

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



Episode 149: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, the garbage duo.  
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One day, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, rounded a corner on the path of adventure and new meanings and came face-to-face with a reality that threatened to shake them up like pepper...pretty much like all the other realities in their lives. Before them in front of a surreal background of mundane pre-apocalyptic normality of the type never to be shown in movies or described in books because they're mundane, sat two containers wrapped tight in metal slats. The one on the left appeared to be a dark form of misery while the one on the right appeared to be a light form of misery, but both were undeniably miserable.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, immediately fell to their knees in a fit of extreme, and possibly inappropriate empathy...the kind that won't go away until it becomes so invasive that it becomes mental abuse which is why it's always a good thing to carry a flame thrower in case someone starts to feel sorry for you. But there were no flame throwers in sight so the two journeyers were free to roll around on the ground grunting and making empathetic sounds like "oo oo oo" and "ee ee ee" until the very air itself refused to carry the sound lest it go mad. Bringing the empathy up a notch, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, changed tactics and began to tap dance and do the twist but their dancing sucked more than their singing and the garbage cans began screaming for them to stop.

Which they did. When they felt like it...months or days later.

When the enthusiasm of the moment evaporated into the air like a bad acid trip, the two garbage cans introduced themselves.

"Hi," said the dark misery can on the left. "My name is Garbage Boy and I collect garbage."

“And I’m Garbage Girl,” said the light misery can on the right. “And I also collect garbage.”

“We’re passive garbage collectors,” said Garbage Girl.

“That’s right,” said Garbage Boy.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were stumped. What was a passive garbage collector? Didn’t you just collect garbage yes or collect garbage no and once you’ve collected it, it would be *collected garbage* yes and that would be anything but passive. Something fishy was going on here and the dog, Sidestepper, could smell it in the air with his super-secret canine sense of smell.

“We don’t believe you!” he said. “The collection of garbage is an *active* act of environmental responsibility.”

“Tell that to the garbage distributors,” said Garbage Girl. “All we can do is wait passively for them to use us because of these stupid metal slats that hold us prisoner and please don’t get all weirdly empathetic again...we need garbage, not empathy.”

“If we weren’t prisoners in these metal slats we could chase the garbage distributors down and swallow their garbage,” said Garbage Boy. “And maybe even swallow one or two of them for attempted littering.”

“Now, now, Garbage Boy,” said Garbage Girl. “Not everyone has a sense of appropriate garbage disposal.”

“But nobody wants to give us their garbage,” said Garbage Boy. “They just want to distribute it willy-nilly all *around* us but not *in* us.”

“That’s so heinous” said the dog, Sidestepper, who’d been waiting all day to use the word heinous.

“But they keep using places like river banks, sidewalks, ditches, oceans, mountain ranges...and they’re even sending garbage into space where there are no garbage boys or girls to properly dispose of the garbage and keep the universe uncluttered,” said Garbage Boy.

“Garbage distribution is out of control,” said Garbage Girl. “The distributors are creating an imbalance in the existence of things.”

“And now things will go wrong,” said Garbage Boy. “Very wrong. There could be floods, droughts and bugs.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, felt much less empathy for the garbage pair and were beginning to think that they were not quite living up to their responsibilities as garbage collectors.

“Have you tried tripping them when they walk by?” said Crazy Man.

“Yes,” said Garbage Girl. “But these slats hold us here, broken-hearted, as distributor after distributor walks past us...throwing their plastic pop bottles, chocolate bar wrappers and used electronic appliances all over the place except in us. Bastards!”

After hearing Garbage Girl’s mention of bastards, Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, decided not to ask her if she was the dog, Sidestepper’s, mother and if she knew where to find a map to food...but they must have thought *too* loud, for Garbage Girl said, “No. No. And you’re both bastards.” She thought a moment before saying, “But then you saved us from the alien invasion so we can forgive you for being bastards.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, weren’t sure what to think about this so they let the whole alien invasion thing rot away in indifference.

“What if you didn’t have the metal slats?” said Crazy Man.

“Then we could eliminate the garbage at the source,” said Garbage Girl, “and we could free the universe of garbage.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were in awe...a universe without garbage...pristine planets populating how many Mr. Clean cosmos. It was too much. They fell to the ground, flapping arms and legs and cheering and singing and bouncing their eyes in their sockets...which turned to be a little too much for the garbage cans and they started screaming for an end to the insanity.

It was time to stop the awesomeness and that’s exactly what they did because Crazy Man had come up with an idea. Picking himself up from the ground he yelled...no...screamed, “We’ll free you from the bonds of metal slats! We’ll liberate you from your tyrannical metal prisons!”

Crazy Man was beginning to sound like a goddamn commie right out of 19<sup>th</sup> Century European chaos but what was done was done and he and the dog, Sidestepper, borrowed acetylene torches from the narrator's compulsiveness and set Garbage Girl and Garbage Boy fire.

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" they said in unison. "Thank you so much for freeing us so that we can eliminate the garbage of the universe at the source!"

Upon which, the two spun out of the openings in their metal cages and bounced insanely across the landscape devouring garbage with the enthusiasm of a thousand bears shitting in the woods after eating too many berries.

And then something very disturbing happened. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, watched in horror as Garbage Boy and Garbage Girl began devouring the distributors, chasing them hither and yon in a nightmare of environment carnage.

The carnage went on longer than Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, cared to watch, which conveniently coincided with the carnage disappearing over the edge of the horizon and out of site.

The deader squirrel popped up from one of Crazy Man's many silly pockets and said, "I sure hope they don't see acorn shells as garbage."

It was kind of a dumb joke, but it was exactly what the three needed to take the edge off another fun day of astonishment along the path of adventure and new meanings. So they laughed the laughter of their journey through the magic of this great and mysterious *outside thing*.

For now.

To be continued...

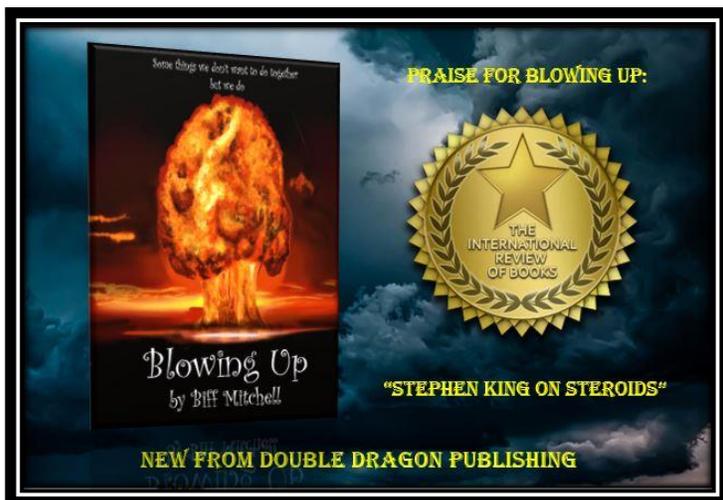
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