

THE PSYCHICS

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

A quiet day in a picturesque neighborhood. We can't pinpoint the exact place or time. But it feels like everything is a bit off-kilter, more magical and whimsical than in real life.

We DESCEND OVER the neat, picket fence houses, most of them painted in white. There's just one that sticks out like a sore thumb. It's the Thompsons' house, under reconstruction.

The house right next to it has a "FOR SALE" sign. We FLY OVER it on our way to the --

INT. THOMPSONS' HOUSE - DAY

We GLIDE IN through a hole in the roof and waft through the hallway. As we explore the house through this OMNISCIENT PERSPECTIVE, we hear Nenia's voice:

NENIA (V.O.)

**This is the story of a family who
used to be like any other family in
this small town.**

We DRIFT BY the PHOTOS on the wall where we see The Thompson family: three biracial kids, a Middle Eastern mom, a white dad, and a bespectacled grandmother.

NENIA (V.O.)

**But the Thompsons were soon to
discover that they were bestowed
with extraordinary gifts.**

A GERBIL skitters out of one room and runs down the hallway.

NENIA (V.O.)

**And these gifts came with
extraordinary challenges...**

COOPER, a 10-year-old boy with a crown of curly brown hair, darts out the room and chases the gerbil into the --

INT. LIVING ROOM

Cooper's mom KARMA is feeding baby VINCENT puree. Her teenage daughter ALICE fusses in front of the mirror. She tries to fix her coarse, black hair by pouring tons of product on it.

ALICE

**Ugh! This is horrible. Why can't I
have Cooper's hair!**

KARMA

He got his from your dad, you
inherited yours from me.

ALICE

Yeah, thanks for "the gift," mom.

Alice rolls her eyes. The gerbil storms in and scrambles to
hide under a chair. Cooper runs after him.

KARMA

Cooper! How many times have I told
you -- you can't let your pet out
the cage!

ALICE

It's a pest, not a pet.

COOPER

Shh! He can hear you.

Cooper crouches behind the table playing hide-and-seek. He
crawls past the baby stool as he sneaks up on the gerbil.
Vincent coos, enjoying a front seat view of the chase.

Suddenly, Cooper lunges at the gerbil but misses. He bumps
Karma's chair and a SPOONFUL of puree flies across the room.
It lands right on Alice's freshly coiffed hair.

She looks up as puree leaks down her forehead.

ALICE

You, little runt!

Alice takes off after Cooper; chases him around the baby
stool. Vincent starts crying.

INT. BILL'S OFFICE - SAME

CLOSE ON BILL'S face as he hears the NOISE from the other
room. As we PULL AWAY, we see he has a noose around his neck.
It looks like he is about to hang himself.

But as we keep WIDENING THE ANGLE, we realize -- Bill is a
magician. His office is filled up with contraptions and
props. He was just practicing an escape trick.

Annoyed by the noise, Bill goes to investigate.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Bill peeks in through the door to see -- his family is in a
melee. The baby is having a tantrum. Karma is bouncing him in
her arms. Alice, with puree on her face, has Cooper in a
headlock.

The rogue gerbil has now jumped on the kitchen table. He sits on his hind feet as he licks his paws.

BILL
Guys, I'm trying to work. Can you
keep it down --

Nobody even hears him. Bill clears his throat:

BILL (CONT'D)
Hey, guys. Guys! Can you, please,
STOP!

FREEZE FRAME.

NENIA (V.O.)
They can't. This is what they do
all day every day.

We stare at the family in complete disarray, their faces stretched out in grotesque grimaces.

NENIA (V.O.)
They keep fighting because, just
like in every other family, each of
them has their own problems.

ZOOM ONTO COOPER as he fends off Alice. Mischief is written all over his face.

NENIA (V.O.)
This is Cooper. He is 10 years old.
He suffers from middle child
syndrome.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Karma feeds Vincent baby formula while looking at Alice's plate. She hasn't eaten much, she's on a diet.

While Karma deals with Alice and the baby, Cooper makes a mess. He squirts ketchup into his orange juice and binge drinks it.

NENIA (V.O.)
No matter what he does, nobody
notices. So he keeps doing things,
trying to get attention.

Cooper spreads out his mashed potatoes and face-plants in his plate. He looks up to check if anyone saw. They didn't -- they were too busy arguing.

NENIA (V.O.)
So, in order to fill in the void,
Cooper has pets.

SERIES OF SHOTS - (FLASHBACK)

- Cooper feeds his gold fish. The gold fish dies. He puts it in a match box and buries it in the back yard.

- Cooper has a turtle. But it dies as well. Cooper puts the dead turtle in a shoe box and buries it in the back yard.

- Cooper keeps having pets, but they all die as they get old. So, the pet cemetery keeps growing as more graves pop up.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Cooper comes out with a bowl of milk to lure in his new pet. It's a STRAY CAT. He puts down the bowl as the cat sniffs it.

COOPER

Yeah... I hate skim milk, too, but that's all we have. Alice is on a diet.

NENIA (V.O.)

He talks to the animals and believes they talk back to him.

COOPER

I know. Sisters are so stupid. How many sisters do you have?

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO THE FREEZE FRAME. CLOSE ON Alice's face. Even the streak of puree can't undermine her intense look.

NENIA (V.O.)

This is Alice. She's fourteen and, like most girls her age, really cares about fitting in.

INT. MULLBERRY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Alice walks down the hallway with her friend HEIDI. On the other side of the hallway they see a group of cool KIDS.

