

Twilight in Quarantine
Chapter Four: Invitations

Julia Argy [JA]: Chapter Four, Invitations

(Music fades in)

JA (Reading): "In my dream, it was very dark. And what dim light there was seemed to be radiating from Edward's skin. I couldn't see his face, just his back as he walked away from me, leaving me in the blackness."

JA: I'm Julia Argy.

Vanessa Zoltan [VZ]: And I'm Vanessa Zoltan.

JA: And this is Twilight in Quarantine from Hot and Bothered.

(Music plays and then fades out)

VZ: *(dramatically)* This was the first time she dreamt on Edward Cullen. Okay I like, you reading that sentence makes me just want to jump right in.

JA: Do you want to do a recap for us?

VZ: Yes, okay, I will recap it for you. So that we can start having feelings.

JA: Great. 3, 2, 1, go.

(Ticking noise begins)

VZ: This is where, the chapter where Bella starts getting invited to the quote on quote "girls choice" dance by everybody, so she gets asked by three people and Edward is being really mean to her and ignoring her but he thinks it's really funny that three different guys have like asked her to the girls choice dance and so she's come up with this fake excuse to go to Seattle, and then he invites himself to go to Seattle with her and that's why the chapter is called The Invitations.

(Ticking noise stops)

(Buzzer sounds)

JA: Great,

VZ: It's a very literal chapter title. Okay, Julia are you ready?

JA: Not really, but I can try.

VA: *(laughing)* Okay, on your mark, get set, go!

(Ticking noise begins)

JA: Um, Edward doesn't talk to Bella for six weeks because, uh, she thinks that he wanted her to die. Uh, it turns out that he thinks that staying away from her is for her own good. She gets asked to the dance a lot. Uh, Mike ends up going with Jessica. And, she uses the excuse that she's going to Seattle to shop for dresses so Charlie doesn't come with her and she makes Charlie some enchiladas.

(ticking noise continues and then stops)

(Buzzer sounds)

VZ: *(laughing)* you need to start taking up all your thirty seconds.

JA: *(laughing)* Nothing happens, like, what am I supposed to say?

(Music notes)

VZ: Let's just jump right into our advice for Stephanie Myer? The sentence that I was like "holy crap, I hate this so much" is something you mentioned in your thirty second recap. Which is Bella says, "He obviously regretted saving my life. This was no other conclusion I could come to." And I was like Stephanie Myer. There is no teenage girl in the world who would think that there is *no other* conclusion that she could come to but that the boy who saved her life regrets it and wishes she were *dead*. And Bella has proven to be, like, quite a reasonable person in previous chapters. To be like, no this isn't about me, there are probably multiple reasons. Even if this was one conclusion that she could come to, I think that Bella would then say something like, "But obviously that was a super dramatic thought. Why would a *stranger* wish I was *dead*?"

JA: I'm trying to think about why the stranger wants her dead. I mean maybe he wants her to die so that they can be immortal vampires forever, even faster.

VZ: Oh, so he is giving off "I wish you had died vibes" and again, she's just reading him really well.

JA: *(affirmatively)* Mm-hmm. There's like a massacre in the parking lot and he can finally change her. Drink her blood, as he's always wanted.

VZ: Finally, after three weeks of knowing her.

JA: Um, six weeks has passed of him ignoring her. It's very agenzizing.

VZ: Okay, I sort of buy that, so, maybe that is the only reasonable conclusion that she could come to. Is that he regrets saving her life, and wishes she was dead so that he could have justified turning into her a vampire and given into his base urges. Okay. What advice do you have for Ms. Myer?

JA: I would like to read a passage and I would like your take on what could possibly be going on with the punctuation.

VZ: *(laughing)* Okay, great.

JA: Okay. *(Reading)* “He must not want to lead me on dot, dot, dot so we couldn’t even be friends, dot, dot, dot because he wasn’t interested in me at all. Of course he wasn’t interested in me I thought angrily, my eyes stinging. A delayed reaction to the onions. I wasn’t interesting, and he was. Interesting, dot, dot, dot, and brilliant, dot, dot, dot and mysterious dot, dot, dot and perfect dot, dot, dot and beautiful dot, dot, dot and possibly able to lift a full-sized van with one hand.”

