



## Characters

<b>Kai Chai</b>	<i>A tertiary student from Beijing, China.</i>
<b>Aditya</b>	<i>A tertiary student from Mumbai, India.</i>
<b>Fon</b>	<i>A tertiary student from Bangkok, Thailand.</i>
<b>Song Ye</b>	<i>A tertiary student from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She wears a two-piece hijab.</i>
<b>* Peta</b>	<i>The English language teacher.</i>
<i>Doubles as:</i>	
<b>Andrew</b>	<i>The home stay provider.</i>
<b>Karen</b>	<i>A retailer</i>
<b>Kim</b>	<i>A journalist</i>
<b>Neville</b>	<i>A taxi proprietor</i>
<b>Harry</b>	<i>A police officer</i>
<b>Inspector</b>	<i>A tram conductor</i>
<b>The Black Dragon</b>	

*\* All of the doubled characters will have some very visible Dragon aspect apparent. Some will have a headpiece and tail, others will have an arm, breastplate or leg of a dragon as part of their costume. They should appear as human/dragon hybrids. They might also have a carved mask or headpiece that sits on the actor's head, as did the headpieces for 'The Lion King' designed by Julie Taymor. Such a device will allow the Dragon hybrids to change throughout the piece, from an Australian Lizard dragon, a Chinese dragon, a Galapagos dragon, and etc (Dragons being documented in the mythologies of many cultures). In this way the style and character of each Dragon appearance would be interpreted by the director and designer.*

*Much of the content of this play is based on recorded interviews and verbatim transcripts from international students and their service providers. My thanks to Helen Aché, Sandra Shí, Valisa Sipila (Fon), Song Yee Ng, Akshay Saraf, Peter Murphy, Joan Denison, Yaso Nadarajah, Philip Harty, Danny Ong, Gaby Ramia, Fiona Clarke, Prathepan Prabhakaran, Aleksandr Voninski and several students and others who wish to remain anonymous.*

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*Shadows of enormous spiked dragon tails weave across the set of a University Campus.*

*They crisscross and multiply between and around the campus buildings.*

*In the darkness four Dragons prowl, remaining hidden and then suddenly darting across the stage to hide again.*

*Kai Chai enters. He addresses the audience.*

**Kai Chai**      Huo long exist in every culture of the world. But they are not the huo long we imagined as a child, not the pretty fantasies of innocent boys and girls. The huo long that live around us today are adult huo long – powerful, cunning, loyal and dangerous.

You can learn to see huo long all around you. You could see them now if you knew how to look. When you learn how to look you can learn to use what you see to guide your decisions and choices here in this new land. Always, always the qui you must long to catch sight of is the one that lives inside you. Others will see this dragon in you, others will recognize him before you do. Adjust your eyesight, adjust your thinking and you will see these huo long possibilities in yourself and in others.

*Lights come up and we now see that Kai Chai has a large travel bag. Andrew, a home-stay provider enters. His face is half-covered as a dragon. Kai Chai looks around.*

**Andrew** The Swiss are a total nightmare to deal with because they are such democrats. 'You are one minute late, I paid all this money.' Every fine legal detail you've got to negotiate.

**Kai Chai** Where I will be staying?

**Terry** The Koreans question why they aren't being hit. You should hit us if you want us to learn they say. And they'll cry about anything.

**Kai Chai** You are hitting them?

**Andrew** The Japanese have an inferiority complex about the West and so they agree to whatever you ask. The Brazilians are, 'Oh my God my clothes just fell off and I haven't got any pencils'. (*Beat*) The Danish and the Norwegians are very matter of fact about everything. No sentimentalism. The Singaporeans are usually older because they have to do compulsory military service before they go on to university. The Chinese are always amazed by the bird life because China doesn't have any birds.

One boy we had living here thought that the birds had paint on them because they were so colourful. He was the same boy who used to get up on the toilet and squat over the seat.

**Kai Chai** Very good balancing boy.

**Andrew** I had a boy from Vietnam who told me that he was scared to get the tram into the city because the noise it made reminded him of landmines going off in the fields near where he lived. I think it was a ruse to get me to drive him everywhere. (*Beat*) Now here we go. This is your kip.

