

HANGOVER CITY

A City Sourcebook for Dresden Files RPG

by Sue Wilson

Chapter Eleven- Clubland

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Welcome to Clubland, leave your sanity at the door
and we'll all get on just fine.

The sun is setting by the time she leaves the safety of the convent. Angela blinks at the sky the days sleep leaving her feeling disorientated and jet lagged. She smiles as she spots Cale leaning against his motorbike, clearly waiting for her. He holds out a spare helmet.

“So what does my white knight have planned for me tonight then?” She teases him.

“Please, I’m no Longarm and wouldn’t want to be.” He grimaces back. Then he takes a deep breath in and looks at her. “There is some where.” He says, his voice is almost reluctant.

She challenges him to go on.

“We’re party city.” He says, again he does not sound thrilled. “Ravers, stuff like that.”

“Supernatural?” She asks.

He laughs, “Well we’ve got more than our fair share of White court changelings and sorcerers who like to party; you work it out.” He responds sarcastically.

“So something that should be in my guide then.” She points out.

He shrugs. “I guess.”

She looks at him pointedly. “So.”

“Its not safe.” He says.

She crosses her arms.

“Look, the rest of the guys are part of our scene.” He taps the badge on his shoulder, “This demands respect, But the clubs, they are full of boxed mortals, out of their tits on Bombers and E. It could turn nasty real quick and...”

“You’re scared.” She interrupts.

His face turns dark. “No!” He refutes.

She tilts her head in a soft challenge to his denial.

“I cant be sure of the back up. I don’t have any authority there. It’s not like taking you to the wolves, or even the Sel... River witches. They wouldn’t try anything because they know there would be repercussions. You can’t trust mortals, they don’t know the rules.”

She laughs. It is a loud and honest laugh. She doesn’t mean to but she is sure he has missed the irony inherent in what he has just said.

He looks at her, confused and hurt by her reaction.

She slaps his shoulder with the back of her hand. “Stop being a wuss Cale. You owe me a night on the town.”

He sags.

She steps closer. "If it would make you feel better you can tell every one you are my date." He looks up and grins. As he pulls on his helmet she is sure there is a twinkle in his eye.

The club is heaving. She didn't manage to catch the name on the way in to the converted warehouse, and when she tried to ask Cale he said it didn't matter because it changes so often anyway. The dance floor is packed with a seething mass of flesh gyrating to the steady thump of the music which threatens to embed itself in her brain. Cale grabs her wrist and drags her forward. Under any other circumstance she would object but she knows it is the only way they can make it through the crowd without losing each other.

The dancers rub against her. She can smell their arousal in their sweat and the intoxication on their breaths. Some of them seem barely conscious of their surroundings they are so lost in the sound and rhythm. One girl reaches for her, laughing, her eyes defocused. She tries to pull her into the knot of bodies as she calls her Trace and demands to know "where yer bin love?"

Cale moves between them, pushing the woman back into the throng, his mouth in a twisted grimace as he states. "Wrong woman." Then he drags Angela on.

They find the closest thing they can to a quiet corner; a space near the toilets where the walls disrupt the sound of the music and give it strange after echoes. As he gives her time to catch her breath she can hear some one in the toilets being violently sick.

She looks at him, suddenly understanding his reluctance.

"Hey you were the one who insisted." He defends.

The crowd on the dance floor parts. Cale frowns and turns as if sensing it. A figure strides through the gap that appears to have come about by some random chance in the dancers gyrations and closes up behind her afterwards. The woman is a stunning red head; long loose plaits seem to interweave into the string dress draped over her in a mockery of decency. She stops looking at them both for a second, a wry smile on her face. Then she focuses on Cale.

"You better not be here to cause trouble Bull dog."

"Cassandra." He greets her.

She turns her face on Angela. Then she smiles as if in recognition. "Ahh the tourist."

"You know about me?" Angela asks.

Cassandra laughs. "Darlin, yer famous." She responds in a forced version of the accent. She swings her arm round pointing up to an upper level half concealed by a white drape. "Come

on,” He voice drops to much more refined tones. “Let me rise you above the plebeians.” She turns to look at Cale. “You can even bring the Bull dog.” She says. “As long as you promise to popper scoop him.”

