

HANGOVER CITY

A City Sourcebook for Dresden Files RPG

by Sue Wilson

Chapter two- Rare Breed.

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Can't blame a girl for asking.

For a prison it is a remarkably nice cage, Angela reflects as she settles back into the arm chair and sips at the glass of wine. She had been warned in Manchester that it could be risky visiting Covenant grounds, but she needed to see the place for herself. The Cathedral had been amazing; a castle to god in red sandstone and ornate marble. She felt like an intruder walking through its high arched vaults. At any moment she felt the sleeping lords and ladies on their mausoleums might rise up and demand the peasant leave.

Leaving she had intended to head for the river, but made a rapid right turn when she spotted the Fou dogs across street. It was all too clear they were a lot more than statues. She could feel the spirits in them glaring at her threateningly as they marked the boundary to their lands. So she had not been surprised when her amble down the narrow alley called Wood Street had been interrupted by four men waiting for her outside an old inn. As being arrested went it had at least benefited from a nice view. Her captors were all good-looking, athletic, young men in tight biker leathers with a shoulder patch reading "Rare Breed". The exchange had been low key as they established her 'not exactly human then' status. The shortest one, with dark hair and a hint of an oriental fold to his eyes, had even given her his helmet so she could ride safely on the back of the bike. However she was sure that the calmness of the approach was mostly dictated by the passing tourists and, if she had chosen to put up a fight, it would have been very short.

She looks through the bars to the small office space on the other side. Two of the men who brought her in are still there. The man who donated his helmet - Cale - is clearly completing some paper work on her arrest. The other (tall, muscular, with mousy brown hair that flops over his forehead in an untidy fringe) is just looking at her curiously.

She returns his gaze for a moment and he smiles.

"Can I get you anything?" he asks. His accent is softer than she expected, but still clearly scouse.

She gestures to the finished lasagne and half empty glass of wine beside her and shakes her head. "No. No I'm fine. It was very nice thank you."

He nods. "So what are you doing in Scally land?"

She smiles. "Would you believe I'm just a tourist?" She asks, leaning forward slightly, to emphasis her cleavage.

He laughs. "Well we do get them. But..." He looks at her curiously. "You don't seem the type."

"I'm researching a book." She decides to come clean.

"Really? What on?"

"The supernatural." She says.

"There is a lot of those on the market, you sure it will sell?"

"It's not that type of book." She says.

"What type do you mean then?" He asks.

She nods. "Supernatural communities around the world. A guide for a Role Playing game."

"Accurate?" He asks.

She nods.

"And you want to include us." He states

"Well I'd like to." She says.

"You know." He twitches his head. "Can't see the council going for that. They don't like people remembering we are here."

"That's a shame." She says. "People do." She warns him. "Cheng Tze in Manchester was most informative."

His crosses his arms. "Really?" He says suspiciously. "And what did he have to say."

She can feel him calling her bluff. She grimaces. "That brother Tu Di Gong does not like visitors." She confesses.

"But you came anyway." He says.

"Yes." She nods, shifting her position slightly again, pushing the flirt. "I usually get what I want when I ask nicely."

To her surprise he leans back instead, his face fixed on her eyes and ignoring the 'delights' she is trying to tempt him with.

"You're wasting your time." Cale says, his comment almost dismissive. "Jake bats for the other team." He glances over from the paper work and then puts down his pen and leans back. "I however..." He smiles. "You can flirt with me all you want." He stares blatantly at her breasts, grinning.

"Tart." Jake says, the accent suddenly very sharp.

Cale looks up at him and beams. "Just doing my bit to continue to line, Bro. Given you're not, some one has to take up the slack."

She stands up, moving to the bars. "So what do I have to do to get out of here?" She asks.

The door at the top of the steps behind them opens and another man in leathers enters. There is enough of a similarity between the new arrival and Jake that she is sure they must be related. The two look at each other for a moment, a flick of confusion then Jake says "Simon, what are you doing here?"

"Your shift's over mate. Boss wants you back home." Simon responds. "Date night or something?"

