

HOT AND BOTHERED: TWILIGHT IN QUARANTINE

BREAKING DAWN IN QUARANTINE

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JULIA: "Breaking dawn. Preface. I'd had more than my fair share of near-death experiences. [Theme music begins.] It wasn't something you ever really got used to. It seemed oddly inevitable, though, facing death again. Like I really was marked for disaster. I'd escaped time and time again, but it kept coming back for me." I'm Julia Argy.

VANESSA: And I'm Vanessa Zoltan.

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

[theme music continues, fades]

V: Okay, so Julia, we are going to do all of Breaking Dawn today. All -- I think it's eight thousand two hundred and twelve pages -- of Breaking Dawn. Do you regret that we didn't break it up chapter by chapter, now that you've read the whole thing? Are you like "Damn it! I wish that we'd really looked closely at this."

J: I can't say I feel that way. But if we had done it, there is a lot of stuff here. Like, we could have done it if that is where our paths took us. Do you regret not doing it?

V: I super don't regret it. I hated this book, and I have a new theory which is that I think I would have positive associations with this series if it ended after book two. And maybe I'm just retroactively like placing positive memories on the past, because I have like suffered so much you know, like when you watch a really long boring movie, and you're like oh my god this is horrible this is horrible this is horrible, and then you walk out of the movie and you're like "Do you know what, that was really interesting." [Julia laughs] And like part of what you're feeling is the relief of it being over, but like also retroactively like the three interesting things sort of rise to the top, and you forget the, like, pain.

J: Mhmm.

V: So like I could be doing that with books one and two, but I am currently convinced that if it had ended after they get reunited after the Volturi thing, I'd have been like "Those were fun. Those were dumb but fun."

J: Yeah, I think reading this made me really miss Twilight. Twilight the original. OG Twilight.

V: Yeah. And then I have one other question for you. Can we go to like, Julia MFA Corner?

J: Oh god. Sure, I guess.

V: So like these books are like a fantasy romance novel. What is the fantasy? Is it that, like, you'll have a million near-death experiences, but you'll always escape them? Is the fantasy that like you don't wanna

get married or have a baby and then it turns out the whole time you did? Like, why are these books so popular?

J: I'm really not sure my MFA program has told me why Twilight is so popular yet. Maybe that's coming up in the last few months of the curriculum. But, Spoiler: basically at the end of the story it's very happily ever after for eternity. And Bella is better than ever before, she's superhuman and she has a hot husband and a cute kid and she's really happy. So I think that's probably what it's hitting. The path to get there was winding, but the end seems like what some people want.

V: Right. So like other romance novels you don't become super model hot and super super rich, and like immortal.

J: Yeah.

V: And that's the difference between the HEA of these books and like the more traditional romance novels that I like to read.

J: Yeah. Happily Forever After.

V: Right. [Julia laughs] It's not til death to us part, as they say in the books, it's "for as long as we both shall live." [Whispers] Which is forever.

J: Yeah. Poetic.

V: Poetic indeed.

J: Vanessa, since we have a whole book, you will get a full minute to recap. I honestly think it could be 800 pages long, so you're gonna have to glaze over a lot but I'm excited to hear what you do with it.

V: [both laughing] Me too! I have no idea. I'm on the edge of my seat.

J: Okay. Three... two... one... go!

[Timer ticking begins]

V: So Bella and Edward are officially engaged, they decide to get married, they tell Charlie, Charlie is like "Uh." Renee is actually happy for them, they have the wedding, Jacob comes to the wedding, and says "Don't turn in to a vampire." They go on their honeymoon, she – they have regular sex, and then they like not-vampire vampire sex, just like vampire-human sex, and she gets pregnant with a vampire baby. And it's like happening really fast. And it's really dangerous. And she's in a lot of pain, and it like breaks her hips and her pelvic bone and it's horrible. They go home – That all happens when they go home. And then she starts to feel better when she starts drinking vampire blood, she loooovesthe – not vampire blood, human blood – And she um – loves the baby, even though it's killing her. And then the baby is born and she's weird and Jacob imprints, and the Volturi are like "Oh there's a baby! We have to come and kill it." And so they put together like a super hero team of vampires from all over the world, and there's this big confrontation with the Volturi. And the Carlisle coven people win! And the Volturi go away, and they all live happily ever after, and Renesmee and Jacob are going to be together.

[Buzzer sound, timer ticking stops]

J: That was pretty good!

V: Thanks! I misspoke a few times. Vampire blood? What am I? A newbie?? Vampires don't have blood
Vanessa!

J: They only have venom!

V: Duh!

J: Okay!

V: Julia! You are going to do just as well.

J: I'm legitimately stressed.

V: You can do it.

J: Okay. I'll try.

V: I believe in you like Jacob believes in Renesmee!

J: Gross.

