

Twilight in Quarantine
Eclipse: Newborn

Julia: Chapter 13. Newborn. “The same thing that happened to your hand,” Jasper answered in a quiet voice, [theme music playing throughout intro] “repeated a thousand times.” He laughed a little ruefully and brushed at his arm. “Our venom is the only thing that leaves a scar.” I’m Julia Argy.

Vanessa: And I’m Vanessa Zoltan.

Julia: And this is Hot and Bothered, Twilight in Quarantine. [music fades out] Vanessa, in honor of the chapter title ‘Newborn’ I wanted to rigorously test your newborn of all kind knowledge. So I’m going to give you some human baby newborn facts, and you are going to tell me whether or not they apply to vampire newborns as well.

Vanessa: See, I thought you were just going to give me a quiz about human newborns, and I volunteered at a NICU for two years so I was like, “I got it!” But it has a twist!

Julia: Yeah.

Vanessa: Julia Twisty-and-turny Argy.

Julia: Vanessa Getting-an-A-on-this-quiz-or-else-she’ll-fail-the-podcast Zoltan.

Vanessa: That’s me.

Julia: Babies can’t taste saltiness. They only can do sweet, sour, and bitter. Can vampires taste saltiness?

Vanessa: If they have gone to Julia Argy’s Sick Burns school then, yes, they know what salty tastes like.

Julia: Extremely attune to salty behavior, salty taste. Got it.

Vanessa: Yes.

Julia: I accept that answer. Okay, human babies’ first poops don’t smell. Do vampire babies poop and if so does it smell?

Vanessa: Yeah, vampire babies poop and I’m going to say the first one doesn’t smell. Because like their colon was empty of human food because it’s been 3 days of transformation before they can eat as a newborn. And so there’s probably nothing in their stomach when they have their first poop as a vampire.

Julia: I really appreciated how seriously you answered that question using logical reasoning. Great work.

Vanessa: Did I get it right then?

Julia: Yeah. 100. Two for two!

Vanessa: Oh my god, I'm so good at this. Okay.

Julia: Okay, human babies cry with an accent reflecting the language they learned in utero and post utero.

Vanessa: Wait, wait, wait. We gotta pause. That is a *wild* fact.

Julia: [laughing] I don't know what to tell you.

Vanessa: French babies going [with French accent] "wah, wah, bonjour."

Julia: [laughing] Yes! That is a fact! So do you think vampire babies cry with an accent?

Vanessa: No. I think all vampires sound like Katharine Hepburn.

Julia: Any reason why? Or just a hunch?

Vanessa: I think all vampires are a little bit fancy. [drawling accent] And they all talk like this.

Julia: So they have accents but they're not crying in baby accents?

Vanessa: They all have one accent. So I thought your question was like do Seattle babies cry different than Galveston babies who cry different than Italian baby vampires? I'm saying they all have the same voice. So, yes, all vampire babies cry with an accent it's just the same accent as all other vampire babies.

Julia: I respectfully decline and believe that they all cry with different accents, but I appreciate your take and I will reflect on it for days to come.

Vanessa: Is it the accent that they had while they were humans?

Julia: It's the accent of the person who built them. It like is contagious and it gets transferred.

Vanessa: Okay. I'm learning so much. Since I got a 66.66% on my quiz I am the devil now.

Julia: And you've been cursed by the devil to do the 30-second recap first today?

Vanessa: Exactly. Can you count me in?

Julia: 3, 2, 1, go!

Vanessa: [ticking sound throughout] So Jasper's like, "Here's my story: I was a confederate soldier. I was only 16 but I told them I was 20-something because...and I got away with it cuz I was tall. And I was a really good soldier, and then these three women recruited me, and they were trying to start an army, and I was good, and then I recruited other newborns, and then I fell in love with a man named Peter but he and I had a fight, and so then I fell in love with Alice, and then I became a vegetarian." And that is only half the chapter. [buzzer sound]

Julia: Yeah. That was pretty good though.

Vanessa: Yeah but can you do like all the conspiracy theorizing about what's going on in Seattle? Cuz I just didn't even touch on it.

Julia: Sure. I mean, I think this is the first time I've been jealous of you going first cuz now I'm left with like the dregs.