Cale grunts in protest at the insult but follows her as she leads Angela back through the dancers and into the V.I.P zone.

“Interesting you should come here tonight.” Cassandra says as she pulls back the drapes. Inside is a brightly lit area covered in colourful swathes of cotton and latex. It is hard to see which of the undulations are cushions for sitting and which are more solid tables. In the centre is a deep bowl jacuzzi bubbling with warm water, changing colours as the lights beneath the surface strobe. Relaxing amongst the bubbles is a young man. Angela would put him at barely more than nineteen. His hand is playing in a bowl of brightly coloured tablets, spinning them round with his finger tips.

Cassandra waves to him as she heads for a small but well stocked mini-bar. “Don’t mind G-Man, he’s just finishing up.”

Finishing what?” Angela asks

“His ritual.” Cassandra replies. She turns holding out a cocktail of pink froth. She presents it to Angela.

“Ritual?” Angela presses.

Cassandra offers the drink again “Surely you wont refuse my hospitality?”

“I’m not sure I’m not in fairy land.” Angela retorts nodding round at the decor.

G-Man laughs loudly at her comment. He rises from the jacuzzi, taking Cassandra drink himself. “Looks like she has you well peg Cas.” He sips the drink. “Ohh, that hits the spot.”

Cassandra glares at him. “Have you finished?” She says nodding to the tablet.

“Yeah hours ago, I was just chillin’” He replies. He reaches out and lifts a swathe of dark blue cotton, revealing it to be a bath robe. He pulls it on and ties the belt. Then he nods to Cale.

“Tien.”

“Massen.”

“Want a drink?” G-Man offers.

“Can I fix it myself?” Cale asks.

The Sorcerer smiles. “Why don’t you trust me?”

Cale nods to the bowl of tables. “If I said yes you wouldn’t believe me.”

“Play nicely boys or I will make you take it outside.” Cassandra says.

“Yeah help yourself.” G-Man replies, gesturing to the drinks cabinet, Cale goes to

investigate. The Sorcerer moves away and drops into the cushions. He looks up at Angela curiously. "So come for Trials night then? Take a pew."

She frowns at him. "Trials night?"

Cassandra bends down and lifts the bowl of tablets. "Yes darling, Like I said this is a fortuitous day for your visit." She holds up the bowl, lifting it to the light almost as if in an act of worship.

"It's why we're so busy." G-Man continues nodding to the window and the club beyond. "The gangs all here."

"What for?" Angel asks

G-Man laughs. "A chance to be the first, the freebie, the bragging rights." He shrugs pointing to the party outside. "Ask them."

Cassandra lowers the bowl, clutching it to her chest. Her eyes flash, a hint of skirting on the edge of sanity. "For this." She says, looking down at the tablets with the tenderness of a mother looking at her child.

"So what's so special about this one?" Cale asks.

Angela glances over, he has dug out a can of soft drink and is clearly checking the seal suspiciously.

"Ah." G-Man responds. "This one we are calling Unity."

"Yeah Nice. Now for the real answer Massen. What's it do?" Cale presses.

Cassandra lifts out one of the blue shiny disks. "A demonstration would be better than words." She lifts it, letting it spin between her finger nails. Her eyes focus past it on Angela. "Don't worry darling. Its completely safe." She says. "We have thoroughly tested it. Even on your kind."

"Can't imagine you would find any one in the wolves interested in drug trails." Angela responds, recalling Gunnar's attitude to 'the Gomorra across the water.'

"Wolves no. Of course not. But they are far from the only game in town." G-Man replies. He stands slowly then moves over and dips his hand into the bowl. Carefully he draws out one tablet and hold it up. Then with a swift snapping movement he flicks it in the air and tilts his head back to catch it in his mouth. He chews it grinning, giving them a full view of the fragments adhering to his teeth before he licks them off.

Cassandra holds out the tablet to Angela "It needs at least two for its full effect."

