

Adventure MDR #2 – B: The Curse of Utch-karr

About The Author:

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Adventure Stats

Pages: 8

Word Count: Approximately 4800

Number of Players: 4-6

Player Level: 2-3

Total XP Possible: 2950

Encounters: 8 Monsters + 1 Multi-faceted Curse/Complex Trap = 9 Encounters plus some traps

Highlight: Critical adventure information

Highlight: 5th Edition Specific Information

Summary/Plot:

In this low-level adventure, the party stumbles upon an ancient, ruined fortress infested with goblins and bugbears. Unbeknownst to them, however, the creatures are not the only difficulty this fortress poses. There are 15 gems scattered throughout the fortress that have been cursed by the powerful deity Utch-karr. When the characters take possession of the gems, they will likely draw the curse down upon themselves. Once they realize this, the adventure transforms from a simple hack-and-slash to a more sinister race against time to solve the mystery and lift the curse.

The Fortress of Utch-karr

Introduction:

This adventure is basically a "Floating Encounter." It can be placed on any rarely used forest road away from the niceties of civilization – things like patrols and heavy traffic along the road.

The Curse of Utch-karr – A Goblin Deity

Years ago, a band of adventurers found this ruined fortress in which a tribe of goblins had set up a shrine. The adventurers defeated the goblins, found the statue to their god (Utch-karr) and desecrated the statue by removing 15 valuable gems from it (12 sapphires removed from the crown, 2 rubies removed from the eyes, and 1 emerald removed from the chest). In his anger, Utch-karr cursed the gems, now called Illstones, and anyone carrying them. One at a time, each of the adventurers succumbed to the curse. Since that time, other creatures have entered the fortress, found an Illstone or two and succumbed to the curse in turn.

Although all 15 of the gems are cursed, NONE of them radiate magic for the purposes of a detect magic spell. An identify spell, however, will reveal that the gems have properties that are masked, but nothing else.

In total, there are 15 Illstones:

The 12 Crownstones – 12 blue sapphires in the shape of octahedrons (8-sided die) – Each worth 100 gp

The 2 Eyestones – 2 red rubies in the shape of dodecahedrons (12-sided die) – Each worth 200 gp

The 1 Heartstone – 1 green emerald in the shape of an icosahedron (20-sided die) – Worth 400 gp

The Curse:

Any creature in possession of one of the Illstones must make a **DC: 16 Charisma save, 1x per day (at dawn)**. On any failure, he/she succumbs to one effect of the curse in ascending numerical order. There are four effects in total for each type of Illstone. With the first failed Charisma save, the first effect takes place. With the second failed Charisma save, the third effect takes place. With the third failed Charisma save, the third effect takes place. And with the fourth failed Charisma save, the fourth and final effect takes place.

The curse effects for each Illstone are as follows:

Crownstones:

#1 – A blue diamond tattoo appears on his/her forehead

#2 - His/her hair falls out

#3 – He/she transforms into a goblin (who, unnaturally, has no hair)

#4 – Personality is lost. He/she becomes an NPC goblin.

Eyestones:

#1 – Red pentagon tattoo appears above one eye

#2 – his/her eyes change to a solid red color

#3 – He/she transforms into a bugbear (who, unnaturally, has eyes that are solid red in color)

#4 – Personality is lost. He/she becomes an NPC bugbear.

Heartstone:

#1 – A green pentagon tattoo appears in the center of his/her chest

#2 – His/her blood changes to a green color

#3 – He/she transforms into a hobgoblin (who, unnaturally, bleeds green).

#4 – Personality is lost. He/she becomes an NPC hobgoblin.

If a character is carrying more than one Illstone, he/she must make a save for each Illstone he/she is carrying or succumb to the appropriate effects.

Every goblin in this adventure has a blue diamond-shaped tattoo on the center of his forehead.

Every goblin in this adventure also has no hair.

Every goblin in this adventure reverts to human form 24 hours after he/she has been slain.

Every bugbear in this adventure has a red pentagon-shaped tattoo above one or the other of his/her eyes.

Every bugbear in this adventure has eyes that are an unnatural solid red in color.

