

# **HANGOVER CITY**

A City Sourcebook for Dresden Files RPG

by Sue Wilson

## **Chapter three- Wizards, sorcerers and practitioners Oh My!**

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Izzy Wizzy, let's get ... Paranoid mostly.

She is napping when the door opens again. It's Cale's voice that awakens her. A respectful "Sir." that carries into her 'cage.' She sits up, pulling her jacket around herself as the foot steps come down the short light of stairs from the door. The voice is cultured, a soft Irish accent, the figure that moves into view is short and portly, dressed in an old style three piece suit in a pale grey pin stripe. The shirt is a high collar, just the slightest triangle at the neck above the white tie. His hair is dark but greying, and cut to a classic short back and sides. His eyes are a soft grey and framed by metal rimmed spectacles which he pushes firmly up his nose as he peers at her. Then he smiles.

"The Sheriff asked me to pop in and say hello." He says, she guesses he is talking to Cale but he is looking at her. "A cup of tea would be nice."

Cale sighs and stands up. "Wouldn't it just."

He walks over to her. His gaze moving up and down her body, as if studying every cell of her being. "And you would be Miss Hughes." He says.

She nods. "And you are?"

"Callum Doyle. Arch Mage to the High Council." He says. His face almost looks amused as he confesses to the title.

She looks at him cautiously, all too aware of Cale's earlier comments. "Are you here to interrogate me Mr Doyle."

"Well...." He smiles as he responds. "That's not a word I like."

She nods knowingly.

"Tea." He says.

The comment confuses her.

"Have you had tea yet?"

"I've eaten." She says. She turns to gesture to the small table, but at some point whilst she was sleeping someone removed the tray.

"No." He says. "I meant the drink. Really you should try some Tea whilst you are here. I know the... stuff... they serve in your homeland is not worthy of the title. You owe it to yourself whilst you are in these shores to taste the best."

"I had green Tea in Manchester." She replies.

"Not the same." He says.

Cale arrives with a small pot and two china cups and places it on the corner of the desk.

"Ah thank you young man." Callum responds. He pours a splash of milk into each and then runs his finger around the saucer of the one nearest to her. His fingers move over it, a subtle shift in the way he is holding his hand but one that seems strangely familiar. He pours in the tea, it is a rich brown colour and fills the air with a surprisingly fragrant smell. "Ceann do na taephota agus ceann do-éirí leat." He whispers. He turns the cup and brushes his fingers

over the edge of the saucer. Then carries it over to her and holds the cup out, reaching through the bars so she can take it.

She stares at it.

He looks at her. "Please, it would be impolite to refuse hospitality." He prompts.

She takes it carefully and sniffs at it. He takes his own cup and sips it. "Yes." He places his cup down and carries over the chair from behind the desk. Cale glares at him behind his back and then moves over to the bottom step of the stair case, dropping on to it resentfully, like some school child sent to the naughty step for something he didn't do.

The Mage sits down close to the bars. She is struck by the fact that she could reach through the bars and grab him. Unbothered he lifts the drink and sips it again.

She sniff the tea suspiciously but there is no taint in it.

"Please my dear. You get your time in Court. It is one of the rules." He says. "You are under the protection of the Breed. I am hardly likely to poison a stranger under the nose of the sheriff, am I?"

She sips the fluid. The taste is stronger than the Green tea she was given in Manchester, less flowery and with a bitter tinge to the sides of her tongue. But it is very refreshing, more so than she expected.

He drains his own cup and puts it down.

"Now then." He says. "Formalities over." He titles his head on one side. "Explain to me what you are doing here."

She tells him. To her surprise he has heard of Role Playing Games, though he dismisses them as "those things the Apprentices do when they should be researching". He asks carefully about the other cities she has visited and her plans for recording them and what persuaded her to visit "This site of madness" as he refers to Liverpool. He presses her gently for what little she already knows. It is only when she talks of the Chinese in Manchester than his expression turns darker and he leans back.

"They told you of Tu Di Gong?" He says, there is an edge to his voice, the merest hint of anger.

She nods.

"I see." He stands. "Not Shen Jun Meng." He asks carefully.

"No. My contact was Tu Di Gong." She replies, confused about why so little a detail means so much to him. "I was told he was the man in charged."

"You are not of oriental descent though?" He asks.

She shakes her head. Then realises from his expression it had been intended as a rhetorical question.

"I am afraid dear Lady, you will need to be taken before the King." He says. He reaches up and removes his glasses. It is only as he does so that she realises there is no glass in the metal

frames. He folds them, his faces caught in an expression of deep thought and then slides them into the top pocket of his jacket, hooking the eat over the flap so they do not fall completely inside.

She frowns confused.

"I had hoped that in talking to you, I could unravel this, but your insistance on a connection to the Grandfather complicates matters.