V: A creepy amount. [both laugh] Okay. On your mark, get set, go!

[Timer ticking begins]

J: So they have a wedding, um, Jacob gets mad because he finds out that they're gonna have sex on the honeymoon and he gets SO mad about that. Um, they—yeah, the honeymoon happens, it's a nice island off the coast of Brazil. They have sex. There are feathers everywhere. Um, she gets pregnant. She gets morning sickness like two days later. They go home. Rosalie's like anti-killing the baby. Everyone's gonna save the baby! The whole book turns to Jacob's perspective for approximately 400 pages, for no reason. Um, he starts his own – he starts his own club. He's the alpha now. [laughs] Um, Leah joins, Seth joins, um-- and then he sees the birth scene, um, and then the baby, he imprints, um, the baby grows super fast. It like grows two inches a day, it can speak really early and can walk. It has a special tower – power, where it pokes you and you can read its mind. And then the whole, like, anti-fight happens. Oh Bella has like a shield, she can like project from her brain over everyone and she saves the day. Um, she gets a fake passport, and that's it.

[Buzzer sound, timer ticking stops]

J: Whew! So much happens everyone. And yet, so little. Cuz I think we covered just about everything in those recaps. Okay! Breaking news. We broke this up because there's so much breaking news in the whole book, we broke this up into several different types of news. So first we're gonna go over to you, Julia, in Weather.

J: Well, in this book, it's interesting cuz the whole plot revolves around the weather. The reason the Volturi are mad about the vampire baby is because there are things called Immortal Children, where you change like a baby toddler into a vampire and it gets extra cute and it kills straight up everyone, and that's illegal now. Probably rightly. So they think that Renesmee is one of those. They're going to come when the snow sticks to the ground. And like, throughout the time leading up to that, where Bella's training her mind shield, it's like "Is the snow gonna stick? Is the – is it gonna stick yet? Is it sticking? Maybe? Yeah." So Mission Critical Weather.

V: Yeah. I'm so happy for Bella that she has like been paying such close attention to the weather this whole time, cuz I feel like she will look at the snow and be like "That's not gonna stick." And like she can really manage her emotions because she's so in tune with the weather.

J: What about you? Do you have a weather update?

V: Oh yeah! So, my weather update is not just a weather update, it is also like callback to Bella in STEM cuz it's also a lesson in relativity. Because Edward is no longer cold because Bella is cold. Mind blown!

J: I know but she doesn't seem to have problems carrying around her room temperature baby, and the baby doesn't seem upset about having to like fall asleep in cold people's arms.

V: Oh yeah, it's not a consistent thing. Like, she doesn't think that that guy Jay notices how cold she is. When she touches Jacob it's not like she burns. I don't know. It's like not consistent. But Edward is no longer cold to her.

J: Yeah. That was really helpful for the sex.

V: [laughs] Yes.

J: Oh yeah, they have a lot of sex in the second half of the book. We don't see it, but we hear about it.

V: Yeah, can we talk briefly before we move on from the weather desk about how disappointing the first sex scene is? Like, I didn't know it had happened until paragraphs after it happened. It's like they walk into the water, and then next thing they're talking in bed, and then there's like goose feathers in her hair. And I'm like "What?" And then it becomes clear that they had sex last night. This is a romance novel. Like, where's the sexy sexy parts?

J: Well it's like for teens, so like it was never really gonna happen.

V: Sure! Which I'm grateful for, but like there should have been like something, like "And then he laid me down and we became one." [Julia laughs] Some like, religious metaphor. Like, I literally didn't even know the sex was happening.

J: Yeah. I can understand why because I think she just walks into the ocean, I'm not even sure they kiss in the ocean. It's like, it's not a fade to black, it's like a cut to black, like probably thirty seconds before it needs to.

V: Right. I'm just like, hint at it! Bring me along, Stephanie! Hold my hand! Walk me through this! We have eight thousand pages. [Julia laughs]. Take an extra sentence. Julia, were you like "Haha! Vindicated!" Because you said that Bella and Edward should have sex for the first time in warm water.

J: Yeah yeah! It was like sous-vide sex. [Vanessa laughs] Like, they're just getting to the right temperature. There's a lot of circulating water around them to get them there and it can last indefinitely. The ocean's that warm.

V: [still laughing] Can you just explain what sous vide is to those [Julia laughs] like I only know because I watched Claire Saffitz do it once.

J: [still laughing] Oh my god, it's so gross in terms of sex as a idea. Okay, sous-vide is when you put a vacuum sealed plastic bag of something into warm water that you keep at the same temperature using a little like motor powered thing. And it cooks really tender. [Laughs] So Bella is the plastic bag that you put into the boiling pot.

V: It's like how super fancy restaurants will like cook fish, to like make sure it gets cooked evenly.

J: Mhmm.

