

RAKE'S HOLD

by Dru Pagliassotti

SYNOPSIS: Adventurers are hired to get a cloak from a weaver and end up in the middle of a demon's stronghold. Splatterfantasy with nightmares attached. Suggested level: 7-9, tough fighters required, cleric extremely useful. There are a number of places in which the DM can weaken or toughen the dungeon as desired.

NOTES: "Mock" is a thinly veiled version of Warhammer's "Nurgle"; if you have the Warhammer Realm of Chaos book, you'll have a good idea of how nasty the creature is. However, he isn't integral to the adventure. This adventure would mesh well with Ravenloft's Nightmare Lands boxed set, which didn't exist when I first wrote it but could be grafted in with little effort. A "mendicant" is my version of fallen angels; use whatever seems fitting to you. The map I used for Rakehold was the "House of Cards" map from the dungeon of the same name by Randy Maxwell in Dungeon #19. (The original adventure was well worth running, too, especially since it came with a Deck of Many Things!) If you can't find a copy of that map, you'll have to rekey these rooms to fit whatever other fortress you decide to use.

DM'S BACKGROUND:

The year is DR (Dominarch's Reckoning) 777, and the Dominarchy is in chaos. Land-dwellers war with the sea-dwelling sahuagin. Monstrous wyrm are attacking farms and mines from their home in the bottomless rift that tore the Dominions in half thirty years ago. Famine and shortages weaken the land, and civil war threatens to tear it apart. Worst of all, a frightening, incurable new disease runs rampant through the Dominions, a magical sickness known as The Hierodule Plague, which twists flesh and mind to create monsters out of normal beings.

In the middle of all this chaos, it is perhaps reassuring to know that people are still having mundane problems. The Onieromancer, one of the head archmages of Candor (and no, nobody knows his real name), hires the player characters to pick up a robe he'd had commissioned several years ago for him from a small village, Oscoro, in the midst of the Icewind Mts. The robe is magical, and especially made for him; as the Lord of Dreams, he commissioned the robe to allow him to travel physically into the Dreamscape. The weaver, Thom Chimera, comes from a very ancient family of weavers skilled in the arts of sorcery. The Onieromancer was informed by letter, received last year, that the robe should be ready this month, but hasn't heard anything from Thom for a while, and the upheavals in the Dominions have been keeping him too busy to go check things out himself. Since the lands are currently very dangerous due to civil unrest and wyrm attacks, and since there is a small possibility Thom's silence is due to some sort of trouble, he hires the characters to go check things out for him and bring back the cloak while he remains in Candor dealing with his political responsibilities. (Note: Journey takes 2 months, should be

brushed over with mention of burned villages, signs of bandit attacks, starving peasants, plague victims, etc; characters should get the idea that things are not going well in the Dominions, but not be bothered dealing with the trip itself. The long journey should also dissuade the characters from returning home immediately once they realize that Thom is dead and the cloak stolen).

THE CLOAK: Unfortunately, there has been a small problem with The Onieromancer's cloak. Thom Chimera is - was? - indeed a great enchanter in his own right, but the sorcerous power emanating from his workroom attracted the attention of a mendicant (blood-drinking evil demon), Rake, who has recently build a sorcerous stronghold several days away in the mountains to carry out his lord Mock's (the Chaos Lord of disease) business. Rake went to visit the weaver one night, and immediately realized how useful this cloak would be to himself. He commanded Thom to finish the cloak that night and give it to him, but Thom refused. Angered, Rake snatched the weaver up and stabbed him in the heart with his own scissors, throwing him on the loom where the cloak was nearly completed. The scissors damaged one of the magical knots, and Thom's blood finished the damage; the cloak's magic went out of control and animated as an evil, dream-dwelling creature. Highly irritated, Rake took loom and cloak back to his stronghold, to figure out how to fix the damage and reclaim the magical garment for himself.

THE MONSTER: Rake is a mendicant, one of the green-eyed servants of the evil deities; see write-up at bottom of adventure. He is in charge of overseeing the spread of the Hierodule Plague by releasing plague-carriers (vectors) across the land. He serves the Metal God Mock (background info on Mock given below in case players do research or can otherwise figure things out):

Mock is the avatarch of decay and plague. When he appears as a human(oid), he is a boil-covered, mutilated leper in rags and carrying a staff of bone. When he appears as a monster, he is a fat, horned, suppurating mass of decaying flesh. In either form, he is wracked with small parasites that chew on his entrails and crawl over his body. Mock also tends to tear off portions of his own body and eat them. Sometimes he gets a parasite by mistake.

