

Twilight in Quarantine: Open Book

Vanessa: Chapter 2: Open Book. "The next day was better...dot dot dot...and worse. It was better because it wasn't raining yet, though the clouds were dense and opaque. It was easier because I knew what to expect of my day." I'm Vanessa Zoltan—

Julia: —and I'm Julia Argy.

Vanessa: And this is Hot and Bothered: Twilight in Quarantine.

intro music plays and fades

Julia: So, last week I started the 30-second recap, so this week do you want to start?

Vanessa: Do I want to start? No—so you go ahead.

Julia: Okay please do it and I can count you in. Great. 3-2-1. Go.

Vanessa: So there's a lot of updates about the weather, it's raining which turns to snow and then it turns back to rain. Bella gets to go to the grocery store, which I understand *is* very exciting; I really feel for her right now. She cooks dinner for Charlie, and she makes steak and potatoes and then she goes to school, Edward hasn't been there, and then [gasps] he's back! And he's more handsome than ever and his eye color has changed and he sits next to her in biology and they get through biology so fast, and, oh my god, the school system in Forks, Washington is so bad.

buzzer sounds

Julia: Really good. Wow.

Vanessa: 30 seconds on the nose.

Julia: Crushed it!

Vanessa: This whole chapter was basically grocery store porn for me. I just kept rereading that part and being like "Yeah, Bella—talk about it slower, describe the shelves to me." Because my partner has tested positive for coronavirus so we're on like real lockdown.

Julia: I didn't know that. Good thing we're talking cause otherwise I would have just been in the dark!

Vanessa: I thought I told you!

Julia: Mm mm. No. Big surprise. Breaking news.

Vanessa: Well, I'm super excited, because I think that in a couple weeks there will be tests proving that that means that I'm immune, and that will mean that I can go out and volunteer and do all sorts of fun things, and if that's true, I'm gonna make capes that say "I'm immune to

the coronavirus" for all of us who have had it. Or like armbands or something exciting. I'm really excited if it turns out that now I'm immune.

Julia: I would be happy for you! Congratulations.

Vanessa: Thank you! Superpower! Okay, your superpower is 30-second recapping?

Julia: Absolutely.

Vanessa: Get ready for this one.

Julia: Okay.

Vanessa: On your mark, get set, go!

Julia: So, it's raining and then it's snowing, and she goes to school and Edward is not there and she's so sad, but they're all so well dressed, the other Cullens, and she didn't even notice at first cause they're so sexy and they drive a Volvo, which is not a sexy car, but she thinks it's sexy anyways. Finally she goes back to school and Edward is there, his eyes are a different color but he's still hot. They go to class, they both know science, that's so sexy, then they get out of class, and then she almost crashes into a car and he laughs at her cause he's a dick. That's it.

Vanessa: [laughs]

buzzer sounds

Vanessa: So you know how last episode I was excited for this to be a crime procedural about Charlie's misuse of like gas and mileage funds?

Julia: Mmhmm.

Vanessa: I am now excited for this to be an expose on the poor education in small town America.

Julia: Bella knows everything, she's acing her classes without trying.

Vanessa: There doesn't seem to be an AP program—it's just like, what are you doing with your nerdy students in rural programs? I really hope that this gets further explored.

Julia: I think it will, but we'll have to see.

Vanessa: I don't want the riveting gas drain of Forks, Washington resources plotline to be dropped, I just want the school quality one to be added.

Julia: This week I picked up on another thread for the police scandal, but we'll have to get to that later. First, you need to tell me about your advice for Stephenie. Or lack thereof.

Vanessa: I'm very confused by Stephenie Meyer's understanding of Phoenix. Is she from there? Because, first of all, I don't think everyone from Phoenix is blond and plays volleyball, which she talks about Bella being different from everyone in Phoenix, because Bella isn't blond and plays

volleyball, and now, Bella has this very strong opinion that beaches should be hot and dry. And like, first of all, there are no beaches in Phoenix, so I don't know why Bella feels that in her bones, but second of all, I understand feeling like beaches should be hot, but like, tropical beaches are like humid and rainy, so I like don't understand why Bella feels like an expert on beaches being from landlocked Arizona, and I definitely don't understand why she pictures it as a desert, cause they're not....

Julia: I have an idea here.

Vanessa: Oh okay, good!

Julia: I think perhaps she has experience a heatstroke in the past, at a beach, and she misremembers it as hot and dry because she was in, like, a fugue state. She was like, too hot, and she couldn't cope. She was at the beach.

Vanessa: And she was parched, like her mouth was dry?

Julia: [laughs] Yeah. "I was hot and dry, therefore, the beach was hot and dry."

Vanessa: You know, that's interesting, because I do think teenagers can be quite self-absorbed and project their own experiences onto entire situations. Right? Like, I went through a break up when I was 19 in Switzerland, and now I'm like, "Switzerland is a horrible country," which like, that's not fair to the country of Switzerland, it's just where I got dumped once. So I feel for Bella on that. Okay. I buy that.

Julia: Yeah. It's a poetic point about the fallibility of memory.