V: You're saying that Edward's penis –

J: Oh god!

V: --is like a piece of salmon that needs to be cooked evenly --

J: Mhmm.

V: --in order to not just be ice cold when it goes inside Bella.

J: Yep. That's exactly what I'm saying.

V: Got it. Great. I just wanted to make sure that we were on the same page.

[Short music transition]

V: Now we're gonna move over to the Fashion Desk. Julia, what have you got from the red carpet?

J: I have another note about the honeymoon, which is Alice doesn't let Bella pick her clothes because it would spoil what kind of destination they're going to for the honeymoon. And then Alice only packs Bella lingerie. It's like she has no comfortable clothes. And this is only like further mystifying because we hear the whole honeymoon once Edward says they can't have sex anymore because she got bruises from the sex. [laughs] So troubling. Um, after they stop having sex after the first time on the honeymoon, she has to go snorkeling all day, and she's like climbing mountains and stuff. Like she has no appropriate clothes but lingerie for the trip. She has to wear Edward's.

V: She has a bathing suit.

J: Yeah.

V: That's it, though. I mean what is a bathing suit except like waterproof lingerie, but like she does have a bathing suit. Snorkeling is doable.

J: Admittedly there's some clothes, but it's mostly just like different kinds of sexy getups for Bella to wear.

V: Right, it's definitely nothing you'd want to go hiking in.

J: Certainly not. Even on a private island.

V: My fashion desk is that Alice committed to fashion always. One, we find out that she never lets any of the Cullens wear the same thing twice. I'm gonna just leave that there for now. No extra commentary, because I have more to say on that later. But this includes Alice dressing Bella while Bella is busy transforming from human to vampire. We find out that she's put in like a silk tight like cocktail dress. And high heels! While she's in like the worst pain of her life. That is what Alice chooses to do to her body. Which I found very weird, but as I was thinking about it, I think it's like a great anti-assault moment. Like, often what we worry about with like a passed out woman is that like we're gonna take off their clothes, and Alice is like "No. I'm gonna put clothes ON you." Right? She's just given birth, she's probably naked.

J: She was like COVERED in blood, there was like blood everywhere.

V: Right. Covered in blood, she'd been like eaten from the inside, like great clean her up a little bit, like give her a sponge bath and put her in some clothes. Very interesting choice, Alice, that you decided to straight up put her in a cocktail dress and heels.

J: Yeah and before she's able to do anything, Alice makes her look in a mirror. She's like "Look, you're hot now. You're welcome." [Vanessa laughs]

V: Now we have the Historical Context Desk that we're gonna go over to. So we're moving from like your local news to some 60-minutes.

J: Yeah, I feel like the main thing we learn in terms of context here is like -- you and I already knew this, because we're geniuses -- but how corrupt the Volturi is. We find out that they've been systematically murdering vampires so that Aro can take the most powerful one into his little coven and that they have someone there who has a special power who can like entice them to stay against their will. And that's what they're planning on doing to the Cullenses. Aro says it explicitly at one point. He's like "All the special ones: Kate, Zafrina, Edward, Bella, you're welcome to stay. The rest of you, dead."

V: Well, not only do they have someone who like makes them stay, they also have someone who like puts them in a twilight where they like can't do anything while the Volturi is quote-unquote "Voting." Like this is a rigged system.

J: Like, the vote is fake.

V: It's completely corrupt.

J: Yeah.

V: Yeah. So my, like, big aha moment is that the books are like racist but in a very true to life way. Like, Bella's racist. We know that people tend to be more forgiving of people who look like them, to like not assume that someone with the same skin color as you is a criminal, to not have as good of facial recognition across like racial lines, and Bella thinks that quote "All the Egyptians look alike." We're told that the werewolves aren't werewolves by white people. Like white people come in and are like "Just kidding werewolves, you're using the wrong terminology for what you identify as." And then we get like an [nasal voice] "Actually, werewolves are this other thing that have to do with the moon, and you all are more accurately called shapeshifters." Like, dude, these people can be whatever they wanna be. They use the word werewolf, white people don't come in with your anthropology, and like tell a local tribe what they are. Gross. But accurate as to what actually happens in the world, right? This is like Margaret Mead all over again. I was like very impressed. And then the last one that I'll mention is that Carlisle steals genetic information from Jacob while Jacob is like in pain from his accident in the last book, we find that out in this book. And again like that is completely accurate. White doctors have a history of stealing genetic information from people of color while they're in pain. Everybody read about Henrietta Lacks. So, I just found that the racism was very well researched.

J: Yeah there's also a moment when she goes to start looking for um her passport, her forged documents, where she goes to quote-unquote "the ghetto," and like –

V: Mhmm.

J: --sees a black person in a nice outfit and she was like "That is – that is so interesting, I've never witnessed that before."