Every bugbear in this adventure reverts to human form **24 hours after he/she has been slain.**

The hobgoblin in this adventure has a green pentagon-shaped tattoo in the center of his chest.

The hobgoblin in this adventure bleeds an unnatural green.

The hobgoblin in this adventure reverts to human form **24 hours after he has been slain.**

Leaving the Fortress

If any creature carrying an Illstone leaves the fortress, it must make a **DC: 16 Charisma** save every hour. For every failed save, that creature will gain **1 level of exhaustion**. A creature so exhausted that returns to the fortress and takes a short rest, will recover and lose all levels of exhaustion at the end of that short rest. If that creature tries to leave again, he/she must make additional **DC: 16 Charisma** saves every hour. Failure indicates he/she, once again, gains **a level of exhaustion**.

Encounter #0: The Approach

As you continue to follow the road that you've been on for the past few days, you emerge from the woods and see an enormous ruined fortress fashioned from dark grey stone jutting up from the ground. The road leaves the forest and skirts around the front of the fortress before disappearing into the woods again a short distance away. The fortress has a circular base so that it appears to be a kind of oversized squat tower. It measures nearly 80' across and reaches 60' into the sky. The SE section of the fortress is damaged so that an enormous hole exposes parts of both level 2 and level 3 to the outside. The road passes right in front of that opening. The fortress is approximately 150' away from your current position.

Any character looking for movement that succeeds on a **DC:12 Perception Check** will notice movement on levels 2 and 3 near the exposed parts of the fortress (Goblins from Rooms 4 and 6). If the players exit the cover of the woods and make no effort to conceal themselves, the goblins in the fortress will detect them with a **DC: 7 Perception Check**. If the PCs stay in the woods and try to assault the fortress from cover, the goblins will need to make a **DC: 15 Perception Check** before they can attack. The goblins will have $\frac{1}{2}$ cover (+2 AC) for the first round of combat, after which they will get $\frac{3}{4}$ cover (+5 AC) in the second and all following rounds provided they remain in the fortress. If the PCs stay in the forest, they, too, will have $\frac{3}{4}$ cover (+5 AC).

If the PCs approach from the N side of the fortress, the forest provides cover until it is within 50' of the fortress. Further, the goblins will not see them unless the PCs do something to attract their attention.

Room #1: The Gate Room

*The door is fashioned from iron and is **locked (DC: 12)**. Opening the door reveals a semicircular room that has a radius of roughly 30'. There is a reinforced wooden door on the E half of the N wall. There is a mosaic on the W half of the N wall. The mosaic depicts a large humanoid with reddish-brown skin wielding a massive morning star in its left hand while raising a sceptre in the other. On its head the mosaic depicts a black iron crown studded with what appear to be blue sapphires. There is an inscription in a strange language written beneath the mosaic. Two small tables are overturned near the center of the north wall. Each one shelters a small reddish-brown humanoid that looks like a smaller version of the creature depicted in the mosaic. Each of these smaller creatures wears leather armor and wields a short bow. Two other similar small reddish-brown humanoids with scimitars, leather armor, and shields are spread out in front of you readying for an assault. Oddly, each of these creatures has no hair. There is also a larger, man-sized humanoid covered with thick, brown fur and solid red eyes. He hefts a javelin in one hand and a morning star in the other standing in the center of the room, glaring at you.*

The small reddish brown humanoids are 4 Goblins (**SRD pg. 315, XP: 200**). Each has a pouch w/ 6 sp, and 14 cp. One of the goblin archers hiding behind a table also has **1 Crownstone in his pouch** (Appears NONMAGICAL, as does every other Crownstone, Eystone, and Heartstone in this adventure). **All goblins behind the tables have $\frac{1}{2}$ cover (+2 AC)**. The larger humanoid is a Bugbear (**SRD pg. 266, XP: 200**) with a large sack with 5 gp, 15 sp, 30 cp, and 1 red spinel (25 gp,). There is also a potion of invisibility (SRD pg. 234) in the sack.

