

# **HANGOVER CITY**

A City Sourcebook for Dresden Files RPG

by Sue Wilson

## **Chapter four- The Royal Court of the Fisher King**

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## Caught of the Faerie King.

Angela remembers the darkness, Callum's hand on her hand as she gripped his arm. The sensation of her feet moving. She is sure she walked up steps. After that... sitting may be? The sensation of a soft comfortable vibration against her legs and back. Then a coolness of night air around her arms and on her face as she walked again. More stairs and then....

Light. Bright light. A spot light shining on her and she has to shield her eyes from it. She is on a stage. Wooden boards, the noise of her foot steps echoing off distant walls. Callum's standing just at the edge of the light looking at her with concern.

"Are you alright? The Veil should be faded by now." He asks.

She blinks at him. The confusion clearing. "Veil?"

"Just a little illusion to keep your senses busy during the journey. After all we can not be too careful, can we?"

"I..." She looks round. "Where am I?"

He smiles.

A man walks into view, though she realises quickly he is not merely 'a man'. Tall, beautiful, ethereal almost, his long fair hair flicked back to reveal pointed ears. The eyes that fix her briefly appear as cat like slits before taking on a more 'normal' human roundness, though they remain a cat like amber. His clothes in white biker leathers, though these appear to be a far higher quality than those worn by the Breed. At his hip is a sword that glows softly in the darkness of the theatre. Captivated by the man, if Callum replies to her question, she does not hear it.

"So you are the visitor that has been causing such a stir." He says.

She hears herself stammer an apology of "I'm sorry." Before she realises she is speaking. She feels an over whelming desire to drop to her knees before him. She manages to contain it to simple lowering her gaze; unworthy of the blessing of looking upon his beauty.

"I did my best Longarm. But if she has a truth concealed in her, it is deeper than I can manage." Callum says.

"Even with soul gaze!" He challenges.

Callum coughs. "Yeah I didn't go that far." He admits.

"May be you should have done." Longarm chastises.

"I doubt it would show up." He defends. "Besides they would know it would be the first thing we would try."

"And so you didn't even bother." Longarm snaps.

"It is a two way street, Longarm." Callum points out. "Reveals as much of me to her as I would learn from it. I judged that too big a risk."

"But you seek to risk My Lord." Longarm retaliates.

"She is of no risk to Him." Callum says pointedly. "It's her sanity I'd fear for."

"Well." Longarm responds, his voice softer, the fury draining out of him. "I suppose that may be true. But you have fears..."

"She was with the Chinese in Manchester. They sent her to see Tu Di Gong." Callum says, The elegant eyebrow of the Fairie lord raises. "Ah, and you think they may have planted something in her that may be of risk to The Grandfather."

"Given what is going on." Callum says. "It would be unfortunate if the Chinese delegation became distracted with their own internal problems." His voice sounds hard. "And it is the Mancs. They have tried things before."

"And we sent them packing." Longarm dismisses

"Last time it was just the mortals, could be they have aid from other sources this time." Callum counsils

Longarm stops for a second as if shocked by the implications. Then he nods. "I see your concern Arch Mage. And I agree." He steps forward. Angela feels his hand on her chin, lifting her gaze to meet his own.

She blushes under his close attention.

"She would be a very distracting bomb." He says.

"Bomb" Angela stammers. "I'm not..." She looks to Callum confused. "A bomb?"

The Arch Mage shrugs.

"You think I'm a Bomb?" She stresses.

"Well the Magical equivalent may be." Longarm tells her. "I mean, If you were sent here openly, why did the Chinese of Manchester not tell us you were coming?"

"We can not afford to be too cautious. Especially at the moment." Callum says. "So. You will take her to him?"

"I'll take her. I am not sure if he is awake. Or even will show any interest." Long arm says, Then he smiles. "Still its a pretty enough face for her kind. May be you will amuse him."

"Him?" She asks.

"My Liege the Fisher King." Long arm says.

"I thought You were the king." She says.

He laughs, "No, child. I am just a Knight of the Court." He offers his arm and she finds herself taking it, almost as if compelled.

He leads her out of the spot light, and whilst her eyes are still adjusting through the back of the stage. She stumbles in the darkness and has to grab his arm to stop herself falling. He pauses briefly.

"Of course I forget your kind do not have the sight in this shape do you?"

"You know what I am?" She says.

