

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



Episode 142: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, have a relaxing day.  
(New here? [Click here to see what it's all about.](#))

One day on the path of adventure and new meanings nothing in particular happened. No talking trees, no mean birds, no homicidal bridges or waterfalls that wanted to be dogs, no Queen of Every Sandcastle...in other words, a relatively *abnormal* day for Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. The path was calm and restful. The deep dark scary woods were less deep, less dark and definitely less scary.

It was a time for thinking and reflection for a kind-of man and a sort-of dog. Their thoughts were simple: *Would they ever find a map to food? Would they ever find a dog's mother?* And there was much reflection on this puzzling but magical *outside thing*. They'd made friends, they'd made enemies. They'd tested the boundaries of sanity and reason and were still able to count to ten. Days and decades had passed and there was no telling the time other than it was light and it was dark, and light again. They forged ahead into an endless horizon.

"Kind of quiet today," said Crazy Man.

The dog, Sidestepper, sniffed the air with his tiny wet doggie nose and said, "And pretty. I like this part of the woods. It's like walking through a tunnel of leaves."

They walked beside each other quietly until a thought burst out of the dog, Sidestepper's, head: "Remember when we first met and we bit each other on the nose?"

"You bit my nose first," said Crazy Man. "I was just trying to be friendly and I was wondering if you really existed."

“You asked me why I walked sideways,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “You reminded me of my long stilt-like legs. I wasn’t in a mood for that.”

“You licked my face,” said Crazy Man. “You thought I was your mother.”

The dog, Sidestepper, chuckled. “I was young. I was foolish. I was traumatized and thought the world was my mother, or at least, something in it. I wasn’t sure what, not having much experience with mothers.”

“At least you don’t ask everything you see if it’s your mother anymore,” said Crazy Man. “That was kind of embarrassing.”

“And you keep asking for a map to food,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Do you think such a thing exists?”

“There’s a map to everything that exists,” said Crazy Man, though he had no actual proof for such a far-ranging assumption but it seemed of make sense at some Crazy Man level...maybe in the other dimension where his body existed or maybe his mind...in one or the other. Living in two dimensions is never easy.

“Are you sure of that?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“Not really,” said Crazy Man. “But it keeps me going. If there’s food, there must be a map so that people will be able to find the food.”

The dog, Sidestepper’s, eyes widened as he remembered something. “We called each other bastards,” he said.

“Everything on the planet calls us bastards,” said Crazy Man. “But I might have a kitchen...and someday I may have a flame thrower. And I’m sure I have a pizza pan in the kitchen I might have. And I remember everyone who called us bastards.”

Just then a cool breeze whisked through the canopy of leaves, rattling branches and shaking the fall plumage like a brilliant kaleidoscope of infinite shapes and colors

“The whole world’s a bastard,” said the agitated leafage.

Well, how about that...talking leaves.

“Yeah,” said a particularly loud orange leaf. “We were having a great time soaking up the sun and oozing chlorophyll, flapping in the breezes, taking in carbon dioxide and producing oxygen...and then it gets a little bit cold and we all start dying off.”

“That’s right,” said another leaf, this one a brilliant red. “And because we die colorful deaths, everyone thinks this is so cool. ‘Hey look,’ they say, ‘look at all the beautiful leaves.’”

“Bastards! Every one of them,” said an orange leaf with half its surface eaten by bugs. “They just don’t get it...we’re dying! Dying!”

“But dying beautifully,” said a group of needles in a very green pine tree.

“Oh yeah,” said the particularly loud orange leaf, “let’s see you turn all sorts of colors and then drop dead to the ground. Great Christmas tree you’d make then.”

“At least people don’t come around with axes and saws and cut you down to stick in their living rooms with bows and baubles,” said all the green needles covering a perfect green pine tree that would look great in any living room with a star on top.

“At least it’s over in a matter of weeks,” said the brilliant red leaf. “We have to endure death every fall of every year and some of our trees live for hundreds of years...hundreds of deaths...every year...every single bloody year...I can’t take it anymore.”