"You take it." Cale says.

"But then who would be left to explain." She responds.

"Fuck it," G-Man declares. "Lets get the show rolling." He grabs the bowl and walks out onto

the balcony above the dance floor. The music fades away leaving an silence of anticipation.

“My peeps.” He announces. “Welcome to Emypren. By now I guess you all know the score...” He leans forward grinning down to the crowd. “But in case we have any Virgins in to night.” The club erupts into screams of pleasure and cat calls. “Lets make it clear.” He points to the far end. “Dominic. Lock the doors!”

A cheer goes up as there is a sound of slamming locks all over the building.

“Excellent, so we are already.” He turns and grins at Cassandra, but she manages only a sly sneer back at him. “Rules are as usual. One Tab each. Enjoy and indulge. Any problems or you see some one else struggling...” He waves his hand over to the right hand side. “Straight to the chill out. No heroics here.” He waves his hand to the left. “Your way out is through customer feedback.” He holds out the bowl briefly and then grabs it back. “And people. It should go with out saying. But eat what you take. Any one trying anything clever will have to answer to Da Boyz. And we didn’t have time to feed them tonight so...” He shrugs. Then he holds up the bowl again. “We all clear.”

The Yes echoes off the walls, bounding around in the enclosed space.

There is a clanking noise, a large shallow disk rolls towards him at his head level. The excitement runs through the crowd as they watch it approach the bowl. The thrumming beat of feet and the call of “G. Man. G. Man. G. Man” fills the darkness. He pours the bowl in, the tablet rattling like rain as the roll down into the disk.

“Enjoy.” He commands as the disk slides away from him, and then drops to the head height of the crowd.

As the hands reach in to grab the delights it contains G-Man returns to the VIP booth and drops into the cushions again. He sighs deeply. “Oh yeah there it goes.”

“So.” Cale stresses. “What does it do Cassandra?”

She hold out the remaining table in her hand. “Find out first hand.”

“How dumb do you think I am?” He responds.

“Very Tien. Other wise you would have thrown your lot in with us years ago when we first offered. Instead you are a Bulldog whilst we have...” She gestures to the surroundings

“Wow exclusive access to M&S bedding seconds department, yeah you are right, what a mistake that was.” Cale responds flatly.

She glares at him.

“I’ve asked three times, you owe me an answer.” He stresses.

“Unity.” G-Man sighs. “You should feel what I feel, take what I take.” He sings

“What?” Cale presses.

“The potion provides a sensory link between the users of the same batch.” Cassandra says. She grins. “Make sex amazing.” She turns to the club where the music has started again. “And of course gives you the ability to be one with the crowd.”

“E plus.” G-Man giggles. Then he sighs “This is shite. I gotta dance.” He leaps to his feet and heads out onto the balcony.

“And you give it away free?” Angela says.

Cassandra laughs. “No. This is trials night, every one gets a sample. We get to make sure its safe for public consumption, make sure there is no group out there that react badly to it, and then they tell their friend about it and then... Well marketing isn't it.” She sighs looking at Cale. “I mean its not like we can advertise on Radio city is it.”

“Not again.” Cale agrees darkly.

Cassandra smiles at him. “They are all mortal and all willing. Its not like we are breaking any laws, but I guess you will have to run back to chief piggy Ream and tell him what the naughty Drug mages are up to wont you Bull dog.”

“Not necessarily.” Cale responds. There is a hint of amusement in his voice now. Then to Angela's amazement he walks past her and takes the tablet out of Cassandra hand. He throws it to the back of his throat and washes it down before handing the can of drink to Cassandra.

“But...” Angela starts confused.

“Thats the thing about the Breed.” Cassandra says, still looking at Cale. “Best humanity has to offer, but at the end of the day they are still fucking Scousers.” She grabs Cales head and kisses him forcefully. He puts up no resistance. As their lips part she laughs. “Jesus Pretty boy, you are so fucking lucky I'm not White Court.”