"But I answered all your questions!" She objects. "I took your truth potion."

"Truth potion?" He looks at her confused, then a smile creeps to his lips and he only just suppress the laugh.

She gestures to the Tea Cup. "The Magic...." She states firmly.

"Just a little charm to guarantee the taste, My dear. One can never be sure that Thomas has not put the tea fund on a three legged horse again and forced the Breed to go shopping at Liddl." He says.

There is a snort of disgust from Cale. "That's Whitards finest mate." then a mumble of "We took the cash box key off him after last time."

She stops, her shoulders sagging. Suddenly feeling caught out. She was so sure he had cast some magic upon her to get her to answer his questions so completely. Now she realises she had just opened up of her own volition. That she had been flattered some one outside the group, had shown and interest in her project.

"Oh." She says.

He smiles at her, an almost fatherly expression. "It may be nothing, just some one in Manchester trying to cause trouble and using you are their bullet. Still we need to be sure."

"And me meeting this king will sort that." She asks.

"He has a way about him." Callum says carefully.

"OK then, bring him here."

Cale snorts again.

"Ah no. It does not work like that. We would need to take you to him. And for that we need to be sure of... things." The Arch Mage says. The smile fades into thought.

She swallows. The same subtle threat she felt earlier rising in her.

Cale stands checking his watch. "Have to make it quick Mr Doyle. Only an hour left till sunrise. You don't want to be trapped in the court all day."

Callum holds out a set of Keys, but his eyes are still firmly fixed on Angela. "Well then Mr Tien, if you could just bring round my car." He sighs. "And, young lady, we will see what Royalty makes of you."

## The Collective Guild Of Liverpool Manipulators of Magic

The Wizards and Sorcerers of Liverpool are a varied and eclectic lot. Some, preferring to work in seclusion, are little more than eccentric hermits. Others have collected around them a loyal little band of apprentices and hangers on. Some of the more powerful are totally focused on only one small area of magic, and would not even be recognised as wizards by the White Council. The only thing they all have in common is the firm belief they should be allowed to get on with their researches with as little outside interference as possible.

Despite this, as far as the Covenant is concerned, they are still considered only one faction and their 'leader' the Arch Mage Callum Doyle is expected to keep them in line. In an attempt to do this Callum instigated the Collective Guild Of Liverpool Manipulators of Magic. Which he hoped would be a local version of the White Council (which he is also a member of, though his attendance record is appalling) Sadly most wizards in Liverpool consider the guild to be a bit of a joke. It's meetings, on the first of every month at the Lyceum, are never quorate, and invariable the aim is to finish all business on the agenda before last orders. (Though the lifting of the drink hours regulations mean the meeting do now go on longer)

Having little in the way of sanctions to keep the mages in line, short of calling in the White Council (which no one would appreciate given the war and numerous 'past indiscretions' by almost all parties) Callum all too often has to turn to Ream and Rare Breed to help him out when mages step out of line. As a result the two have a close working relationship, and when the Breed need 'heavy back up' the Mages are often the first to be called. Fortunately at such times of crisis the 'guild' reluctantly manage to pull together for the good of the whole city. After all they all know they have it quite cushy under Callum's regime and can get away with things in Liverpool that would be leapt on in other cities where the White Council are paying closer attention. As Callum once pointed out in one of his rallying speeches "No one wants to try and carry on working in a bomb site, so get off your back sides and stop the bomb from going off."

### Location: The Lyceum

The two men, sprinting through the shopping centre as the city begins to come to life with its normal mortal daytime traffic, make an interesting contrast. The tall emaciated goth relying on his longer legs to keep pace with the shorter stockier athlete in biker leathers. At Ranelagh Street, the pedestrian crossing lights mysteriously flick to green and stop the traffic for only long enough for them to run over, leaving a woman loaded down with bags stumbling out of the way of the impatient taxi.

Fidel, the goth, takes the lead as Simon heads for the reading room entrance, yelling to him and gesturing to a narrow alley at the side of the building. They slide in as the stall holder begins to unfold his table and set up his collection of bookends and name plates made from twisted metal, effectively blocking entrance behind them. The alley ends in a bricked up doorway that has been painted black. They slide to a stop before the 'wall'.

"You ever notice how the people of the Covenant lurk down narrow alleys?" Simon asks as its similarity to the entrances to the Cavern and the River Pen strike him.

"Nature of the beast I guess." Fidel responds. He closes his eyes and rests his hand on the black stoned, mumbling in something that sounds like Latin. The black surface ripples and Fidel grabs Simon's wrist pulling him swiftly through the suspended oil. Almost instantly it solidifies behind him. Simon looks round.

"Yeah you don't want to dawdle through one of those gates." Fidel quips.

