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Welcome to Purgatory

by [HaughtBreaker](#)

Summary

Nicole Haught is brand new to Purgatory and quickly learning who she wants to see more of, and who she doesn't.

Notes

I wanted to write a piece that was Nicole moving to Purgatory and seeing Waverly for the first time.

"Welcome to Purgatory - You'll never want to leave." Nicole read the sign aloud, more to fill the silence in the car than anything else as she looked down at the crate on her lap, a ball of fur wedged into the corner of the carrier. "Guess this is it, Calamity." Looking around, she noted how the highway cut through a grassy plain, property fences on either side establishing residential domain. She'd heard it was rather cheap to purchase land around here, but she couldn't understand why. She'd seen worse land for significantly higher prices in Illinois.

"It's a small town but, it's got heart."

She glanced over the older man who would become her boss in a week, allowing her time to settle in before taking up the duties she'd signed up for. "It's beautiful country out here." She tried to make small talk, but she could feel an uneasiness settling in her gut. Being on a tiny plane for a few hours didn't help either.

She'd lived in small towns before, when she was a kid switching schools every two years, and she'd always preferred city life, especially after learning she wasn't exactly a part of the majority when it came to love. Small towns weren't necessarily keen on her kind, but perhaps it was a blessing in disguise. The last thing she needed was another disaster like the one she'd left behind in Chicago.

"Now, we ain't never had a female officer in these parts, not that we're the sort to prevent it. We've got lots of strong women in the town, it's just never happened, so there might be a little shock."

What was she even supposed to say to that? "Well, I'm glad for the opportunity." The words tasted strange in her mouth, and she was sure there was some sort of liberal comment she could make regarding women's rights, but she didn't feel like starting off on the wrong foot. She was glad her ex wasn't in the car with them... well that was one of a thousand reasons she was glad, but she could just imagine the very... *activist* woman speaking her mind. Nicole wasn't the type to cause waves. She believed that change happened through actions and if this gave her a chance to open the minds of a few closed-minded backwater townsfolk, well, who was she to complain.

"You can die in peace if you leave even just a little bit of goodness behind when you go," her grandmother had always told her. Well she could only hope to leave behind as much of a legacy as that woman had left, and if that started with some Canadian back water town, who was she to say no?

"You don't talk much, do you?" Sheriff Nedley side-eyed her as he pulled into the central part of town, where shops made of wood, bricks and hard work lined the small road. "That's fine. I like the quiet. Gives us all a chance to... reflect on our circumstances and decisions."

The way he said it, she knew he had heard about what happened. Maybe not all the specifics, but perhaps the gist of thing. No doubt he'd heard that she'd clotheslined the captain of the Chicago PD. She could only hope he hadn't heard the reason behind it.

No one liked their dirty laundry hung out for everyone to see, especially when your laundry was rainbow colored and you threw exes and infidelity in the mix.

The sheriff pulled up behind a moving truck that had parked in front of a 2 story building that seemed dwarfish in comparison to the tall skyscrapers of Chicago. "I know you're used to city life and all, and that's fine and dandy, but I just want to warn you that living in a small town... these people see everything, and if you think they're focusing on you just because you're new... well I can't deny the truth in that."

Nicole looked up at the truck that held what little things she brought with her, most of the furniture having belonged to her ex. Just a few pieces, clothes and belongings cleared by customs not that long ago. There were a few men lingering about, cowboy boots and jeans seeming to be the required uniform of the town. "Thanks for the warning."

Stepping out of the cruiser, she took a breath of the air, noticing that despite standing behind a moving truck, it was significantly cleaner than back home.

"I got you some strong hands here to help with your moving while you're signing your lease and the sort." The sheriff pat one of the men on the shoulders.

Of course he did. "You didn't..."

"Don't go protesting now." The sheriff cut her off. He hooked his thumbs in his belt as the movers emerged to open the truck. "No sense in having to carry all that on your own. You're a member of the town now and we help each other out."

Being raised by in a military family, Nicole had learned that the key to blending in with a new environment was to choose your battles wisely and this was, judging by the stubborn look on the sheriff's face, not one she wanted to fight. She was hesitant to leave a bunch of strangers handling her belongings, but she guessed with the sheriff there, nothing would happen.

It didn't take long, getting her keys and all the boxes carried up to the furnished apartment. It wasn't a large space, but it had a bedroom and a decent sized bathroom, soothing away her nightmares of outhouses and bathing in barrels. She looked around the space and tried to picture decorating, a knock on the door causing her to jump.

"Sorry about that. This is the last of it." The man set the box down, running his hand through his hair to straighten it into what she guessed was his attempt at attractive. Not that she couldn't see why some women would find him appealing. He wiped his hands in his jeans before offering it to her. "We haven't been properly introduced. I'm Champ."