Cale just smirks. “I know you too well Cas.” He darts another kiss again and then pulls away from her, dropping on to the cushions. He looks out onto the balcony at the Sorcerer gyrating before his worshipers. There is admiration in Cales eyes. “You know Massen, I think you have excelled yourself with this one.” He shouts.

The drug mage yells back “We aim to please Caley boy, We aim to please.”

Clubland

"You'd 'ave to be on drugs to live in that mad house."

The term Clubland is a little miss leading as it implies an area of the city. In fact it is more of a concept and tends to move to follow the mortal crowds as they move from bar to casino to nightclub as fashion dictates. Through the history of the city a number of locations have laid claim to the title clubland; often more than one at the same time, as different areas supplied the needs of those of different social standings. In the early days it was focused around the docks, providing to the sailors wanting to celebrate their time ashore. Later the richer cliental collected in the large houses around Toxteth park whilst those of lower standing occupied the inns in the city centre. As the rave scene built up the old warehouses along the dock road became the focal point. Now there are a number of locations that fall under clubland; the student clubs around the universities, the night clubs in the city centre, and the drug houses in inner city ghettos. Additionally all those Faerie glammers, magical potions and white court skills make for a very interesting and competitive drugs scene. Groupies collect around the source of the current 'flavour of the month' only to move on as something new comes on the scene. Clubs open up and close down as the mortal authorities move in as part of their never ending "war on drugs."

Throughout this time Clubland has been under the attention of the White Court Vampires who have used it as a feeding ground. Other members of the covenant have turned a blind eye to this as they all accept that the Vampires have to feed. There is an assumption that mortals entering the domains know by their reputations that they are letting themselves in for trouble and thus choose to take the risk in return for the pleasures they may find, and as such are 'willing' under the Covenants definition.

Most of the Covenant assume that Clubland is Vampire only territory but in practice this is far from being the case. There are lots of other 'people' showing interest in the mortals activities here and use them for their own ends:

It was in a clubland gambling den that McKenzie encountered the mysterious Madison and sold his soul (if his claims can be believed).

There are a large number of Faerie who enjoy the delights of the clubs, as they can safely 'let their glamour down' sure that any mortals watching will put it down to hallucinations. It is also a good source of mortals that may prove happy to make a deal with a Faerie in exchange for creative talent and power.

Clubland is also considered a safe area for some of the wielders of magical forces who do not want to work under the restrictions of the Guild whilst practicing their arts. The Wizards of the Guild avoid it, not wanting to get caught

up in any White court draining activities. Thus any deviation from the rules of magic go unnoticed.

Finally, and most importantly, most of the supernatural races - including wizards- come into their power with puberty. This can make for a collection of very confused adolescents. For as long as anyone can recall, 'clubland' was where these children were sent to 'get over it' away from 'normal polite society'. Here they could find other like minded (or afflicted) individuals that understood what they were going through and thus offer mutual support. It is not just the supernatural that fall into this regime, 'Clubland' has long been more tolerant of things like Homosexuality or mixed raced relationship than the mortal Zeitgeist. Clubland is a place where a changeling can grow horns with out anyone really caring; where an over enthusiastic young sorcerer can ignite a curtain and just get a bucket of water thrown over it; and a white court vampire can wake up from their first real feed and there will be some one around to quietly dispose of the body. Like Vagas - what happens in clubland, stays in clubland. Still this makes for a lot of strange bedfellows as people who would not give each other the time of day in the 'outer world' are bound together by events they all would rather no one else knew about.

Officially Elijah, as Vampiric Prince, has dominion in Clubland, but it is much less than he like to believe. Also his interests tend to extend only to what he can get out of it, and as long as his supply lines are not disturbed he pretty much leaves it to its own devices. That said, many of the physical locations are owned by him through cover companies, and he skims a financial profit from rents. He has a number of 'drug mages' whose job it is to come up with new products for the clientele, and any profit form those dealing also enters his coffers. Additionally he has a fairly large number of enthralled Vampire who move through the club 'feeding' off those indulging in his products who attend him shortly before dawn to pass on their collected energies and keep him topped up.

The Drug mages.

