

Quilandria:
A Novel about Minds, Ideas, and Other Worlds

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Critical Acclaim for *Quilandria*

Hip, haunting, and hilarious... I couldn't put it down. Do we exist simply to propagate our genes? Or our ideas? Or is our task here in the material world to purify our souls so as to ascend to subtler planes of spiritual attainment? The author's decision to pit these views against one another in a story was a stroke of brilliance, because it leaves the reader with not just an intellectual understanding of them, but a feel for how they each shed light on everyday life. Made me wish that I too was a playful, irresponsible twenty-something with time to sit around and ponder the meaning of it all!

--Sir Reginald Clark, Director of the Interdisciplinary Institute for Everything

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It is true, as one character in this book claims, that fresh vegetables have auras while cooked ones do not. These auras are clearly visible using Kirlian photography, or detected by individuals such as myself who are sensitive to the whims of plants. However, it is not possible to rejuvenate your cooked vegetables with reconstituted aura extract, as one of the characters implies. To my knowledge, there is no such product on the market.

--Dr. Susan Sply, Plant psychiatrist and internationally recognized expert on out-of-plant experiences

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Quilandria is an enigma surrounded by a riddle buried in a mystery veiled in sensuous membranes shrouded by avocado peel.

--Vanna Cadenza, lead singer of the rock group *Her Eyes Said Yes*

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This book is hot! The time for it is *now*. It's the unprecedeted blend of science and spirituality the world is craving, vividly rendered in a 'story' truer than the actual facts, as heartwarming as it is heart-wrenching. If I weren't a figment of the author's imagination, I'd pounce on it! (Though I might suggest she can—so to speak—the vegetable jokes.)

--Marshall Sunbold, Stupendously Successful Editor

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Just when I got used to the idea that to keep up with the Joneses you have to bolster your theories with fancy computer programs, things change again. Now your computer program has to be explained by fictional characters that gloat unabashedly over its success. And the characters can't be everyday people; they must be people who, for instance, experience "an unforgettable night involving an earthquake, an orgy, and the ingestion of a strange pollen from the stamen of an artificial neon flower." I write to you as one who has witnessed a trendy infiltration of sensationalism and flashy gimmickry into science, and the deleterious results thereof. ... I am unconvinced that your antics work either for the benefit of you or your 'memes,' and I am wary

of the effects of such trends on science at large. That is not to say I think there is no place for your ideas, which are occasionally provocative. After all, in my dull life, an earthquake hardly ever lands on the same evening as an orgy, so the addition of pollen from a neon flower would be somewhat extraordinary, and I might as well read about it.

--Concerned Reader

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Part One

Near Future, Montreal

1. Secrets of the Spherical Glass Doorknob

“Get down here, Scribe,” Raj called up. “Showtime in ten minutes. Whoa, insane. Tens of thousands of viewers already waiting.”

“Be there in a flash,” Stella called down.

She drew the sapphire gown from the back of her closet. It smelled faintly musty, and was laden with bittersweet memories, but it was the only piece of silk clothing she’d ever owned, and putting it on made her feel regal as ever. And it was no longer tight. Perhaps she’d lost weight since last time.

She brushed her onyx hair, admiring the pale green tint and oddly angular ceiling of her new bedroom. She could have moved back into her old room, but it was good to be making a fresh start in this one. Nothing could ever be like before.

She closed the bedroom door, which had a spherical, glass doorknob that offered a distorted, upside-down reflection of everything around it. Unforgettable moments had been reflected in that doorknob. One of the other graduate students in the physics department was always talking about how time is an illusion, and if that was true, there was a sense in which those moments were forever suspended in the doorknob. Peering now at her distorted, upside-down self, she recalled how after her world fell apart when she was ten, the sight of glass had bothered her. Glass had seemed to want to flow, to gush, to wash away its impurities. Almost as if her younger self had somehow known that glass retains the disordered chemical structure of a liquid.

She walked carefully down the staircase so as not to trip over the cascading fabric. Something cracked open inside her at the sound of Raj’s familiar intro music: an electronic soundscape of tinkling bells, singing bowls, African drums, and strains of harp. The music made it real. They were actually doing this. She wiped a tear from the corner of her eye with the sleeve of her gown.

As she entered the living room, Seung-Gong, ready with his camera, eyes glistening, gave her a knowing smile. At the opposite corner, Raj was seated at a rack of electronic music equipment, next to a drum set in the corner of the living room. Behind him was the ball wall, as it had come to be called: a wall lavishly covered with white cement, and studded with round river rocks and hundreds of tiny, iridescent resin spheres that abutted one another like sea foam. It had an arched doorway into the dining area, and an arched window looking into the kitchen.

Raj was tapping a pen on the music rack. A pen had once jabbed through flesh, again, and again, and again. Along with the others, that memory was no longer imprisoned. It was free. It was what it was. Just part of the miraculous process of minds and worldviews evolving.

“Let’s get started!” Raj said, running his hand through his lustrous locks, which swirled

like an unkempt galaxy.

He waved Stella over to a tasseled cushion on a futon draped with plum-coloured satin and a gold chiffon scarf. Her dress was so voluminous it was easy to sit cross-legged on the cushion.

Raj handed Stella a mic, and gave Seung-Gong a thumbs up to signal it was time to start filming. Seung-Gong nodded.

Raj banged the gong that hung above the fireplace mantle. As the gong reverberated, he picked up his own mic and cast a deliberate glance around the room before speaking.

“Welcome, devotees of the Groove. We’re thrilled you’re here, and we’re overjoyed to be back.” His golden voice, lightly enhanced with electronic reverb, was more melodious than ever. “Let us begin. In ancient times, music and dance were forms of worship, the earliest expressions of devotion to the Groove. We now pay tribute to this legacy. This show guides the seeker, the woebegone, the pilgrim on a rhythm quest, to cultivate a personal relationship with Groove.”

He turned and gestured toward Stella. “I now introduce to you: the Sacred Scribe of Cosmic Vibe.”

Stella smiled serenely into the camera. “Thank you, Raj,” she said. “Yes, so good to be back. Glory to Groove in the highest.”