

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 161: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, stick around for the mean fish
(New here? [Click here to see what it's all about.](#))

Sometimes we're not ready for things to end. We're in a smooth sailing groove with the horizon in sight but still far away. We like what we're doing and where we are. We've finally got things moving the way we want them and then BAM.

Some jackass twist of fate says, "OK. Nice work. You have things going nice and smooth here. Time for Phase 2."

And, of course, Phase 2 is when everything turns to shit.

"Hey, you two!" yelled the tip of a tree branch from the surface of a lake. "Can you get me out of here? I seem to be bogged down by a hopeless situation."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, just happened to be in empathetic moods when they heard this woeful tale and immediately went into their supercharged empathy dance. Crazy Man's head bopped up and down as his eyes spun in their sockets and he jumped side to side while waving his arms at fate and spewed indecipherable insults at the powers that be while the dog, Sidestepper, sniffed his ass so hard his butt swallowed his head and he burped accusations at all hopeless situations, especially those that attacked tips of tree branches.

This went on for what seemed like a few minutes but was more likely several days or weeks while the tip of the tree branch waited patiently.

Eventually the two empathizers stopped empathizing from sheer physical empathetic exhaustion and asked the tip of the tree branch what they could do to help.

"Can you get me out of here?" said the tip of the tree branch. "I wasn't finished being part of a tree. Maybe you could replant me somewhere that's not in the middle of a lake?"

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, considered and conferred. They met regularly for discussions and prepared risk management reports and ecological impact analyses and finally made a decision.

“Nope,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“No can do,” said Crazy Man.

“But...” said the tip of the tree branch. “After all the empathy and all the...”

“Our decision is final,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Your hopeless situation is not our hopeless situation which is hopeless enough as it is and neither of us knows how to swim and even if we did we don’t have swimming trunks.”

The tip of the tree branch sifted through the initial plausibility of the dog, Sidestepper’s, statement and finding nothing in it that made sense said, “You’re a dog. Dogs don’t wear swimming trunks.”

The dog, Sidestepper, was immediately offended by the tip of the tree branch’s assumption that dogs were somehow forbidden to wear swimming trunks.

“I have swimming trunks,” he said. “But not here.”

“No you don’t,” said the tip of the tree branch.

“Yes I do,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “I just don’t wear them because I don’t know how to swim.”

“I might have a kitchen,” said Crazy Man.

“You’re both crazy,” said the tip of the tree branch looking straight into the dog, Sidestepper’s, eyes. “And I’ll bet you don’t even know where your mother is.”

The dog, Sidestepper, wasn’t having any of this. “Say that again and I’ll throw stones at you.”

“Yeah,” said Crazy Man. “And me too.”

The tip of the tree branch’s attention turned to Crazy Man and it said, “If you throw stones at me and miss, you’ll anger the fish in the lake and they’ll eat you.”

That was the last straw for Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper. They considered themselves to be friends of fish and had always welcomed fish into their culinary experiences and no damn tip of a tree branch was going to sully their connection to fish. They gathered stones from the shore and began throwing them at the tip of the tree branch. They threw stones for hours and days that turned into weeks and their arms felt like lead weights dangling from their shoulders but not a single stone hit the tip of the tree branch. Not a single one.

“Ha ha!” said the tip of the tree branch. “You missed!”

“We weren’t really trying,” panted the dog, Sidestepper.

“Yeah,” said Crazy Man. “We just wanted to scare you because we don’t like you.”

“So there,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

The tip of the tree branch dipped itself into the water a few times, pointed right at the dog, Sidestepper’s, lack of a mother and said, “Ha ha...you don’t have mother.”

Infuriated, the dog, Sidestepper, picked up the biggest stone he could find and lobbed it at the tip of the tree branch. It hit square in its meanness and it let out a long noisy, “Ouch! You canine bastard. You’re gonna pay for that.”

Whereupon the tip of the branch sank into the water and disappeared without even a ripple.

The ripples came a few minutes later.

A lot of ripples. A veritable boiling cauldron of ripples that transformed into splashes moving towards the shore where Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stood, wondering *what the hell now?*

Something out of the mass of roiling water plopped down on the beach...

...fish.

Lots of fish.

Followed by more fish.

Large fish and small fish.

Algae eating fish and fish eating fish.

Fish for Friday and fish for...no...these were no Friday fish.

These were *mean* fish. Meaner than a flock of mean birds and more unforgiving than a thousand hourly upgraded passwords. That mean. That unforgiving. Hundreds of them, flapping and flipping out of the water and forming a scaly mound of fish flesh plopping and sizzling over the beach toward them.

Unfortunately for the mean fish they were out of water and we all know what that means. Before this dawned on the mass of fresh water fury, it was too late. Air choked the life out of them and they flopped their last flop, flipped their last flip and collapsed into a pile of lakeside detritus that dried completely just in time to be carried away by a convenient breeze.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared at the empty beach and felt no pity for mean fish. They saw a ripple in the water as the tip of the tree branch emerged from the surface. Just as it was about to say something nasty, a loose bolt from a passing jetliner plummeted out of the sky and fell directly onto the tip of the branch, turning it into a variety of chop sticks and toothpicks that were immediately carried away by frogs and beavers.

“At least it’s something useful now,” said the dog, Sidestepper as he watched the last piece of toothpick sink into the water in a frog’s mouth.

“Just because you’re in the water doesn’t mean you control the fish,” said Crazy Man.

The two thought about this for a few minutes or hours before deciding that neither one of them knew what it meant and neither really cared so they stopped thinking for a while and just enjoyed the blue sky and white clouds in a sky with, comfortingly, no planes with loose bolts flying overhead.

To be continued...

© Biff Mitchell

Up for more laughs? www.biffmitchell.com

Check out the blog at: www.crazymanadventures.com

Oops

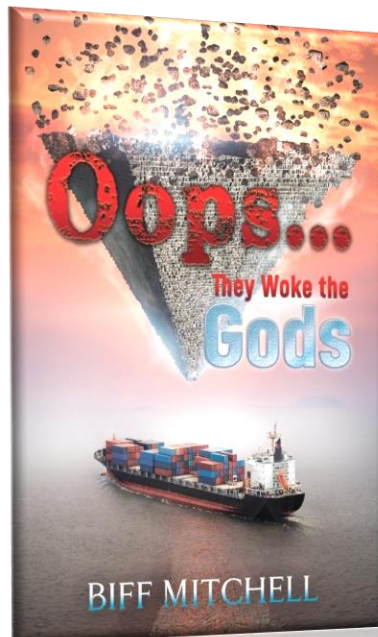
They Woke the Gods

Cursed to sleep for 2000 years, the Gods of Rome awaken 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 they didn’t have coins for the ferry crossing to the underworld. Now, he must hunt those legions down, give them a coin for the ferry and kill them.

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 moves.

COMING SOON!



BIFF MITCHELL