There are a number of practitioners of the arcane using Clubland as a base of operations. Some of these, like G-Man and Cassandra, are using their skills as a means of gaining fame, power and money. They collect around them a following of obsessed mortals, attracted by the pleasures they offer. Most are experts in ritual, using it to great potions or amulets that sell to the raver communities. Although few reach the level required to be considered a wizard there is enough of them for a healthy 'darwin-esk' competition which means the clubs are well supplied with new drugs and trinkets. A few of them have the backing of external agencies, like Elijah or Faerie of the Royal court, giving them access to better resources, but many of them are 'home brewing' and proud of the fact.

The Lone Magicians

Also with in the Clubland community there are a number of individuals who are using the cover of the club to practising their art without being over looked by the guild. Some are wizards who fell out with their Guild mentors and have left, or been kicked out of, the organisation. Others are Self taught sorcerers who have avoided being recruited and are figuring things out for themselves. Others do not have the skill or power required by the guild for full membership, but who are specialists in their own field and do not want the Guild interfering in their work.

For the most part these are not a group and work in paranoid isolation; always nervous that another practitioner may be stealing their ideas, or might turn them into the guild. However they can occasional be bribed, cajoled or persuaded into action if the course is well paying, or more rarely noble, enough.

White Court of the Clubs.

The Zanders have not being in power for very long, there are plenty of vampires who remember what it was like under the old system and would rather go back to it. However they are clever enough to know that moving against Elijah and his power base when he is so closely linked to the High Council and the Royal court lies some where between futile and fatal. These old families are lying low, using the clubs to breed and rebuild a power base independent of the High council.

Through the drug scene they have ties into the groups all over the world, most of whom are mortal and unaware of the true nature of the scousers they are dealing with. This is giving them not only access to the classic black market, such as weapons and criminal links, but also into the rich and powerful via addicted individuals in high level positions in legitimate organisations across the globe. Following the economic collapse, Liverpool has become quietly known as a good place to lie low if you have the money to pay for the protection.

Along side this undercurrent there are the White Court Virgins. Clubland is seen as a 'safe' place to practice their skills as they come into their power. Many of these are subtly tested by the 'rebellious' White Court, only being brought into the clubland community when their loyalty is assured.

Changelings

Just as the white court who are unhappy with Elijah as their prince hide away in the clubs there are a collection of Wyldfae and changelings who are not happy with the Fisher King and Royal Court. Their objections put them in one of two camps: the ones who feel the Fisher King is clearly Senile, not fit to rule, and the fae of the city would do better with out him; and the changelings who frankly don't care who rules them, because they wouldn't listen to them any way out of principle and just want to kick back and have a good time with all these juicy mortal playmates. But Fae being Fae, they often change which faction they are in depending on how drunk they are at the time. Also in the community are Mortals and Faerie who have made their choice and stepped away from or into their powers, but are still drifting through the lifestyle unwilling or unable to leave that part of their existence behind. This can lead to strange to over hear conversations including such phrases as "You wouldn't say that if I was still a troll!"

Mortals

Clubland uses Mortals like cars use oil; Usually there is a steady level in there which only needs 'topping up' after some major disaster, and only very rarely are the 'disasters' down to the actions of the Supernaturals. More commonly a crack down by the local authorities will reduce the numbers in the clubs. There is always a drop in the summer as the students vanish off back home or to their festivals. Occasionally areas which are being used by clubland will be 'redeveloped' by the council or big corporations and the scene will go quiet as new venues are hunted out and word gets out again. The supply and price of some of the drugs fluctuates in response to world events or police raids, although the Zanders try to even this out as much as possible to deter marketeering.

Most mortals are blissfully unaware of the activities going on around them. Taking street drugs, notoriously unreliable for cleanliness or accuracy in their labelling, means that anything strange they witness can easily be explained away as hallucinations. "Crap man, can you not spell? I wanted E, you've got K, there is a woman over there who is seven foot tall, blue with horns." Etc.

