



Roman Dusk

Chelsea Quinn Yarbro

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Rome is crumbling. The child-emperor, Heliogabalus, diverts the Roman populace with parties, circuses, and celebrations, while his mother and grandmother jockey for power behind the scenes. The government is riddled with scandal and no business is conducted without bribes which grow ever larger. Religions joust for prominence, with factions of Christians seeking to overthrow the ancient Roman pantheon. Courtesans, once honored for their skills and protected by special guards, have become targets of opprobrium.

The vampire Ragozy Germanius Sanct' Franciscus, already subject to extra taxes and regulations because he is a foreigner, falls under the maleficent eye of Telemachus Batsho, a minor functionary who dreams of power and wealth. When Franciscus thwarts his attempts to extort ever-increasing sums from a young Roman of good birth, Batsho swears revenge. Franciscus finds his activities closely monitored and is accused of treason and conspiracy. His friends, threatened with similar scrutiny, abandon him to Batsho's mercies or urge him to leave the Eternal City.

But Franciscus has many ties to Rome. He has taken under his protection a beautiful courtesan who was brutally beaten by the very men who should have been protecting her. She has been the vampire's sustenance for many months.

Franciscus is also held in the city by the plight of the family Laelius. The Domina's health is failing despite the vampire's great medical skills; her son has converted to Christianity and rails against his mother's beliefs; her daughter Ignatia, who has sacrificed her own life to care for her mother, realizes that when her mother dies, her fate will rest in the hands of her increasingly fanatical brother.

Determined to claim pleasure for herself, Ignatia invites Franciscus's attentions, inflaming him with the power of her untapped sexuality. Unfortunately, they are not unobserved, and their simple yet powerful act of love sparks a conflagration that destroys Ignatia's family and nearly brings about the vampire's True Death.

Roman Dusk Details

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Starling says

I think I'm getting tired of this series. I've been reading them since the first one came out. And unlike most paranormal series this one basically has a single plot. Saint-Germain moves into a new area some time in the past. It is generally an interesting place and time. He sets up his household (not so much of that in this book), meets a woman because he requires intimacy in addition to blood to survive (in this case 2 women), things get weird and dangerous (started almost immediately with this book and then turned into two separate threads of weird and dangerous), Saint-Germain gets attacked physically (doesn't always happen) and then he finds a way to leave the area. Sometimes people around him get killed in the process, sometimes not.

Not only won't you get a happy ending to any of her books, you can expect every book to end badly. Sometimes, as with this one, you know that everyone who has survived to the last chapter will be going on with their lives, but for some reason it never occurs to Saint-Germain to get out before everything falls apart.

Because this is a historical paranormal series the places and times are generally interesting. Because this is the 19th or 20th book in the series a lot of the really interesting times have already been taken by earlier books. In this case we are about 200 years into the Current Era, the Roman Empire has begun a downward slide, but is still several hundred years from falling, the current Emperor is one of the better known bad ones, and things in Rome have changed enough from Republican times that there is obvious decadence.

Wesa says

This is not one of Yarbro's better Saint-Germain novels. The story felt forced and the people in the vampire's life were mostly unlikeable. Saint-Germain's actions, when he took his vengeance on those who hurt him and the people he cared for, seemed out of character because, unlike in Tempting Fate when he was crazed with grief, in this book he has a long time when he is recovering his "health" and strength during which to consider his reaction. To me, this makes his vengeance seem far out of balance, and perhaps the character - who I have known and loved for decades now - would actually have attempted to bring the vandals to justice via the legal system.

Michel says

Beter dan de gemiddelde recente Yarbro.

Voor één keer is Roger niet de Igor van het verhaal maar een collega in Egypte. Oh, en gemene christenen, boo hiss. Geen idee hoe dat precies zat met Paulianen versus Petrusianen: dringend eens meer over bijlezen.

Oh, maar voor de rest: een halve dag lezen en het is uit. En een mens heeft bijgeleerd over een interessante periode in de geschiedenis--Elagabalus ftw.

Beverly Kyle says

This was one of the best St Germain books in the series. As I am not a history buff, sometimes the historical and political aspects of these novels are lost on me, but I nevertheless read on because the stories and the characters are so compelling. This novel was no exception and the vampire St Germain showed a side of him rarely seen. He was more human in some respects in this novel than in most of the others.

Bry Jensen says

Hm...

