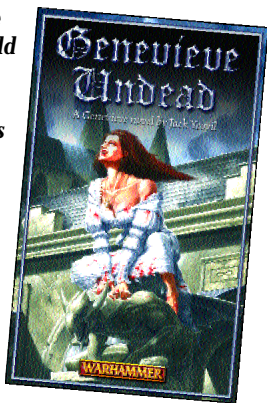


Genevieve Undead

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.

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

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UPON THIS PEAK in the Grey Mountains, there had once been a castle. It had stood against the sky, seven turrets like the talons of a deformed hand. This had been the fortress of Constant Drachenfels, the Great Enchanter. Now there was only a scattering of rubble that drifted like snow into the valley, spreading out for miles. Explosives had been placed throughout the structure, and detonated. The fortress of Drachenfels had shaken, and collapsed piece by piece.

Where once there had been a stronghold, there was now a ruin. The intention had been to destroy completely all trace of the master of the castle. Stone and slate could be smashed, but it was impossible to blow away like chaff the horrors that lay in memories.

Buried in the ruins for these five years was the Animus, a thinking creature with no true form. Just now, it resided in a mask. A plain oval like a large half-eggshell, wrought from light metal, so thin as to be almost transparent. It had features, but they were unformed, undefined. To gain character, the mask needed to be worn.

The Animus was not sure what it was. Constant Drachenfels had either created it or conjured it. A homunculus or a spirit, it owed its existence to the Great Enchanter. Drachenfels had worn the mask once, and left something of himself behind. That gave purpose to the Animus.

It had been left in the ruins when Drachenfels departed the world for one reason. Revenge.

Genevieve Dieudonné. Detlef Sierck. The vampire and the play-actor. The thwarters of the great design. They had destroyed Drachenfels, and now they must themselves be destroyed.

The Animus was patient. Time passed, but it could wait. It would not die. It would not change. It could not be reasoned with. It could not be bought off. It could not be swayed from its purpose.

It sensed the disturbance in the ruins, and knew it was being brought closer to Genevieve and Detlef.

The Animus did not feel excitement, just as it did not feel hate, love, pain, pleasure, satisfaction, discomfort. The world was as it was, and there was nothing it could do to change that.

As the moons set, the disturbance neared the Animus.

AS THEY MADE love, Genevieve licked the trickle of blood from old wounds in his throat. Over the years, her teeth had put permanent marks on him, a seal. Detlef had taken to wearing high collars, and all his shirts had tiny red stains where they rested against her bites.

His head sunk deep into the pillow, and he looked at the ceiling, vision going in and out of focus as she suckled his blood. His hand was on her neck, under her blonde curtain of hair. They were joined loin to loin, neck to mouth. They were one flesh, one blood.

He had tried to paint the experience with words, in one of his still-secret sonnets, but had never managed to his satisfaction to catch the butterfly feelings, pain and pleasure. In many ways his chosen tool – language – failed him.

Genevieve made him forget the actresses he sometimes took to his bed, and wondered if she too found this joining more special than her brief liaisons with young bloods. Their partnership wasn't conventional, hardly even convenient. But even as he felt the darkness gathering, this ancient girl was the candleflame to which he must cling. Since Drachenfels, they had been together, sharing secrets.

A thrill shot through him, and he heard her gasp, blood bubbling in the back of her throat, knifepoint teeth scratching the leathered skin of his neck. They rolled over, together, and she clung to him as their bodies joined and parted. There was blood between them, and sweet sweat. He looked at her smiling face under his in the gloom, and saw her lick the red from her lips. He felt himself climaxing, first in the soles of his feet, then...

His heart hammered. Genevieve's eyes opened, and she shuddered, overlapping teeth bared and bloody. He propped himself

above her, elbows rigid, and collapsed, trying to keep his weight off her. Their bodies slipped apart, and Genevieve eased herself forwards, almost clambering over his bulk, pressing her face to his cheek, her hair falling over his face, kissing him. He pulled the quilts up around them, and they nestled in a cocoon of warmth as the sun rose behind the curtains.

