

## Twilight in Quarantine: Scary Stories

Julia: Chapter 6: Scary Stories. "As I sat in my room, trying to concentrate on the third act of *Macbeth*, I was really listening for my truck. I would've thought, even over the pounding rain, I could've heard the engine's roar, but when I went to peek out the curtain again, it was suddenly there."

Vanessa: 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\*

Vanessa: Oh man, I loved this chapter. So. Much.

Julia: Really?

Vanessa: Yesss! Julia, can you remind everybody what happens in the chapter please?

Julia: I can certainly try.

Vanessa: Okay. On your mark, get reset, recap!

Julia: She goes to the beach, and it's sunny, and she's loving it. She goes to look at tide pools. She falls. Um—Lauren is being so mean to her, even though I had no idea who Lauren is. Um—oh god. She meets Jacob, she used to be friends with Jacob's older sisters, but the sisters moved to Hawaii to be with their surfer husband which sounds awesome. And then Jacob tells her that the Cullens are vampires and that they are not allowed to come to the reservation. The end.

\*buzzer sounds\*

Vanessa: Such a good job.

Julia: Thank you. Eyes on the prize.

Vanessa: Do you want to count me in?

Julia: Sure, I would love to. 3, 2, 1, go!

Vanessa: Truck magically appears, and then the sun magically appears, but even the sun looks different. And then, there is a lot of politics about who is going to sit where in which cars, which I totally understand because I have two stepkids, and that is a real thing. And then they drive down a beautiful view, and they go to this beach, and then Bella meets Jacob, and Jacob goes and tells her a ghost story about his tribe and the blood drinkers, and maybe Edward's one.

\*buzzer sounds\*

Vanessa: I can hear the applause that people are giving me across the world for my 30-second recap.

Julia: It flew by! It was seamless.

Vanessa: I know, because it was so riveting!

Julia: Mmhmm.

Vanessa: So I've actually been to these beaches.

Julia: On your *Twilight* fan tour?

Vanessa: Yeah, we will post a photo of my younger brother Jonathan and I, before my brothers and I had real life responsibilities we used to take an annual trip to a national park, and we went to Olympic National Park including the beaches that Bella is describing here. There's a great photo of Jonathan and I.

Julia: So, usually we do a segment where we give Stephenie Meyer writing advice based on a passage as confused us, and I think as we've finally hit the 100 page mark of this book, we're less interested in that kind of advice and more interested in the advice to characters that we're been giving, so I'm wondering if you think we should just transition over in full to character-only.

Vanessa: Yes, I still want us to be celebrating the moments we love.

Julia: Permitted.

Vanessa: Cause there's some juicy stuff that isn't in the advice section, but that like, I'm gonna need to talk about.

Julia: Do you want to speak to a juicy moment in the text?

Vanessa: So the juicy moment that I *loved* in this chapter was the ghost story that Bella's womanly wiles seduces out of Jacob. So, Bella's like "Jacob has stories about the Cullens. I'm gonna flirt a story out of him." So he tells a story about blood drinkers who came like 150 years ago, and there was a truce because they were "civilized" blood drinkers, and they came to an agreement that the wolves wouldn't tell the pale-faced people about the blood drinkers as long as the blood drinkers stayed off of their land. And the implication is that the Cullens are somehow vaguely descendent of the blood drinkers. But then there's this great twist when Bella's like "Oh you think the Cullens are related to them?" And Jacob's like, "No, the Cullens *are* them, the person who was here 150 years ago *was* Carlisle, and by the way, there are family members that I have that aren't going to the hospital now because this blood drinker from 150 years ago is a doctor." And if I found out a local doctor at my hospital was, like, part of some like awesome, tall tale from the local Medford area, that would make me so excited. Like, if I

found out that Narcissus was the mirror salesman at the local Macy's. Like I love the combination of the like, magical and the mundane. I just love it so much.

Julia: I—okay— I never read stories within stories.

Vanessa: I often skip stories within stories too. That's so funny.

Julia: [laughs] I think the only one I've ever read was like *Wuthering Heights* because it's the whole book. The rest of them, I'm like, if it was important, I'd be told in the present. Skip skip skip.

Vanessa: Wait, did you not read this story?

Julia: I skimmed it.