Any character who succeeds on a **DC: 8 Perception Check** will note that each goblin has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on his forehead and the Bugbear has a red pentagon over its right eye. A second **DC: 15**

Perception Check will note that the diamond shapes have etchings on their surface so that each one appears to be a front view of an octahedron. A third **DC: 15 Perception check** will note a similar feature of the red pentagon – that it has etchings on it so that it appears to be the front view of a dodecahedron.

The inscription under the mosaic is written in goblin and reads “All Hail, The Mighty Utch-karr, Lord of the Goblin Host”.

There is no obvious explanation for the lack of hair on the goblins or the solid red eyes on the bugbear (see “The Curse of Utch-karr” above).

Difficulty XP: 800

Room #2: The Armory

The door to this room is wood reinforced with bronze and is unlocked. When it is opened, it reveals a semicircular room with a radius of roughly 30'. In the center of the N arc there is a spiraling staircase leading both upwards and down. Lining the walls are a variety of weapons, armor, and equipment. Standing guard at the staircase are two man-sized humanoids with thick, brown fur and solid red eyes. They are hefting a javelin in one hand and a morning star in the other. They see you and move to attack.

The 2 man-sized humanoids are Bugbears (SRD pg. 266, XP: 400). Each has a sack with 4 gp, 32 sp, and 60 cps. One of the Bugbears also has an **Eyestone** in his sack. Any character that makes a **DC: 8 Perception check** will note a red pentagon tattoo above one of the eyes on each of the Bugbears (left on one, right on the other). A second **DC: 15 Perception Check** will note that the red pentagon has etchings on it that indicate that it is the front view of a dodecahedron.

The armory holds 20 helms, 18 shields, 25 leather armor, 12 scimitars, 12 short bows, 3 morning stars, 8 javelins, 34 daggers, 220 arrows, 12 coils of 50' long rope, 20 iron spikes, 4 hammers, 8 flasks of oil, and 2 lanterns.

Difficulty XP: 600

Room #3: The Room of Warning

*You step off the stairwell and enter a semicircular room that has a radius of roughly 30'. On the W half of the S wall there is a reinforced wooden door (It is locked – **DC:12**). In the SE corner of the room there is a humanoid skeleton lying with its back to the wall. Scrawled across the E half of the S wall are the words (written in Common) “It won't let me leave. It won't let me stay” – in black. There is also a small table in the center of the room. 3 small reddish-brown humanoids sit around the table chewing on a few shanks of mutton. Again, oddly, each of these three creatures has no hair. They see you, grab weapons, and charge.*

The skeleton is the skeleton of a dead human male. Sitting on the floor by his right hand is a small piece of black charcoal. His bones have been stripped bare. Any character who examines the skeleton and succeeds on a **DC: 8 Perception Check** will note that he has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on his forehead. A second **DC: 15 Perception Check** will note that the diamond shape has etchings on its surface so that it appears to be a front view of an octahedron.

The 3 humanoids are Goblins (SRD pg. 315, XP: 150). Each has a pouch w/ 6 sp, and 14 cp. Two of the goblins **each possess a single Crownstone**. Any character who succeeds on a **DC: 8 Perception Check** will note that each goblin has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on his forehead. A second **DC: 15 Perception Check** will note that the diamond shaped tattoos have etchings on their surface so that each one appears to be a front view of an octahedron.

Difficulty XP: 300

Room #4: The Ruined Watchroom

You enter a semicircular room with a radius of roughly 30'. However, roughly 30' of the SE arcing wall is

ruined and open to the air. The E half of the N wall holds a mosaic depicting the same reddish-brown humanoid that was depicted in the first room (Utch-karr). This time, though, he is leading a host of similar, but smaller creatures, against an enemy horde of similar creatures being led by a larger reddish-brown creature of comparable size to himself (One goblin deity leading one goblin horde against a different goblin deity leading a different goblin horde). Again, he holds a sceptre and a morning star and wears a black iron crown studded with sapphires. In real life, inside the room there are six small reddish-brown humanoids. Four of the creatures are sitting in a circle playing with dice. The two remaining goblins stand near the gaping hole in the wall with their gazes fixed outside. Once again, oddly, each of the six creatures has no hair. The creatures turn as you enter, grab weapons, and move to attack.