Amongst them is LUCY (a.k.a. Lucifer). She has pink highlights in her hair. Alice and Heidi make a mental note.

TIME CUT:

Alice and Heidi walk down the same hallway. They both have pink highlights in their hair. And so does every other girl at school; Lucy started the trend.

But as they turn the corner, they are horrified to see -- Lucy has green highlights now. Alice and Heidi are out of style.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO THE FREEZE FRAME. CLOSE ON Vincent. His face is scrunched up as he is crying.

NENIA (V.O.)
Vincent doesn't feel neglected
since he is often the center of
attention. Nor does he care about
how his hair looks.

ZOOM ONTO Vincent's temple. He has a tuft of baby hair.

NENIA (V.O.)
He is crying because he pooped his
pants. It's a big problem for
him...

INT. HOUSE - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Karma unfolds Vincent's diaper and makes a sour face.

NENIA (V.O.)
And believe me -- he has "big"
problems.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Karma disposes the diaper in the dumpster as if it was toxic waste.

NENIA (V.O.)
But no matter what mess he makes,
his mom always cleans it for him.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO FREEZE FRAME. CLOSE ON Karma's face. Her beautiful brown eyes are flanked by dark circles. She is clearly underslept.

NENIA (V.O.)
This is Karma. She married when she
was 19. And for 15 years she's been
birthing, burping, and handling
children.

TIME-LAPSE MONTAGE - (FLASHBACK)

- Karma gives birth to Alice. Feeds her. Grooms her. Sends her off to school.

- Karma gives birth to Cooper. Feeds him. Grooms him. Sends him off to school.

- Karma gives birth to Vincent. Feeds him. Grooms him. The same drill. The only difference is, the tree outside her window changes leaves with the seasons.

NENIA (V.O.)

And let's not forget, there's one more "child" she needs to take care of.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO FREEZE FRAME. CLOSE ON Bill in his magician cape. He looks very charming but immature.

NENIA (V.O.)

This is Bill. He is biologically 39 but emotionally 13.

INT. THEATRE - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Bill performs a dramatic monologue on stage. There are only four PEOPLE in the audience. Three of them get up and walk away. The fourth one, who stays behind, happens to be asleep.

NENIA (V.O.)

When acting didn't work out for him, Bill switched trades.

EXT. TOWN'S PLAZA - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Bill, in a clown outfit, is entertaining a CROWD. He juggles oranges as he rides a unicycle.

Once he finishes, he takes off his hat. People throw in a few pennies.

Bill counts his tips which are clearly not enough. He starts peeling his oranges; that's the only dinner he'll have.

NENIA (V.O.)

When his stint as a clown didn't work out, he changed it up again.

INT. SMOKY PARLOR - EVENING - (FLASHBACK)

Bill, in his top hat, performs magic tricks. He makes a coin disappear and PATRONS bet money, trying to guess where it is.

Bill cheats with a sleight of hand but a BIG BURLY MAN catches him.

EXT. SMOKY PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

The Man drags Bill outside to settle the score. Bill gets light on his feet, ready to put up a fight.

The Man lands just one punch, and Bill gets knocked out. His top hat rolls off on the ground. The Man steps on it as he walks off.

EXT. SMOKY PARLOR - LATER

Bill sits on the curb staring at the ground. Suddenly, a woman emerges from the dark. She smiles at him empathetically as she hands him his flattened hat.

Her head partially covers the full MOON as if she had a halo.

NENIA (V.O.)

That's how Bill met Karma. The love of his life. Soon after, they got married.

FLIP THROUGH an album with family PHOTOS. All of them shot the same way.

- Bill and Karma on their wedding day. They look so happy.

NENIA (V.O.)

Nine months later, they had a baby.

- Bill, Karma, and baby Alice. They look a bit less happy.

NENIA (V.O.)

And... another one.

- Bill, Karma, young Alice, and baby Cooper. They seem even less happy.

NENIA (V.O.)

And... another one!

- Bill, Karma, Alice, young Cooper, and baby Vincent. All of them look miserable. Don't even wanna be in the photo.

NENIA (V.O.)

But don't let their happy faces fool you. We know how they look in reality.

END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO THE FREEZE FRAME. We see the whole family now. They look like they are in a war zone.

NENIA (V.O.)
I still love them though, 'cause
they are my family. And I'd do
anything for them.

UNFREEZE FRAME. We are back to speed with the fighting and chasing. Everyone yells on top of each other.

NENIA (V.O.)
And who am I, you might ask --

FREEZE FRAME again. ZOOM ONTO the gerbil.

NENIA (V.O.)
No! That's not me.

Swift ZOOM OUT. We PULL BACK quickly out of the room and through the hallway. We EXIT through the window into the --

EXT. PORCH - DAY

NENIA (V.O.)
I'm Nur. Karma's mother. But my
grandkids call me Nenia.

We notice an ELDERLY WOMAN sitting on the rocking chair outside. We recognize her from her photo in the hallway.

NENIA (V.O.)
I like to read on the porch.

The book in her lap flips a page with the wind. It seems like she has fallen asleep.

NENIA (V.O.)
Or, at least, that's what I used to
do before *this* happened --

Out of nowhere, the gerbil jumps on Nenia's lap. She doesn't twitch or awaken. She remains still.

A second later, we hear a scream:

COOPER (O.S.)
Nenia's dead!

We PAN to reveal Cooper standing by her side. He has come out to chase after the gerbil. The rest of the family rushes out.

NENIA (V.O.)
I was struck by an unexpected,
untimely, and *unusual* death...

Everyone stares at Nenia in a shock.

END OF TEASER