Occasionally incidents do occur and the clublanders are left with the option of bringing a mortal 'into the fold' or "removal of memory patterns with extreme prejudice by use of a 9mm slug to the brain". Given these people are the playmates and pets of the supernaturals the former is more common than you might expect. There are a number of 'mortals' with in the community who are aware of what is going on and trusted to keep their mouths shut - even if in some cases this is assured by an addiction that only their 'owner' can feed.

These individuals find work in the clubs as security, bar tenders, dancers etc. As they become more skilled and trusted they can rise to more important positions, providing mortal club owners with names that can appear on the liquor licences (For some reason the council is reluctant to give a liquor licence to some one with a date of birth stated as 1873), or looking after the finances as they can officially prove they exist and thus open bank accounts and sign legal documents.

In short Clubland is more reliant on mortals than its supernatural communities would want to admit. Organised they could have a lot of power.

Face: The Yank and Felix.

The yank is practitioner focusing in ritual - most specifically the creation of potions. Even more specifically Potions that will create the ultimate high. He arrived in the country around three years ago after breaking away from his mob boss owner. There was some level of 'unpleasantness' as the mob boss sent an assassin after him; but it was resolved during some complicating negotiations in the VIP box of Anfield Football stadium. He has created a drug that he claims to be the ultimate experience; Stronger than cocaine, more hallucinogenic than acid, more explosive than ecstasy and like getting a personal visit from god. It is also created from components that are 100% legal. However so far all 'mortal' attempts to reproduce it have failed and he remains the only source

Physically the Yank (He does not acknowledge any other name now) is a large muscular black man who occasionally wears a kilt. He has not yet got a grip on the unique culture of Liverpool, nor indeed the slang spoken here and it is not uncommon for him to stop a conversation in mid stream and demand for a translation.

Felix is a natural born scouser who attracted the attention of Faerie who gifted him (may be cursed him) with synchronicity- the art of being in the right (or wrong) place at the right (or wrong) time. This property has resulted in felix pushing his luck on more than one occasions and as the Yank has observed it is something of a wonder he is not dead yet. Despite his regular protests that he "ates fucking Yanks!" it is clear his fate is tied to the imposing black man, and all attempts to get away from him has failed. He seems to have given up and now acts as a reluctant tourist guide for their permanent visitor.

Felix is short, with dirty blond hair. Typically he wears a badly fitting suit over a Liverpool football shirt. He employs what could be described as colourful language and swears as often as he draws in breath.

Face: Violet and Angelo

Violet is a middling Sorcerer. Her skills are good but she has always struggled in gathering the power she needs to enact the effects. As a result she has specialised in thaumatic rituals where the time limitations have less of an impact. Things have changed recently as she has paired up with Angelo; a gruff changeling, who was attracted into club land looking for a playmate. Angelo is a source of the power Violet desperately seeks. Although he has not managed to access the faerie magics that his blood carries, he has learnt to collect the energy and gift it to Violet so she can use it in her magic. To assist in this Violet has had a number of glyphs tattooed onto Angelo's body, which glow slightly as she draws out the power.

In fact Violets problem is that she is a White Court virgin, and she is trying to gain energy in a way that is incompatible with her basic nature. Angelo is a horny young goat and so has excess sexual energy to spare. He is 'feeding' her exactly what she needs.

Face: David Rankin

David is a white court Vampire of the Raith Family. He is the oldest survivor of the Raiths and thus their defacto leader. He would have inherited 'the Princeship' if Elijah's manoeuvrings had not been so successful, but he claims he has little interest in the politics of the city and is happy to leave all that rubbish to Elijah. Of course there is a high probability he is lying.

He runs a franchise of highly successful massage pallors catering to the requirements of 'discerning gentlemen of the city', and has done for the past century. His highest class emporium operates from an old georgian building on Fenwick street, but he has 'outlets' all over the city catering to every level of need; from the footballers looking for a way to waste there thousand pounds a second income on a good time, to the street walkers in the 'tolerance zone'. There is also an escort service which David stocks from his own descendants, thereby ensuring a high standard of girls to appear on the arms of his clients. This gives him ears and eyes in some of the more exclusive mortal arenas.