Silverback Siege

Table of Contents

Set up

This module is intended for a group of 4 level 7 adventurers. They start with either: a) their starting gear plus 1 uncommon item and 2000 gold to upgrade OR b) 1 uncommon item and 3500 gold to buy any gear they feel they need, based on equipment available in the PHB (pp. 144-156).

Setting

Silverback Mountain is a medium sized city of dwarves that offers protection and goods to many people in the lands around the mountain in the frozen north. The Silverback Dwarves have pursued a campaign against various small tribes of Goblins and Gnolls for the past few years with varying degrees of success.

The party has been hired to collect and transport a wagon full of weapons, armor, and other smithed goods from the Silverback Mountains to the Uthgar outpost, a trip which would take a little over 3 days. When they arrive at Donnersburg, the small town at the base of the mountain that acts as a trade hub and resupply point for merchants travelling to Silverback, they find the streets empty and the buildings abandoned.

There are signs of people hastily packing up some belongings and running towards the mountain. Most of the shops look to have been ransacked, and several of the nearby buildings are smoldering wrecks. Closer to the entrance to the Dwarven city, the party will find the bodies of some of the townsfolk, stabbed or shot in the back as they ran.

Conflict

The main factions are the Gnolls, led by Gruk Clayskin (a Flind), and the Silverback Dwarves. There is a Dwarf guard captain, Garrak Boldstone, leading a group of city soldiers and

guards in defense of the city, and the players may encounter him fighting Gruk in the Foundry

area.

Gruk Clayskin

[1]

- Gruk hates the Dwarves of Silverback Mountain more than anything else in the world.

  Anyone and anything associated with them is fair game to him. He has no intention of

  letting any dwarf go or letting anyone past him, into or out of the mountain.

- It would be almost impossible for anyone to convince him to call off his attack. If the

  party doesn't attack him and manage to make at least 3 DC 20 Persuasion checks, he

  could be convinced to leave the city for now, but if the party fail 3 of their attempts by 5

  or more, he will resume hostilities and fight to the death. This will be more difficult if

  any surviving dwarf is near him because they will *not* try peaceful negotiations.

- Gruk will usually try to get in close and use his flail. He will often try to get near groups

  of his Gnolls to use Aura of Blood Thirst.

Garrak Boldstone

GARRAK BOLDSTONE
Dwarf (Mountain)

Armor Class 20 (Plate/Shield)
Hit Points 103 (9d10+45)
Speed 30 ft.

INIT

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20	12	20	13	14	14
(+5)	(+1)	(+5)	(+1)	(+2)	(+2)

Saving Throws Str+9, Con+9
Skills Acrobatics+5, Athletics+9, Insight+6, Intimidation+6, Perception+6
Damage Resistances Poison
Senses Darkvision 60ft, Passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Dwarven
Challenge (XP)
Proficiency Bonus +4

Action Surge
Fighter ability

Fighting Style: Dueling
+2 dmg fighting one handed

Combat Superiorty
5d8
* Disarming Attack
* Riposte
* Parry
* Trip Attack
* Commander's Strike

Indomitable
1/LR
Fighter ability

Shield Master (Reaction)
Feat abilities

ACTIONS

Attack.
Melee Weapon Attack: +10, Reach 5 ft, One target
Hit: 12 (1d8+8) slashing damage
Attacks twice on Action; +1 Longsword

BONUS ACTIONS

Second Wind.
1/LR
+1d10+9 HP

Shield Master.
Feat abilities

[2]

Garrak is a no-nonsense person who is fiercely loyal to his people and his city. He hates Gnolls,

Goblins, and Giants with a passion, and will not trust any who try to ally or attempt peaceful

negotiations with anyone attacking his people or his home. He would also have to be convinced

to not attack if the players wish to do so (Persuasion DC 22).

Arriving at the Mountain

When the party reaches the Silverback entrance, they'll meet Hulkam, a survivor hiding near a guardhouse. Hulkam will tell the party of the Gnoll attack during the night and that the Gnolls have breached the city. The party learns that the Gnolls seem to be destroying everything and killing everyone they see.

- Hulkam is a merchant, not a smith nor a soldier. He cannot and will not fight or join the party entering the mountain. He's not a coward – he simply knows that he'd get in the way and likely get himself and maybe others killed.

- Hulkam saw the Gnolls attack. He watched them cut down defenseless people before breaching the city. He has stayed where he was because he wasn't certain if there were more Gnolls in Donnersburg. He will leave as soon as the party is done speaking to him.

- He doesn't know the names of any of the Gnolls, but he will point the party to Karnak's Emporium (the arcane research lab) and tell them that Garrak Boldstone, a captain of the city guard, would likely be leading any defenses farther in the city.

