



The Kaiinese Drakeling

A Cugel-Level Scenario for DERPG

By Ian Thomson

(Footsteps of Fools': Episode 6 - www.pelgrane.com/violetcusps.htm)



Original Artwork: 'Commode Minstrels in Bullface' collective (Drakeling pic)
Odkin Prospect section (p33) by Sarah Wroot
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**WARNING: If you wish to play a PC in this scenario stop reading here, and pass it on to your GM.
Reading it before play would undermine your enjoyment significantly.**

Useful References

1) This scenario follows indirectly on from the three-part adventure of 'The Exasperating Cadaver' (EC), which is available as a free download on the author's 'Violet Cusps' page. Since the 'EC' is an introductory scenario to Kaiin, it is very much preferable for several reasons that you run that adventure before this. If you then run one or two non-Kaiin adventures between the two, this not only makes this return visit more game-realistic (and marks the true beginning of a Kaiin campaign), but also optionally introduces a recurring theme to your campaign: the 'Odkin Prospect Hotel'. The 'EC' also contains many notes on Kaiin that are extremely useful background material for the scenario before you. The work before you also contains some spoilers to the 'Exasperating Cadaver'.



2) You will ideally own a copy of the *Players' Guide to Kaiin* (Pelgrane Press, 2003). In such a case, many more supporting characters and location details will be at your fingertips to expand this adventure spontaneously as you run it. Without that book, any GM with DERPGE experience will still be able to run this adventure to good advantage (but will need to create any incidental details required to flesh out the scenario).

3) An entire free sample chapter of the *Players Guide to Kaiin* is available at: www.pelgrane.com/kaiin.htm You will ideally download and print this, since one section of the following adventure is set in Canal Town and involves significant interactions with certain residents of this colorful part of the city.

4) A Map of Kaiin: The *Players Guide to Kaiin* contains amply sufficient cartography. Additionally an official full-color map is available from Pelgrane Press, which is a perfect visual aid for this scenario. The *Scaum Valley Gazetteer* (Pelgrane Press, 2002) also has a fine map of the city (p112). As a default option, a low-resolution map of the city is at: www.pelgrane.com/images/KaiinMap.jpg and the GM could use this as the basis for a detailed sketch.

Abbreviations:

EC – 'Exasperating Cadaver', Thomson

DDE – 'Demons of the Dying Earth', Thomson (Pelgrane Press, 2003)

DERPG – 'Dying Earth RPG Rulebook', Laws et al (Pelgrane Press, 2000)

KPG – 'Kaiin Player's Guide', Laws (Pelgrane Press, 2002)

TT – 'Turjan's Tome', Laws & Thomson (Pelgrane Press, 2003)

Adventure Summary

The PCs are forced or enticed into a plot to steal back five valuable identical golden statuettes of drakelings from their new owners. One Nerijs (the owner of the Odkin Prospect Hotel) originally owned these statues, and two friends are supporting him in their retrieval. A small gang led by Dothand, that actually resides (without permission) in Nerijs' large house is said to have been responsible for the thefts.

Unfortunately, Nerijs and his cronies are distorting and fabricating the exact truth. The statuettes never belonged to Nerijs, and were never stolen by Dothand. (Although certainly Dothand is a heartless criminal and a thorn in Nerijs' side.) The real truth of the matter is that Nerijs and his fellow conspirators became aware by coincidence that these statuettes had recently arrived in Kaiin. Their collective knowledge of ancient lore has led them to strongly suspect that one of the statuettes is a powerful magical item tied to the Fates, and they want it.

Having been unable to purchase the statuettes themselves, they now wish to obtain them by any means necessary. They have invented the above story in order to protect themselves from any backlash of stealing objects tied to the Fates, and to keep the true nature of the object they are seeking an absolute secret. Also, they are all advancing in years and hardly the agile burglars required for the job. Thus they require some dupes (the PCs) to perform the thefts.

In order to add further fun to the mix, the conspirators really don't know the full powers of the object (actually objects) that they are seeking, and the effects of interacting with these statuettes will add many amusing and confusing events to the unfolding scenario that follows.

Though this scenario is already rich in detail, the GM must read it carefully in its entirety before attempting to run it. Various sections will need to be expanded, and ratings devised, dependent on your assessment of the common proclivities and most likely activities of your campaign PCs.

The Conspirators

(All are further detailed in the 'Exasperating Cadaver', and it is presumed you have at least read that free scenario. However, these folk are also described in greater detail later in the adventure before you.)

Nerijs (KPG: p81) owns the Odkin Prospect Hotel, which is his manse now largely populated by rogues and rascals. He has been spending inordinate amounts of time in the last few years trying to make sufficient money to buy back his home from the disreputable tenants that inhabit it (and/or to secure his fragile financial future indefinitely). These efforts have met with failure (mostly), and limited success (occasionally), and his desperation and despondency have increased.

Nerijs¹: Obfuscatory 7, Pure-Hearted 9, Caution 3, Intuition 4, Magic (Studious) 3, Health 4, Appraisal 7, Athletics 2, Concealment 4, Etiquette 6, Gambling 2, Living Rough 3, Pedantry 10, Perception 6, Quick Fingers 2, Riding 4, Scuttlebutt 3, Stealth 6, Stewardship 8, Wherewithal 7.

Cantraps: Locate Silver Coins, Make Food Fresh, Repel Dirt.

¹ These ratings are in some cases alternate to those noted in the *Players Guide to Kaiin*.



In the last year or so, Nerijs' associations with two of the residents at his home have matured to the point where all three have banded together in order to attempt various subtle plans for mutual financial gain. Nerijs is now used to sharing his home, and his goal is to have sufficient wealth and good fortune to be able to pick and choose his tenants. He has agreed to appoint these two as honored guests, should their plans succeed. They are Zank Rendeg (EC: p32), a former pirate captain, and the eccentric minor magician Korwhis (EC: p32).

Zank Rendeg: Charming 11, Wary 12, Finesse 8, Sure-Footedness 10, Magic (Curious) 4, Health 5, Appraisal 9, Athletics 4, Concealment 6, Gambling 12, Living Rough 7, Pedantry (Treasures of Former Aeons) 9, Perception 8, Quick Fingers 5, Riding 6, Scuttlebutt 13, Stealth 8, Stewardship 3, Wherewithal 10.

Cantraps: Assuage Injury, Efficacious Spring, Sense Gems, Sense Precious Metals.

Korwhis the Magician has some understanding of magic, and is able to operate (and slightly adapt) the powerful protective enchantments in the Hotel (though these were created long ago by a far more powerful mage than he). However, in reality he is more of a sage with a side specialism in magic. Nonetheless, he portrays himself as a competent (though not overly-powerful) magician content to keep very much to himself, including allowing his friends Nerijs and Zank to assume he is more powerful than he actually is. This subterfuge garners sensible respect from non-magicians whilst not raising him to the point where truly powerful magicians might consider him a threat. He does have some magic available to assist the PCs. What follows is not a full list of his capabilities, and the GM may make additions that enhance the playing of this adventure:

Korwhis: Eloquent 12, Penetrating 14, Finesse 6, Sure-Footedness 8, Magic (Forceful) 9, Health 7, Appraisal 9, Athletics 5, Concealment 6, Etiquette 4, Gambling 7, Living Rough 3, Pedantry (History of Kaiin) 12, Perception 5, Quick Fingers 4, Riding 3, Scuttlebutt 8, Stealth 6, Stewardship 4, Wherewithal 9.

Cantraps: Bring Book to Hand, Copy Document, Discommoding Dazzle, Disclose Toxins, Lorgan's Instant Flame, Read Swiftly, Sense Eavesdroppers, Sense Magic, Translate Paragraph.

Spells: (including summaries for ease of reference)

Edan's Thaumaturgic Poultice (DERPG: p106) – heals wounds and non-magical diseases

Illusion of Vile Arthropods (DERPG: p107) – temporarily creates a realistic but intangible horde of charging small insectoids

Panguine's Loyal Porter (DERPG: p108) – summons an invisible entity to fetch and carry (remains within 100yds of caster)

Archemant's Unlikely Self-Restraint (IT: p84) – causes the target's clothes to temporarily restrain them

Enchantment of the Stilled Tongue (IT: p89) – prevents the target from ever revealing a specific piece of information

First Retrotropic (IT: p90) – reverts a single object/being back to the form it was before a magical alteration

Inviolat Attire (IT: p92) – protects caster's clothes and personal belongings from muck, damp and singeing

Obstructive Ether (IT: p96) – creates a large cube of solid air that massively impedes movement of those within

Turjan's Thunderclap (IT: p105) – a blast of sound that stuns the target and terrifies target's allies

GM Notes: In my game, the PCs know very little about spells, and in itself a dialogue with Korwhis about what spells he has and what they do would be interesting role-playing. He will claim to know several more spells of specific application that he will not reveal under any circumstances. (Even in emergency situations he will assure PCs that the other magics he knows cannot help.) PCs may assume that he is claiming greater magical potency than he actually has, but he will never admit this. In my campaign, the PCs recently retrieved a book of intriguing spells (from *Axomber's Tomb*), every one of which actually had major unfortunate side-effects or performed its supposed activity in a way that was highly vexing. However, the book was written in such a way as this was not obvious. If the PCs have not learned these spells yet, Korwhis will, if asked, assist them in learning them provided he may also do so. However, he will **not** be the first to try them out, but will rather wait to hear reports. (Though he will not reveal that this is his plan.)

What Has Already Happened

The following is a detailed backstory on which this scenario hangs. The PCs may become aware of some parts of this tale, but are in effect only pawns in the grander scheme of things. Thus, this information is mainly for the GM to use as he decides on the behaviors and responses of the notable GMCs.

Through his contacts amongst pirates and similar riff-raff, Zank Rendeg has long known of the legend of the Kaiinese Drakeling, a purportedly magical statuette of incalculable worth. This had not been a personal obsession, just one of many rumored great treasures the like of which every pirate hopes may be part of their big haul. One day, whilst at dinner with Nerijs and Zank, Korwhis happened to mention that a few days ago a decrepit stallkeeper in the marketplace had tried to sell him a small golden statuette of a drakeling. The man asked for an inflated price, claiming that the statuette was a magical relic of great historical import. Korwhis had scanned it and detected no magic, so had dismissed the whole thing as a con. When Zank finished choking on his oysters, he was able to relate that according to rumor the true Kaiinese Drakeling does not register as magic - because it is a divine item tied to powers of the gods of Fate, rather than to the elementals and daihaki.



The next day the three were at the marketplace as early as they were able, searching high and low for the vendor, but he did not reappear. After several days of not finding the man, Korwhis set himself the task of trying to track the Drakeling magically in case it really was the genuine article. Although he failed to locate it, on visiting various seers he did discover that all of them sensed that some object of great power linked to the fates was very recently arrived in Kaiin. (Korwhis of course related nothing about the Drakeling to any of these people.) Nothing more happened for a few weeks, although the three men often visited the marketplace seeking the mysterious vendor. In the end it was Nerijs who simply stumbled up Naplon Dhole one day at the edge of the market-place.

Naplon Dhole is a man of late middle-age, sporting a huge beard. He is not well-known in Kaiin, and comes here only irregularly. He is just a merchant, and a magician of small competency, who travels Western Ascolais collecting and peddling what curios he may. Nerijs, through astute questioning and liberal purchasing of overpriced curios, found out that Dhole knows a little about the legend of the Drakeling, and last season purchased five small golden statuettes from a contact in Taun Sferre. Where they came from prior to that he has no idea, and since the contact is a thief that occasionally supplies him with cheap goods, no further details were (or will ever be) forthcoming. Nerijs had in his excitement revealed his hand that he had heard that Dhole was selling such a statuette, but covered this by feigning embarrassment at his duplicity in thinking that the real Drakeling had been for sale.

Both men laughed loud and long, but Nerijs knew something that Dhole didn't – that Korwhis had already confirmed (as noted above) that a potent item connected to the fates was now in Kaiin. The simplest answer seems to be that one of the statuettes sold by Dhole is genuine! Nerijs persuaded Dhole that he (Nerijs) was interested in purchasing the entire set of Drakelings merely as curiosities, and paid to learn whom the purchasers had been.

Korwhis has been spending time at the Scholasticarium Library, researching the ways of Yelissea (the Goddess of Fate), and has found a ceremonial incantation that he is convinced will reveal whether an object is sacred to the Fates. Korwhis has also found other rituals, which he believes will activate the real Drakeling and allow the three conspirators to benefit from benevolent fate. Their research supports the idea that if one uses the powers of the Drakeling for good deeds as well as personal gain, fate smiles upon the user. However, if greed and power-mongering overbalance the equation it appears that the Drakeling vanishes, and the backlash of the fates bestows extreme bad luck – and even death or madness – upon its former owner.

Since all three men consider themselves to be pretty close to the bottom of the barrel where fate is concerned, they are willing to take this risk. Their plan is to harness the powers of the Drakeling to amass significant wealth (some portions of which they will donate to benevolent causes - in order to assuage any chance of invoking negative fates) and good fortune. Then they intend to sell on the Drakeling to a new owner who lives far away – perhaps one of the nobles of Erze Damath, or perhaps in the marketplace at Kaspara Vitatus. Thus any repercussions caused by future misuse would be unlikely to affect them in Kaiin.

They wish one by one to obtain and test the five statuettes until they uncover the authentic Drakeling. However, from their researches, they have become aware that meddling with the fates in any way is dangerous, and are determined to minimize the risks involved. (The very act of theft seems contrary to the benevolence needed to activate the Drakeling, and so they wish others to do the actual stealing.) Additionally, all of them are known, and of them all only Zank is both willing and able to conduct criminal acts with any aplomb – and even he is no longer young and spry enough to be competent. Thus, they need the help of experienced criminals who are not locally known. A secondary benefit is that if the thieves are unsuccessful, or caught, then they can take the blame. Of course, neither of these reasons present themselves in the following scenario details, since Nerijs and his fellow conspirators are looking for patsies not partners.

Immediately prior to the commencement of this scenario, the conspirators have performed a small ceremony designed to evoke the fates to provide them with assistants of the caliber required. Thus it is not such a coincidence that the PCs are encountered exactly at the right time (for the conspirators). The astute amongst readers will note that the conspirators are already compromising their integrity as regards misuse of the fates. However, they see these deceptions as entirely necessary acts for which they will atone as soon as they have harnessed the power of the Drakeling.

The Legend of the Kaiinese Drakeling - as known to Nerijs, Zank, and Korwhis

The Kaiinese Drakeling is said to have been originally created from nothing in response to the request of a priestess of the Great God Yelissea, Mistress of Fates. The contemporary ruler of Kaiin (who varies in the different versions of this tale) was persecuting this priestess and her followers, and the priestess presented the statuette as a gift – claiming that it would allow the ruler to gain the blessing of the fates. She was being truthful, but the blessing of the fates is a two-edged sword. Although this ruler gained much good fortune over the next few years, one day the drakeling was stolen. Suddenly, the tides of fortune turned against him and within a short while he not only began to lose catastrophically on the economic and political fronts, but also was soon suddenly and horribly assassinated by his younger brother. This brother, whilst no paragon of virtue, held much more liberal views on the freedom of religions, and the priestesses and followers of Yelissea (and other gods and goddesses) were now free to practice their religions with only more normal prejudices being levied against them. The tale does not end here, because, the Drakeling has reappeared at least three more times throughout Kaiin's history.



Its first reappearance was in the hands of the then Duke of Azenomei. He recognized it for what it was, and used magicians to harness its benefits for him. During this time the town of Azenomei swelled into a great city and his lands were fertile and well-protected. He ruled wisely and benevolently, and died at a ripe old age. Unfortunately his son was more ambitious, and attempted a march of conquest on the surrounding lands. Initially his attempts were successful, but then the Drakeling disappeared. Within the month, the new Duke was slain in battle, and his sister became Duchess. She was able to salvage some of the pride of the Dukedom, but it took many decades to repair the damages and secure their lands from angry neighboring states.

The second documented reappearance of the statuette was when a local magician named Youde Bergi somehow found the Drakeling, and again managed to activate its powers. His successes with the refinement and invention of spells grew and grew, and he became wealthy - and respected throughout the land. After some years he began to use his powers to try to recreate the mighty spells of previous aeons, and became involved with unwholesome individuals from the subworlds. For a while he was a feared and imposing power in the world, but one day whilst he was visiting one of the seven hells the drakeling was stolen. Bergi did not return from that journey, and these days only a handful of lesser spells remain to remind us of his life's work.

The last known reappearance of the Drakeling was in the hands of King Shiin of Kaiin. He too received the advice of his counselors on how to avail himself of its fortunes, and during the early years of his reign he oversaw the expansion of Kaiin in matters artistic, cultural and architectural. However, the possession of such powers corrupted him, and he began to amass his own wealth and treasures, take on the services of catamites and concubines for bizarre rituals, and treat his political enemies with great cruelty. Again, the Drakeling was stolen, and shortly after this Shiin was struck with an illness that left him not just 'mad' in terms of bizarre and unwholesome behaviors, but utterly bereft of wit. He never recovered.

Bear in mind that this information is not common knowledge, but is the result of painstaking and arduous research by Korn'his (who is a researcher). Few indeed are the folk who could recite this degree of detail, though some dozens of people in Kaiin likely know lesser or greater parts of the tale.

Introduction Option A: The Carrot

This option works well if you are running this scenario in a campaign a few adventures after the 'Exasperating Cadaver'. (And are planning that the PCs will be continue to be based in Kaiin for a few adventures at least.) It is also the easiest to adapt if the PCs in your campaign are already living in the Odkin Prospect Hotel (which was one of the options suggested in the 'Exasperating Cadaver').

Our rogues are back in Kaiin after adventures in the Scaum Valley (or some other locale) and looking for a base. However, finding a secure dwelling in Kaiin is not as easy as one might hope – as landlords are penurious, slow to perform maintenance, and quick to find reasons to expel tenants who prove to be of unsound character. Of course, various ruins may be occupied on the outskirts of town, but self-appointed patrols of 'Occupancy Monitors' (semi-organized thugs) charge a high fee - and deal out rough justice to those who resist. A solution is at hand: Nerijs, the 'owner' of the Odkin Prospect Hotel², has two important issues he needs help with, and requires a bold and unknown (to the folk of Kaiin) group of resourceful adventurers to aid him. Firstly, he is having trouble with a particular bunch of residents, and wants them out - and will welcome more reliable persons in their place. Secondly, he and three friends have been working on a daring plan that they hope will change their fortunes forever. Below (Scene 1) we detail several options as to how the PCs may connect with Nerijs.