“Of course.” He says. “But there is no need for shame. We have many pets of many shape in the court. I am sure there is one here who will take you in if it is decided you should stay.”

“Stay!” She exclaims. “NO You don’t understand. I need to get home. There are people waiting for me.”

“My dear, if those in Manchester who seek us harm have used you they you can not leave. You would always be a danger to some one. But do not concern yourself. The Court has taken in many waif and strays over its time. You will find companionship here.”

She pulls her arm away from him, Stumbling back wards. It is all to clear they intend to imprison her here. She turns to run but only succeeds in colliding into soft cloth. It smells strongly of cheep perfume. She claws at it, her fear rising . Then suddenly there is sun light. She turns slowly, confused by the sharpness of her silhouette. The source is not some open door as she had prayed but the blade in the hand of the faerie Knight. He holds it high above his head, casting illumination into the small space. Around her she can see the cloth painted sheets, hard scenery flats and discarded props of the theatre. Behind him is a painted scene of a grassy hill topped by a fairy tale castle and for a fraction of a moment in the strange glow it seems all too real. In the moving shadows it almost looks as if the drawbridge is lowering.

He extends his other hand, his voice soft and welcoming. “Please Angela.” For a moment it sounds all to human and she has to remind herself of the eyes and the danger his kind represent.

She moves back away from him, trying to sink deeper into the scented cloth.

He signs, his drops his gaze for a moment and then slowly looks up at her, his body relaxes, his grip on the sword holding it more as a torch than the weapons of destruction it so clearly is. “Wolf-kin.” He says , his voice little more than a purr. “If we judged you only for for death you would never had made the Caverns cage. The breed are well trained and well briefed.” He pauses, it is less than a heart beet but it gives time for his words to sink into her mind. “As hard as it may seem to be to believe, we are trying to help you.” His wrist flicks as he offers his hand again.

She swallows.

There is a movement in the debris beside her, and despite herself she shrieks. As it shifts she realises that what she took for a manikin dressed in a discarded robe surrounded by years of accumulated rubbish is a man. Then as he looks at her she realises that she was wrong.

The Fisher King stands. His movement heralded by the sound of cascading aluminium cans and the chink of bottles. The air fills with the scent of stale beer and urine. She wrinkles her nose at the all too familiar scent of any city alley after closing time. He turns to her and she can see a fragment of a sweet wrapper adhering to the whiskers near his cheek. The blue

eyes glitter like sapphire.

“Take yer jacket off to nancy there and he’ll hand yer yer arm .” The voice is old, rich, and shot through with a scouse accent. “Yer not playin tic in ‘ere.”

Angela blinks at him. Her mind trying to arrange the noises he has made into words that might mean something.

His brows drop as he stares at her. “Yer no mine.”

“No my Liege. Ream and Callum sent her here. There is a problem with the Chinese.”

“Then let chinky deal wi’ it.” The Fisher King dismisses.

Longarm coughs gentle. “But that is the problem Sire, If...”

The King moves, spinning on his spot. The cloak swings out, sending a cloud of fag ash and dirt into the air around them. The fragments glitter for a moment in the shafts of light from the sword. Then it slowly falls. There is the sound of a zipper being unzipped and the unmistakable sound of fluid flowing into a bottle.

Longarm grimaces. His eyes close in clear embarrassment at his Lords actions but he waits in silence until the king has dealt with his needs.

The king hands him a sealed bottle of dark brown glass which the knight takes with clear reluctance. “Bin on yer way out.” The king commands.

“Yes Sir.” Longarm says. The figure settles back into the pile of trash then he looks at Angela again.

“You mine?” He asks,

“No Sir.” Long arm sighs again. “That is what I was explaining. Ream and Callum wish your advice as to whether she is a threat to Grandfather.”

“Why would she be?” The King asks, still studying Angela. “Just a Bizzy Blouse this one. Not even a Jack.”

“She came from Manchester.”

“Traitor land. Stealer of ships.” He grunts. “Gud Nutmeggin.”

“Yes sir but we think she might be...” Longarm says,

“She’s no muriel or mule, or blinder for that.” The King declares, There is the sound of crunching cans as he settles back into his ‘throne’. He looks at Longarm and eyes the bottle suspiciously. Then wrinkles his nose. “Dirty sod. Git rid of that.”

Longarm grimaces clearly irritated at the kings accusation that the bottle is his. He turns to Angela. “Come on.”