V: Right, which is absolutely something that a white woman with access to a Ferrari would say. [Julia laughs] I don't know, I – I don't think Stephanie Meyer did it on purpose, but if she did, excellent job!

[Short music transition]

V: And now Julia we're gonna put it over to you at the Conspiracy Theory Desk. I love your tin foil hat by the way. You look amazing.

J: Thank you! I think I should start off with my conspiracy theory about what the people want to know. And what the people want to know is how Edward with his [pause] current situation [laughing] no blood, questionable what's working, what's not, how Edward possibly fathered a child.

V: So you're wondering how one gets an erection without blood.

J: Yeah, and like what's up with the sperm? But worry not everyone, I have answers from my deep dive into the text. So. I will pose a theory that Edward has maybe never had an orgasm before, and has definitely not had an orgasm since he turned into a vampire. This is a quote from when he's telling Bella about his sexual history. He said "'I asked Carlisle what I should expect. I didn't know what it would be for me, with my being a vampire.' He smiled half-heartedly. 'Carlisle told me it was a very powerful thing, like nothing else.'" So it seems like he's trapped his ancient sperm since turning, he's never had an orgasm, it's just like still in there—um and that's why he's able to conceive a child, is it's – it's just been lingering there for quite a few decades. You're welcome.

V: And that makes it more potent? Like a fine wine?

J: [laughs] I think it's partially that but also it's just like – he's ready.

V: Yeah. Yeah.

J: It's like not gone anywhere, it hasn't turned into like venom.

V: Ohhh. It's his human sperm still.

J: Exactly. He hasn't like recharged.

V: But then why does Renesmee come out half vampire? It's like a little change. [Julia laughs] By the way, thank you so much Julia cuz I am literally picturing Edward's sperm in his ballsack right now

J: [still laughing] Peeking out...

V: So thank you.

J: Yeah maybe it's just changed a little. Just enough. Keep it spicy.

V: Yeah yeah yeah

J: It's immortal sperm! [laughing] It's been changed just to be immortal.

V: Got it, got it, got it. Well thank you so much Julia for solving that mystery, I really appreciate it.

J: Yeah. Did you have a conspiracy theory?

V: I do. So both of my conspiracy theories are about Alice. One is that she is actually rich and so obsessed with everybody wearing new clothes all the time because she owns a fast fashion empire. She like just wants everyone in disposable clothes, she wants them to wear it once, like they're quote-unquote "not

expensive” but then you like stop wearing them. And I think that that feeds into my wider Alice theory, which is that she can’t see the future. It’s not that she’s betting on stocks, it’s that she’s getting rich on fast fashion. And she knows that like saying “I own a sweatshop and that’s how I’m rich” doesn’t look great, so she’s like “Oh I can see the future, I bet on stocks.” No you don’t, Alice! You have factories.

J: Yeah, I can picture that. I just don’t even know like what she even does with all of the clothes. Like, she must be like then these are her sample pieces and she’s like selling the rest of the garments on a storefront.

V: Yeah, I mean also with the disposable clothes, what a lot of companies do is then sell the like rag material as like stuffing for couches and stuff. So it’s beneficial to them twice, financially. Alice is like a part of a huge fashion slave empire racket.

J: Global conspiracy. We’re no longer in Forks, folks. [pause] So the last update that we’re gonna do is on the status of Jacob Black. He’s gone from really nice in book two to really bad at end of book three. How did you find him in book four?

V: I mean you know, more the same. A couple pieces of evidence of his like continued awfulness I would say is his like constant blonde jokes. He like has this bit with Rosalie, they don’t like each other and they’re always telling each other that they stink, and so he makes blonde jokes about her all the time. And it’s just like not great. And then the other like really minor one is that there’s a moment where he’s like stuck naked somewhere and there’s a sundress that he can put on, and he says that he would rather be naked than wear a sundress. And I just like would like to inform him that we don’t wear clothes for ourselves, we wear clothes so that other people don’t have to look at our naked bodies, Jacob. And gender essentialism is not enough of a reason to like go around streaking. He’s also horrible to Leah. Like, until he turns medium awful to Leah, he’s HORRIBLE to her. So those are the ones before the big one. Do you want to talk about the big one? The big awful?

J: Obviously in this book we knew it was coming that Jacob imprints on Renesmee the baby. It’s pretty unsavory to say the least. It starts when we’re back in Bella’s perspective and he’s really mean to Bella about seeing her own baby for the first time. So that’s kind of where it starts.

V: He’s trying to protect Renesmee because he’s imprinted on her and he’s worried that Bella will like eat her own baby.

J: Yeah. And he’s really – I would say a jerk about it.

V: Yeah. And Bella has no idea what’s going on. She’s like “Why do you care? Why are you still here?” And he’s like “Don’t touch your baby!”