Jake grins. He grabs his helmet.

"What about me?" Cale protests.

Jake nods to Angela. "There's your date pal." He winks and takes the steps two at a time.

Cale sags into the seat and glares at Simon. The man shrugs. "Hey I'm stuck here with you too." He points out. Then he looks over to their prisoner. There is a long pause as he studies her then he asks. "Can I get you anything?"

She gestures to the Lasagne and wine on the table behind her. "No I'm fine."

He nods. "So what are you doing in Scally land?"

She is hit with a horrible sense of De' Ja Vu and Cale says. "Yeah we did all that already." In a bored expression.

"Oh. Well if you are briefed." Simon says. He moves closer. "So what do you want to know?"

"Rare Breed?" Angela says. Nodding to the old crest on the wall behind him; its image identical to the patch on his shoulder. "What's that about?"

"Mortals bred and trained to take down supernaturals." He responds.

His honesty almost shocks her. All she can manage is "What?"

"When the covenant was first set up it was realised that they needed an independent group to enforce things and keep order. That was the Breed. I guess they wanted mortals because we die off fairly quickly, so we can never gain too much power." Simon explains.

It takes her a few moments to gather her thoughts. Obviously the rumours she had heard in Manchester were true, but to hear the 'confession' so quickly and from the lips of one of their own surprises her. She expected them to be more circumspect about such a thing. Not so blatant, and frankly proud of what they were doing.

"Why Rare Breed?" She manages, desperate to keep the conversation going.

He shrugs. "Because they breed us I guess. We come from the old families. The Pymys, The Stanleys, The Molyneux, The Cavendish. Families like that. For a long time the Covenant have been keeping track of those blood lines. Ream has books and books of our lineages in his office. Occasionally there is a bit of match making or arranged marriages going on, but its all to making sure the people that come out of them are competent and capable and ready for the task at hand. We are the best Humanity has to offer." He grins, a pride in his voice.

"Well best you can get out of scousers." Cale responds.

Simon looks at him grimacing. Cale holds up his hands in defence, "Hey I'm a scouser too."

"Yeah, half breed." Simon teases back.

Angela looks at them confused.

"My dads out of China, well technically Hong Kong, got out before they handed the place back." Cale explains.

"But," She nods to his jacket on the back of the chair, "you are Rare breed?" She asks, slightly confused.

"Mum was from the Stanley line." Cale nods. "And Tu Di Gong put in a word for my dad." He explains dismissively.

Angela looks impressed, knowing just what a compliment is hidden in the throw away line. She

knows from her conversations with the Community who protected her in Manchester that the leader of Liverpool's chinatown rarely speaks on any subject, let alone to recommend a mortal's suitability. She starts wondering what Cale's father could have done to earn such an honour.

"They like to bring in outside blood occasionally." Simon says. He grins ruefully. "I mean we have a canoe and the river would be a bit embarrassing if we all took up the banjo."

She frowns at him.

"Deliverance." He hints, then he shrugs. "Doesn't matter."

"The famous Scally whitt is just lost on some people." Cale comments darkly.

"So what happens now?" Angela asks.

"You get to be our guest," Simon says. "And we answer whatever questions you have on the Covenant."

"And then?" She asks.

He looks at her, his face suddenly serious. He sniffs "Then you go before the court and depending on what you say to them..." He shrugs.

"You stay, you leave, or you die." Cale intones.

"Die?" Angela asks, shocked at the suggestion.

Cale nods. "If you are a danger to us." He stands up slowly. Even through the leathers she gets a sense of the strong precision in the muscles. Simon's comments about the Breed being there to take down supernaturals haunts her thoughts. Cale looks at her, his dark eyes looking somehow deadly; all trace of the jovial flirting she was enjoying earlier gone. He moves closer to her, standing just behind Simon.

She feels the blood drain from her face. "Oh."

"So you might want to have a serious reconsider about what you want to write in that book for yours." Cale warns. "Cause that sounds pretty threatening to me."