I've come to the conclusion while reading this book that I enjoy Yabro primarily, and sometimes singularly, for her dedication to historicity. Her ability to establish fantastically detail oriented historic backgrounds to play out her tales, so complex that they require glossaries, is a skill to be admired. As a historian with great passion for my subjects, this makes me love her.

I also cannot express fully how much I appreciate her extensive and elevated vocabulary, and her unapologetic tendency to implement it casually and naturally, as if to challenge the reader to uncover the richer, deeper meanings often lost in more common vernacular.

...yet there is still so much I find frustrating!

The pace and structure of this book required getting used to; in the beginning it felt stilted, disorganized, and almost as if written purely from a stream of consciousness. Also, Sometimes, Yabro's subtlety fails her. I appreciate that her vampires are not so bluntly obvious as most, nevertheless it took almost 100 pages for vague references to vampirism, and literally 238 pages for the word vampire to even appear on the pages. Yes, there might have been 19 Saint-Germain books, but they're intended to be able to be read as stand-alones that require this information.

Most importantly, the plot was lacking and very slow moving. In fact, there wasn't that much of it - the actual action of the book was relatively minimal. But for all its other elements and Yabro's style, the book might have been at least 100 pages shorter. Saint-Germain, though romanticized and appealing in many ways, still fell a bit flat for me, but are other times to explore that opinion.

Overall, the richness of the history still made this book a win for me, but it was a close call.

Michele says

Ancient Rome is possibly my favorite setting for the Comte St. Germain. An excellent story, with Yabro's usual attention to detail and high-quality research.

Kathy says

As Rome is at the end of its influence... Saint-Germain stays in his female vampire friends' villa in Rome... the politics of a disintegrating government... with the emperor a child who is self indulgent, with local bureaucrats over taxing and taking bribes... and the beginning of Christianity - though the fanatics in this story are glorified thugs...

he is involved with an older woman with poor health and hysteria, and her grown daughter sacrificing to care for her (Saint Germain takes her as one of his special lovers)... and he is involved with a courtesan, once revered in Rome, but the tide has turned... she is beaten by the Christian zealots, healed by Saint-Germain...

Kyra says

Beautifully written - the extensive vocabulary is to die for - interesting historical period, likeable characters ... but basically this book set in the twilight of the western Roman Empire - and the first one I have read from the series, I admit - is like a long well-mannered tea party. Jane Austen with vampires. But NICE vampires. Sexy vampires.

I will reserve judgement until I read another book in the series. But oh the language ! Delicious. Yum.

Samantha Brady says

I loved this book. Saint Germain rules. I loved it when Roger is in the book. Especially when Saint Germain needed him the most like he did in this one.

Spoiler alert....

You see a whole different side of Saint Germain that you don't see in the other books. Taking revenge out on those boys like he did. I am personally glad that he did because they would have never been caught with the law the way it was then.

End of spoiler....

I love this character so much that I wrote a poem about him and his loneliness and it will be published soon. I just wished that I could find him and I know he isn't real, to tell him he is loved. But that is why I wrote the poem. I will let you all know when it is published and where soon.

Patty Collins says

St. Germain is in 8th century Rome when the Roman Empire was degenerating into moral decay. He is living in his friend and fellow vampire's home while she is away in Upper Italy. He becomes the object of jealousy to one of the decuria who collect taxes and are very corrupt themselves. This person starts an investigation into St. Germain's affairs. He is treating the mother of a young woman who becomes infatuated with him

leading the mother to report to the officials that he is a bad influence. The son of this family has become a Christian and has been burning down homes of non-Christians. When he finds his sister and St. Germain together he becomes enraged which leads him to set fire to his own home, killing his mother and seriously wounding St. Germain. He is eventually cleared of all charges by the Curia but is forced to leave Rome for Alexandri where he has businesses. The nice thing about these stories is that the author has researched the era very well and you learn about life in whatever century the story is set.

A. E. S. says

Pros: This is actually a LOT better than the last two or three Germaines I have been reading, either that or Saint-Germain is growing on me. The plot is the contention between the Old Guard of Rome and their gods, and the new emergence of Christianity - and its worst fan club of hypocrites therein.

Cons: I feel that this book could have been a bit shorter, although it is a fast read. There are a lot of details about the Roman Games that didn't seem to add to the plot, except to display the wasteful excess and death of the times. Looking forward to the next installment! (NOTED: Yes, I am reading these books in the best chronological order I can, which actually helps me though it's not required).

Wiley says

Freelance Internet Marketing campaign

Nancy Laney says

St. Germain (Rome, 218-220) Book 20

Rich says

WANTED,Saint Germain #19