J: And then he nicknames her daughter after the Loch Ness Monster!

V: [pause] Okay, it’s the same nickname that my best friend calls me, so I think it’s a great nickname. That is the thing that bothers me least about Jacob’s imprinting.

J: Oh yeah, I don’t actually have a personal problem with that, but that is a big contentious point in the book. I think they have a fist fight, Bella and Jacob finally get into it, and it’s because of the nicknaming.

V: Yes.

J: Partially. It’s also cuz of the imprinting [laughing] but the nicknaming precipitates the fight.

V: So we find out more about what like adult-baby imprinting looks like in the book first, because we have this scene between baby Claire and Quil, who we know from a previous book is a shapeshifter-slash-werewolf who imprinted on a baby. Thoughts about that scene?

J: I experienced it as like one of the most troubling scenes in the book, partially because I was listening to it and it's in Jacob's perspective so it was a man doing a girl baby voice. And then the girl baby voice was speaking back to the adult man. And I was like "This is honestly the worst, most troubling scene I have ever read." It was really chilling. They're playing on a beach, and he's effectively babysitting her, and Quil's like "I will never date someone or have sex with someone until Claire is of age."

V: Yeah, and you just really don't get a sense of the mutuality of imprinting. Right? Like, you know that Quil's obsessed with Claire, but you are given no evidence that Claire feels a natural attachment to Quil, which gives the whole thing this real grooming feel to it. Right? In theory, the thing that makes imprinting okay is that there's such a powerful mutual understanding of love that the default is consent. That like the -- usually woman, right, the woman who is imprinted upon -- feels as strong of a connection. But when you're starting with a child, and you are not giving her any other options, right, like this seems like something different.

J: Yeah. I mean, baby imprinting [pause] I'm sure I'm gonna shock everyone by saying it, is morally bankrupt. Personally I believe.

V: So like the Jacob/Renesmee imprinting. I was like this is really creepy, but it wasn't pedophilic. Right? Like, he's not attracted to her. He is like super protective of her. And I was like this is gross, but it wasn't as gross as I was scared it was gonna be. Like, those chapters that were reading in Jacob's head and like knowing that the imprinting was happening, I was getting really nervous that it was like in Jacob's head gonna tell me how beautiful he thought Renesmee was, and like start sexualizing a baby. And because it didn't do that, I think I felt a real sense of relief. But then he gives her a promise ring for Christmas, when she's like two months old. And that is when I was like "Nope, it's fully fucked up."

J: Yeah. The promise ring is also really troubling to me – and there's this like Twilight, like, bunny – bunny hole moment where the book came out the other side, where Bella is trying to make the fake passports for Jacob and Renesmee in hopes that they'll be able to escape the Volturi attack, and she was like looking at the passport photos and she goes "Oh this'll be great, it will look like Jacob is her stepdad." Horrible!

V: Yeah. It is hinted at through the stories of like Emily and Rachel that imprinting is mutual, but I would just say that we like do not get enough evidence of that. Like, maybe Emily had a crush on Sam before, and like loved her cousin Leah but you know was a little bit jealous. Like, we do not know from the woman's point of view that it is as strong of a feeling, and therefore it wasn't quite as bad as I thought it was gonna be, but it was almost as bad as I was scared it was gonna be.

J: In terms of not being able to see from Jacob's perspective, it switches the moment he imprints. It goes back to Bella

V: Right.

J: -- literally – he looks in the baby's eyes, and it's out of his perspective. So there's this like way that the text purposefully alludes [sic] what it's actually like to imprint on a baby, which is what you're saying about not getting the woman's perspective, it's like the second it happens it's like too [laughs] messed up

and like if you want people to read the book, can't go there or something. I don't know. But I feel like it's pretty purposeful the way that it switches then.

V: Totally, totally. And just because, like you I was listening and so I didn't have that like visual sense that Jacob's point of view was ending, I was so scared that the next chapter was gonna be like "Oh my god I've never seen anything more beautiful in my whole life," and that also would have been the chapter title by the way. But like it just wasn't. I'm not saying that it made imprinting less gross, I'm just saying that I was so scared. [laughs]

J: Speaking of the chapter titles, those were my moments of genuine enjoyment. When we're in Jacob's perspective, I think they're hilarious. Like, they were so funny. As a concept. They're often like full sentences, I pulled a few of my favorites. [laughs] "Why didn't I just walk away? Oh right, because I'm an idiot." I was like "True! Yes!" Another was: "The two things at the very top of my things I never want to do list."

V: That sounds like something you would say. [Julia laughs] That is at the very top of my things I never wanna do list. That is like a straight up Julia Quote.

J: [laughing] Yeah, I liked that one. Then, "What do I look like, the Wizard of Oz? You need a brain? You need a heart? Go ahead. Take mine. Take everything I have." [both Vanessa and Julia laugh] But it's also like not the plot of the Wizard of Oz. The Wizard of Oz isn't taking people's brains. Like it doesn't even make sense.

