

# **HANGOVER CITY**

A City Sourcebook for Dresden Files RPG

by Sue Wilson

## **Chapter one- You'll never walk alone.**

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## Liverpool.

The very name conjures up images of a glorious maritime history, world-beating musical heritage, two of the Premiership's biggest football teams and not one, but two majestically different Cathedrals. Now bulging with fabulous new shops, buzzing new restaurants, hip hotels and trendy wine bars, as well as a world class cultural offering with more museums and galleries anywhere outside of London, this is a must visit destination. And do not forget its inhabitants, of course, who are famously friendly and will welcome you with pride.

Yeah right. That's what the tourist information people sell you. Scratch the surface; sniff the air; Step off the main through-fares and you will find a darker decaying place. A city dying on its feet and unwilling to accept it. Stumbling on like some eyeless zombie unaware of its death. The city is living on past glories and the impossible dream that one day the good times will return. The ultimate curse in Pandora's box - Hope.

This is a city with a long pedigree for taking in the unwanted and the hopeful from all over the globe; Irish around the docks, the Chinese of Duke street, the black community of Toxteth are the mortal surface of an iceberg of conflicting tribes and factions. But all know that all out war will only bring destruction for all. So in this city of 'You'll never walk alone' there is a peace of sorts fuelled by the knowledge that "together we stand or together we hang".

Amongst the many and varied Supernatural communities, this takes the form of The Covenant. An agreement drawn up long ago at the founding of the city that enforces rules and a level of mutual support. Those factions supporting it will tell you that those breaking its rules are counting their remaining breaths and will be 'dealt with'. But times are changing, and not all the new breed want to be hamstrung by those rules any more. Trouble is bubbling under the surface, its ripples could sink everything and the ferry is only so big.



In at the Deep end

You arrive back at your house to see number of impressively expensive vehicles pulled up the the drive way; the first is a slate grey Austin martin V8 Vantage with the number plate PRINCE, the second is a black 1968 Jaguar XJ6 with the number plate MYC171E, the final one is a White Ducati racing bike with no visible licence plate. Also propped up by the front door is a dark blue and ageing push bike with a broken chain which, whilst not of the same scale of wealth as the others, you know is in its own way even more exclusive.

You have the horrible feeling you may be in trouble.

Inside, the small front room is occupied by the owners of the vehicles.

Collapsed in the easy chair, his legs stretched out so they take up much of the remaining space, is a man with fine features and long blond hair which cascades over the shoulders of his White biker leathers. Resting against his legs is a large broad sword which, despite it's depth in the gloom of the room, seems to be reflecting the sunlight. His eyes are closed, his expression almost blissful.

Leaning on the back of chair, practically backed into the corner, is a tall almost emaciated man wearing a long black morning suit over a White frock shirt; his skin is pale, which is further emphasised by the black lipstick and kohl around his eyes. He looks up and smiles, obviously relieved that your arrival means things may soon be underway, and he will be free to escape the presence of the other men.

The bay window has been claimed by a man who looks too normal for this company. He is dressed in a lounge suite, shirt and tie. His wavy blond hair is streaked through with grey, as is the neatly trimmed beard. He fixes you with cold blue eyes and his mouth is deliberate held without expression.

Some how the remaining man manages to dominates the room, despite the presence of the others. He is standing at the fire place, checking his dark hair in the mirror as you enter. He looks up and stares at you through the reflection with dark, nearly black, eyes. He turns, every movement is control, almost as if he is on a cat walk. The silk shirt is open to his waist revealing a rack of washboard abs and a smooth hairless chest. A silver pendant reminiscent of a cannabis leaf rests against the tanned skin. The trousers, a tight black leather with lacing at the hip, leave nothing to the imagination and reveal the tan to be natural and all the way down.

"Come in." he says. He gestures to the sofa that has obviously been left clear for you. "Settle down." His eyes run over you all, evaluating carefully.

He waits long enough for you to all sit.

"Now, just in case you are all clueless, let's do some introductions." He says. He gestures to the man in the bay. "Sheriff Ream is the law in this town." His hand swings to the man in White leather. "Sir Longarm is here in his role as representative of the Royal Court of the Faerie."

