

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 154: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, See the Oneness of the Empty Bottle (New here? [Click here to see what it's all about.](#))

“Hello travelers on the path of adventure and new meanings,” said two wicker wrapped bottles of wine that appeared to be twins right down to the slant of their corks. “We’d like to slake your thirst but we’re empty and we were wondering if you might have some candles and matches.”

Crazy Man checked the pockets in his zoot suit...all 715 of them...and pulled out a half used emergency candle.

The dog, Sidestepper, being a dog that walked sideways, had no candles but somehow had matches. Exactly one.

“You’re in luck,” said Crazy Man. “But we just have one of each.”

“That’s OK,” said one of the empty wine bottles. “There’s really just one of me but I look like two because that’s the way everyone sees me after they’ve emptied me. I have no idea why you two can see me.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were suddenly gripped by misplaced sympathy for the empty wine bottle and immediately went into epic empathy mode with Crazy Man’s head spinning almost off his shoulders and spraying the path with a storm of tears as he jumped up and down in full support of a single wine bottle’s right to be seen as two wine bottles. The dog, Sidestepper, chased his tail in a hopeless marathon of hope for wine bottles everywhere and their need for matches and candles until a thought occurred to him: “Why do you need candles and matches?” he said.

“I need them for Phase 2 of my existence,” said whichever of the wine bottles was not a figment of the contents of a wine bottle. “I can be re-cycled or re-purposed and I choose to be re-purposed as a light in the night.”

The dog, Sidestepper, who had always wanted to be a light in the night himself, wished that he had a ship container full of candles and matches that he could share with this wine bottle at the crossroads of its existence.

“I feel your need!” he yelled.

“Yes he does. He’s always wanted to be a light in the night,” said Crazy Man, who wasn’t really sure if this was true but he was ninety-three percent sure, so he stuck by it.

“How wonderful,” said the non-figment bottle of wine. “Could you please put the candle in my spout and light it?”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, weren’t sure why the wine bottle would want a lit candle in its spout but Crazy Man approached the bottle and, just as he was about to put the candle in, the wine bottle said, “No...the other one!”

Whereupon Crazy Man realized that the bottle he was looking at was suddenly not there but there was one next to it. And that’s where he pushed the candle in. The wine bottle sighed happily. “Now, please light the candle.”

The dog, Sidestepper, handed the match and striker to Crazy Man, who struck the match against the striking pad a few times until it burst into a small flame and he lit the candle. Immediately, molten wax began to flow down the sides of the candle and over lip of the bottle and then down the sides of the wine bottle.

“Owww!” screamed the empty wine bottle. “That hurts! Yeow! Put it out! Put it out!”

Crazy Man quickly pinched the flame out. It made a tiny wisp of smoke and was gone.

“Are you all right?” he said.

“Yeah,” said the wine bottle. “Didn’t expect it to be that hot.”

“What were you trying to do?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

The empty wine bottle seemed almost to blush. “I saw some pictures of empty wine bottles in the 70s and they all had candles sticking out of their necks and colored candle wax forming really cool patterns over their labels and wicker bodies. I wanted to be cool like them.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were confounded by the world’s lack of cold burning candles and decided it was time to summon scads of analysts and cold candle experts to right this non-burning wrong. However, none of these resources were currently available anywhere on the path of adventure and new meanings so they descended into a fit of over-cooked empathy which resulted in hours or days of relentless head spinning, eye-balling, neck wringing, torso inflating and gravity-defiance...which, of course, solved nothing and left them both existentially exhausted.

The empty wine bottle followed their display nervously, expecting them to explode at any second like one big blast of misplaced empathy.

“Thank you for your concern,” said the empty wine bottle. “You can go now.”

But Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were far from finished. They had dances and movements, thought progressions and rituals and many other means of outstaying their need to help and there was no way they were leaving this empty wine bottle until it had experienced the full force of their concern.

“Maybe we could get a petition going,” said Crazy Man. “We could submit it to the highest levels...whatever they are.”

“We could buy ads on Google and Amazon and Facebook and Biff’s blog,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “They could say something like: “If your candle is too hot, sign the petition to cool it down.”

“Or we can send you thoughts and prayers until somebody does something useful,” said Crazy Man.

The empty wine bottle was beginning to feel strangled by their empathy and all the antagonizing ways it sought to alleviate a problem that had nothing to do with them.

“You can go now,” said the empty wine bottle.

Both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, froze in mid-empathy and stared at the empty wine bottle. It was beyond their understanding that this brave little piece of glass was bent on facing the world’s lack of non-burning candles all on its own...and trying desperately to send both of them and their concern on their way to do better things elsewhere...but, they thought, how could they possibly do better than to stay right here with this empty wine bottle until it screamed for them to get on with their journey.