"Book?" Simon asks, twisting to look at him.

"Yeah Pal." Cale says. "Way to go briefing the enemy." He pats Simon's shoulder sarcastically.

Simon openly grimaces at his mistake. "I thought you were just a tourist." He says.

"Watch ALL the tape next time." Cale says. "I need a piss, I'm sure you can finish the rest of the chapter for her whilst I'm gone." He heads for a small door at the far end of the room.

Simon glares at Angela.

She shrugs. "You can't blame a girl for asking." She defends.

He shakes his head and stalks over to the desk, clearly annoyed with himself. Then he picks up his pen and carries on with the Paper work in silence.

Rare Breed.

Rare breed are a group of 'humans' who act as the strong arm of the High Council. They have been trained in the weaknesses of all the supernatural races and are equipped with the magical items to defeat them. When the Covenant was first drawn up it was recognised that some one would need to enforce it, but no one trusted any one other faction with the task. It was theorised that as any individual mortal would not live long enough to capitalise on the skills and powers they gained in service of this group, it would be relatively safe for this force to be made up from 'May-fly lives' as the Fisher king termed it. Thus the Breed was born by selecting suitable candidates from the mortal families of the city that had close ties to various supernatural groups. As the years progressed the children of these initial candidates fell into the roles vacated by their fathers and the Breed quite literally evolved. As much as the Breed members are 'mortal', they are far from being your typical humans. They are, as Simon boasted, the best humanity has to offer and at the end of a long selective breeding and 'survival of the fittest' programme. Most are equipped with talismans and artefacts that are designed to protect them and give them a fighting chance against the supernatural enemies they face, and it is not uncommon to find one or two in any group that has mastered a smattering of ritual or channelling which they can bring to bare on an opponent.

Additionally they are well trained and well briefed and have the advantage of numbers. Over the years certain talents and knacks have emerged and bred true in the families; for example the Mathers Family almost puritanical attitude which has made them particularly adept at resisting the charms of the White Court Vampires, or the Claytons inherited talent for seeing through Faerie glamour, said to be a gift from the Fisher King for a kindness shown to him in 1654. This, along with Reams habit of teaming up Uncles and nephews, has led to lines of specialisation in the breed. A trait that is almost essential as learning all the techniques against all the supernatural elements would take longer than a human life time. It is also seen as something of a reassurance amongst the rest of the community, as if any one group of Breed were to get ideas above their station, chances are they would be some supernatural group who could slap them down again. As a result most know that if you have a 'wolf' problem the people turning up are likely to be the Stanleys, but if it is a group of Sorcerers up to no good, the phone will be ringing in the pocket of a Molyneux.

That said once you get past all the armour and wards what is left is human flesh, with little of the advantages of toughness, regeneration, or even longevity

of other faction and the Breed are all to aware of this. It makes them very cautious and tactical in their out look - they live by the motto retreat and live to fight another day. A breed member fleeing from a conflict is not a coward running away; he is the man who has worked out the strengths and weaknesses of those they face, and is reporting his findings back to Ream whilst the rest cover his retreat. Then he will be back, with reinforcements. Lots of them, and a couple of the Mages and local chimera just to be on the safe side.

Mortals of Liverpool believe them to be a biker gang, and give them a wide berth. Breed members can clear a bar in seconds just by entering it in their leathers and looking round - which is a useful talent if you want to deal with a drunken Lycanthrope without bystanders getting hurt.

Guidelines for Rare Breed Characters.

Given the training, talismans and 'selective breeding' they benefit from, they fall better into the Minor talents, focused practitioners or emissary templates than 'True Mortal'. They should have a High aspect that refers to the Breed, the family line they are descended from or the group they are trained to face.