“But...” She turns to indicate to the Fisher king, but already the old man is snuggling down and his eyes are closing.

“Unless you want to be in here with him all day, we need to leave now.” Longarm says. He strides up the stairs, dropping the bottle into a waste bin at the top.

Hoping some one will explain, Angela follows.

## The Royal Court of The Fae

The Faerie living in the city are divided into two major factions;

**The Court Proper** - being the sidhe and the knights and those of noble birth, **Commoners**, which are every one else, and who are expected to live in serfdom to the nobles.

This being liverpool, with something of a socialist ideology colouring the political attitudes of many of its mortal inhabitants, it is perhaps not to surprising that the 'Commoners' are not a 'loyal to their noble leaders' as the Court Proper would like them to be. It is not unknown for one of the knights coming to collect the monthly tribute to be told of "F@@K off", or for a Elf commoner to steadfastly refuse to given up their seat in the bar to the Sidhe waiting expectantly for it, or for the phrase "yeah make me" to be uttered when a Sidhe makes an unreasonable demand of a ogres. Successful members of the Court Proper have to master the art of diplomatically manipulating the commoners around them so as to achieve their goals.

Because of the international flavour of the city, there are many Faerie living in Liverpool that you would normally expect to find in other parts of the globe; Papa Bois, essentially a variant on the Green Man, now inhabits Princess park in Toxteth, having moved here with the Caribbean community. China town is crawling with things that might be Faerie, but no one is really sure. Many of these sit outside the Classic Commoner/ Court frame work. The Court Proper may consider them Commoners by default, but they would never accept the title themselves.

That said, just as many people of england may respect the queen whilst protesting against her government, most of the Faerie have a degree of affection for the Fisher King. Its hard to have anything against a man who is so clearly 'doo-lally' as local parlance would put it. He is the nutty great uncle in the corner at christmas who occasionally interrupts proceedings to ask if dinners ready, only a hour after you all finished eating. Also every one knows that every now and again he sits up and says something really important, and at those times the survival of every one depends on doing what he says. Deep down all know he does have an extreme level of power and no one wants to upset him and feel that turned against them.

### **The Royal Court**

The Royal Court of the mortal world is theatre cum music venue in the centre of the city. It is a large square building painted in dark colours. All traces of the victorian architecture were removed when it was renovated in the 70's. Inside there is still traces of its music hall days, with ornate plaster work and boxes but most if it has been hidden by the lighting. The ground floor beyond the booking office and entrance is now just a large sloping ramp leading to the front of the stage. However the balcony is still retains its seating. The bar is accessed from a stairs leading down from the back of the ground floor and is a long corridor of a room with the bar on the far wall. The colour scheme here is also very dark with blue carpets and walls and gold fittings on the black bar. Doors from the room are painted black.

In fact most supernatural visitors access the Fisher King's Court via the stage door and then down through the bar area of the theatre and through a nameless door at the far end of the bar that most mortals assume just leads to the bar stores area. The area inhabited by the Faerie still contains the props from the theatre days and all to often sleeping Fae appear to be manikins still dressed in costumes form plays performed long ago. The Kings throne is at the far end behind a series of brightly painted scenery flats. It has been constructed out of the props and the Fisher Kings 'Treasures', collected on his daily trips through the mortals lands, scattered around it. Unfortunately this means it does smell some what of decaying rubbish and stale beer. The rest of the court have taken to spraying the scenery with perfume, but it really does not help.

On every full moon, in the early hours if there has been a gig on, The High Council of the Covenant meet in the Royal court. The High Council and special guests, or defendants, sit on the stage. (Except the Liver bird, who prefers to perch on the balcony). Every one else in attendance stands in where the audience, but any one in the room can speak.

### **The Fisher King**

Ancient Faerie and all but insane, the fisher king has been in the mortal lands for far too long for a Fae, and his brain has struggled to keep up with the rapid changes happening around him. He just about coped up to the 1850's but then the rapid industrial growth and mechanisation of the city left him behind.

He spends most of his days looking like a tramp and hanging around the underground railway system and the walkways of the shopping precincts, collecting his 'treasures' in plastic bags and being moved on by the security guards, almost all of whom call him Pops and treat him with some affection. At night he retreats to the cellars under the Royal Court and sings along to the bands performing above whilst he sorts his finding from the day and bestows the gifts on anyone visiting him.

