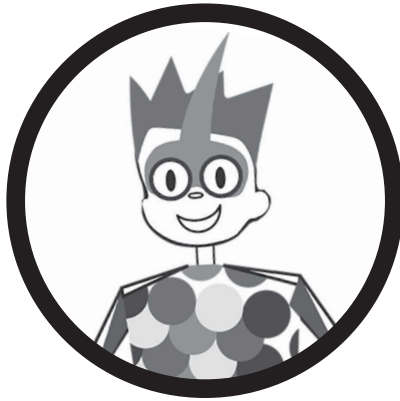


Fish Boy



M.G. Higgins

MEET THE



Danny Lopez
a.k.a.
"Fish Boy"

Age: 12

Favorite Dinner: fish tacos with black beans and Spanish rice

Secret Wish: to have the superpower ability to turn into a mountain lion

Future Plans: to live and work in Hawaii

Best Quality: determination

CHARACTERS



Burp
and
Twerp



Ages: Burp is 7 and Twerp is 5

Favorite Activity: taking turns hiding Danny's Fish Boy mask

Big Secret: they wish they had superhero powers too

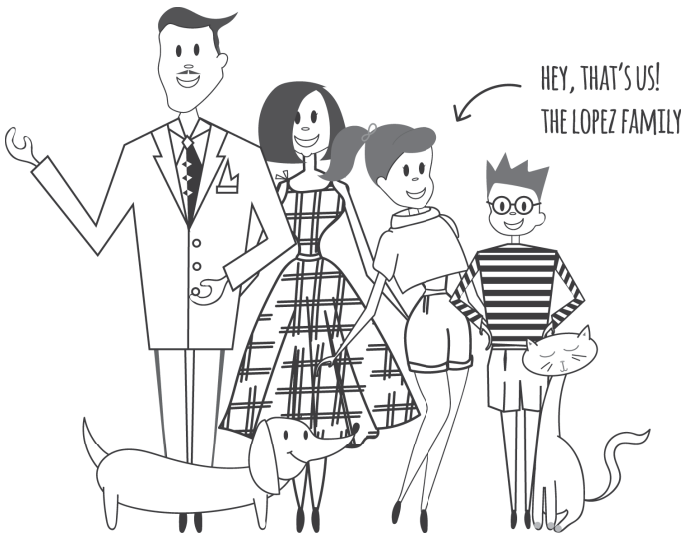
Best Day: talked a chicken out of crossing the road

Best Qualities: caring and brave

1

NORMAL CRAZY

My name is Danny Lopez. I live with my mom, dad, and sister. Marta is my sister's name. She's two years older than me. We have a dog called Burp. Twerp is our cat.



We live in Arizona. Our house is just outside Phoenix. Mostly I like it here. There's just one problem. The desert is too dry. It doesn't rain much. But I'm talking about more than that.



It's Tuesday morning. I'm eating a bowl of cereal. The house is crazy. But that's normal.

"Marta!" Mom calls. "Come eat breakfast!" She pours coffee with one hand. Her other hand opens a cabinet.

"In a second," Marta yells back. She's still in the bathroom. Who knows what she does in there.



“Do you have swim practice today?” Dad asks me. He is trying to make lunches. Twerp scratches his leg. Burp barks.

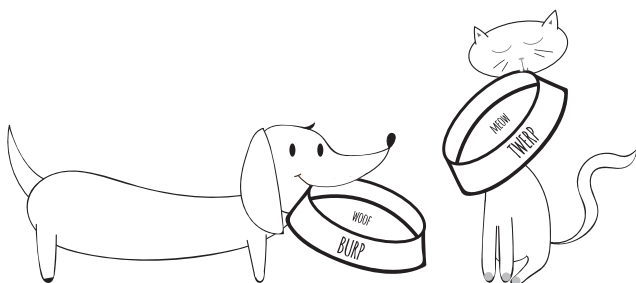
“Yeah,” I say.

Dad looks at Mom. “Can you take him?”

She checks her phone. “No. I have a client.”

My parents both have pretty regular jobs. Mom sells houses. Dad works at a computer company. Marta and I just go to school.

Dad slaps cheese on some bread. “I’ll try to get off early. Danny, did you feed Burp and Twerp?”



“Not yet.”

“Well, hurry up.”

Ten minutes later, we climb into Mom’s car. Marta gets dropped off at the high school.

“Do you have your phone?” Mom asks.

Marta rolls her eyes. “Duh,” she says, walking away.