VZ: Period?

JA: Uh, yeah. The amount of ellipses in this paragraph was unparalleled. I don’t think I’ve ever seen anything like it in all my years of reading fiction. I’m wondering what you think could be going on in Bella’s cognition that creates this amount of intense dramatic pausing within her own internal monologue.

VZ: Isn’t one of the future books called ellipses?

JA: *(laughing)* it’s called Eclipse!

VZ: *(laughing)* Ohh! Okay, never mind. I was like “it’s foreshadowing for one of the other books!” Eclipse, got it, that’s different. Okay! So I think, I think that this is because she’s multitasking!

JA: Oh my God, she is making the enchiladas!

VZ: Yeah, she’s frying onions! The dot, dot, dots—

JA: Is like, chop, chop, chop!

VZ: Exactly! Chop, chop, chop, drop onions in. And Stephanie Myer knows what it is that we want to read about. We want to read about weather, we wanna read about car types, we want to read about Phoenix. Oh my God! By the way, I did some research and Stephanie Myer went to a magnet school in Scottsdale, Phoenix and she went to one of the best schools in the country, slash, *the* best high school in Arizona. So that is where her Phoenix-Good-Education-System-Bias comes from.

JA: Got it, wow, good thing we cleared that up.

VZ: I know, I just wanted to make sure that you knew that. But yeah! I think that she knows that we find weather interesting, but she also knows that we don't find cooking interesting. And so this is just like her really keen knowledge of what I want to read about. And I don't want to read about chopping.

JA: I think I'm really missing, like, the enchilada recipe that I assume was taken out in place of the dot dot dots. Like wouldn't that of been nice content for the appendix.

VZ: Oh my god, yes. I do love in Nora Ephron's book *Heartburn*, she has recipes in there and it's fantastic. So yeah, I think one theory is definitely that she's cooking, and that's what all the ellipses are. But, I don't know, she's, isn't she just like daydreaming about how beautiful he is? Isn't it the punctuation equivalent of her like jaw dropping and some drool dribbling down?

JA: What a horrifying image. Imagine literally drooling in your kitchen as you're making food thinking about, like, a dead guy.

VZ: She does not know that he's dead

JA: He's so pale. Like is he supposed to be hot? All I've heard about him is, like, he has really bad under eye circles, he's mean all the time, he loves to gas light her, (*laughing*) like it's just not looking appealing yet.

VZ: I mean he's also so beautiful, and like his voice is sing song-y. Apparently.

JA: She describes his voice like that every time he speaks. And I'm like, "is he constantly singing opera?"

VZ: It's like he's Snow White. (*JA laughs*) He's the male equivalent of Snow White. She was also very pale.

JA: Yeah, wow.

(Music notes play)

JA: So, what advice would you like to give to someone in this chapter?

VZ: My first piece of advice I would like to give to Tyler. First, I just found it confusing. So, Bella gets trapped by the Cullens in her car. And, so Tyler gets out of his car in order to ask her to the dance. And he goes to the passenger side window. Which, he would be right behind her also on the driver's side. So, I don't understand why he like crossed over in order to be further from her while asking her to the dance. And she has to like lean over and only manages to half roll down the window. So, first, I just found that logistically confusing. But my advice, is that he says that he's trying to take advantage of her being trapped. And I just don't think men should do that. I

don't think men should take advantage of women being trapped in order to do anything. I think if you feel there is a woman being trapped in your presence, give her extra space, not less.

JA: Free her.

VZ: Yeah!

JA: RE your first point, he's driving a British vehicle, where the driver's side is on the other side. So that eliminates that confusion.

VZ: (*laughing*) Okay. But do you disagree with me, that he should not be taking advantage of women when they are trapped?

JA: Yeah, wild that he just upfront admits it saying, "you're trapped, let's go on a date."

VZ: I know! I know. So yeah, my first piece of advice is, like, try to avoid trapping women. Sometimes women are trapped like in elevators. When they are, do your best to make them feel safe, not to exploit the situation

JA: Don't get in elevators, ever, with a woman. Just take the stairs please.

