

CASTLING

Written by

Taylor Miley

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom is dimly lit by an old desk lamp. It barely lights up the desk it is sitting on.

VIOLET (17 years old, hair tied back tightly, looks older than she is) sits at her desk typing away on her laptop. She is emailing a restaurant about who she believes is stealing their tips out of a their tip jar.

VIOLET

And...sent.

Violet sends the email. She glances up at a poster hanging above her desk, front and center. It is a poster for an article competition hosted by Columbia University. Whoever wins, gets a scholarship.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The early rays of morning light peek through the curtain of the bedroom. It shines on the walls, a copious amount of corkboards, pictures, and red strings decorating them. Books and papers are scattered through the room.

A piercing noise of an alarm jolts Violet awake. Her draft of her article for the restaurant still open on her laptop screen. She rushes out of bed. A dry-cleaned private school uniform hangs in her closet, which she puts on. She scrambles to grab her backpack. She heads downstairs where she can hear her family getting ready.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The kitchen is chaotic. Dishes are all over the counters, and the family members are preparing for their day. Violet's dad, RUFUS (late 40's, rugged and tired), is dressed in his construction uniform. He is making a cup of coffee.

Violet's mom, JOYCE (mid 40's, well-manicured) is dressed in business casual. She is making breakfast. They both turn to Violet as she enters, smiling at her in her uniform.

JOYCE

Honey, you look fantastic!

Rufus puts an arm around Violet, hugging her.

RUFUS

We are so proud of you, sweetie.
Are you nervous?

Violet shrugs.

VIOLET

A little. Never been to a school
this nice before.

JOYCE

It's good to be a little nervous.
But, remember you were accepted
into that school. You belong there.

A scoff comes from the living room. Violet's brother, JEREMY
(early 20's, run-down, alcoholic), glares at her from the
recliner.

JEREMY

Who would wanna belong in that shit
hole?

RUFUS

Jeremy.

VIOLET

Don't you have someone else to
harass you dick?

JEREMY

Nope. Just you.

VIOLET

Seriously, can't you just be happy
for me for a second?

JEREMY

Why would I be happy? The school is
fucked up, you'll-

RUFUS

Jeremy! Enough!

Jeremy huffs and storms off upstairs. Violet looks at Joyce,
who gives her a look that translates to "let it go". A door
slams.

JOYCE

You know how proud of you we are
for you getting your scholarship.

Violet nods. She fixes herself a cup of coffee.

RUFUS

This is a great opportunity for you
to get a leg up for Columbia.
Especially with your article.

JOYCE

Oh, your Aunt Carol called today.
She said your college funding
account got set up.

Violet looks uncomfortable by this comment.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Honey, I know you don't want to
hear it but, we really can't afford-

VIOLET

I know, mom. You don't need to
remind me.

RUFUS

What she means is, just try your
best at school. You're a smart
girl. As long as your grades stay
up, that fund will be yours and
Columbia will be real.

Rufus checks his watch, noticing they are running a bit late.

RUFUS (CONT'D)

Alrighty kiddo, let's head out.

JOYCE

Good luck, honey! We love you!

INT. CAR - MORNING

The car is run down and not in the best condition. Rufus and Violet are riding in Rufus's construction vehicle. Violet looks out at her neighborhood out the window. It is a middle-class community. She sees other kids getting on the bus for the local public school.

As they get closer to the school, Violet sees several gated communities. The cars get nicer too.

INT. OUTSIDE SCHOOL - MORNING

Violet's car sticks out from the others. She grabs her things. Before she exits the car, Rufus stops her.

RUFUS

Honey, I know you're nervous. But
you have nothing to be nervous
about. You deserve to be here.

VIOLET
Tell that to them.

She gestures her head towards a group of girls who are looking and snickering at her.

RUFUS
Violet, ignore them. Don't let these people get to you. Jeremy did, and look-

VIOLET
Yeah, yeah I know.

Rufus reassuringly pats her on the shoulder.

RUFUS
You got this!

Violet takes a deep breath before getting out of the car and heading up the steps.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

When Violet walks in, she enters a different world. There are kids everywhere, all broken up into their respective cliques. Cheerleaders, athletes, etc. She tries her best to just blend in.

She finally finds her locker. Two girls are leaning against the locker next to hers. LANA (17, a streak of blue in her hair, lots of piercings) is talking with IMANI (17, looks younger than she is, dressed well). Lana takes notice of Violet.

LANA
Hey! Are you new here?

VIOLET
Uh, yeah. Yeah I am.

LANA
Nice to meet you! I'm Lana, this is Imani.

She gestures to the girl beside her, who gives a simple wave and a smile.

LANA (CONT'D)
So, where'd you transfer from? Do you know anyone who goes here?

IMANI

Sorry for the interrogation, she
can't help being nosey.

VIOLET

It's okay, I don't mind.

Lana smiles at Imani, who rolls her eyes.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I just transferred from Pacific.
It's a public school. But my
brother used to go here.