How The PCs Might Connect to Nerijs

1) In my campaign the PCs (well, one or two of them) were kind to Nerijs during the episode of the *Exasperating Cadaver*. If such a thing happened in your running of that adventure, Nerijs spots the PCs in the city during their initial seeking employment/fine goods and services/accommodation. (If they are blundering around spending ill-gotten gains, then perhaps he follows them into a shop and saves them from being ripped off – which would be a good way to establish him as a sympathetic figure.) He either recognizes the person that helped him (he was being dangled from a window), or remembers a friend of the person that helped him. (It does not matter much to him, as his list of allies is thin.) Or (an even better option) the players themselves remember his offer of friendship and seek him out at his manse³. However, do not remind the players directly of that previous offer. Restrain your questions to such things as: "You will need somewhere to stay. Did any of you make any friendly connections on your last visit?" Then, if someone remembers helping Nerijs, you can repeat his offer to them. (If significant real-time has passed since you ran EC, then subtle reminders to players may be appropriate.) When using this option, Nerijs recalls them as daring thief-adventurers who passed briefly through his manse on some kind of dangerous smuggling mission. (Actually they were dupes fooled into running a risk for someone else, but Nerijs wasn't in the loop when it came to the true story.) Thus he will address them in such a fashion, awed and impressed – and respectfully plead for their help.

² Which featured as a prominent location in the *Exasperating Cadaver* adventure.

³ Where they will find the despondent Nerijs having been unable to find trustworthy associates for his plan.



2) If the characters (or some of them) undertook the Exasperating Cadaver adventure and were not particularly friendly to Nerijs, he will still recall them as resourceful folk of high criminal aptitude (as above), and seek their aid – offering to overlook their past poor behavior if they will help him now.

Note: In either case, note that Nerijs was one of the people paid by Vyejuar (see EC) to pretend to know their quarry, and so the old man may feel apologetic for having tricked them.

3) If for some reason you are unable to run the 'Exasperating Cadaver' adventure before this one, you might use that old chestnut of family connection: One of the characters is a nephew or niece of Nerijs. The reason that this was not a connection they thought to explore before, is that the PC's parents were from a disowned branch of the family. Nerijs to the PC is just a face that they knew until aged about six or seven. However, the character will recall that some 'falling from grace' occurred for their parents at about that time. Nerijs will recognize them because they resemble so closely their parent of the same gender. Or (perhaps better yet) the PC will remember their uncle and go purposefully to visit him. (GM invents further details as required.)

Nerijs' Initial Offer (Carrot)

If they meet anywhere away from his house Nerijs will then offer to buy them drinks at a nearby hostelry, where he will ask for their help. His manner will be enthusiastic and hopeful, and he will be under the impression that they are skilled criminals:

"I am fortunate indeed to have met persons of your caliber and skills at this time. The fates are surely smiling upon us all, for I require competent assistants to engage in acts requiring skill and daring in exchange for great reward."

What can you offer us in return?

"My greatest advantage is my home in the fashionable and delightful Odkin Prospect District. Certainly 'guests' of varying degrees of welcome inhabit most of it, but a significant number of rooms are still protected by the original enchantments, and by newer magics installed by my associate Korwhis⁴. These are not open to common riff-raff but only to those I so choose. I can offer you a permanent rental of a small suite of rooms protected from casual incursion by powerful enchantments, a place where you can leave your valuables in safety whilst you enjoy the city life. Should you wish to have the rooms, they can be yours free for one year along with all meals, and after that at a grand total of only seventy terces per week between you⁵."

The PCs will undoubtedly ask what Nerijs wants in exchange:

"Certain objects belonging to me have been stolen and I wish to have them back. However, they have been sold to new owners who are unlikely in the extreme to relinquish them – so they will need to be stolen once again and returned to me."

The PCs may sensibly question how they can trust him:

"I am an old man, and no magic wielder. It is true that my friend Korwhis is a magician, but we are often apart, and I venture weekly into the city to visit the shops or my few remaining friends. Were I to trick you from your funds, I would be forever looking over my shoulder in fear of retribution, and I much prefer to live out my final years in relative peace and security."

He may continue:

"Whereas I actually have much to gain from this arrangement. Not all of my guests are respectful of my house and property. Were you to be even only normally courteous, maintain your own board and pay a nominal rent I would be gaining tenants of surpassing quality compared to those currently in residence. The rooms I offer command a fine view of Golden Walk and the distant Palace from the front windows, and the Sanreal Bay itself is displayed to great advantage through the side windows. Should you inhabit them, your status amongst the notables of Kaiin is assured⁶."

What exactly do you want us to do?

"Come and meet my fellow conspirators, enjoy the hospitality of my house, and I will elaborate somewhat. Then if you agree to aid us and swear to secrecy I will reveal the full details."

Maintaining PC Motivation

This scenario is geared to moderate Cugel-Level, or low Turjan-Level. In order to motivate the PCs to continue their involvement (despite potential reservations that players of DERPG at Cugel-Level all eventually begin to evidence), rude use of Resistances (DERPG: p73) may need to be applied:

⁴ Not actually true, but Korwhis has led Nerijs to believe this.

⁵ This is an awesome bargain. Presuming there are four PCs, a week at a good inn would cost them 35t each (total 105-175t). This includes food, but so too does general residence. Nerijs can be bargained down to 15t a week per PC, but no less. This is probably the best point to call for Resistance rolls. Any PC who fails (declines) is now hooked on the deal.

⁶ And more Resistance rolls called for here if necessary.



Arrogance – Never underestimate the lure of a suite of apartments in Odkin Prospect. PCs will feel that they deserve this superior situation, and quite frankly do not have the remotest chance of achieving such in any other way except by completing the mission for Nerijs. Feel free to remind them at any point of the ostentatious advantage of such an address. Truly experienced GMs (coupled with players who know the milieu) may negate the need for any such rolls.

“There are thousands who would give everything for an address of such distinction. You may never get such an offer again! If you are hoping to live well in Kaiin, attract the respect of your peers, and enjoy the best of all things, an address in the Prospect will advance your experiences exponentially.”

Avarice – This opportunity to make a substantial saving by obtaining a low rent set of Prospect apartments over a whole year cannot be ignored. PCs used to high charges, theft and misfortune, and continual loss of wealth in deals that backfire will not be able to resist the benefits of Nerijs’ deal.

“You have been offered a fine suite of rooms in Odkin Prospect, something beyond price. The savings you will make will be astronomical, and any further terces gained can go straight into the ‘ready cash’ category.”

Throw these Resistances into the mix any time a PC considers abandoning the mission or somehow threatening its success. Be not afraid to call for one resistance after the other – after all this is an extremely rare and profitable opportunity they are jeopardizing.

Further Rewards: As this adventure goes on, PCs/Players may begin to complain that the increasing hazards seem to outweigh the rewards, especially if they believe that Nerijs may have no real intention of honoring his side of the bargain. Explain that to all intents and purposes, Nerijs does seem to be totally above board, and that truly the PCs will be gaining a major advantage through being able to reside in this residence. It may also be appropriate for Nerijs and the other conspirators to throw a few other rewards into the pot. What the GM deems these to be depends on your campaign details: minor magic items, a spell, more cantraps, money or other valuables (though by definition the conspirators don’t have much of these), favors from other notables – perhaps a forged enrolment in the Scholasticarium from a contact of Korwhis who owes him big time...

Introduction Option B: The Stick

This option works well if you feel that the level of hazard in this adventure requires a stronger incentive to continue to the bitter end. (IE if your PCs are likely to wish to flee for the hills when things start to get tough.) Our rogues have either already been in Kaiin for a few adventures – though have not performed actions that have made them well known - or they are recently arrived. This does not work if they are already resident at the Odkin Prospect Hotel, but suits a campaign that will soon be moving on from Kaiin.

The GM needs to arrange to have them arrested for some crime sufficiently serious that they are thrown into Kandive’s jail - with the deodand pits a worrying, if not likely, potential destination for them. Spend a bit of time creating this introduction, rather than merely reading out some pre-prepared statement. Allow the PCs to role-play the sale of stolen goods, or be recognized for a real crime the actually committed⁷ in some previous adventure - and captured only after being followed and trapped, etc. This Introduction also serves beautifully to part the PCs from any previous wealth and special items (though some of the latter might be returned on their release).

However their arrest comes about, a short encounter with Kandive’s tortuous legal system (KPG: pp18/19) is in order, as is exposure to the squalid prison cells beneath the palace. If you like, run this entire process with initial hearing, appeal, counter appeal, character witnesses and the works. The likely sentence will be ten years slavery, and confiscation of all goods and funds. If the PCs do at all well, then have these sentences transmuted to seven or three years slavery and the right to retain some of their goods. If they do very badly, then the angry senior adjudicator has them all consigned to the deodand pits and closes the case.

Late in the evening before the morning they are due to be branded and collected by the slave owners at night (or publicly lowered into the deodand pits) they receive a visitor. Chancellor Petrij⁸ (KPG: p92) suggests himself because his position in the palace hierarchy is extremely unstable – and this might realistically impel him to take such risks. Very simply, he is an associate of Korwhis (the most likely member of the Hotel conspirators for him to know), and a sleeping partner in the Drakeling conspiracy. He has been promised the opportunity to be part of the activation ceremony to evoke the powers of Fate attached to the Drakeling. In return he has been asked to keep an eye out for a band of rogues who are sufficiently trustworthy to be hired and yet in sufficient dire straits to have no choice but to agree.

⁷ Various options suggest themselves in my campaign: involvement in the kidnapping of Pioni (EC), burning down a tavern (Cooks of Cuirmif), theft of a magical boat (High Road to Kaiin) – though in this latter case their accusation will be part of an insurance scam.

⁸ He will not introduce himself, but may be recognized by a PC familiar with the Kaiin court, or one who took part in the ‘Day of the Quelo’.



Petrij will ask the guards to leave and then converse with the PCs in whispers. He will explain that an associate of his needs skilled individuals of nefarious habit to assist in a series of 'recovery operations'. In return for full agreement, Petrij promises them an absolute pardon - worded to the effect that their arrest was a case of mistaken identity. If any PCs suspect that this whole thing was a set-up from start to finish - with Petrij engineering their arrest - perhaps it was. Petrij can inform them only that their chances of success are reasonable - that is to say they are not being asked to agree to some kind of suicide mission. He will say no more, but may wave the pardon in front of their noses.

After they agree, he will tell them that when they leave this place they must go straight to the Purple Hissock Inn (KPG: p95) in Golden Walk and there await two men, one of whom has a wooden leg. When this pair arrives, the PCs must introduce themselves as 'the assistants you require'. Petrij will then call guards and escort the PCs to the side entrance of the dungeons. There they will receive back some of their possessions (no chance to ask for more, since the rest are still locked away in storage), and the promise that the rest will be returned when the mission is completed. Then they will be marched to the gate.

As they go, Petrij will remind them that their meeting with him of course never took place. (He is unlikely to feature again in this scenario, as part of his agreement with the conspirators is that the only risk he takes is to supply the rogues necessary to do the dirty work.) If the PCs ask how he has become involved, he says he is an old friend of Korwhis (true) and Nerijs (not true), and is helping them out because he owes them a significant favor from way back (not significantly true).

Nerijs' Initial Offer (Stick)

(GM: If you are using this introduction, yet still want to offer the rooms in the Odkin Prospect Hotel as reward, then adapt the information from the 'Carrot' introduction.)

Since Petrij sent runners to Odkin Prospect, it will be almost an hour before Nerijs and Zank arrive. (Note that Korwhis is also there, but mingling amongst the other patrons in order to assure the safety of his friends.) Nerijs' manner will be enthusiastic and hopeful, and he will be under the impression that the PCs are skilled criminals:

"I am fortunate indeed to have come across persons of your caliber and skills at this time. The fates are surely smiling upon us all, for I require competent assistants to engage in acts requiring skill and daring."

The PCs will undoubtedly ask what Nerijs wants them to do:

"Currently in my manse lives a small band of brigands under the command of a certain Dothand, and his two lieutenants - the enormous Torbt, and the wily Astra. They have stolen from me, and through a criminal with commercial connections have sold my precious goods onto others. I require a small group of experienced rogues to aid me in retrieving my property; people whose faces are not well-known here in Kaiin and who care more for the spirit of the law rather than its letter."

Although we are grateful for our freedom, the Law of Equipoise demands a tangible reward for our risk-taking. What is on offer to us?

"Since you are no doubt folk of the road, travelling here and there in search of adventure and loot, we can offer to teach you valuable cantraps. Additionally between us we have a number of influential contacts in the city that can provide you with goods or training. Sadly we have no great wealth, but can also arrange for two hundred terces each⁹ to be yours on completion of the mission."

The PCs may sensibly question how they can trust him:

"Would I go to such lengths to gain your assistance for some kind of joke? I am an old man, and no magic wielder. Were I to trick you, I would be forever looking over my shoulder in fear of retribution, and I much prefer to live out my final years in relative peace and security."

What exactly do you want us to do?

"Come and meet my fellow conspirators. Then you must swear to secrecy before them, and I will reveal the full details."

Scene 1: Nerijs' New Friends

The PCs will then accompany Nerijs (Carrot option) or Nerijs and Zank (Stick option) back to the Odkin Prospect Hotel. The other conspirator/s will either already be there (Carrot option), or (Stick option) will arrive only two minutes later. The group can discuss whatever they want - the point being that the PCs can ask general questions and get to know the conspirators - who will freely tell general details about themselves. Whatever the introduction, the PCs will be offered free accommodation at the Hotel for the duration of the mission including at least some short while thereafter.

⁹ Petrij has actually promised an amount equal to 300t each, but the conspirators expect to be bargained up. They will continue to pretend that any cash amount is coming from their own meager savings.



Playing the Conspirators

Portray Nerijs as an angry but decent old man who has been robbed and is now determined to get justice. Portray Korwhis and Zank as being also badly done-to (ridiculed and disrespected) by Dothand's Gang, and keen for Equipoise to be reinstated. Also allow the players to understand that the conspirators whilst not decrepit, are no longer as nimble or quick-thinking as is necessary for such activities as are required. (Mind you, perhaps all three of the elderly members are actually exaggerating their infirmities in order to make it seem more realistic that the PCs must do all the real work. They are all definitely emphasizing their wish for revenge as being the primary motive for this enterprise.)

Continued Conversation with Nerijs (Carrot or Stick)

Will the Job be Risky?

"Risks are of course involved. However, we believe that the rewards more than match them."

In response to inquiries about Dothand's Gang:

"Only two months ago, they claimed to be acting on behalf of The Vlark, and managed to raise over ten thousand terces in protection money before their ruse was discovered. A few weeks before that they got on board a merchant ship, took it to sea and ran it aground south of Kaiin – where their associates took possession of the goods that were on board. Some sailors were killed and others were sold off as slaves. Last season they somehow managed to break in to Poscerrista's prestigious Gem Emporium in Golden Walk, and made off with quite a haul. A vigil was killed in the course of their escape. Perhaps their most audacious act was the kidnapping of the daughter of Schi-Gii, who is the head of the merchants' guild. Apparently they carted her across town like chattels once the ransom was paid. The unfortunate Schi-Gii found her on his doorstep in the morning – rolled in a carpet like common commodities. With all this loot, you would think they could spare me a terce or two, to contribute to the upkeep of the house! But, no! Instead they rob me."

[Vlark: KPG, p32; Gem Emporium: KPG, p94; Schi-Gii: KPG, p56]

We Have Already Met

Note: If you have run the *Exasperating Cadaver*, then Dothand and his two lieutenants may well have been encountered (but not named) in the amusing incident: 'An Uncanny Reflection'. We won't mention exact details here, but only repeat the description given: *"One of the people is short and lithe, with a certain fox-like cunning plainly evident - his hand moves to the hilt of his rapier, though he does not draw it. The second person is female, and is slightly taller. She tosses back her thick black hair and moves on agile feet to the far side of the street. The third man is six feet tall and half that wide."*

Should the PCs have experienced that encounter, by all means jog the memories of the Players when Nerijs describes the bandits.

Talking to Nerijs: Advanced Information

Nerijs will reveal this following specific information only when the PCs have agreed to be part of the action and sworn themselves to secrecy. Resistance rolls may be applied again if needed (as suggested earlier in this piece). Note that some of the information is peripheral and not all points need to be read out if the appropriate questions are not forthcoming.

What exactly do you want us to do?

"A few months ago a set of five valuable statuettes was stolen from me and resold by the gang¹⁰. These criminals were suspected, but nothing could be proven. I have recently traced the last of these statuettes to their new owners. Therefore, I want you to steal the statuettes back – every last one of them."

What can you tell us about the Gang?

"Dothand is a man powerful with the rapier, and he knows a few cantraps such as how to scale walls quickly. He is not overly-tall, but is possessed of fox-like cunning and grace. Torbt knows no magic, but is prodigiously tall, strong and muscular. Astra is lithe and quick, with long dark hair, and she knows cantraps such as the Sleeping Dust and jumping high over obstacles. Their underlings, when such exist, are generally common city rogues, of middling or lesser skills."

How did they Steal Your Statuettes?

"I had kept them for years, despite my penury, but at last was desperate enough for funds that I had to sell them. Zank and I took them early one morning to a jeweler in Golden Walk, but when we arrived the chest was empty save for rocks. Three days later Dothand laughingly told me how he had come into unexpected wealth from a benefactor, and he banded me 5 gold centurms in lieu of rent unpaid.¹¹"

¹⁰ Note that this is an utter and outright lie. You may by now be getting the (correct) impression that the PCs are not going to be told the full story of what is going on. (Although we later discuss options covering the unlikely chance of them uncovering the true details.)

¹¹ This is all lies.



An Outline of the Plan:

"You must devise ways to obtain the five statuettes from their current owners. Here we shall assist you as much as possible, but cannot risk being involved in any obvious way."

Who then now owns the statuettes?

"Fladgna, Priestess of Canal Town's repulsive Bowellers bought several valuable ornaments for the Temple of Dijekom. These relics are displayed near the shrine, as examples of the repulsive decadence that her flock so assiduously avoids. To me this logic seems strange, but then the Bowellers are such odd people - who knows how they think."

"Volune Stinobric, lecturer in erotic studies at Kaiin's Scholasticarium, now uses one of my beloved ornaments as a paperweight on his desk. Oh the ignominy!"

"Lady Hemilovi owns another of the houses in Odkin Prospect. Like myself she is without regular income, but she maintains a lavish lifestyle through gifts and donations from those who wish to attend her regular exclusive soirees."