For once, their sleep came at the same time.

With the play and the party and their private embraces, they'd both been awake the night through. Detlef was exhausted, Genevieve in the grip of the vampire lassitude that came over her every few weeks.

His eyes closed, and he was alone in the dark of his mind.

He slept, but his thoughts still raced. He needed to work on the swordfight to prevent more accidents. And he would have to give thought to Illona, to balance the blossoming Eva's performance. And the second act could use delicate pruning. The comic business with the Tsar's minister was just a tiresome left-over from Tiodorov.

He dreamed of changing faces.

THIS HIGH IN the Grey Mountains the air was as sharp as a razor; as he inhaled, he felt its cutting pass in his lungs. Trying desperately not to wheeze and thus lose his habitual decorum, Bernabe Scheydt completed his mid-morning devotions to the gods of Law: Solkan, Arianka and Alluminas. At the dig, the first thing he had ordered was the erection of a sundial. A fixed point on the world, shadow revolving precisely with the inexorable movement of sun and moons, the sundial was the perfect altar for worship of order.

'Master Scheydt,' said Brother Jacinto, touching his own forehead in a mark of respect, 'there was a subsidence in the night. The ground has fallen in where we were digging yesterday.'

'Show me.'

The acolyte led him to the place. Scheydt was used to hopping around the ruin, judging which lumps of rubble were sound enough to be stepped on. It was important not to fall over. Every time someone so much as tripped, two or three of the workforce deserted in the night. The locals remembered Drachenfels too well, and feared his return. Every slightest mishap was laid to the lingering spirit of the Great Enchanter. Many more, and the expedition would be reduced to Scheydt and the acolytes the

arch-lector had spared him. And acolytes dug a lot less well than the mountain men.

The superstitious fever of the locals was nonsense. At the beginning of the expedition, Scheydt had invoked the dread name of Solkan and performed a rite of exorcism. If any trace of the monster lingered, it was banished now to the Outer Darkness. Order reigned where there had once been chaos. Still, there had been 'incidents.'

'Here,' said Jacinto.

Scheydt saw. A half-rotten wooden beam was balanced over a square pit. A few slabs angled into the edges, like the teeth of a giant. An earthy, shitty, dead thing smell fumed up from the hole.

'It must have been one of the cellars.'

'Yes,' Scheydt agreed.

The earliest-rising workmen stood around. Jacinto was the only one of the acolytes up from their comparatively comfortable village lodgings this morning. Brother Nachbar and the others were poring over and cataloguing the expedition's earlier finds.

Back at the university in Altdorf, the arch-lector must be pleased with the success of this dig. The acquisition of knowledge, even knowledge of the evil and unholy, was one way in which the cult of Solkan imposed order upon chaos.

'We must pray,' Scheydt declared. 'To ensure our safety.'

He heard a suppressed groan. These peasants would rather be digging than praying. And they would rather be drinking than digging. They did not understand the Law, did not understand how important order and decorum were to the world. They were only here because they feared Solkan, master of vengeance, as much or more than they feared the ghosts of the castle.

Jacinto was down on his knees, and the others, grumbling, followed him. Scheydt read out the Blessing of Solkan.

'Free me from the desires of my body, guide me in the path of the Law, instruct me in the ways of seamliness, help me smite the enemies of order.'

Since he had embraced the cult, Scheydt had been rigid in his habits. Celibate, vegetarian, abstinent, ordered. Even his bowel movements were decided by the sundial. He wore the coarse robe of a cleric. He raised his hand to no one but the unrighteous. He prayed at perfectly defined intervals.

He was in balance with himself, and with the world as it should be.

The prayer concluded, Scheydt examined the hole in the ground.

The arch-lector had sent him to Drachenfels with orders to search out items of spiritual interest. The Great Enchanter had been a very evil man, but he'd had an unparalleled library, a vast collection of articles of power, a store of the most arcane secrets.

Only by understanding Chaos, could the cult of Solkan impose order. It was important to carry the battle to the enemy, to meet sorcery with cleansing fire, to root out and destroy the devotees of unclean gods.