VZ: I mean, I would prefer that. But fine! You have to get in the elevator with me, but don't, like, take advantage of it! Okay, what advice would you like to give and to whom?

JA: Okay, so my major qualm is with I think the school administrators. I don't think the ladies choice dance should exist. Queer children have it hard enough in high school. They don't need to have to deal with a ladies choice dance. It doesn't make sense. And secondly, even with the ladies choice dance three guys still asked Bella. So, it's like the rule is stupid, and then they break the stupid rule.

VZ: Yeah, you can imagine a world in which this is an attempt at some weird feminism. Where it's like trying to empower women to take charge and yet, the men can't like help themselves.

JA: So, I was trying to think about alternatives to a ladies choice dance, which empowers people to ask others who they might not otherwise ask to a school dance

VZ: I love that! I love that you don't just name problems, you come up with constructive solutions. Look at you.

JA: I'm solution oriented. Okay, listen to my idea and tell me what you think. Just half of the people get to ask. Regardless of gender.

VZ: Like, if your birthday is from January to June, you get to ask to the first dance.

JA: Yeah.

VZ: And July to December, you get to ask to the second school dance.

JA: Exactly. With the caveat, that the school administrator who we met in the first chapter, can just never make Mike, Tyler, and Eric be the ones who ask. Just be like “You were never born. We don’t have your birthday on record. You can’t ask, but everyone else can.” Like eliminate the problem children.

VZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah! I don’t think you have to eliminate their births; it could just be a privilege that you lose.

JA: Great idea. Yeah, solved.

VZ: I love the idea that like, somebody treats someone else poorly in a relationship and they get put in like a relationship penalty box for a year. Where it’s like—

JA: Time out.

VZ: Yeah, you’re not allowed to date for a year. You treated so-and-so poorly, no dating. Sit alone and think about what you did.

JA: Maybe that’s why Edward keeps going back to high school is he always behaves so badly he’s just constantly in the relationship penalty box and he’s just trying to free himself, but he can’t stop being evil.

VZ: But there really isn’t one in Forks, or it’s isn’t strict enough because these three boys still get to go to the dance. Mike gets to say “hang on Jessica, thanks for asking me, I think I can maybe do better. Let me break the rule to try and do better, oh wait I can’t, sure I’ll go with you.” He should definitely be in the penalty box. There isn’t one in Forks.

JA: Yeah, so my advice to the administrators is to create a relationship penalty box for those who break the rule of the dance.

VZ: Yeah, ugh. I’m so excited for that to exist and for us to be on its board. For like people to petition be like “I’m ready to come out of the penalty box” And we’re like, “What lessons did you learn?”

JA: Yeah.

VZ: And Tyler’s like “To go to the driver’s side.” And we’re like “Nope, wrong lesson, try again. (*JA laughing*). Just to be clear, I’m all for prison abolition but dating penalty boxes (*JA giggles*). It’s a tough needle that I’m threading, but I believe in it.

JA: Do you have advice for someone else in this chapter?

VZ: I do. My second piece of advice is for Bella. And I think she really needs to lean into some female friendships. She is super judgmental and mean to Jessica and is, like, constantly assuming bad intentions in Jessica. When it seems to me that all Jessica is, is like a nice, young person with a crush on an undeserving young man who is, like, still being kind to Bella. Is like a little bit jealous that Mike has turned his attention to Bella, but it still being kind to her. Jessica calls Bella to ask permission to ask Mike to the dance. Which is like such a sweet, generous move. Like Bella doesn't have any claim on Mike, Jessica should just call Mike. But she doesn't, she does this gracious thing and Bella is still assuming bad intentions with Jessica. And, so, my advice is Bella, this is a friend reaching out a friend—take it!

JA: Do you think that Bella is a snob?

VZ: Do you think Bella is a snob?

JA: I think she might be. I mean obviously she's always talking up Phoenix, the cosmopolitan city of the United States. And then, she hates Forks and can only go to Seattle for her goods. She's mean to Jessica for no discernable reason. She's read all of the books ever on the Forks curriculum.