Mock is cheerful and macabre, offering mortals the chance to stop attempting to avoid the end that will inevitably come to all, and instead to embrace it and gain power from it. Decay, disease and death is Mock's gift to mortals who worship him; he is the god of rot and plague. Mock's Champion is Travail, and he rules the undead. Travail's body is covered with sores that constantly weep blood, and he periodically vomits his intestines and must swallow them again in order to speak coherently.

Mock's rites are observed whenever plague ravages the land, and consist of carnivals, dancing and self-flagellation. His symbols are the fly and the mouth. His colors are sickly green, yellow and dull brown.

ABOUT RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE:

This dungeon was designed in a splatterpunk mood. The "whys" in this dungeon aren't too important; Rake's a sick puppy, make something up if the players ask why he's got random organs scattered around as decor. The important thing is making the players squirm a little. For younger kids you might want to nudge up the gross-o-meter a bit - they love that stuff. A quick review of Clive Barker's "Hellraiser" movies (especially I & II) should get you into the proper mood.

This dungeon is a little sketchy; some rooms aren't described at all, others are described loosely with regard to furnishings and decor (blame my laziness). As general hints, Rake's interior decorator was influenced by sadistic dentists and vivisection manuals. Rake is immune to iron, so a lot of stuff will be made of iron. As usual, my dungeons are scarce in magic items, so embellish as needed. If the players don't have a Read Magic spell, you might want to add it as a scroll early on so they can read the books and scrolls (or just put the writing in some obscure tongue that one of them just happens to know). Also, I haven't put many monsters in here; if you think things need livening up, I suggest undead encounters, since Mock is the god of undead and Rake is most likely to have them around.

While the characters' first goal is to find The Onieromancer's cloak, this will probably begin to change as they learn that Rake is spreading the plague. Getting the cloak is a mini-adventure in itself, but killing Rake should be the real climax!

OSCORO

Oscoro is a small mountain village, Germanic in looks, huddled in the middle of the Icewind Mountains not far from the bottomless rift. Very few people live there anymore, due to the lack of food and constant danger from the wyrm. One of the few remaining residents are Hanzi, who runs the Spruce and Thorn tavern, and Greta, a ranger and self-appointed captain of the guard (since the prior captain was killed by wyrm). Use Hanzi to set moods and give info as needed; the Spruce and Thorn is the only tavern/inn in town, and pretty desolate right now. He can also recommend talking to Greta if they ask a lot of questions about Thom's disappearance. The town is generic small village, use any map you have lying around.

Thom Chimera's front door is splintered and cracked; however, it has been set back on its hinges and a board has been nailed across it. Painted on the board are the words "NO TRESPASSING BY ORDER OF TOWN GUARD." The windows are all shuttered. If the house is entered, either by getting Greta's permission or by breaking in, the characters will find a large front room with a hardwood floor and several fur rugs, dominated by a large fireplace. Bolts of cloth are stacked in one corner, and there is a work-table filled with a variety of weaving and sewing implements. On the floor in front of the fireplace is a huge stain of dried blood. (This is where the loom was; where Thom was killed). Not far from the stain is an overturned stool with a cushioned top. Other rooms are typical living areas.

The story of Thom's disappearance is widespread gossip around town. General gossips "know" that 1) Thom vanished three days ago, 2) Thom's dabbling in black magic finally caught up with

him, 3) Some sort of monster must have ripped down his door; did you see the huge gouges?, 4) That mage from Candor, the one Thom was working for, must have been displeased with his work and maybe turned him into a monster in revenge, 5) There were strange shouts coming from the house right before he disappeared, 6) Thom was killed by a wyrm, 7) Thom put on the cloak and turned into something awful. Greta, on the other hand, knows that 1) Thom vanished in the early evening three days ago, 2) His loom and that Candor mage's cloak are missing, 3) There is too much blood on the floor to assume Thom still lives, although the body hasn't been found, 4) The overturned stool and blood splash-marks indicate a struggle of some sort, 5) The gouges on the door apparently occurred as something was leaving, not entering, 6) Footprints led away from the village to the north. The footprints were very strange, clawed and bare, but like a large humanoid in shape. Greta followed them for several hours, but the wind finally blew the snow over them, and she gave up for the time being.

Greta will be willing to join the group if asked, and can be used to "discover tracks" when necessary. She will also, if necessary, urge the group to travel with her to discover what happened before they return to the Onieromancer, claiming that there's more safety in numbers.