Whereupon the brilliant red leaf tore away from its branch and threw itself onto the ground so hard that it disturbed a group of very fat ants burrowing into the ground for a much deserved winter vacation. Feeling bad for the brilliant red leaf, one of the ants said, “But it’s not you who dies every year...it’s different leaves every year so you just die once.”

The brilliant red leaf thought about this for seven and one half seconds and said, “Oh yeah...that. Maybe I should have stayed in the tree a little longer.”

At that moment, a terrible swift wind that occupied at least ten quarts of air space zoomed in out of nowhere and carried the brilliant red leaf off to some random place to become Spring mulch.

“No sense of timing for that one,” said the particularly loud orange leaf. “Could have stayed up here with us for at least another week.”

“Sometimes you just have to go with your gut feeling,” said a very brown crinkly leaf. After which it dislodged itself from its branch and fell screaming and cursing about gut feelings all the way to the ground where it immediately turned into flakes of brown crinkly matter.

“Geez,” said a group of green pine needles, “why don’t you all find yourself a pine tree to grown on?”

This made some kind of cockeyed sense to the dying (but colorful) leaves and they started pulling and tugging away from their trees and springing into the air looking for a pine tree to roost on...and within minutes the air was saturated with thousands red, orange, brown and lime green leaves searching desperately for seasonal immortality. They tried worming their way between needles to attach their stems to the evergreens but the needles were having none of it and shifted around just enough to keep the leaves from attaching. Terrible curse words broke out as thousands of leaves flapped in the air until they lost momentum and fluttered hopelessly to the ground leaving the trees that nurtured them barren and spindly.

The trees were pissed off.

“So,” said a particularly pissed of maple tree as the wind cut through its leafless branches, “we’re not good enough for you, are we?”

Birch trees and elms and a host of other trees nodded leafless agreement in that way that leafless trees nod agreement. The general consensus was that the leaves were being unreasonable so it served them right for falling prematurely to become bug food. The world was unhappy with its leaves and the leaves were even unhappier and feeling kind of foolish.

But next year there would be new leaves...big shiny green leaves that would bloom all Spring and Summer and die beautiful deaths in the Fall.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, kicked patches of leaves along the path of adventure and new meanings as they laughed and recalled all the crazy madness of their journey and looked forward to more of the same because life thrives on surprise.

To be continued...

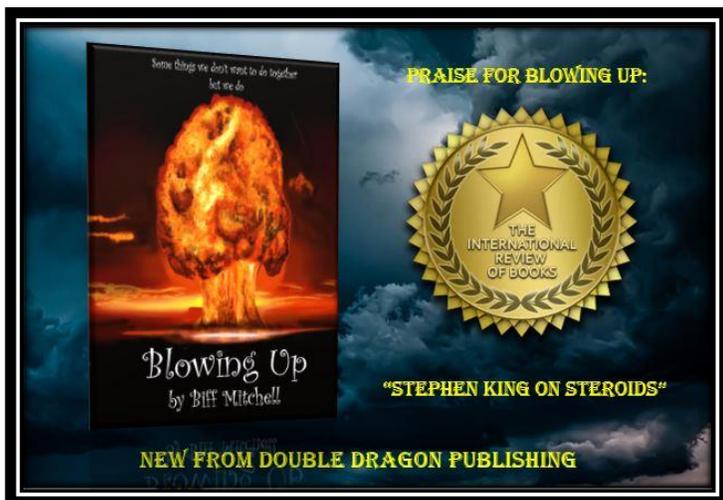
© Biff Mitchell

Up for more laughs? [www.biffmitchell.com](http://www.biffmitchell.com)

Check out the blog at: [www.crazymanadventures.com](http://www.crazymanadventures.com)

New from Double Dragon Publishing!

# Blowing Up



“His stories are simultaneously shocking and funny, literate and profane, a riot of cynical creativity brightened by occasional flashes of compassionate insight...the book is utterly original.”

Lisabet Sarai, Goodreads Reviewer

[Click here to own your very own copy.](#)