Only the strongest in mind could qualify for this expedition, and Scheydt was honoured by his selection as its director.

'There's something down there,' Jacinto said, 'catching the light.'

The sun had risen, and was shining now into the cavity. An object reflected. It was the shape of a face.

'Get it,' Scheydt said.

The acolyte followed the order. Jacinto knew his place on the sundial. Two of the workmen lowered the young man into the cavity on a rope, and then hauled him back out. He handed the article he had taken from the floor of the pit to Scheydt.

It was a delicate metal mask.

'Is it anything?' Jacinto asked.

Scheydt was not sure. The object felt strange, warm to the touch as if it retained the heat of the sun. It was not heavy, and there was no place for a cord to bind it to a head.

His hands tingled as he held the mask up in front of him. He looked through the eyeholes. Beyond the mask, the acolyte's face was distorted. Jacinto seemed impossibly to be sneering at his master, tongue poked out, hands flapping by his ears, eyes crossed.

A flare of wrath went off in Scheydt's heart as he rested the mask against his skin. At once, something leaped into his skull, fastening on his brain. The mask was stuck to his face like a layer of paint. His cheeks convulsed, and he felt the metal move with his twitch.

He saw Jacinto truly now, stumbling back away from him.

He was still Bernabe Scheydt, cleric of Solkan. But he was something else too. He was the Animus.

His hands found the acolyte and lifted him up. With new strength, he held the struggling young man up high and tossed him into the pit. Jacinto crashed through the remaining beam and thumped, broken, against an unseen flagstone floor.

The workmen were running away. Some screamed, some prayed. He enjoyed their fear.

Scheydt, devotee of the Law, tried to claw the mask from his face, horrified at the disorder he'd wrought. But the Animus grew strong in a moment and stayed his hands.

The Animus burrowed into Scheydt, seeking out seeds of excess within his imprisoned heart, encouraging them to sprout. Scheydt wanted a woman, a roast pig, a barrel of wine. The Animus had found desires within its host and was prepared to help him slake them. Then, it would travel.

To Altdorf. To the vampire and the play-actor.

As the workmen tumbled and ran down the mountainside, Scheydt drew a huge breath and laughed like a daemon. The straight trees that poked through the rubble bent in the breeze of laughter.

DETLEF GOT TO the theatre in the mid-afternoon, leaving Genevieve sleeping in their rooms on the other side of Temple Street. The rest of the company were there already, poring over the reviews. The *Altdorf Spieler*, which boasted a circulation in the hundreds, was stridently in favour of *The Strange History of Dr Zhiexhill and Mr Chaida*, and most of the lesser broadsheets followed its line. Felix Hubermann picked out phrases to be flagged across the posters, humming superlatives to himself as he underlined them, 'gripping... powerful... thought-provoking... spine-chilling... bowel-churning... will run and run...'

Guglielmo reported that the house was sold out for the next two months and heavily booked thereafter. The Vargr Breughel had another hit. On the set, Poppa Fritz, the stage-door keeper and an institution in the theatre, was on his knees, trying to scrub blood out of the carpet. Detlef had ordered buckets cooked up in anticipation of a long run. When he had burst the bladder in his glove as he seemed to strike Eva Savinien, the whole audience had been shocked. He recalled the spurt of feeling that came at that moment, as if his own Mr Chaida were gaining the ascendant, encouraging him to delight in horrors beyond imagining.

As he entered the rehearsal room, cast and company broke into congratulatory applause. He bowed, accepting the praise that meant the most to him. Then, he broke the cheer up by producing a scroll with 'a few more notes...'

When he was finished, and the girl who played the innkeeper's daughter had stopped crying, he was ready to consider the business matters Guglielmo Pentangeli thrust at him. He signed a few papers and contracts, including a letter of thanks to the Emperor for continuing his patronage of the Vargr Breughel.

'Does that hurt?' Guglielmo asked.

'What?'

'Your neck. You were scratching.'

It had become an unconscious habit. His bites weren't painful, but sometimes they itched. Occasionally, after Genevieve bled him, he felt tired and drained. But today he was refreshed, eager for tonight's performance.