The City Map

Overview Map
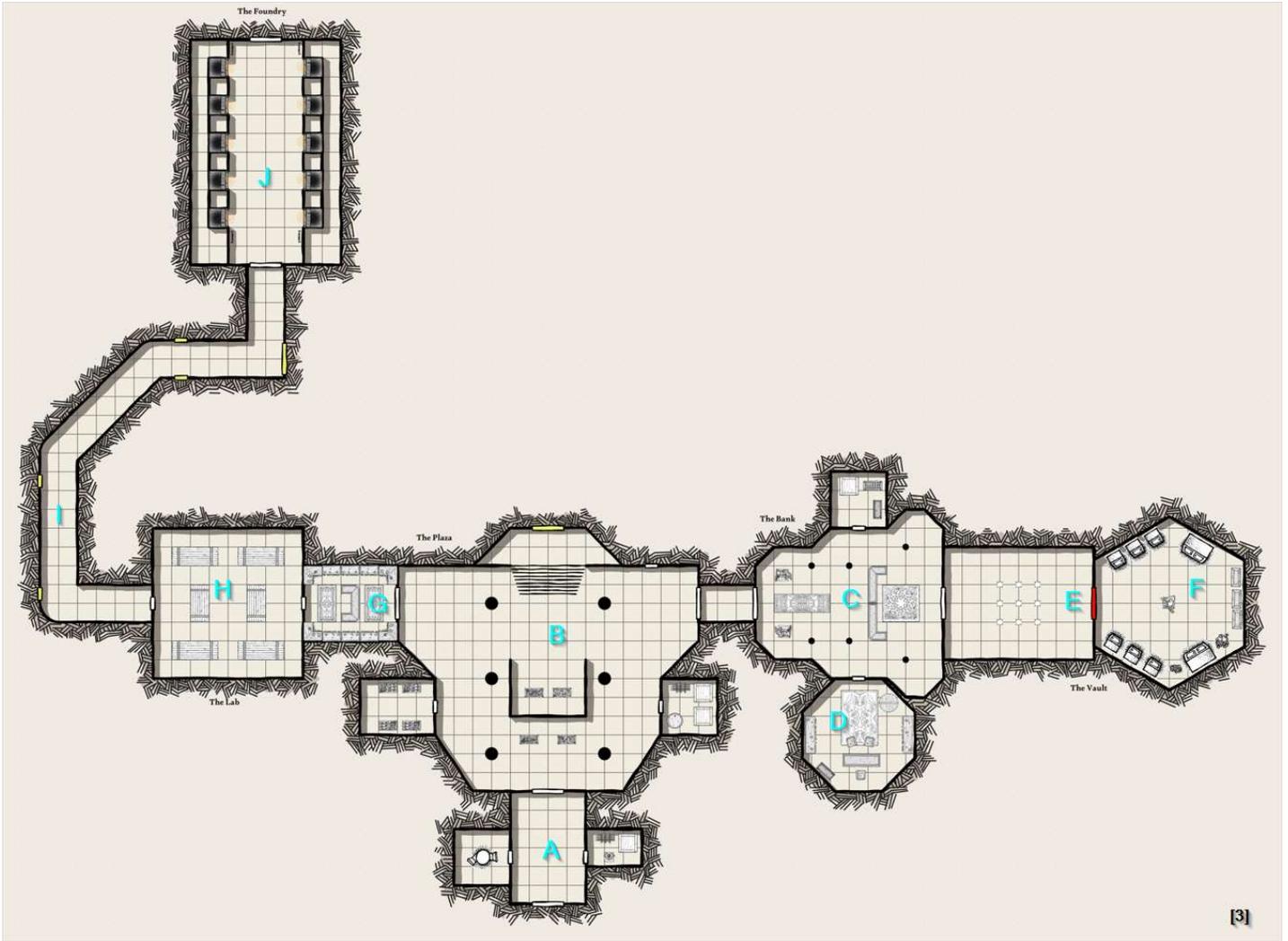
A. Entry Area

A: Entry area. The room to the right is locked (Thieves' Tools DC 15), and contains an item

from item chart A. The small room to the left has a few dead bodies.

[3]
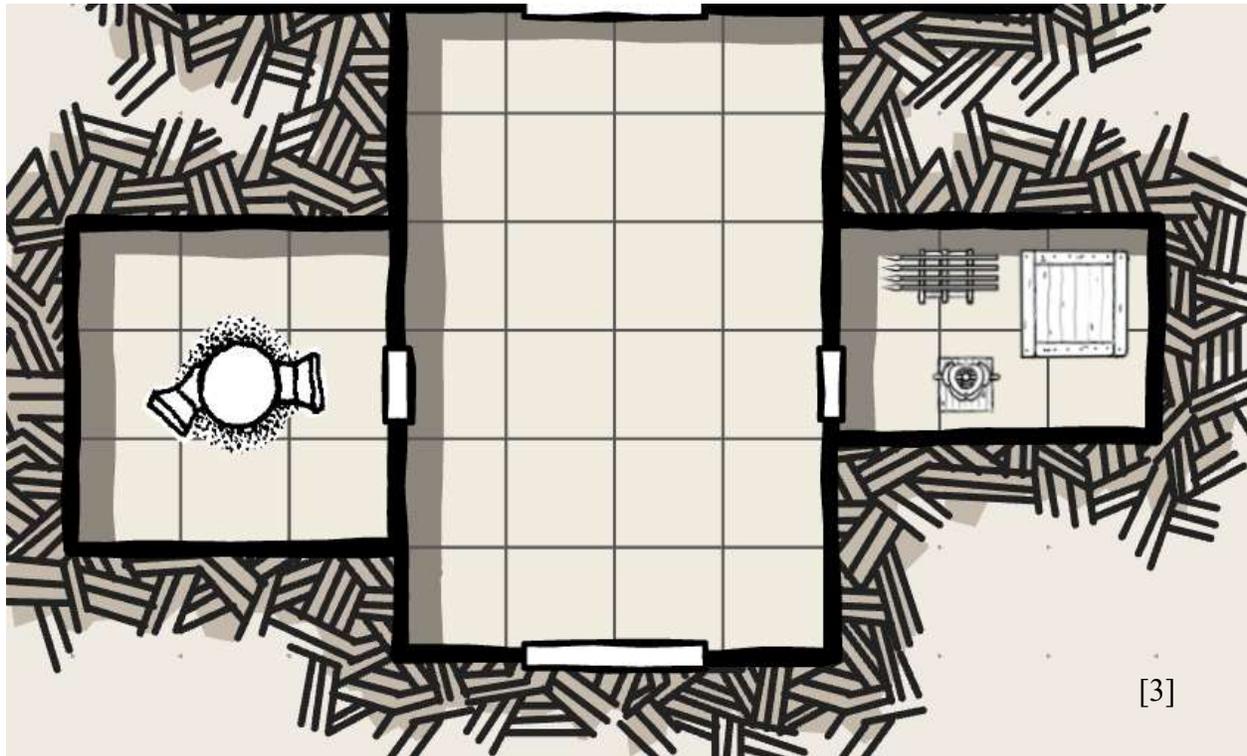
B. The Plaza

B: The Plaza. There are 3 Gnoll Hunters (CR ½) and 3 Gnolls (CR ½) led by a Gnoll Pack Lord