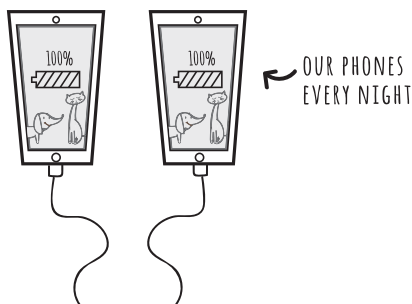
Next, we head to the middle school.

“Have a good day.” Mom kisses me on the cheek.

“Aw, Mom.”

“Do you have your phone? Is it—”

“Yes, I have it. And it’s charged. You don’t have to remind me.”



Science is my first class. I land in my seat. It's in the back row. That's where I sit in every class. My friend Trent sits next to me.

"Hey," Trent says.

"Hi," I say back.

"Did you do the homework?" he asks.

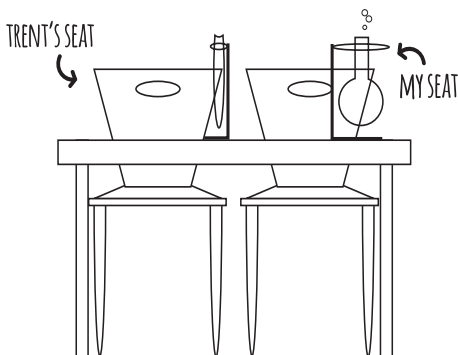
"Yeah." I pull out my worksheet.

"Can I see it?"

"So you can copy it? No way."

"Aw, man. Come on. Why do you have to be like that?"

"Do your own work." I shrug.



The rest of the day is just as normal. Then I'm in math. It's my last class. All I can think about is swim practice.

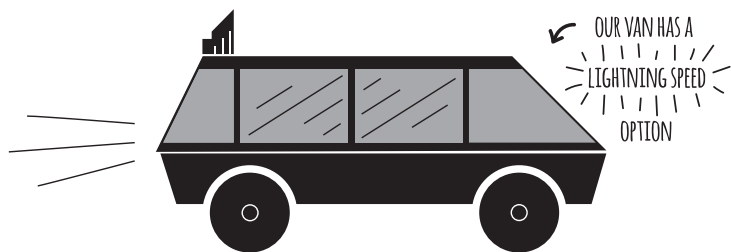
My phone buzzes. A text from Dad pops up. "BR. IP. WCC."

It's our special code. I text back. "OK."

Class is still going. But I wait until my teacher isn't looking. Quietly, I grab my stuff and slip out the back door. Then I trot to the curb.

A black van pulls up. It's Dad. I jump in, and he speeds off. In the backseat, I change my clothes.

We pick up Marta. She changes too. Then she sits next to me.



The three of us head downtown. We drive by the pool. No practice for me today. It makes me sad.

“Anything you can tell us?” Marta asks.

“Not yet,” Dad says. “Mom’s there now. She’ll fill us in.”

He pulls the van into a parking garage. We jump out.

“This way,” Dad says.

Two blocks down, we see Mom. The local SWAT team is there. A bunch of cops are too.



By now you must be wondering what's going on. I'll start with the code from Dad's text.

BR = bank robbery

IP = in progress

WCC = wear complete costume

↖ LET'S DECODE THIS FOR ALL
NON-SUPERHEROES OUT THERE



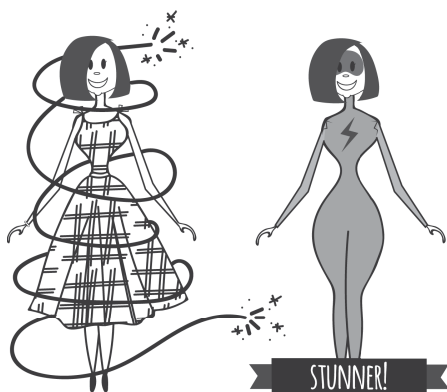
2

ABNORMAL CRAZY

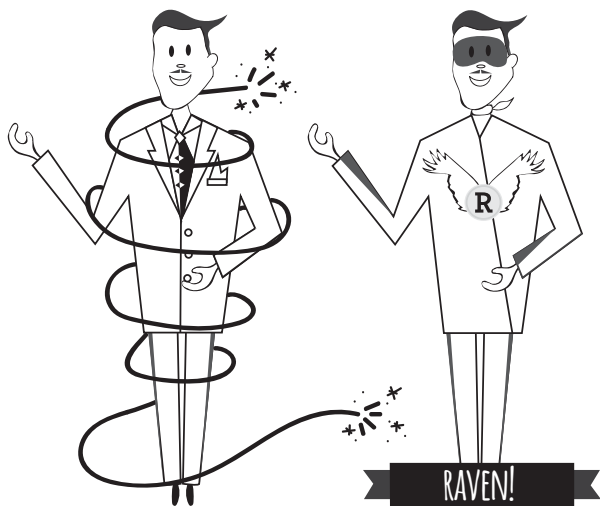
Yeah, I know. You're still confused. Let's meet my family again. That might help.