Rake's stronghold is three days away from Oscoro; thus, about the time the characters leave, he'll have reached "home." His tracks shouldn't be too easy to follow, but there can be signs such as half-frozen, ripped-up deer or wolf carcasses (dinner), big strips or sheets of scaly skin wrapped around tree trunks by the wind or caught on branches (Rake's shedded scales), or marks in the snow where he rested the loom for a while. Finding the stronghold itself shouldn't be too hard; the cave entrance is fairly easy to find against the snow. The entrance is about 10' wide and about 30' deep; it is THE DOORSTEP.

THE COMMONS

1 THE DOORSTEP

This dark cavern is marked by the pale rune over the entrance that glows when the moonlight shines on it, but is invisible in the sunlight. (The rune is the sign of Mock. At the end of the cavern is a magical wall that teleports any who touch it to room 2. Note that this makes exiting the dungeon really tricky. More on this later.)

2 ENTRY HALL

The entry hall is illuminated by ensconced torches along the short hall and the hall branches that run left and right. The sconces look like twisted iron thorns wrapped around the torches. There is no apparent way out, although there is a dark iron keyhole in the wall. (It cannot be picked, and is, in fact, rather large for most normal keys, anyway. This is, of course, the only way out - and, naturally, the key is on the villain's person. However, there are so few (intelligent) creatures here that the characters could very well spend a few days hiding in the dungeon without being captured, as long as they are circumspect.)

3 ANTECHAMBER

The antechamber has straight-backed wooden chairs with red velvet cushions on the seats. There are also thick desert-style rugs on the floor.

4 AUDIENCE HALL

This large room is lit by a great chandelier that hangs from the center of the ceiling, wrought of black iron in twisted, thorny spikes. The candles are white and greasy, and light the room with unsteady, flickering light. The floor is black iron that clangs under heel. A bleeding heart is impaled on the chandelier's spikes, dripping slightly with fresh blood. (It is Thom's heart, placed there by an annoyed Rake; it has been slowly thawing over the past few days; thus, it seems pretty fresh.)

5 SERVANT'S ROOM

This room has a small oaken table with carved wood griffen's legs, and a straight-backed wooden chair. In one corner is an iron stand with a white porcelain bowl and pitcher upon it; a white linen towel hangs from its side.

6 SQUIRE'S ROOM

This room has a small oaken table with carved wood griffen's legs, and a straight-backed wooden chair. In one corner is an iron stand with a white porcelain bowl and pitcher upon it; a white linen towel hangs from its side.

7 ARMORY

This room is filled with weapons in racks along the walls; slim swords with blades that flash like quicksilver, shields of wrought iron and deep crimson garnets splashed across them like blood, and narrow-bladed knives with hilts wrought in silver of beasts's skulls and talons. There is one oddly-shaped suit of armor in the center of the room. (Guarding the room is a suit of ENCHANTED ARMOR; its helm is shaped like a ram's skull, and its feet-coverings like split hooves. From its fingers extend long, razor-sharp knives. (AC 1, not affected by sharp weapons, double damage from blunt weapons, HP 40, damage=head butt 1d4, razor slice 1d6/hand, attacks as Fighter 4).)

8 VECTOR'S QUARTERS

These rooms are closed with oak doors; the floors are covered with nettle and thorn (itching and damage to characters who have bared flesh). (Thirteen enstasised Vectors are locked in these rooms, prior to release by Rake. A Vector is a plague-carrier; it appears as an emaciated, hairless, sexless human with its eyes and all orifices sewn shut with red thread, and mystic runes tattooed all over its body. They are brainless, scrabbling uselessly, blindly around when animate.

Enstasised means suspended several inches off the floor in a constantly swirling black mist, head thrown back, arms limp at their sides. The mist is chillingly cold, doing 1d4 to any who touch it and frosting swords and such items that are plunged into it. The Vectors can be easily slain, to reveal pale, green-tinged organs. They rot extremely quickly, and any who get too close to them must save vs. poison or be infected with some fast-acting, unpleasant disease).

9 LESSER MEETING ROOM

This room is dominated by a great round table of oak, griffen-legged and inlaid with iron

patterns like rambling thorn branches along the edges. Nine chairs circle it, straight-backed and cushioned. Unlit torches are ensconced along the walls. There is a jagged-edged scrap of scaled skin in one corner of the room. (The furniture is slightly misproportioned; built for someone taller than human.)

10 TAYKER'S QUARTERS

A dark room with a curtained alcove. The room is richly appointed with desert tapestries and ensconced torches, an ornately carved desk smaller than the furniture in room 9; built, in fact, to suit an orc. Rich desert rugs lie over the floor. In the center of the rugs is crouched a small creature that looks like a flayed humanoid, dripping a bloody slime. It looks up as the group opens the door. (A HOMONCULOUS guards the room; it will attack intruders, screaming to awaken Tayker.)