(CR 2) in the Plaza. They seem to be patrolling the area and trying to access the yellow door at

the top of the room, which is inaccessible. If the players try to open it, they will find that it is

locked down under some kind of magic that would require a specific keystone or a high level

spell (7th or 8th) to open – they will not be able to go this way, though it is the direct route to

where the cart they seek is.

The room on the left (A) has some regular healing potions and an item from chart A. The

room on the right (B) has spears, javelins, a suit of chainmail, and an item from item chart A.

The Plaza

[3]
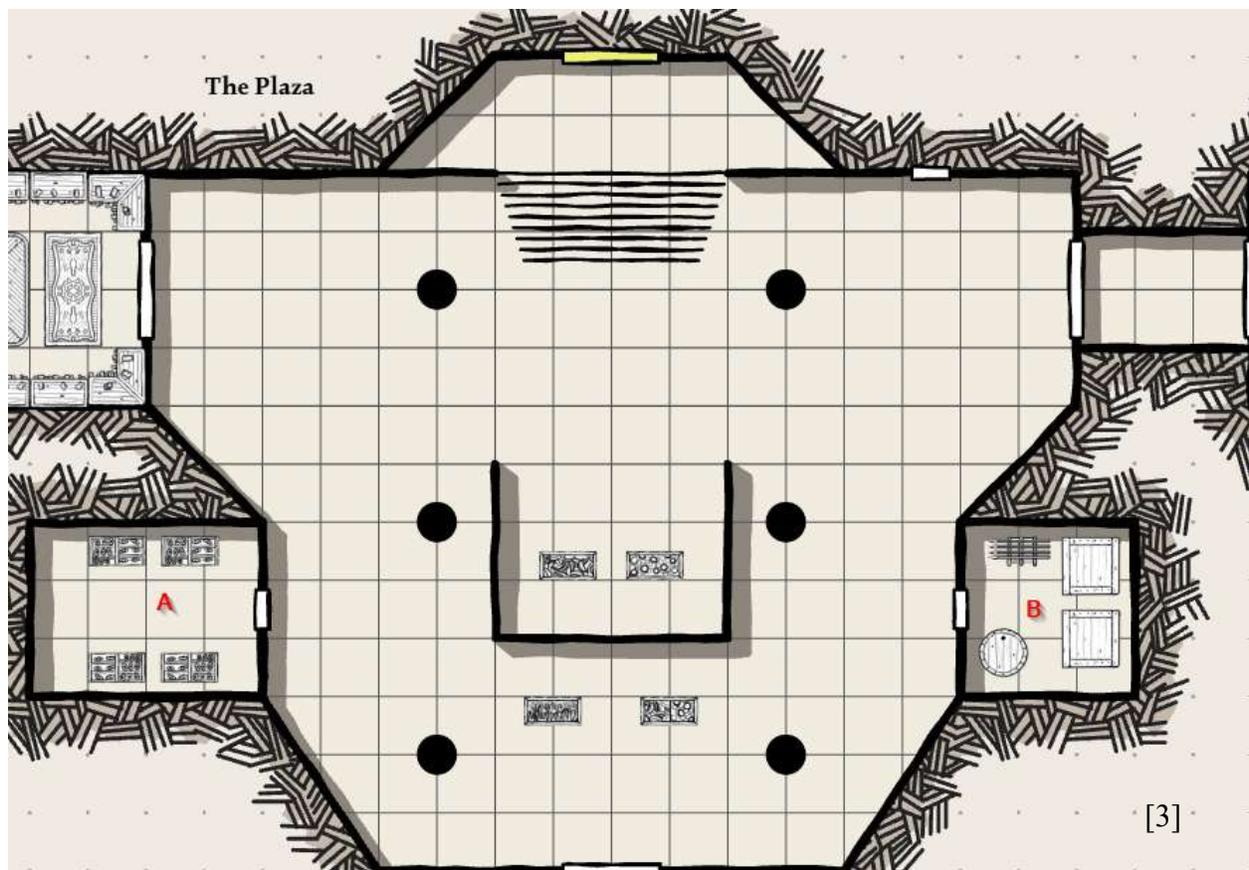
GNOLL HUNTER 🔊   MPMM p144

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Gnoll
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) 📶   **Proficiency Bonus** +2

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gnoll makes two Bite, Spear, or Longbow attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage when used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the target's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.

BONUS ACTIONS

Rampage. After the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll moves up to half its speed and makes a Bite attack.

Environment: Arctic, Forest, Grassland, Hill
Source: *MPMM*, page 144. Also found in *VGM*, page 154.

[1]

GNOLL 🔊   MM p163

Medium Humanoid (Gnoll), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	6 (−2)	10 (+0)	7 (−2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Gnoll
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) 📶   **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Environment: Desert, Forest, Grassland, Hill
Source: *MM*, page 163. Also found in *PotA; TftYP; GoS; BGDIA; ERLW; EGW; IDRotF.* Available in the SRD.