V: He's not sacrificing his own brain to give it to the scarecrow.

[pause to laugh]

J: And then the chapter where Jacob witnessed the birth is – there are no words for this. And then like we get like a very long chapter about like Bella's spine cracking in half [both laughing] and like the blood going everywhere is like – I wish there was no words for this. That was like the worst – the worst birth scene I've ever read. It was so funny.

[pause to laugh some more]

V: Woo! Yeah. They tickled me to death as well. So I'm glad that you liked them.

J: Did you have other moments you genuinely enjoyed?

V: Yeah. The big one is like I love this idea of like raising a baby entirely together. Edward and Bella like get to go sleep every night, or I guess they don't have to sleep, they get to go have sex every night, but like in theory if this was replicated into the human world, like I love the idea of intergenerational living, but like on a big enough plot of land that you can like go to your own house. This is – this was the fantasy, right? Like, eight adults one baby. That seems like the right ratio to me, for a baby. I genuinely enjoyed that.

J: Yeah, it was nice there for a few chapters, where like everything was good, the baby was there, Bella was a vampire, she was loving life, the baby seems to be doing well. Yeah there were like a few blissful childrearing chapters in there.

V: Yeah. It turns out that all you need is immortality and a bottomless pit of money.

J: Yeah. Hundred percent.

V: And then you can raise a baby in America.

J: The other thing I'll just mention in passing is: I really like Seth Clearwater. He's like the nicest character I've ever encountered in this book. He was like "I love vampires, I love werewolves, let's just get along. [Vanessa laughs] Like, here Bella I'm not creepy, you can hold my arm cuz you're cold and super pregnant. Like, thanks for these sandwiches Esme, like I love life and I love my mom and I love everyone." It was so nice!

V: Seth is great. But even he complains about Leah. Like why is Leah the most abused character?

J: To Seth's credit, he is like a teen boy complaining about his older sister, like he is the only one who has the right to complain about Leah. [laughing]

V: Absolutely. That is a completely completely fair point. I mean we're now going to transition into a non comprehensive list of questions and concerns, and I would say that one of my primary ones is: Leah. Like, the way she's talked about in these books. And like how isolated and abused she is.

J: Yeah, one of mine was: they have a conversation that Leah is a female werewolf because she's infertile potentially? And like she's not able to like contribute to the tribe through babies, and therefore like is cursed to live as a werewolf, and it seems like the conversation around that is like women who can't make babies are like worthless as women and are therefore relegated to like a separate sect of non-womanhood. That was dark.

V: Yeah. As soon as you can't procreate and make babies, we like get rid o' ya.

J: You like turn into like a weird monster. One of my other ones was also kind of similar to Leah around like artificial insemination. So Edward is pissed that Bella's dying from the vampire baby eating her from the inside out. He goes to Jacob and he's like "Jacob, bro, we all want the same thing in this: Bella to be alive. Can you tell Bella you will get her pregnant and carry her children? And we'll just like be a throuple or whatever." So that is a conversation they have to have, and Bella doesn't understand that Jacob is saying that he'll be the father of her children, and she goes OFF on how bad like sperm donors are, like anonymous sperm donors. And it's -- it's so horrible.

V: Yeah, it also could just so easily be fixed with some I statements. Of like, "I don't want to do that." Like, just don't generalize about personal feelings.

J: That's totally right.

[Short music transition]

V: Okay, let's now move over to Mentor Corner.

J: Let's!

V: So, my first piece of advice is like to the Cullen clan: Bella is in a lot of pain and they have baseball on in the background. And she says that baseball was not interesting enough to distract her from her pain. First of all, Bella: sick burn about baseball! Second of all, put on something more interesting for her. Like, literally put on a cage match. Like, you all are indestructible. Like build one of those motorcycle domes and like motorcycle upside down and stuff. Like, do whatever you have to do to distract her from her pain. You have no problems like murdering animals, like she's always wanted to watch that. Go hunting in front of her. Like, just do what you've gotta do! Why do you just have baseball on??

J: Yeah.

V: Put on a romcom! What's wrong with When Harry Met Sally? That always makes me feel better!

J: I'm in full agreement. I hadn't thought about that. I agree with the gut instinct that baseball is boring and people shouldn't watch it, in pain or not, but I hadn't thought about any alternatives and I think those are really good ideas.

V: Thank you.

J: Like breathing fire, like a little circus – Cullen circus.

V: Yes! Jump through fire!

J: Tightrope walking!

V: Yeah!

Julia and Vanessa together: Trapeze! [laugh]

J: And if they wanna fly us out on a private jet to entertain Bella, we will gladly accept.

V: We will absolutely do that for a fee.