Vanessa: Well lucky you that you now have my gushing summary of it. You don't need to read it.

Julia: It was a little rough in my mind so I appreciated the play-by-play.

Vanessa: Okay, what did you love?

Julia: I have great news. It's that Bella is starting to engage with the weather people in her community, let me read: "Mike was animated again, putting a great deal of trust in the local weatherman, who promised sun tomorrow. I'd have to see if before I believed it." She's becoming a weatherperson.

Vanessa: She's like tracking their hypotheses and then like seeing whether the data bears up.

Julia: Yeah, and she's creating her own hypotheses. I'm so proud of her.

Vanessa: A true scientist.

Julia: I know! And she's great at science class. She's really a woman in STEM.

Vanessa: You know those shirts—did you know when I was young, women in medical school would wear T-shirts saying "I'm gonna be the doctor my dad wanted me to marry"?

Julia: I haven't seen that T-shirt but it sounds quite charming.

Vanessa: Yeah, well, Bella is the weatherman that her dad wants her to marry.

Julia: Or the vampire her dad always wanted her to marry.

Vanessa: Ugh, she is going to become the vampire that her dad always wanted her to marry.

Julia: What is some advice that you had for someone in this chapter?

Vanessa: Yeah, I would like to give advice to Bella. A couple of episodes ago I talked about how I thought that she should invest in a relationship with Jessica. Well really, what I think Bella needs to do is investigate her preconceived notions about women and potentially think through

the self-loathing that the patriarchy has wanted her to believe in, that like women should be in competition with each other rather than allies and friends and confidantes. She at one point literally says she doesn't know whether or not she's going to go on a hike and then waits to see what the girls do, and then does the opposite. She's like constantly trying to distinguish herself from the other women in this group of friends, and like, you don't need to be making yourself distinct from other women. Like, the patriarchy wants women to feel as though they are in competition with each other for this limited resource of like "the good man," and I would just like to say that there is an abundance of good men, there's an abundance of everything in the world, and I just wish that Bella would see herself as part of this community rather than constantly defining herself by her superiority.

Julia: Okay, the this is my advice: I thought she was doing the opposite of what the other girls were doing because Lauren, who has appeared out of nowhere, has decided to be really mean to her? Class, open your books: "'Don't know why Bella,'—she sneered my name—'doesn't just sit with the Cullens from now on,' she heard her muttering to Mike." And then Mike says, "'She's my friend, she sits with us.'" And it seems pretty unprecedented given that we haven't really seen much of her earlier in the pages so I just want her to, like, dial back down, like, the attitude that she's giving Bella. Maybe Lauren is also suffering from a little bit of a scarcity mindset in terms of like, what it's like to be in Forks, and if they just combined forces into a loving relationship and maybe have a beautiful friendship.

Vanessa: I just think that Lauren is responding to Bella being rude to Jessica. Like Jessica's like "Oh, what did you and Edward talk about?" And Bella assumes bad intentions in Jessica, she's like, "she probably just wants gossip, because that's all girls do is gossip." And like, no, she's like, asking because you did something out of the norm for you, and people are curious when things happen out of the norm. I just think that this is like an insidious set of assumptions that Bella is making about her fellow female classmates.

Julia: Mmhmm. But do you not think Lauren is being mean to her, or do you just think Lauren is being mean to her for good reasons?

Vanessa: We do not have enough information to know if Lauren is actually being mean. I'm not sure how mean that one sentence is, like it could just be like, well, "She's causing all this drama, I wish she would just go be friends with the people she seems to actually *want* to be friends with. She doesn't seem to want to be friends with us," which is fair and true, Lauren. So Lauren's just seeing the situation clearly, and even if Lauren is being mean, I think that Bella has like truly brought this on herself, through being like so snobbish.

Julia: Yeah, she's definitely a snob. Do you have advice for someone else, Vanessa?

Vanessa: So my second piece of advice is very much on this theme, and I promise I'll drop it in future episodes, but Bella calls Lauren's voice "unpleasant and nasal" and first of all voices, especially women's voices, don't have to be pleasant. Like that is not the job of a voice. And I think probably because I am a woman in podcasting, I am hypersensitive to this, but there are

lots of studies that show that women's voices get critiqued like exponentially more than male voices do, and this is just a literal way that people are policing women's voices and trying to silence women. So this is just my opportunity for a PSA: do not comment on something about a person's voice. It's like talking about their chin. People act as though one's voice is something that they're in control of, or something that should have certain normative qualities, and that that normative quality is the quality of like Walter Cronkite in 1962, and that is just like not an objective fact, and Bella should stop being part of the voice monitoring industrial complex.