The man opens his eyes, revealing them to be amber in colour, and leans forward, pushing his hair behind the characteristic point of his ears. "Greetings."

"Behind him is Fidel." The man says. "Who is here on behalf of the Mages Council because..?" He

prompts

"Callum is tied up with a ritual at the moment." He shrugs. "You know how it is."

"Frankly no," the man dismisses, "I leave that sort of things to the lesser beings." He looks at you. His head twists slightly. "And I am Elijah Zander of the White Court." His mouth moves revealing perfect teeth. "But you will call me Prince."

He pauses letting his words impact and then says.

"So Gentlemen, and ladies. What could you possibly have done that requires four representatives of the High Council of the Covenant to come to this..." He looks round at the decor "... Truly amazing example of interior design?"

He stops his eyes fixing on you, slowly one eyebrow raises. Silence descends as they wait for you to reply.

After a few moments he adds. "Any ideas at all? Want to go for a wild stab in the dark?" His eyes settle on you. "Anything you feel the need to confess?"

There is a long pause.

He claps his hands once and straightens up. "Excellent. Ream. I suggest you brief them. I'm going to see if this places excuse for a kitchen has anything like a kettle and a tea pot."

He strides out from the room.

Fidel clearly relaxes. He comes out from behind Longarm's chair with a deep sigh. The Faerie shifts his sword and props it next to the fire. He sits up and stretches. "Yes Ream couldn't you wait until after he had fed?"

"No." Ream says. "This was too important." He looks at you. "You are being deputised. We have need of your skills."

"Which may give you some indication as to how desperate we are." Fidel says.

"Please Arch-Mage-apparent you are not inspiring them with confidence." Longarm teases looking up at him. "Where is Callum? Really?"

"Ritual." Fidel responds firmly. "A counter spell that is required in Speak. He said that if any one should ask, I should say Evil wizard did it."

"I just bet he did." Ream says darkly.

"Could we not have done this without the prince?" Fidel asks.

"Not where it concerns Clubland." Ream says. He looks at you. "Which is why we require you. Our people are known. You are not, or at least you are not known as minions of the Council. So..." his blue eyes fix on you. "We want you to go into Clubland, have a snoop round and let us know what is going on. Because I have been hearing rumours and what I have been hearing concerns me."

Longarm twists in his seat looking up at the sheriff in confusion.

"And they should concern you too." Ream says pointedly to the fae.

Elijah returns hold a tea bag up by one corner, extended from his finger as if it were a rat. "What is this?" he demands staring at you.

"It's a tea bag Prince." Fidel says flatly.

Elijah glares at Fidel then he throws his car keys at him. "You, baby-Mage, go to my car and get me my hamper. I will not use this." He shakes the teabag as if to kill it. "This is what brought down the Empire."

"Funny, that is just what we were discussing." Ream interrupts.

Elijah looks at him, his expression challenging him to explain.

"If there is any truth to what I have heard some one is planning a coup." Ream continues.

Longarm raises an eyebrow, "Against the Prince, the Fisher King or the Arch-Mage?"

"All." Ream says firmly. "Some one seeks to destroy to The Covenant."

"Ah." Longarm respond. He leans forward, looking more concerned. Then he looks up at Fidel still standing holding the keys. "Fidel, if you would be so kind, I recall the prince has a whiskey cask in that hamper, and," He glances up at elijah pointedly, "I find myself in need of a stiff drink."

Fidel nods and slides out of the door, taking care to keep as far from the Prince as possible. Elijah watches him go, licking his lips suggestively. His eyes hood slightly as the Mage hurries away. The prince breaths in as if scenting the air where then man walked. He emits a soft low hum.

"Prince Elijah." Ream says firmly.

Elijah blinks and looks at him, a half smile on his lips.

"If we could just have your attention for a few moments more." Ream states.

"Of course." He says, "You need me to sign the authority of action." He holds out his hand. "Pen. Paper."

Ream reaches inside his jacket and pulls out a scroll of velum and an aged ink pen. Elijah takes it and leans on the fire place. He fills the lower quarter with an ornate signature of 'E. Zander, Prince'. He holds out the paper and pen to Ream. "There you can fill in the blanks."

