

# Drachenfels

A Genevieve novel by Jack Yeovil

**DARK AND TERRIBLE** secrets may be found lurking within the cities of the Old World and the savage wilderness that surrounds them. Genevieve Dieudonné, vampire heroine of Drachenfels, battles to outwit adversaries both magical and mundane, human and beast, in this series of three linked novellas: *Stage Blood*, *The Cold Stark House* and *Unicorn Ivory*.



JACK YEOVIL is a pseudonym for popular novelist Kim Newman. The Genevieve books were first published by Games Workshop in the late 1980s and quickly gained a cult reputation amongst Warhammer and fantasy fans alike.

*Drachenfels* can be purchased in all better bookstores, Games Workshop and other hobby stores, or direct from this website and GW mail order.

Price £5.99 (UK) / \$6.95 (US)

**Bookshops:** Distributed in the UK by Orca. Distributed in the US by Simon & Schuster/Pocket Books.

**Games & hobby stores:** Distributed in UK and US by Games Workshop.

**UK mail order:** 0115-91 40 000

**US mail order:** 1-800-394-GAME

**Online:** Buy direct care of Games Workshop's web store by going to [www.blacklibrary.co.uk/store](http://www.blacklibrary.co.uk/store) or [www.games-workshop.com](http://www.games-workshop.com)

**PUBLISHED BY THE BLACK LIBRARY**

Games Workshop, Willow Road, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK

Copyright © 2001 Games Workshop Ltd. All rights reserved.

Reproduction prohibited, in any form, including on the internet.

UK ISBN: 1 84154 152 4

US ISBN: 0 7434 1170 6



*This is an excerpt from DRACHENFELS by Jack Yeovil, published by The Black Library in 2001.*

*Copyright © Games Workshop Ltd 2001. All rights reserved.*

*Reproduction prohibited, in any form, including on the internet.*

*For more details email [publishing@games-workshop.co.uk](mailto:publishing@games-workshop.co.uk) or go to the Black Library website <http://www.blacklibrary.co.uk>*



CONSTANT DRACHENFELS, the Great Enchanter, had been old, had been ancient, long before the first birth of Genevieve Sandrine du Pointe du Lac Dieudonné. And that, she never allowed herself to forget, had been six hundred and thirty-eight years ago.

In true life, Genevieve's home had been the city of Parravon, in the east of Bretonnia, where her father was minister to the First Family and her sisters were counted among the greatest beauties of a court renowned throughout the Known World for its great beauties. Drachenfels had been more often abroad among men in those days and went to show his metal-masked face in the courts and palaces of Bretonnia and the Empire.

The stories were fresher then. Tales were told in a whisper of his vast debauches, of his inconceivable crimes, of his devastating rages, of his titanic sorceries, of his terrible revenges and of his single defeat. Drachenfels had been one of the powers of the world. She supposed, though half-forgotten, he still was. He had only been bested once, at the hands of Sigmar Heldenhammer. Strange to think that Sigmar had been deemed a man then. A hero, but still a man. Now, the priests called him the patron deity of the Empire. Sigmar was gone, no one knew where, but the monster he had once humbled was still here. The evil of Drachenfels was still very much with the world.

As a girl of twelve, four years before the Dark Kiss, Genevieve had seen Drachenfels in person. He rode through Parravon with his army of the dead, bedecked in gorgeous silks, wearing his mask of gold. The heads of the First Family's

militia captains bobbed open-mouthed on pikes. An assassin dashed from the crowds and was torn to pieces by Drachenfels's rotting lieutenants. Daemons danced in the air, bearing away pieces of the martyred daggerman. Genevieve hid behind her sisters' skirts, but got a good look all the same.

Her father's friends had discussed Drachenfels in her presence. His origins were unknown, his weaknesses unknown, his powers unlimited, his evil depthless. Even his face had not been seen by living man. She had tried to conceive of a hideousness under the mask, a hideousness so dreadful that it would make the skull-and-meat faces of Drachenfels's armies seem attractive. Or, as her sister Cirielle suggested, a handsomeness so awesome that all who gazed upon it were struck dead in an instant. Cirielle was always the silly one. She had died of the plague some fifty years – a heart's beat, really – later.

Drachenfels had his tribute from Parravon, but slew the First Family nevertheless. As an example. Genevieve's father also perished, served with other public officials as a meal for one of the Enchanter's attendant daemons. Six hundred years later, Genevieve could summon little thirst for vengeance. Her father would have lived another twenty, thirty years – thirty-five at the most – and would still be lost to her memory. It's hard to think the premature death of a mayfly any great tragedy. She sometimes found the faces of her parents, her sisters, her friends at court, popping into her mind. But mostly those were lost times, a life that had happened to someone else.

A few years later, years that were now minutes to her memory, Chandagnac came to her uncle's house. Chandagnac with his dark eyes and plaited beard, his needle-like teeth and tales of the world's youth. She received the Dark Kiss, and was born a second time, born into this half-life.