[1]

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GNOLL PACK LORD  🔊                          MM p163
Medium Humanoid (Gnoll), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 49 (9d8 + 9)
Speed 30 ft.

   STR        DEX        CON        INT        WIS        CHA
  16 (+3)    14 (+2)    13 (+1)    8 (–1)     11 (+0)    9 (–1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Gnoll
Challenge 2 (450 XP)                          Proficiency Bonus +2

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its
turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite
attack.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The gnoll makes two attacks, either with its glaive or its longbow, and uses
its Incite Rampage if it can.
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing
damage.
Glaive. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing
damage.
Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2)
piercing damage.
Incite Rampage (Recharge 5–6). One creature the gnoll can see within 30 feet of it can use
its reaction to make a melee attack if it can hear the gnoll and has the Rampage trait.

Environment: Desert, Forest, Grassland, Hill
Source: MM, page 163. Also found in PotA; GoS; BGDIA.
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[1]

C. The Bank & D. The Bank Manager's Office

C: The Bank. If the combat in the Plaza was over too quickly (less than 3 full rounds or 20 minutes), there could be more Gnolls (CR ½) and a Kurr (CR 4) here. The room at the top has an item from item chart A.

D: The Bank Manager's Office. Here there is a note from the Bank Manager to a teller, telling them to avoid the new "security system" for the vault, and that they just need to humor the wizard who insisted on its installation for a few more months before they can remove it. The note also reminds them to not approach the vault without some way of putting out a fire.

Locked in the cabinet (C) near the manager's desk (Thieves' Tools DC 13) is a potion of fire resistance and an item from item chart A.

The Bank

[3]
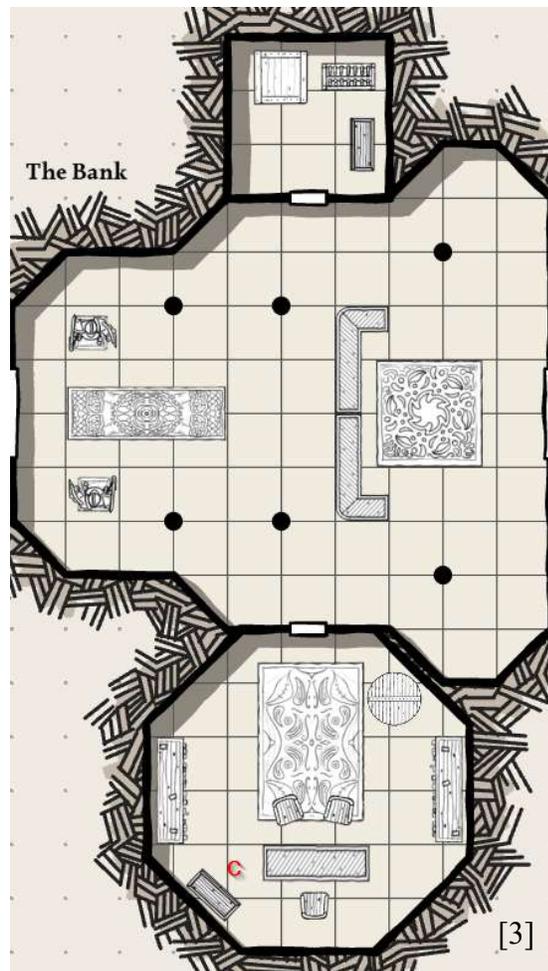
KURR   OOTA p179

Medium Fiend (Gnoll), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2, Cha +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Abyssal, Gnoll
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)   **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Rampage. When Kurr reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, Kurr can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kurr makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Source: *OotA*, page 179

[1]

E. The Security System & F. The Vault

E: The Security System. An optional puzzle for the players. When they enter, a lone Gnoll is attempting to pick the locks of the Vault door. Their entry, whether they attack or not, startles the Gnoll, who looks at them and fails their attempt, setting off the trap and immolating them. Now, the players may attempt to open the vault themselves (see Puzzle: Vault Door) or move on.

F: The Vault. This is the repository of much of the bank's gold and trade goods. Most of the gold here is not in the form of coins but bars, meant for bank to bank transfers. Each ingot weighs ~400 troy ounces (27.5 pounds) and is worth ~1350 gold pieces (gp). NOTE: if dwarves discover that the players take any of these ingots, they will likely demand their return and become hostile if the players refuse. There are six safes (Thieves' Tools DC 20 to open) containing more ingots

and 1d6 x 100 gp in loose coins, as well as 2 larger safes (Thieves' Tools DC 20 to open) each

containing a +1 weapon and armor and an item from item chart A. The three chests along the

back wall (Thieves' Tools DC 18 to open) contain mainly personal effects from wealthy clients

and a common healing potion each.

[3]