"Do you do cheques too?" Longarm asks hopefully.

The Prince looks down at him and smiles. "Only the morning after darling." He pouts a kiss. "And even then only if you are L'Oréal."

He turns as Fidel reappears carrying a wicker picnic basket. The wizard lays it down on the floor and opens it. Then steps back and gasps at the contents. "Bloody hell I could get high just carrying that in!" He rubs his hands on his trouser legs as if to remove any contamination.

Inside is a vast array of tablets, vials, powders, blotters, herbs, flasks and bottle. Each is held in place by miniature leather straps. Elijah bends down and reaches beneath to a second layer, drawing out a couple of paper wraps. He looks from on to the other for a moment and then declares "Assam I think." He drops the remaining wraps into the hamper then he takes a small metal tea pot from the corner and

vanishes once more in the direction of the kitchen.

Longarm pushes the hamper towards you with his foot. "See anything you fancy?"

"Are you sure that is wise?" Ream says. "They do belong to the Prince."

"He would probably appreciate the snack at the moment." Longarm responds darkly. Then he sighs.

"Some one has to do the honours, we need him and he is useless as he is." He reaches down and with draws a small flask. As he opens them a strong scent of whiskey fills the room. Longarm helps himself to a sip and coughs at the strength. "Highland Park cask. Excellent. Mind you with the Prince I'd expect nothing less." He takes another longer sip before resealing it.

Elijah returns with the tea pot. He looks at the flask in the Faerie knight's hand and then moves closer to him.

Longarm looks up and smiles, his face twisted with inebriation from the strong drink.

"My prince." he whispers, his eyes slightly defocused.

Elijah breaths in deeply, as if inhaling the man's exhaled breath. His eyes flash silver. "Tasty." He says, a purr in his voice. Longarm arches his back, almost as if to expose his neck to the vampire's caress. Elijah reaches down with a delicate finger nail but before he can make more than the lightest of contacts Ream coughs. The Vampire shudders and pulls back, leaning on the fireplace to balance himself.

His fae almost victim sags back into the seat, the hair falling forward over his face. Longarm shakes his head slightly and blinks to clear his vision. Very deliberately he puts the flask down on the floor next to his feet.

"Most potent Sir Knight, Thank you." Elijah whispers as his eyes clear. The black iris return as he turns to Ream. "So Sheriff. This coup." Suddenly he seems so much more focused and serious. He pours the tea from the small pot into a matching cup. "How do we dissuade them?" He asks.

"First we have to find them." Ream responds. He turns and looks pointedly at you. "Of course when I say we...."

And suddenly the eyes of the four representatives of the High Council are on you.

What are you going to do?

## Together We Stand

The Covenant has, for the most part, held the supernatural groups living in Liverpool together and under the radar of the Mortals since the mid sixteenth century. Over that time it has been modified and added to reflect decisions of the Court, and on one occasion accidentally burnt and rewritten from the collective memories of the High Council. As a result it is a horrifically complex document; full of clauses and sub clauses and cross reference notes, often to pages that no longer exist or have long since been renumbered. Additionally it is written in 'latin' - because it was considered the proper way to do it in 1560- but it is in a phonetic form of latin which only makes sense when read aloud in a Scouse accent.

As a result, calls to "refer to the book" invariably result in groans of protest from all present at the meeting or trial. It effectively means all decisions must come to a stop, often for hours, until the relevant passage or passages can be located. The last remaining Black Court vampire in the city, Stephen Allourd, is only tolerated because he is fully conversant with the text, can find the information required quicker than any one else, and can actually translate the scrawls. He also acts as the default defending lawyer for those being prosecuted under the rules of the Covenant as being the only remaining Black Court representative he is by definition a neutral.

Though the 'letter of the law' may be problematical, all the factions agree on the principles the Covenant stands for:

It says the factions will work together to keep their existence's secret and not do anything to jeopardise that.

Each individual who is deemed to be 'not Mortal' under the Covenant must align with one of the factions, although they can technically choose any faction to align to and do not have to go with the 'obvious one'. For example magic using women who object to being associated with the 'Lyceum Gentleman's Club' often join the river witches, even though that group are predominately Were-seals; Allourd being part of the Royal Court under the fisher king; and Elijah has a number of Changelings in his employ who are considered part of his factions.