Behind the heavy curtains covering the alcove are piles of rugs and silks. (This is where Tayker sleeps. Tayker is an orc slaver who travels back and forth between Bahr al' Raml and the Dominions with victims to be enchanted into Vectors by Rake. Rake approached him, not vice-versa; but Tayker is an excellent servant, being both amoral, callous and more than willing to bring about the hated Dominions' downfall). He will grab two scimitars and fight intruders (AC 6 no armor, HP 25, Fighter 4/Wizard 4, spells at DM's discretion) to the death. If captured, he will not speak unless tortured into it; he fears Rake's power with all the superstitious awe the desert folk can muster. He is utterly evil, though, and will betray the group if given a chance, perhaps deciding to pretend to work with them and then stabbing them in the back when opportunity presents itself. He knows nothing of Rake's Hold outside the Commons.

11 LIBRARY

The library is filled with scrolls; there are no books in sight, only end on end of bone scroll-cases marked with spiky etched runes of a type unknown (the demonic Chaos Tongue). By one wall is a long, upright drying rack upon which is stretched a human skin, cleaned and softened. Inside the cases are scrolls of soft, creamy parchment (human and elven flesh) written on in the strange script. (These are Rake's records, and, if translated, will reveal his background and mission, list the various places he has released Vectors, and chart the progress of the plague. They also describe his preparation of a skeletal army that will subdue the survivors in Mock's name after the plague has run its course.) Characters searching the library will be secretly attacked by a PARASITE, VILIRIJ, which will land on anyone touching the skins.

12 MEETING AREA

A There is a desk and tall chair in this room; a twisted single candlestick of thorn-iron holds an unlit candle, pale but red-veined. On the table are several pieces of parchment, and a pen in a jar with a block of ink set next to it.

B A mage's workroom, filled with counters and paraphernalia of a wizardly sort. (Tayker will be sleeping in Room 10 unless too much time has passed for that to be reasonable, or he has been alerted; place him here only if desired. Tayker is trying to learn something about magic from Rake, which Rake allows him to do, amused by his temerity). One a table in the center of the room is an elven child's head and raw spine; runes copied from the Vectors are crudely painted on its forehead, and although it writhes slightly, it is no longer truly "alive." Nevertheless, prodding it will cause the eyes to open and the mouth to scream in agony. (The containers will

hold material components for his spells, a variety of chemicals and minerals, a potion of Sweet Water, and two potions of Extra-Healing. Everything is labeled in orcish.)

13 TREASURY The room is filled with five great iron chests, wizardlocked, filled with 2,000 ancient cinnaph coins each. (Cinnaph coins were used by the ancient race of Candor, the kevalinu, and Rake happened upon them while digging out the stronghold; unfortunately, this crimson-tinged metal is very poisonous to humans and humanoid races, causing nausea if touched (no save) and death if tasted (save vs. poison at +3 to vomit and live, suffering 5 rounds of exquisite agony).) There are also three locked doors. In the first lies a small table with runes around it; within the runes is a small silver box. (The runes are explosive, for 4d6 damage.) Inside the box is a 4" diameter disk of cloudy, translucent crystal; this is a Medallion of ESP. In the second room is another small table with runes and a silver box; the runes are again explosive. Inside this box are 2 grey, lustreless bands with runes carved on the inside. These are Armbands of Jumping (see Ring of Jumping, but both must be worn). In the third room is another small table with runes and a silver box; inside this box is a silver chalice. (This chalice will fill with any nonmagical, nonpoisonous liquid at command, six times per day.)

14 KITCHEN:

Lots of knives, bloody butcher blocks, scraps of meat everywhere, a floor covered in a geological strata of crusty, congealing, and fresh blood. A trussed child has been skewered on a spit over the fireplace - dinner. The cook is a MARRASHI spirit summoned by Rake and bound to his service - it is fettered by a rune-covered iron chain wrapped around one of its bird-clawed feet. The chain only gives it enough room to move from the kitchen to the larder and the dining hall. The marrashi will do its best to convince the party that it's a slave and would be happy to be free of Rake's power. It cannot directly fight Rake, and cannot tell them anything about the dungeon, but it doesn't need to let the characters know that! It'll lie its head off to get free. Once free of its chain, of course, it will abandon the characters at the first opportunity and try to escape to do its own plague-spreading.

15 LARDER

Hung from hooks on racks are the skinned and gutted bodies of animals and humans and elves, of various sexes and ages.

