

Countess Marianna Chevaux

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as appeared in Town Cryer 22.
History transcribed by
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Revenge is Eternal

"The Lords of the Night will not be held to ransom by this whelp!" Count Vusitch declared emphatically, ramming his pale fist down upon the opulent table with a resounding thump. A finely cut wine glass that had been perched upon the table plunged to the rough cobblestone floor and shattered. Remembering his courtly composure, the vampire smoothed his finery and gestured for his ghoulish servants to replace his broken glass with another. They moved forward in a shambolic parody of servitude dressed in a ragged and decrepit interpretation of a manservant's garb.

Quaffing deeply from the blood wine, Vusitch's gaze fell upon Keloch, the hooded vampire who sat passively across from him.

"What say you Friedrich?" Keloch inquired, unmoved by Vusitch's outburst, without looking at the fellow night creature to his right, his voice low and resonating.

Friedrich was a fell and disheveled creature, a lowborn night-stalker bedecked in filthy rags, stained in the brownish grime of dried blood. He held an animalistic glint in his eyes and looked upon Vusitch with obvious contempt.

"This vampire" he began "she stalks her own kin?" The last part was a grunt of sorts.

"She is a rogue," a languid and uniquely alluring voice answered. The lady Isabette was the last of the quartet. She sat alone, removed from the table, hidden by shadows. "She stole a potent artifact from Serutat, my patron, a jewel, the 'Noctu'."

"Your motivation is well noted Lahmian," Vusitch broke in, leaning forward "and we all know of the bounty on her head. But the more immediate danger is her killing of our brethren here in Mordheim," he explained spreading his arms wide, indicating the ruined coaching inn where their negotiations were taking place, where blood-drained corpses were already growing cold in the shadows, Vusitch's ghouls gnawing eagerly whenever their master's attention was elsewhere. "And our proposed alliance."

"Indeed she is a dark threat to our operations here," Keloch concurred.

"And there is vengeance to be wrought also, Keloch!" Isabette demanded in an uncharacteristic show of emotion. "My mistress has sent emissaries to the city. As we speak, they are readying by the south-east quarter, where she was last sighted and Serutat herself will arrive on these shores in mere days, lest she must exact her vengeance in person!"

"How interesting," Friedrich muttered beneath his breath.

"An alliance then," Vusitch proposed, his ghoulish servants scurried about the table at their master's subliminal command, one laying out a wine glass for each vampire while the other filled it with the blood wine.

"Agreed," said Keloch, reaching for his glass.

Isabette nodded her compliance. They would root out this Vampire turned Vampire hunter, exact revenge, and she personally would remove the Noctu from her decaying hand.

"Death to the Vampire-bitch!" Friedrich hissed, his slavering tongue playing about his lips as the ghoulish manservant poured out his draught.

"Death!" Vusitch agreed and swilled back his blood wine.

Keloch and Isabette were about to join him when Vusitch clutched his throat; the glass sent clattering to the stony ground, shattering like its untainted counterpart. One hand fell to the table, grasping it so hard that a chunk of wood broke away. A misty pall of smoke exuded from Vusitch's neck as he staggered back, battering one of his fawning ghoul servants away with a back swipe of his hand.

"Garlic," he spluttered through the bloody froth bubbling from his mouth.

Keloch stood, casting away his glass, "Treac...", he began but was stopped short when he noticed the wooden stake protruding from his chest. Keloch was burning ash in seconds, disintegrating as he turned to look at his attacker, the Vampire Friedrich.

"There will be no alliance," Friedrich declared, his voice distinctly becoming feminine, reaching with the folds of his rags to produce a finely wrought dart pistol which he used to dispatch the two advancing ghouls. Each was pitched back by the force of the blow as they scrambled over the table to attack their master's assailant. Friedrich vaulted over the table athletically, replacing the dart pistol and drawing a long dagger in the same movement with the opposite hand. He beheaded the ghouls with two precise slashes of the dagger, then pivoted on his heel and back flipped as a blade swept where he had seconds before been standing.

"It is you!" Isabette raged accusingly: sword drawn, bloodlust in her eyes.

Friedrich smiled an acknowledgement, sheathing the dagger then pulling away the ragged disguise and mask with a flourish.

"The confession of your mistress' movement was very useful," Marianna, Vampire assassin informed her. Bereft of her disguise, Marianna was revealed in her true aspect. She wore black leather breeches and a tight-fitting jerkin displaying her more than ample charms. About her waist was a plethora of weapons, one of which she drew now, a long curved rapier. She adopted a dueling stance and grinned at her adversary, revealing her vampiric canines.

"Your move, Milady," she goaded.

Roaring in furious anger Isabette charged forward with inhuman speed and rained a barrage of blows upon Marianna's defenses. At first she was hard-pressed to repel the onslaught such was Isabette's fury. But with the initial impetus of the Vampire's rage in check Marianna was able to dodge her attacks and open up a series of small wounds that hissed with the garlic essence upon Marianna's blade.

"You turn upon your own using the weapon of the Sigmar worshippers," Isabette accused her, stepping back, the excruciating pain of her small wounds blinding. It was all the respite Marianna needed. Blocking a clumsy overhand swing with her rapier she pulled her long dagger from her belt and beheaded Isabette in one swift and brutal motion. The still astonished corpse fell and was dust as it hit the ground, showering the stones with cursed ash.

"Whatever works," Marianna quipped, and noticed the struggling form of Count Vusitch in the corner of her eye.

He crawled along the floor, clutching his throat ineffectually, gaining some leverage on a wooden support beam as he desperately tried to reach the door of the coaching inn.