Chandagnac was dead, too. He had always been too flamboyant for their kind and made too many important enemies. Finally, the priests of Ulric hunted him down and pinned him to the ground with a length of hawthorn while they sawed off his head with a silver scimitar. That was three hundred years ago. She was the last of his get that she knew of. There were many others older than she, but they lived far to the east, on

the borders of Kislev, and kept to themselves. Occasionally, mindless dead things would come to the Crescent Moon, drawn by her presence, and she would turn them out, or put an end to them, depending on how she felt. Sometimes, they could be a nuisance.

Centuries had passed and everything had changed many times. Empires, dynasties, wars, alliances, cities, a few great men, numberless little ones, monsters, arts and sciences, forests; all had come and gone like the seasons of the year.

Genevieve was still walking the earth. And so was Drachenfels.

She wondered if he felt the same suppressed kinship for her that she felt for him. There were songs that they alone of all the world would recognize, once-famous names that they alone knew, extinct animals the taste of whose meat they alone could recall. Probably, he did not feel for her. Probably, he was only dimly aware of her. She was what she was, at best the cousin of humanity, but Drachenfels was beyond even that. He had ceased to be any kind of a man long before he rode into Parravon. The face he kept beneath his bland collection of metalwork masks would not remotely resemble anything else that drew breath.

Tonight, one way or another, she would look upon that face. Perhaps long-dead-and-dust Cirielle was right after all. Perhaps she would not survive the sight. And perhaps, after six and a half centuries, she would not mind dying all that much.

She had followed Drachenfels's career down through the ages, kept a mental note of the kingdoms sacked and bled dry, the plagues unleashed, the tributes exacted, the daemons set free. He had been quiet for a few centuries now, quiet in his impregnable fortress in the Grey Mountains. Some believed Drachenfels dead, but there were too many evidences of his continued handiwork throughout the Old World. The wizards who frequented the Crescent Moon would talk about him sometimes, about the disturbances he was making in that sphere beyond time and space where the greatest of enchanters venture in search of the vast principal beings of the universe. They knew enough not to sign up with Oswald's expedition. Some said he was too old to be the monster he once was, but Genevieve knew that immortals grow rather

than diminish in strength as they put years behind them. Some ventured that the Great Enchanter was voyaging within himself, trying to plumb the depths of his own darkness, to summon the worst of his personal daemons. One song, sung only by a strange-visaged Bretonnian minstrel, suggested Drachenfels was meditating his many sins, finding the strength to battle again with Sigmar and that this time he would vanquish the wielder of the warhammer forever, bringing about the end of all things.

She had heard all manner of rumours, but none had touched her more than any other tavern gossip until Prince Oswald von Konigswald, son of the elector of Ostland, walked into the Crescent Moon. He told her that Constant Drachenfels was preparing to return to the world and take over the Empire, and that the Great Enchanter would have to be stopped before he could bring down fiery doom upon an entire continent.

That had been three months ago. Oswald was a year or two older than she had been when Chandagnac had kissed her. She supposed him a handsome youth and could see around him the aura of the great and noble man he would grow into. He would be elector after his father, of course. The elector of Ostland could sometimes sway the others completely and hold the course of the Empire in his hands. Never had a candidate opposed by Ostland succeeded. Never. Oswald's father lived in a comparatively modest palace, but upon occasion Luitpold himself came to his court as if the elector were Emperor and he the supplicant. If Luitpold's son, Karl-Franz, were to succeed him on the throne, he would need the support of Oswald's father. Indeed, since the elector had married late and was now nearing the end of his middle years, the Emperor would soon need the support of Prince Oswald.

Genevieve had heard that the prince was a serious youth, a young man capable of outstripping all his tutors in everything from gastronomy to philosophy, and who was as skilled with the Estalian guitar as with the longbow of Albion. The tavern jesters told jokes about the grave-faced boy who had, it was rumoured, once shamed Luitpold into withdrawing a proposed edict against harlotry by asking if the Emperor intended to set an example by burning at the stake a certain sub-

stantial Tilean fortune teller much in evidence at court functions since the demise of the lady empress. And Genevieve had read, with interest, a slender but acclaimed volume of verse in the classical style, published anonymously but later revealed, through a careless boast on the part of the elector's tutor-in-residence Sieur Jehan, to be the work of Oswald von Konigswald. Nevertheless, she had been unprepared for his ice-clear eyes, the strength of his handshake and the directness of his speech.

In the back room of her tavern, Oswald had offered her his wrist. She had declined. Aristocratic blood was too rich for her. She depended upon the friendless, the unmourned. In Altdorf, there were many without whom the Empire, indeed the world, would be much improved. And they had been her meat and drink since she had decided to settle down.

