

HOT AND BOTHERED: TWILIGHT IN QUARANTINE

NEW MOON CHAPTER 11: CULT

VANESSA: Chapter 11: Cult. “Each time that I opened my eyes to the morning light and realized I’d lived through another night was a surprise to me. [theme music starts] After the surprise wore off, my heart would start to race and my palms would sweat. I couldn’t really breathe again until I’d gotten up and ascertained that Charlie had survived as well.” I’m Vanessa Zoltan--

JULIA: And I’m Julia Argy.

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

[theme music continues]

JULIA: Vanessa, when this chapter title was called “Cult,” I was like, “Oh my God, Vanessa is right, the Cullens are back, the cult has returned!” [theme music fades out] Unfortunately, it was a different cult.

VANESSA: Cults everywhere. I never thought of Washington state as being such a ripe place for cults, but there are at least two just in the Forks area!

JULIA: That’s a super high density. No wonder Forks has so many problems.

VANESSA: Do you want to remind people of what happens in the chapter?

JULIA: I will.

VANESSA: OK, I’ll count you in. On your mark, get set, go!

[timer starts ticking]

JULIA: So, Bella and Jacob still aren’t talking, and so Bella says, “I’m gonna call him every 30 minutes!” And that then -- then that doesn't work, and then she says, “I’m gonna go to his house and wait outside.” And then she does and she sees Quil and he’s super hot, and then she -- she sees Jacob and Jacob is super hot. And they get in a fight, and he’s like, “Your vampire boyfriend did this to me!” And Bella’s like “What?” And I’m like, “What?! How?” Um, and then it’s raining, and they’re still fighting, and she

goes home and she cries and she has a dream that Edward is now Jacob and Jacob is Edward and then there's someone at her window! [timer buzzes as Julia screams] Ahhh!

VANESSA: [laughs] I'm so glad you interpreted that dream for me because that's not how I understood it at all.

JULIA: Oh...

VANESSA: I just don't think I understood it. It's not like I had a different theory. [both laughing] My different theory was confusion. OK, count me in?

JULIA: 3, 2, 1, go.

[timer starts ticking]

VANESSA: So, it occurs to Bella after being miserable for a while that Jacob is not sick or blowing her off because of hurt feelings, he's blowing her off because he's now in Sam Uley's gang. And so she calls Charlie and is like, "I need you to do something! Jacob has basically been kidnapped even though he's perfectly physically safe!" And Charlie is like, "[scoffs] I don't believe women." And then, um, then, Bella drives and they have this big confrontation and then Bella comes home and Charlie is like, "[gasp] You've hurt my daughter's feelings!" and calls the reservation and threatens Billy! [timer buzzes] The--uh, time's up. But he threatens Billy and it's so -- weird and gross! He completely abuses his police power!

JULIA: Shocker!

VANESSA: Here, I found what he said. He said, "Those boys step one toe out of line and I'm gonna know about it." So basically he was like, "I am going to racially profile these kids because one of them hurt my daughter's feelings." Awesome, Charlie.

JULIA: Who's surprised about that kind of overpolicing? Not me.

VANESSA: I feel like he's a dick both times this conversation happens. When Bella calls he's like really dismissive of her and her feelings, and then, when they talk about it again at the end, he decides to go the like police abuse-of-power route. Like, both are the wrong vibes. There were like 10 vibes you could take, seven of them were the right vibes, you did two out of the three wrong vibes.

JULIA: What was the third wrong vibe?

VANESSA: [pauses] Modern dance.

JULIA: [laughs]

VANESSA: [also laughing] Modern dance is usually the right vibe, but this would have been the wrong time.

[music]

JULIA: Do you have any breaking news?

VANESSA: I do! This is one of my direct addresses again, it's breaking news about me: I am now Team No One. That's it. The things I loved about Jacob were his sunny demeanor, the fact that he was so game, the fact that he, like, respected Bella and paid attention to her, and I don't think it's his fault that he's none of those things right now, I don't understand exactly what's going on, but he's clearly outgrown this relationship and her, and he has changed in ways that I do not find attractive anymore. So, it was fun while it lasted, but -- it was a short and fleeting affair. And I think I'm just Team Jessica again.

JULIA: A good team to be on. I mean, Jacob turns into, just Edward 2 in this chapter.

VANESSA: Yeah! It just got so bleak. I was like "Ugh." What about you, Julia? Doo doo doo.

JULIA: My piece of breaking news is that part of Jacob's transition into Edward is that he too has gotten hotter now. Like, we only hear more about how bulky his -- different muscle groups are, and--

VANESSA: Yeah.

