

HANGOVER CITY

A City Sourcebook for Dresden Files RPG

by Sue Wilson

Chapter Nine- Churches of Faith

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Have Some Faith.

“That is a cathedral?” Angela asks, staring up at the strangely conical concrete structure. “I thought it was a night club.” She looks behind her down Hope street to the Sandstone castle she toured when she firsts arrived in the city. She cannot think of two buildings more opposite.

“Oh yeah.” Cale lifts his face to the sky and starts to sing. “In my Liverpool Home, In my Liverpool Home, We speak with an accent exceedingly rare, Meet under a statue exceedingly bare, And if you want a Cathedral, we’ve got one that looks like the atmosphere re-processor from Aliens...”

“I don’t want to be a critic Pal, but I think the original scanned better.” The priest says as he strides across the flat white concrete towards them. He is a stocky man, almost a mass of muscle, and it is clear his nose has been broken more than once. The eyes are a soft green and twinkle with hidden mischief that Angela is sure is not appropriate in the expression of a ‘man of god’ as his clothing so clearly marks him out to be.

Cale looks at him and smiles, he offers his hand “Father Mackenzie. Good to see you again.”

“The Father MacKenzie?” Angela asks. “Like in the song?”

“Aye lass. We come in six packs.” The Priest dead pans back as he shakes. “Come on in and tell me your troubles. Because, like cathedrals, we’ve got plenty to share in this town.”

Slightly to Angela’s disappointment, the priest leads them down a small set of steps away from the cathedral and towards a square white building.

“The good sheriff said you needed some where to hold up for the day. A chance to rest?” The Priest asks.

“For Angela yes.” Cale responds. “It’s not like I can take her back to my digs.”

The Priest nods. “I’m sure the sisters will make her most welcome. Though I should warn you. Worship starts at 10.” He turns to Angel and grins. “Early kick off.” She frowns.

“A local derby today.” Cale says.

Father MacKenzie pushes open the door. The noise coming from the room beyond is not what Angela expected of a convent. Inside the lounge has been covered in red and blue scarfs. A large flat screen TV dragged into the middle of the room. Before it, almost like an altar is a coffee table groaning with ‘chips and dips’ and cans of beer. The women in the room are all dressed in the classic black and white ‘penguin’ costumes of Catholic nuns. Only their habits have been adorned with rosettes and scarfs declaring their allegiance to ‘Everton’ or ‘Liverpool’. The conversation is buzzing with excitement as they discuss the players and tactics and anticipate the sport to come.

Angela stands in the door way caught in confusion. “Erm...” She manages.

Father Mackenzie leads her in. “Sisters, You’ll be having room for one more I hope?”

A portly looking nun places a bowl of snacks on the table and walks over to them. As she speaks her accent is shot through with a strong taint of Belfast. “Of course Alan, more

than happy.” She holds out her hand. “I am sister Immaculate Conception. But you can call me Immy, every one else does.” She laughs.

Angela takes her hand “Thank you, I’m Angela...”

“Ah what a nice name. And you’re from the states.” Immy says as she drags Angela into the room by her hand. “Let me guess, Michigan? Am I right? Close enough from your face. I was in retreat with a nice young girl from Illinois for three years so I know that part of the world quite well. She was a lovely girl, lovely girl. So dedicated to Our lord. And played a mean ukulele too. Now come on in and we’ll explain it all to you. This is not that rubbish with the pads and grunting you play over there. This is the real thing...”

Cale and Father Mackenzie retreat and leave Angela in the safe care of the nuns and to be illuminated on the mysteries of the offside rule.

The Churches of Faith

Liverpool is a city of many communities and each community has its own faith, this makes for a lot of ‘churches’. Rubbing shoulders with people of other beliefs hardens attitudes and this has result in sectarianism in some areas of the city. Liverpool is highly unusual in boasting 2 cathedrals; one catholic and one Anglican. There is also a strong methodist community, many of whom have ‘signed the pledge’ and being abstinent are resistant to the games of the Zanders. The Caribbean community in Toxteth brought their spiritualism,

Moving beyond the christian beliefs there is a massive Grade 1 listed Synagogue on Princes Road, with in sight of the Anglican Cathedral; a Hindu temple with in Edge Hill; Smaller communities of Sikh, Jain and Muslim also exist. As already discussed, the religions in China town have been around long enough they have ‘leaked’ into the rest of the city.