16 DINING HALL

This magnificent room is lit by three great chandeliers of black iron, within which burn red-veined, creamy candles that look like frozen flesh. In the center of the room is a long, heavy oaken table covered with white linen, upon which are settings of silver; plates, platters, chalices, rows of knives, forks and spoons, serving bowls and saltcellars. Inside the largest platter is a huge roast pig with an apple in its mouth; it is filled with roaches which move about inside of it, making its sides heave almost as if it were breathing. There is also a huge soup tureen filled with fresh blood and broken glass. The wine is thin and yellowish, slightly salty tasting - like lymph and plasma. The platters of sweetmeats are very undercooked.

(At the DM's discretion, the roast pig can animate and attack as a monster zombie, perhaps spewing disease-carrying roaches right and left everytime it's struck.)

17 CISTERN/LAVORATORY

18 GALLERY

The walls of the gallery are mirrored, reflecting the light of the chandelier overhead in a dazzling, blinding array. Works of art and craftsmanship line the walls, each worth a great deal to collectors if restored, but very awkward to carry.

A Paintings: A great oil painting of two dragons in combat, ripping at each other; two figures in ornate armor, strangely out of proportion, battling with swords that crackle with lightning; a dark figure standing on or perhaps floating over a vast expanse of water, cloaked and hooded. Worms writhe in the wood that backs the paintings.

B Armor: Six suits, all too tall and attenuated to fit a human or elf, engraved with silver etchings and ornate with gothic spikes and ridges. Green slime drips slowly from the ceiling of this room.

C Tapestries: Of elvish make, depicting silent wildernesses of dark trees and cold stone, in which nothing moves. They are moldy and musty-smelling. They're also infested with Fleas of Madness, which are desperately seeking something to live off of (like the characters).

D Statue: Of a human male with head thrown back, breathing licks of flame (or is he vomiting his own intestines?). In one hand is an orb, in the other hand is a coiled chain. His hair is tumultuous, and in its twisting, chaotic locks one can see small carvings of dragons, trees, mountains, people, and small animals. Fresh blood covers the statue and drips to the floor. (The statue is of Travail, Mock's Champion, and Rake's superior).

E Music room: A strange harp of bone dominates the room, with barbed strings that would draw blood if plucked. Carved on the walls themselves are lines of music written in a very ancient mode. A humanoid skeleton sits on a stool by the harp, its fingers impaled (through the bone) by the barbs on the strings.

F Book: This book is sealed under a crystal barrier, wizardlocked. The book is open to one page bearing a multihued illumination of four swords hilt-locked. On the other page is script in an unknown language. This is the book of Vectors, and explains how to make the hapless creatures; it is very evil, and clerics and paladins of good intent will be well-advised to destroy it at once.

G Statue: Of a great, coiled dragon, very life-like. Its eyes are black opals. (DM's option to make it come alive and attack, perhaps as a Common Animator or as a golem.)

19 MORE GALLERY

The Chimera Loom: A large loom of oak and iron stands here, with an apparently finished long-coat of woven chromium rings and multi-colored ribbons still strung on it and the shuttle held by the strings. It is stained with blood.

(If the coat is cut or the loom touched, the group will release the dream-monster Loom. See Loom write-up at the bottom of this adventure for details.)

RAKEHOLD

20 ENTRY HALL

The entrance hall to Rakehold is lit with ensouced torches. The door at the end of the hall is made of black iron, spiked and twisted so that it is impossible to turn the door handle without

scratching one's self on the metal, leaving blood to stain the metal (Rake, of course, is immune to iron and ignores such spikes).

21 UNDEAD GUARD

This large room is filled with hooks and spikes jutting from the walls. An undead guard stands here with a bullwhip and long, hooked blade (zombie, juju). He will attempt to stop intruders by grabbing them with whip or hook and throwing them against the spiked walls (for 1d6 of damage).

22 DOOR TO PIT

This heavy iron door is like the door to Rakehold; spiked and barbed, one cannot open it without paying a fee in blood.

23 PIT GUARDIANS' ROOM

This is the chamber of the guardians of the pit, four ghouls (MM) whose chamber is littered with bones and scraps of fur and hair. A dark, deep pit gapes in the center of the room. (If attacked, the ghouls will try to trip the attacker into the pit).

24 THE PIT

Stairs lead down into this dark, damp chamber. On the bottom of the pit squirm thousands of rot grub. Bones jut up from the mass of maggots; this is where Rake cleans skeletons. Anything falling (or pushed by the ghouls) into this pit will be stripped of its flesh in but a few rounds.