Julia: Mmm. Definitely agree.

Vanessa: So. That is my advice. What about you, do you have a second piece of advice?

Julia: I have a little nugget, just a tidbit, for Jacob, who we hear is tying his long beautiful locks back with a rubber band. Which, obviously for anyone who has had long hair, as I do now—he can use a scrunchie, he can use a clip, he can use a regular hair elastic, but rubber bands absolutely tear your hair out. I don't know how he's living like this.

Vanessa: That's so funny that you noticed that, I thought it was a 'hair rubber band.' But you're right, it's just a regular rubber band!

Julia: A rubber band. Isn't that so sad? It's like Charlie eating those enchiladas. It's like oh my god, you guys can do better.

Vanessa: Like, that is what you do if you are like in a real pinch, and even when you're in a real pinch you're like, "not worth it, it's gonna rip all my hair out."

Julia: Yeah. I wish he would use a hair elastic. I mean he would look so cute with a scrunchie! Or like, I don't know. Anything.

Vanessa: Yeah, or like an Alice band.

Julia: I've never heard of that before.

Vanessa: Like a headband.

Julia: Great, yeah, get him an Alice band!

Vanessa: He would look so cute in an Alice band.

\*musical break\*

Vanessa: Before we say goodbye today, should we put a couple of extra things in Bella's care package?

Julia: We should. I wanna get her something that she should give as a gift. So, Jacob tells her that Edward's a straight up vampire, and I think as a thank you gift for that, she should get him the car part that he asks for in the chapter. He asks for a Volkswagen Rabbit car engine thing.

Vanessa: A master cylinder for a 1986 Volkswagen Rabbit.

Julia: Exactly. She should get that for him, and maybe slip a hair elastic in there and send it his way.

Vanessa: I love that you're giving things for her to give as gifts. That is really thoughtful.

Julia: I'm a really good person.

Vanessa: You are! You are.

Julia: Is there anything you wanna give Bella?

Vanessa: Yes. I wanna make Bella a mix CD, and the song that I would put as her top track is by one of my favorite artists, and this is me, like, really pushing my feminist agenda onto Bella, but I would like to introduce her to the singer-songwriter Ani DiFranco, who in one of my favorites of her songs "As Is," which is on my favorite of her albums, *Little Plastic Castles*, is "cause when I look down, I just miss all the good stuff, and when I look up, I just trip over things." Bella talks about on her hike in this chapter, cause she is like very careful while walking there, and doesn't fall, but misses the view, and then on the way back enjoys the view but trips, and I would just like Bella to feel accompanied by this song the way that I do on like every hike that I go on, I basically sing the song to myself. It reminds me to stop and look up and enjoy the view, and then look back down so I don't fall. And so I feel like this song will accompany her on hikes, maybe give her a hiking strategy and will be brainwashing her to get used to different types of women's voices.

Julia: Oooh!

Vanessa: So it's an all-in-one.

Julia: Wow. The whole care package!

Vanessa: Ani DiFranco mix CD, coming at you, Bella.

Julia: That's really good. She'll love that.

Vanessa: Thank you. I love Ani.

Julia: So do you have any ideas about what you think is going to happen next besides her listening to Ani DiFranco?

Vanessa: Yeah, I do. I'm actually really excited. I think that this is the point in the romance where we get a makeover, and like, Jacob gets a makeover. He gets a hair scrunchie, he gets a new car, he like, goes full makeover, and then Bella also gets one because she's gonna go dress shopping, so I think that there are gonna be like a lot of makeovers. And I *love* any montage that involves the trying on of clothes.

Julia: Wow, I hope so. I would love that too.

Vanessa: Right?

\*outro music fades in\*

Vanessa: This has been Twilight in Quarantine, and annoying nasal girl voice exposure therapy session from Hot and Bothered. This episode and all episodes were 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 provided all the feminist rants today. We are a production of Not Sorry Productions and are distributed by ACAST. Talk to you in a few days.