JULIA: --how his new haircut enhances his cheekbones, etc., etc. So, he's super hot, we already knew it was coming but it's here, finally.

VANESSA: [laughs] What's the sound effect for that? For like, the hotness has arrived?

JULIA: Isn't that like-- [makes a sizzling sound]

VANESSA: [laughing] Oh! I was thinking it was more trumpety than that.

JULIA: Oh like, "Doo doo doo doo!"

VANESSA: Exactly. "Doo doo doo doo!"

JULIA: He's hot!

VANESSA: [sings] The hottest version of him has arrived! [speaking normally] Anything else, as far as breaking news?

JULIA: Well, Bella -- basically gets dumped in the woods again. The woods is *the* hottest place in town to get dumped. [both giggle] If you wanna have a breakup, go to the woods.

VANESSA: Well, *you* gave advice saying "Don't have serious conversations in public," and there's like nowhere more private than the woods! They're, like, going into hiding for these intense conversations.

JULIA: Mmhmm. Yeah, poor Bella. No wonder she has flashbacks about Jacob turning into Edward. Dumped in the woods a second time. That's tough.

VANESSA: Um, did you have a moment of genuine enjoyment, delight?

JULIA: Oh yeah! Bella has a great dramatic line here. She says, "The worry was eating a hole in my stomach. Soon I would have *matching punctures*." Cause she thinks a vampire is gonna eat her soon! That's hilarious. I just thought that was extremely funny. What was your piece of genuine enjoyment?

VANESSA: I really liked this new expression, that I had never heard before in my life and it gets used in this chapter, "Holy crow."

JULIA: I've never heard that either.

VANESSA: Yeah! Uh, it's -- Bella says it instead of swearing, she says, "Holy crow!" Which, I feel like if you say something like that you have to add "Batman" after: "Holy crow, Batman!"

JULIA: Why doesn't she just say "Holy cow" which is an actual expression people use?

VANESSA: Yeah! It's a mystery, but, you know, she's like Shakespeare. Shakespeare, you know, would slightly amend expressions in order to make them even better, and -- what's better than a holy cow? A holy crow.

JULIA: So true. They're super intelligent.

VANESSA: I really enjoyed that. I love that she's taking initiative as far as progressing the English language. She's not just a woman in STEM, she's also a woman in the humanities.

JULIA: Multitalented, certainly.

VANESSA: So, advice. What have you got?

JULIA: As I mentioned earlier, Bella calls Jacob every 30 minutes one day, and then again shows up to his house to wait for him to show up. This is called stalking and harassment, it happened to her when Edward did it, and now she's doing it to Jacob, and it's not okay! I don't know why no one in Forks can identify this. Charlie just says, "Don't be a pest" -- it's like, don't be a stalker. Don't commit crimes. My advice is to not stalk people.

VANESSA: Are you worried that stalking is like winking and it's contagious?

JULIA: Maybe. That would be a more reasonable explanation about why everyone thinks it's okay to -- relentlessly harass the people who are in their lives.

VANESSA: Yeah. Jacob is trying to end the cycle though. She comes and he's like, "Go. Away. Forever."

JULIA: Whereas Bella was like, "[sounding flattered] You stalked me? You?"

VANESSA: [giggling]

JULIA: [continuing as Bella] "Ohmigod, thank you!" What's your first piece of advice?

VANESSA: Mine is, like, on theme with yours, it's for Bella. So she comes to the realization that what's actually happening is that he has been like, brought into Sam Uley's gang -- Jacob. And so then she says, okay, I have to go to La Push now. This is no longer, like, a social call -- quote unquote, "This was a rescue mission." And I just would like to say to all white ladies that like, this is probably a sentiment that we should like never even think, but like definitely not say and act on: that imposing ourselves, that like us showing up, is rescuing someone. And I -- I do think that -- right, like, if we watch a friend really get, like, kidnapped and brainwashed, that like their connections to the outside world is something that can help them; however, Bella, you have to understand that like -- he is a person of color and you are a white lady and there is a long history of white savior complex, and so you have to be extra discerning, by like, actually acknowledging the power dynamic that is at play here when you say things like, "This is a rescue mission."

JULIA: I mean, at one point she describes the group of Sam Uley and Jacob and their friends as like, a bunch of "russet-skinned people" coming towards her, and she definitely doesn't have any kind of understanding despite her skills in the humanities and STEM of the history of white people and indigenous people in the United States.