"Shote, the trainer of dhjetar who lives near the Tracks, was given one of the statues by the wealthy Oman Tesqui. Tesqui is an owner of dbejatar who employs Shote, but Shote's arrogance is legendary and resplendent gifts mollify him in his attitude towards a particular trainer for some notable time."

"Vidierista the coin-seller obtained one of my statuettes from a colleague of his who operates his shop in Golden Walk. Vidierista himself lives in the Undercity and presumably the statuette is in his possession there."

GM Note: With the risks now fully revealed, the PCs may ask for greater payment, such as cash up-front, spells to be cast to assist them – that sort of thing. The conspirators may agree to small concessions immediately, but Persuasions will be necessary if the PCs wish substantial or highly specific extra benefits. Fuller details on the new owners of the Drakelings are available at the start of each relevant Scene, and may be consulted whenever the PCs ask for, or uncover, information about them.

How did you discover the new owners of the statuettes?¹²

"Korwhis, Zank and myself went daily to Golden Walk and all purveyors of fine ornaments, knowing that Dothand could only get a substantial return so quickly here in Kaiin. We are not foolish, and did not claim to be seeking stolen property, but said that we were looking to purchase golden antiquities in the shapes of animals. At the marketplace Korwhis found one of the statuettes still in the possession of a trader named Naplon Dhole, for he had already sold the others. Claiming an interest in purchasing the whole set, Korwhis was able to pay Dhole sufficient terces to be informed of the new owners. In the case of Fladgna and Stinobric, it was relatively easy to uncover where the statuettes were now residing. In the case of Hemilovi since the admirer who bought it for her remains anonymous, it was sheer luck that she is a neighbor and I co-incidentally became aware of its presence in her manse. With Oman Tesqui, Korwhis had to pose as a collector of antiquities trying to trace statuettes from the past. Through chicanery he was able to uncover that the statuette had gone to Shote. Whilst we thus operated, the final statuette was sold to Ediccio's Antiquities on Golden Walk. From thence it was bought by a representative of Vidierista's Numismatic Emporium apparently as a gift for Vidierista himself."

[Golden Walk references – KPG: p94]

Where shall we reside? / How shall we live?

"It is customary for visitors of my manse's residents to be able to stay for some days without question, provided one or more of the residents vouches for them. This tradition evolved by mutual agreement. Normally, so long as the visitors number no more than half a dozen they may stay without interference for 3 or 4 days. Thus, we will have Zank vouch for one of you as being the child of a former colleague. Should our activities take more time, we can make further arrangements."

The Odkin Prospect Hotel

(Information summarized from the 'Exasperating Cadaver' adventure.)

In the KPG, the residents of the 'hotel' are all described as 'bandits'. In the house campaign, the term 'bandit' covers any unconventional folk whose means of income is uncertain. Thus, this place may become the base of operations for the characters in forthcoming scenarios. (Some inhabitants still fit the common conception of a 'bandit' quite well, mind you.) Nonetheless, since that nocturnal vigil attack (KPG: p81), the occupants are suspicious. The characters will be greeted at the locked (and magically protected) gate by Sorgscove the felon (KPG: p83) who is only partially sober, and is the rostered lookout¹³ for this part of the night. It may be possible to convince him (Ψ IMPOSTURE-1, PERSUASION-1) that they are here for a party, although he hasn't heard of any particular party tonight. If not, they will have to find some other way. (If they pose as legitimate visitors, see section on 'Visitors' below.)

¹² Note that the response to this question follows the wisdom that the best lie is a distortion of the truth. Various facts here will check out if the PCs investigate them. Dhole himself is no longer in Kaiin, and will not return in the course of this scenario. However, others in the Market will know of him and may even confirm that he was selling golden statuettes of drakelings (though this is not common knowledge).

¹³ The only duty which residents take with absolute seriousness; since the vigil attack looms large in their minds.



In the EC playtest, the characters eventually convinced Sorgscove to summon others from the house. (They learned that a small gong was hung nearby, to be rung only in case of emergency, and threw stones at it, some of which struck Sorgscove.)

What It's Like Inside

This place is a mess, though not the absolute chaos that one would imagine. The halls are lined (but not knee-deep) with the debris of multiple occupants. Scraps of leather, old shoes, empty and torn coin purses, lengths of broken stick, worn pieces of clothing, broken boxes, and pieces of shattered furniture. The open doorways reveal rooms that were clearly once places of resplendence; however, their fine furnishings are now decrepit with age and ill use. Portraits have been defaced, wooden chests and tables covered with graffiti, and more litter is strewn on most surfaces. The closed doors almost without exception bear locks and chains of significant proportion. Many bear runes that indicate protective enchantments.

The Main Rooms

Four large common rooms are available. These used to be (and are still condescendingly referred to as): the Drawing Room, the Library, the Master's Study, and the Dining Room. In any of these places, and in the wider halls, one can find various folk lounging, playing cards, and occasionally reading or engaged in conversation. Most such folk look up at you for a moment before looking away and continuing their activity.

The Library is the only room that maintains an air of luxury, since it is still maintained by various enchantments. These magics keep it clean, repair vandalism, punish vandals with painful cantraps, and prevent books and other objects from being stolen. Whatever magical entity resides here is also quite discerning; it prevents the illiterate from entering (a wall of force blocks the doorway).

The Kitchen and Larders are all reasonably clean, as (after several unfortunate fatal altercations here) the original occupants swore an oath to wash what they used and clean up obvious mess. All newcomers must also swear this oath. Anyone may eat here initially, as residents are unable to be sure that they may not offend friends of one of the other powerful resident factions. However, people will ask around, and anyone eating here a second time will be challenged and asked to either pay, desist, or leave the house never to return. In the EC playtest, Nerijs himself arrived to complain bitterly at them, but since everyone had just failed to resist Gourmandism they didn't care. Also in the kitchen is a small sign: "Please clean anything you use." Anyone who ignores this will draw a minor curse. (Reactivated by Korwhis some time ago.)

The Cellar

Superior wines and ales are stored down here (unlike the standard fare in the kitchen larder). This area is totally protected by enchantments, so that none of the beverages can be taken without Nerijs' consent. Of course, bandits merely 'encourage' him to come down here when they get thirsty and to select something for them from the racks.

The Gardens

Protected by high walls from the adjacent properties, the gardens of this manse are almost a jungle. The only easily accessible sections are the patio outside the drawing room, where folk often drink and gamble in warmer weather, and the small lawn before the latrine block. (This is fortunately connected to the Prospect's sewer system, since no current residents wish to pay for civic waste removal services, nor to have the repulsive Bowellers wandering the neighborhood.)

The Residents

Dothand's Gang - These brigands maintain a suite of rooms on the first floor. Dothand is a rough fellow, but with his own sense of honor. This gang is still active in and around Kaiin, and its members fluctuate as they are arrested and executed. Dothand and his two lieutenants are too skilled to be easily apprehended (or to ever leave a trace of evidence that can point conclusively to them).

Fulia's Gang - This group, led by a woman, live in the attic apartments¹⁴. They are friendly enough, except they have rivalry with the members of Dothand's Gang, and are skilled city thieves. Fulia is the one who every week or two rounds up all the visitors and some of the inhabitants to clean up as much of the rubbish as they can. The hour or so she can be bothered to motivate them - and keep intervening in the petty squabbles that result - is the only thing that keeps this place habitable. She is on good terms with Nerijs and feels sorry for him. She is also the one who organizes irregular collections from the inhabitants to help pay for their food. (The PCs will likely first encounter her during one of these collections, as she and her assistants carry round small sacks whilst requesting donations. However, if the PCs have arranged - and are actually paying - official rent, they have grounds to be exempted if they are otherwise poor. If they clearly have terces to spare despite paying rent, then the demands will continue.)

¹⁴ The conspirators absolutely do not want Fulia's Gang involved in the enterprise, since she is reasonably well-known and may be suspected. Also, she may well try and double cross them and make off with the statues.



Joepel Korwhis - Korwhis is the resident magician. He is aging now, but has a million stories about the exploits of his youth. Occasionally he becomes maudlin, especially when he has had too much to drink, but is otherwise a fine fellow. He chanced upon this house when walking the Prospect and has decided to retire here. (When younger he always dreamed of owning a manse in the Prospect.) He will cast protective enchantments for a small fee, and occasionally can be tempted into assisting some of the friendlier crooks with his magic. He is Nerijs' closest friend.

Zank Rendeg - a former pirate, with one leg, who acts perpetually drunk but is actually stone sober - due to an enchantment - and a canny fellow. He lives in his own room and is on at least reasonable terms with all of the other residents. He is also a good friend of Nerijs.

Sento Thertenek - Once a renowned captain of a band of treasure seekers, he now dwells here, existing on his ill-gotten gains. Three of his old associates live with him, and occasionally they travel around in order to replenish their funds. Sento has no interest in outsiders and he and his followers rarely associate with the other inhabitants (except on matters of joint security.)

Visitors

Associates of the residents often visit, and stay here for a while, dossing down in a corner of one of the common rooms, or in one of the wide window bay compartments. Such folk are tolerated for a few days and then asked to leave - usually by those least friendly with the folk this person is ostensibly 'visiting'. (Visiting is usually a euphemism for hiding out from the authorities.) Mind you, some people who are generally well-liked manage to stay for longer - such as the smiling Verefet of Azenomei. (This small female street singer and pick-pocket has been here now for many weeks, and nobody is really sure who was supposed to be her original 'friend'.) NB: Visitors are not usually admitted unless the person they are visiting is present to vouch for them. (This is doubly true at night.)

Typical Domestic Situations

(NB: Some or all of these may already have been used during the 'Exasperating Cadaver' scenario. Some are easily repeatable, others cannot realistically be run again - at least not in the same way.)

- 1) A couple of the really tough residents pick a fight with one or more of the characters, whom they accuse of stealing meat from the kitchens. (These men are drunk.) (Ψ RESIST PETTIFOGGERY not to become embroiled in an argument. If you lose the argument, fisticuffs ensues.)
- 2) In a small junk room upstairs a couple are becoming intimately acquainted. The character who stumbles upon them is loudly berated until convinced to depart.
- 3) On a balcony several young fellows are partaking of certain aromatic substances, and invite one of the characters to partake. (Ψ RESIST INDOLLENCE not to join them.)
- 4) In the drawing room several residents are playing dice for money and are clearly drunk. Any character coming across this who has more than 1 point left in their Gambling pool will be sorely tempted to join in. (Ψ RESIST AVARICE). (They roll for their Gambling at a Penalty of 1; however, if the character rolls a Dismal Failure, the other players become aware that they are being taken advantage off, and complain violently.)
- 5) Korwhis is somewhat drunk and in one of his 'I know many things' moods. A character eager for information who engages him in conversation may (Ψ RESIST PETTIFOGGERY) become embroiled in his tortuous ramblings.
- 6) Korwhis is short on ready cash, and has a 'Peregrinating Gem' for sale (Cugel's Compendium, p11). He has used this a number of times and suspicions have been roused. Therefore he must relinquish it as quickly as possible. He will not accept less than 30 terces, but will start off the process asking for 100 terces. Any character that has at least 40 terces, may (Ψ RESIST AVARICE) be impelled to bargain for its ownership. (He cannot again sell it to anyone residing in the hotel, as he has already done so, and now claims not to know the whereabouts of the 'missing gem'.) When he passes it on, Korwhis also teaches the ownership cantrap, which must be recited once each day whilst the gem is in your hand.

GM: If the character who buys this displays it around the manse, the previous person who believed they purchased it may spot it and presume they have identified the thief. If he is confronted at this stage, Korwhis will cover his tracks by saying that he bought it in good faith from the market.

- 7) Verefet takes a fancy to one of the characters. (Lowest Sympathy point rating.) Though her attraction is genuine, she cannot resist stealing their valuables. (Ψ RESIST RAKISHNESS in order to resist her SEDUCTION attempt.) Alternatively, the GM can introduce her in a fashion as to encourage acts of reckless Rakishness amongst the characters, and the victor amongst them can discover her nefarious traits at their leisure. (Perhaps she poses as someone impressed by 'adventurers'.)

Repeat Encounters from the Exasperating Cadaver adventure

Zank and Nerijs himself (who is perpetually desperate for funds) were paid to claim to personally know the elusive (and fictional) 'Penderbast' if asked. They were persuaded (Nerijs bribed, Zank repaying a debt) to 'remember' Penderbast. It is entirely possible that some PCs may wish to re-open dialogue about this trickery. If so, defuse such situations with apologies - after all, these two GMCs did not know the PCs at that time, so it was not personal.



Alternate Rewards: If the PCs need further motivations and are staying in Kaiin, then perhaps enrolment at the Scholasticarium is useful to them, or introductions to a few notable contacts? Although Nerijs has few friends, Korwhis, and Zank (and Petrij?) may know a variety of people that owe them significant favors. If Korwhis can identify magical items, he may offer this service free upon request for a whole year. Or, between them, the conspirators may have a few minor magical items they can bear to part with, and may even agree to teach more cantraps or arrange training in specific skills. ('Locksmith' Tweak anyone?) Use your imagination, dependent on the kind of thing that the PCs desire and what suits your planned campaign continuation.

Scene 2: Preparing for Action

Moving In

Nerijs and the other two conspirators will casually spread the word that one of the newcomers is the child of one of Zank's old cronies. Nerijs will also advise the PCs that if any of the other residents are around they should not approach any of the conspirators except in the most casual fashion. Korwhis is the safest to talk to, since he has magic that alerts him to eavesdroppers. (Although spending time with Zank also is logical, since he is their sponsor.) Everything should move fairly quickly, so there is no actual need to role-play much detail as regards their hanging around the house. (Although if such things unfold as entertaining gaming then so be it.)

More likely their residence in the house will be the backdrop to planning sessions in Nerijs' rooms. The other residents will not see this as unusual, since Zank apparently favors one PC – and Zank is a good friend of Nerijs. The conspirators will be only too happy to discuss all plans and tactics, but will need to do so behind closed doors where Korwhis has access to enchantments that automatically resist all eavesdroppers. The GM is advised to maintain enough detail and passing encounters with the other residents to set the house up as a rich background. Encounters with Dothand or members of his gang should be minimal at this time, but will all enhance the impression that Dothand and his cronies are ruthless and arrogant.

Remember that internal security enchantments restrict access from the main house into the quarters of the conspirators. The PCs will need to be incorporated into these defenses in order for them to be able to pass through these enchantments. Such things will become important in the Grand Finale.

Making Plans

In the planning sessions, the GM will refer to the following Scenes in this scenario as the PCs and conspirators devise plans of action. The GM needs to minimize GMC input of course, so as to give the PCs/Players the maximum opportunity to ask questions, raise points, and suggest and analyze potential plans. These sessions may be interspersed with scouting missions to gain specific advice or intelligence, and visits to third parties to obtain equipment or further information. However, the conspirators are keen to get things moving as quickly as possible, in case any of the statuettes are moved from their current locations – or sold to someone else. Thus, the night following their arrival at the Hotel should be the night of their first theft.

Though much information is contained in the following Scenes, be fully aware that this material is not there to be 'read out'. Rather it is there as a resource that the GM can use to frame responses to the actions and questions of the PCs/Players. Even the sections titled 'General Knowledge' may cover information known widely only by those connected to the place/person in question. Nerijs and Korwhis have no experience in theft, subterfuge and adventuring; Zank knows about piracy on the high seas, smuggling and some robbery of ancient ruins but not much about civic activities.

Nerijs and the others have a suggested order of action, based on their assessment of the likelihood of it becoming publicly known that the statuettes are being stolen. (When this happens the owners are likely to take extra precautions, so speed is of the essence.) Therefore it is likely that the following suggested order will be followed. Their reasoning is thus:

"You will need to act swiftly and in the most advantageous sequence to ourselves, to avoid the new owners of the statuettes becoming alarmed and taking precautions. First obtain the statuette from the Temple of Dijekom. So many followers of their Screaming Prophet exist that their own members will surely be suspected first. Additionally, Fladgna's pomposity is renowned and she will surely be extremely reluctant to admit to the world at large that her temple was breached and something stolen. Certainly at least some days will pass before it becomes known. Next, obtain Volune Stinobrie's statuette. Whilst he is only a minor dabbler in magic, he is a former adventurer and reputedly quite cunning. His rooms in the Institute Building are said to be protected by traps, so we are fortunate that presently the statuette is in his Scholasticarium Office. He will no doubt initially suspect students, hopefully giving us a day or so before the theft is declared. Our actions from now on need to be swift indeed before the news of the thefts break. Lady Hemilovi should be your following target, preferably in the evening of the same night as Shote's statuette is taken, as both of these may declare the theft at once. Nonetheless, to obscure our purpose, take several items from Shote and ransack his apartment – thus making the theft seem part of an unspecific crime. Finally our target will be Vidierista's dwelling in the Undercity. Since these deluded folk are so sheltered from the surface world we can be reasonably sure that news will only slowly filter down."



Disguises and Diversional Behavior to Prevent Identification via Magic

No spells are known to exist that can infallibly identify and track a criminal after the event. However, magic is believed to be available capable of viewing a place's recent activities. Therefore some manner of disguise is recommended for each operation. Or general things such as dying/cutting one's hair, buying shoes with thick soles to increase height might be done at the beginning and then changed back when the missions are complete. Korwhis will additionally advise the PCs that after obtaining any statuette it makes sense to follow an extremely circuitous route back to one's hideout – in order to foil the more powerful spells that may be applied after the event. In this same regard, for the first couple of miles, one's general direction must head in some way other than towards the district one is intending finally to go to ground in. Crossing running water also is widely believed to disrupt such limited spells as do exist for the tracing of criminals.

Learning Cantraps

Normally people preciously hoard even their cantraps, and certainly do not teach them to casual acquaintances except perhaps for a high fee. However, two cantraps have clear and obvious benefits to the success of the mission, so Zank and Korwhis will offer to teach one each. The circumstances in which this will occur are that the conspirators will declare that amongst the cantraps they collectively know are two with direct benefit to the mission. (Therefore they are prepared to teach one each to the two most magically proficient of the PCs.) If the PCs put up a fuss (Ψ PERSUASION), the conspirators might reluctantly agree to teach one cantrap to each PC from their collective pool – provided that these two important ones take precedence until at least one PC has learned each of them. This is a cunning set-up by the conspirators, who are aware of collective greed rife amongst criminal riff-raff. Thus, by offering less and agreeing to more, they assume that their employees will feel they have gained a bargain deal. Remember that this is not an easy thing to do, and the learning of even a single cantrap takes several long hours of arduous practice for the magically unproficient.