Vanessa: I'm sorry. You don't have to. We can just chat about that stuff after.

Julia: No, it's okay. I'll do my best.

Vanessa: Okay. On your mark, get set, go.

Julia: [ticking sound throughout] So Jasper proposes that an untrained wild pack of vampires are running around Seattle. Alice is like, "Oh my god. Why didn't you tell me it was a vampire army?" And then everones like, "But there's no territory to fight. Why are they doing it?" and then Rosalie's like, "Maybe they're trying to fight the people in Alaska," and Edward's like, "No. Then they would have gone to Alaska, they're in Seattle," and then Edward's like, "What if they're here to see us?" and then they're like, "Maybe it's the Volturi," and then Victoria is brought up but no one like no one thinks it's Victoria. [buzzer sound]

Vanessa: You said Rosalie says, "Maybe they're after the Alaska people," I think it's Esme who has that idiotic idea.

Julia: Yeah, I know. Rosalie said something else that was like equally unintelligible but I forgot what it was.

[transition music]

Vanessa: Okay um breaking news. Doo-doo-doo. Jasper's the funniest storyteller ever. He gets so into it he'll be like, "And then I saw three women. 'That's a handsome man,' Maria said." And I've never met anyone who tells a story like that.

Julia: Yeah, he's very into narrative.

Vanessa: It would be like me saying "my friend Julie and I went out to lunch. 'How are you?' she asked me."

Julia: "Her brown locks blowing in the wind." [Vanessa chuckles]

Vanessa: What about you? What's your breaking news? Doo-doo-doo?

Julia: I noticed in this chapter that Edward uses his powers of deduction for the first time, in this chapter. He only gets 50% of the way there, but he was the first person to bring up like, "Oh, what's the other coven in the Seattle area? It's us." So I was really happy to see that. It makes me hopeful that the plot will soon move forward.

Vanessa: I always forget that you like plot.

Julia: This book is nearly 700 pages long. It has to happen at some point.

Vanessa: I just want her to go back to school at some point.

Julia: Then I hope she runs for student council president, you know like there needs to be something.

Vanessa: Sure.

Julia: I don't need them to fight. I just need something to happen.

Vanessa: That's fair, that's fair. Did you have a moment of genuine enjoyment in this chapter?

Julia: Oh yeah, I loved when Alice joined the Cullen family and promptly evicted Edward from the nicest bedroom in the house. I was like, yeah Alice, you're right. He doesn't deserve it, please take that from him.

Vanessa: Yeah. We have a rule in my family that whoever looks best in something gets it. So like that's how I got every shirt of my brother's that I like. Alice probably looks better in that room than Edward.

Julia: Oh, I'm sure about it. Did you have a moment of genuine enjoyment?

Vanessa: I did. I love the love story between Peter and Jasper.

Julia: Say more.

Vanessa: So Peter is this character who also doesn't love murdering, and he disappears with this woman who he loves, and then Jasper has this great line where he's like, "It took a while for Peter to come back for me." And then I think the three of them like go off together, and Peter swings a little back and forth, but it was a love match. My guess is that Jasper got a little jealous of the fact that Peter had another partner. And so he met Alice and he was like, you know polyamory it takes the level of vulnerability and commitment to conversation that I'm not ready for, and so Jasper and Alice went off on their own. But I just really love that-that sweet little moment between Peter and Jasper.

Julia: Yeah I mean the tension around when they were going to get in a little fight and then it turns out Jasper just let him free. Isn't there a saying about that? If you love it let it go.

Vanessa: And if it comes back to you it's yours to keep, right? And Peter comes back.

Julia: And then he let it go again. [laughing] I don't think-maybe he needs to hear the saying.

Vanessa: [laughing] Yeah he only knows the beginning part. But my question for you is what is a Peter-Jasper couple name? Jaster?

Julia: Jeepers!

Vanessa: [giggling] Jeeters. Like Derek Jeter.

Julia: Yeah mine was like a slant rhyme.

Vanessa: [laughing] Okay well I'm really happy that we got like a glimpse of the romantic icon Jeepers for a moment. It was brief, but I loved it.