The 6 creatures are Goblins (SRD pg. 315, XP: 300). Each has a pouch w/ 6 sp, and 14 cp. Two of the goblins each possess a single Crownstone. Any character who succeeds on a DC: 8 Perception Check will note that each goblin has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on his forehead. A second DC: 15 Perception Check will note that the diamond shaped tattoos have etchings on their surface so that each one appears to be a front view of an octahedron.

There is no further writing or other details on the mosaic other than what is written in the description above.

Difficulty XP: 600

Room #5: The Upper Room

You hear angry guttural shouts as you climb up the stairs. As you step off the stairwell, you enter a semicircular room with a radius of roughly 30'. On the W half of the S wall there is a reinforced wooden door (It is locked – DC: 12). On the E half of the S wall there is a mosaic depicting, from what you can tell, a statue of the large reddish brown humanoid with a black iron crown and red gems for eyes (Utch-karr). Before the statue there is a granite altar depicted upon which is a hapless elf bound in ropes. The mosaic also depicts a normal smaller reddish-brown humanoid in black robes standing before the altar holding in both hands a long wavy dagger raised above the elf's chest. In real life, there are four more of the small reddish-brown humanoids with no hair present in this room They are in the middle of a heated argument. They turn to you as you enter, grab their weapons, and move to attack.

The 4 creatures are Goblins (SRD pg. 315, XP: 200) Each has a pouch w/ 6 sp, and 14 cp. Two of the goblins each possess a single Crownstone. Any character who succeeds on a DC: 8 Perception Check will note that each goblin has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on his forehead. A second DC: 15 Perception Check will note that the diamond shaped tattoos have etchings on their surface so that each one appears to be a front view of an octahedron.

There is no further writing or other details on the mosaic other than what is written in the description above.

Difficulty XP: 400

Room #6: The Upper Watchroom

You enter a semicircular room that has a radius of roughly 30'. Roughly 40' of the SE arcing section of the wall is ruined and missing, open to the wind. The floor is missing a small slice at the edge near the wall. On the E half of the N wall there is another mosaic. This mosaic depicts a small reddish-brown humanoid in black robes pushing open a strange stone door that looks as much like a wall as it does a portal of any sort. In the center of the depicted wall/door there is an image of the large reddish-brown creature's head you've seen in other mosaics (Utch-karr's). Again, he wears a black iron crown atop his head. The crown also has a circle of small sapphires around its base. In real life there are 7 of the small reddish brown humanoids with no hair in this room, but 2 of them, like the creature depicted in the mosaic, are wearing black robes. Two of the others stand watching at the edge of the opening in the wall. The other 5 are

sleeping. But as you enter, the two watchers turn to you and shout a warning, rousing the others.

5 Goblins (SRD pg. 315, XP: 250). Each has a pouch w/6 sp, and 14 cp. Two of the goblins each possess a single Crownstone. 2 Goblin Shamans (See below, XP: 100). Each has a pouch w/ 8 sps and 21 cps. One of the goblin shamans also possesses a single Crownstone, as well as a single blood sprinkler (a black iron rod tipped with a perforated ball of black iron) at his side. A DC: 15 Perception Check on the blood sprinkler will note the presence of dried blood inside and outside the ball. The other carries the Blade of Utch-karr sheathed at his side. This is a long, wavy black dagger made of obsidian with 2 small sapphires in its hilt, 2 small rubies in its cross guard, and a single small emerald in its pommel. All told, the dagger would be worth 500 gp, but it is cursed. Any non-evil creature that picks it up or touches the weapon must succeed on a DC: 18 Charisma save or suffer 3d6 necrotic damage and be forced to drop the weapon. The creature takes ½ damage on a save and can remain holding the weapon, but the save (and resultant damage) is repeated every following round in which the creature continues to touch the weapon. The Blade of Utch-karr serves as a +1 dagger in combat and radiates magic. Any character examining the weapon who succeeds on a DC 12 Perception Check will notice old bloodstains on the cross guard, hilt, and pommel and an inscription in goblin on the blade reading “The Blade of Utch-karr.” Any character who succeeds on a DC: 8 Perception Check will note that each goblin and goblin shaman has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on his forehead. A second DC: 15 Perception Check will note that the diamond shaped tattoos have etchings on their surface so that each one appears to be a front view of an octahedron.