My mom is Mrs. Lopez. But she is also called Stunner. She wears a shiny red outfit. There is a blue lightning bolt on the front.

Right now, Mom is crouched behind a cop car. She waves us over.



Dad kneels next to her. You might know him as Raven. He's dressed in black. His shirt has gold wings on the chest.



Marta wears a white skirt. A mask hides her face. She stoops next to Dad. Her name is Vanish.

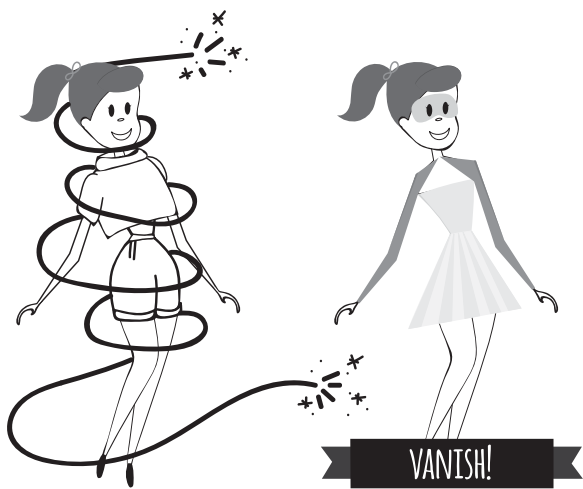
I bring up the rear.

“We’ve got three perps,” Mom says.
“Armed. Ten hostages. There’s a back door.

I'm thinking *Shake and Bake*. What do you think?"

"Maybe," Dad says. "Or how about *Fly Slip By*?"

"Yeah," Marta agrees. "That worked great last time."



"Sounds good." Mom glances at me. She looks guilty. It makes my stomach twist. "What do you think, Danny?"



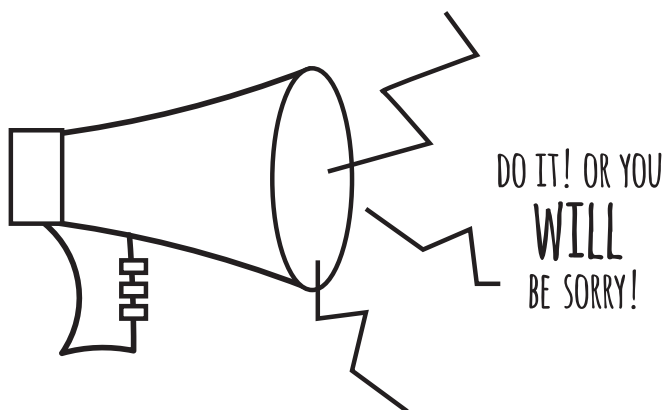
I'm sitting on the hot sidewalk. My arms are crossed. I shake my head. "Doesn't matter."

Dad sighs. "Well. Keep an eye out."

"Yeah," I say. "Good luck."

Marta pats my arm. "Maybe next time, little bro."

Mom talks to a cop. The cop turns toward the bank. He shouts into a bullhorn. "Send out a hostage. Then we will meet one of your demands!"



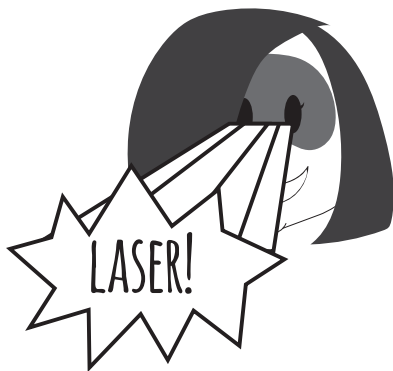
In a blink, Marta is gone. She's turned invisible.

Dad lifts Mom off the ground. They fly over the building.

The front door of the bank opens. One hostage walks out.