[transition music]

Vanessa: So, these books are like weirder than we remembered or thought that they would be. And they're keeping these like issues that we're like, "Ah! How do we talk about this in a comedy podcast?" Things like gangrape and cultural appropriation and...

Julia: Pedophilia.

Vanessa: And pedophilia. And so we thought that we would try out a segment that might come and go as we need it called 'A Question or Concern.' Or comment. 'Question, comment, or concern.' That's what I always say at the end of a talk "Any questions, comments, or concerns?"

Julia: So beyond the whole like sexy confederate situation we were dealing with, the language Jasper uses around North and South, speaking to like the unruly violent global capital-s South and the quote-un-quote civilized North. Extremely jarring.

Vanessa: Yeah. And he's talking about in terms of vampires and so I don't know if it's supposed to be like an anti-slavery metaphor. I don't know if this is Stephanie Meyers' way of being like, "People in the South are barbarians and people up North are civilized." Even though Jasper fought for the Confederacy and there's like no comment on that.

Julia: I at first read it as the North and the South in terms of the United States in the Civil War, given that a lot of this chapter takes place during that time. But it ultimately integrates like Mexico City and southern Mexico, so I don't think it's about Confederacy vs. Union.

Vanessa: So it's about racism.

Julia: Yeah. Oh yeah.

Vanessa: A question, comment, and concern I have: it's just a question for Stephenie Meyer if she's listening, if she could write in. Why she chose to make Jasper a member of the Confederate Army. It's really confusing why you would glorify the Confederacy. Like are there monuments Jasper up in Houston? As the boy who went missing, who we thought was 25 and was so tall, but it turns out that he turned 17 while he was fighting. Did it get pulled down by protesters, finally, recently, in the last year? If so, what did it get replaced with?

Julia: I mean, I would hope it gets replaced with like a nice affordable housing complex.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Julia: And then whatever material it was made with could be like melted down and turned into money for reparations. That would be the ideal.

Vanessa: Yeah. Yeah, I like that idea a lot. Or like a woman's clinic. Cuz he gets picked up by all those women and he wasn't taught to see women as dangerous but to protect them.

Julia: That's a direct quote.

Vanessa: Yep.

Julia: For those curious.

Vanessa: So he is like, "do you know how you protect women? You protect their right for choice."

Julia: Yeah. Something useful hopefully.

Vanessa: Okay should we give some advice?

Julia: Yes please.

Vanessa: So my first piece of advice is for Bella. This was the first chapter that it occurred to me that this is a horror book. And I hate horror like I do not think that being scared is fun. But this chapter in particular is right from a horror film. It is the Machiavellian monologue at the end of the movie that a man tells a woman right before he kills her. Bella the call is coming from inside the house. Almost everyone in this room has confessed to you multiple homicides. They are surrounding you. So my advice is get the fuck out of this house. Like get scared of this family. It is horrifying that you are okay with this. I am deeply concerned about you.

Julia: I mean the scary black cover with the torn red ribbon and the creepy tooth-pointy tooth font didn't start to clue you in?

Vanessa: I guess it should have, but I guess I just like believed the hype that this was a love story. Like I now no longer think that Edward and Bella end up happily together. I think Bella ends up murdered and buried.

Julia: I just think that this whole problem would have been solved if there was like a little subtitle under the word Eclipse that said "It's scary!"

Vanessa: [giggling] Or even, I wouldn't mind if it was more specific and it was like "Not for you Vanessa." [Julia laughing] I'd be like, thanks.

Julia: Dedicated to Vanessa, please don't read.

Vanessa: This book will make you unhappy. What about you Julia? What's your first piece of advice?

Julia: So, as I read in the opening line, we find out that Jasper's skin is covered in vampire bites. And this leads me to believe that when vampires fight all they do is fist-fight each other and bite each other. I assume they also pull hair based on like what I'm seeing so far in terms of fair game fighting strategies. And I just think it's kind of undignified that like you're supposed to be these beautiful, angelic creatures and all you do is scrape each other with your nails. It's just not cool. So I was thinking that the vampires should come up with a fun fine weapon to use. I was brainstorming because the two problems are that vampire skin is made of rocks and rocks are hard to break so you can't use a regular sword. The second part of the problem is that we know that when you dismember a vampire it crawls back together, and so you can not like bludgeon a vampire with another vampire arm because that vampire arm is trying to reunite with its beloved owner.