That each faction must swear loyalty to one of those who sit on the council and these people will resolve any problems within their faction fairly and impartially, and bring any grievances or suspected breeches of the rules between the factions to the council for arbitration. A rule which forces the smaller groups to 'sign up' with the major groups, even if only on a meeting by meeting basis.

In greater detail the Covenant covers specific activities of the factions that are deemed 'unacceptable behaviour';



Like dictating that when Vampire are feeding from sentient victims that they be willing and should never be drained to death. (It used to read Human but the werewolves objected after one of their number was taken by force and drained back in the Red Court days) There is a current dispute at the moment as to whether an addict to a drug is still a willing victim, but Elijah says it's always their choice and funds a drugs rehabilitation program, including an outreach team who operate in his clubs, to show willing.

It covers the responsibility for the Faerie to ensuring the local NeverNever is patrolled and not used to effect dreaming (Or heavily drug inebriated) humans. It also stresses that faerie do not overly inspire their mortal subjects, or push the boundaries so far that the artist becomes too renowned and attracts too much attention. - Or as Ream puts it "can we not have a repeat for those four fecking warblers. It's hard to police a city which half the world are visiting."

It covers rules to insure any were who is 'half way' does not go wandering the city causing rumours of 'wolf-men!'. That the 'Loups' in the city ensure they are bound during the full moon to prevent accidental attack.

It stresses that those using magic not use their abilities in an overly showy or undeniable way. It also firmly states that any wizard with the skill should use their abilities to assist others factions; particularly the Spirits who have a duty to protect a location but may not be able to do it so easily without being blatant about it. Most commonly this is used to help mortals to 'forget' or justify what they have seen.

That spirit don't do anything stupid and prove that they exist - however taunting 'Most haunted' is considered fair game because no one believes that anyway - which is a genuine sub clause that Osbert Molyneux, 6th Earl of Sefton (Deceased) managed to get inserted into the Covenant after his spirit was caught on CCTV in 2009.

### **FAQ > Is there a hand out of the text of The Covenant**

In a word no. Its a massive document that lays out the rights and duties of all the supernatural factions and as such was never actually written down "in the real world". And given the whole thing is written in a phonetic ancient latin which only makes sense if read in a scouse accent, its debatable how useful such a hand out would really be.

However if your players are the type that would really like a piece of paper to play with, use the Preamble extract on the next page and then bulk it out with pages generated by a lipsum program such as <http://www.lipsum.com/>

and ask them to sign it in blood\*. That should give them a feel for what their characters face.

\*Addendum - Apparently HSE guidelines state that signing in blood is a Hazard To Public Health due to communicable diseases, like HIV and Hepatitis strains, and so is to be discouraged. You will just have to use red ink instead (but you can always let them think its blood).

## Coeverant de populis plusquam mortale Liverpooll

Quantum nos consentiente hodie quarto die Junii MDLXVIII, ob mutuam et residui utilitatem totius ducta erit apud nos Coeverant intellectus. Ut hiis qui censentur mortale non velint manere in villa de Liverpooll conveniunt tueri ac poena stare exsilio aut morte.

Constat leges dictat in se complectitur Coeverant sit fluidum tabellae mutabilis accommodare necessitatibus eorum subscripsi. Hoc facilius formabuntur repraesentativum Consilio. Consilium habeant unam ex his repraesentativis civitatibus;

Vis adquisie

Magistri magicis viribus

qui ones mortuus

nummulariorum figura

Candida populi

Huius Concilii assistat in conciliis a Genius urbis et praeunte iustitia

Erit munus Consilio audiamus Coeverant lites et sub iudicet si reus damnatus, vel ad hanc literam modifications convenientiam sentire si omnes tales essent iudicio iniquum.

Non mam munera et inposita restrictions multitudo civitatis sit arduum. Debent esse mutua curet mortale protectionem ut auctores aliter petunt benigna. Hortari debent adesse group alios secundum quod possunt, ut qui simul cognitionem habemus melius forte mutui quam nos salvos seorsum.

Huc omnes consenserunt.

