

CRAZY IS THE NEW NORMAL

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

JESSICA	Leader of a Marginalized People support group
WALTER	A simple man cursed with normality
APRIL	A marginalized woman
SUSAN	Another marginalized woman
GARY	A marginalized man

SETTING

A group counselling center. Present day.

SCENE

(It is a support group setting. People are sitting in a semi-circle, with Jessica slightly apart.)

JESSICA

Thank you, April, for sharing that experience with us. That was very brave of you, and we all applaud your courage.

(Everyone claps politely and somewhat insincerely.)

Next is a new member to our group today. This is Wally's first time with us, yes?

WALTER

It's, uh, Walter.

JESSICA

Or in fact any support group, am I right, Wendell?

WALTER

That's right. And, uh, it's Walt—

JESSICA

Why don't you tell us a little about yourself.

WALTER

Well, my name's Walter.

JESSICA

Wendell Walter? What an interesting—

WALTER

No, Walter Stonebridge. Not Wendell, or Wally.

APRIL

That's quite the unremarkable name, William.

WALTER

Walt—

APRIL

How do you compensate for that?

WALTER

I... I don't. It's just my na—

SUSAN

And how long have you known you were an animal trapped in a human's body?

WALTER

What?

SUSAN

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to call you out on that if you—

WALTER

I'm not an animal trapped in a...

APRIL

Well good for you, Warren—

WALTER

Walter.

APRIL

I think it's really great that you feel so comfortable being able to talk about these things.

SUSAN

April!

APRIL

Oh, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have assumed you were comfortable. Are you comfortable?

WALTER

What? Yeah. I'm fine. It's fine.

GARY

You know who you look like, Wesley? You look just like Miguel. Doesn't he look like Miguel?

JESSICA

He does, doesn't he?

GARY

Have you ever spent time at St. Agnes?

Whose that?

WALTER

Not who. Where. St. Agnes' Home for the Estranged Extraterrestrial. It's on 4th street—

GARY

No.

WALTER

I want you to know that it's okay.

JESSICA

What is?

WALTER

Not being an extra-terrestrial. It's okay.

JESSICA

It is?

WALTER

You are?

APRIL

He is?

SUSAN

I knew it. I knew you looked like Miguel. He's from Alpha De-Sinti La-Minty Seven. Are you from—

GARY

From Earth. I- I'm from Earth.

WALTER

Well, good for you. I want you to know that you are absolutely welcome here.

GARY

Welcome here... on Earth?

WALTER

That too.

GARY

SUSAN

Have you ever been to Dominic's Gastrology Pub?

GARY

I... wh--?

SUSAN

It's where a lot of people go if they feel like they were born inverted.

APRIL

Have you always felt inverted?

WALTER

I don't know what that means. Like... upside down?

(Susan snorts.)

APRIL

Don't make fun of her, Winslow. That's not nice.

WALTER

I... I wasn't maki—

SUSAN

It's alright. I'm used to it.

WALTER

Are you... inverted?

(Everyone jumps up out of their chairs, but Susan waves them off.)

SUSAN

It's okay. Really. I think he just doesn't understand.

WALTER

That's for certain.

SUSAN

Waylen, I want you to feel comfortable asking questions about my inversion. I want you to know that it's okay.

WALTER

Thank you. And it's Walter.

SUSAN

And it's okay that you feel that way.

WALTER

Wha— Never mind. You don't look inverted.

APRIL

It's really inappropriate of you to say that, Warner. You have no way of knowing what she feels, or how she sees herself.

SUSAN

No, really April. It's fine. You see, Wylie, I have always felt that I was born inside out. Have you ever felt that way?

WALTER

I... No, I haven't.

APRIL

And you don't think you were meant to be a hippopotamus?

WALTER

No.

GARY

Or that you might be an extra-terrestrial?

WALTER

No.

(They all stare at him in silence for a long moment.)

JESSICA

Gay?

WALTER

No.

GARY

Anarchist?

WALTER

No.

Atheist? APRIL

No. WALTER

French? GARY

No. WALTER

Emotionally displaced in any way? JESSICA

Not until now. WALTER

So you're saying that you are... completely *normal* in every sense? JESSICA

I don't really know what that mea— WALTER

Are you a really tall dwarf? GARY

No. WALTER

A midget giant? APRIL

No. WALTER

Too pale? SUSAN

Too dark? JESSICA

Too fat? GARY

APRIL
Too thin?

WALTER
No. No no no. I'm just...

SUSAN
Just what?

WALTER
Normal. I guess I am just normal in every way.

(Everyone suddenly turns very cold.)

APRIL
I see.

GARY
One of *them*.

WALTER
One of who?

*(There is a silence as the group shares looks.
Finally...)*

JESSICA
I'm afraid I am going to have to ask you leave.

WALTER
Leave?

JESSICA
If you like, I can give you a list of resources you can reach out to.

WALTER
Reach out to for what?

JESSICA
Marginalization, of course.

APRIL
Oh, poor Watson.

WALTER
(Finally annoyed at it.)

Walter...

GARY

Such an ordinary name, too.

SUSAN

It must be so difficult, being so alone.

WALTER

Yes. Yes it is. That's why I came here, actually. I wanted—

APRIL

I'm sorry. We simply don't associate with normal people.

WALTER

Why not?

SUSAN

They're too judgmental.

APRIL

Always calling us names.

GARY

Saying we're sick.

SUSAN

We're not sick. We're different.

WALTER

Right. I couldn't agree more.

SUSAN

How dare you?

WALTER

What?

SUSAN

Calling us different.

WALTER

I didn't. You did.

GARY

But not you. You're not different. You're just normal.

WALTER

Is that so bad?

(They all look away, clearly uncomfortable.)

I... I could be different!

JESSICA

Don't try to fake it, Woodrow. People can tell.

WALTER

I could be inverted, you know. Maybe I was meant to be, you know, flipped.

(Susan breaks down in tears, and April glares at Walter.)

APRIL

I think you'd better go.

(Walter looks stunned, then exits.)

GARY

Well, that was awkward.

APRIL

I wonder why he even came here.

GARY

Probably to mock us.

APRIL

I bet you're right. Normal people do that. All the time.

JESSICA

Well now that that's over with, I think that brings us to Gary.

(Lights out)