The Vault
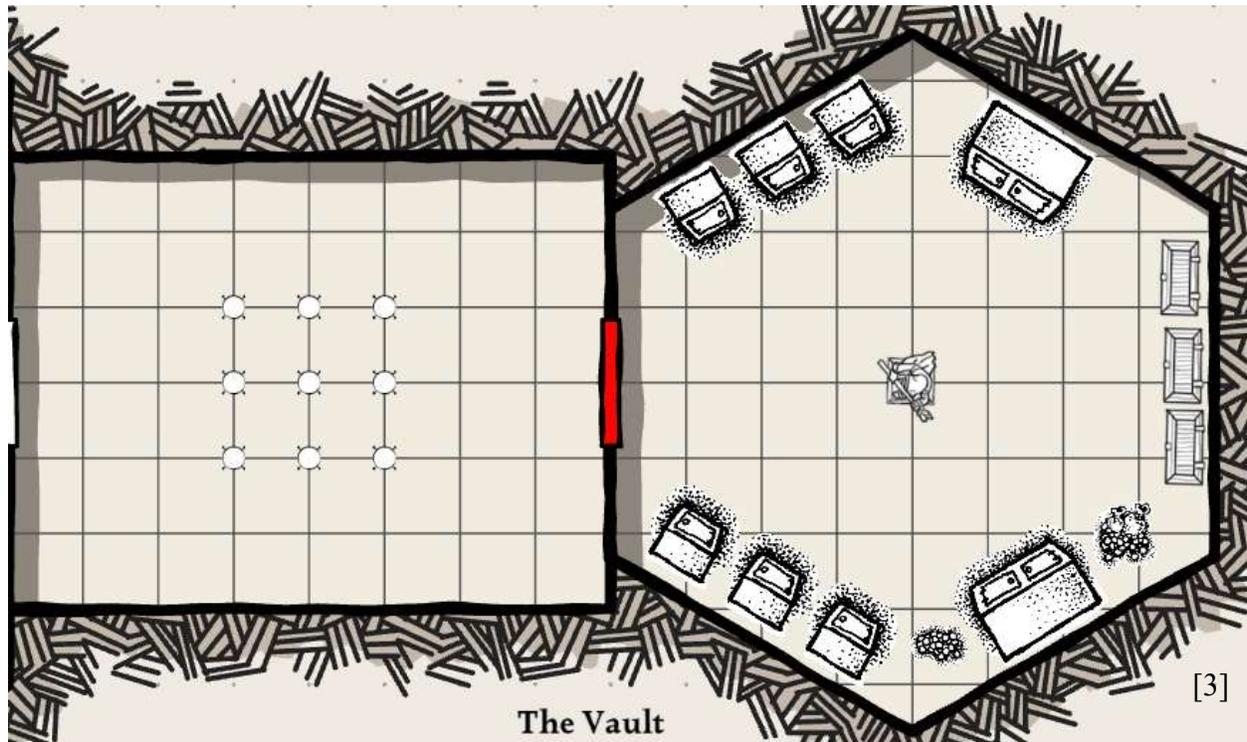
G. Karnak's Emporium & H. The Lab

G: Karnak's Emporium. This is the store front for Karnak, a wizard living in the city. His

emporium has a great many books detailing knowledge Arcane and Alchemical. The players may

find (Investigation DC 16) some notes and a recipe for common and greater healing potions in a

hidden drawer desk near the cash register.

H: The Lab. Puzzle room – see Puzzle: The Lab. Players must pass through this area to continue

on.

[3]
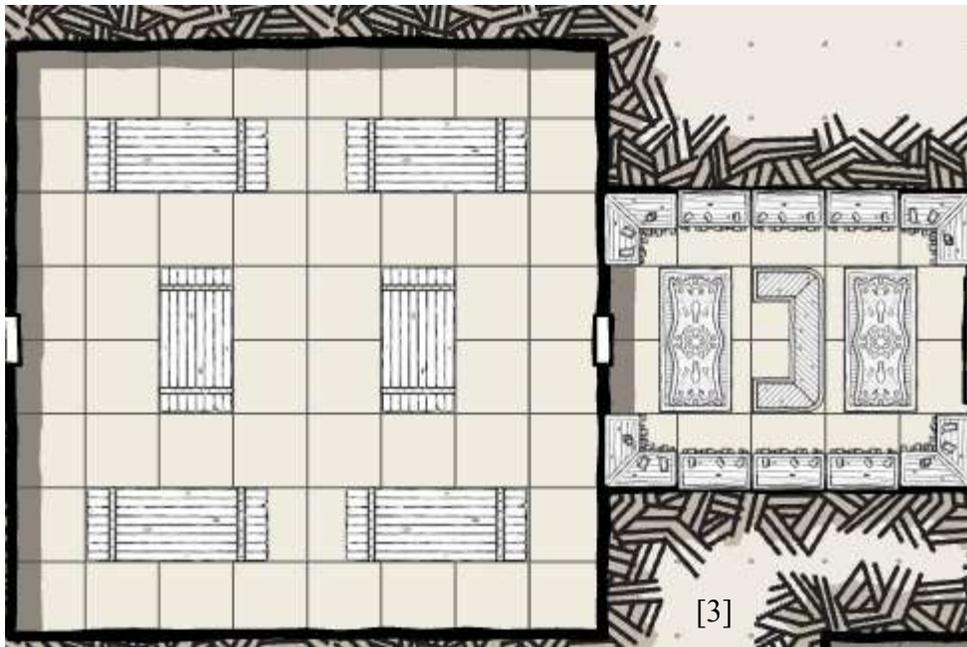
I. Passageways

I: Passageways. All of the doors here are on lockdown and cannot be opened. Many seem to be

barred or in front of collapsed areas. There are no sounds of battle or life behind the doors.