**Kai Chai** For car.

**Andrew** What's that?

**Kai Chai** For car?

**Andrew** No, not for car. For sleep.

*Kai Chai looks at him, confused.*

**Kai Chai** Not for sleeping.

**Andrew** Yes, sleep. Look, bed. Desk. Door.

**Kai Chai** Not for sleeping in.

*Kai Chai crosses his arms.*

**Andrew** Well, this is all there is mate.

**Kai Chai** I'm not sleeping. Here.

**Andrew** It's called a converted garage. Well it will be. It was supposed to be done over the last month but Kev's dog died, and then his mother, so the work got put off. Tell you the truth if it had just been his mother it would have been fine but it was the dog that really put the work back.

**Kai Chai** Your friend died?

**Andrew** No, my friend's dog. Which was his friend.

**Kai Chai** Who?

**Andrew** Kev. You understand. Dog. For friend. Not for eat.

**Kai Chai** Yes, I have paid for meals as well.

**Andrew** Oh yes, we understand what we've paid for don't we.

*Andrew nods and smiles as he says this.*

**Kai Chai** I would like to sleep in house.

**Andrew** No mate, you sleep in here. I'm not giving you my bed and you needn't think I am.

**Kai Chai** Please. Not sleeping in room for car.

**Andrew** Come on mate. Don't start whinging. We're used to roughing it a bit. Come on.

**Kai Chai** Get back. Draco Marsupialis. Not for sleep.

*Andrew exits. Kai Chai sits.*

*Aditya enters with a stack of forms. He hands them to Kai Chai one by one.*

**Aditya** This one is to report on the home stay experience.

**Kai Chai** But I didn't stay at the home stay.

**Aditya** That's right, so you fill in this one to report the problem. This one is an application to refund all the money you sent to the home stay provider. This is the one that will put the home stay provider out of business for corrupt practices.

**Kai Chai** All of these?

**Aditya** You want the ISO to help you or not?

*Pause.*

**Aditya** Look, here's the thing. In India, as my father says, nothing is possible but everything can be arranged. You know what I mean. In Australia, it doesn't work like that. Everything is possible, you just have to fill in the forms.

**Kai Chai** Okay.

**Aditya** This one is a request for counselling. Do you want counselling?

**Kai Chai** I don't think so.

**Aditya** You don't. This is a survey about use of online ethnic social groups among Chinese international students. Do you want to fill this in?

**Kai Chai** I don't know.

**Aditya** You don't. This is a request to participate in a Ph.D. study about cultural alienation among international students. Would you like to take part?

**Kai Chai** What's it about?

**Aditya** It's to identify those students who hold unrealistically high expectations about their competence and their lives in Australia and who may therefore face a deep sense of loss accompanied by painful feelings of inferiority.

**Kai Chai** Right.

**Aditya** Are you depressed?

**Kai Chai** No.

**Aditya** Good man.

**Kai Chai** I just want to find somewhere to stay.

**Aditya** I thought a place on-campus would be good for you.

**Kai Chai** Not another home-stay?

**Aditya** Nah. You should stay on campus.

**Kai Chai** Do you live on campus?

**Aditya** Yeah. I do.

**Kai Chai** And you're not depressed?

**Aditya** What?

**Kai Chai** That's not why you came to work for the International Student Organization, because you were suffering from cultural alienation?

**Aditya** No man.

**Kai Chai** You just like helping other international students with their problems?

**Aditya** Yeah, I've got a thing going with clipboards and questionnaires.

**Kai Chai** You mean, a thing about stationary?

**Aditya** Yeah. Full on kinky about Kinkos.

*Kai Chai and Aditya laugh a little as Kai Chai continues filling in forms.*

**Kai Chai** Lots of girls come in to get help?

**Aditya** What?

**Kai Chai** I thought. I dunno. I understand about the stationary fetish. Nothing like a good bulldog clip. But I also thought you know, this might be a good way to meet girls. All helpless and in trouble. Needing a sympathetic shoulder to cry on.

*Aditya looks at him and circles him, sniffing the air.*

**Aditya** What's your game?

**Kai Chai** Globe of Dragons Two for PC.

**Aditya** Draco orientalis?

**Kai Chai** Draco occidentalis magnus?

**Aditya** Dragon from the Chinese steppes.

**Kai Chai** Indian sub-continental dragon.  
**Aditya** Forms of attack?  
**Kai Chai** Horns, teeth and claws used defensively.  
**Aditya** Fire breathing?  
**Kai Chai** When required.

