

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



### Episode 9: Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper, Talk to the Bridge Flowers

Darkness. Sudden darkness. They were about ten feet past a bridge that had maliciously lied and then tried, with a chilling degree of weird madness, to kill them.

“I don’t know,” said Crazy Man. “I’m not sure how I feel about this.”

“Feel about what?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“This whole outside thing...it’s not what I expected.”

The dog, Sidestepper, decided that he wasn’t interested in his travel mate’s expectations at the moment and promptly changed the subject. “Do you think we’ll ever find something to eat?”

Crazy Man in another context might have been just a little offended, maybe even pissed off, for having his train of thought so obviously demoted. But just as he was about to reach the apex of his sensitivity-driven rage...he forgot what he was raging at. Pretty much par for the course when you exist in two dimensions. One thing he was sure of though...he was hungry. He was hungry enough to eat a pound of green cheese straight from the moon, that hungry. His mind suddenly filled with happy thoughts of green cheese fondues and, while thinking these cheese things, Crazy Man’s eyes swept to his left where the dog, Sidestepper, was sidestepping beside him. Crazy Man licked his lips. He suddenly felt feral, more feral than a feral cat or feral dog, more feral than KD without the cheese. He wondered a moment about green cheese on KD. He was having dark thoughts, crazy thoughts. In one dimension he saw the dog, Sidestepper, as an

erstwhile travel mate although it did bother him that his travel mate walked sideways which meant that his head was always facing him and, of course, the dog, Sidestepper, always knew what was going on in Crazy Man's head because Crazy Man's eyes were a window into his soul although it wasn't quite precise in which dimension that soul existed. So...Crazy Man cried. As usual, his head spun, soaking everything around him with self pity.

The dog, Sidestepper, was well aware of Crazy Man's survivalist conundrum and took pity on him. After all, he might have had a few Crazy Man a la carte thoughts himself. So, he let the self anguish go on for a few minutes, maybe a few days, or months, and said: "You won't like me. I'm bony. I'm the perch of dogs. You would just..." The dog, Sidestepper, stopped side stepping and grabbed Crazy Man's arm metaphorically (not really, because his legs were too long and wobbly as it was). But...he metaphorically dragged Crazy Man a full ten inches across the path and pointed at something the likes of which Crazy Man had never seen and would likely never see again unless, of course, he travelled the path of adventure and new meanings right from the beginning all over again. But he wasn't going to do that. It just wasn't all that impressive. What he saw was...

Flowers...but not just any flowers...these were flowers under the bridge along the path of adventure and new meanings. That kind of flowers.

The dog, Sidestepper, fell into a coma that lasted approximately 1.0375749 seconds, give or take, but he adjusted to the post-coma reality quickly, and in keeping with the occasion he gave it a hopeful shot: "Are you my mother?"

To which the flowers replied: "No."

Grabbing desperately at the smallest of hopes, Crazy Man asked, "Can we eat you?"

"No."

Having worked out the social niceties, the flowers, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were free to become best friends...even the weeds and bushes and a bunch of other flowers. And even the bridge that'd tried to kill them, which was very still and dark and sort of looked like an upside down smile. Nice bridge. But nobody wanted to be friends with the bottomless trench that could very likely feed the unwary to the sharks. For the moment, it seemed to have metaphorically disappeared. This caught Crazy Man's attention and started a painful train of thought in whatever dimension he thought: *If it's metaphorically not there, then it must have metaphorically been there when we crossed the it, which means there was never any danger of falling into a trench because the trench wasn't there in scary reality...it was there just metaphorically. But just don't walk over there.*

Crazy Man tumbled out of this painful train of thought just in time to hear the flowers give the dog, Sidestepper, directions to the nearest food.

"Just up the path," said the flowers. And they bent toward the continuing path, as did the bushes and the trees and the shrubberies...but not the bridge. It was just sort of upside down smiling. Nobody gave a shit what the trench was doing...it being metaphorical and all.

"Thank you. Are you sure you're not my..."

"No."

"Ok," said the dog, Sidestepper, who looked forlornly at Crazy Man and said, "Guess it's further on up the road."

Crazy Man nodded and looked up the road. Forlornly.

“Too bad you weren’t here when the dandelions were here,” said the flowers. “They like to be eaten in salads.”

The flowers and the bushes, trees and weeds...all of them...sort of leaned into towards each other like a big mass of secrecy and mumbled things for several minutes or days and broke apart in a burst of spontaneous merriment.

“And they like to be made into wine,” said the flowers and all the fauna around the bridge laughed right down into their roots.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, stared at the flowers for a few minutes, yes, just a few minutes, and kind of backed away, slowly, quietly, keeping their eyes on the flowers, until they were so far away and down the path that they couldn’t see the flowers anymore. They both let the lung-bottled air out slowly in a kind of *ooooooooommmmm* way and started breathing again.

“What was that all about?” said the dog, Sidestepper.

“What was what about?” Said Crazy Man, having forgotten about *that*. “You know,” he said, “there’s something I’ve been meaning to talk to you about.”

“Go ahead. Talk meaningfully.” The dog, Sidestepper, giggled.

Crazy Man considered kicking one of his long legs from under him but decided instead to stay on track. “When you walk sideways, you’re always facing me.”

“And this bothers you?”

“But my eyes are windows into my soul...and stuff. And you’re always looking into them.”

“I think that might’ve stopped you from turning me into a hot dog.”

Crazy Man blushed and was about to spew tears and remorse but decided that the dog had a point. “Maybe you could walk on the other side and maybe keep an eye open for threats from the dark scary woods?”

The dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for an unmitigated period of time and said, “Nope.”

“Nope, what?” said Crazy Man, and the two travellers continued along the path of adventure and new meanings looking for food. And a mother. And this outside thing.

“Nope what?”

To be continued...