

TWILIGHT IN QUARANTINE

CHAPTER 5

Vanessa: Chapter 5: Blood Type. I made my way to English in a daze. I did not even realize when I first walked in that class had already started. [begin intro music] "Thank you for joining us, Ms. Swan," Mr. Mason said in a disparaging tone. I flushed. and hurried to my seat. I'm Vanessa Zoltan

Julia: And I'm Julia Argie. And this is hot and Bothered

Vanessa: Twilight in quarantine.

[END INTRO MUSIC]

Vanessa OK, Julia. Let's remind everybody what happens in this so so weird chapter. This chapter is so weird.

Julia: I am so glad you're #1 because I have forgotten, even though I read it last night. Can I count you in?

Vanessa: Count me in.

Julia: 3, 2, 1.

[BEGIN TICKING sound]

Vanessa: So, um, Bella's so excited that Edward is paying attention to her, and then she goes to biology class and he's like "I'm going to skip class," Oh, they have lunch together and it's a huge deal. And he's like "I'm gonna skip." And then it turns out that it's like blood test type day and Bella gets really faint, and she's like "Oh, my God, I'm gonna die from the sight or smell of blood." And then she goes to the nurse's office, and Edward carries her, and then he insists on driving her home against her will. And he drives her truck back for her."

[long buzzing sound]

Julia: Beautiful! Moving!

Vanessa: No, I could have done better.

Julia: That's OK. That just makes it easier for me to beat you.

Vanessa: I didn't believe in myself enough.

Julia: [laughing] I'm sure that was the problem.

Vanessa: I didn't believe in myself the way that Bella believes in Edward. OK, are you ready to go?

Julia: I'm so ready.

Vanessa: On your mark, get set, go!

[begin ticking sound]

Julia: She goes to school. Edward is sitting alone away from his family. And he winks at her to come over, and she listens and does. And then they have this really weird lunch where he says a bunch of cryptic things, and instead of being like, "You're weird, bye!" she's really into it. She goes to biology class, it's blood type day, Edward says he's not going 'cause he thinks truancy is cool. And then she starts to get light-headed. Mike escorts her out, and then Mike doesn't want to carry her but Edward does, and then he drops her off!

[long buzzing sound]

Vanessa: Yeah, you did a much better job.

Julia: I missed the abduction scene.

[Segue music]

Vanessa: So Julia, I'm a little worried about something. I'm worried that in our, like mocking relationship with this book, that we're starting to sound like the kind of people we hate who mock romance novels.

Julia: I mean, every time I sit down to read it, I'm excited to see what's in store for us so I definitely don't hate it.

Vanessa: Right? Yeah, me too. So, we were thinking offline that it might be worth creating a segment to, like, capture that actual joy. I do think that these books are problematic, but that doesn't make them less awesome and fun to read just because they're highly problematic. And I don't think that that has been coming across at all. So, I thought that we could add a new segment where the love of these books is not sandwiched by mockery but is just straight up us saying, "This is awesome."

Julia: Great! Let's do it! Do you want to start, or do you want me to?

Vanessa: Sure. I actually have two, and I couldn't pick.

Julia: Hit me with it.

Vanessa: So, first of all, I love the fantasy of having a boyfriend who can read everybody's thoughts. I think that having a boyfriend who could read other people's thoughts would be so much more fun than being able to read them. Like, I don't want to know what certain people think about me, or I just don't care to hear certain people's thoughts. They might be boring. So, having this selective access to somebody who can read people's thoughts, which we see in this chapter. Edward is like, "Your boyfriend Mike is mad at me." That was a moment where I was like, "Oh my God, I'd totally date Edward Cullen."

Julia: I'm coming from that same idea from a different perspective. I was thinking of myself as like one of the lay people in this school and imagining what it would be like for someone to read my thoughts as I excessively day-dreamed during class. I just feel bad for Edward. I was like, "Oh, my God, he has to be, like, riveted by the plot-turns of my elaborate story-telling in math class. Like, that is a bad gig. Maybe that's why he's so evil.