1) **Sense Precious Metals** - Zank will teach this. It makes good sense to do so, since the objects the PCs seek are solid gold. Describe his clumsy and painstaking teaching methods (he is not a competent user of magic) and the difficulties PCs experience when attempting to encompass this small magic. Zank finds the process extremely tiring, and stops when two PCs have successfully learned the cantrap (or when only one has but the others have proven repeatedly incompetent over notable time).

2) **Sense Magic** - Korwhis will not teach a spell under any circumstances. He believes this cantrap will be very useful in locating any magical traps to be avoided.

NB: Both of these cantraps, plus some of the others listed in this scenario, are described fully in the free download article on Cantraps available at: www.pelgrane.com/violethusps.htm

Learning a Cantrap

After several hours {12-MR – where MR is your Magic rating: then divide by two} of study with someone who already knows the cantrap you may check to see if the cantrap is successfully learned. Mechanically this involves rolling an IS with your Magic rating, at a maximum number of re-rolls equal to half of your pool. Since this is so difficult, it makes sense if the GM allows PCs to attempt their learning in a group. If everyone fails first time, then the GM may allow a PS on the second or third attempt also to indicate success.

There is No Connection Between Us

The conspirators wish of course to remain unconnected to criminal proceedings, and will say that if the PCs are arrested their story will be that they have never met, and they (the PC rogues) must have heard about the statuettes through Dothand. The PCs, the conspirators say, should invent their own cover story along those lines. "However," says Korwhis, "I have a friend high-up in the Palace, who owes me a favor and will probably be able to arrange your release if you are thrown into the dungeons. I will be happy to call in that favor as long as you say that you were acting on your own. Nonetheless, it is far better if you avoid arrest at all costs."

Dothand's Gang

These ratings were created for a previous conjectural version of this scenario where the gang were more prominently involved. I have left them in because it is still an option that they are significant GMCs in one of the later scenes.

Dothand

Charming ~+5, Penetrating ~+6, Finesse ~+6, Intuition ~+5, Health ~+2, Magic (Daring) ~+4, Appraisal 12, Athletics ~+4, Concealment 12, Etiquette 9, Gambling ~+6, Imposture 14, Perception 11, Quick Fingers 10, Scuttlebutt ~+5, Stealth 13, Wherewithal 13.

Cantraps: Assuage Injury, Carry Heavy Weight, Climb Fast, Convincing Chatter, False Face, Leap Far, Mend Clothes, Repel Dirt, Run Fast, Throw Voice.



Astra

Glib ~+4, Lawyerly ~+5, Cunning ~+5, Sure-Footedness ~+4, Health ~+3, Magic (Curious) ~+3, Appraisal 10, Athletics ~+5, Concealment 13, Etiquette 10, Gambling ~+5, Imposture 9, Perception 12, Quick Fingers 10, Seduction 7, Scuttlebutt ~+3, Stealth 15, Wherewithal 10.

Cantraps: Assuage Injury, Discommoding Dazzle, Hide Well, Jump High, Run Fast, Spray of Sleep Dust.

Torb

Intimidating ~+2, Obtuse ~, Strength ~+6, Parry ~+6, Health ~+6, Gambling ~, Wherewithal 14.

Typical Underling

Obfuscatory ~, Wary ~, Speed ~+2, Dodge ~+2, Health ~, Athletics ~, Concealment ~, Gambling ~, Perception ~, Quick Fingers ~-2, Scuttlebutt ~-2, Stealth ~, Wherewithal ~.

NB: In games where PC average ratings (~) are high, no underling will have any rating be higher than 1 less than Astra's rating in that same ability.

Researching the Drakeling

Such research will possibly not take place, since Cugel-Level games are not renowned for their research components, and the PCs will not likely suspect that things are not what they seem. (Or at least may suspect but have no clue in what way.) Nonetheless, should a player know the resources of Kaiin, or learn of them when traversing the streets, they may decide to make some inquiries. All that follows of course relies on the fact that they somehow manage to find someone who knows of the legendary golden statue of the Kaiinese Drakeling, which in itself is extremely unlikely. Otherwise, all research attempts on 'a golden statue of a drakeling' are at a penalty of 1. Only if they know of its name, are they unaffected by this penalty.

The Scholasticarium Library

Three different publications refer to the Drakeling. To find these requires several steps to be successfully completed. Firstly, remember that it is very difficult/expensive (KPG, p122) to gain access to the Scholasticarium Library; secondly one must be able to read; thirdly one must be able to find the books in question. For each hour one spends in the library, a player may make a Pedantry attempt at a levy of 1 (unless their Pedantry specialty is research or library use). On an IS/PS they find something:

i) A musty copy of Mortiquaan's Collected Verse contains a poem entitled 'Fourteen Wondrous Mysteries'. One single verse describes the Drakeling, but does not elaborate on why it is a wondrous mystery. GMs will need to invent thirteen more verses if their players are likely to insist on knowing them.

*"Poured from the mould of Yelissea, this glinting beast was born,
Of noble snout and proud held wing, it gazes out with scorn.
The mighty wish to own it, but few avail its power,
For fate is twisted in its weft, and danger in its glower."*

ii) 'Items of Magic and Merit' by Groymar Hetsik

Another old tome; this contains a much longer piece, though it is incomplete – since a previous reader has torn out the facing page. This was presumably for information on the other side, since otherwise the entire Drakeling entry would no doubt be gone.

"The Kaiinese Drakeling – This piece is one of the rarest and most intriguing I have had the pleasure to examine in my long career. I noted the gold scrollwork so typical of the Seventeenth Aeon, the courtly bearing of the beak indicating a heraldic origin, and the unmistakable stamp of maker's authenticity on the base. Of the reputed properties I cannot speak, for the piece passed through my hands in less than an hour, and I was not granted the privilege of its examination under laboratory conditions. I did hear sometime after my encounter with the piece that its owner had suffered a mysterious boom and then sudden collapse of his fortunes, and been forced to sell it on. Perhaps the charm is ..."

iii) 'Curses and Cures' by Jonpol Fewk

"I have heard of an item known as the Kaiinese Drakeling, that is said to have the power to remove or invoke hexes from or upon its owners. Some say that it is a demonic embodiment, others that it is a product of one of the overworlds. Further commentators suggest that it is merely an item created and enchanted by one of the great magicians of the Sixteenth Aeon, perhaps Simbilis or even Phandaal himself. If so, we may have to consider the speculations that it was created as a grand joke to spread misfortune upon the creator's enemies by feeding their avarice and paranoia. Should a curse of notable potency be struck upon you it is believed that the Drakeling can absorb its effects, though it must then transfer that energy elsewhere. Since the mechanism by which it does so is little understood, it is advised that you attempt such a use with maximum safeguards in place."

Note that if the PCs do access the services of the Scholasticarium, and talk to one of the librarians about what they are looking for, someone may overhear them and start to trail them around the city. Who this is and exactly what type of challenge this will present for the PCs is up to the GM. A prime candidate is the weird 'Thrupp' (KPG: p116).



The Underworld Grapevine

For the sake of this scenario's integrity, we will assume that at Cugel-Level none of the PCs already know anything about the Kaiinese Drakeling. At Turjan-Level perhaps an IS with Pedantry might reveal that a PC has at least heard of the name, but we feel justified in claiming that our crude rogues do not. However, PCs may seek out those more knowledgeable than themselves. Bear in mind that only a few dozen folk in Kaiin know the phrase: 'The Kaiinese Drakeling', though a few dozen more may be able to recall hearing some legend about a magical drakeling statuette. The following examples of responses presume that the PCs actively pursue an expert, and that this expert makes an IS with their Pedantry on a single roll. Note that the following information is not entirely accurate.

Antique Dealer: *"A solid gold statue of a dragon. I have heard that it drifts in and out of Kaiin's history, from one city to the next. It is also said that one person will profit from it, another will be cursed, and many have their fortunes changed. As a dealer in curios I would try to sell such a thing as quickly as possible."*

Criminal with Refined Tastes: *"My great uncle once mentioned this thing. He said in the story he read the master thief who saw it claimed that it was the most beautiful creation he had ever seen, and that he was driven to possess it at any cost. Some say that he killed both of his partners when they could not agree who would keep it."*

Pedant of Magical Lore: *"Various worthies have owned, or claimed to have owned, this statuette, but it has been lost for centuries, thought to have been buried somewhere in the Old Town. Originally it was apparently recovered from the ruins of the manse of Phandaal himself. Its properties are unknown with any certainty, but apparently include the ability to bestow great fortune, to assist with magical potency, and perhaps even to grant wishes. It may possibly be some kind of embodied sandestin or other daibak."*

The Back-Up Lie

If accused of chicanery, the conspirators have already devised a back-up plan. Nerijs will 'admit' that after his statuettes were stolen, Korwhis visited various curio shops to try and trace the items without revealing his interest to be more than casual. One aging shop-owner (Oodle Sump of Sump's Antiquities, they say if asked) knew something of the legend of the Kaiinese Drakeling - which he told to Korwhis. Thus, the conspirators explain that the true reason why they are going to such efforts to regain the statuettes is in case one of them is the actual Kaiinese Drakeling. Mind you, they will play down the fate-twisting properties of the object they seek (presuming the PCs are not privy to the legends - which they probably won't be), saying merely that the statuette is supposed to bring good luck - something that all of the conspirators sorely needs.

Presently they have no idea, they say, how to access such powers, but it is essential that they recover the true statuette before anyone else realizes its possible potent properties. From research that Korwhis has done since talking to Sump (so the conspirators say) apparently the Drakeling has to be activated in some way before its properties become apparent. Also, one reference claimed that for some reason the item is enchanted so that normal spells to detect magic fail to register it. [NB: If the PCs try and trace Oodle Sump, they will find that he is away in Azenomei, holidaying with his daughter - which is why the conspirators used his name in this subterfuge. His premises are temporarily in the hands of his nephew Grubshank, and are small, shoddy and containing no objects of real value. This may seem odd, since Sump was - according to the conspirators - a well-educated man, nonetheless, downplay responses to any PC suspicions, since there is no trail that can be followed at this time.]

Note that the casual information available to the PCs does not reveal the full mythic potential of the Drakeling. This is purposeful, as such a revelation might realistically undermine their determination to succeed. As it is, if the PCs are smart enough to uncover any facts about the Drakeling and to confront the conspirators, they move into a far better bargaining position. The conspirators will allow themselves to be bargained into granting the suite of rooms for free, and the conspirators will agree to make all of their cantraps available again, so that each PC can attempt to learn another one of them. These are major concessions, and the conspirators will go no higher.

GM Notes: Running the Following Scenes

Making Plans: As mentioned elsewhere, much of the following information must be learned through PC actions within the game. (Seeking out sources of information.) Only some parts of the general knowledge might be told to the PCs by one of the conspirators. This varies from Scene to Scene; for instance, Nerijs might know quite a lot about the details of Hemilov's salons, but virtually nothing about the Undercity. Also, the PCs are free to make plans outside the scope of what is written. For instance, they might insist that Zank be standing by a block away at pre-arranged points in any city scene - with an escape vehicle. The conspirators won't offer this, and may initially resist requests for such involvement. Nonetheless, it makes good sense, and so they might (Ψ PERSUASION) eventually agree.

Improvising the Action: Though fairly detailed, much of what follows must by its very nature be role-played off the cuff, dependent on the actions and preferences - and successes or failures - of the PCs. This is intentional, since the chaotic nature of Cugel-Level DERPG can be a resource to be taken advantage of. (Or in other words, it's heaps of fun to give the PCs a lot of leeway and watch them form plans and try to make them work.) The material has been enhanced to cover the contingencies that took place during the



playtest, but the PCs in your campaign might have very different aptitudes and techniques than the rogues I had to deal with. Thus, know your stuff, have some ideas up your sleeve, and be prepared to improvise like crazy. For instance, if they do end up escaping in a cart or cab driven by Zank, inevitably some kind of chase will occur at least once – whether with vigils on foot or mounted, dependent on what will be the most fun.

Enhancing the City Experience: Since this scenario is strongly episodic, make pains to elaborate the linkage sections and take full advantage of any incidental opportunities for role-playing. At all costs, avoid the players experiencing the adventure as being shunted from one scene to another. At the very least, as the PCs travel about the city, describe its nuances in detail. If you have the Kaiin Book, refer to that for incidental detail of the districts. If not, make it up. The important thing is to make the city come alive in your descriptions. Whether it be the hustle and bustle of the day, or the sinister shadows and scurrying characters of the night, use this. Do not pass over the scenes from section to section with merely a phrase of explanation: Kaiin is huge and the PCs/Players need to feel that their activities take place amidst its immense complexities.

Fate Takes a Hand: The five drakelings, as will be more fully described later, are a complete unit. All are parts of the genuine item, but none are genuine without the others. Nonetheless, all are powerful. GMs can optionally decide that anyone carrying a Drakeling benefits from increased luck whenever attempting tasks the results of which affect their safety or health, or directly affect the chance's of the mission's success. The easiest way to run this without arousing immediate Player notice is to apply a levy (or even penalty) of 1 to any rolls that resist the PC's intent. On uncontested rolls apply a boon of 1 to the PC's attempt. Players will of course notice this, but resist any urge's to explain why it is happening. Realistically, a PC is unlikely to notice this effect unless unusual good luck results. However, after say 4 or 5 such interventions if a Player is becoming restless you can allow the PC to become suspicious that he/she seems somehow to be slightly luckier/more agile etc than usual. If this turn of events is mentioned to the conspirators, they will suspect that the correct Drakeling has been found. Nonetheless, in order to keep all bases covered they will not relate any further information to the PCs, and will allow the missions to continue as planned. However, they will most definitely not let such a statue out of the house, even if PCs say that its magic will aid the mission. Nerijs will only allow this if two statues show this property – upon which time he will (correctly) presume that the statues are somehow linked, and that any advantage that assists him obtaining all of them will be a risk worth taking.

Scene 3: The Temple of Dijekom

"Fladgna, Priestess of Canal Town's repulsive Bowellers bought several valuable ornaments for the Temple of Dijekom. These relics are displayed near the shrine, as examples of the repulsive decadence that her flock so assiduously avoids. To me this logic seems strange, but then the Bowellers are such odd people - who knows how they think."

GM Notes: The evening of the first day the PCs spend in the OP Hotel is the same day that the Bowellers have their main weekly service, during which what might laughingly be referred to as their 'security' is the most lax. Thus, the PCs can try and infiltrate the service, or they can wait until after the service and sneak in with one of the Boweller squads returning to the mass of snoring followers in the temple yard in the early hours. The regular services are held at sunrise, so the PCs will need to be done and away well before then – since the temple staff get up early to prepare. A benefit of being involved in the main service is that it is the only time when a mass of worshippers is allowed to pack out the shrine room itself. (Normal services are held in the courtyard.)

General Knowledge

The free sample chapter of the *Kaiin Players' Guide* is 'Canal Town', and is available for download at:

www.pelgrane.com/kaiin.htm. *The Bowellers* are described on p26&28, *Fladgna* on p31, and the *Temple of Dijekom* on p37. It is crucial to note also that right-minded folk of Kaiin believe that whilst the Bowellers perform an important civic service, their religion is a sham clearly designed at some point in the past to create and control an underclass of sewage-disposal operatives. (Not that anyone would extol this point of view to a Boweller.) Although the Bowellers have many tales, Dijekom has never been known to manifest or perform miracles or smite down enemies of his faith. Neither has anyone ever been known to try and infiltrate the religion – as presumably never before has there been any reason to. Nonetheless, it is likely that mundane guards stand watch over any temple valuables, and these will need to be avoided or dealt with. Though they portray themselves as a religious sect, the average member is of very low intelligence and thus there are no rotating passwords, commonly quoted religious texts, or other cultish complexities to master.

Possible Plans

a) The Bowellers patrol the streets at night; all wear hooded cloaks deeply stained with ordure. They speak little whilst on duty, merely using shovels to collect the discarded contents of chamber pots in their sacks and buckets. It might be possible to join a



group and then infiltrate the temple. (Or alternatively to find a group of the same number as the PCs, disable and restrain them, and steal their clothing and equipment.) Once in the temple when the mass of worshippers are asleep one could sneak into the shrine room and obtain the Drakeling.

b) Across the street from the temple is The Howling Saint Tavern (KPG: p34). Here Bowellers drink non-alcoholic beverages and rant proudly about their acts of self-abnegation. Perhaps one or more could be carefully questioned within the tavern – or detained on their way in or out of the tavern, taken apart and interrogated at leisure.

c) From time to time the Bowellers hold worship services. Being so covered in muck as they are, it would be easy to infiltrate their ceremony to either observe the premises in order to spot the statuette, or to also launch an attempted burglary under cover of the heaving throng of worshippers.

d) A major distraction might be useful, with thieves on the inside and accomplices outside. Perhaps setting fire to the temple or to the Howling Saint? Then the statuette could be snatched up in the ensuing confusion.

Other Details

a) **The Vlack** (KPG: p32) roams Canal Town. During the *Exasperating Cadaver* adventure his attentions were rudely thwarted, and he may remember those who treated him so badly. Fortunately (see map on p35 of the Canal Town chapter) the temple is close to the East Threek rather than deep in Canal Town. Unfortunately, Canal Town is a maze of alleys and bridges that it is easy to become lost amongst.

b) **Disease** - The only suspected magical property that Dijekom bestows on the Bowellers is partial immunity to disease, since – despite their filthy occupation – they seem only as sick and weakly as normal residents of Canal Town. However, perhaps the folk of Canal Town have merely become resistant to filth since they live in - or next to - it every day. After all, Bowellers do occasionally fall down dead of various diseases. In any case, Korwhis possesses the spell 'Edan's Thaumaturgic Poultice', and will use this on anyone who risks disease.

Challenges

Getting In - The PCs at some point must try to steal the statuette from the altar inside the temple. The GM should construct a sketch of the temple compound with the outbuildings round its edges and temple annex at the back. It is all single-story¹⁵, so that makes things easier. When entering the complex no identification is checked – so long as those entering act and look like long-time Bowellers. Not all of the Bowellers know each other, and so no great problem, exists here. However, many worshippers are yet to throw off the full trappings of their former lives, and so merely look like regular folk who are not taking good care of themselves. Such folk are examined with more care when they enter the premises, and occasionally may be questioned and asked who can vouch for their membership. Nonetheless, nobody has attempted to rob the premises before so no overriding sense of paranoia dictates the behavior of the Deacons (senior security officers). Fladgna's recent acquisition of ostentatious wealth is a new and unexpected event, and nobody has as yet considered the full security implications. (Even Fladgna herself is operating under the misconceived idea that no-one would dare defy Dijekom.)