[3]
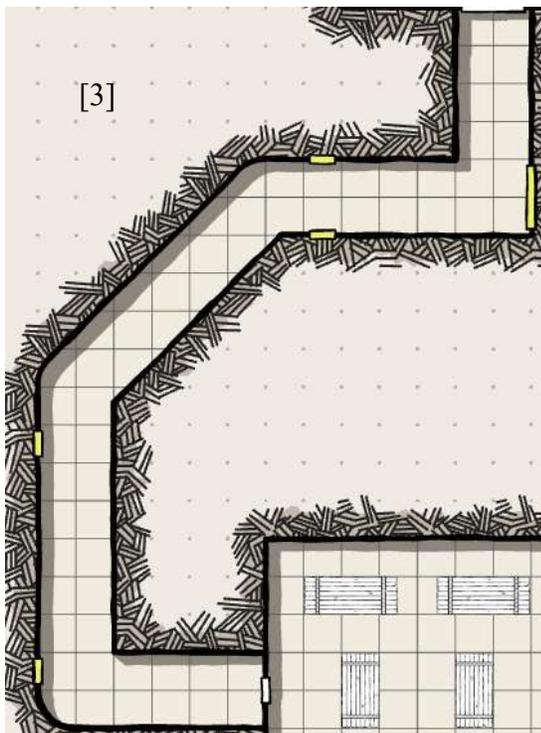
J. The Foundry

J: The Foundry: Where Gruk and Garrak are fighting each other, along with their allies. Gruk is leading 4 Gnolls (CR ½), 4 Gnoll Hunters (CR ½), and a Gnoll Pack Leader (CR 2). Garrak has 5 dwarf soldiers (CR ½) with him. (If the session is running long, reduce the number of Gnolls and Gnoll Hunters as needed)
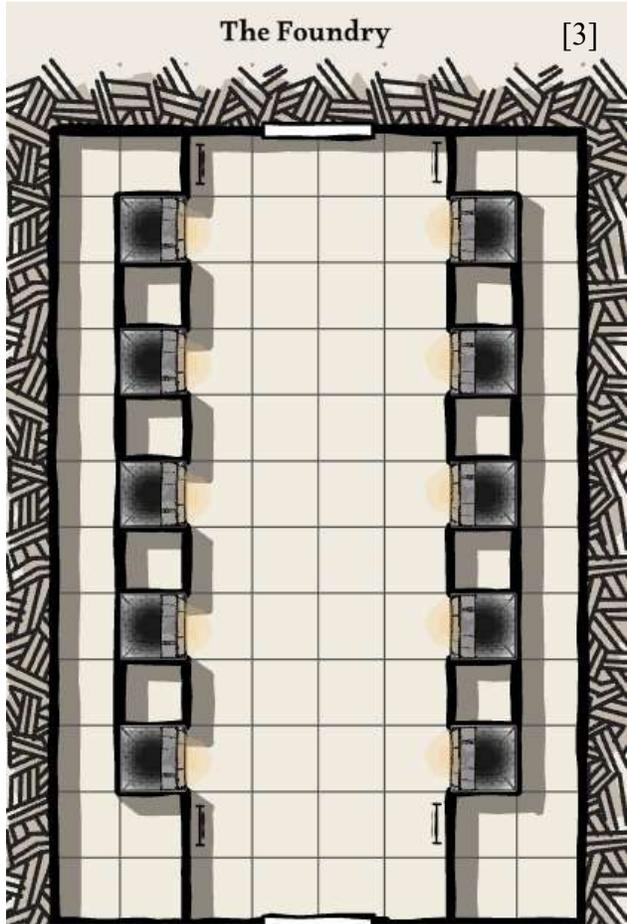
There are catwalks alongside both sides of the room, ~10 ft. up. There are ladders at the entrance and exit of the room. Gnolls have taken positions on the catwalks to fire down at both the dwarves and the party.

The furnaces dotted along the walls are potential hazards – if directly in front of one, a successful push check will throw a character into it, dealing 4d10 fire damage immediately and requiring a DC 17 Con save, with the character catching fire on a failure. When the character starts their turn in or enters the furnace for the first time, they take 4d10 fire damage and, if they are on fire, take an additional 2d6 fire damage. The character must move out of the furnace (treated as difficult terrain) and use an action to extinguish the flames.

The combat sequence runs something like this:

- 1st round: Garrak calls out for aid from the players, and Gruk commands the Gnolls to attack the party.

- 2nd round: Garrak and Gruk focus on each other while the Gnolls focus down singular dwarf soldiers or party members.

- 3rd round: Gruk orders any remaining Gnolls to try to use the furnaces as environmental hazards. They will forego conventional attacks to grapple and shove the dwarves and players. The dwarves will do the same once they realize what is happening.

- 4th round and on: Combat continues until one side is defeated, or the players manage to somehow convince everyone to stop fighting (extremely difficult, as noted in the above conflict section).

The Foundry [3]

FLIND

FLIND   MPMM p127

Medium Fiend (Gnoll), Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	Hit Points	Speed	Challenge	PB
16 (breastplate)	127 (15d8 + 60)	30 ft.	9 (5,000 XP)	+4

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +5

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Gnoll, Abyssal

Aura of Blood Thirst. If the flind isn't incapacitated, any creature with the Rampage trait can make a Bite attack as a bonus action while within 10 feet of the flind.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The flind makes one Flail of Chaos attack, one Flail of Pain attack, and one Flail of Paralysis attack, or it makes three Longbow attacks.

Flail of Chaos. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target must use its reaction, if available, to make one melee attack against a random creature, other than the flind, within its reach. If there's no creature within reach, the target instead moves half its speed in a random direction.

Flail of Pain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 16 (3d10) psychic damage.