Vanessa: Wow. Okay. I stand corrected. But, did you have a piece of Stephenie Meyer advice you think might hold water? Cause so far she keeps outfoxing me.

Julia: Well, I'm hoping you can help me parse out the page-by-page update about the weather in Forks, Washington?

Vanessa: Oh, I'm riveted by it. Okay, go. I love it.

Julia: It doesn't rain. It rains. It snows. It rains again.

Vanessa: Washing away the snow!

Julia: [laughs] Exactly. And in the approximate maybe page and a half where it snows, here are the following descriptors: "Bits of white." "End of a Q-tip." "White mush." "Wet stuff." "Mush ball." "Snow." I'm wondering if you have any sense of, like, *why* there are so many consecutive synonyms to the snow.

Vanessa: I think that Stephenie Meyer probably took, like, a middle school creative writing class, and in that class, the teacher gave the really good advice of like, "don't use the same word for things multiple times if you can use many words for things," and maybe that middle school teacher was Stephenie Meyer's favorite teacher, and she's honoring that teacher by

following that advice in a very explicit way, and saying "Why use snow when I can be descriptive and more specific and *really* make people feel as though they are there." Did she grow up in Phoenix, where the good teachers are?

Julia: Literally, how would I know that?

Vanessa: I don't know but maybe she did! Maybe this is a shout out to the great education system in Phoenix, Arizona, where she got this great advice about describing snow.

Julia: Well, they must be sponsoring her, because this book is full of Phoenix propaganda.

Vanessa: [laughs] Also, Julia, I feel like maybe you don't notice all the different kinds of snow because you're from a snowy area, and so you just, like, take it for granted, whereas, *I*, like Bella, am from a warm climate and have moved to a snowy area, and I also describe it as Q-tips, sometimes.

Julia: I didn't know that. [Laughs] "Sometimes, maybe I've done it once."

Vanessa: Maybe. I think this is you showing yourself as like a snow expert, and like, she is inexpert—[gasps] again, character development—she is new at snow, and so she has inexpert language to describe it. You just don't remember what it's like to be inexpert at describing snow.

Julia: I'm sure I would be not an expert at the desert.

Vanessa: Yeah, you would be horrible at describing heat!

Julia: I would be like "the sand... it's dry... cactuses..." I have no idea what goes on there.

Vanessa: It's *cacti*—see! You've proven my point.

Julia: That's interesting. Because *I*, upon further reflection, just thought maybe she has a natural instinct to become an anchorwoman for a weather channel.

Vanessa: Ohhhh.

Julia: And this is her life's calling, and we're just getting a sense of that, and maybe in her eternal time as a vampire she's just going to be reporting on the weather later.

Vanessa: That is fascinating—she has that great skin.

Julia: Yeah.

Vanessa: So she'd probably look great on camera.

Julia: Mmhmm. No makeup needed.

Vanessa: Yeah. She's gonna always look young, so she's won't age out of the job, cause we know how oppressive TV executives are with wanting women to look young. Men can age and get more quote-unquote "distinguished," but women just turn into nagging old ladies.

Julia: Can you imagine her with her translucent skin, with the fake weather map behind her, just like showing it through her own body?

Vanessa: [laughs] Uh, "translucent" only means partially transparent. She's not 100% see-through, Julia.

Julia: A disembodied voice, just like, pointing things out.

Vanessa: [laughs] You are being ridiculous.

Julia: I don't know, I got the sense that that was implied.

Vanessa: [laughs] No, that is just silly. Everything else brilliant, that has bridged too far into *silly*.

Julia: Okay, I accept that criticism.

transition music

Julia: Speaking of criticism, Vanessa, do you have any advice that you'd like to offer a character in this chapter?

Vanessa: I do. So my first advice is actually going to be for the star, Bella. She seems to really be absolutely unable to sleep because of the sound of the rain, so I would like Bella to go to the doctor, because I think that she might have misophonia, which is hypersensitivity to sound. It says that she's only able to sleep on this one night because the rain is finally quiet, and I'm just worried that this is going to lead to insomnia, and this can lead to further delusions later on, like wanting to date a vampire. And so I'm worried about her not addressing this early on.

Julia: Mhmm. Another solution would have been not be such a self-sacrificing minor that you move to Forks, Washington, one of the rainiest places on earth, for no real reason.

Vanessa: It's a reason! We find out in this chapter that her reason is that she wants her mom to be happy. That's a nice reason.

Julia: It's a nice reason.

Vanessa: I was more thinking of 49 cents solution of earplugs.

Julia: Genius. We should mail her a care package.

Vanessa: Yes! Maybe a new segment of this podcast should be adding things to our Bella care package. A little bit of self-tanner, and 49 cent orange ear plugs. This girl would be *thriving!* Thriving. Okay Julia, who would you like to offer some advice for?

Julia: Okay, um, I have a big update. There is a new thread to the crimes of Charlie in Forks, Washington. He comes home from work, and he just hangs up his loaded pistol, I think just like on a wall, and just leaves it there? This is another moment when he's using police goods just with reckless abandon. That is not good gun safety. This cannot be allowed. Aren't police

supposed to have lockboxes? Like aren't they the ones looking for people's lockboxes for their guns, and there he is, just like slinging his pistol around the house?