'Did you know the Chancellor had condemned the play? In the strongest of terms.'

'He said as much last night.'

'It's here in the *Spieler*, look.'

Detlef cast his eyes down the column of blocky print. Mornan Tybalt had branded *Dr Zhiekhill and Mr Chaida* an obscenity, and called for a ban on it. Apparently, the horrors of the play were an invitation to the feeble-minded to act in imitation.

Tybalt cited the thumb tax rioters, the Beast and the Warhawk as the logical results of a theatre exclusively concerned with the dark and the depraved, the violent and the vile.

Detlef snorted a laugh. 'I thought those riots were a logical result of the silly tax Tybalt himself devised.'

'He's still a powerful man at court.'

'A ban isn't likely, not with Prince Luitpold on our side.'

'Be cautious, Detlef,' advised Guglielmo. 'Don't trust patrons, remember...'

He did. Detlef and Guglielmo had met in debtors' prison, after the default of a previous patron. After Mundsén Keep, everything seemed like an unconvincing play. Sometimes he was certain the curtain would ring down and he would wake up back in his cell with the other stinking debtors and no hope of release.

Even a terrible death at the hand of Drachenfels would have been preferable to a life slowly dribbled away in the dark.

'Have Tybalt's comments engraved on a board, and hang them outside the theatre with all our good notices. There's nothing that increases queues like a demand something should be banned. Remember the houses they got after the Lector of Sigmar tried to suppress Bruno Malvoisin's *Seduced by Slaaneshi or: The Baneful Lusts of Diogo Briesach?*'

Guglielmo laughed.

'The Trapdoor Daemon is with us, you know,' Detlef said. 'I'm sure of it.'

'Box Seven has been cleaned out.'

'And...'

Guglielmo shrugged. 'The food was gone, of course.'

'It always goes.'

This was a recurring joke between them. Guglielmo claimed the offerings were taken away by the house-cleaners for their families, and that he should be allowed to put on sale tickets for Box Seven. It was only a question of five seats, but they were the most potentially expensive in the house. Guglielmo, like all ex-debtors, knew the value of a crown, and frequently mentioned how much the Vargr Breughel lost by not letting out Box Seven.

'Any other signs of spectral visitation?'

'That peculiar smell, Detlef. And some slimy stuff.'

'Hah,' Detlef exclaimed, delighted. 'You see.'

'Many places smell funny, and slime is easy to come by in this place. A good fumigation, and some new furniture and the box would be good as new.'

'We need our ghostly patron, Guglielmo.'

'Maybe.'

THE TRAPDOOR DAEMON heard Detlef and Guglielmo discuss him, and was amused. He knew the actor-manager only pretended belief as a pose. Still, there was an obvious kinship between them. Once, years ago, the ghost had been a playwright too. He was touched that Detlef remembered his work. Few others did.

From his space behind the walls, he observed everything, eyes to the peepholes concealed in the scrollwork of a tall cabinet no one ever opened. There were peepholes all over the house, and passageways behind every wall. The theatre had been built at a time when the reigning emperor alternately persecuted and patronised the players, necessitating the incorporation of multiple means of escape into the building. Actors who failed to

please were able to get away without encountering the emperor's halberdiers, who then had a reputation as the harshest dramatic critics in the city.

Several players had got lost in the tunnels, and the ghost had found their skeletons, still in costume, strewn in nooks around the theatre's catacombs.

There was no formal rehearsal this afternoon. Everyone was elated from the night before, and eager to repeat the performance this evening. The test of a hit was its second night, the Trapdoor Daemon knew. Magic can sometimes strike once, and be lost forever. From now on, the company of *The Strange History of Dr Zhiekhill and Mr Chaida* would have to work to live up to their reputation.

Poppa Fritz, who had been with the house almost as long as the ghost, handed out mugs of coffee and flirted with the chorus girls. If anyone was responsible for the endurance of the legend of the Trapdoor Daemon it was Poppa Fritz. The stage-door keeper had encountered him on more than one occasion, usually when in his cups, and always embroidered and elaborated when he told of these incidents.