Simon turns. The space beyond is considerably larger than the Lyceum building. It stretches up into blackness in seemingly endless floors higher than the roof out side and descends into a pit. Beneath them, down a metal spiral stair case, is a massive open area of black stone. Small groups of mages gather round tables, cauldrons and fire pits discussing their creations. Then his eyes fall on the man stalking towards them along the metal walk way running around the room; ArchMage Callum Doyle.

"Fidel have you lost your mind!" He roars.

Fidel looks at him. "We have important information Boss and..."

"You have brought a foreigner into our inner domain." The man continues.

Fidel looks at Simon. "He's not a foreigner. This is Simon Pym. We were at school together."

Callum stops and take a deep breath. "HE is not one of US." He says, obviously having to focus to exert control.

Fidel sighs. "Yeah and honestly Boss it was that sort of thinking that got us in this mess in the first place. Now do you want what I have or should I take it to the Wolves?"

Callum glares at him.

Fidel stands his ground returning the gaze impassively.

Callum's shoulder sag. "Crap you are unbearable when you are right."

"I believe that is why you apprenticed me sir." Fidel responds.

"Come on we can debrief in my study." He turns to lead them back along the walk way, "Mr Pym, stick with us, and try not to notice too much whilst you are in here."

There is a woosh from one of the fire pits and a phoenix like form rises briefly in the blaze before it dies back down in a crash of flames that sends the gathered figures running. The cloak of one clearly alight.

"Like that." Callum says, his tone exasperated. "Definitely try not to notice things like that."

"Yes Sir." Simon responds uncertainly. "I'll do my best."

The Lyceum in bold street was one of the first lending libraries in Europe. Built in 1802 by Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society as a comfortable and quiet place to meet away from the rowdiness of the coffee houses, it expanded and became the home of the Lyceum gentleman's club; being a slightly more discrete title than the Collective Guild Of Liverpool Manipulators of Magic, which the members realised was a bit long and blatant to fit over the door.

The building is veiled and warded, not so much to prevent people getting in (though it does that too), but more to prevent the activities of the Guilds members getting out and disturbing the mortals. The Waterloo Place entrance leads into the old public reading area, which is the only part of the building that can be entered by non guild members. It is used as a waiting area for those in the know who have come to meet one of the guild and as a coffee/ esoteric book shop where the guild can keep an eye out for potential recruits.

The wards can only be breached by members of the Guild, and a few trusted assistants who have been given personalised 'keys'. There is only one door into the building, a small entrance down an alley at the side of the building between it and the central station complex. However any of the obvious doors can be used as an exit to allow guild members to sneak out as they wish. A trick often used by apprentices trying to avoid their masters after a particular unsuccessful experiment.

Inside the building appears to be much bigger than the external walls would suggest. Though if this is the case or just a trick of the light or an illusion is uncertain. The central cylindrical space is split into smaller areas on the lower floor, each dominated by a cauldron, lab bench, work shop, fire pit etc depending on the 'flavour' of magic the area is used for. The height of the area is utilised by rings of metal walkways with alcoves which are used to store the collected libraries and resources that the members of the guild can make use of.

Of course most of the 'major' members would not stoop to using such 'communal' materials and pride themselves in having their own libraries and laboratories. However it is seen as 'good enough for the apprentices and those poor folk with no real skill'. Further up these alcoves have been adapted into quiet reading spaces, known as 'The Stacks' where guild members and apprentice can hide from each other when they are not feeling sociable.

Lighting is limited and mostly achieved by piped gas lights which bubble slightly and smell. There is one ancient Bakelite phone in the main office which is the only way of communicating with the out side world. Groups of apprentices can often be found huddled around texts or cauldrons discussing their latest experiments, or, on a bad day, running from the results. The Guild employ Matthew Khan, a wizard particularly talented in fire and water spells as a magical fire suppression system on days when the Apprentices in. Most Wizards in Liverpool have been 'ticked off' by him for attempting some effect that has got out of hand - in fact some claim you can not really claim the title of wizard until you have been.



## Callum Doyle - Face of the Guild

"Its counter productive Man! One If you kill yourself, he would not want to go on without you. And, two If you destroy the world to save him, where is he going to live!"

The practical advice of Callum Doyle

Callum Doyle does not want to be ArchMage of Liverpool. Callum Doyle would dearly love not to be ArchMage of Liverpool. Its a pig of a job (he uses heading cats as a metaphor); it carries no real power or respect with it; dumps an massive responsibility on his shoulders; and, most significantly, it takes up far too much of the time he would much rather spend researching his books on Lore and developing new magics. However the fact remains, he is Arch Mage and as the only way to dispose of the title is to die and pass it on. As he is a wizard with the famous wizards longevity, so that is unlikely to happen anytime soon.