The following are typical 'supernatural' powers found amongst the breed, although any individual breed member is only likely to have one of the them:

- Items of power designed to act against a type of supernatural threat.
- Pack instincts with other breed members that has come from a lifetime training and working with the same group. This is the most common power.
- Supernatural sense - see through the glamour, the power possessed by the Clayton line as mentioned above. People with this power have to actively concentrate to see the glamour rather than the other way round. The danger is, in this city, they are so used to seeing the Faerie walking around it might not strike them as anything unusual any more!
- Cloak of shadows, Though Simon claims its really just the art of being scouse
- Ghost speaker, for those charged with dealing with the spirit world.
- Marked by power, typically possessed by older breed members who are acknowledged experts in their field.
- Psychometry, popular with the breeds investigative branch but sadly

uncommon.

- The sight, often found in the Molyneux who are charged with keeping the Wizards in line.
- Ritual or channelling
- Guide my hand, which comes more from their faith in the training and Ream than any deity related process but works the same way.
- Dedicated to the cause [-1]. The Mathers power referred to above, the breed member effectively counts as being in 'true love', or similar catch effect, when facing a White court vampire, as his dedication to the Breed and what it stands for prevents him from being swayed by their powers.

Rare Breed as a group:

High Aspect: Your Supernatural Emergency Service

Trouble: Memento Mori.

Aspect: If there is a weakness we know it.

We are legion and we are many.

Home turf advantage.

Friends in High- and Low- places.

Best humanity has to offer.

The Caverns

The caverns are actually a number of locations spread across the city which are used by the Breed to detain their captives. All are set up to be able to contain the creatures they Breed bring in and hold them there for trail and are fitted out with wards, armoured walls, and equipment to ensure that happens.

Temple Street.

The original and most comfortable Cavern, temple street is in the city centre it used to be convenient for the town hall and the castle, but the castle has long since gone and the financial centre of the city grew up over them. It is accessed via a metal door in an derelict looking brick building hidden in a side alley only just wide enough for one vehicle. Beyond the nameless door is a long dark corridor, which is full of detectors and wards that let the Breed inside know what is heading towards them. At the end is another metal door, and both can be sealed turning the corridor into a killing ground if that is judged to be the measured response required.

Those surviving to get through the door are quickly divided, those taken to the right

are lead through another metal door and then down a set of five stone steps. This is a small office area with three large brick arched spaced with heavy iron bars - The Cells. There is a second door out of the area but it only leads to a small bathroom and kitchen used by the breed members who are on Guard duty.

The Cells here are nicely furnished, almost like a good quality hotel room. The beds are comfortable. There are chairs and tables and one of the 'cells' even has a book case of local tourist information and mortal historical texts, and the odd trashy novel that has been donated by Breed members.

'Guests' held here are even allowed to chose their own meals form a variety of delivery companies (although the Breed makes the call and goes a picks up the food)

To the left once inside the door a short corridor leads to the operations room and the stores. These are the hub of the Breeds actions where the Dispatcher takes calls from members of the Covenant in trouble and sends out the Breed in response. It is also the lab and office space used by the investigative team. Approximately half of the equipment not issued to Breed members is stored here. The rest is scattered around other 'caverns' and safe houses. The Breed are not so stupid as to put all their eggs in one basket.

The River Pen.

From the most comfortable to the least in less than a mile. The river pen is cold and dark. The air stinks of rotting debris that the river washes in twice a day. It is part of a subterranean dock complex created when an old wharf was buried under the new water front in the 1850's. The area partially floods with every high tide (though the water stops short of the cages except in the most extreme of weather conditions) As such it never totally dries out, making it a popular location to keep Wizards and Fairies who prefer to throw around fire.

It can be accessed from the surface via a set of metal shutters on Moor Street, that most assume is a private car park for the office block above; the old blue signs saying 'This space must be kept clear at all time' and 'Private parking, Staff only' might have given them that impression. There are also submerged tunnels from the river near the Pier head which the river witches use to bring in any suspects they have detained.