This gives plenty of opportunities for different ‘true believers’ in the city to add flavour.

There is another ‘faith’ common in the city that can not be ignored; the fanatical religion of football. Many of the terminology of religion has passed into the sport; stars are worshiped and adored; stadia are referred to as ‘Hallowed turf’; club supporters are described as ‘the faithful’. They even have their own ‘hymns’ for communal singing - though it may be several centuries yet before “Who ate all the pies?” appears on “songs of praise”.

Location: Paddy's wigwam

Or to give it its 'official title' the Metropolitan Cathedral Church of Christ the King is the home of the Archbishop of Liverpool and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool. Constructed from concrete and aluminium and glass, it is a very modern looking building and stands in marked contrast to the classic brown stone of the Anglican cathedral. It was built in only 5 years after long delays and many redesigns, and has been plagued with problems since, including 'concrete cancer' which caused bits of the cladding to fall off. In the 1990s the lantern was rebuilt with stainless steel and plastic. The diocese is constantly fundraising for repairs and renovations.

Externally the building is an inverted white funnel with a stained glass lantern, but the building is at its most impressive inside. The huge open space is lined in white and grey marble and the altar is in the centre under the lantern so that mass is celebrated 'in the round'. Hanging above the altar is a 'crown of thorns' lighting and sound rig insuring all attending can see and hear the proceedings. Around the edges are a number of alcoves providing side chapels for quiet prayer, some of which can be closed off to give privacy.

Beneath the cathedral is the crypt. Built from arches of brick and granite, and to the first design for a cathedral, this acts as a marked contrast to the open modern space above. The crypt is often used for 'secular' activities, including hosting Liverpool Annual Beer festival.

Also on the site is a small convent of nuns. The sisters are dedicated to the care of the people of the diocese and the upkeep of the cathedral. This last part of their job description and the ongoing issues with the fabric of the building beans they are perhaps the only nuns in the Uk who are equally skilled in mixing concrete and laying tiles as they are in counselling the sick. The convent has also been used as a convenient 'holy ground' place of safety for trouble souls.

Father Paul Mackenzie

It is not easy working in liverpool with the name Father MacKenzie, especially at the catholic Cathedral, which is so popular with tourists. In his time here Paul has developed something of a nervous twitch to the opening bars of 'Eleanor Rigby'. He tries to take the attitude that this is just yet one more of the ways that 'Our Father' tests his patience in order to make him a better person in the long run.

He is a stocky man, almost a mass of muscle, and it is clear his nose has

been broken more than once; The after effect of far too many games of Hurling whilst he was a student priest in Maynooth College. His soft green eyes twinkle with hidden mischief suggesting his thoughts are not as appropriate as they should be for a 'man of god'. Indeed even as a choir boy the priests claimed there was 'a little too much of the devil in that one' and it was one of the reasons his devout Catholic Mother pressed him so hard to go into the priesthood.

Initially he entered as it was seen as one of the few ways of getting steady work in Ireland, but since coming to Liverpool and encountering 'the evil all around' he has started to take it 'calling' more seriously. He has some idea of the supernatural community, though his take on it has been skewed by his biblical teachings. For example he is sure the White Court are all descendants from Nephalim, and as god sent the flood to destroy them, that it is only a matter of time before it all happens again - which is why he finds it so amusing that the Catholic cathedral is at the top of the hill and the anglican is lower down. He is also fond of quoting Leviticus 20:27 to those he suspects of 'dabbling in dark arts'.

Despite this attitude, (or may be because of it and because of the role they play in the city) Paul is on good terms with Rare breed. He has responsibility for a number of buildings around the city which, though they have fallen out of use as Churches and meeting halls, still have enough power to act as holy ground. These he makes available as safe houses to people the Breed are protecting. He has also helped out with an exorcism of two when the spirit in question proved to be vulnerable to such techniques. Plus he has enough sense to recognise trouble when one of his parishioners brings it to him, and when that happens he knows exactly who to call for back up.