Flail of Paralysis. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

[1]

GARRAK BOLDSTONE
Dwarf (Mountain)

Armor Class 20 (Plate/Shield)
Hit Points 103 (9d10+45)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20	12	20	13	14	14
(+5)	(+1)	(+5)	(+1)	(+2)	(+2)

Saving Throws Str+9, Con+9
Skills Acrobatics+5, Athletics+9, Insight+6, Intimidation+6, Perception+6
Damage Resistances Poison
Senses Darkvision 60ft, Passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Dwarven
Challenge (XP)
Proficiency Bonus +4

Action Surge
Fighter ability

Fighting Style: Dueling
+2 dmg fighting one handed

Combat Superiorty
5d8
* Disarming Attack
* Riposte
* Parry
* Trip Attack
* Commander's Strike

Indomitable
1/LR
Fighter ability

Shield Master (Reaction)
Feat abilities

BONUS ACTIONS

Second Wind.
1/LR
+1d10+9 HP

Shield Master.
Feat abilities

ACTIONS

Attack.
Melee Weapon Attack: +10, Reach 5 ft, One target
Hit: 12 (1d8+8) slashing damage
Attacks twice on Action; +1 Longsword

[2]

SOLDIER   GGR P226

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)   **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Formation Tactics. The soldier has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, grappled, or restrained while it is within 5 feet of at least one ally.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The soldier makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Source: *GGR*, page 226. Also found in *MOT*.

[1]

Puzzle: Vault Door

The party enters a large room, 40' x 30' x 15'. In the middle of the room are 9 braziers, one in the center and one at each cardinal and ordinal point. There are channels in the floor from the center brazier to each other brazier. The brazier at the North point is lit, and all the others are unlit. Beneath the basin of each brazier is a switch. The switch on a lit brazier lights up and darkens when the brazier extinguishes.

The vault door has 9 locks on it and the charred remains of a gnoll with a melted set of thieves' tools. One of the locks is open already and glows red hot. Each lock is magical, requiring a DC 22 thieves' tools check to unlock. Failure to meet the DC causes each lock already unlocked to reset, and a fire trap goes off in a 10-foot cube, starting at the door (2d6 fire damage +2d6 fire damage for every lock that resets, Dex save DC 18 for half damage).

Activating a brazier swaps the state of each brazier it directly connects to and the next brazier in a straight line (Activating the North brazier would swap its state to unlit and the state of the center brazier and the South brazier from unlit to lit). When a brazier turns on, a corresponding lock on the door unlocks. Likewise, when a brazier turns off, the corresponding lock on the door resets *without* setting off the trap at the door. Unlocking a lock with thieves' tools also activates the corresponding brazier but does *not* swap the states of any braziers connected to it. If the lock is open, but the brazier is unlit, lighting the brazier will not reset the lock, but switching back to unlit will reset it again.

The vault door opens when all 9 locks are open.

Possible player options and strategies

At level 7, Rogues, Monks, and some Rangers should have Evasion, allowing for mitigation or total avoidance of the fire damage from the trap. Likewise, Bear Totem Barbarians

and certain races could have resistance to fire damage. A character with proficiency in shields

and the Shield Master feat could also avoid all damage from the trap on a successful Dex save.

Arcane Trickster Rogues could use *mage hand* to pick the locks from a safe distance entirely.

The *knock* spell would unlock a single lock, meaning some spell casters could find

alternative ways of getting past some steps of unlocking all the locks, though potentially at

extreme resource cost.

Puzzle: The Lab

The puzzle takes place in an arcane laboratory. The room is 40' x 40' x 20', with several

long workstations, a couple of statues, and other pieces of furniture. A sheet of water spans the

entire room, 10' off the floor. At first glance, the ceiling appears to be a mirror. Closer inspection

reveals that it is water and that there is no reflection of any of the party. Inspecting further

reveals that what's above is not an exact replica of what's on the floor.

Once the entire party enters the room, the door they entered closes and magically locks,

and the first half who entered the room fall upwards through the sheet of water, "dropping" to the

ceiling on the other side. They are surrounded by matching furniture, statuary, and workspaces as

those on the floor. When the party members on the ceiling look "up", they'll notice a glow

around one of the statues.

 Any party member on the ceiling will find that their relative direction has changed.

Jumping or attempting to fly or teleport back to the floor simply causes them to "fall" back to the
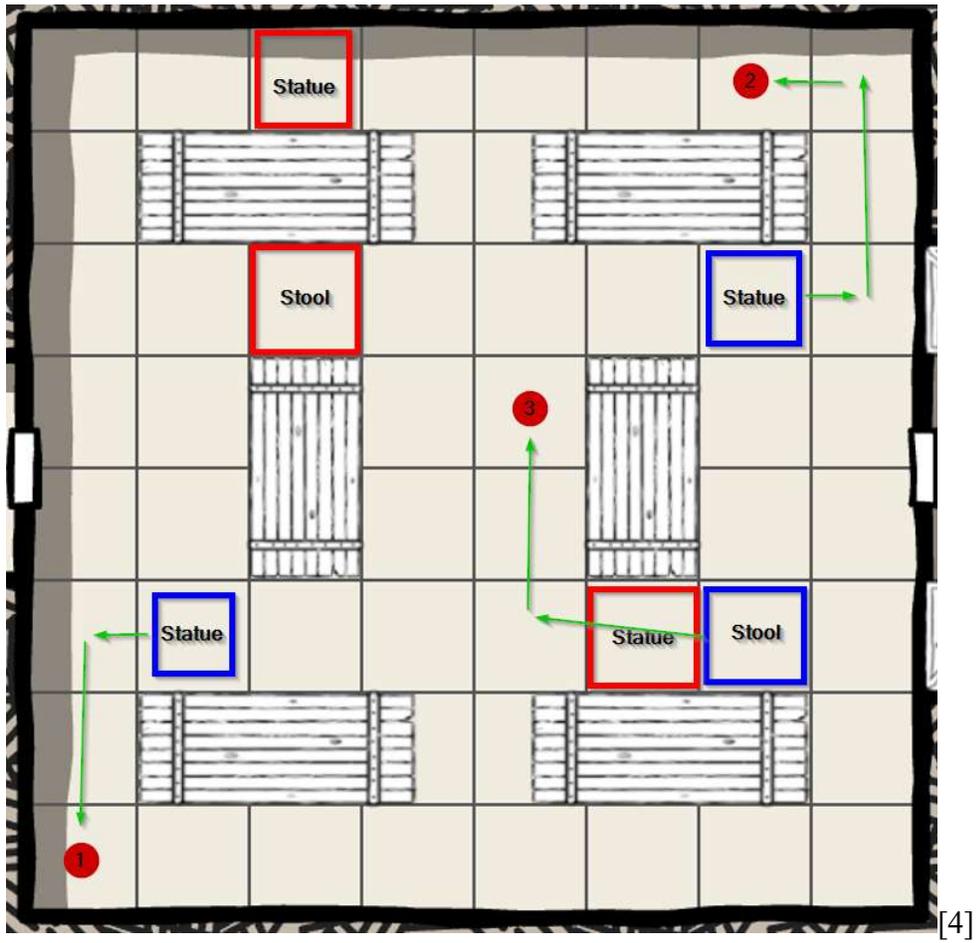
ceiling.