Inside it is very dark. Small waterproof bulbs line the walls every few meters but they are not really powerful enough to carry into the space, and Breed members on guard usually carry large Mag-lite torches that can also double as clubs should they need to 'dissuade' a difficult detainee. The water laps at the old wharf and the noise echoes in the large space, conversations are difficult and any attempt at

vocalisations will quickly be detected by the guards. The concrete wharf is used as a walk way almost the edge of the dock to the cells at the back, which have been built into the old warehouse area. They are a system of metal cages with concrete plinths and thin foam mattresses. There is an upper walk way that extends across the top of the cages, allowing those on guard to watch what is going on in the cages in relative safety. Guards often hang round on the walk way when on duty because frankly there is no where else to go. Literally - the toilet facilities consist of standing on the wharf an weeing into the river. Breed member have leant to check there are no River witches down there before relieving themselves- that is a mistake you only get to make once.

It is not the most popular of duties and often used as 'punishment' detail. There is one regular guard - Armando Wyclif. He likes the place because it is quiet and he can fish off the wharf, although even he is not mad enough to eat anything that is pulled out of the river. He is also having a fling with Shelly Mullen, one of the river witches and working at the pen gives them plenty of chance to meet up in private.

Smithdown

Up near the university the Breed have claimed a section of the famed Williamson Tunnels. This set of cells conveniently connects into the police station at the same location, allowing the Breed to remove supernatural individuals who have been detained by the mortal forces before the truth about them can be discovered. The cells here were constructed at the same time as the police stations facilities, and out of the same materials (although various wards have been bound into them to ensure they can hold people who are beyond mortal.) As a result they are no more comfortable than any other 'night in the cells'. Indeed some supernatural visitors have been detained here and escorted off Covenant lands with out ever realising it was not the Mortal Authorities dealing with them.

The cavern is run by one of the Breeds female members, Amelia Stanley. She was a changeling troll but she gave up her faerie nature so she could stay in liverpool work with the breed. However her heritage has left her a large and some what formidable character. Ream admires her and trusts her, mainly due to this sacrifice, so pretty much leaves her to run the place as she sees fit. So far she has never let him down.

Wavertree Lockup

A historic building, the lock up is mostly used to contain Loup Garou, although it can be used to hold any of the more physical types. It is a hexagonal stone building in the middle of a park and although it is technically under the remit of the Breed, the park is guarded by the Wolves and since Ream and Gunnar fell out, the Wolves and the Stanley's have been looking after it.

It's actually guard is a ghost called Garrett Farrow. He appears to be a scruffily dressed 14 year old boy and usually pretends to be a fellow prisoner, because its a good way of getting people to open up to him and tell him what they are really up to in the city. Its not far from the truth. Garrett was thrown into the lock up back in 1812 after getting drunk and throwing stones at a police man. Due to his inebriated state he did not survive the night, though there was some suggestion a white court vampire may have been imprisoned in there at the time which may have been a contributing factor. He now seeks to persuade others to turn over a new leaf rather than follow his fate.

Inside it is a single space with a cylindrical iron cage built so it is arms reach from the stones. Just outside the cage is a ring of silver which can be used to activate a powerful ward, and also set up a zone of silence so the howls of those contained do not disturb the local mortals.

Other locations

The breed have another of other locations they can temporarily use to detain prisoners, but are not on the 24/7 watch;

- There is a small hut on the roof of the Liver building, which the Liver Bird perches over, that has been used as an out of the way holding point.
- There is an old Mausoleum in the graveyard behind the Anglican Cathedral which is often used to detain creatures that can not cross holy ground without assistance.
- There is a cellar under the Shaw Street mansion dating from the Red Court days that Elijah has held troublesome White Court Vampires in so he can give them a good talking to before they go before the council.
- One of the draws in the Morgue at the Royal Infirmary can be sealed using magic to hold 'bodies that are not exactly dead' until they can be quietly moves some where else. The mortal staff know it is a pain of a draw that always sticks so they don't use it.
- There is also a 'cavern' of sorts some where under China town. But that is only used by the chinese community, and the Breed do not have easy access to it. Mostly the spirits hold perpetrators there and then transfer them to the appropriate Cavern by their open means.

The sheriff.

No one is sure what sheriff Ream is, though given he has been around for at least 350 years (there is a portrait of him by William Hogarth in the Walker art gallery) the safe money is on 'Not Mortal'.