J: For a low low price of forty million dollars.

V: [laughing] Yeah, for a life-changing amount of money I would absolutely consider doing that. [pause] Um, what about you Julia? What advice do you have?

J: So, my first piece of advice is to Bella and Edward. And it's: Don't talk about your family's sex life while Edward is inside of you. Edward and Bella are sitting in bed, we as the reader don't know what's going on, but they have this full conversation about each couple in the family and how long it took for them to overcome their like sexual vampiric urges towards each other. We find out Rosalie and Emmet have broken houses from their vigorous sex, whatever. Okay. It says "We laughed together, and the motion of our laughter did interesting things to the ways our bodies were connected, effectively ending that conversation." You guys were connected that whole time?? [Vanessa laughs] Just get out! While you're talking about your parents' sex life! It's so weird! [both laughing]

V: I love how transferable this piece of advice is to all of our lives.

J: No one should be doing this! I'm a hundred percent serious, I think this could really change people's perspectives.

V: Best piece of advice you've given on this podcast. [Both laughing] Whew! Okay.

J: What about you? What's your second piece of advice?

V: So my next piece of advice is for Aro. Aro, like, sees all of these vampires he hasn't seen in a while, and he like really lays in, especially on one, like "I haven't seen you in many decades! Why don't you come visit me? Oh I know you'll come visit me soon!" [Julia laughs] And I would just like to say that this is like standard grandpa move. People are gonna wanna visit you more if, when you visit, you don't guilt them about not visiting more often. If you want people to visit you, be happy to see them, bring them gifts, bribe them, I don't know, just like do other things grandparents do. There are other strategies.

J: Yeah, I mean it's interesting we know Aro is really old, but I feel like that was one of the first glimpses we get of like vampires acting old.

V: Right!

J: He's finally old enough where it's like he's acting like a grandpa. Carlisle's like still in dad mode but like Aro is full grandpa.

V: Yeah. Like that may be your feeling, that like they should visit you more often, but that's a conversation for your therapist.

J: Mhmm. Yeah. And the person who he's guilt tripping literally sprints away in fear. He's like "Can I – Can I go now?" [both laughing] and like runs away and definitely will not visit.

V: Okay so Julia, last piece of advice in Twilight in Quarantine!

J: Dun dun dah! I'm bringing up something that we didn't talk about and so I'm really glad I'm bringing it up now. Edward bites the baby out of Bella's stomach. He chews it out. Okay folks? My advice is to do literally anything else [laughing] to get the baby out of [both laughing] the stomach. So the reason that he uses his teeth is because the placenta protecting the baby is hard like vampire skin, so I did just like some cursory research as to things that can like cut through diamonds, and therefore I assume will work for the placenta. It seems like a circular saw that's encoded in diamond dust would work. Or alternately a laser. We hear that they have like an X-ray room in their house so I'm sure getting a laser isn't like past their budgetary constraints. We also throughout this book find out there's literally millions of dollars stashed around the house which I thought you would appreciate Vanessa.

V: Yes [laughing] I do love that. When Bella creates a go-bag for Renesmee I was super into it.

J: So use some of the millions of dollars you have lying in cash, get a laser, and laser out the baby.

V: Oh my god, again, advice that works in everybody's life! Even if it was completely like sanitary, I still wouldn't recommend it. The lack of precision.

J: Yeah.

V: Right? With a laser I feel like you can draw a perfect circle, like how do you bite your way around? Like, does his jaw unhinge?

J: [laughing] He's like a boa constrictor and just puts it over the whole pregnancy belly.

V: [also laughing] Right? Like, how? How does that work?

J: And the birth scene was just so so gross in general, and it's amazing that we read it, and that y'all don't have to.

V: [laughing] Nobel Peace Prizes for me and Julia for reading this.

J: I know, reading that birth scene, it was really grim.

[Short music transition]

V: Okay, so Julia this is our last episode for a while. We're gonna do some Patreon bonus episodes but we're only coming back in Hot and Bothered in June to do our Jane Eyre podcast where we're gonna be

doing a close reading of Jane Eyre. So Julia to wrap us up, you and I are each gonna name our top three moments across all four Twilight books. So we're gonna go back and forth. Ready? Go!

J: Number one: Twilight: Book One: Edward force-feeding Bella mushroom ravioli and her drinking like seven Coca Colas while he wears a white cashmere turtleneck and a beige leather coat.

V: Ugh. A classic moment.

J: I know. What about you? What's your first greatest hit?

V: I also have one from Book One: And it is when Tyler shows up to take Bella to the prom. I know it makes me [laughing] a bitch that I think it's so funny [Julia laughing too] but it's so funny!

J: I'd forgotten about that! It was so embarrassing! [both laughing]

V: It's just like, it's just the most ridiculous thing and I love it so much. Woo! Okay. Number two, Julia, go!