VANESSA: No. Clearly not. Nor does Charlie, with the way that he handles that phone call at the end.

JULIA: Read a book, folks! Read a book.

VANESSA: Yeah. Julia, what is your second piece of advice?

JULIA: My second piece of advice is also for Bella, and it relates to internet research as we were discussing.

VANESSA: Hmm!

JULIA: Jacob has told her about the werewolves in his community. She knows this is true, and then when she googled, or Bing-ed, vampires and werewolves in Washington, it talks about the history of werewolves and vampires together. So I don't know why she hasn't accessed these two parts of her brain to put the puzzle pieces together. My advice is to -- go into a deep, meditation state, you know kind of right before you fall asleep, and you have your best thoughts, this can also take place in the shower, and have a series of -- images come to your mind. It's like, werewolf. Vampire. Jacob. Jacob looks like that giant dog I saw. [Vanessa giggles] Wonder what could be going on here.

And then she can just come to the realization that that's what's happening here and they wouldn't have to go through this whole soap opera drama of yelling at each other crying in the rain about how they're breaking up cause he can't say that he's a werewolf.

VANESSA: Do you know that Benjamin Franklin's trick was he would lie on a cot with pebbles in his hands and his hands draped over the side of the cot? Because he thought that he had his best thoughts right before he fell asleep, but sometimes he would fall asleep and not wake up to write it down, so as he fell asleep he would let go of the pebbles and they would fall on the floor and wake him, and he'd write down whatever he thought about and only then he would go to bed.

JULIA: That's exactly what she needs to do. I'd never heard that before -- no wonder he was a genius.

[music plays]

JULIA: What's your second piece of advice?

VANESSA: My second piece of advice is also for Bella and the way that she treats Jacob. So Jacob finally is like, "I'm gonna tell you everything I'm allowed to tell you: the reason for what I'm going through is because of the Cullens, and the fact that they are bloodsuckers." And he's like, "Let's just cut through the bullshit and have a frank conversation." And she full-on gaslights him. She keeps saying, "I don't know what you mean, I don't know what you're talking about." And that is gaslighting. Trying to convince someone of something that you know is not true in order to like, make your own life easier is gaslighting, and it is incredibly manipulative and wrong, and so, just -- stay quiet! You don't have to say anything. Just be like, "I can't talk about that." Like, plead the fifth. You have a legal and emotional right to not say anything. But don't gaslight!

JULIA: I mean, it seems like she's just going through Edward's greatest hits!

VANESSA: Oh, that's true! She's like, "Tried stalking -- check! Now gaslighting -- check!" Do you think she's gonna watch him sleep later tonight?

JULIA: Maybe. [laughs] I wouldn't put it past her.

VANESSA: Try to carry him places, rock him to sleep.

JULIA: I mean, I think it's interesting because both Jacob and Bella start to do Edward things. Like, Jacob says, "What if I'm not good anymore?" Which is the whole "I'm not the hero, I'm the bad guy." I know this is *Twilight 2*, but why is it actually *Twilight 2*?

VANESSA: Well, Stephenie Meyer does like to tell the same story over and over again, right? She like, wrote *Twilight* gender-swapped, now she's gonna write *Twilight* from Edward's point of view -- so, maybe we thought that this was a different book, but it's just the same book. And we love it so much we come back for more.

JULIA: It just speaks to the richness of the material.

VANESSA: [laughs] Truly.

[music plays]

JULIA: Vanessa, what's in your *Twilight* Diary?

VANESSA: My *Twilight* Diary was how sad this was for Bella. I think the most pathetic part was when she was like, "I could try to date you. Maybe I can make myself be attracted to you." And -- that was just really sad. I was like, "Wow. Jacob, she really loves you, if she's like 'Maybe I could be attracted to you.'" But, high up on the pathetic rankings would be like, when Billy looks at her with pity in his eyes, or just when she stands in the rain, for literal hours... it's a very pathetic, like, series of choices she is making here.

JULIA: I mean the first one, the whole "I could date you," is kind of an insult. Like if someone said that to me, I would be like, "That's not nice."

VANESSA: It's like, you can almost hear her gagging as she says it. [Julia laughs, Vanessa joins] Yeah, it's not nice! It's like, "I could lower my standards!"

JULIA: "I could try to make myself like you! Might not work!"

VANESSA: But I don't think it has to be nice in order to be pathetic.

JULIA: Oh, no, it was pretty desperate. [Vanessa laughs] But no wonder Jacob says no!

