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Behind the scenes of the most combustible 'Handmaid's Tale' relationship



Yvonne Strahovski and Elisabeth Moss, here in a scene from Season 3 of "The Handmaid's Tale," discuss their characters' love-hate relationship on the series. (Sophie Giraud/Hulu)

By RANDEE DAWN

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The title of [Elisabeth Moss](#)' and [Yvonne Strahovski](#)'s Hulu series is "[The Handmaid's Tale](#)," but as fans of the show (which went on hiatus after filming several episodes of its fourth season due to the coronavirus quarantine) know, it's as much about Wife Serena (Strahovski) as Handmaid June (Moss), who have a love-hate magnetic relationship that threatens to end in mutually assured destruction.

The two chatted on a video call from Los Angeles (Strahovski) and New York (Moss) mid-quarantine. And though the conversation was well before the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, each spoke strongly against injustice of all kinds.

Serena and June didn't cross over much during Season 3, but are you friendly during production? Or do you keep that love-hate relationship going in real time?

Strahovski: We hate each other.

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Moss: Every time we cross paths, she throws me up against a wall. It's very awkward for everybody in hair and makeup. (Laughs) No, no ... I mean, Yvonne and I haven't really gotten a chance to do a lot of interviews about that relationship.

Strahovski: I don't think we've ever had an interview together. It's crazy because the Serena-June relationship is so pivotal.

Moss: I think that they are these two sorts of titans that they're so powerful and interesting alone. And so when they cross paths, it's just this incredible explosion.

Are they destined to be each other's antagonists?

Moss: We talked last season a lot about their love story. We felt like that D.C. memorial scene was a breakup. I get chills talking about it because they did become friends. And

they do have so much in common. That scene was so heartbreaking because it felt like a breakup between friends.

Strahovski: They had come together after going through all this tumultuous back and forth, had come to some kind of middle ground, only to realize that it was never going to work.

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Were either one of you familiar with the other's work prior to coming to "Handmaid's"?

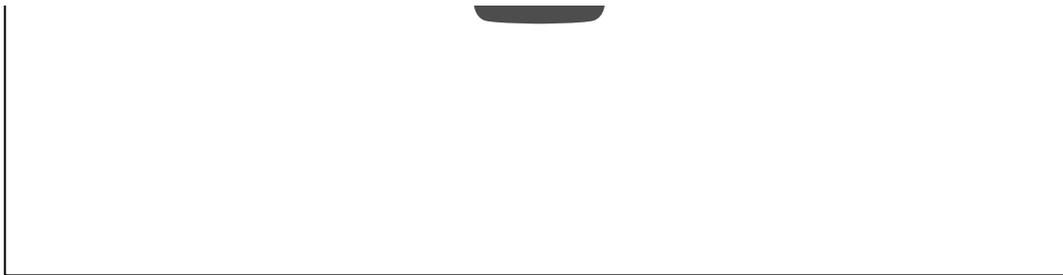
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Strahovski: I've watched a little "Mad Men."

Moss: When you work with someone, the last thing you want to do is go home and watch them in another show. Wouldn't it be amazing if I had never told you, "I am a huge 'Chuck' fan," and it turns out that was the reason that you were on the show? It's like, [costar] Alexis [Bledel] when I finally watched "Gilmore Girls." I still don't think I've told her. It's just too embarrassing to be like, "I've seen all the episodes of your show."

The Handmaid's Tale Season 3 Trailer #2 (HD)





Trailer for Season 3 of Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale."

We left Serena and June both in very extreme circumstances behind enemy lines at the end of Season 3. Do you think they'll always run in parallel opposition?

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Moss: I see them as so similar. That's what's so tragic about them. They're like these two people who are in the same place, but obviously it ends in the fight. United they would be unstoppable, but they just can't quite get there.

Strahovski: Serena takes June's bait all the time because it's nice for someone to believe in Serena, it's nice for someone like June to look at Serena and see a good person. That's not something Serena gets every day. So I think she loves it.

Do you think making "Handmaid's" has affected the way you personally perceive the real world?

Moss: For sure. I've always [considered myself a feminist](#), but you can't work on something like this and not develop a larger awareness of what's going on around you. Given current circumstances, we're paying a lot more attention.

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Strahovski: It is impossible to ignore what you're a part of and how aligned it is. The majority of the conversations I feel like that we have outside of our "Handmaid's" family, it always steers right back to the [current issues](#) of the world and whatever it's sparked within that person who's watched our show.

How do you respond to people who might say, "With everything going on in the world right now, your show is awesome but also too hard to watch"?

Strahovski: I hear that all the time. Even for me when I watch it for the other scenes [I wasn't present for], it's shocking. I have a very strong emotional reaction. And I too have to cap it; I can't watch many in a row. At the same time, I'll say that it is important to see that stuff and important to have this piece of art reflecting life, as art often does.

Moss: We're not unaware that it's a difficult show to watch. We know exactly why. What I always say is if you can't watch this fiction version of life and what's going on in the world, how are you going to be able to look at what's actually going on and confront it and do something about it?

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