

THE FAMILY: EPISODE 1

Written by

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INT. GRIMY APARTMENT - CASS'S ROOM - DAY *

CASSIDY "CASS" LOPEZ, age 5, wears dirty pajamas and wild curly brown hair. She kneels before a beat-up doll house and plays with a mangy doll. *

A loud BANG sounds from somewhere else in the apartment.

Cass flinches and drops her doll, knocking over the dollhouse in the process.

Cass eyes the open door warily. She stands and walks out of her room. *

INT. GRIMY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY *

Cass cautiously approaches an open door.

INT. GRIMY APARTMENT - CASS'S PARENT'S ROOM - DAY *

PAULA GOMEZ, 23, wears a bleach stained T-Shirt and no pants. She holds a smoking gun in her hand aimed at MICHAEL LOPEZ, 26, who lays motionless on the floor.

Cass stands in the open doorway. She whimpers.

Paula turns her flat gaze towards Cass.

CASS

Dad?

Paula drops the gun, strides towards Cass and shuts the door in Cass's face.

SIRENS sound in the distance. *

SUPER: 12 YEARS LATER *

INT. CAR - DAY *

Cass, 17, sits in the back seat and watches the scenery pass by. *

LORETTA HYNES, 48, African American dressed in a basic suit, sits in the driver's seat. *

LORETTA
I really think you're going to like
this family.

Cass grunts.

LORETTA (CONT'D)
Oh, come on, I have heard nothing
but good things about this family.

CASS
They're probably secretly
murderers.

LORETTA
Hush now.

EXT. ASHER HOME - DAY

Cass marvels at the home as she climbs out of the car. She
heads over to Loretta, and they walk down the path to the
front door.

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*

CASS
Holy shit.

LORETTA
Language.

CASS
Sorry, Ms. Hynes.

Loretta reaches the door and rings the bell. The door opens
almost instantly to reveal AMANDA ASHER, 37, ADAM ASHER, 42,
and AXEL ASHER, 7, all blonde haired and cleanly dressed.

The Ashers all sport oddly matching smiles.

AMANDA
Welcome, please come in.

INT. ASHER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amanda, Adam, and Axel sit on a large couch across from Cass
and Loretta, who each sit in arm chairs.

Cass takes in the immaculate living space.

LORETTA
You have a lovely home.

ADAM

Thank you, it's all thanks to this one.

Adam points at Amanda.

AMANDA

Aw, its nothing, especially with this little angel.

Amanda looks over at her son with pride painting her features. Then she returns her attention to Loretta.

Axel slowly looks to each person in the room. His gaze eventually meets Cass, and she waves at him.

In response, Axel tilts his head to the side slowly, smile never wavering. Axel then snaps his attention back to the empty space in front of him. *

Cass frowns.

LORETTA

Cass? *

CASS

Huh?

LORETTA

I was asking if you had any questions for the Asher family.

CASS

Oh, um, no.

LORETTA

Okay, then, it looks like we are all set here.

They all stand.

AMANDA

It was a pleasure meeting you, Ms. Hynes. I promise we will take great care of this wonderful child.

LORETTA

I don't doubt that. Call me if you need anything, Cass. *

Cass hugs Loretta. *

INT. ASHER HOME - CASS'S BEDROOM - DAY

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Amanda and Adam lead Cass into the sparsely decorated room.

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Cass walks past Amanda into the room and sets her bag onto the bed. She then turns back to face Amanda, Adam, and Axel who regard her with the same unwavering smiles.

*

Cass forces a smile.

CASS

Um, It's beautiful, thanks.

AMANDA

You are welcome. Now, we have dinner at four pm sharp every evening. We ask that you are punctual as we have church every night starting at six pm.

*

*

CASS

Oh, church. I, um...

Cass chews on her lip.

AMANDA

Oh, it's okay if you don't want to attend. Baby steps.

Amanda's smile returns as though it never left.

Cass nods and smiles tightly.

INT. PRESTON HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Cass sits at a nearly empty cafeteria table with ANITA JENKINS, 17, African American, sporty.

CASS

I don't know, they seem weird. There's something off about them.

ANITA

So, they never stop smiling?

CASS

It's creepy. And the kid, he is the best behaved little kid I have ever seen.

ANITA

I don't know, it's weird, but if
all you have to worry about is
smiling then I think you are lucky.

Anita picks at the ends of one of her braids.

ANITA (CONT'D)

The place they have me in is a shit
hole. The mother is always drunk
until the social workers come
sniffing around. The husband is
just creepy and not in a smiling
way like your family.

*
*

Anita shudders.

CASS

Ew, okay, I guess I'll take smiling
weirdos over creepy dad and drunk
mom.

Anita nods.

INT. PRESTON HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Cass switches out books from her backpack for ones from her
locker. KIMBERLY MONTGOMERY, 16, mousy, approaches.

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KIMBERLY

Hey, you, girl.

Cass turns to look at Kimberly.

CASS

Yeah? Oh, hey. Kimberly, right?

KIMBERLY

Yeah. Hey, so I heard they put you
with that family, the Ashers.

*

CASS

Yeah, so what?

Kimberly looks around then she leans in close.

KIMBERLY

Be careful with that family. Every
friend I ever had that moved there
went missing.

CASS

Do the cops know?

KIMBERLY

The cops just say they ran away.

Cass rolls her eyes.

CASS

So, maybe they just ran away.

KIMBERLY

No way. I knew them, they'd never do that.

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Cass shuts her locker.

CASS

Okay.

KIMBERLY

Don't say I didn't warn you.

Kimberly shuffles off as Cass frowns.

INT. ASHER HOME - DAY

Cass enters and shuts the door behind her. Cass then creeps forward into the house and opens the door to each room she passes, finding them all empty.

INT. ASHER HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Cass enters the kitchen, spots a door at the far end of the room, and then approaches it. She tries the knob but finds it is locked.

Cass turns and looks around. She walks to the cabinets and searches. She pulls out a butter knife.

Cass approaches the door and wedges the butter knife into the crack between the door and the door jamb.

A CLICK sounds down the hall, followed by the SQUEAK of the door hinges.

Cass looks back toward the entrance to the kitchen and then back to the butter knife.

Cass pulls at the knife but it won't budge.

FOOTSTEPS approach down the hall as Cass frantically yanks on the stuck butter knife.

The FOOTSTEPS grow closer as she yanks one final time, freeing the knife from the door.

Cass runs over to the kitchen sink just as Amanda enters the room.

Amanda looks from Cass to the knife in her hand.

AMANDA

What are you doing with that?

Cass looks down at the butter knife in her hand.

CASS

Oh, um, I was going to make myself a sandwich.

Amanda walks closer.

AMANDA

I could do that for you.

CASS

No, it's fine, I changed my mind.

Cass drops the butter knife into the sink and leaves the kitchen.

Amanda frowns.

INT. ASHER HOME - CASS'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cass paces back and forth. She stops and frowns.

Cass approaches the window and looks out.

SKYLER SMITH, 18, stands in the neighbor's yard, a street light illuminating him. He holds a sign that reads: "Don't trust the family."