[Julia and Vanessa laugh]

Vanessa: And then the other moment that I really loved was when he was like, "I'll drive you home, and I'll make sure your car gets delivered." I just really hate gestures that people think are thoughtful, but they actually make my life harder. Right? And I feel like this happens a lot, where someone is like, "No no, I want to do this nice thing for you." and then they like send you food that you like don't want to eat! They are annoying things that people do as thoughtful gestures. and Edward drives her home and then is like, "Don't worry, I will make sure your car gets brought to you." And I just think all nice gestors should be that thoughtful.

Julia: I ... I'm so glad you found joy in that moment. I wouldn't consider it, him, driving her home as he abducts her ...

Vanessa: Totally.

Julia: But I understand what you're saying.

Vanessa: But he's thoughtful about the repercussions of his abduction.

Julia: Mmm-hmmm. What a catch!

Vanessa: Julia, what was the moment where you were like: "Ugh, these books!"

Julia: So, Bella and Edward were eating lunch and Edward convinces Bella to tell him one of her theories about how he saved her from the car crash. And she guesses that he's Spiderman. Which was incredibly relatable to me as someone who knows nothing about superheroes or superhero movies. And the idea that I could see someone who has like a weird hot cult family and who acts bizarrely and says "Spiderman" just shows such a relatable amount of ignorance towards a part of the world that I also don't know anything about. I really identified with her.

Vanessa: Except that you obviously know more about Spiderman than she does to know that that is a laughably little amount to know about Spiderman.

Julia: I mean, I know he was bit by a spider, which is what she says, and that he can shoot webs from his fingers, but beyond that I don't know anything else. And it seems she does not either.

Vanessa: [laughs]

Vanessa: Yes, but we can't pretend that these books are perfect, as lovable as they are. So what advice would you like to give to Ms Meyer today?

Julia: So Bella is talking to Edward about how she faints around blood, and she says it's because of the smell. And then Edward says, "People can't smell blood," which just isn't true. And I wonder what you thought about that.

Vanessa: Maybe he's been a non-people for so long that he's forgotten what regular people's relationship to blood is. Like, I get really surprised when a non-Jew knows anything about Judaism, and I'm like, "How do you know that?" And so maybe that's what being a vampire is like for Edward. Edward is like, "How do you know blood has a smell? Only Vampires know that." And Bella is like, "No, everyone knows that."

Julia: Edward is just old as hell.

Vanessa: Yeah, he's just been a vampire forever. He's forgotten.

Julia: Yeah, is there any advice you had or questions that you had?

Vanessa: Yeah, I'm very confused by Ms. Meyer's use of the word "whoops". Bella's allowed to ask Edward a question, and then he clearly doesn't like the question that Bella asks, and so Bella says internally, "Whoops!" And I don't know why it would be "whoops!" Bella enjoys asking him questions that he doesn't want to answer. She's been given permission to ask the question. She seems to like making him uncomfortable. I actually think she means, "ooh!" Not "whoops!"

Julia: Mmm-hmmm.

Vanessa: Like, "Ooh, that seemed to upset him. And I don't think "Ooh!" and "Whoops!" are interchangeable. "Whoops!" is what you say to a falling baby.

Julia: [laughs] A falling bella? Like as bella trips around the world, everyone's just like -Whoops! Whoops! Whoops!"

Vanessa: Whoopsie, Bella!

Julia: Maybe she hears it so much as she falls everywhere that she thinks it's just something you say when something unexpected happens.

Vanessa: Like those dogs that think their name is No?

Julia: [laughs] Exactly.

Vanessa: [laughs] So Bella just thinks that people walk around saying, "Whoops" all the time.

[both laugh]

Vanessa: Well, solved it! OK!

Julia: Yep. Check and check.

Vanessa: Stephenie Meyer, the most thoroughly developed characters in the history of literature.

[Segue music]

Vanessa: So we've given our Stephenie Meyer advice. Julia, what advice do you have to offer a character? What are you going to save a character from?

Julia: So Edward really bothered me in this chapter. I'm going to start at the surface level when they're eating lunch. And the wink to lure her to the table really bothered me just on a basic level. I don't think people should be really responding to winking except in a completely farsical way. If someone winks at you in a seductive way, like, it has to end. And then he says a bunch of cryptic things, and is just so entertained with himself. And one of the lines that he thinks is so, like, charming. Let me get the book because it's so bad After the amazing spiderman comment, he says, "What if I'm not a superhero, what if I'm The Bad Guy?" He smiled playfully, but his eyes were impenetrable. He's so unbearably annoying! Like, I cannot stand him! [laughs]

Vanessa: [laughs] So what's your advice? "Be less annoying?"