25 VECTOR STALLS

These stalls contain seven new Vectors who have not yet undergone the last rites of making; they are still intelligent and aware, and although their eyes and orifices are sewn up, and they have been magically/surgically rendered sexless, they are only half-covered with tattooed runes. (They can be easily slain, although characters of good inclination would be encouraged to free them. Unfortunately, their ordeal has made them mad, and they will be more hinderance than help. Aren't these moral dilemmas grand?) Rake intends to infect these Vectors with the viruses in Room 35 as soon as he gets a chance.

26 STORAGE

This room is filled with linens, basins, and the other odds and ends one might need to run a wraithhold.

27 TORTURE CHAMBER

This great chamber is filled with hooks, barbs and razor edges; a razor-edged table stands in the middle, with barbed manacles at each end, as does a great iron framework built to hold a humanoid still. A brazier in one corner burns cherry-red, the barbed irons in it glowing with heat.

28 HALL TO RAKE'S DOMAIN

This hall is dark, unlit, stone floors echoing hollowly under foot. The walls are inlaid with outjutting iron nails that snag and tear at flesh or clothing as one passes (doing 1d2 damage).

29 CELL 1

The cell is dark and sparse, the floor covered with thorn and nettle. The doors are heavy oak, barred and reinforced. There are three Cannibal Zombies in here, a little side-experiment of Rake's. He's hoping to infect them with a disease, but so far the plagues won't stick to their undead flesh, and he can't figure out why.

30 CELL 2

The cell is dark and sparse, the floor covered with thorn and nettle. The doors are heavy oak, barred and reinforced. (Should the characters be captured, they will probably be put here until Rake gets around to making them into Vectors or feeding them to his pet ghouls.)

31 CELL 3

The cell is dark and sparse, the floor covered with thorn and nettle. The doors are heavy oak, barred and reinforced. (Should the characters be captured, they will probably be put here until Rake gets around to making them into Vectors or feeding them to his pet ghouls.)

32 ASSEMBLY AREA

33 GRAND PROCESSIONAL

This hall is much like the hall to the temples, but wider; it, too, is covered with spikes and edges. The floor is black iron and the torches flicker unsteadily. Animals are impaled on the walls, groaning and squealing with terror as their struggles send blood spurting over any who pass and pools on the floor. The floor is ever so slightly curved, so that all spilled blood runs down the center.

34 CHAMBER OF MAKING I

This is where Vectors are made; filled with surgical instruments, expanses of blood-stained white cloth, cold, sterile marble counters, pots of dye, sharp needles, red thread and shining needles, etc. (Play on everyone's fear of doctors and dentists in this room description.)

35 CHAMBER OF MAKING II

This is where Vectors are infected; it is a huge alchemical laboratory with delicate glass jars filled with unusual substances. These substances are various forms of plague viruses, microbes, and so forth. In particular, there are tubes for the following viruses: combustion, crystal, petrification, phobia, psionic, and shadow. Anyone taking these tubes must be very careful - any sharp jarring of the tubes will cause them to crack and release the viruses. Of course, the tubes are unlabeled.

36 RAKE'S GRAND HALL

This richly-appointed hall is well-lit by thirty torches along the walls ensconced in thorny iron branches. A great black iron throne dominates the room, carved and twisted with spikes and thorns, from which dangle scraps of raw, bloody meat. The floor around the throne is covered with sharp iron spikes, and dark with blood, some dried, some fresh. Flanking the throne on each side are three (for a total of six) pillars covered with iron spikes and hooks; dangling from each are the impaled bodies of various types of humanoids (maybe even a friend of the characters, if they're local to the area). Lapping at the blood that spills from them are small, black lizards with

spiked backs and forked tongues that hiss and lash their tails at intruders (AC5, HP 20, bite 1d6). (If the characters are captured by anyone but Rake, or if they are called from cells after capture to be interviewed, or if they get here for the "big battle scene," they will find Rake seated on the throne careless of the spikes. Fighting in this room is a perilous endeavor; walking on the floor causes 1 hp damage/round, and falling on the floor causes 1d4 damage. Being hurled to the floor could well cause 1d6 damage. Rake, of course, is immune to iron and the effects of the spikes.)

37 CANDLE PREPARATION ROOM

Seething vats boil the fat off of a variety of small animals and a few prisoners too small or sickly to become Vectors. This fat is used to make Rake's odd pale candles.

38 CANDLE DRYING ROOM

Here the shaped candles hang from racks, waiting for use. They are greasy, off-white with red veins in them like blood.

39 RAKE'S CLOISTER

40 CRYPT GUARDROOM This room is draped with 6 hollow humanoid skins. They are Boneless, and will animate and attack anyone who enters the crypts without Rake.