What follows is a back and forth of party members looking at the other half of the room

and telling their partners what to move or change and how. Once the statues, furniture, and lab

equipment are moved to the proper locations, the exit door opens, and the party on the ceiling

safely lowers back down to the floor.

Ceiling to Floor View

[4]
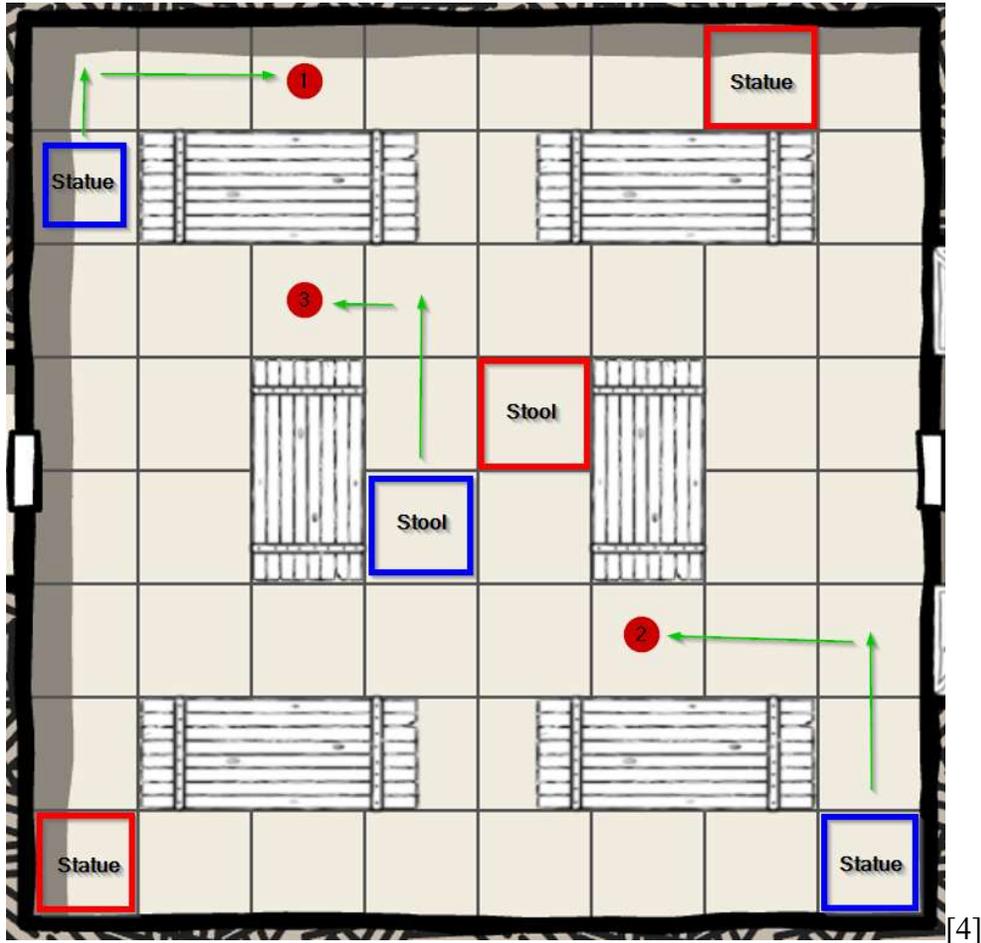
Floor to Ceiling View

[4]

Item Chart A

Number	Item
1	Potion of healing (common)
2	Greater Potion of healing (uncommon)
3	Potion of Fire Resistance (uncommon)
4	Alchemist's Fire (flask)
5	Magical Cloak (see chart B)
6	Magical Jewelry (see chart C)
7	+1 Armor (uncommon)
8	+1 Weapon (uncommon)

Item Chart B

Number	Item
1	Cloak of Billowing (common)
2	Cloak of Many Fashions (common)
3	Cloak of Elvenkind (uncommon)
4	Cloak of the Manta Ray (uncommon)
5	Cloak of Protection (uncommon)
6	Cloak of the Bat (rare)

Item Chart C

Number	Item
1	Amulet of the Drunkard (uncommon)
2	Necklace of Adaptation (uncommon)
3	Periapt of Health (uncommon)
4	Ring of Jumping (uncommon)
5	Ring of Mind Shielding (uncommon)
6	Ring of Fire Resistance (rare)

References

[1] "Flind." 5e Tools. https://5e.tools/bestiary.html#flind_mpmm (Accessed Feb. 8, 2023).

[2] "Garrak Boldstone." Character made by me.

[3] "Silverback Mountain." Dungeon scrawl. Map made by me.

[4] "Lab puzzle views." Maps made by me.