As eyes raked over her form, Nicole grimaced, accepting the hand in a quick shake before he could get a firm grip on it. "Nicole. Thank you for the help."

"My pleasure... really." He smirked. "So... you movin' in all by yourself or is your boyfriend moving up later?"

Nicole sighed, putting a smile on her face. "Nope. No boyfriend."

"What? A pretty thing like you?" He laughed, his hands sliding into his pockets. "Well, if you wanted to come on down, around the block is Shorty's. Maybe you could stop by and we could get a drink and I could... show you around town."

Pursing her lips, Nicole shook her head. "Sorry Champ. I appreciate it but it's been a really long day already."

"Well I'm sure a drink would help lift those spirits a bit." he tried again.

"And I've got a bottle of vodka I've already stuck in the freezer. I'm fine."

"Well, maybe you need someone to stick around and help you drink it. "

Nicole had to close her eyes and count to ten. The last thing she needed was this testosterone driven caveman invading her space. "Again, thank you for the offer, but I like drinking alone."

He seemed to instantly deflate at that, finally getting her meaning. "I get it." He lifted both hands in surrender. "Your loss." He commented with a hint of indignation before disappearing.

"Completely my loss." Nicole commented as she closed the door, turning to finally release Calamity from her carrier.

Meow! The Calico cat shot out of the crate, running around the apartment in confusion. Suddenly overwhelmed, the cat came back to her, wailing loudly while weaving around her feet.

"Hold on, hold on." She made quick work of setting up the litter box and food, rooting around for Calamity's bed and scratching post before starting her own unpacking. A sudden knock came on her door and she jumped again. "Small towns...better not be that idiot again..." She muttered. She didn't expect to find her stoop filled with the sheriff again.

"I know you're busy unpacking and getting settled but, the way I figured, if you wanted to get some paperwork out of the way, a squad car at your disposal would probably help you get around a bit... in case you needed to head to the city for some... supplies or what not."

Nicole was exhausted. She could feel it in her bones and she wanted to protest. She hasn't been lying about the vodka, but she also needed some food and other things and the idea of mobility was very tempting. "Ok, yeah. That would help. Thank you, Sheriff."

What started off as a ride to the sheriff's station ended up being an impromptu tour of the town as Sheriff Nedley made sure she knew where the basics were. The market. The mechanic. The hospital. She really shouldn't have been surprised that there was only one of anything in the town.

"This here is the station." he said as he pulled in front of the building, a second cruiser parked by its lonesome. "Over there Shorty's, the local watering hole so to speak." He gestured to the building that resembled a western saloon.

"Ahhh. Champ mentioned it." She spoke with a wry look, taking in the sight of the wooden sign that had been crafted with care and the well used double doors. Movement caught her eye and she turned her attention to the small parking lot. Her gaze fell on a short brunette that hopped out of a red jeep, hefting a bag from the open back of the vehicle. They were far away to not be noticed yet close enough for her to take in the natural smile on the woman's face and Nicole felt frozen in place.

There was a bit of a skip to the woman's step, as if her cowboy boots never actually touched the pavement, stopping briefly to look both ways before crossing the street. She wore a red and black jersey shirt and cut off shorts that definitely caught Nicole's eye, long brown hair braided to the side. "Who's..." Her voice came out a little higher than she intended, and she cleared her throat. "Who's that?"

Had she been facing the sheriff, she would have seen the look on his face that was a combination of curiosity and knowing, one that said he could see right through her. He'd seen many people caught off guard by the youngest Earp daughter, she was just that type of person. "That's Waverly Earp. Sweetest thing ever, but deadly with a shotgun. She works at Shorty's, brings me coffee every now and then. She makes a great cappuccino."

"Waverly." The name rolled off her tongue, leaving behind a smile in its wake. Something awoke inside, maybe it was fate or maybe it was just lust, but her eyes tracked the woman's movements, greedily taking in every step. "Earp?" her mind only then processed. "As in..."

"As in Wyatt Earp, yes."

Watching the short woman disappear into the bar, she mulled over that information. Of course she'd heard about the small town's one claim to fame, it just seemed so strange thinking about the infamous gunslinger somehow being related to...

"You alright over there?"

"Hmmm?" Nicole turned, realizing she had been staring. "Sorry. Long day already."

Sheriff Nedley gave her a strange look, the uncertainty evident in his expression. "Well... let's get these papers signed and you can get back home."

Home... the word seemed so odd to her as she looked around at the dusty streets, the rustic buildings and rugged mystique before finally settling in the bar's closed double doors. She thought about braided hair and short shorts and maybe the word fit...

Maybe

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