There's no need for me to watch. I know what happens next. Marta sneaks in unseen. She opens the back door. Mom and Dad enter.

Dad flies around the room. He distracts the bad guys. Mom stuns them with her laser vision.

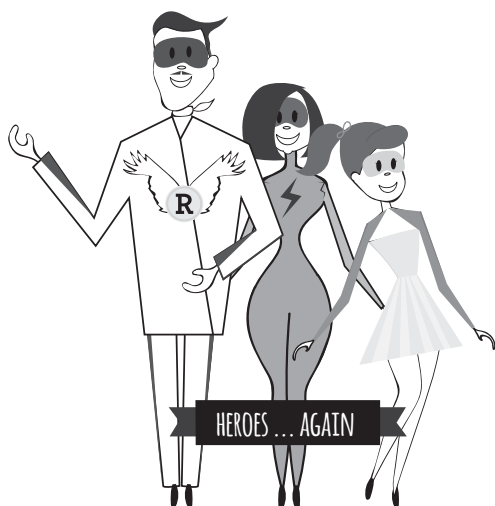


It's over within five minutes. Raven and Stunner leave the bank. The hostages walk out behind them. Cops rush in. People watching clap and cheer. News crews catch it all.

Marta pops up next to me. "That was great," she says. "Textbook."

"Yeah," I say. "Textbook."

Mom and Dad join us. They're both smiling.



“Great job, guys,” Dad says. He doesn’t mean me, of course. I didn’t do anything. “Let’s go home.”

Marta leaves with Mom. Dad and I go in the van. I change out of my costume.

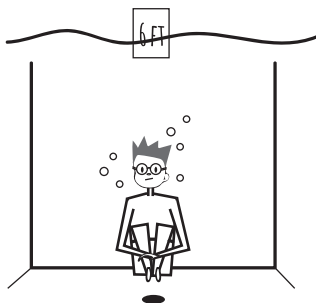
“It’s not that late,” I say. “Practice might still be going.”

“Really?” Dad says. “You want to swim now?” Then he seems to get it. “Sure. Of course. I’ll drop you off. Want me to wait?”

“No. That’s okay. I’ll call when I’m done.”

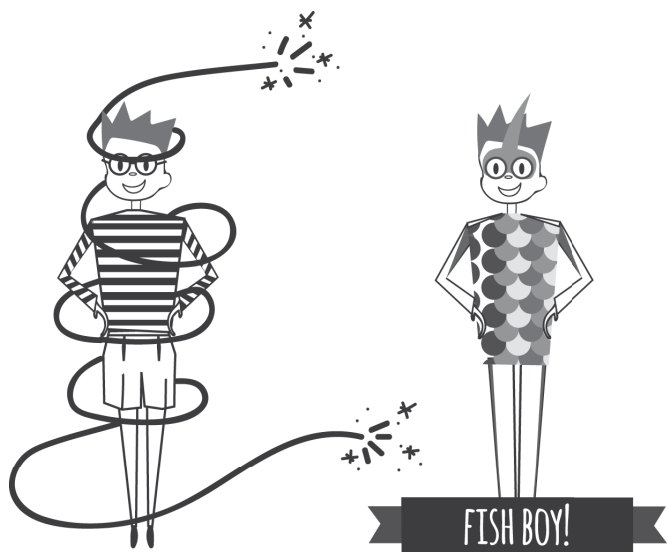
Practice is over by the time I get in the water. That’s fine. I want to be alone anyway.

The pool is deep. I sink to the bottom. Half an hour goes by. It’s hard not to feel sorry for myself.

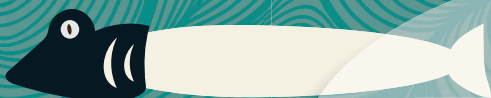


Now is probably a good time to tell you about me. My name is Danny Lopez. I'm also known as Fish Boy. My costume is green. It's covered with scales. On top of my mask is a fin.

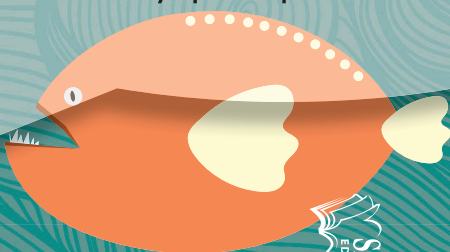
Is it lame? Yeah, just a bit.



Fish Boy



Hi, I'm Burp!
My name is as odd as
my family. They aren't
ordinary people.



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