VANESSA: Oh yeah, no! Any self-respecting person would be like, "No thanks!" [both laugh] Like, "Super weird offer, but I'm good."

JULIA: [laughing] Soaking in the rain, and being like, “Are you breaking up with me?” And then the answer’s no, and then saying, “But I would date you”? [Vanessa laughs] “If I tried really hard.”

VANESSA: And then my other Twilight Diary moment is that Jacob is like a total jerk in this chapter, and I was like so over him, except there was one moment where I was like, “[gasps] The old Jacob’s still in there!” Which is when he is like, “You know why I can’t do that, the bloodsuckers,” and she’s like, “No, what do you mean?” And he’s like, “Don’t make me say their name. I don’t like to hurt you, and I don’t want to see your face hurt.” And she *still* gaslights him and plays dumb, and so he says, “The Cullens,” and it like hurts him to hurt her, and I just think that’s very sweet.

JULIA: And do you feel like you could rekindle your Team Jacob heart?

VANESSA: If he, like, goes back to being the old him! If he goes back to being like, really sweet and dopey. Like, I thought he was gonna turn into like, a cute, fun dog--

JULIA: Mmhmm.

VANESSA: --and it turns out that he turned into like, one of those mean, sad dogs! And like, they deserve a home, like I would really rescue them -- I know I said that white ladies shouldn’t talk about rescuing, but I do think you can technically rescue a dog -- but [starts laughing] Jacob has turned into a dog that like, I wouldn’t even want that dog! [Julia laughs] I would take it into my house outta charity, not outta love.

JULIA: Wow, that’s like Bella being like [both start laughing], “I guess I could date you.”

VANESSA: Julia, what do you wanna put in Bella’s care package?

JULIA: Well, after a lot of reflection, I want to let everyone know that I’ve changed. And, I said no private conversations in public places, but I’m revising my statement to say, if you need a neutral space to break up with someone -- that’s *not* the woods, I understand that, and I support you and it doesn’t need to be in a tent. So I’m gonna send Bella a Yelp list of the best cafes in Forks, so she doesn’t have to keep being abandoned in the rain in the woods whenever she gets dumped, which happens a lot. At least every six months, as we know. [Vanessa laughs, Julia joins] So, I’m hoping this list of cafes, she can get dumped, she can drink a hot chocolate, she can leave a great

tip for her barista, and she can go home and cry about it, as opposed to being soaking wet and having to be miserable, in addition to having being dumped.

VANESSA: I also don't want her to be cold and dripping, and so I wanna give her a mud room, or a coat rack. A mud room would be very generous of me but I don't know -- I would have to consult with Realtor Bella as to whether or not you're actually allowed an extension on the house, and I know it can be really disruptive to your life to like, remodel, and so I don't want to do that. So maybe just a nice coat rack. But I think that Bella, we know comes in after being soaked in the rain, and just walks right into the house and sits down, and Charlie like puts a blanket on her, which is like not helpful, because like, she has, like, her rain jacket on. So the blanket's not gonna do anything through the rain jacket. And so really the thing that she has to do is take off the rain jacket. And this just like doesn't seem to occur to her! And so I think some sort of visual clue will create a habit for her to always take off her rain jacket before she comes in.

JULIA: Yeah, you might also need to send in, like, a mildew cleaning crew, cause if this has been happening the whole time they've lived there, like, that house is damp 100% of the time.

VANESSA: Yeah, there's probably a mold problem!

JULIA: Mmhmm. What do you think is gonna happen next chapter?

VANESSA: Well this chapter ends with like a scraping at the window, which I think we're supposed to think is like, Victoria punking her? [Julia laughs] But I don't think that that's what's actually going on. I think we have a red herring. I think it's Alice. And she's back, and it's one of her pencils -- she's trying to draw a premonition on the window, you know, like, cause she promised Edward she wouldn't talk to Bella, so she's found a workaround and she's drawing a picture for Bella on the window. I don't know what the premonition is though. I am no Alice.

JULIA: Totally believable! One of your better guesses.

VANESSA: That is similar to saying, "I could date you." [Julia laughs] It like, is shrouded like it could be a compliment but it's actually really insulting.

[end theme plays]

VANESSA: This has been Twilight in Quarantine, a “Holy crow, Batman!” episode of Hot and Bothered. This episode and all episodes are executive produced by Ariana Nedelman and produced by Ariana Martinez. This show was conceived of as a vampire baby by Julia Argy, and I’m Vanessa Zoltan and I am Team No One. We are a production of Not Sorry Productions and are distributed by ACAST. Bye!