Vanessa: Do you know what? I take it back. This is a love story [Julia laughs] between vampire body parts.

Julia: My idea for a weapon that Jasper should make and hand out to his family is that they extract the teeth of the vampire that they kill and glue them onto a mace. And we know the teeth have poison so it's like a poisonous pointy mace that they can swing around. Teeth are really not that mobile, so they would really have to go through a lot to get reunited. One mace could have teeth from a bunch of different vampires so they're not already close together. I just think that that would be much cooler than them giving them little love bites all the time. Like I want to see some hand-to-hand combat with swords and stuff.

Vanessa: That is the most horrifying image I've ever been asked to imagine.

Julia: You're not liking the tooth-mace idea.

Vanessa: I mean like you know me, I would go another way. I would say, this is undignified and maybe have a choreographer come and do some like Broadway-style fighting like the Jets and the Sharks. Right, with like snapping, like set it to music. But you went the Kill Bill route and like I respect that. My only question is actually a scientific one. Which is that when the teeth are separated from the body are they still venomous?

Julia: It will have at least the first coating of venom when the extraction occurred.

Vanessa: Sure, sure, sure. That's great.

Julia: Excited to see it in the *Eclipse* movie. That we will watch later. [Vanessa laughs] I'm sure it will get put into practice by the end of this book. What's your second piece of advice?

Vanessa: My second piece of advice is to Carlisle. He like picks up the phone and calls Alaska. That's great but like while you have your phone out, call the Volturi and ask questions. Like you've historically had a pretty good relationship with them. I just don't understand why they're like doing all this conjecture and like staying so confused.

Julia: Yeah I mean, hypothetically they're worried that he's going to go come and not only take the two children, but murder Bella. So I think that's the reason that they're staying away.

Vanessa: Here's a thing like robbers call houses to see if someone's home before they rob the house. They-well they did in the 80s when like everyone had a landline, you would like call the house and if somebody answered you wouldn't rob it because someone was home. So like you can just get information from knowing whether or not someone answers the phone. [Julia mm-ing] You go, "Hi is Aro there?" and they go, "Yeah, hold on," and then you hang up.

Julia: I'm really liking the way you're integrating crime strategy into your advice. I think that's really smart.

Vanessa: What about you, Julia? What is your second piece of advice?

Julia: I was just really moved in this chapter to see how little action vampires take to not murder people. Jasper is in extremely desperate straits: he's all alone, he's broken up with Peter, he's broken up with Maria, he's murdering a bunch of people. And we hear that, this is so troubling, Jasper says, "I could feel everything my prey was feeling. I lived in their emotions as I killed them." Like, at that point why not just try to eat a deer? Just see if it works. Like he is extremely desperate but doesn't try something that I think a desperate person should. I just feel like to all the newborn vampires out there alone, listening to this podcast, just like please feel free to like eat a raccoon recently killed on the side of the road and like see if that helps. Because Carlisle figured it out, but I'm not sure why other people haven't yet, when they don't want to kill people. Like blood is out there. You just have to find it.

Vanessa: But, Julia, he didn't know that he wasn't going to feel the feelings of animals. And maybe he thought he would care more about animal feelings than human feelings.

Julia: Wow.

Vanessa: I often care more about animal feelings than human feelings.

Julia: He's like the true anti-speciesist. He's like not stepping on ants.

Vanessa: Right.

Julia: Wow. What a burden to hold, Jasper. I have a lot of sympathy. So maybe don't kill a deer. Just best of luck to you. You can mummify.

[transition music]

Vaness: Instead of doing a reality TV show that exists outside of Twilight in Quarantine, we decided to do today's reality TV segment with a reality TV show that we invented in Twilight in Quarantine: The Conspiracy Theory Desk. So what is gonna happen is that Julie and I are each gonna give you a conspiracy theory that we have about one thing in history that actually was caused by vampires, like epidemics and stuff, and you will vote on Instagram as to which you think is more likely. Okay. So, Julia, what do you have from The Conspiracy Theory Desk today?