Julia: "Stop it! Please! For the love of God please stop!" [laughs]

Vanessa: I need your advice to be more specific. You're not setting Edward up for success here.

Julia: Stop making cryptic comments that you think are funny that are not funny.

Vanessa: [laughs] Run all cryptic comments through a writer's room.

Julia: Yeah, he needs to get workshopped. Like, imagine if someone said that to you. Imagine if someone was speaking to you like that. would you not lose your mind?

Vanessa: Yeah! I would. I'm not 17. I do sort of think that when I was 17 I would have found this interesting and that it was hot. Like, I would have found Mike boring and Tyler boring. And so like at least Edward is interesting. As a grown person, if someone talked to me like that, I would have thrown up on them.

Julia: [laughs]

vanessa: But I can imagine finding this really attractive at 17; I really can. And feel free to judge me, for it but I can.

Julia: I just can't believe that you wouldn't say that you would find Tyler interesting after he almost killed you. I feel like if there was some kind of remarkable incident with me at 17 almost getting into like a life-threatening car accident, I would be like, "Oooh, star-crossed lovers! It's not me and Edward, it's me and Tyler."

Vanessa: You got into a horrible car accident when you were a teenager.

Julia: Oh, yeah, the day of prom!

Vanessa: Did you fall in love with the person?

Julia: It was a couple. And I don't think at the age of 17 I was ready to join a threesome. Maybe now? Who knows.

Vanessa: [laughs] So my two pieces of advice this time are going to be on theme. At one point, Bella literally says, "let go!" and Edward doesn't. And I would just say that unless you're teaching a 3-year-old to ride a bike in a busy street ... if somebody says, "Let go!" let go. It is like one of those requests slash commands that to me is not optional. Like if I and a three-year-old were crossing the street and I was holding his hand and someone said, "Let go!" I would be, like, no. But I mean short of that, I really do believe that if someone says "let go!" you run to the other side of the room to show how much you let go. So that is my advice to Edward: When Bella says things like, "Let go!" you let go.

Julia: Yeah, my advice was going to be when he says, "If you run away, I'll just come and drag you back." I was like, "Uh, what?" He literally drags her into a car and says, "If you run, I'll just come get you."

Vanessa: Yeah, he's treating her like a child. I don't know, this also just calls into question their whole relationship. Because he is, like, 120, right?

Julia: Yeah.

Vanessa: And so I feel like it is probably frustrating for him to deal with a 17-year-old. She probably shouldn't be driving home, like half an hour after she fainted. Like that probably is dangerous.

Julia: Mmm-hmm.

Vanessa: HE thinks he's the adult holding the 3-year-old's hand across the street. But you can't be in a romantic relationship that's based around a dynamic like that. So it's one or the other. He either has to not abduct her or not date her.

Julia: Imagine the blissful world where he neither abducts her nor dates her. Wow! Why not both?

Vanessa: Yeah, it does make me wonder what is attractive about that. Like, part of me gets it, right? Part of me gets that there's something comforting about someone knowing better than you. So you can't mess up. We all know that there are all of these taxes on women on all of the extra labor that they have to do to walk through the world. So I do think that there's something really fantasy-oriented about somebody who just takes over some of the labor of your life, that there is someone who literally does know better, not that they really know better, but that they think they do, because they're actually 120 years old and immortal. But I still ... It is like so hard to watch it unfold. ... You look horrified by what I just said.

Julia: If someone tried to tell me what to do as much as Edward tries to tell Bella what to do it would be over so fast. I'd be like "Title 9! Get him away!"

Vanessa: I love that you were suddenly in college with this person. Title 9 was involved!

Julia: [laughs] Yeah, well, I think that once they institute the dating penalty box at Forks High School, there will be like a Title 9 system that I can turn to.