Marianna turned upon her heel and threw the long dagger straight into the creature's back, impaling it upon the wooden beam. Vusitch convulsed in pain and exploded into dust, the long dagger left, still twitching, in the wooden beam.

"There will be no alliance," Marianna repeated to herself. Without pausing further, she gathered her trappings and vaulted to the upper staircase of the coaching inn. In the shadows she watched as a dreg, doubtless one of Keloch's minions entered the room and gaped at the four dust piles that had previously been vampires. Peering in the dust he found a single Black Orchid.

Satisfied her "message" would deter other such pacts, Marianna headed off silently into the night, with little time to dally, some Marienburgers wanted a Reikland captain dead by sunrise and everyone knew that Marienburgers always paid well...

A Saga of Revenge

Once an assassin-thief, Marianna's ambitions outreached her. In a daring expedition to Araby, she came into contact with the ancient Vampiress Serutat. Marianna succeeded in her mission, stealing the gem, the Noctu, from Serutat's crypt but the Vampiress caught up with her, tainting her with the curse of Vampirism before the resourceful assassin could escape.

In a moment Marianna had become a thing of the night and yet she was not completely damned, a half-vampire. Sating her bloodlust on the numerous courtesans, captains and suitors that came her way, Marianna fled the bitter vengeance of the Lahmian Vampire, Serutat, to Mordheim. With the City of the Damned her relative anonymity would be assured.

Marianna is a pragmatist, neutral in her persona, serving only her own means, hiring her skills out as an assassin, taking care to conceal her secret. Wary of witch hunters and the other devout followers of Sigmar, Marianna is a creature of the shadows, her

vampiric powers enhancing her abilities immeasurably. And yet the flight to Mordheim serves an ulterior motive. Vampire turned Vampire Hunter and as such an exile in the dark Undead underworld, Marianna tracks the night-stalkers of Mordheim, torturing them for information; the whereabouts of Serutat and the true nature of the Noctu, the black jewel stolen from her crypt. Marianna's efforts have born dark fruit, a word of power and the stone will create a veil of shadows to cloak the bearer, drifting like black ether. Marianna means to seek out Serutat in her lair when she is vulnerable, exacting her own vengeance for damning her to darkness, her 'interrogations' warning her that the Vampire has traveled to the Empire to settle the score and retrieve the Noctu. A plethora of aliases have kept Marianna hidden so far but occasionally, during a battle in the deepest recesses of the city, minions of Serutat will appear out of the night to exact their mistress's vengeance, much to the surprise of the vying warbands. Marianna walks a dagger-thin line but thus far she has yet to slip...

Marianna Chevaux is a Dramatis Persona and as such follows all the usual rules for these characters as given in the Mordheim rulebook.

Hire Fee: 150 gold crowns to hire, 75 gold crowns upkeep (varies see below.)

May be Hired: Any warband except Witch Hunters, Sisters of Sigmar, Undead, Elves and any other Sigmar devoted warband may hire Marianna (note, mercenaries are men of lax faith and do not count here).

Rating: Marianna increases the warband's rating by +90 points.

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Marianna Chevaux	6	6	6	4	4	2	9	3	9

Weapons/Armor: Marianna carries a rapier (see Town Cryer 7), dagger and has a set of throwing knives and a crossbow pistol conceded about her person. Her crossbow bolts and rapier are coated in essence of garlic, which acts as Black Lotus when used against Vampires. She also has quite an expensive wardrobe of very expensive Bretonnian silk dresses!

Skills: Marianna has the following skills: Combat Master, Step Aside, Leap, Acrobat, Lightning Reflexes, Dodge, Jump Up and Scale Sheer Surface.

Special Rules:

- *Immune to Psychology:* As a Vampire, Marianna is completely immune to the effects of psychology and will never leave combat.
- *Immune to Poison:* As a Vampire, Marianna is completely immune to the effects of poison.
- *No Pain:* Marianna treats a Stunned result on the Injury chart as Knocked Down instead (note that with her Jump Up ability Marianna cannot be Knocked Down either so the only way to stop her is to take her out of action!).
- *Cause Fear:* Marianna is a terrifying creature, although more through reputation than her being a Vampire as she is contriving to keep her identity a secret.

- *'You can never escape your past...'*: On the last turn of the game in which Marianna is still standing or as soon as a warband routs, ending the game, roll a D6:

D6	Effect	D6	Minions
1-3	Marianna has discovered that Serutat is getting close and will leave the warband's service after the game.	1-2	D3+1 Zombies
4-5	Marianna has discovered a useful lead that she must pursue in this area and will stay for another game if the warband can afford her upkeep.	3-5	D3+1 Ghouls
6	A group of Serutat's minions have caught up with her! Fight D3 more turns as if the losing warband hadn't routed (in the confusion the balance is reset). A randomly determined group of minions 'appear' within 2D6" of Marianna, the opposing player chooses where. Marianna takes the first turn and then the minions, after which the turn sequence returns to normal with the minions counted as a an extra player. The minions only attack Marianna and must move towards her as fast as possible but will attack anyone else in their way. If her warband fight to help her (by taking at least one minion our of action) and she survives, Marianna will fight the next battle for free, otherwise she will leave.	6	Vampire (Sword & light armor) +2 Ghouls

- *Fighting Undead*: Due to her vocation as a Vampire Assassin turned Vampire Hunter, all Vampires Hate Marianna.
- *The Noctu*: The gemstone stolen from Serutat's lair has powerful cloaking properties. The veil of shadow it creates reduces all shooting to hit rolls against Marianna by -1.