He lurches in and out of sanity, one moment being totally coherent and the other demanding the Court gathers to move against the Daemonic horde. He often talks to things that are not there - and really not there, not just ghosts that no one else can see. However his madness gives him great insights and reveals hidden truths so the court can never totally dismiss what he says without fear that this time he is right.

He predicted the Hillsborough disaster in that he told the meeting of the Covenant a week before the disaster to dig 94 graves on Kirkdale hill. He appear on the dock side when the Lusitania sailed saying goodbye personally to every member of the crew who died when the ship was torpedoed on the return voyage. Also he has successfully predicted the winner of the Grand National since the race started - a feat which has made for a lucrative income stream for the court, though he can not be persuaded to show any interested in any other racing fixtures.

It is theorised the powers of the Knights come from The Fisher King and that it is in some way related to the power the Faerie Queens have, but it seems to be a watered down version. Also unlike the Queens, who choose mortals, the king can only imbue changelings and Faerie with his gifts, and they are at best an addition to what ever talents they may already have. The Knights are colour coded - no one knows why, but Emma Clayton (the current Green knight) says she feels uneasy when not in her colour, and suspects her gifted powers are not so effective.



## White Knight

The current (And possibly only ever) White Knight is Longarm. No one recalls another one. When Longarm first arrived in the city the Fisher King declare him to be his long lost knight finally returned from the nobel quest he had been sent on- which was something of a surprise to the young Sidhe, who clearly had no idea what he was talking about. Originally Longarm spoke with a french accent, but 300 years of exposure to scouse has destroyed it; however at time of stress he does swear in perfect 17th century french. When pressed to disclose his existence before becoming the white knight he makes dismissive references to Huguenots, french kings called louis and unfortunate misunderstandings.

He is definitely the favoured son of the Fisher king, so much so that the king has been known to call him over during meetings of the court just so he can pet him, much to Longarm's embarrassment. However this means that when he speaks most assume he has the authority of the King, especially if the king is in one of his less lucid moments.

Longarm is one of the few members of the Court who routinely travel beyond the boundaries of the city. These 'quests' for the Fisher King are something he does not like to discuss. Most assume they are related to the kings madness and that Longarm does not want to admit he does not understand them. In fact a lot of them are for the High Council and are highly secret.

Physically Longarm is a classic Fae. Fair, tall, beautiful with pointed tips to his ears and the cat slit eyes (except when he glamours them to look more normal - which is often the only concession he makes to blending in). He only ever wears white, which some how never seems to get dirty, regardless of the intensity of the battle. Usually these are white biker leathers, as he has transformed his Faerie stead into a white Ducati racing bike. He is always carries his talisman of office - a broad sword with sunlight bound into the blade which, although he can put down, can never be removed from him.

Over the last 50 years Longarm has developed a close friendship with Elijah Zander, prince of the White Court. There are some who suspect the Fae had a lot to do with the Vampires rise to power. Weather this was sanctioned by the Fisher King, or some personal project of Longarm's is unknown. Certainly both would seems to be far too politically motivated for it to be merely the friendship they like to claim; but then a meeting of minds have made for stranger bed fellows.

### **The Red Knight - Graham Rathbone,**

The Rathbones have been in the city for a long time, and it was only natural that eventually one of them would be seduced by a Faerie, though few expected that the 'luck girl' would be a Sylph. Graham was the result and was quickly taken into the protection of the Royal Court before mum dropped him off a building or something. He was adopted out into one of the trusted Breed families and grew up with Cale Tien. The two are still good friends and regularly go out 'on the pull' together.

The Red Knight powers fell to Graham after the old guardian, a Sidhe known only as Commerce he had been doing the job for so long, declared he had seen enough and walked into the sea during the Dock workers strike of 1996. It left the Court in something of a dilemma, because although they all knew this mortal money thing was important, none of them had ever paid that much attention to what was going on. The King demanded 'the little flying Rathy-lad' be brought from 'Reams place', which took a bit of deciphering. But when Graham, fresh out of six form collage, was presented to the King He was declared "The new red one!" and handed his talisman.

It was left to Longarm to explain to the confused young man just what that meant. Grahams successful application to Cambridge to read Math had to be refused and he found himself enrolled on the Business and finance course at John Moores University, which he was not pleased about given all the hard work he had done to get into Cambridge in the first place. Longarm sweetened it with a guaranteed top flight job at the end.