LANA

Oh, cool! Who was your brother?

Violet looks hesitant to answer before she is saved by Imani.

IMANI

I know it might be kind of
intimidating, but you'll fit in in
no time.

LANA

Is that your schedule?

She points at the piece of paper in Violet's hand.

VIOLET

Yeah, I honestly have no idea where
these places are though.

Lana takes the paper out of her hand.

LANA

Well, lucky you! We all have first
period together!

Lana links arms with the two, walking them down the hallway.
Violet is smiling, happy to have made two friends so quickly.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING

The three girls file into the class and sit in adjacent seats
in the middle of the class. Other students enter one by one.
A boy catches her eye, COLTON (17, well-groomed, preppy and
athletic). He sits in front of Violet. He turns around to
greet her, smiling.

COLTON

Hey. Are you new here?

VIOLET
(nervously)
Yep, today is my first day.

COLTON
Nice to meet you, I'm Colton.

She stares at him for an awkwardly long amount of time. He gestures his hand out to say, "What about you?"

VIOLET
Oh! I'm Violet. You can call me
Violet.

Some girls nearby are eavesdropping on their conversation and snicker at her. Colton side-eyes them.

COLTON
Well, It was nice to meet you
Violet. If you ever need help with
anything, just tap me.

COLTON (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Oh, and don't worry about them.
They have nothing better to do than
gossip.

VIOLET
(smiling)
I won't.

Lana and Imani look at each other, mocking the gazing and talking. Violet mouths "shut up." She is still smiling.

MR.KALMAN (late 30's, a bit hippy looking) enters with books in hand. He places them on the desk with a *thud*. He turns and writes his name on the board behind him. He goes on to take roll call. He goes down the list until he gets to Violet.

MR.KALMAN
Violet Murphy?

VIOLET
Here.

Some of the students turn to look back at her, whispering.

MR.KALMAN
Murphy? As in Jeremy Murphy? Are
you by any chance his sister?

Violet cringes.

VIOLET
Yeah, that's me.

Lana and Imani look at Violet. Class goes on, but Violet feels awkward.

The bell rings, and everyone leaves except Violet, Colton, Imani, and Lana.

COLTON
See you around, Violet.

VIOLET
See ya!

Imani and Lana come closer to Violet's desk, Lana sitting on the chair in front of her.

LANA
You're Jeremy Murphy's sister?

Violet sighs.

VIOLET
Yeah, I am. I didn't really want anyone knowing, though.

LANA
Why? That guy is a legend!

IMANI
(warningly)
Lana.

LANA
What? He is! If I could deck one of these guys in the face I totally would.

IMANI
I'm sorry, Violet. I'm sure everyone will forget about it by lunch.

The school secretary shows up at the classroom door.

SECRETARY
Violet, your needed in the Headmaster's office.

Violet looks confused and looks at the other two.

VIOLET
(whispering)
Is this normal for new students?

The two shake their head. Violet sighs and gets up to follow the secretary.

INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE

Violet knocks on the door.

VOICE
Come in.

Violet opens the door slowly. HEADMASTER DEVNEY (mid 40's, greying hair, clearly made of money) sits at his desk, writing on some papers.

HEADMASTER DEVNEY
Come in! Come in! Take a seat.

Violet looks around a bit suspiciously before taking a seat.

HEADMASTER DEVNEY (CONT'D)
Our newest student, and on full
academic scholarship nonetheless!

VIOLET
I'm honored to be here, sir.

He nods, taking out a file from his desk.

HEADMASTER DEVNEY
And we are happy to have you! I
just wanted to go over the
parameters of your scholarship with
you, if that's alright.

Violet nods.

HEADMASTER DEVNEY (CONT'D)
Firstly, you have to keep your
grades above a 3.8 average. But,
looking at your record, that
shouldn't be an issue. Second, you
cannot receive any disciplinary
action.

VIOLET
Understood.

HEADMASTER DEVNEY

Which brings me to a question, if you don't mind me asking. How is Jeremy doing?

Violet looks taken-aback.

VIOLET

He's, uh, managing, I guess?

Headmaster Devney nods. He looks smug.

HEADMASTER DEVNEY

I see. Such a shame, he could have done so much. I trust that you'll perform better.

VIOLET

I'll try my best, sir.

HEADMASTER DEVNEY

Great. Well then, I'll let you get back to classes. Welcome to Woodwell Prep.

INT. CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

Violet heads to lunch with Imani and Lana. They are in line to get their food.

LANA

That was so fucking weird. Headmaster Devney never talks to students. My first two months here I didn't believe he existed.

IMANI

It is kind of weird, but I mean, she's here on full academic scholarship. That never happens, he probably just wanted to congratulate her.

VIOLET

Yeah, I'm not sure what to make of him yet.

LANA

Well, if it makes you feel better, he scares everyone. I heard he can be kind of intimidating.