Cathedral Church of Christ in Liverpool

The home of the Bishop of Liverpool (That's the anglican one - the Catholic one is an archbishop, try not to get confused!) The Cathedral dominates Liverpool's sky line; it manages to be the longest cathedral in the world (198ms) and one of the tallest church towers at a shade over 100m.

Strangly standing on the other side of the river the Catholic and Anglican cathedrals appear to be the same height - whilst "paddy's wigwam" is only 85m tall. However it was built at the top of the hill, rather than half way up - So as Father MacKenzie says "God did half the work for us."

Whilst the Catholic cathedral was built in only 5 years, the Anglican took much longer. The foundation stone was laid in 1901, and by 1910 the lady chapel was consecrated and in use. However, due to redesigns, funding problems and two world wars getting in the way, it was 1978 before the building was actually considered complete- some 18 years after the architect died- and even then there were some carvings on the interior design still outstanding.

It is constructed mostly from locally quarries Sand stone, and there is a deep 'hole' at the back of the building which provided some of the stone in the early stages of the project. This is now the Cathedral gardens and graveyard and contains the tombs and crypts for many of the 'great and the good' families of Liverpool.

The graveyard also contains Stephen Allourd - the city's last remaining Black Court Vampire. He lives in the catacombs built into the rock under Hope Street surrounded by a community of cats. There is an ongoing debate as to whether the cats are pets of Allourd, or Allourd is the pet of the cats. Certainly their relationship appears to be symbiotic.

Allourd acts as both defence council and executioner to the High Council's trials. At first this may seem to be a conflict of interest, but this is far from the case. Around the founding of the city Allourd was hit by the death curse of a powerful local Wizard, Albert Rylands, who cursed him to feel the pain and suffering from the lives of all those he fed from. As a result Allourd is very reluctant to partake of human blood when it is always accompanied by the dark emotions and physical torment of his victims. Faced with that the weaker blood of his feline companions is preferable.

Still, as Ream was keen to point out, it does give the Vampire an incentive to perform his defending duties to his utmost abilities; that if there is any potential for error, doubt or mitigation in a case the vampire will find it and bring it to the

attention of the court. A valuable trait when so often the rest of the supernatural community are baying for the blood of the perpetrator.

When not needed for his council duties Allourd keeps himself to himself. His days are spent sleeping in his crypt and at night he potters around the grave yard tending to the plants, cleaning the graves and polishing the statues. He rarely has visitors but is happy enough to sit and talk to any one who seeks him out. He has a long and active memory and a valuable, if untapped source, of the history of the city.

Location: The Football Stadia and Stanley Park.

Anfield has been the home to Liverpool football club since the club was founded in 1892, and prior to that was the home of Everton. Indeed Liverpool started as a break away club after a dispute over rent, with the new club retaining the grounds and Everton moving down the road to Goodison Park. Walking in a straight line, there is less than a kilometre between the two grounds. Be careful not to fall into the lake in Stanley Park should you try this, it is rather deep. Being the home to the 2 clubs, this whole area is 'holy-ground' to the glorious game so revered in this city.

The Kop at Anfield is the largest single tier seated stand in Europe holding 12,409, with nine disabled spaces. It replaced the original 30,000 capacity uncovered standing only terrace following the Hillsborough disaster. It is unusual in being a public place with a strong threshold. The collective chants, shared fears and hopes of the supporters of the club have imbued it with a property close to holy ground; making it an anathema to 'unbelievers' who do not support the club. People with no interest in the game who have visiting the ground for commercial conferences etc have reported feeling cold and intimidate in the kop even when there is no one else in the place. It just 'knows' you shouldn't be there.

Both stadia have more than their fair share of ghosts - mostly supporters or employees who are unable to move on and leave their clubs behind. Sadly at the moment they only have enough for a small five a side tournament, though most believe it is only a matter of time before they get enough for 2 full teams and official; when they plan to spend eternity in death play the game they loved so much in life.