“We’re going to stay here and make crazy empathy for you until the sun goes down...a thousand times,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “We want you to feel the full force of our pain for you.”

If empty wine bottles could groan, then this wine bottle would have groaned for ages but wine bottles, especially the empty ones, don’t groan, so this one was stuck with just four words: “You can go now.”

But Crazy Man talked right past the empty wine bottle’s words: “We need to prepare the world for a new world order where non-burning candles are non-burning in every household, on every street corner, in every mailbox on every wine bottle, empty or non-empty.”

The empty wine bottle wanted to lift itself into the air and bash the weird guy’s head a thousand times.

“YOU CAN GO NOW!” yelled the empty wine bottle.

Suddenly, Crazy Man and the dog Sidestepper, were no longer all that eager to take their empathetic feelings down to the floor for this unappreciative bottle that probably didn’t have good wine in it to begin with.

“All we ever wanted to do was be a sounding board for your need for non-burning candles,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “But all you ever were...was a bastard.”

Whereupon Crazy Man reached out and grabbed the candle from the empty wine bottle’s snout and put it back in one of his pockets.

“You don’t deserve a candle,” he said. “Burning or non-burning...bastard.”

Suddenly alone in the world and unloved by both weird strangers and non-burning candles, the empty wine bottle tipped itself off the ledge upon which it was precariously perched and pitched forward onto a slab of Polynesian marble that was miraculously present right under the bottle so that it smashed into a thousand glittering pieces that decided, each of them, that maybe falling off its perch wasn’t such a good idea.

“Please, travelers on the path of adventure and new meanings,” said the myriad sparkles, “would you happen to have some glue.”

And yes, both man and dog had glue and showed their glue to the sparkles of broken glass and then put their glue away and looked at the sparkles and said in unison, “None for you.”

As they continued their journey along the path of adventure and new meanings in search of a mother, a map to food and an understanding of this outside thing, they smiled as they heard from the distance behind them where once an empty wine bottle had tested them:

“Bastards, you bastards.”

“But then,” said Crazy Man, “isn’t the whole world a bastard?”

Both somewhat man and strange dog smiled, realizing that they weren’t the only bastards in the world as they journeyed into another adventure on the path of adventure and new meanings in search of a mother, a map to food and this...outside thing.

To be continued...

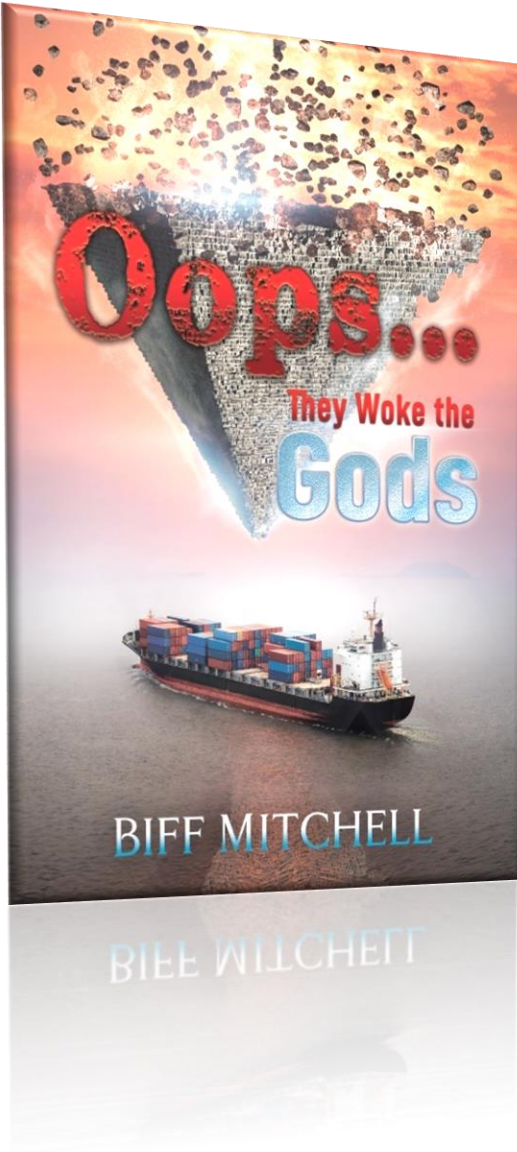
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God only knows when the gods get angry!

Oops



They Woke the Gods

Cursed to sleep for 2000 years, the Gods of Rome awoken to a world destroyed by the mortals and a war among themselves that threatens to destroy all that's left.

Charon the Ferryman has upset the balance of nature by sending legions of the dead back to the firmament because no one is given coins for the ferry crossing to the underworld.

Meanwhile three crazed demigods wreak havoc on what's left of the human race...and gods of the skies and the underworld must join forces in seedy bars and drink vast quantities of Scotch to plan their next move.

COMING SOON!