Difficulty XP: 875

Room #7: The Harem

The stairwell you are on ends in a 30' x 30' square chamber. The floor of the room is covered with 3 soiled bearskin rugs. Scattered about the chamber are 8 of the reddish-brown creatures with no hair, but these are females and are scantily clad in little more than animal skins. They cower as you enter the room. There are two doors leading from the room, both fashioned from wood and reinforced with bronze. 1 is in the N section of the E wall, and 1 is in the W section of the S wall.

The doors are both locked (DC: 12). The 8 small creatures are Goblins (female) (SRD pg. 315 but, no armor, and no weapons: XP: 0 each). Two of the female goblins each have a pouch with a single Crownstone. Any character who succeeds on a DC: 8 Perception Check will note that each goblin female has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on her forehead. A second DC: 15 Perception Check will note that the diamond shaped tattoos have etchings on their surface so that each one appears to be a front view of an octahedron.

Difficulty XP: 0

Room #8: The Treasure Room

You enter a small 20' x 20' square room. There is a humanoid form lying face down by the E wall. It is dressed in chain mail and is not moving at all. Two wooden chests reinforced with bronze sit against the S wall. There is nothing else of note in the room.

The humanoid form is a partially decomposed dead male half-elf. He holds a dagger in his right hand up by his throat which has clearly been slashed. He wears chain mail armor and has a long sword, a long bow, a quiver with 15 arrows, and a backpack w/ 50' of rope, a grapnel, a tinderbox, and 4 torches, If the body is turned over and examined, any character who succeeds on a DC: 8 Perception Check will note that he has a blue diamond shaped tattoo on his forehead. A second DC: 15 Perception Check will note that the diamond shaped tattoo has etchings on its surface so that it appears to be a front view of an octahedron. A rolled up scroll is grasped in his left hand. It has the following written on it in Common,

"I am the last one. All the others have changed and I am starting to. It begins with the symbol on the forehead. Then the hair falls out. And then, you change. By all the gods, I can't endure such. I had to kill all my friends. Now, I must do the same to myself. Or risk, living as one of those Things."

Both chests are locked (DC: 14) and trapped (DC: 12) with poisoned needles (DC: 12 Con save) or take 3d6 poison damage, save for ½). Chest #1 contains: 225 cps, 65 sps, 11 gps, 4 flasks of oil, a tinderbox, 2 potions of healing, and an Eversmoking Bottle (SRD pg. 220). Chest #2 contains: 240 cps, 55 sps, 14 gps, 3 potions of healing, and 2 vials of acid.

Room #9: The Master's Chambers

You enter a 20' x 35' rectangular room. Four soiled bearskins cover the floor. There is a soiled sofa against the E wall. Sitting on it is a man-sized humanoid creature that is reddish-brown in color. He is flanked by 2 of the man-sized humanoids covered with brown fur and having solid red eyes. On the S corner of the E wall there is a small mosaic depicting the head of the strange over-sized reddish brown humanoid you've seen in the other mosaics. Again, he wears a black iron crown encircled with blue sapphires. There is nothing else of note in the room.

The reddish-brown humanoid on the sofa is a Hobgoblin (SRD pg. 322 – but this hobgoblin has 18 hps, XP: 100). The hobgoblin has a sack with 6 gp, 35 sp, and 56 cps. He also has the Heartstone. The other two humanoids covered in brown fur are 2 Bugbears (SRD: pg, 266, XP:400). Each Bugbear has a sack with 4 gp, 32 sp, and 60 cps. One of the Bugbears also has an Eyestone in his sack. Any character that makes a DC: 8 Perception check will note a red pentagon tattoo above one of the eyes on each of the Bugbears (left on one, right on the other). A second DC: 15 Perception Check will note that the red pentagon has etchings on it that indicate that it is the front view of a dodecahedron. If the Hobgoblin's chain armor is removed from his body, any character that makes a DC: 8 Perception check will note a green tattoo in the shape of a hexagon on the hobgoblin's chest. A second DC: 15 Perception Check will note that the green pentagon has etchings on it that indicate that it is the front view of an icosahedron. The mosaic of the goblin deity's (Utch-karr) head is located on the center of the secret door. The secret door is found with a DC: 15 Perception Check. It is opened by depressing both eyes on the face of the deity (DC: 15 Investigation Check).

