Latest trailer for long-delayed The New Mutants ratchets up the horror

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Despite a long and bumpy road, 20th Century Fox's *The New Mutants* is finally coming to theaters this spring.
We were starting to think we'd never get to see it, but 20th Century Fox has dropped the latest trailer for *The New Mutants*, director Josh Boone's horror-inspired film originally developed as part of the *The X-Men* franchise. Slated for release in April, the film has been described as a "Stephen King meets John Hughes" YA horror film, with a dash of *Stranger Things* for good measure. *The New Mutants* does indeed feel very different tonally from prior films in *The X-Men* cinematic universe.

It's been a long road for Boone, who first pitched *The New Mutants* as a potential standalone trilogy to the studio after wrapping his 2014 film *The Fault in Our Stars*. From the start, Boone wanted to bring a different vibe to *Mutants*, much like *Deadpool* did in 2016. But while *Deadpool* went for raunchy R-rated comedy, Boone wanted to explore horror in the vein of classics like *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Shining*. "There are no costumes, there are no supervillains. We're trying to do something very, very different," he told Entertainment Weekly

in 2017. But Boon later confessed to some frustration at the "neutering" of his original vision by the studio, which wanted more of a YA focus.

Early screenings of Boone's original cut were positive, and the success of *IT* in 2017 convinced the studio to play up the horror elements it had previously wanted to de-emphasize. Several reshoots were planned but never happened, in part because of conflicts in the actors' schedules, but also because Fox kept changing the planned release date to avoid competing with other films in its stable: *Deadpool 2* in 2018 and last year's *Dark Phoenix*.

Then Disney acquired Fox last year, and studio executives purportedly thought *The New Mutants* wouldn't have strong box office potential. They changed their mind when Boone presented an updated cut of the film, which met with Disney's approval. And that's why the movie is finally, at long last, coming to the big screen.

Per the official synopsis: "Five young mutants, just discovering their abilities while held in a secret facility against their will, fight to escape their past sins and save themselves." Boone's cited influences include Demon Bear, a major villain in *The New Mutants* comics, as well as the 1987 slasher film *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*, which features kids in a psychiatric hospital being trained to control their dreams, the better to fight off main monster Freddy Krueger.

- Danielle "Dani" Moonstar (Blu Hunt), aka Mirage, wakes up in a psychiatric hospital after a tragedy.
- Alice Braga (channeling Ken Kesey's Nurse Ratched) as Dr. Cecilia Reyes, a mentor to a group of emerging mutants. Or is she?
  20th Century Fox
- Much of the film was shot on location at Medfield State

Hospital in Boston.
20th Century Fox
- Dani meets her fellow mutants.
20th Century Fox
- Roberto de Costa (Henry Zaga), aka Sunspot.
20th Century Fox
- Maisie Williams plays Rahne Sinclair, aka Wolfsbane.
20th Century Fox
- Charlie Heaton plays Sam Guthrie, aka Cannonball.
20th Century Fox
- Illyana Rasputin (Anya Taylor-Joy of *Split, Glass*, and *The Witch*), aka Magik, is sister to Colossus, one of the X-Men.
20th Century Fox
- Dani discovers they are actually prisoners.
20th Century Fox
- Under surveillance.
20th Century Fox
- Dani sees something Dr. Reyes did not intend her to see.
20th Century Fox
- Wolfsbane finds herself in a cemetery.
20th Century Fox
- A nightmare scenario.
20th Century Fox
- Sunspot channeling solar energy.
20th Century Fox
- New mutants, assemble!

The *Mutants* trailer opens with a shot of Dani Moonstar (Blu Hunt) rubbing a drop of blood between her fingers, as Dr. Cecilia Reyes (Alice Braga) asks in a voiceover about the last thing she remembers. We get a nightmarish flashback to Dani and a man (likely her father) running away from a fire. Dani wakes up in a psychiatric hospital, hand-cuffed to her bed, while Dr. Reyes tells her the reason she survived is because she's "a very uncommon girl"—a mutant, in fact. And she's not the only one. Reyes introduces her to a group of young

mutants, all part of a therapeutic support group in the hospital. Each of them is haunted by strange nightmares and visions.

Rahne (*Game of Thrones*‘ Maisie Williams), aka Wolfsbane, can turn into a wolf, which clashes mightily with her religious beliefs. Sam (*Stranger Things*‘ Charlie Heaton), aka Cannonball, is invulnerable when he propels himself into the air. Roberto (Henry Zaga), aka Sunspot, has the ability to manipulate solar energy, and his inability to control that power seems to have led to the demise of his girlfriend. Illyana (Anya Taylor-Joy), aka Magik, can teleport and is sister to X-Man Colossus. She’s also known in the comics for her sword, which makes a brief appearance here, emerging from her arm. As for Dani, aka Mirage, she has the “power to create illusions drawn from the fears and desires of a person’s mind.”

Dani’s power is of keen interest to Dr. Reyes, who explains that they must explore Dani’s power in order to help her get better. But as Illyana tells her, “This isn’t a hospital—it’s a cage.” When Dani “sees” something during the tests that Dr. Reyes likely didn’t want her to see, she concludes that none of them are in the hospital to get better. “This place takes your greatest fear and makes you live through it,” we hear Reyes say. “Until it kills you.” And the mutants resolve to combine their powers to escape.

Filmmaker Boone has vacillated in interviews over the years about whether or not Demon Bear will actually appear in *The New Mutants*, but the character is listed among the cast. We see a shot of Dani in the trailer wearing a bear-shaped pendant, and we possibly catch a glimpse of Demon Bear toward the end. So we’ll go out on a limb and predict that this will be the primary antagonist for the film. There’s also a rumored post-credits scene featuring Antonio Banderas as an as-yet-unnamed villain, setting things up for a potential sequel should *The New Mutants* hit it big at the box office.

The New Mutants is slated for theatrical release on April 3, 2020.

Listing image by 20th Century Fox

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