*Aditya slaps him on the back.*

**Aditya** Feel like coming along to the Orientation Ball tonight?  
**Kai Chai** Are you going?  
**Aditya** Sure. I wouldn't miss it.

*Lights change and balloon and streamers drop for the International Students Orientation Ball.*

*Aditya and Kai Chai are in one corner. They are approached by the two girls, Song Ye and Fon.*

**Song Ye** Hey Aditya. What are you doing here?

**Fon** He's on the prowl for helpless young students that he can befriend for oh..one night, maybe two.

**Aditya** They think I'm a jollu party.

**Song Ye** And now he's got an apprentice, mah.

**Aditya** This is Kai Chai.

**Fon** So how do you like the orientation so far?

*Kai Chai is smitten with Fon. For a moment he just stares at her. Then he speaks.*

**Kai Chai** You mean the... dance... the party... the ball?

*Fon is aware of the effect she has on him. She laughs.*

**Fon** Song Ye and I helped organize this.

**Kai Chai** Thank you.

**Song Ye** Oh. You're not going to make an apprentice out of this one, Aditya. He's way too polite.

**Aditya** I'll knock that out of him.

**Fon** Where are you from, Kai Chai?

**Kai Chai** Beijing.

**Song Ye** What are you studying?

**Kai Chai** A Masters in Business.

**Aditya** Same course.

**Kai Chai** You?

**Fon** Arts/Law. But I'm enjoying the arts more than the law.

**Kai Chai** You look like an artist. Or at least, you're pretty enough to be an artist's muse.

*Pause.*

**Fon** Your English is good.

**Kai Chai** Not really, but I've been learning for three years.

**Fon** You shouldn't have any trouble making friends.

**Aditya** Girlfriends?

*They all laugh.*

**Aditya** Keep up, Kai Chai, or we'll throw you over into the corner with the lonely losers.

**Kai Chai** Well, you can have lots of friends and still be lonely can't you?

**Fon** That's exactly what I think. I mean mostly it's the Indians hanging with the Indian students and the Chinese hanging with the Chinese students. But in the ISO you hang out with everyone.

**Song Ye** Hey, Fon, come on, we've got to give out the prizes.

**Aditya** Just give them all to me and save yourself the trouble.

**Fon** We've been up all night wrapping them. They're really good things – books about Melbourne and sunhats, for if the sun ever comes out.

**Aditya** Any packs of coloured nirodh?

*He indicates condoms.*

**Song Ye** Get away from him, Kai Chai, that's my advice to you. Get away while you can.

**Fon** Nice to meet you, Kai Chai.

*Fon's look at Kai Chai lingers. They move around each other and then put up the hoods on their tops to become dragons.*

**Kai Chai** Draco Icilus.

**Fon** Frost dragon ancestry from my Scandinavian mother.

**Kai Chai** Required food source?

**Fon** Giant squid, polar bear, orca, walrus, leopard seal.

**Kai Chai** Forms of attack?

**Fon** Fearsome frosty blast, tail, claws, horns.

*Kai Chai then circles around Song Ye.*

**Kai Chai** Draco Ocsipitus.

**Song Ye** Bird dragon ancestry from my Malay father.

**Kai Chai** Particularly keen eyesight and second sight.

*Song Ye and Fon exit. Kai Chai returns to Aditya's side.*

**Aditya** So. Quite good basic technique there.

**Kai Chai** What?

**Aditya** Slightly helpless, they love that. Then the follow up with the sensitive understanding of other student's loneliness – very asli. Reeled her in very nicely.

**Kai Chai** I was not.

**Aditya** 'Nice to meet you, Kai Chai'. Did she shake your hand?

**Kai Chai** No.

**Aditya** Then there's your next move.

*Pause. Kai Chai shakes his head.*

**Aditya** What? You didn't like Fon?

**Kai Chai** Are you kidding? Xuan.

**Aditya** So you wouldn't want to see her again?

*Pause.*

**Kai Chai** How can I do that?

**Aditya** Forget it. For that one you need money.

**Kai Chai** How much money?

**Aditya**        How much have you got?

**Kai Chai**      Enough for the year.

**Aditya**        What? All at once?

**Kai Chai**      It's all my parents have saved. I have to use it mîng zhî.

*Aditya smiles and pats Kai Chai on the back.*

**Aditya**        You lucky boy.

**Kai Chai**      What?

**Aditya**        Well there must be enough for at least one pucca night on the town.