Difficulty XP: 1000

Room #10: The Shrine to Utch-Karr

You enter a 30' x 40' rectangular room. In the SW corner there sits an exquisite, life-like statue of an 8' tall humanoid that resembles the much smaller reddish-brown humanoids you've encountered all throughout this ruined fortress. Indeed, it is the spitting image of the larger reddish-brown humanoid depicted in the various mosaics you've stumbled across. The statue wears a black-iron crown on its head and holds a sceptre in its right hand. It also holds a massive morning star in its left hand. Immediately in front of it there is a granite altar flanked by two bronze braziers. There are also two chests lining the center of the S wall.

The statue of the goblin (SW corner) is of the goblin deity called Utch-karr. It is he who has cursed this fortress and the Crownstones, Eyestones, and Heartstone as all of these gems were once embedded in his statue. The 12 Crownstones were once located in a circle around the base of his crown. The two Eyestones were once embedded in his eye sockets. And the single Heartstone was once embedded in his chest. The gems were once removed by a small band of adventurers who promptly fell under Utch-karr's curse in retaliation for the desecration. The adventurers never made it out of the fortress alive. Since then, the gems have been wreaking havoc on all humanoids who have dared to enter this fortress, slowly transforming them into goblins (or bugbears or hobgoblins).

Any character who examines the statue and makes a DC: 10 Perception Check will notice the various

sockets and niches on the statue (in the crown, eyes, and chest) where the various gemstones were once contained. All the niches in the crown are shaped to hold octahedrons. Both those in the eyes are shaped to hold dodecahedrons. The one in the chest is shaped to hold an icosahedron.

Any character who examines the altar and makes a **DC:10 Perception Check** will notice old black bloodstains. The braziers are unlit but are filled with charcoal.

Lifting the Curse:

If the gems are returned to the statue, the curse and all its effects will be lifted immediately. The order in which the gems are placed does not matter provided that all 12 sapphires are placed in the crown, the 2 rubies are placed in the eyes, and the single emerald is placed in the chest.

If the statue is destroyed, all the gems will turn to dust, but the curse will remain and will require the casting of a **Remove Curse Spell** for each effect to be negated in descending order per person. That is, the first remove curse removes effect #4 on person #1, the second remove curse removes effect #3 on person #1, and so on.

Destroying any one of the Illstones does not negate the curse, but will prevent it from progressing. That is, if a character has reached effect #3 and destroys the Illstone, the curse will not progress to effect #4.

XP: 650 for lifting the curse

Extra Hints to Provide the PCs if needed

To find the source of the curse:

#1: During a long rest, a character has a vivid dream of handling an Illstone that burns a hole through his palm.

To find the secret door:

#1: During a long rest, a character has a vivid dream of passing through a secret door fashioned from stone. There is a blurry image on the door that the character cannot make out. It opens into a dark, forbidding hallway, but he/she knows that he/she must proceed.

Goblin Shaman

Small humanoid (Goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class: 12

Hit Points: 10 (3d6)

Speed: 30

STR 8 (-1) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 10 (+0) **INT** 14 (+2) **WIS** 8 (-1) **CHA** 8 (-1)

Skills Arcana +4, Stealth +4

Senses Darkvision 60', Passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

Nimble Escape: The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on its turn.