VZ: Yeah, the fact that she was like, "I don't even need to become a member of this library, there are no good books in this *whole* library?" Yeah, I do think she's sort of a snob. There's no good Mexica restaurants in the state of Washington? Okay, yeah, she needs to become less snobby and I think that becoming friends with this lovely young woman Jessica is a great first start. So, my advice is become friends with Jessica.

JA: I think that's great advice. I mean, maybe she'd also stop complaining so much if she had a friend to complain to.

VZ: Okay Julia, what is your second piece of advice?

JA: So, I also have advice for Bella. I want her to work on her sick burns. She has opportunities left and right with Edward to just absolutely decimate his self-confidence and she never takes them. Let me read to you. Okay, so Edward is inviting himself on her trip to Seattle. And he says, "Do you want a ride to Seattle?" And then she says, "'With who?' I asked, mystified." Can you imagine if she had said "with who" like pretending it's not him inviting himself? That would have been hilarious.

VZ: So, do a dramatic reading for me, how do you hear her saying it in the book?

JA: You do, you be Edward.

VZ: Okay. *(voice lowered)* Uh, want a ride to Seattle?

JA: *(Voice higher pitched and confused)* With who?

VZ: Okay, okay, and instead you think it should be, *(Voice lowered)* Do you want a ride to Seattle?

JA: Be like “yeah, with who? Not with you, bitch.” *(both laugh)*

VZ: Wow, that is really different. That is really different. Did you start taking acting classes with Edward?

JA: I mean, like, she just always acts so confused around him and I wish she would just try and like keep up with the conversation enough to insult him when he insults her.

VZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

JA: Like it’s so sad that he just walks all over her intellectually despite all of her education in Phoenix. Like I just want her to have a little bit more spunk.

VZ: Say “Hey, want a ride to Seattle?” Punch in the nose.

JA: Yeah, exactly. *(both laugh)* Self-defense. I feel like the only thing lacking in our reenactments is that we didn’t sing it in Edward’s opera voice.

VZ: *(Singing)* Do you wa-a-ant a ride to Seattle?

JA: *(Singing, higher)* Seattle!

VZ: *(Singing)* In my Volvo!

JA: Can you imagine, like, the other Cullens doing harmonies in the background?

VZ: *(Singing jazzily and snapping her fingers)* Do-wop-do-bee-doo. Do you want a ri-i-ide? *(both laughing)* I would be so excited for Twilight the musical.

JA: I am sure that’s out there. That has got, someone has got to have done that.

VZ: But wouldn’t it be even more amazing if only the Cullens were in a musical? But everybody else just like, responded to them normally? Like *(singing)* “Who with?” “With me!”

JA: *(singing in falsetto)* Myself, obviously!

(Music notes play)

VZ: Julia, before we say goodbye, would you like to update Bella’s care package?

JA: I would love to send her a tortilla press. She's gotten really into cooking, and we have that really terribly sad scene of Charlie eating his first enchilada and being so overwhelmed and confused and I think the tortilla press could expose Charlie to fresh, healthy, nutritious food and Bella could enjoy her cooking progress even more. So, Vanessa, what do you think is going to happen next chapter?

VZ: Well, I would like to still thank the Cullens to listening to this podcast because Bella says that the Cullens are just sitting there not eating. And she doesn't talk about any fake eating, she just says they're not eating, So I would like to believe that they really heard us on the food waste complain and are now just sitting there not eating. So, thank you to the Cullens for being committed listeners to Twilight in Quarantine by Hot and Bothered. But in the next chapter I think that we are really going to start seeing the downfalls of not putting boys in penalty boxes. So I'm guessing that Mike and Jessica are going to go to the dance and have a really bad time.

JA: I believe it. I want to like give Jessica another, like, charming Forks options and there's literally no one in the text who I think would be a good pair.

VZ: I like to think that he's just off the page somewhere.

JA: *(affirmatively)* Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

(music fades in)

VZ: This has been Twilight in Quarantine, a care package from Hot and Bothered. This episode and all episodes are executive produced by Ariana Nettleman and produced by Ariana Martinez. This show was conceived of as a vampire baby by the great Julia Argy, and I am Vanessa Zoltan and I showed up. We are a production of Not Sorry Productions and we are distributed by A-cast. We'll talk to you in a few days and good luck to the Cullens on your musical theater practice.