If the PCs pose as Bowellers and attempt to sleep in the compound, they must wait until the majority of worshippers are asleep and then sneak into the shrine room. Sensibly they will make sure that where they sleep in the compound is close to the shrine doors. These doors are heavy and creak abysmally. Fortunately there is a small window up on the roof, but this will require them to climb to the roof. It also presents another option – that one or more PCs can creep across the roof at night. This sounds simple, except the Bowellers regularly throw 'slops' onto the roof, thus the tiles are covered in gooey slime, making traversing the roof very difficult (Ψ ATHLETICS-1). In any event, avoiding the few patrolling guards is the greatest difficulty prior to getting inside.

The Shrine - Inside the shrine room there are crude wooden benches lined up facing a life-size stone statue of a spectral man in a tattered cloak and hood, leaning and reaching forward – with mouth open in some kind of scream. Directly before this statue is an altar carved from a single block of stone and decorated with crude and unrecognizable sigils hacked into it. During the service it will be impossible to obtain the items within full and plain view of the mass of worshippers. Outside of service time, two burly followers maintain vigil, operating in teams relieved every three hours. Since there have been no previous attempts at theft these gentlemen generally slumber upright on the benches. (Such is contrary to Fladgna's instructions to remain alert at all time.)

¹⁵ This description is knowingly at odds with the 'remodeled tenement' described in KPG.



Anyone touching the statue or altar risks suffering an advanced version of the curse (see below). The GM makes a single roll for them with Magic (presuming the PC has a Magic rating). An IS resists the enhanced effect, but the regular curse still takes effect. If the enhanced curse takes effect, the mechanical result is a penalty (rather than levy) of 1, and the First Retrotronic cannot remove this version. However, this effect is not immediately obvious, so the GM will need to note who is so afflicted - and inform the Players when the action is over. Anyone who does resist feels a momentary feeling of unease and foreboding.

The Altar - The niche behind the altar (that holds the ornaments when Fladgna is not displaying them) is the primary protection for these items, and the main reason why Fladgna's other security is lax. It is not only secret and the door difficult to identify (Ψ PERCEPTION), but the catch is hard to find (Ψ QUICK FINGERS) and operate. Furthermore, if the catch is not operated in exactly the right way (IS) a trap is activated as the door opens, and tiny holes around all sides of the top of the altar spray foul-smelling oily liquid in a wide fan around the entire altar. This goo covers skin and clothes in a thin noxious film that is hideously nauseous to the olfactory senses. Paradoxically the person kneeling to try and open the door will be the best protected, and might be able to merely shuck their cloak and hat to be free of this taint.

The stench will cause any sleeping guards to stir and mutter and show signs of waking, and in a minute or so will even spread to the courtyard and attract any Deacons that are awake. In a few minutes more it will begin to rouse the closest slumberers as well. The stench cannot be removed from clothes (except magical ones, from which it fades within a few days) which will have to be burned. It lingers in hair and on skin for several days even with washing vigorously in regular scented baths, or for a fortnight if such extreme cleansing activities are not pursued. Initially it applies a penalty of 2 to all Persuasions (except Intimidating) and to Etiquette and Seduction rolls, and is simply likely to cause people to retch and hurry away. After it starts to fade reduce this penalty to 1, then to a levy of 1. Even close friends (and fellow PCs) might be required to take a Wherewithal check merely to remain in proximity to a tainted person.

Since stinking abominably will detract from a PC's ability to act in future scenes, we have to insert some means of removing this taint with relative ease. The simplest way is to declare that according to the elementals that power 'Edan's Thaumaturgic Poultrice' this virulence registers as a disease. Therefore Korwhis can use this spell to cleanse a single person. After that he will need an hour or so to re-encompass it before doing the next person. Again, he will not initially be aware that this spell can help, since 'stench' does not automatically equate with a wound or a disease. Thus preferably the PCs will have to ask him to give the spell a try. (Or, of course they may simply avail themselves of this spell just in case they caught anything at the temple - and find to their delight and relief that the stench is also eradicated.)

Fladgna (KPG: p31) - It is in fact no coincidence that Fladgna put the statuette here in the shrine room. Whilst she knows little magic, she does know enough to have scanned the Drakeling for magic and not found any. Therefore, she has presumed it is not the real Drakeling. (Yes, she is one of the few people in Kaiin who has heard of the legend.) However, eager to support the fortunes of her followers in these difficult times, she has placed the statuette in the shrine room 'just in case' it has any properties that encourage the blessings of the fates. She has covered this with the explanation that a temporary display of ostentatious wealth will serve as a reminder of the evils as such things to her followers. When the statuette is stolen, she will marshal the most intelligent (and most presentable) of her followers to work out what has happened, and to try and track down the statuette. She does this because she now suspects that perhaps it was the real Drakeling after all, and also because she feels foolish and offended that someone has raided her temple. Fladgna leads the main service, talking in eloquent tones about the need to atone for the arrogance of arrogance of the previous generations - and how such actions will prolong the life of the sun. Visitors will need to force their way (Ψ ATHLETICS) to be amongst the Bowellers that are actually present in the shrine during the service (rather than the larger group who must make do with packing the end of the courtyard against the shrine doors). Those who succeed will see Fladgna pick up (during the service) various precious ornaments from some kind of cavity behind the crude altar (and in front of the sinister statue of Dijekom) and place them on the altar's top. She then holds these up one by one - as she derides ownership, ostentation and pride. Observers will notice that although the Drakeling is one of those placed on the altar top, it is the only one that she doesn't actually pick up as an illustration.

The Curse - Anyone who actually enters the premises of the temple of Dijekom during a raid in which the statuette is taken, suffers a curse. (Those who stay outside do not.) It is a relatively minor affair, in that from now on until the curse is removed, anything they wear will look somewhat shabby and grubby. Cantraps are insufficiently powerful to work against this, but certain spells may temporarily annul the effect if the GM so desires. Mechanically the curse applies a levy of 1 to all rolls where appearance matters - Persuade (Eloquent/Charming), Etiquette, Imposture (unless taking the appearance of a grubby person), and Seduction (unless attempting to influence a person of the lowest orders). It may take some time for the PCs to notice this,



but only hours – not days. The GM is advised to prominently note down who is affected. Note that this disadvantage is not sufficient to have them ostracized in polite society, but rather just puts an unfortunate negative sheen upon them. Nerijs and the others will try to pretend they can't notice anything wrong, but when forcefully convinced will agree that indeed it is probably a result of the Dijekom raid and that therefore they are partly responsible for getting the curse lifted. A simple application of 'Phandaal's Repudiation of Curses' (or even the First Retrotropic) will do the job. Fortunately Korwhis has the latter, though initially he will not imagine it will work in this case. However, it is the simplest solution (rather than seeking out and paying another magician trustworthy enough to keep quiet) so he will eventually give it a try – and be happily surprised when it works. The issue then is that it takes him a couple of hours to re-encompass the spell, so the order in which the PCs are de-cursed might be a matter for heated debate (amongst the PCs). Note (as mentioned above) that anyone who touched the altar or statue (and did not resist with their Magic rating) is affected by a more stringent curse and greater resources will need to be used to combat it.

Escape Clauses

- 1) Should any PCs be caught, Fladgna will have them thrashed until they reveal what they were doing. It is possible that PCs might be rescued or talk their way out of it, but if not then the only way to escape being stunned and thrown into a canal might be to tell the truth. If so, Fladgna will make them swear to her service, and to deliver the true Drakeling to her once it has been found and identified. If they protest that they may never have access to it, then Fladgna will make them swear on Dijekom that they will instead find out where it is, and how it is protected, so that she can steal it. They will also be made to swear that they won't tell anyone. If appropriate, Fladgna has the spell 'Enchantment of the Stilled Tongue' (IT: p89). Once any such agreement is made, the clever Fladgna will engineer some realistic way for her new followers to 'escape'. Alternatively, since the Fates are involved, some unusual way for them to escape might present itself – possibly involving The Vlark.
- 2) The Vlark must return to the lives of the PCs; he is far too amusing a character not to. Perhaps he is lurking around outside the temple? If the PCs then emerge on the run, pursued by Boweller guards, then a chase by The Vlark might be just what they need to cause a commotion to cover their escape. If one of the PCs is caught, by The Vlark then that would be very unfortunate. Hopefully they can talk their way out of it. Again, since the Fates are involved, some unlikely event such as a runaway barrel of beer knocking The Vlark into a canal might save the day. Or, some crazed would-be hero whose brother/son/friend was recently eaten by The Vlark charges from a side-street and impales The Vlark on an iron-tipped erb spear – pinning the creature to a wooden door. Of course, The Vlark cannot be killed in such mundane ways, and though oozing gore will nonetheless claw its way along the spear until it reaches the unfortunate challenger. If PCs stay around to watch - or even try to assist this avenger slay The Vlark - The Vlark's blubbery form resists damage with amazing resilience. Additionally he does not seem to feel much pain, and also slowly regenerates. "Cease your frantic slashing at once. My favorite overcoat is becoming unacceptably stained and rent!"
- 3) Korwhis in disguise – See next Scene for details. Korwhis will only appear here to aid the PCs with his spells if absolutely no other game-realistic option is available¹⁶.

GM Notes for Scene 4: In the following scene, the conspirators might suggest that the PCs disguising themselves as students would be a good idea. Or perhaps one of the PCs will think of this during planning. Students wear all manner of types of clothing dependent on their level of wealth. Nonetheless, the bulk of them preen themselves like dandies despite both glaring lack of taste and certain wear and tear discernible in their costumes. They also carry themselves with a recognizable reckless arrogance. Rummaging through the panniers in any of several general stores in the Scholasticarium will net oneself suitable clothing. Student-like behavior is easy to generally emulate, though Imposture rolls might be required for any specific interactions. This is the only Scene where any conspirator can be inveigled to possibly come out and assist. Korwhis visits the library with reasonable regularity and occasionally has social interactions with other magicians in the district – so his presence here would not be out of the ordinary. He will not suggest supporting them in this Scene, but might be convinced to. The magical protections around Stinobric's office door are the main reason why this scenario incorporates the PCs' being able to learn the 'Sense Magic' cantrap.

¹⁶ With this and all other 'Escape Options' it goes almost [the exception being this footnote] without saying that the GM needs to take great pains to make it appear as if the events described are a fluid part of the adventure experience. (Rather than some hastily contrived GM plot device.)



Scene 4: Volune Stinobric's Office

"Volune Stinobric, lecturer in erotic studies at Kaiin's Scholasticarium, now uses one of my beloved ornaments as a paperweight on his desk. Oh the ignominy!"

General Knowledge

The Scholasticarium District – *"A loud, boisterous place where students from Almerly and beyond regularly rampage. Burly enforcers called 'Maugifiers' strut pugnaciously across the cobblestones, swinging their dannysticks. Not everyone dwelling here is a scholar, though merchants and other folk of middling means tend to concentrate their dwellings alongside the marketplace or near the Pannone Gate."* (Adapted from KPG: p101)

Volune Stinobric – Volune was appointed as lecturer in Erotic Studies as the result of an ill-advised casual wager with Inferator Perrin. He possesses an odd sense of humor, but not one that centers on the misfortunes of others. He apparently knows a few cantraps, but has never shown knowledge of spells. Due to his previous travels he has a worldly demeanor and a self-assurance that some find obnoxious, but is generally a well-mannered fellow. However, should he find thieves absconding with his property, he will probably not hesitate to bring the full force of the law down upon them, nor to summon true magicians of his acquaintance to aid him.

The Scholasticarium Building (KPG: p121) – *"A four-story structure of pale limestone, surrounded by buttresses and topped by abandoned battlements occasionally decorated with gargoyles. Facilities include four great lecture halls, offices for the Master of Masters and his staff, and a vast foyer where magical curiosities are displayed in adamantine cases."* (Adapted from KPG: p121)

The Institute Building – *"A domed five-story hexagonal brick structure of relatively recent construction. The interior is a crowded warren of suites and offices, where Institute fellows study and tutor individual students or small groups during the day. The poorer or thriffter lecturers live in their suites. Although cooking here is technically forbidden, the smell of boiled cabbage is a constant characteristic."* (Adapted from KPG: pp121/2)

The PCs will not necessarily need to enter this place, but may do so in order to observe or meet with Stinobric.

Possible Plans

- It may be possible to simply buy the statuette from Volune (since he does not know the legend - and bought the statuette merely on impulse). However, it is unlikely the PCs will attempt this, and unless they did so with extreme cunning he might sense some ulterior motive.
- Posing as students interested in enrolling seems the most likely option, at least to scout the premises. (Many such folk visit Volune – at the least hoping for a glimpse of the erotic artworks adorning the walls of his room.) By feigning interest in the various objects and artwork in his office the clever PC might even ask specific questions about the Drakeling – although this would only be safe if they are in a reasonable disguise – since after the theft such questions might be remembered.
- The PCs might choose to investigate the office during the first day, before they burgle the Temple of Dijekom. Then, when they rob the office the next night, many other visitors will have been in and out to see Volune – thus reducing any suspicion that might fall on them.
- Someone might think to actually leave evidence (or even a mock ransom note) that points to the theft being a student prank, or even a riddle that will shortly be revealed. Anything that delays Volune's perception that a simple theft has taken place is a good idea.
- Posing with extreme cunning and conviction as cleaners or even academics might convince the porters to allow access to Volune's office. However, most porters know the staff well, so a careful plan would be timed to take place when a junior porter was on duty.

Other Details

- Maugifiers** (KPG: pp107 & 115) patrol the Scholasticarium District and Building.
- Robbing the Scholasticarium** - One might think that attempting theft from an office in the Scholasticarium would be tantamount to suicide. Not so, for rivalries are so intense that no grand body of mutually supportive magicians works here. Alliances are small and Stinobric is not entrenched with any of them – though he is friendly with Grashpotel. Korwhis has not been to the Scholasticarium Building to check things out, in case he is recognized, though he knows Volune by sight.
- Gargoyles** - Some of the gargoyles on the Scholasticarium Building are animate and sentient (as the result of students testing their capabilities). However, their intelligence is limited. Thus whilst initially they may appear as threatening lurkers, it might be possible to convince one or more of them to assist with the theft.
- Student Creations** – Students and inept lectures alike occasionally create vat-creatures that survive and escape from their clutches. (Usually as the result of forgetting to be present when the brewing process was completed.) A variety of creatures



suggest themselves that might be encountered at night in (or on) the Scholasticarium Building. Those who have read/played/run the *Exasperating Cadaver* may recall the multi-legged monstrosity that guest-starred. Other options include slobbery slime creatures, mischievous imps, floating clouds of negative energy that try to suck one's life force, and a golem-like limbering hunch-back that emerges nightly from his daytime hiding place in search of food.

Challenges

a) **The Office Door** - Volune has minor magical protections around his office door, and the Sense Magic cantrap reveals with any success that a number of spells are focussed on the doorjamb. Even with an EF it is clear that magic is present. (Although cantraps can deliver no other details.) Thus to get in one must either (unlikely) break through the wall or negotiate the narrow ledge from the window at the end of the corridor to the office window. If the PCs are so dumb as to try to break open the door, the warding spells attached are a half-dozen applications of the 'Curse of Unwitting Merriment' (IT: p87). The GM decides how many points back each one, according to their desire to wreak mayhem upon the party. If only one or two people are laughing raucously, perhaps they can be stunned and dragged into the office. However, the night porters have been briefed to instantly summon the Maugifiers should they hear extended uncontrollable mirth coming from anywhere near Volune's rooms. Most nights before he leaves, Volune activates a charm that attaches this magic even to unauthorized access of a more regular type. That is to say even using a stolen key or picking the lock activates these spells – unless the GM rolls 6 on a single D6 (in which case Volune forgot).

b) **Inside the Office** - The drakeling is perfectly obvious, sitting on a pile of papers. Volune merely liked the look of it, and remembers once hearing something about a drakeling statuette that was supposedly magical. His cantraps have not revealed this one to be magic, though he does plan soon to have a more competent magician double-check it for him. On the walls are various erotic carvings and woodcuts, plus on some surfaces are fertility symbols and small eastern figurines engaged in acts of love-making. Inside a glass-fronted cupboard are a number of books with titles ranging from: 'Boudoir Etiquette' to 'Sousanese Islander Mating Rituals'. Various defensive cantraps exist around the office, attached to storage cabinets and the like. If PCs go meddling, the GM will need to invent these on the spot – as well as the contents of the cabinets. Likely much are lecture notes, letters to friends, and a few souvenirs of previous adventures. Only a few interesting things are also standing about the office in the open. These are:

- A solid glass globe the size of a croquet ball. Whenever touched this lights up and displays beautiful scenes of exquisitely beautiful folk walking in delightful gardens. If touched again the people begin to engage in vigorous physical activities¹⁷. If touched a third time it once again goes dark. If left untouched for five minutes it also goes dark. Anyone who makes a DF with Resist Rakishness wants to possess this item. Other PCs may feel the need to convince them (Ψ PERSUASION) that this is not a good idea – since the more things that are stolen the more annoyed Stinobric is likely to be.
- An invisible assistant of limited intelligence. PCs may bump into this character, and he/it feels something like a regular human, but curiously indistinct if they try and identify any features by touch (as if draped in a thick blanket). It cannot talk, but follows them around the office, and tries to hold the door closed if they wish to leave that way.
- A small book of great age, entitled: 'Nymphs and their Uses'
- A small copper vase with a screw-top lid. It contains a thick oily resin that is beautifully scented. (Massage cream.)
- A large book with an artful erotic silhouette on the cover, and sealed with an ornate copper clasp. If opened, the pages are blank, but a voice begins to read out a tasteful erotic story whilst this simultaneously appears on the pages. Like the glass globe, this is also highly desirable to anyone achieving a DF with Resist Rakishness.
- Hanging behind the door is a brown three-tiered hat and an ordinary gray cloak. The hat has no special properties, however, anyone who puts it on is able to see clearly in the dark (in monotone grays).
- A stack of thirteen love poems on parchment, each of which is reasonably tasteful. (Assignments waiting to be marked.)
- A blank parchment with a pretty silvered border. When held in the right hand it instantly displays the text of a fine love poem.
- GMs are advised to also invent several further interesting things.

c) **Leaving the Office** – Another trap is on the door for those leaving whilst carrying any object taken without permission. This spell first of all initiates a disembodied voice to speak out: *"It appears you have taken something belonging to the owner of this office. Please replace it immediately."* If the person immediately goes back into the room and replaces the object more or less where it was taken from no further effect occurs. If not, the person becomes charged with static electricity. Their hair stands on end, clothing pushes gently away from their body, and any conductive metal items they touch shock them painfully. This effect lasts

¹⁷ GM decides how much detail to go into, according to the nature, age and maturity of their players.



for 10 minutes after the item is put back (if it is then replaced), or for a full three hours if the item is retained. (Or it can be dispelled by the First Retrotropic.) NB: The original protective spells (see 'a' above) also apply if the party enters by the window but leaves by the door without successfully by-passing the doorjamb trap.