Sieur Jehan was with the prince, a bagful of scrolls and bound books with him. And Anton Veidt, the bounty hunter who cared for his weapons as others care for their women. Oswald knew about her father. Oswald knew things about her that she had herself forgotten. He offered her a chance for revenge and, when that hadn't been a temptation, appealed to her need for variety, for change. The young Sigmar must have been like this, she thought, as she sensed the excitement Oswald was suppressing. All heroes must have been like this. Suddenly, rashly, she longed for a taste of him, a flavour of the pepper in his blood. She didn't mention her rush of lust, but somehow she knew that he had seen the desire in her, and answered her longing with a need of his own, a need that would have to be postponed until after the accomplishment of his current mission. She looked into his eyes, into the eyes in which her face was not reflected and, for the first time in centuries, felt alive again.

Sieur Jehan laid out the proofs of Drachenfels's recent doings. He read aloud the testament, obtained through a medium, of a wizard who had lately been found flayed and boneless in his chambers. The dead sorcerer alleged that all manner of magical and daemoniacal forces were converging on the fortress of Drachenfels, and that the Great Enchanter was reaching new levels of power. Then the scholar talked of a plague of dreams and visions that had been reported by the

priests of all the gods. A masked man was seen striding over a blasted land, between the fires that had been cities and the deserts that had been forests. The dead were piled high as mountains and the rivers were nine-parts blood to one-part water. The forces of evil were gathering and Drachenfels was at their heart. Oswald intended to face the monster in his lair and vanquish him forever. Again, he offered her the chance to join the party and this time she relented. Only then did he reveal that his father, and presumably Emperor Luitpold himself, had refused to believe Sieur Jehan's evidence and that he was pursuing this venture unsupported by any Imperial forces.

They set out from Altdorf for the Grey Mountains the next day.

Later, others joined. Rudi Wegener, the bandit king of the Reikwald Forest, threw in his lot with them and helped fight off the possessed remnants of his own comrades during one long, dark night in the thick of the woods. Along with Rudi came Stellan the Warlock, who had lived with the bandits and was determined to pit his magics against those of the Great Enchanter, and Erzbet, the dancer-assassin from the World's Edge who recited every night like a prayer the names of those she had killed. Ueli and Menesh had been recruited at Axe Bite Pass, where an entire community of peaceful peasants had turned out to be daemons in disguise, and where young Conradin, Oswald's squire, was spitted and eaten by an altered ogre. The dwarfs had been travelling south, but were willing to pledge their swords for gold and glory. Heinroth, whose soul was eaten away by the murder of his children, joined them soon after. A raiding party of orcs from the fortress had made sport with his two little sons and killed them afterwards. He had vowed to scar himself with his serrated blade every day he let Drachenfels live, and grimly sliced at himself every morning. One day, they woke up to find Heinroth turned inside out, with words carved into his bones.

#### GO BACK NOW.

None of them had heard a thing, and the sharp-witted Veidt had been standing guard.

Through it all, Oswald had been at their head, undaunted by each new horror, keeping his followers together – which in the case of Veidt and the dwarfs or the licentious Erzbet and

the fanatically ascetic Heinroth hadn't been easy – and forever confident of the eventual outcome. Sieur Jehan told her that he had been like this since childhood. The scholar evidently loved the boy as a son and chose to follow Oswald when the prince's real father had refused to listen. These were the last great days, Genevieve had thought, and their names would live in ballads forever.

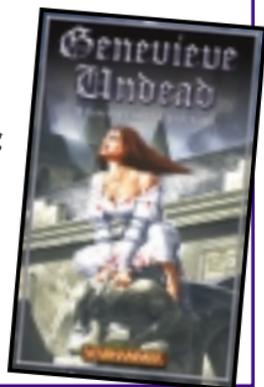
Now, Conradin was dead. Sieur Jehan was dead. Heinroth was dead. Ueli was dead. And before the night was over, others – maybe all of the party – would be joining them. She hadn't thought about dying for a long time. Perhaps tonight Drachenfels would finish Chandagnac's Dark Kiss, and push her at last over the border between life and death.

Oswald walked straight up to the open gates of the fortress, looked casually about and signalled to them. He stepped into the dark. Genevieve followed him. And the others came after her.

**Discover what horrors lurk deeper in the  
fortress of the Great Enchanter  
in DRACHENFELS!**

Also by Jack Yeovil  
**Genevieve Undead**

*DARK AND TERRIBLE secrets may be found lurking within the cities of the Old World and the savage wilderness that surrounds them. Genevieve Dieudonné, vampire heroine of Drachenfels, battles to outwit adversaries both magical and mundane, human and beast, in this series of three linked novellas: Stage Blood, The Cold Stark House and Unicorn Ivory.*



*More Warhammer from the Black Library*

· **WARHAMMER NOVELS** ·

HAMMERS OF ULRIC by Dan Abnett,  
Nik Vincent & James Wallis

GILEAD'S BLOOD by Dan Abnett & Nik Vincent

THE WINE OF DREAMS by Brian Craig

· **GOTREK & FELIX** ·

TROLLSLAYER by William King

SKAVENSLAYER by William King

DAEMONSLAYER by William King

DRAGONSLAYER by William King

BEASTSLAYER by William King

VAMPIRESLAYER by William King

· **KONRAD** ·

KONRAD by David Ferring

SHADOWBREED by David Ferring