Vanessa: It's also so weird that Charlie didn't buy *any* groceries before his teenage daughter came home.

Julia: I thought that too! He's so insensitive. He's great in the movie and bad in the books.

Vanessa: Yeah, Charlie's not impressing me so far. I was like, really Charlie? You didn't think "maybe some Frosted Flakes"?

Julia: I'm eagerly awaiting his glow up. It needs to happen soon.

Vanessa: I mean I think it might, with your great observation and advice, how could it not?

Julia: Mmhmm. Do you have advice for another character?

Vanessa: I just want to give more advice to Bella. Is that okay? I think she's really lost in this chapter.

Julia: Yeah, please.

Vanessa: I would like to give Bella some advice, about, trash-talking, and really, like, libelously so, against Golden Retrievers. So, she already seems to have a stalker, which is Mike, in these books. Mike keeps showing up, and picking up her books, and giving her truly unwanted attention. Now, I don't think Mike is in the danger zone yet, she has not yet told him to leave her alone, but I think that he should be picking up on some signals. His behavior is not great. Comparing that behavior to a Golden Retriever... I'm concerned that Bella is going to be sued, by like, the American Association of Golden Retrievers, for creating a really bad reputation for Golden Retrievers, whose attention is literally always consensual. It is always wanted. No Golden Retriever has ever given any intention to anyone in the history of the world that has not been welcome.

Julia: Yeah, I felt really upset about the Golden Retriever slander, and I noted it was well.

Vanessa: Yeah, so I would just like to warn Bella, like, I do think that this is unhealthy male attention that she is getting, and it shouldn't be on her to manage that but try to nip it in the bud early if you can, but not be denigrating one of the world's greatest achievements, which is creating Golden Retrievers.

Julia: Mmhmm.

Vanessa: Now Julia, is there any other advice that you would like to give?

Julia: I had some final thoughts for Bella as well, of a different thread, which is: keep it up! She says in response to Mike following her around, "It looked like I was going to have to do something about Mike, and it wasn't going to be easy." And then later, when Jessica is bothering her about Edward, she says "I raised my head enough to make sure that she looked

away from Edward, contemplating violence if she didn't." And these two lines, where she imagines doing something evil to her friends, I was extremely entertained by. And I'm getting, like, some dark undertones in her personality, and I'm loving it. Keep it up. I'm having a great time reading about that.

Vanessa: Woah woah woah. That is some bad advice. No no no. "Keep up angry, violent thoughts for your friends"?

Julia: If only for my entertainment.

Vanessa: Sure, just like, as one of your best friends: I would like to probe more into your love of wishing violence upon your close friends. Tell me more about this, Julia.

Julia: Do I think it is good? No. Do I like imagining the future of this text to turn into a dark noir where Bella turns into like a *Gone Girl* figure, and like kinda goes a little evil? Yes.

Vanessa: I guess I would just say my advice would be that "keep up the hyperbolic ways of self-entertaining to get you through, like, boring, tedious things." Right? Like I love doing that. Like if I am in a boring concert and there's someone who looks annoying, I love imagining like braiding her hair together with the woman's hair next to her, and how funny it would be if they then got up and found out that their hair was braided together. But like, I explicitly know that I'm only doing those imaginings to entertain myself. So, I would like to encourage Bella to keep *imagining*, but not actually ever thinking of ever acting on it.

Julia: Not actually *Gone Girl*-ing.

Vanessa: Yeah. I think that's a bad look.

Julia: Just the diary part.

Vanessa: Yeah, just the diary part of *Gone Girl* without the actions of *Gone Girl*.

Julia: I'll take that. I love reading about it. Now that I've doled out bad advice, what do you think is going to happen in the next chapter?

Vanessa: So, I think that there will be a further exploration into the failed education system in Forks, Washington. I also think that there is going to be a really quick turnaround on Edward. And Edward so far seems to be pretty bad at pretending to be immortal. He isn't great at fake eating, which we saw in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, we see that he has no defense of his eye color changing, which I don't know how but it seems to be related to him being a vampire. And so, I think between Chapters 2 and 3 he's going to be taking some acting lessons, doing some real research on method acting, and we are going to see the fruits of that labor. And there will stop being such, like, obvious holes in his story.

Julia: Okay, but—most importantly do you think there will be more talk about the weather?

Vanessa: I mean, if Bella wants to keep working on her future career as a weatherwoman, than yes. I certainly hope so. I hope she doesn't give up on her dream so quickly. Don't give up on yourself, Bella!

Julia: I believe in you.

Vanessa: Dream big. You can be the Forks, Washington micro-weathergirl. Hour-by-hour updates.

Julia: It's her dream. It's her calling. Vampire who?

outro music fades in

Vanessa: This has been Twilight in Quarantine, a micro-weather update from Hot and Bothered. It was executive produced by Ariana Nedelman, produced by Ariana Martinez, and conceived of as a vampire baby by Julia Argy. I was here, and I'm Vanessa Zoltan. It's a Not Sorry Production and produced by ACAST. Thanks, everyone, and we'll talk to you in a few days!

outro music fades out