Vanessa: OK, my second piece of advice, which I feel is really on brand for this whole episode, is for the biology teacher. The word that is used in the text is "grab". "He grabs Mike's hand and pricks it" to do the blood test. And so I think that maybe Edward is actually a victim here and that he is really good at re-immersing himself into a town when he starts fresh and then culturally follows the lead of the elders of that town. And what he has seen of the biology teacher is that you can just grab people and stab them. In which case he's like, "Sure, I can abduct Bella. I don't have to let go when she says "let go". Like, it's just so wild to me that a teacher grabs someone's hand and pricks them with the needle.

Julia: Wow.

Vanessa: Like, that is Evil-Witch-in-Sleeping-Beauty actions; this is, like, bad.

Julia: I have a really good idea: OK the biology teacher is a vampire hunter. He knows that there are vampires in the town of Forks, and he's out to find them. He thinks, wrongly, that Mike is the vampire and grabs his hand and tries to stab him in class to prove or disprove his theory.

Vanessa: Do vampires not have blood? IS that one fo the things?

Julia: I think they don't have blood and then you can't stab them because their skin is made of hard marble.

Vanessa: Hmmmm.

Julia: So he'd like stab them and it would be like, "Clink Clink!" and then it would just bounce off.

Vanessa: Wow, so he was hoping for a very public confrontation.

Julia: Yeah, Isn't there a Van Helsing movie where he kills vampires? It's like that.

Vanessa: Got it. OK, well, he's a failed one because he picks the wrong mark. This just seems like failed mentoring because he's a teacher who doesn't realize that your responsibility isn't just how you teach your subject but it's also to be a mentor and how you treat people. And this teacher did not get the memo that this is really part of his job and is just a really bad teacher. So my advice to that teacher: Don't grab your students and stab them.

Julia: So you're saying mentors shouldn't stab their mentees.

Vanessa: Yep. That is what I'm saying.

Julia: Ah, never heard that one.

[segue music]

Vanessa: So Julia, We always like to end this by sending Bella a little gift. What would you like to put in her care package this week?

Julia: So as you could tell, I felt really distressed about her future and so I had a few ideas of what I'd like to send. First is a plane ticket out of Forks, either back to Renee, maybe to Hawaii and a nice tropical vacation, like anywhere on a hot warm dry beach, Anywhere away from Edward.

Vanessa: So she's not falling ...

Julia: My second idea was a wooden stake to stab Edward through the heart; if he tries to kidnap her again, I think that could work. And then generally a garlic subscription, so that she can constantly apply it to her body to repel him away from her.

Vanessa: Yeah, like a perfume delivery system, but garlic?

Julia: Yeah. If there are one of those out there we'd be happy for them to sponsor the podcast.

Vanessa: I would like to send her, ironically, some sort of phlebotomy order. I think she needs to get tested for anemia because she seems to faint so frequently, and she seems to know it makes her tired when she faints. And I think that if a seemingly otherwise healthy-presenting 17-year-old person faints regularly ... fainting is really dangerous: you can faint and hit your head; you can faint while driving; I'm not sure what medical orders are necessary but I think we need to investigate this. So I think we need to send her to a doctor.

Julia: I think the phlebotomy order was actually mean. I thought you were going to be like, "So she can get used to being afraid of blood."

Vanessa [laughs] as in like immersion therapy?

Julia: Yeah, that's bad. Don't do that!

Vanessa: No! But don't you think she might be anemic?

Julia: I do worry for her; poor girl. Um, what do you think is going to happen next chapter?

Vanessa: What a good question! I hope that Charlie goes and confronts Edward for kidnapping his daughter. I hope she's like, "Do you know what? Having a Police Chief dad has some upsides. He can go put the fear of God in an unwanted suitor or a wanted suitor who is misbehaving." And she sics Charlie on Edward and there's like a big confrontation.

Julia: Maybe like get Carlyle involved; he seems like a good Dad.

Vanessa: I know. I like Carlyle.

Julia: Dad Intervention:

[begin ending music]

Julia: This has been Twilight in Quarantine, a Title IX training from Hot and Bothered. This episode and all episodes are executive-produced by Ariana Neddleman and produced by Ariana Martinez. This show was conceived as a vampire baby by me, Julia Argie, and Vanessa Zoltan who talked to me about it. We are a production of Not Sorry Productions and are distributed by A-Cast. Bye!

Vanessa: Bye! [laughs]