Julia: So as we all know, millions of years ago there were dinosaurs. [Vanessa laughs] And one day a meteor came and killed them...so you thought! [Vanessa and Julia laughing] So what really happened was that before human vampires there were dinosaur vampires. And it was actually just an extreme version of vampire dinosaur turf wars that eradicated their population to the degree that it did. Evolution later happened in a similar way but that initial mass extinction event was due to an extremely magnified turf war among dinosaur vampires.

Vanessa: Whoa.

Julia: What's your conspiracy theory?

Vanessa: So we all think that Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were the first two men on the moon in July of 1969. This is not the case! There used to be a vampire coven on the moon. And Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong knew about it and they are vampires and they went up to the moon to see if there were any other vampires left that they could bring to Earth. It was just the first time that man went to the moon and it was going to cause enough of a ruckus and there were TV cameras. And so there is just like actually a long history of like vampire-astronaut Moon-Earth swapsies.

Julia: Lunar vampires.

Vanessa: Yeah. That's how they're so fast. They like learn about like gravitational pull on the moon and then they come to Earth and they're like I know how to beat gravity.

Julia: So the deeper conspiracy here is that vampires are not vampires but aliens.

Vanessa: [laughing] I mean, I am not here to care about where people are from.

Julia: They don't need to breathe. So like space could really work for them.

Vanessa: Yeah. They don't need to breathe, they don't need to eat. And my bigger conspiracy theory is that like Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong were *not* the first people to go to the moon.

Julia: Wow.

Vanessa: So go to Instagram and vote as to which conspiracy theory you believe in. What if they believe in both? That sounds hard for you. You have to decide. Then just vote for who you like better.

Julia: Good. Sew some discord. What did you put in Bella's care package this week?

Vanessa: I am sending her an escape plan. She needs to get out of there, so I'm sending her like maps, GPS like pinging devices, water, food, someone to meet her when she crosses the border and help her get to safety.

Julia: [laughing] She's leaving this horror book.

Vanessa: [laughing] She's getting out of this horror book and moving over to a romance, where she belong.

Julia: Happy for her. If only she would take us with her. [Vanessa laughs]

Vanessa: She's going to stay at nice hotels along the way now too. [Julia laughs] I mean, we have an endless budget. What about you? What are you putting in Bella's care package?

Julia: I think I'm going to get her one of those tape recorders that people use for recording oral storytelling. This is like, as I mentioned, one of the many chapters in a row where people are regaling them with tales of their past and I think she's like one more extended story away from a National Book Award winning not-fiction book.

Vanessa: Oh, I love that.

Julia: She's done at like 80% of the journalism so far. She only has a little bit more to go. I think she's very close.

Vanessa: With the audio clips she could do an extended *This American Life* or *Storycorp* piece.

Julia: Yeah. Go across all mediums.

Vanessa: Bella, you should hire Ariana Nedelman. She's a wonderful producer and editor and she only charges \$1,000,000 an hour. [Julia giggling]

Julia: And I will put in my care package Ariana's million-dollar salary to help work on this project.

Vanessa: That's great.

Julia: What do you think is going to happen next chapter?

Vanessa: What I'm really hoping for is that I'm finally going to get my training montage. They are building a vampire army. They need to train. Esme is going to make matching uniforms with her sewing machine, Rosalie is going to be the drill sergeant, Carlisle will cure the wounded. I'm very excited.

Julia: Okay. Usually you're not so into fighting.

Vanessa: But they're not fighting. They're training to fight.

Julia: Got it, got it.

Vanessa: It's like in *Mulan*. I love 'I'll Make a Man Out of You' but when they actually start fighting the Huns I'm like, "Ugh. Scary. Why are you holding that doll? It used to belong to a kid." [Julia laughing]

Julia: Yeah. I hated that doll scene too. So hopefully we don't get to that point.

[Theme music playing throughout outro]

Vanessa: This has been *Twilight in Quarantine*, a dinosaur turf war from *Hot and Bothered*. This episode and all episodes are produced and edited by Ariana Nedelman and this show was conceived of as a vampire baby by Julie Argy. I'm Vanessa Zoltan and I have the Volturi on speed dial. We are a production of Not Sorry Productions and are distributed by Acast. We'll talk to you next week.