According to Poppa Fritz, the ghost was twenty feet tall and glowed in the dark, with bright red skulls in the pupils of his huge eyes, and a cloak woven from the hair of slaughtered actresses.

Detlef did what the Trapdoor Daemon would have done, and concentrated on Illona Horvathy and Eva Savinien. They had few scenes together, but the contrast between them was vital to the piece, and last night Eva had outshone Illona to the detriment of the play. The trick was to bring the one up without taking the other down.

Illona was not in a good mood, but tried hard, listening intently to Detlef and following his instructions to the letter. She was intently aware of her position. Having had twins a few years ago, Illona was constantly struggling to keep her figure. Last night she must have realized that in the next Vargr Breughel production, Eva Savinien would be the leading lady and she'd be playing somebody's mother. Reinhardt Jessner, on hand merely to read his lines, gave his wife support, but was careful not to tread in the director's way.

Eva, however, was quietly firm, displaying a backbone of steel in her willowy body. She might step from ingenue to star on the

strength of Nita, and was even more careful than Illona. She was not a flirt exactly, but she knew how to flatter without seeming to, to ingratiate without being unctuous, to further herself without displaying a hint of ambition. In the end, Eva would be a great star, an extraordinary presence. The Trapdoor Daemon had seen that from the first, when she had had the merest walk-on as a dancer in *The Treachery of Oswald*. Since then, she'd grown inside. He felt pride in her achievements, but also nagging doubts.

Just now, while Illona and Detlef were playing the scene in which Sonja first meets and is attracted to Chaida, Eva sat on a table, hugging her knees, watching intently, and Reinhardt Jessner was in a huddle with her, massaging an ache in her back.

Before scaling the mountain, you first conquer the foothills, and the gossip was that Eva would doubtless seduce Reinhardt away from Illona before she tackled Detlef. The Trapdoor Daemon discounted this rumour, for he knew the girl better, understood her more finely. She wouldn't have a personal life until her position was assured.

Then, Detlef was working with Eva, restaging their final argument, smiling encouragement when he wasn't spitting hateful lines at her. After their dialogue was over, Detlef lightly tapped Eva on the skull and she fell down as if mightily smitten. The company applauded, and Reinhardt helped her up. The ghost saw Illona watching her husband intently, chewing a corner of her lip. Eva, without cruelty or encouragement, pushed Reinhardt away, and paid attention to what Detlef told her about her performance, nodding agreement at his points, taking them in.

The Trapdoor Daemon realized he'd not misjudged Eva Savinien. The girl didn't need to bestow any favours. She would advance on talent alone. And yet, despite the affection he felt for her, he could not but realize there was something chilling about the girl. Like some great performers, there might not be any real person inside the roles.

'All right,' Detlef concluded. 'I'm happy. Let's go out there tonight and kill 'em.'

Read the conclusion of this blood-soaked tale of intrigue
and dark adventure in GENEVIEVE UNDEAD.

Also by Jack Yeovil

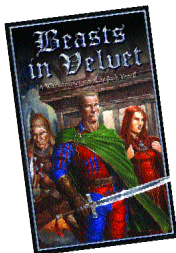
DRACHENFELS, the first Genevieve novel

DETLEF SIERCK, the self-proclaimed greatest playwright in the world, has declared that his next production will be a recreation of the end of the Great Enchanter Drachenfels – to be staged at the very site of his death, the Fortress of Drachenfels itself. But the castle's dark walls still hide a terrible and deadly secret which may make the first night of

Detlef's masterpiece the last of his life.



BEASTS IN VELVET a Warhammer novel



THE DARK, CROWDED streets of Altdorf, greatest city of the Old World, have always teemed with rogues and cut-throats. But now the City Watch is faced with its greatest challenge, a murderer so savage that he is known only as the Beast. Against a background of mounting fear and hysteria, three unlikely allies must work together to track down the killer. A trail of bloody clues leads to the Imperial court – can the Beast be apprehended before the Empire is overwhelmed by the flames of revolution?

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