Graham has an instinctual grasp of math and number, something he probably got from his mortal line rather than his mother. He has turned this talent to the flows of the international money and stock markets, which he claims he can see 'like clouds or something'. However he does it, the fact can not be denied that Graham is very good at predicting the trends and has amassed a massive amount of wealth out of very volatile markets for the city centre firm he works for.

In fact Graham hardly used the powers in the talisman the Fisher king gave him; a 1967 penny - one of the last minted before decimalisation. He keeps it on the watch chain of his red waist coat as his lucky penny and tells every one his uncle gave it to him. He is still not totally sure what he is meant to be doing, but hopes that in keeping a steady supply of finance coming into the city which can be redirected into regeneration projects it will all come right in the end.

**The Green Knight - Emerald (Emma) Clayton**

The role of the Green knight stems from when Toxteth was a royal Deer park and the mortals of the hamlet around the pool spent a significant amount of their day foraging in the surrounding woods for fire wood and mushrooms to staves of starvation or hypothermia for a few more days. The knight was charged with making sure the mortals got what they needed without damaging the natural environment.

Sadly for a long time the role of Green knight was held by Jonathan Gall, who was more interested in his personal success than his responsibilities. Eventually his partying caught up with him and he was killed in a duel in 1927. Emma inherited the task in 1953 when the Fisher king finally noticed that Gall had gone and found herself with a monumental in-tray of problems.

Now-a-days Emma spends most of her time liaising with people like the Parks department, the city developers and corporations and the Wolves to try and protect the green space in the city. In this she has been remarkably successful, at 135 hectares, the city has the largest area of inner city parks in the uk, and almost double the average green space per person for europe. She has also managed to get a number of areas declared areas of Special scientific interest, there by preserving them for the future.

Her talisman of office is an oak leaf and acorn, which she wears like a broach. It gifts her the insight into what is important to the person she is trying to persuade so she can tailor her approach to that most likely to get them to agree to what she wants - essentially massive bonuses in social conflict.

Emma's mortal form is a unassuming women with shoulder length brown hair and green eyes. She is around 5'6" and athletically built. Mostly she will be in a smart dark green business suits, or a track suit and trainers. She is a Nixie Changeling, but so far has managed to resist the whole 'drowning husbands thing' by not getting involved and only using her glamours and incites powers on official business.

**The Blue knight- Frank Stanley**

Franks official title is Lord Protector of The Faerie city. Essentially he is responsible for raising an army to defend the city from any external attack. Back in the days when city militia were the norm, that was relatively easy, in these days private armies tend to be disapproved off so the practicalities force him to work closely with Sheriff Ream and the local police. Still should the Fae ever go to war, Frank will be at its head leading them into battle and his talisman is a

war horn to call the Court and the Commoners to rally to his aid.

Unfortunately for Frank, the madness of the King means the 'War horn' has taken on the form of a day-glow orange plastic kazoo. Admittedly if he raises it to his lips it does still attract the attention and obedience of all those in the city with Faerie blood, but it is hard to give orders to a collection of people who are suppressing giggles. As a result it usually stays deep in the pocket of his jacket.

Frank is an Elf, although he has managed to swap his bow and elf shot for an impressive collection of semi automatic weapons with specialised rounds constructed by the Guild. He is tall and thin with dark hair which he wears short. He runs a laser-quest and Paint ball outlet in an old office building at the bottom of Mount Pleasant. Popular with both students and members of the Breed, Ream has even used his facilities for 'training exercises'. His 'employees' are his best troops being kept ready incase of an invasion.

### **The Grey Knight and the Black Knight.**

These cause a certain amount of confusion amongst the Royal Court. The Fisher king occasionally refers to the Grey Knight, and has even been seen addressing an empty patch of air and telling 'it' what to do. For a while it was assumed the Grey knight was a spirit in the NeverNever, but that too has proved not to be the case. Best bet at the moment is that the Grey knight is figment of the Kings imagination.

The Black Knight is even greater concern. His name is Rudi Atticus and his talisman is a black hooded cloak, which he never removes. No one is sure what its abilities are, or what the Knights role is in the Royal court. The Fisher King has not made reference to the man since he was given his talisman and it is assumed he has been forgotten. Never the less the knight quietly attends every Royal Court and Covenant meeting. He often turns up to other events that later prove to be of great importance. However all he ever does is watch and he refuses to take any active part beyond that required to protect himself. As a result he is rather unpopular and seen as a herald of disaster.