Escape Clauses

1) **Crow Night** (KPG: p124) – Perhaps in your version of Kaiin (like mine) Crow Night has no fixed date and can happen at any time during a certain season – as organized at a whim by the heads of the Student Sodality (KPG: p114). Thus, high-ranking lecturers will no doubt have arranged to receive advanced warning – which sticks to the spirit of the official description. If the PCs are forced to flee Volune, or cornered by him, the full force of Crow Night can be brought to bear – this involves a large group (say 15 or so) masked and staff-wielding students racing round a corner and belaboring the poor fellow with rattan canes. If the Maugifiers are the ones who have the PCs at a disadvantage, a lecturer runs frantically past them, closely pursued by masked and staff-wielding students – who barrel into the Maugifiers and take the opportunity to strike them a few hearty blows. Likely the PCs will be mistaken for fellow students and largely left unscathed.

2) **Korwhis in Disguise** – If the PCs convince Korwhis to come along, he will agree to do so only if he can follow them discreetly. He will also assume a disguise, using a larger false beard and a different set of robes. If they do not convince him to do so, he may shadow them in any case, popping up at the last second with magic to aid in their escape. (Bear in mind that Korwhis puts his own safety first, and will not wish to make any magic here unless absolutely necessary.) Options:

Discommoding Dazzle cantrap – momentarily blinds and distracts a person, or a small group (charms do not protect)

Lorgan's Instant Flame cantrap – starts a fire as a distraction

Edan's Thaumaturgic Poultice (DERPG: p106) – if a PC is somehow wounded

Illusion of Vile Arthropods (DERPG: p107) – a major distraction if the PCs are being pursued

Panguine's Loyal Porter (DERPG: p108) – can hold a door in place, or drop heavy objects to block the way (cannot pick up a Maugifier because of the charms they have, but can pick up or hold other people – resistance is possible)

Archemand's Unlikely Self-Restraint (IT: p84) – causes the target's clothes to temporarily restrain them (not working on Maugifiers)

Enchantment of the Stilled Tongue (IT: p89) – prevents the target from ever revealing a specific piece of information

First Retrotropic (IT: p90) – reverts a single object/being back to the form it was before a magical alteration

Obstructive Ether (IT: p96) – won't affect Maugifiers when cast, but can block the way so they are affected when they enter the area

Turjan's Thunderclap (IT: p105) – doesn't affect Maugifiers

NB: The Maugifiers have charms to protect them from cantraps and minor spells. Korwhis knows this, so will only act indirectly against them. Where it is noted that charms do not protect, this is to clarify that the magic in question is not a direct attack.

Scene 5: The Odkin Prospect Salon

"Lady Hemilovi owns another of the houses in Odkin Prospect. Like myself she is without regular income, but she maintains a lavish lifestyle through gifts and donations from those who wish to attend her regular exclusive soirees."

GM Notes: The evening of the second day that the PCs move into the OP Hotel Lady Hemilovi is holding one of her larger irregular salons. By hook or by crook the PCs must get into this event. (Or else the timing of the entire mission will be compromised.) The earliest another large salon will take place is in three weeks. Nerijs was one of the Prospect residents invited six days ago to a meeting at the salon to discuss issues of security in the Prospect. The idea was to try and influence Nerijs to take decisive actions against his tenants. Such meetings happen a few times every year, usually in Hemilovi's manse, since she is the local 'busybody' as well as salon keeper. Since she is proud of her wealth, she displays her current favorite gifts ostentatiously, and Nerijs was in turn, startled, amazed, and gratified to notice one of the drakelings amongst them.

General Knowledge

Odkin Prospect: This wealthy housing district is dealt with more extensively in the *Players Guide to Kaiin* (pp74-85) and described in overview in the free scenario the *Exasperating Cadaver* (pp28/29 & 34/35).

Lady Hemilovi (KPG: pp79/80): Hemilovi, like Nerijs, is short on funds. She, however, made a success of her move more than a decade ago to replenish her wealth. She did this by beginning to hold regular social salons, with sizes varying from the regular intimate number of between one and two dozen distinguished guests to the irregular grand jamborees of two score or more. Though nobody pays for the privilege of attendance, many wealthy folk continually send gifts to her in order to be ascribed a place on the guest lists. A few of these gifts she keeps (and the number has slowly increased so that now many fine objects are in her house), but most she sells on within a short while to collect sufficient ready wealth to pay for the upkeep or herself, the building, and her maiden aunts.



Possible Plans

Getting an Invitation from Hemilovi – Two ways are known to secure an invitation from Hemilovi herself. If she knows you already, then bestow upon her a lavish gift and sing her praises; and continue this practice until it bears fruit. You must be either of good social standing or extremely vibrant and interesting to expect this to work. If she does not know you, then a similar rule applies. However, if you are new to town and extremely vibrant and interesting, then the gift need not be overlavish - as she welcomes exciting newcomers, especially to the larger gatherings. The PCs may choose to portray themselves as persons of interest and vibrancy, and contrive an introduction for themselves.

Accompanying Someone Else – Flolad, son of Flolad (KPG: p78), has a standing invitation and is allowed to bring 2 or 3 guests to the larger gatherings. However it is extremely unlikely this information will be of direct use here. A very few others enjoy this privilege and are all equally as unlikely to take the PCs along under normal circumstances. Possibly the PCs might think to Impersonate one of these nobles (and his/her entourage) but at time of writing I can't think of how this could be convincingly done.

Posing as Servants – On Salon Days both large and small, extra staff are hired to collect hats and coats, carry around plates of canapés, dispense drinks, and prepare food in the kitchen. However, on small salon days few such persons are in place, and mingling with them would be difficult. Fortunately on the evenings of the larger gatherings close on a score of extra staff are in place, and 3 or 4 interlopers might easily hide amongst them. The most useful to emulate would be either the waitresses serving food platters, or the underbutlers dispensing drinks. Security are also present – two huge Gattanesse warriors (KPG: p79) on regular salon days, and the number increased to five bulky individuals for the larger gatherings. These are not too bright, and will let in anyone with an invitation, or anyone who appears to clearly be (Ψ IMPOSTURE) a servant on duty, without more than cursory questioning. If one of the PCs is a strapping lad (Attack: Strength), he might pretend (Ψ IMPOSTURE) to be an officer checking security arrangements or something similar. Since servants each have a pass allowing them entry, then one of these must be obtained and copied. (NB: Korwhis knows ritual magic that replicates documents temporarily, and is capable of replicating a servant pass – since these are produced by their employer¹⁸. However, Hemilovi's guest invitations are magically protected against duplication – and such is a well-known fact.) Alternatively, the PCs might approach the hiring company directly and bribe (Ψ PERSUASION) or threaten the manager into employing them at the salon. Bear in mind that he is wealthy and commands a number of obscenely well-muscled private watchmen.

Posing as Entertainment – Hired for the evening have been the singing trio – the 'Sousanese Songbirds' from Val Ombrio, who arrived in Kaiin only last week and are soon to begin a theatrical residence in the city. They wear elaborate make-up and fine wigs for their performances, and are also not personally well-known in Kaiin. The GM adjusts the gender of any of the 'songbirds' to suit the PC party, and it is also likely that they will have one or two wardrobe assistants and/or porters with them. The main problem here is that the actual Songbirds (who in actuality do not have any assistants) must be prevented from arriving and exposing the pretence. They will travel from their lodgings in one of the more decent housing enclaves on the eastern edge of the East Threek in a cassec-drawn (KPG: p70) covered sedan with a courtesy driver. This sedan will come from a nearby office of conveyances within a block or two of their lodging.

Other Details

The House Layout – Off the main hall to the left is the drawing room, full of sumptuous chairs and divans. Here the curios (including the Drakeling) are displayed in a glass case. Off the main hall to the right is the dining room, where refreshments are continually served throughout the evening. Behind the dining room, reached through a set of wooden sliding doors that no stand open is the rear salon, where recitals are heard. Off the rear salon is a corridor that leads to the kitchens and – via a shorter branch corridor – to the washrooms. Members of security staff stand watch anywhere that guests might wander into the house at large. Two also patrol the premises randomly.

Party Atmosphere – This gathering reflects nothing more than the Edwardian Court. Friendship and admiration is often feigned, laughter false, and toadying and fawning so thick in the air that you could almost carve of pieces and serve them on a platter.

Lady Hemilovi – Unless the PCs are servants, she will want to talk to them at some point – in order to gauge their interest-value for possible future return invitations. The primary ability to impress her with is either Etiquette or Pedantry, although the PCs must of course explain what they are doing/talking about – rather than simply saying: "I impress her with my Etiquette".

¹⁸ Archanbrink's 'Retainer's of Quality' on Golden Walk.



Secondary possibilities are: Seduction, Persuade (Charming or Eloquent), Imposture, or possibly even Scuttlebutt (for the telling of a saucy bit of gossip). (Note that the guest list is always private, known only to Lady Hemilovi until a few days before, and guests are asked never to reveal their invitational status until the day.)

Guests that the PCs might/probably will interact with:

Flolad son of Flolad (KPG: p78) – The tall and elegant patriarch of Kaiin's oldest, wealthiest and most respected family. Permanently protected from magic of all kinds, cunning and alert. Flolad leaves early.

Spolizista (KPG: p82) – A rake about town, disowned son of Yakethese the merchant grandee, and resident in Flolad's Guest House. Spolizista becomes drunk and lecherous, and may attempt to 'woo' a female PC, or to pick a fight with a male one.

Schi-Gii (KPG: p56) – Jovial head of Merchants Association.

Twegg (KPG: p58) – Kaiin's most prominent dealer in exotic livestock. If the PCs have taken part in the 'Day of the Quelo' then he may 'recall them from somewhere'. However, he is not a great one for names and faces - especially if the PCs are in any sort of disguise. Though, if it amuses, perhaps he may recognize them at the height of the action and add to the confusion.

Atmon Ripedueccio (KPG: p94) – Business owner at Golden Walk, purveyor of garments of exotic fabrics

Sir Elrim Joont of Old Romarth – A moneyed noble of the north. Staying in Kaiin as part of a tour around the Dying Earth. Although he has many tales of danger and excitement, most are fabricated. He prefers the finest inns and the safest routes.

Nona Joont – The lithe and appealing young adult daughter of the corpulent traveler.

Lady Wenla Charbatte – a local minor grandee

Rotomol of Symnathis – A philosopher and gourmand, now resident in Kaiin for a decade or more.

Sir Keel Poten – Keel is a swordsman of no small repute, though now advancing in years. His Etiquette rating is almost high as his Cunning Attack.

Zendrea Twill – A renowned actress, famous for her 'dance of the three veils'

Adult Male Aristocrats (KPG: p76) – Defunch, Gattifear, Klobuth¹⁹, Mandsef, Revolimso

Adult Female Aristocrats – Adrisca, Charbatte²⁰, Guri, Imdaami, Initria, Peshorril

Younger Male Aristocrats – Egnip, Ferat, Maar, Serbi

Younger female Aristocrats – Mesti, S'fibi, Turulensa

Playing the Roles - The PCs will have duties to do if they are general staff, and even if impersonating staff, the supervisor will give them tasks to do. Such tasks require Stewardship rolls. If pretending to be musicians, it is highly likely that they will actually have to perform. Other deceptions may require Imposture attempts.

Challenges

Obtaining the Statuette – The statuette is within full view, displayed within a glass case that is reinforced with fine ironwork – through which it is not possible to pull out the Drakeling. The lock on the case must be picked. Fortunately the case itself is not magic. Also within the case are:

- a beautiful small golden and silver box, inside of which is a tiny imp that sings fine (and very loud) baritone melodies whenever the box is opened
- a hand mirror in an ornate jeweled frame. If anyone looks into the mirror, a nymph appears within the glass and dispenses flattering fashion tips from the previous aeon
- an ostentatious sapphire necklace, which increases the wearer's Seduction (+1 bonus or boon)
- a pair of exquisitely-fashioned jade bracelets, which alert the wearer to the presence of assassins
- a delightfully-crafted silver and bronze pair of miniature dancers that continually revolve around one another in perfect dance steps, always maintaining contact
- a bright crystal gem (when touched it captivates the 'toucher', causing them to lose all volition and stand gazing at the object in their hand until it is knocked from their fingers or they collapse from malnutrition/dehydration) Touching it with gloves still activates the effect, but not with tongs

Smuggling the Statuette Out – Once a theft is discovered, all guests will be searched on the way out, except for Flolad. However, he will volunteer to be searched in order that the others will follow his lead. Staff will also be searched, so the Drakeling will need to be thrown over a wall, or otherwise sent out clandestinely.

A Boweller spy is here. Fladgna is not so dumb, and not only that but in her other identity is an associate of Hemilovi. She (and/or) her lackeys are here to retrieve this statuette, having done some quick research and now suspecting what the statuette

¹⁹ The Boweller infiltrator

²⁰ The mundane identity of Fladgna the Boweller Priestess



is – though at this stage she presumes there are only two. The Boweller and Fladgna (Lady Charbatte) will keep watch on the statuette – he being in disguise as one of the wine-waiters. (Charbatte has paid the catering agency to hire him as a roving wine-waiter, claiming it is on the job training for a member of her own staff – although she used another disguise when making these arrangements.) They will put their plan into effect towards the end of the evening if the PCs have not acted before then. (See 'Escape Clauses' below for ideas.) They will also be on the look out for other thieves, so the Boweller himself will be stationed near the display case most of the evening. (Charbatte will relieve him once or twice so that he can answer nature's call.) Charbatte has cantraps – GM designs as they see fit.

Escape Clauses

- 1) Korwhis cannot be here in disguise – bear that in mind. However, he can be outside upon the street, sequestered amidst a row of thick shrubbery. Thus, if he hears any commotion as people try to escape over the wall, he can come to the aid of the PCs, or stop a fleeing Boweller clutching the statuette.
- 2) It is possible that the PCs will fail in their deception and be thrown out of the house. It is even possible that vigils might be called, and the PCs restrained by security or other guests. If possible, some PCs should remain free in order to provide a distraction, pose as security in order to take the criminals away, and/or thwart the Boweller thief. (Who will try to abscond with the statuette during any such distraction.) In a totally disastrous attempt, Charbatte will provide a distraction – fainting, accusing someone of impropriety, 'seeing an intruder', starting a fire... During this cover, her Boweller companion will steal the statuette and sneak away. He will not pass out through the gate, as some guard magic is there, but will instead climb a tree round the side of the house, shin along a limb and drop into the shrubbery outside. If the PCs are outside, then hopefully they will spot him and give chase.
- 3) Boweller Fanatics! Unsure of what opportunities she might have, Fladgna has arranged for a party of Boweller fanatics to raid Hemilovi's manse as soon as she blows a whistle. (Though she is audacious almost to the point of insanity, 'almost' is the apposite word, and she will not do this until after Flodad leaves.) Using grapnels and knotted ropes more than a dozen Bowellers scale the walls and burst into the house, exuding their characteristic reek, wielding cudgels, and covered in grime and repulsive sludge. Whilst most engage the security persons, four will smash open the case and snatch up all objects within – though after some amusing interplays they will leave the hypnotic crystal behind – buffeted out of the last victim's fingers. Crafty PCs will engage the Bowellers with the Drakeling, obtain it, and escape whilst pretending to pursue other thieves. Spolizzista and Poten will be the only guests willing to assist the security agents, but Spolizzista is more than half into his cups by now, and Poten is not as fast as once he was.

Scene 6: At the Tracks

"Shote, the trainer of dhjetar who lives near the Tracks, was given one of the statues by the wealthy Oman Tesqui. Tesqui is an owner of dbejatar who employs Shote, but Shote's arrogance is legendary and resplendent gifts mollify him in his attitude towards a particular trainer for some notable time."

GM Notes: Zank is the only one of the conspirators to have spent much time here, and that was not in recent years.

General Knowledge

The Tracks (KPG: pp142/143) – *"South of the city's walls, near the bayshore, lies an area dominated by a (huge sunken) race track, where the city's gamblers gather (at a variety of gambling halls). Though the races of the weasel-like dbejatar (the size of juvenile mermelants) are the main source of interest, you can find a game of chance here to suit any taste."* (Adapted from KPG: p142) An overview and further detailed information on the Tracks is available in the free adventure download the *Exasperating Cadaver* (pp21-28).

Oman Tesqui – This effete and fawning member of one of Kaiin's old families (KPG: pp 74/75, and 'Aristocrat' p76) is of no consequence to this scenario. Thus if the PCs insist on meeting him the GM will need to improvise using the references noted.

Shote (KPG: p152) – Arrogant and contemptuous, he has neutral relations only with those who work with and know about dhejatar. Everyone else he despises.

Other Details

The Inn of the Hide Vest – Shote has a small suite of rooms in the *Hide Vest Inn* (KPG: p157). Although card dealers, bet-takers and other employees of the gambling houses are the majority of the clientele, this is still the best such establishment in this district – and moderately successful gamblers and adventurer-types also frequent this establishment. Food is reasonable and the accommodation passable. Shote himself has the best rooms on the top floor at the end, and these are blocked by a sturdy iron-reinforced door that he commissioned himself. Bunkrooms are also available for a modest fee, and occasionally the



manager (Peroje) lets people sleep in the common room. The only rooms that are magically protected are Peroje's (attic apartment) and Shote's. Both of these have a warding that shouts an alarm when intruders enter by door or window.

Gambling Houses – As described in the *Exasperating Cadaver* (pp23-27) many opportunities for Gambling are here. Should any of the PCs have more than 7 terces, they must make a Resist Avarice roll or else become determined to increase their fortunes by a 'quick round of the tables'.