Ream is highly intelligent and capable of being completely emotionless. Appearance wise he seems to have been caught in his mid 40's, his blond hair has grey streaks and he sports a neatly trimmed matching beard. Illustrations of him created over his time in office when he has held 'official' positions in the mortal authorities (such as the Hogarth) show him always just slightly behind the fashion; and currently he is favouring a cream lounge suit with blue shirt and a White tie.

He has diplomatic ties with most of the supernatural factions in the city, and a few of the law related mortal ones (like the police service and the county courts) He has a reputation for giving unbiased and factual accounts and summaries of any incident brought to the High Council (or indeed the mortal authorities where he has appears as an expert witness).

He has lead the breed for as long as any one can recall; carefully choosing it's prospective members from the old families of the city that have proved themselves loyal, mentoring them to determine their particular strengths and then pairing them up with an older member to learn the ropes. He has taken care to keep up with the times, which means that in addition to the magics and techniques from lore, many of the breed are also proficient with that latest forensic analysis and computer surveillance techniques and are employed by the local emergency services. This helps to provide a useful cover for their Covenant activities.

His relationship with the werewolf faction in the city took a major knock a few years ago when he 'came out'. The local wolf packs have a big downer on homosexuality as it clashes with their fundamental drive to reproduce and make lots of wolf cubs to carry on the blood line. There is still an element of friction between himself and Gunnar which they will put behind them only when the city is really in danger. The rest of the time the atmosphere when both men are in the room is rather cold. Often when Ream is speaking at the High Council Gunnar with pointedly ignore him until one of the other council members addresses him directly.

"You don't understand. I was not living a lie as you claim. I was nothing. There was nothing before him. I had no knowledge of those emotions. Like a man who had lived forever in the dark and so knew nothing of colour. I was Blind Justice. I gave my council only on the facts of the matter and there were no other considerations. I looked into those brown eyes and saw colour for the first time. Now. Now things are different and I am a better man for it. "

Ream's husband, Eurig Randal, is a little too good to be true and something of an Adonis. He is around six foot six, with dark hair and deep brown eyes, and usually bearded. He has the type of sculptured body men spend life times in the Gym for and never achieve. Most people peg him in his mid 30's unless he is clean shaven, which usually only occurs after he has lost a bet, when he looks closer to his early twenties. He has a soft welsh accent, an easy smile and a magnetic personality. He seems to be a genuinely nice guy, very loyal to those around him and putting himself in danger to help them on numerous occasions. It is thought it is this quality that first attracted Ream to him.

He appeared out of nowhere in the gay clubs of the city around five years ago, and rapidly collecting a following of enraptured mortals around him. He claims to have come from a community in Mid Wales which no one can find any trace of. Most believe he was a White court virgin who became mortal on encountering Sheriff Ream and falling in love. He certainly claims that everything changed for him the night he met Ream as a prisoner in the Breeds lock up.

In fact the truth is more complex than that. Eurig is actually a werewolf. His true body is a small rather weedy looking wolf with very dark black pelt that can pass for a shaggy grey hound in bad light. Not surprisingly perhaps, he rarely appears in this form. The community in mid Wales he referred to was an small privately owned wolf pack that was destroyed by animal rights activists. Running for his life and with little experience of humanity, the young wolf created a human shape by combining elements from the images of men in a discarded periodical in a mens toilet on Llandudno bus station. He had expected the body to allow him to blend in - in which regard his plan was an unmitigated failure. However by gathering around him a number of mortals he has carved out a life for himself in the city and has left the scared lone wolf that ran from Wales far behind.

They live in an apartment in the Albert dock with their two adopted 'sons' (or cubs as Eurig calls them); Brian Walton and his lover Jake Pym. Brian was one of the first mortals to attach himself to Eurig when he arrived in the city and now works as a dispatcher for the Breed. Jake Pym is one of the Breeds more capable warriors, specialising in taking out trouble causing Faerie.