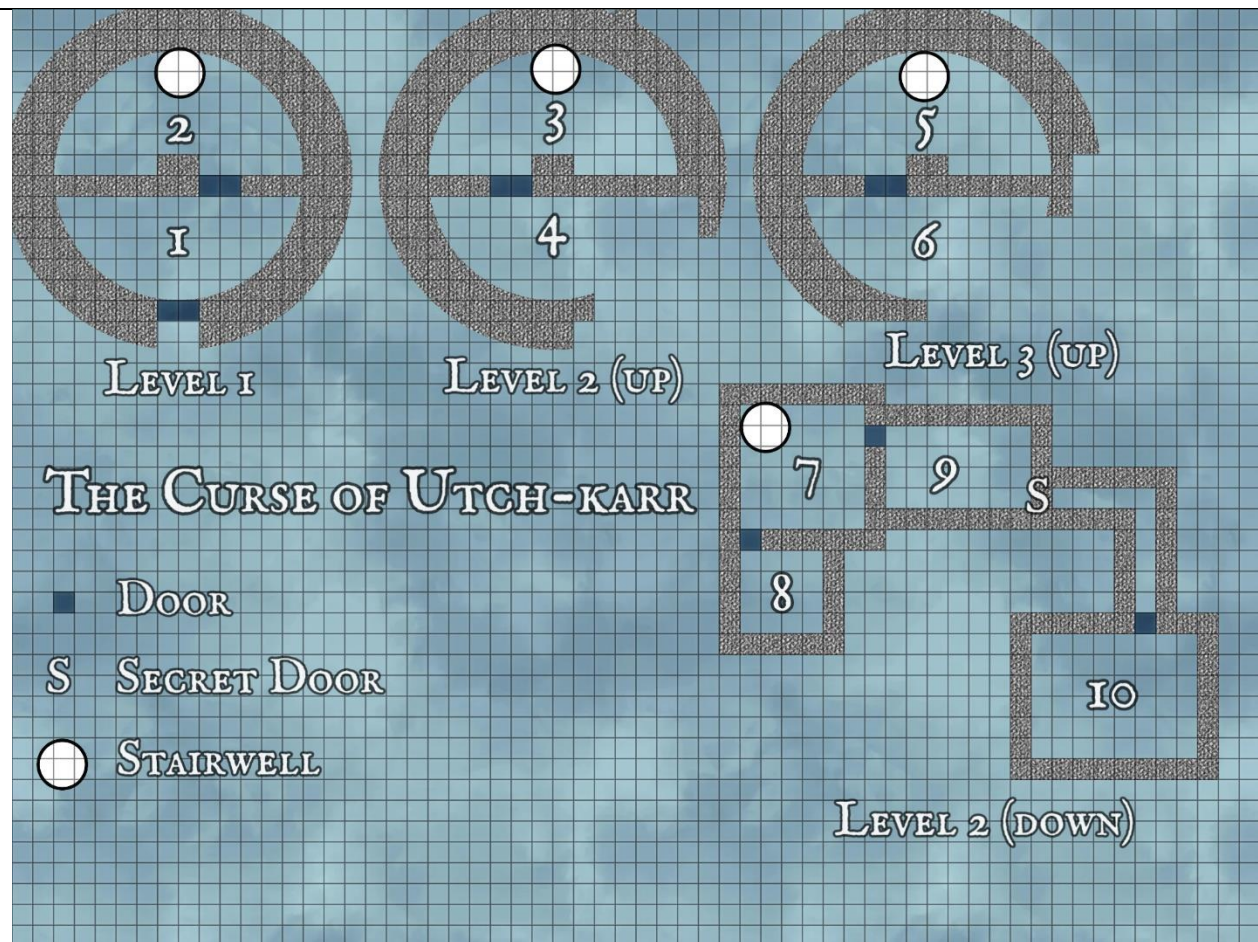
Spellcasting: The goblin shaman is a 1st level spell-caster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 To Hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips: Fire bolt, ray of frost, mage hand

1st Level (2 slots): Burning hands, shield, expeditious retreat

ACTIONS

Scimitar: Melee Weapon Attack: +4 To Hit, reach of 5', one target, Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage
Short Bow: Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 To Hit, Range 80/320 ft, one target, Hit: 5 (1d6 +2) piercing damage.



About The Author:

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