Shote's Rooms – Fairly austere, with a bed, cupboards, and small private bathroom. Most surfaces are decorated with trophies for winning an unseemly number of dhejatar races, and some of these are quite valuable. There is one large locked chest in here, which is protected with the spell: Lugwiler's Dismal Itch (DERPG: p108). This spell is cast at anyone who tries to pick the lock. (Maximum of 3 charges remaining.) The real lock is hidden at the back, and allows the chest to be lifted upwards from its walled base (rather than the – false – lid to be released). Inside is: a bag of 123 centurms; another of 713 terces; another of small gems worth about 2,500t; the Drakeling statuette; a splendid jerkin with a gold weave throughout; a hat with silver feathers; a dhejatar carved out of jade; another carved out of amber; and yet another made of solid silver. Apart from all of these, a large leather satchel fills the bottom third of the chest. Inside is what can only be described as a dhejatar costume – something one might use for fancy dress, although Shote is not someone who goes to fancy-dress parties. With this costume is a dhejatar riding crop.

Possible Plans

The general plan will probably revolve around tracing Shote's movements, and raiding his rooms when he is not there. Shote is often at the Tracks until late, supervising his dhejatar pens, but sometimes retires early to his rooms, to study his literature and performance notes. Very occasionally he brings a courtesan back to his rooms, but usually indulges such needs at the Lyre Road (KPG: p157). When he drinks out, usually after a big race, he spends his time at the Snarl (KPG: p157). When he gambles, he uses the facilities at the Silver Tray (KPG: p155). He gets up very early (except on those days after a big night), so another option is raiding his rooms in the wee hours just after he has left.

Challenges

- a) The warding on the doors and windows is detectable (but not identifiable) with the cantrap that the PCs will have. They may think to hire one of the bunkrooms below Shote's chamber and cut up through the floor. This is the only way I can think for them to get in without setting it off. They may of course simply plan for a smash and grab raid, and have speedy transportation standing by outside. (Which could be a beast and cart or some kind of river vessel to take them back into Odkin Prospect.)
- b) Also in Shote's chambers is a bound madling capable of casting: Thasdrubal's Laganetic Transfer (DERPG: p111). It does this by appearing in mid-air (wispy sprite) and asking them for Shote's password. (Password = "There's nothing like a day at the races.") When they cannot respond, the madling cackles nastily and casts the spell. Shote bought this effect relatively recently, presuming that its effect would be to 'safely and conveniently transport all trespassers away from his premises'. Unfortunately he was swindled. Whilst the spell works, its effect is to summon a large winged demon²¹, that arrives after a couple of minutes and forces its way in through the window (destroying window and part of wall in the process). It then attempts to systematically stun all of the PCs prior to gathering them up in its muscular arms (of which it has six). During this process it makes a lot of noise and completely trashes the apartment. Anyone nearby cannot help but be roused, and the district's vigils will surely arrive at the run pretty quickly. (Although they are unlikely to actually venture inside.) The demon is smart, and one of its first actions will be to barricade the door (by throwing heavy furniture) so that no PCs can escape. If the PCs are extremely quick and wily, just make the demon even quicker, stronger and more effective. It will not hesitate to smash the whole building to try and find them – and this might lead to amusing incidences of PCs hiding in cupboards and under beds, and innocent guests being temporarily carried off before the demon realizes it has the wrong person. It will not attempt to fly away until it has secured all the intruders – or is sorely injured.
- c) PCs who flee across the district at night without a proper plan will engage the attentions of thieves and vigils.

Escape Clauses

- 1) Korwhis might be here, but more likely Zank – or perhaps both of them? Korwhis, if given time, might pay some of the local bullies to launch an attack on the vigils when the PCs are being hauled off to the district cells. In the pandemonium the PCs are freed. Korwhis advises them to run very quickly, since the money he gave to the bullies was magical and will shortly vanish. If the PCs run pell-mell to the river and attempt to swim for safety, Zank might have a small craft waiting. If he is brought into the planning process,

²¹ GM is advised to use suitably Vancian descriptors of more variation than this. Also, should you be sufficiently wise to own 'Demons of the Dying Earth', use the 'Resisting Fear of Demons' (p92), or refer to the Supernatural Terror rules newly available at the Violet Cusps page.



he may suggest this back-up plan in the early stages. He knows cantraps to impel it with speed, and they can outpace the vigil canoes and reach Odkin Prospect with ease.

2) The Agent of Far Dispatch (the demon) might be overwhelmed by the PCs and used as some kind of steed to escape. Or they might manage to wriggle from its clutches (or more likely stab it for sufficient injury that it is unable to continue full flight) and fall into the Scaum from a height of only a hundred feet or so – as it heads north, or attempts to. Since magicians are known to frequent the Tracks, if all else fails several of these are attracted from one of the Gambling Houses by the commotion, and one overzealous diabolist happens to have the spell 'Shabat's Obliging Demon' encompassed. He sees the chance to prove his worth and calls forth another winged demon, that gives chase as the first demon flies low along the Scaum towards the sea, hoping to escape without harassment. A struggle ensues in which the first demon is savagely injured (whether it wins or not) and flies away to the west after dropping the PCs into the river. From here they may swim to safety or be rescued by well-wishers (busy-bodies) who launch skiffs from the Tracks. If it was carried away with the PCs, the Drakeling itself will be found by a by-stander near the river, having been dropped. It will then be up to the PCs to get it back (or perhaps Zank and his crafty cudgel will intervene in its recovery).

3) It is not inconceivable that the PCs may somehow be able to use their knowledge of Shote's dhejatar costume as leverage with him should they be captured and charges proffered.

Scene 7: Visiting the Undercity

"Vidierista the coin-seller obtained one of my statuettes from a colleague of his who operates his shop in Golden Walk. Vidierista himself lives in the Undercity and presumably the statuette is in his possession there."

GM Notes: If you do not possess the *Players Guide to Kaiin* you will need to invent various interesting shops and their proprietors, devise the demeanor and actions of the patrolmen and undercity elders and invent a map of intersecting tunnels and caverns. If you do own this estimable tome, it is advised to read this chapter carefully and make notes before running this scene. Korwhis is the only one of the conspirators to have been here before (twice), but his most recent visit was more than a decade ago. He will **not** go again.

General Knowledge

The Undercity (KPG: pp165/166) – The Undercity is a large cavern and connected tunnels beneath Kaiin, lined with excavated structures from previous cities on this site. Several thousand individuals who believe the sun has already gone out and they are the world's last survivors inhabit it. Only a little more than a decade ago their prophet proclaimed that the world would end. Many believed him and stayed, and others entered from the city. The residents still interact with visitors, presuming these to be travelers from the past, a distant star, or another dimension. Anyone who visits them must make up such a story and stick unflinchingly to it on this and subsequent visits. Those who assert that the world still lives above the Undercity are proclaimed as disguised deodands and tossed into an execution pit. Since such unfortunate incidents happen reasonably regularly²², many people choose never to visit the Undercity in their entire lives. However, some of Kaiin's best craftsmen, jewelers, tailors and the like are found amongst the inhabitants. Therefore, and also for reasons of excitement, the wealthy and semi-wealthy of Kaiin (or their representatives) continue to visit this place. Prince Kandive himself has ordained that the delusions of the Undercity be maintained - so that their excellent crafts will continue to be available.

Vidierista (KPG: p169) – This tall gaunt man once owned the world's foremost collection of ancient coins, but it was stolen. He retreated to the Undercity where he buys and sells ancient coins and is slowly rebuilding his collection. Since he also maintains a shop in Golden Walk, clearly he does not actually believe that the surface world has died – though he is presumably one of very few residents of the Undercity with this view.

Possible Plans

The PCs of course need to scout the area, and check out Vidierista's premises and security. Possibly they will do this through Imposture, possibly through Stealth. Their main goal is to locate the statuette about his premises, which of course they won't - because he has given it away. Scuttlebutt may assist them in discovering that he has a love interest – although this interest is not returned (see below). It is unlikely that PCs will pose as fellow numismatists, since it is a specialist field, but they could pose as fellow lovers of different antiquities who admire his specialism.

²² It is easy to forget the Imposture, since otherwise the residents here seem entirely normal.



Any plan will need to incorporate a means of escape. Persons are not searched upon leaving the Undercity, unless some significant theft has recently been reported. Even then, persons of the nobility will not be searched²³, so the PCs may like to consider disguising themselves as being amongst the grossly wealthy. (Nerij's has some clothes that could be adapted for this purpose – washed, ironed, mended etc.)

Particularly bold PCs might think to try and black-mail Vidierista with the threat of exposing him as a person who still maintains a shop in the world above. This is not such a straightforward task. Vidierista has already established the 'fact' amongst fellow residents of the Undercity, that he survived the destruction of the world above because he was journeying in the distant past researching ancient coinage – and returned to find the world blasted and dark. Additionally, the argument itself seems nonsensical – since the Dying Earth has no photography, and the mere suggestion in public that the blackmailer believes the world above still exists is sufficient to have them consigned to the pit. Vidierista is also sufficiently smart to swiftly frame any would-be blackmailers as 'deodands in disguise'. Any PCs that ask about this possibility may learn that a couple of years ago blackmail was tried - and it was the accuser that ended up in the pit.

Other Details

- a) Gaining entry (KPG: p172) – The main entrance is through a mausoleum-shaped structure behind some tenements in the Scholasticarium District. One knocks on the door and guards peer out from a panel. If they see anyone else around the guards presume these to be disguised deodands, and will not open the door again for hours. Thus, this entrance (and exit – for the same reasons) is mainly used at night. Another entrance is in the Threek. Beneath a heavy metal plate is a drop of 20ft negotiated by rope and pulley. At the bottom is a long corridor, at the end of which is a heavy metal door with Undercity guards behind. Behind either door is a long series of stairs and passages (and occasional further doors and guard-posts) before reaching the Undercity itself.
- b) Pretending to be from another world/dimension – What identities will they assume? This is an important aspect of this scene, and needs to be carefully developed. Korwhis will explain the importance of this if the PCs don't grasp it for themselves. Anyone entering will be quizzed by the guards and must convince (Ψ PERSUASION) them of the validity of their assumed identities. One spokesperson takes on this role for the whole group.
- c) Undercity description (KPG: p171)
- d) It would be sensible for the PCs to disguise themselves as merchant-travelers and stay in the Undercity for some hours (days?) until they can act. During this time they will have to maintain their subterfuge or face the pit. Since this is the last scene/drakeling, and communications from the world above are by definition minimal, taking one's time here is perfectly reasonable.
- e) It seems that a few folk of the Undercity do not believe the world has ended, but rumors in the upper world contradict as to who these may be, and it is best to be on the safe side. As well as Vidierista, Cortamel the owner of the Last Amphora (KPG: p175) Liquor Store is one such candidate, as his wares come entirely from the upper city.
- f) Seeing someone accused and thrown into the pit is a 'must happen' event. (KPG: p167) Such a person might be a poor middle-aged woman from Odkin Prospect, who didn't fully comprehend the seriousness of the situation. As she is dragged away, she will shriek out that all here are deluded, and call out to her companions to assist her. Through sweat and bluff, they will manage to convince the patrolmen that she must have infiltrated their group as they 'waited briefly at an inter-dimensional relay station on the surface world'. Even so, they will then shortly leave the Undercity, never to return.
- g) Commercial Establishments (KPG: pp173-175)
- h) Landmarks (KPG: p176)

Challenges

- a) Vidierista has given the statuette to the object of his unrequited affections. PCs wandering the Undercity may spot the statuette boldly displayed inside a glass case in Flumosa's workshop, or they may have to pry the information from Vidierista.
- b) Thieves are considered also to be disguised deodands and tossed into the pit. Suspicious patrolmen (KPG: p170) wander the district eaves-dropping on visitors.
- e) Consuming the food (KPG: p176) – The local lichens and spices can cause something of an internal upset until one becomes used to them. If you bring your own food it is sensible to have it packed as if you have come on a long journey. (Otherwise suspicions might be aroused.)

²³ Such is reasonably well-known.



- e) Robbing Flumosa's Workshop (KPG: p168) – Remember that anyone who encounters Flumosa must make a Resist Rakishness roll (KPG: p169). Any male who fails, suffers the effects described, and any male who makes a DF is entirely smitten by her and from now on of no use in the actions required. Optionally (for GMs who like to portray social realism), any female who makes a DF also suffers the standard effects. It is always remotely possible that a PC may attract (Ψ SEDUCTION – IS only) Flumosa. From this point on we leave individual GMs to decide on the details of what might follow, and how such things might assist a person to gain possession of the drakeling statuette (of which Flumosa is quite fond).
- f) Fladgna/Charbette may have found out about some of the other statuettes, and be pulling out all the stops to try and obtain this one before the mysterious thieves. One amusing complication is that she – and two burly Boweller accomplices - get to Vidierista before the PCs (or at least after their first scouting visit). Thus, the PCs may be able to pose as agents of good, routing the Bowellers (who at the moment the PCs arrive are beating Vidierista with lengths of pipe), and obtaining the location of the Drakeling from a grateful and sobbing store-keeper. (Charbette/Fladgna herself has plenty of skill and cunning, and is unlikely to end up in the pit, though her assistants might not be so lucky.) Any interactions with Bowellers will be modified by the fact that no-one from the surface world wishes either to (a) mention anything from the surface world, or (b) draw any attention to themselves. Not only those who talk of the surface world are assumed to be disguised deodands, but also criminals of any kind – including those foreigners who attack each other on the street. Of course, one group may possibly convince (Ψ PERSUASION) Oolbrea (see 'Thrown into the Pit' below) that they are innocent victims of disguised deodands.
- g) Getting out (KPG: p172) – As mentioned above, unless a theft is known, security is minimal. If a theft has been reported, the drakeling will have to be somehow disguised or hidden inside another object. Also, if an alert is on, one's assumed identities might be thoroughly questioned (Ψ PERSUASION) on the way out – and this would form the finishing action of this scene

Escape Clauses

- 1) No conspirator will risk a trip to the Undercity, so the PCs are on their own in this regard.
- 2) Although it might seem rather coincidental, especially if the PCs have previously benefited from the spontaneous appearance of 'Crow Day', every two weeks the Undercity residents have the 'Processional for the Death of the World' (KPG: p177). This might provide cover for them to escape. If any players question this, freely admit that this is a bizarre coincidence and that even the PCs may feel that fate is smiling upon them.

Thrown into the Pit. If everything goes pear-shaped, the PCs may end up tried (KPG: p167) by Oolbrea (KPG: p168) and tossed into the bottomless Pit (KPG: p176). If they wish to escape with the drakeling, this must be thrown in too. The GM perhaps allows the person with the Drakeling to be last searched, or allows them to attempt a desperate bid for freedom – only to be hurled in by citizens before a search can be undertaken. (Weapons and other possessions – such as packs – are generally casually kicked/thrown in after the victims, although cash and obvious magical items are usually removed first. Since the fates are at work, a pack with the drakeling in might be thrown in without first being examined.) Optionally, weapons are removed from the victims, and the PCs will have to find some way to enter the Pit with at least two or three weapons – perhaps by leaping in prior to judgment (after it is observed that the weapons are taken from the first to be cast in).

The PCs will survive because they land on top of a thick forest of giant fungi. Certainly some of these huge mushrooms are crushed around here if someone recently was thrown in, but they grow extremely fast. If the PCs have no light source, then common patches of glowing lichens provide minimal illumination. If the Bowellers are also thrown in, a fight to the death might be the first activity, or the two groups may come to some kind of temporary alliance.

The pit does indeed lead to a network of caves and tunnels, and small odd insects, and larger predatory insects inhabit these. The GM will be advised to draw a detailed map of caves, tunnels, climbs, underground rivers, sinkholes, as the PCs clamber and fight their way out of this maze. Pretending to be copying from an actual map would not be considered inappropriate. If the PCs are on good terms with The Vlack (which my PCs are not) perhaps they meet him, and on a whim (or in return for promised future unconditional assistance) he leads them to safety. Or, they might come across a secret ceremony being undertaken by the Kaiin Witch Cult (DDE: pp49/50) and follow these individuals back up into some cellar in Odkin Prospect (Hemilovi's?).

All in all, the PCs must suffer sufficiently much to make it realistic that most people in their position would surely die (especially if they had no weapons). The exit from these tunnels might be via a dangerous climb out into the edge of the Old City next to the Fringe. It is possible that the PCs may be sitting at the bottom of an unclimbable shaft when they hear voices (adventurers exploring the ruins) above. They might convince (Ψ PERSUASION) these persons to lower a rope.



Scene 8: What Happens Next

Failure? It is always possible that the PCs might fail to acquire one or two of the statuettes. Astute GMs should long ago have realized that this is not a preferred outcome. Of course, if Fladgna is the one who obtains the remaining statuette/s that can be dealt with reasonably easily – as Nerijs reluctantly brings her into the conspiracy. (She herself does not know the rituals required to activate the true Drakeling, nor even to identify it.)

Success! The 'return' of all five drakeling statuettes to Nerijs and the others is the cause for some rejoicing at the Odkin Prospect Hotel. Now that the task is completed, Nerijs is less secretive, and admits that one of these statuettes is somehow linked in with the fates, and if it can be activated is "guaranteed to bring favor and fortune to all concerned"²⁴. Although Zank and Korwhis counsel caution, poor Nerijs is convinced that days of wonder lie just around the corner. "Nobody knows," whispers Nerijs, "except us, that the statuette has such remarkable properties." If the PCs were introduced from prison (whether this concept suits your campaign or not), he offers them a year's (or permanent?) accommodation at his manse anyway as a special bonus. He then capers about the house as Korwhis prepares his attic room for the important rituals.

Zank is less ebullient, but nonetheless optimistic. He spends most of his time trying to keep Nerijs acting more or less normally – so that nobody else suspects something major is afoot. The main surprise at this stage is that it takes some hours for Korwhis to realize that all of the statuettes are linked. Initially he tests each of them at length and declares that he cannot identify the true Drakeling. "Perhaps," he says, "all are forgeries." (This concept refers back to the original movie and story that inspired this scenario. Players familiar with either of these, who identified the parallels, may have imagined all along that such would turn out to be the case. Fortunately, Korwhis will – after a few hours – realize his error, and discover that somehow the Drakeling has split itself into five parts. "Probably", he declares, "this is how it hides itself over the centuries, somehow conspiring to bring the five pieces into proximity only when its time for renewed activation is at hand".