J: Number two, from book two, when Edward [laughs] breaks up with Bella in the woods, she can still see her house but instead of going back to the house she walks into the middle of the woods and falls asleep under a tree.

V: [laughing] Yeah, it is just fantastic that she can see her house and gets lost. It's amazing. I think that it really expresses how much grief she's feeling—

J: Mhmm.

V: That she like literally can't walk in a straight line. She's drunk with grief.

J: Yeah. Yeah, and she hates the woods so much she's just so overcome with emotion she deigns to sleep on a fern. [both laughing] That's how bleak it is.

V: Okay, my number two is also from book two. And it is the scene in the movie theater where both boys are next to Bella with their hands up waiting for her to hold one of their hands. And again, [laughing] I'm realizing how much this makes me a bitch, cuz I like the scenes where men are just like in pain. But it's so funny!

J: Yeah, that really stuck with me as an image throughout the rest of the series.

V: Okay Julia! Drumroll! Your final favorite moment! Da da da da da!

J: I'm skipping over Eclipse and going into Breaking Dawn when Renesmee and Jacob are gonna run off together to save themselves from the Volturi, Edward goes "Goodbye, Jacob, my brother, my son!" [screams] [Vanessa laughs] What??? What??? That really summed up this whole book for me. It's like, what in god's name?

V: So I too couldn't find one from Eclipse. So I just stayed in New Moon. And mine is like a really genuine one, it was like the most One Tree Forks moment of them all. It was Angela and Bella addressing envelopes, it's just friendship. [laughing]

J: Wow.

V: There's just nothing nefarious, like people are being annoying in regular ways, and Angela and Bella are like adoring each other.

J: Yeah.

V: And I loved it.

J: Yeah. That was really nice.

[Short music transition]

V: Okay, Julia, our last care package for Bella. What are you putting in there?

J: I'm getting her a one-way ticket back to Isle Esme. I feel like the first trip was really a bust, and I think they need to do a re-do.

V: [laughing] A bust insofar as she gets like horribly sick by becoming pregnant with a vampire baby?

J: Yeah! After their literal first time. I don't think that we made it clear, it's like: you have sex, you get pregnant, and you die. Like that's literally the first 500 pages of this book.

V: Um well I'm gonna get her a toddler backpack of her own, but like to wear! On her back! To carry Renesmee! Renesmee is gonna get like bigger and bigger, and heavy pretty soon, she's getting carried all the time. At one point in the book we find out that she's never been put down. And so I just think that there's like this symbolic part of Bella now wearing the toddler backpack.

J: Wow.

V: For her actual toddler!

J: Full circle! I think you and I were having some premonitions when you said that. You were like "A toddler backpack? There's probably gonna be a baby one day, they're gonna need it.

V: [laughing] Oh my god, Alice, this is what it looks like when you can see the future!

J: Hundred percent. So what do you think is gonna happen with the crew? What's happening after they, whatever, live?

V: So they're immortal, but climate change is real, so they will be left on like a barren post-apocalypse Earth, and they're gonna have to resort to eating cockroaches. But then I guess they will have to like start the new race? So it's like a pro-eugenics like the most beautiful immortals will start the new race. But I think like they're gonna have to survive an environmental apocalypse. Which is pretty bleak.

J: Bella and Edward eating cockroaches for eternity. [Vanessa laughs] That is the happily ever after that we need.

V: So Patrons, we will be doing movie episodes and many other things on there, so we will keep talking to you. There will be a Jane Eyre podcast in your ears starting the first week of June, which we're so excited about. So we're gonna go off and work on that, and we'll be back then. But Julia, this is your last episode in the feed! You're not joining for Jane Eyre because you're a Wuthering Heights person. Any last words?

J: Last words before I'm killed [both laughing] for no longer participating in Twilight in Quarantine!

V: Yeah.

J: Um. This has been really a wild ride for a year of my life. Thinking so much about Twilight, and I am happy I did it, and I am even happier it's over. [both laughing]

V: I would just like to remind you that this was literally your idea.

J: Okay, when I had this idea, I did not realize anyone would take me seriously [both laughing] so it was like, I have a lot of ideas that like don't turn into anything.

[Theme music begins]

V: So this has been the last episode of Twilight in Quarantine from Hot and Bothered. This episode and all episodes are produced by Arianna Nettleman and this episode was edited by Mallika Gumpankum. This show was conceived of as a vampire baby by Julia Argy and I'm Vanessa Zoltan and apparently I don't know when Julia's just kidding. We are a production of Not Sorry Productions and are distributed by Acast. I'm super grateful that you went on this journey with us, and I'm really really excited to talk about Jane Eyre with you all in a couple of months. It is my all-time favorite romance novel! So we will be back then. Take care!

[Theme music fades, ends]