Physically Callum appears to be in his late 50's. He speaks with a upper class Irish accent and dresses in the height of fashion for Edwardian elegance. Fidel teases him with the possibility that if he waits long enough it will come back into style and then he will have to go out and buy a jumper, which given Fidel's preference for GOTH attire is very much the pot calling the kettle black.

He lives in a house in Speke which is on the site of a weak point between the mortal plane and the Never-never. Sadly it is also now far too close to the airport for Callum's liking and he finds the sound of the jets disturb his studies. Still he has been there longer than the airport and seems confident that it will leave first.

Also living at the house are his 'apprentice' Fidel Marino, the spirit of his dead wife Naomi and his daughter Rebecca, a strange child who spent almost 100 years being 'not quite dead' and has returned from her experiences with a touch of madness and a lot of power.

**Naomi** now acts as his house keeper as the marriage vows only lasted until her death so it would not be proper to carry on any other relationship. Naomi and Callum refer to each other only as Mr and Mrs Doyle. Mrs Doyle is an excellent cook and her cinnamon buns are famous across the city. Few dare to refuse her hospitality.

**Fidel Marino** came into Callum's care as a teenager having been found in a local second hand book shop. He was successfully enacting a ritual he found in an old note book Callum had left here by mistake some 30 years earlier. (It was a ritual Callum had never actually mastered himself, which is why the Arch mage spotted he was something special.) After a brief trial at the Royal court for his crime of 'Unauthorised witchcraft in Covenant territories', Callum took the

young boy home and started teaching him. It was only when, a few months later, the police arrived at his house investigating a missing persons sighting that Fidel got round to admitting he had family in the city and should probably go home and tell his mother he was ok. This was the first of many rows between the Arch Mage and his apprentice. Despite, or may be because of, their volatile relationship Fidel has excelled. He was the one who figured out the curse that held Rebecca in her deathless-lifeless state and the two of them journeyed into the Never-never to rescue her spirit. Fidel has since confessed that if he had know what Rebecca was like he wouldn't have bothered. Callum thinks he is joking and that the 'love' between the two youngsters is genuine. Fidel claims it is not.

Since her recovery **Rebecca** has taken up Fidels fashion sense (although she is a little too plump and well fed to carry off the Goth look properly.) She is a very direct person who does not suffer fools at all and believes tact is for lesser mortals. She has returned from her Near Death experience (in all senses of the words) with some talent for seeing the future and divining the truth; she hands out these insights (and possibly incites) as and when she sees fit with no regard for the impact they may have on the listener. Recently, and much to Fidel's surprise, Rebecca announced that she and Fidel are engaged and that they will mary as soon as the wedding is planned. Fortunately for the young Mage she is constantly changing her mind about the arrangements, so so far no actual date has been set. He is hoping that this will continue long enough that she will forget all about it.

Also at the house at any one time will be three or four 'urchins showing promise'; Young mages that Callum is keeping an eye on and mentoring. (As a result, any one wanting to create a wizard in the city could easily claim Callum as their mentor.)

**Hermit - Independent Sorcerer (Probably)**

The hermit is not his name, it is just what other people call him. Around six foot but painfully thin, he is dressed in a long woollen coat that may once have been brown but is now a collection of stains. As it is permanently buttoned up, even under the hottest of days, no one knows what is underneath (and some say we are better for the ignorance) Some how he remains clean shaven, and his hair, though long, manages to be untangled and straight. It too is best described as 'brown with stains'.

He lives in the Grotto in Sefton park. He did briefly move onto the island in the middle of the lake when the council renovated the Grotto as part of the city of culture celebrations, but has since moved back. He spends his day in the park apparently talking to the rocks and trees, and occasionally the statues. Mortals assume he is a 'Care in the Community' Case and give him a wide berth. He can be persuaded to talk to non mortals who bring him a gift. The gift can take many forms but his favourite is a fact he does not already know.

He has become the Oracle of Liverpool. Those with a puzzle no one else can solve bring it to him, and whilst they may not always get an answer to their puzzle directly, the insights he shares are always accurate and relevant to the questioner. Only once has any one got any information out of the Hermit about himself. Fidel gave up some fact that was of such value the Hermit was willing to trade a hint about his own nature to the young wizard. However what he said seemed almost too strange to be believed true even by the Hermit himself. He told Fidel that his guidance and insights came from the fact that he was a character in a series of books, and that he had already read them all. Unfortunately the books did not contain all the actions of all the people who approached him, so some times he could only reveal other relevant and useful tidbits that he had gleaned from other parts in the story, and from the information other people have 'paid' him with.

Essentially the Hermit is included as a GM Fiat for days when the players are suffering from an attack of 'hard of thinking'. He can be used to push them in a direction, but if they come to rely in him too much he will start demanding more interesting payment (revelation of Aspects that could be used by others against them for example) or provide them with interesting but fundamentally irrelevant stuff.