Participation – Once the PCs become aware that mighty magics are afoot, they may wish to leave. However, the conspirators are grateful, and offer the PCs the chance to be part of the ceremony – and thus benefit from the full advantages. They will proclaim that prestige, power, position, and wealth await anyone prepared to use the influence of the Drakeling wisely and fairly²⁵. Resistance rolls vs Arrogance, Avarice, and Indolence may be appropriate to motivate reluctant PCs in the face of the excitement and vivid descriptions supplied by the conspirators. In reality, Korwhis has worked out that the ceremony will benefit from an increased number of participants, and in any case the focus of the ceremony can only be directed at one person. (He will neglect to pass on these specific details, as he intends that person to be himself.)

The Ceremony – As evening falls, the group will retire to Korwhis' attic chamber, there to perform the ceremony. He has already placed each of the drakelings at the point of a chalked pentagram. Korwhis then locks the doors, throws up a protective enchantment and begins reading from an ancient scroll. The language that he uses is an almost forgotten mage-speech and so is not intelligible to the PCs. After a few minutes, magical energies are palpable and the statuettes begin to glow and become less substantial. [Any PC with a Magic rating loses 1 point from their pool.] After a further half an hour, a magical energy begins to form in the middle of the pentagram. This is in the shape of another drakeling – one is forming from the substance of the five. [As it solidifies another Magic pool point is lost by anyone who has them to spare²⁶.] After another half-hour or so, the five have vanished and the one remains. Korwhis is weak and perspiring, and must take a break before the next stage – the activation.

The Disruption – Noises begin downstairs. Various of the residents are making a fuss. A worried Nerijs asks one or more of the PCs to go and see what is going on. It is soon revealed that the Prospect vigils are making another raid on the Hotel. What a coincidence that this reprisal happens at this precise time! At present the manse's enchantments are holding, but the various residents and their friends and associates are arming themselves and setting up ambushes and barricades in the corridors and wild front garden – just in case. If any PCs peer out of the upper windows they will see that more than a couple of dozen vigils are supporting those battering at the gate with a large faintly glowing (presumably enspelled) tree trunk. A few of these soldiers have cantraps that they are casting against the wall's magical defenses – with no apparent effect.

²⁴ He may well reveal some of the secret history described earlier in the scenario – make it sound favorably epic and amazing!

²⁵ Make such descriptions rich and enticing. We want the PCs motivated enough to defend the ceremony in the hopes of its completion.

²⁶ This is an unashamed technique to illustrate to the players that something powerful is going on. The points do not actually make any difference mechanically to the following events – but never reveal this fact!



When the conspirators learn of what is going on, they will reveal their suspicions that this is no coincidence at all and that the power of the fates is testing them. Clearly they must complete the ceremony before the attack is successful, and then all will be well. Korwhis marshals his flagging energy and begins the final complex stage of the ceremony. He reads from a tome (in the same ancient language), gesticulates wildly and makes arcane gestures. The PCs may likely be asked to go and assist with barricades and other obstructions.

The residents have almost a half-hour to prepare, before the unthinkable happens – the magic ensorcelled tree-trunk smashes the gates open in a burst of violet sparks, and the vigils rush inside. The residents respond with their customary vigor – determined to uphold what they see as their legal right of abode (KPG: p81). Nerijs says that the vigor of his other tenants is not in doubt, but their tactical intelligence is questionable. Therefore he asks the PCs to keep an eye out for surprise attacks and incursions.

Action! This is where the PCs get the chance to pitch in against the vigils (whose ratings the GM will need to devise). Ideally the PCs will (as do the rest of the residents) adopt some kind of mask to hide themselves from easy recognition. Of course, such only helps if you don't get beaten senseless and arrested. Consequently, the residents stop at nothing to prevent one of their own from being captured. Charges, counter-charges, ambushes, and woundings begin to occur at an alarming rate, and gradually the vigils force their way through the garden and inside the manse. Remember that this is DERPG, and so people are not being hacked to pieces, but clubbed unconscious, snared in nets, winded then tied in sheets, or (at worst) stabbed sufficiently badly that they have to retreat for healing or surrender to their attacker/s.

Inevitably the PCs will need to repel several vigils that have managed to scale the back wall of the house onto the verandah. Perhaps they will be notified as another resident screams for assistance, or possibly the PCs will have a sensible roving patrol happening. It is equally likely that the PCs will have split up in order to follow their individual whims. Again, what happens must largely be improvised according to PC actions/locations.

Results of the Raid! The raid culminates as the PCs are defending the very stairs up to the attic, whilst up above Korwhis attempts maniacally to finish the ceremony to attune himself to the Drakeling. (Though Zank and Nerijs, and possibly the PCs still believe that they are included within this focus.) If the PCs were exemplary in their assistance with the defense make the following roll at a bonus of 1. If they were adequate, make no adjustment. If their defense was poorly thought-out and/or executed make the following roll at a penalty of 1.

Korwhis Attempts the Attunement (roll one dice)

1 – An explosion rips through the attic, setting the house on fire. Korwhis and Zank are killed – and Nerijs blasted out through the roof and into the branches of a tree. (Where he will awake several hours later more or less unharmed after all the fuss has died down.) The drakeling statue vanishes. Vigils and residents alike combine forces to put out the fire, but no trace of the activities remains. Sensible PCs will take this opportunity to try and sneak away – and such should be role-played, as vigils are securing the house and actively seeking conspirators.

2 – As 1, except only Korwhis is killed. Zank and Nerijs suffer minor injuries, and are arrested by the vigils.

3 – Korwhis does not quite finish the ceremony – and the vigils burst in and arrest everyone, and confiscate the Drakeling statuette. PCs at this point may wish to try and escape.

4 – As 3, except Korwhis finished the first part of the ceremony, evoking a general aura of good fate around all participants. For the duration of any aftermath all PCs and conspirators make Defense, Persuasion, Rebuff, Concealment, Gambling, Imposture and Stealth rolls at a boon of 1.

5 – Korwhis finishes up to the middle part of the ceremony, bestowing the luck of the fates temporarily on himself. He is able to convince the vigils that he is not the man they are looking for. They believe him and set about a thorough search and questioning routine throughout the entire house. In the meanwhile Korwhis merely tucks the drakeling under his arm and walks away. Nobody tries to stop him, and vigil officers even salute him as he passes. This is not the case for anyone who tries to emulate him (unless a successful Imposture is used: "I'm with him"). If the PCs do somehow follow Korwhis and try and stop him a bizarre series of coincidences allows him to get clean away. He leaves Kaiin immediately and may never be seen or heard of again.

6 – Korwhis finishes the whole ceremony, evoking the power of the fates upon himself and the other conspirators. Zank's missing leg instantly grows back, and the pirate also recalls where he and some comrades buried an enormous treasure a few miles south of Kaiin around a decade ago. (It is still there, and when things quieten down he takes the PCs to dig it up²⁷.) The vigils apologize to Nerijs, saying that they had been planning this raid to restore the rightful ownership of his house for quite some time. They ask him who he

²⁷ In XPS Vol. 1 No. 3 (pp12/13) is a scenario wherein the PCs must dig through a tavern floor to reach a forgotten crypt. It could be amusing to adapt this scenario/premis (or something like it) rather than merely allow the PCs to drive up with spades and dig up the chests of gold and gems.



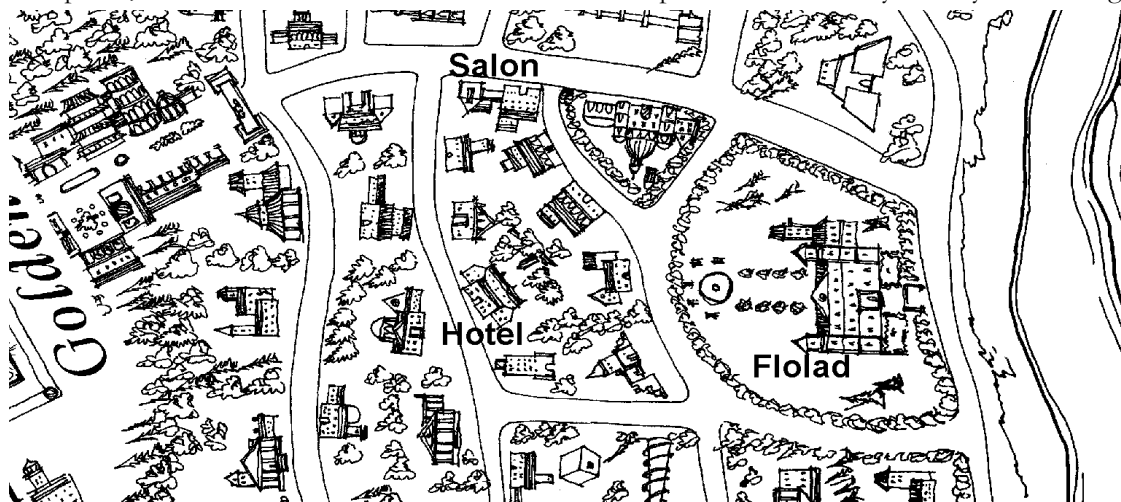
wishes to stay, and who are squatters. Nerijs has his few intractable enemies arrested (Dothand's Gang), those who were neutral to him evicted (Fulia's Gang and Sento and his associates), and allows the PCs to stay. With much apology, and a real effort at clearing up, the vigils depart as soon as they can, escorting the evictees to the gate and dragging the vagrants away to the local lock-up. Korwhis himself, thanks his old associates for their part in this great undertaking, and expresses his pleasure that they seem to have benefited well from the events. He then uses invisible servants to gather his gear, and departs to launch a political career²⁸. The other conspirators realize that he alone has the full benefits of the Drakeling, as only he can pick it up without suffering some kind of magical shock. He is also now highly resistant to magic, and radiates power and charisma. (It is likely he also knows new spells, or has remembered any he ever knew, but he does not use these.)

Likely Outcomes – If the die roll resulted in any of the outcomes '1-5', Prince Kandive has been tracking the whole operation through his spies, though he did not discover the whole picture of what was going on until the very last minute. If the PCs escape, they will hear on the grapevine that some powerful artifact was recovered, or is sought for, by the Prince – and that the city is being swept for the thieves involved. Any surviving conspirators will co-operate fully, and be given pardons by the Prince for doing so. Thus the blame will be shifted fully onto the PCs.

If the PCs are arrested, they will be dragged through a trial (KPG: pp18-21) and (unless they argue their case well²⁹) sentenced to the deodand pits. If Korwhis gained the fates and escaped, he will engineer their release. If he did not, the day before their execution Nerijs will successfully petition the Prince for reprieve, and the PCs will instead be sold into slavery for a period of 18 months. (GMs may choose to run this as a mini-scenario, or merely relegate the period of slavery to one of those unfortunate events that occurs between scenarios.)

Best Outcome - If outcome '6' came about, the Prince loses interest in the whole affair, which he was in any case only peripherally involved in anyhow. (One of his magician advisors was behind it, and is quietly executed for wasting the Prince's time. Korwhis becomes his immediate replacement.) Zank's treasure haul sets up Nerijs and Zank for the foreseeable future, and they honor their agreement to give the PCs residency in the house as co-tenants, at least for a year. Some few of the Prospects other residents now condescend to give Nerijs the time of day, and his fates are to some degree restored. The stain of his history is not so easily forgotten, and he does not become a major player in local politics. Still, he is content.

The PCs now have a base for a Kaiin campaign. Or the GM may simply state that after a year of luxury here they are politely evicted by Nerijs, and find themselves back on the road again. In this latter case it would be a fine gesture from the GM to allow each PC to add one point each to any three skills from: Appraisal, Etiquette, Gambling, Pedantry, Riding, Seduction, or Stewardship. (Feel free to remove any abilities from this choice for a particular PC if their score is already above a certain level.) These improvements indicate the time that passed and that they learned from various experiences. If the original agreement was for them to stay for more than a year in the Hotel, then peer pressure from other folk within the Prospect has forced Nerijs to ask them to leave. (Nerijs was deeply frowned upon for still housing rascals when he didn't have to.) With many apologies, and some kind of recompense, he is forced to turn them out – and indeed kept them there for a year only out of his goodwill.



²⁸ Korwhis is not abusing fate by taking the major benefits for himself. Originally he wanted to share the full benefits with his friends, but then realized that the Drakeling only allows one person to be the key beneficiary. So he just neglected to mention this to the others.

²⁹ Always possible, especially if they were blessed by the fates.



Tag-Lines for 'The Kaiinese Drakeling'

GM Note: Should you have less than five PCs, simply divide up any remaining tag-lines as appropriate, creating more if necessary to maintain balanced distribution. It is possible that your gaming sessions may not exactly match the suggested tag-line dispersion below. In this case, re-order them as required.

SESSION ONE (Intro & Preparation)

Character One

"I perceive an ambitious plan - one with clear and consequential rewards."

"It is my suspicion that persons of low moral standing inhabit these premises."

"To abrade me is a mistake. I am wanted on two continents, and highly sought after on a further three."

Character Two

"Such tasks are well within my capabilities; and my companions make able - if somewhat unrefined - accomplices."

"I shall adopt an impenetrable yet exquisite disguise – all the better to confound our foes and entertain our associates."

"This is not a divinity with which I am familiar. Hopefully its capacities are few and insignificant."

Character Three

"Fear not, for I shall dedicate myself to the return of your goods. This I proclaim as my earnest bond and unshakable intent."

"One day I shall reside in such a fine establishment, and liveried servants will leap at my beck and call."

"Though in most situations I am noted for my fearlessness, the very mention of The Vlack causes my skin to crawl with terror."

Character Four

"Yonder is a fellow with a wooden leg and gargantuan beard. It seems obvious to me that we should seek his company."

"Though I do not doubt our capabilities, some manner of ingenious plan is clearly a prerequisite to our success."

"I am clearly the one to master all manner of magics, on account of my superior sensorial capacity."

Character Five

"The path of my life may have been somewhat haphazard, but has afforded me the opportunity to amass many rare and valuable abilities."

"Such impertinence as these fellows have expressed leaves me livid with indignation."

"I lack the dedication to don a robe of ragged sackcloth and coat myself in stinking ordure."



SESSION TWO (Temple of Dijekom & Stinobric's Office)

Character One

“Since your appearance is normally one of dishevelment, you are clearly the best candidate for the task.”

“Its manner is more than marginally sinister. I decline to approach it any closer.”

“Perhaps we can assume the guise of folk eager for education? Although, other than for myself, this might prove somewhat unrealistic.”

Character Two

“When I cough politely from over there, you will step smartly from the shadows and strike him solidly with a length of wood.”

“Numerous folk undoubtedly pass in and out of this place every day. With a minimum of consideration we could blend imperceptibly with such traffic.”

“Surely he would not miss one or two of these other choice treasures?”

Character Three

“It is unlikely that security measures will be substantial. After all, who in their right mind would wish to enter such a repugnant environment?”

“As a man of education, surely his reactions would in any case tend more towards civil complaint than violent retribution.”

“In the names of Fate and Fortune, run now, run fast, and do not stop if you value your life!”

Character Four

“An agile person could race along that roof, and swing safely to the tiles - though a person of lesser competency would likely dash out their brains on the cobbles below.”

“Though their stench is overwhelming, perhaps it would be politic to treat them with some small measure of respect.”

“I fear that the students themselves present the greatest danger of the district. Their pranks are legendary, and are sometimes fatally amusing.”

Character Five

“This smells not so much like a place of worship, but more like the civic refuse heap.”

“With the most profound respect I must say that your suggestions strike me not so much as a plan, but more as the fevered ramblings of a poltroon.”

“I must pause for a moment to examine the artistic complexity of these erotic appurtenances.”



SESSION THREE (The Salon & The Tracks)

Character One

“I will easefully blend in with the city nobles, on account of the obvious refinement of my character.”

“The hulking stature of that gentleman is intimidating to say the least. I do not wish to annoy him in any fashion.”

“Continue your explorations without me whilst I indulge in a hand or two of Skax, or perhaps Rumpolio. I do so merely to add luster to our deception.”

Character Two

“You could pose as a servant of middling rank with very little adjustment to either attire or attitude. I mean no disrespect of course.”

“This is indeed a drawback of eminently significant consequence.”

“I shall hold the lantern steady – no mean skill under such difficult circumstances.”

Character Three

“I shall cause some manner of distraction, whilst you flee for the gate with our prize. Such a plan lacks flaws of any substance.”

“It is only right and proper that we sample this delicious fare. To do otherwise would be churlish.”

“The nature of this defensive measure seems grossly disproportionate to our transgression!”

Character Four

“This chair is a Bizrint original, and that cabinet was carved by Latwiler himself from a single span of sandalwood. Truly we are in the presence of greatness.”

“I am beginning to suspect that we are not alone in our unusual quest.”

“Some may call me over-cautious, but I strongly suggest that we devise an escape plan of fiendish artifice.”

Character Five

“Amongst these persons of nobility and achievement is truly my rightful position in life. I must partake of fine wine to assuage my melancholy.”

“Here are terces for the taking. We would be foolish indeed not to try our hands at the gaming tables.”

“I shall linger here as rearguard. Should you encounter any great danger shout out loud and I shall dash to your aid.”



SESSION FOUR (The Undercity & The Finale)

Character One

“Though these folk are clearly deranged, it seems only politic to indulge their fevered ravings.”

“I bow in acknowledgment of your fine plan, and will stand here in languid appreciation as you see it through to its logical conclusion.”

“I for one declare a personal interest in receiving the full and substantive bounty of the fates.”

Character Two

“I shall attire myself as a merchant-grandee of the distant star ‘Cansaspara’. My tales of silver lakes and green cloud trails will convince even the most skeptical troglodyte.”

“We stand now amidst the grandeur of ages past. Let us pause and contemplate these glories for a moment.”

“I shall remain here in order to bravely protect my interests. Those of lesser character may now depart.”

Character Three

“Open this door at once. We have traveled across three separate dimensions to visit your renowned establishments.”

“Though somewhat lacking in flexibility, your customs are unquestionably cogent, and I applaud you for embracing them.”

“Such a thing seems only to confirm that we are indeed in the presence of divine magic.”

Character Four

“If you continue on this course I shall renounce you as a deodand. Then we may see an end to your sniveling.”

“The windows of these ancient ruins glare like the eye-sockets of a skull, and the looming stone above oppresses my soul. For these reasons alone I now retire to drink several glasses of fine wine.”

“A life of wealth and privilege is my true destiny. Kaiin will find me ranking highly in the company of the most fashionable aristocrats.”

Character Five

“I was sailing near the outer planets in a barge of glittering glass on that fateful day, and shed bitter tears at the loss of our species and all its accomplishments.”

“Words fail me in the presence of such abundant loveliness.”

“None shall come between me and the rich rewards of the fates. Let us draw our rapiers and spring boldly into action.”