

# Orion Works Sonova Quark

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## Chelsea Quinn Yarbro

September 15, 1942 - August 31, 2025

By Steven Vincent Johnson



**I thank Georgie** for alerting us to Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's recent passing. I also hope others might step up and share a few memories of their own, as I will attempt to do here.

It was back in the 80s when I was lucky enough to be included in a pre-WisCon dinner outing attended

by the WisCon staff, with our Guest of Honor in tow. At that outing, Quinn made a strong impression on my soul. She possessed one of the most intense pairs of eyes I've ever encountered—eyes with a kind of magnitude I wasn't used to seeing, especially when they gazed back at me. It took me a while to stop averting my gaze, particularly when I realized she had noticed I was staring. It felt as if the entirety of my soul's personal secrets had been revealed to Quinn in an instant.

Of course, Quinn was no threat to my fragile ego. That was just my own timidity quaking in its boots. Eventually, I summoned some internal chutzpah and dared to engage her in eye-to-eye conversation. I quickly learned that Quinn was as open-hearted and welcoming as anyone could hope for. And there was plenty to talk about.

It was at WisCon that I first learned Quinn was renowned for her work in horror, science fiction, and mystery. One of her most celebrated series featured the immortal vampire

**Saint-Germain**—a 3,000-year-old being who, rather than embodying evil, turned out to be a profoundly moral soul.

I may be off by a bit, but I believe Quinn's Saint-Germain series helped pioneer the genre of the reluctant, ethical, and tormented vampire—a character cursed with immortality and remorse. In doing so, she opened the door for future authors to explore morally complex vampiric characters in their own universes.

The Saint-Germain novels were often set in richly detailed historical periods, deeply researched by Quinn. St. Germain faces countless challenges from unscrupulous people while trying to avoid drawing attention to himself. His mastery of alchemy allows him to finance a modest, discreet lifestyle by crafting and selling artificial rubies and sapphires.

Being 3,000 years old, he has seen more than enough blood and horror to last an eternity. Quinn makes it clear that he has come to understand the weight of his karma—deeply so. He tries to do good quietly, without fanfare. But in cultures still steeped in cruelty and ignorance, doing good—especially discreetly—is rarely simple, or safe.

[Spoiler Alert paragraph!] One of the most tragic St. Germain episodes I recall involves the senseless saga of a young orphan girl—an innocent child St. Germain had rescued from squalor. He took her in as though she were his own daughter. He sheltered, fed, clothed, and educated her—becoming a doting, loving stepfather. His only goal was to watch her grow into a wise, educated young woman, perhaps even one day giving her away in marriage—if she so chose—to someone who would love and respect her as much as he did. His dream was simple: to

give her a chance at a full, mortal life—from birth to natural death. But when that dream is ripped away by her senseless murder, his grief sends him spiraling back into a darkness he thought he had left behind. He reclaims the violent skills of his youth and delivers justice on his own terms. I'll leave the details of that justice to your imagination.

As a vampire, Saint-Germain still requires the elixir of life—blood—to survive. But unlike others of his kind, he learned to take only what was necessary, leaving his partners unharmed but often imbued with dreamlike memories and fantasies. Never greedy, he takes no more than a wine-glass worth. Sometimes, he even forms honest, long-lasting mutual relationships with those he feeds from.

I drank in these books like wine. And I wanted more.

A year or so before I met Quinn, I noticed a paperback at the UW Bookstore with a cover featuring a Ouija board. Had I known it was one of her works, I might have picked it up. But that cover turned me off. I later learned Quinn wasn't thrilled with the cover either.

What was written inside that paperback pertains to subject close to Quinn's heart—a study of metaphysics. And it's why I've lingered so long on the character, Saint-Germain, in this eulogy. For me, he symbolizes a deeper spiritual reality. In particular, I'm referring to **The Michael Teachings**, where Quinn introduces a mysterious spiritual guide known simply as **Michael**. Some TURBO members may recall I've occasionally referenced these teachings—as have other TURBO members—though perhaps not with as much fervor (but usually with respect).

When I became engaged in learning the Michael Teachings it didn't take long for me to personally interpret Quinn's Saint-Germain character as metaphor—as a symbolic representation of an *Old Soul warrior*, maybe even an *Old King Soul* as described within Michael's terminology. (And a tortured *Old Soul* at that. Not all that uncommon, BTW.) We learn that the character, St. Germain, had long ago passed through the bloodthirsty, reckless stages of a younger vampire's desires and fantasizes and had reached a point of wisdom, reflection, and sorrow. He sought only to treat others as he wished to be treated. But unlike us mortals who, in Michaellean terms, must reincarnate hundreds of times to gain such wisdom, Saint-Germain lived through all

of life's harsh lessons in one extended never-ending immortal lifespan—forced to carry all the memories of countless tragedies and mistakes, of never experiencing the mercy of multiple deaths, each one that could wipe the slate clean. I came to view St. Germain as a symbol of the Oversoul—the immortal self described in the Michael Teachings that watches over all our brief incarnations, and somehow integrates all our mortal lessons, no matter how painful.

Having seen Quinn speak at numerous sci-fi and fantasy panels on vampire lore, I often walked away with a gut feeling—no, a conviction—that somewhere deep in Quinn's soul, she may have believed, or at least wished, that vampires were not merely myth. That perhaps, somewhere, in some form... they do exist. But for obvious reasons, we would never, ever hear of them. I never mustered the courage to ask Quinn directly if my suspicions were accurate. It felt too intrusive. I preferred to respect the possibility that Quinn would have wanted to keep such mysteries to herself—just as I have often wrestled with how much to reveal about my own research into the UFO conundrum (or, as it's now officially called: AIP—Anomalous Interdimensional Phenomena).

Nor did I dare tell Quinn that, in a few of her publicity photos, she bore an uncanny resemblance to a female representation of Uncle Fester. I sincerely hope that my confession gives her a chuckle. And if, by some quirk of the cosmos, the spirit of Quinn decides to retaliate by scaring the bejeezus out of me at some unexpected moment within my mortal life-plan... Well, My Lady—go for it.

I'll probably deserve it.

—Steve J.

Addendum: There's a thoughtful Wikipedia article on **The Michael Teachings**, including useful historical background.

OR