Fisher K.

R. Molyneux

Rodger Calldway

Whitby

Thomas Stanley

Matthew Clayton

John Pym

Et. Goodman

William Carandish

Adfuit et convenit non potest signandi in manu

T. Redhead

Lamar Ginty

J. Elton

Joel O'Flynn

Jacob Perez

Emeric Bowie

Bebbington

Stacey Blakey

Edgar Andrews

Tyler Watson

Wenzeslaus Bragg

Ianto Nairn

Darrick Spade

Eilert McBean

Nelson Cairns

Otis the smith

A. Mellor

Israel

Ramon Heraty

Owen Murden

## The High Council

The Covenant is enforced by a group known as the High Council. It is made up of representatives from the largest 'supernatural' factions, and most of the smaller factions align with one of the other larger ones to ensure they have a voice. Currently the High council consists of:

Elijah Zander, The Vampiric Prince of the city.

Gunnar, The leader of the biggest Werewolf pack in the covenant boundaries,

The Fisher King, A some what unhinged Faerie who's seat is under the Royal Court, although often he sends one of his knights to attend on his behalf. Or at least that is how his loyal servants interpret his mumblings.

The Liver Bird. The city's longest serving chimeric guardian.

Mckenzie, The cities most vocal Ghost, (and leader of the cities 24hr poker ring).

Ream, The sheriff of the city and leader of Rare Breed

Callum Doyle, The some what reluctant representative of the magically active people of the city. A job he has equated to herding cats!

To enforce their rulings they have put together a group of humans (Minor talents etc) who have been taught the weakness of all the supernatural creatures involved in the covenant. This group is Rare Breed, the Hells angels biker gang in the city. They can also call upon the support of any of its members to assist in taking down the criminal.

The court meets once a month on the full moon\* at the Royal Court to deal with the 'ongoing issues'. It can also be convened in 48 hrs to discuss 'urgent matters arising' by sending runners to the representatives. In Emergencies any three members (though most typically this means Ream, Callum Doyan and Elijah Zander as they are the easiest to find at short notice) can make a interim decision which will be formally accepted at the next meeting. There has never been a case when such interim decision has not been accepted by the Council; although some of the votes have been very close and were it ever to happen it would cause something of a constitutional crisis.

No one knows what would happen then.

\* The fact the meeting as on the full moon has been labelled as discriminatory by the lycanthrope and Loup-Garou community in the city, as it prevents them from attending. This is an issue that has been on the agenda for

almost 75 years, but is constantly delayed by the lack of a representative to put forward a case FOR moving the meetings to a different date, causing it to be adjourned to the next meeting. It is not anticipate to be resolved in the near future.

### **In Game**

In theory all supernatural beings in liverpool (which would probably include the P.C.s) must sign the covenant and agree to up-keeping it or will be evicted from the city and face death if they return. Breaches of the covenant also results in exile/ death. Additionally any signatory to the covenant can (and in some case must) bring any dispute with another signatory to the court, for it to be resolved 'legally and amicably' in so far as is possible. This could add an interesting twist into any 'social conflict' the P.C.s become embroiled in.

However it should be remembered that it is a big city and there is a lot going on under the radar. Rare Breed's resources are not as limitless as the High Council would like to think, and a bit of 'back-room/ financial persuasion' can go along way when a mortal is asked to face down a supernatural entity that could rip his head off.

That said, if a supernatural is found using powers in the city in a way that can not be quietly ignored, they will be detained by Rare Breed and taken to the Caverns. Procedure states they will be held until the next council meeting and then 'encouraged' to sign the covenant and agree to live under its rules. Being detained in the Caverns is not as bad as it sounds. The accommodation is fairly comfortable, and the Breed are keen to sell the advantages of the Covenant to visitors. The food is pretty good and they will do their best to provide for any cultural or biological dietary requirements.

If the visitor refuses to sign chances are they will be escorted to the city boundaries and sent on their way. (The motorway services on the M62 and Runcorn Railway station being popular drop off points.) Of course, should they return, or if the council decide their release could be detrimental to the Covenant, then they will be killed. The supernatural peoples of liverpool are proud of what they have achieved their, and they will do what ever it takes to protect it.