Or maybe we should just leave them alone for the time being,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “You said that you won’t grow unless you have a tap root.”

“That’s right,” said the acorn. “No tap, no sap. That’s an acorn joke.”

Both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, tried unsuccessfully to laugh.

“Maybe if you bury me,” said the acorn. “Maybe I’ll grow a tap root or something. Can’t be any worse than hanging around here pretending to be a ladybug.”

This sounded like a great idea and the dog, Sidestepper’s, bone-burying instincts kicked in and he attacked the ground with his front paws sending dirt and detritus flying in all directions until he had a hole in the ground big enough and deep enough to bury the acorn.

There you go,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “How’s that?”

The acorn was almost in acorn tears (a rare side effect of kindness to acorns) and rolled across the ground with a loud *weeeeee* and plopped into the hole.

“Thanks guys,” said the acorn from the bottom of the hole. “Some day I’m going to be a big beautiful oak tree.” It thought a moment and said, “Or a rotting piece of acorn shit. But what the hell.”

Crazy Man plowed the small pile of dirt into the hole with a big red boot (which he tried not to look at) and patted it down to a smooth level surface. And now it was up to time and tides to determine the acorn’s fate.

Later, on the path of adventure and new meanings, Crazy Man said, “Do you think there’s such a thing as good luck and bad luck?”

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for exactly 23 sideways footsteps and said, “I guess that depends on what side of the luck you’re on.”

Crazy Man had no idea what this meant but he nodded agreement and said, “Have you ever wanted to be anything but yourself?”

“Only when I’m not myself,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Again, Crazy Man had no idea what his travel companion was saying and decided it was time for some quiet reflection along the path of adventure and new meanings.

Which they would probably need before their next adventure.

To be continued...

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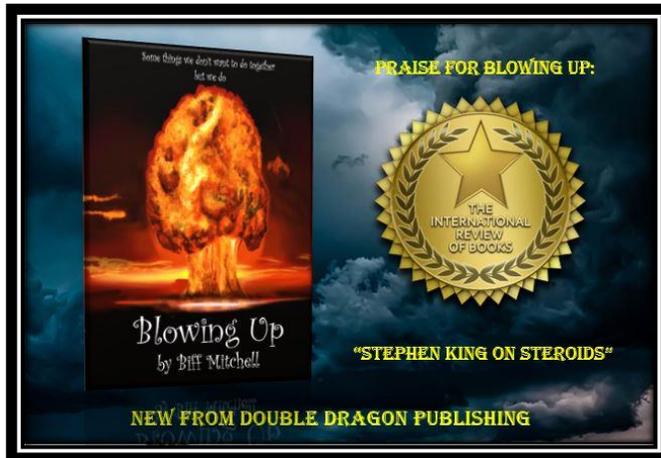
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