41 CRYPTS

The crypts are filled with skeletons Rake is setting aside to be animated when the plague has weakened the land enough for him to put it under his control and the control of his lord Mock. The bones are stacked on each other, piled high - right now he has 200 skeletal warriors prepared that will assemble at his command. (Unlike normal skeletons, these skeletons have limited free will and that stats of juju zombies. However, Rake will not call them unless sorely pressed or, if characters escape, he might use them to hunt the characters down through the mountains. Clerics and such of good intent should destroy them.)

THE CHIMERA LOOM - ROOM 19

(NOTE: A DM who has the Ravenloft Nightmare Lands boxed set may want to work those rules into this scenario - certainly horror checks and so forth would be appropriate here, and it would be so much fun to drive a few players mad, wouldn't it?)

The Chimera Loom is an enchanted device upon which one can weave magical garments. Right now, the almost-completed cloak intended for The Onieromancer is strung on it. Unfortunately, the weaver died before the cloak could be finished, and his soul was trapped in the cloak itself. When it was damaged by the scissors, its power went wild and it became an animated power. Now insane and possessed with unnatural powers, Thom's twisted soul calls itself Loom, and travels the Dreamscape, fancying itself the lord of nightmares and madness.

Death in the dreamscape is not permanent, nor will anything destroyed or used in the dreamscape really be missing upon awakening. Thus, no damage is given, and anyone "killed" in one scene

should be fully recovered when the scene change. However, for each "death," the character will lose one point of con, that can be regained after one night's restful sleep.

Once any player touches or otherwise disturbs the cloak, the entire cloak will seem to stretch out, its multi-colored ribbons wrapping around the players. The door will slam shut. They can cut or struggle their way through the ribbons, but they are now (unknowingly) in the Dreamscape, and things are going to start getting strange. Below are scenes that will occur in order, changing quickly (i.e. after every character has gotten a chance to do something nifty). Eliminate, change or add any scenes you want - but running through scene 1 and scene 7, at least, is required. (I suggest you tailor each scene to a specific character to play on their past histories, hopes and fears). Despite the fact the characters sometimes seem to be in the room, they are not; if they try the door (with the exception of one scene, described below), they are locked in. It cannot be broken down or otherwise opened - after all, this is a nightmare!

1) The room seems the same as the characters cut their way out of the ribbons, but the loom is gone; instead, a human's body (Thom's, as Greta will recognize if she is there, or they will if they got a description) is suspended in midair, thousands of threads webbing out from his veins and arteries, pulsing crimson with his blood. He screams and froths at the mouth, quite insane. If he is cut down he will shamble after the group, but there is no intelligence inside his body.

1) If Thom is not cut down, after a moment blood will spurt out of his arteries and blind the players; when they look again, they are in scene 2.

2) If Thom is cut down, blood will spurt from his severed arteries, etc.

2) The players wipe blood from their eyes to find themselves standing on an uneven surface instead of the floor they were on a second before. They stand upon a stair of souls, bones crunching, faces screaming as the players ascend or descend, hands feebly plucking at the players' bodies and clothing. Everything around them is black, empty. The stair-creatures beg to be freed from their torment, and will begin to pull any clerics or paladins down into themselves; those characters will recognize the faces of those they have killed in their past as the hapless things cry for help. Hacking at the creatures will cause the stairs to collapse. The players fall a frightening second, only to have their feet strike the room's floor again. The vision fades, and once more they are in the loom room; but again, the loom is not there. Instead, they see:

3) The Onieromancer's body, racked on a loom of sharp hooks and needles. He is skinless, muscles threaded left and right, up and down by beautiful women with tentacles in their eye-sockets. If he is cut down he will collapse to the floor and then melt in a puddle of viscous, bloody ooze, to reappear where his body lies sleeping (somewhere in Candor, The Onieromancer will wake up, disturbed by this nightmare and wondering what the hell is happening on the Dreamscape; alas, his work is giving him insomnia, and he cannot fall asleep again to help his employees). The ooze begins to bubble and rise, forming into:

4) A woman (if someone in the party has died, make it this person; or, perhaps, make it one of the characters who is there, staring in horror at this apparent doppelganger. If you know someone in the party who has a girlfriend, daughter, wife, mother, etc, make it this person), her hair is woven into a cage surrounding her and spun on the spear piercing her throat like thread on a spindle. She is alive, but screaming, and helpless; she begs the players for aid. If her hair is cut

through the ends will pour blood, and she will bleed to death before she can be rescued. The hair tumbles around the characters. As they shrug it off, they find that the scene has changed again, and see before them:

5) An octopus-beast of a thousand arms stretching off into a blood-red sea. Each arm is barbed with steel hooks, razor-sharp, to pull people apart with. Each razor does 2d10 points of damage (thac0 = 10). If slain, the beast will tear itself into shreds that will elongate and become the horizon for scene 6. If the players are all slain, they wake up on:

6) A wide horizon, and grass that ties the group down. Skeletal humanoids caper madly around them, with barbed whips, tormenting a naked man in the middle - one of the characters, preferably one who may be dead, or otherwise one who must look at himself (if you know one of the characters has a boyfriend, husband, son, father, etc, make it this person). They peel long strips of flesh in bloody ribbons from his skin to bind and gag the characters with. If the skeletons are destroyed, the scene flashes abruptly to:

7) The Loom: Standing in a vast, empty plain with roiling clouds and lightning bolts stands the great loom, its threads going off in all directions so that the horizons are impossible to discern. The frame pulses, gleaming wetly, like a great heart.

As the characters draw nearer, a chimera appears, snarling and crouching, tail thrashing madly. Its eyes glow blue-white.

"I am Loom," it declares. It will talk and/or fight as necessary. It can control magical clothing to make the garments hinder the character wearing it. If defeated, it will collapse ordinarily, still as a chimera. Nothing will change in this scene until the characters destroy the loom, which can be done normally.

Once the characters destroy the loom, everything will fade out and they will "reawake" in the same room they had been in before, except the loom and cloak are broken and destroyed before them. The body (Thom) from scene 1 stands by them, whether or not they cut him down during that first scene. As they open the door to the room (which has closed if it was open when they first entered), they will see a man made entirely of coiled thread standing before them. It looks roughly like the body (Thom) in terms of build and crude features.

"Haven't managed to unravel the problem yet, have you?" it asks. "There's a common thread here that you're missing." (Loom enjoys needling the characters.) (Add more puns at your own risk.) At once the room writhes and the loom reconstructs itself, the cloak still on it. Needles will protrude from the floor and ceiling, seeking to sink into flesh, and thread themselves with intestines (2d4 hp, thac0 = 10). The nightmare isn't over!

The only way to defeat Loom is to kill the weaver, Thom, which will drive his sorcerously animated soul away, allowing the characters to wake up (for real, this time - although GM should make sure scene is described just as it was before, and let them remain nervous for a bit), and make it impossible for him to attack during an adventurer's waking hours. The cloak will fall to the ground, completed and ready to be taken (although desperately in need of washing). The

cloak itself has no magical powers that can be used by the players! However, if one puts it on, it will magically adjust to fit (like all magic garments) and protect as chainmail, even for mages. The wearer, however, will become very sleepy, and keep drifting off as long as the cloak is worn. If the players sleep later on in this adventure, the GM should mention that they have nightmares about Loom.

(And if the DM has the Nightmare Lands set, you can be sure that all of this hubbub on the Dreamscape has attracted the Nightmare Court's attention!)

RAKE

S: 18.80
I: 14
W: 12
D: 18
C: 14
CH: 3

PERCEPTION: 18

AC 2 MOVE: 12" ATTKS 1 bite (1d8) 2 claws (2d4 each)
MR 10% HP 80 FIGHT & SAVE as Monster (8 HD).

Infravision, ultravision, immune to iron, can ignite claws for an extra 1d4 of fire damage per hit.

Rake is a servant of Mock, and as such, bears the mark of plague. He is 8' tall, covered in pale, glistening, slime-covered, flesh-colored scales, with a flayed, cat-like head, huge, sharp fangs and long claws. His scales constantly peel off, leaving huge strips of scaly skin behind him as he goes and making him constantly irritable. He often scratches himself, peeling off skin and sometimes drawing watery blood. If killed, he rots rapidly, giving off a terrible stench and infecting anyone near with an awful disease (save vs. poison for no effect but nausea).

As has been mentioned, Rake is very irritable, and this makes him vindictive, violent, and (perhaps) a little careless. He is servile and groveling to his superiors, but cruel and mocking to his inferiors. If confronted by the characters, he may try to lull them into a false sense of security by offering (bogus) explanations, etc., but soon enough tripping over a flapping strip of skin or something of the sort will piss him off and annoy him into doing something violent. His priority will be to capture the characters and (probably) make them into Vectors (see room 8 for explanation of Vectors), storing them in cells (rooms 29-31) until he's ready to deal with them (in which case they can try to escape by overpowering a zombie guard or Tayker). He could be played as cold and cruel (I did this in my game), but could also be fun as an overbearing, slightly

amusing villain. (Note: If Rake gets The Onieromancer's cloak from the players, it will do him as little good as it did them. Specially tailored magic items are a drag.)