

# ULTRA VIOLET

AIDA SALAZAR



SCHOLASTIC PRESS  
NEW YORK

Copyright © 2024 by Aida Salazar

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*.

SCHOLASTIC, SCHOLASTIC PRESS, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Salazar, Aida, author.

Title: Ultraviolet / by Aida Salazar.

Description: First edition. | New York : Scholastic Press, 2024.

| Audience: Ages 10 and up. | Audience: Grades 7-9. | Summary: Thirteen-year-old Elio is struggling with "coming of age"—first love, first heartbreak, first real fight (which lands him in the hospital), and what it means to be a "man," a true friend, and an ally, as well as how to overcome a culture of toxic masculinity.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023003274 (print) | LCCN 2023003275 (ebook)

| ISBN 9781338775655 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781339027432 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Mexican American boys—Juvenile fiction. | Machismo—Juvenile fiction.

| Masculinity—Juvenile fiction. | Interpersonal relations—Juvenile fiction. | Emotions—

Juvenile fiction. | CYAC: Novels in verse. | Mexican Americans—Fiction. | Machismo—

Fiction. | Interpersonal relations—Fiction. | Coming of age—Fiction.

| LCGFT: Bildungsromans. | Novels in verse.

Classification: LCC PZ7.5.S23 U1 2024 (print) | LCC PZ7.5.S23 (ebook) |

DDC 813.6 [Fic] —dc23/eng/20230314 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023003274> LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023003275>

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1            24 25 26 27 28

Printed in Italy                            183

First edition, April 2024

Book design by Marijka Kostiw

# Ultraviolet

Who invented love, anyway?

Had to be a girl, right?

*Had* to be.

'Cause I don't get it.

Who can understand

the feeling of shimmering sol

that swallows anything smart

you wanna say

and tangles your blushing nerves

up inside your growling guts

so bad,

you almost wanna fart

so bad,

your skin turns all goose bumpy?

Just by looking at the

brown besos of her eyes,

the embers of her cheeks,

hearing the sound of her voice in the key of F

entering your ears,

taking root inside

the blob of your thirteen-year-old dude brain

and washing everything you see  
with a reel of colors  
beyond the spectrum  
    red,  
    orange,  
    yellow,  
    green,  
    blue,  
    indigo,  
    violet.

More than that.

    Ultraviolet.

Glow-in-the-dark outrageous.

It's what I see

when Camelia is around.

Is this what it feels like to be

in love?

# Irrational Fears

Bees.

Abejas scare me rotten.

There, I said it.

I know. Of all the things

I could be afraid of, like

El Cucuy  
the plague  
earthquakes  
La Llorona  
fires.

It's bees.

Tiny, hurt-nobody bees.

It's the worst when a critter zooms by  
because I lose all sense and wild jiggle  
my whole body so it won't sting me.

No, the worst is  
when I'm around my boy, Paco.

Closest friend I have  
my bud, my dude,  
my “I got your back” kinda bro,  
*and* a bee zim zams near me  
forcing me to do the wild jiggle and run  
'cause he laughs at me,  
calls me a *miedoso*.  
Stone-cold scaredy-cat.  
And I have to hold myself back  
from punching him on the arm  
for him to quit it.

Just the thought  
takes me right to the time I was six  
swinging on the monkey bars.  
I smashed a bee with my hand  
against the metal.  
I jumped off, my hand shooting streaks  
of pain, turning on the siren of my wail  
fire-engine red blasting through my boca.  
It made Moms stop pushing my little sisters  
on the swings and come running to me  
with a

*¿Qué pasa, Elio? ¿Mi'jo?*

zigzagging

across her face.

My throbbing hand swelling,  
my lips turning blue,  
the weighted blow of pain  
pulling me down to the ground  
at Moms's feet until  
my face hit the sand.

Passed out. Stone-cold. Frío.

Then waking up a second later  
just to keep crying  
and pushing sand off my tongue  
and Moms crying to see I'd come to,  
and my sisters crying to see Moms crying,  
my heart pounding louder than our cries,  
all of us looking like a broken walnut—  
tight, brown, and crumbled together.

The world spun so much I couldn't see  
the blue clouds and white sky  
turn that moment into  
what my pops calls an "irrational fear"  
which I can't get over



no matter what I do  
to erase it.

Yeah, bees.

*And* my body growing  
explosively like an Animorph  
leaving purple Wolverine  
stretch mark scratches  
on my back and butt.

Puberty.  
Wild and scary stuff.

And girls.  
I used to be afraid of girls  
until I met Camelia.