



## ***OBSERVATORY OF ILI SENIR UNU***

By Todd Pote

The Observatory of Ili Senir Unu is a dungeon for use with Castles & Crusades intended for 4-6 player characters of levels 8-10.

### **History:**

The Observatory of Ili Senir Unu is located in a small mountainous valley beyond the boundaries of the trade road passing through the desolate mountains. The valley itself is a place most would avoid, its floor being largely a stagnant swamp with a canopy of twisted windblown evergreens. This very isolation is what prompted the builder to construct their observatory upon the cleft hilltop a short distance

beyond the cold misty swamp. The Observatory itself is not large, consisting of a single tower with a bridge to the observatory building. Between the two buildings they house a huge telescope, living areas, and a small library.

The wizard that commissioned its construction was obsessed with observing other planes and the black reaches beyond the stars. Things for which his fellows believed him quite mad, though a madness that was harmless as it consisted mainly of observation and random ramblings. They could not have been more wrong.

Over the decades the wizard made advance after advance, finding things seen by no other. Unfortunately for him the universe holds things not meant to be seen by mere mortals and it was into one such place his curiosity led him. Being a hermit, there was no one to witness his fall into madness nor to turn his telescope away from the place he had discovered. Nor were there any witnesses to what came into our world through that tenuous bridge and ended him.

As the centuries passed, darkness called to darkness and underground chambers were constructed to house the members of the chaos cult that came to serve the dark god now dwelling in the unplumbed depths below the Observatory.

Eventually the cult's predations of the trade road became too much for the merchants and rulers of the bordering realms to bear. An army was sent to deal with the cult, hired by the merchants whose fortunes stood to be ruined by the continued raids. Though small by most standards, the army was comprised of experienced mercenaries and well known swords for hire. It had little trouble reaching the Observatory.

The battle was very one-sided in the army's favor, the cultists cut down in their tracks upon the hillside leading up to their stronghold. The few cultists that remained fled into the depths of the Observatory closely followed by the bulk of the victorious mercenaries. None that entered were ever seen again. The few troops that held back to care for their wounded and dead fled as the very ground shook not long after their fellows made their entry. It was obvious to all that something terrible was awake within the hidden depths of the cult stronghold.

Those brave souls that, over the following century or two, tried their luck at exploring the abandoned observatory either found nothing, went mad for unknown reasons, or simply disappeared within much like the soldiers of the past. In time, the observatory was forgotten and began to fall to ruin. Only the occasional obscure footnote in historical texts surfaced from time to time that were ignored by those researching other things except for one person. An astronomer that was as fanatical and obsessed almost as much as the builder of the remote observatory.

## **Story Hook:**

It is because of this unlikely happenstance attracting a fanatical astronomer that leads to the Player Characters being offered a rather lucrative contract to retrieve any journals or documents they can find in the forlorn place. Particularly anything to do with astronomical research and discovery which their patron is most interested in.

The Castle Keeper may also use the raids of giants lairing elsewhere in the remote mountain valley to send the PC's on a mission to deal with them. Much like the army of old was sent to deal with the cultists after their predation of the trade road became too much to bear.

In either event, the PCs will find themselves with a generalized map of the valley copied from a 300 year old original. No mention is made of the lizardman village in the swamp or of the Stone Giant Steddings at either end of the valley on the map. All the residents of the valley are quite protective of their territories and all tend to avoid the old observatory. The CK is free to develop these settlements and the details of the valley as they wish.

## **Observatory Key:**

### **1 – Guard Shack:**

A small stone walled building with a high peaked roof in need of new stone shingles and repairs. A single stone bench is within the shack and easily visible through the open entry arch. Near the small building an echoing ramble, much like someone muttering incoherently, can be heard. This muttering gets louder the closer to the shack one gets but investigation of the small hut reveals no one there and nothing of any interest.

The mutterings are from the Allip that haunts the guard shack. It will target one of the player characters randomly as they investigate the building, flying out of the shadows of the rafters to make its assault.

### **Allip (1) Medium Incorporeal Undead (Extraordinary)**

HD: 4d12 (hp: 38); MV: Fly 30'; AC: 15; Attacks: Touch (Ability Drain); Special: Wisdom Drain, Babble, Madness, Darkvision 60', Incorporeal; Saves: M; XP: 312 (full stats found on page 11, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

## 2 – Dead Tree:

Just off the roughly ascending and stony path, perched precariously on the cusp of cliff edge, is a gnarled tree, long dead and riddled with dry rot. In its bare branches several large crows perch, staring with glowing green eyes at the PCs as they make their climb and begin to pass beneath the branches overhanging the path. Several human and demi-human heads hang from branches, tied by their remaining tresses and mummified after a fashion by the harsh cold weather of the mountains. The heads appear to have been untouched by bird and beast. A couple of these heads dangle over the path though in high enough positions that avoid any hindrance of passage below them.

At the CK's option, one or more of these dangling heads can be the nest of Ear Seekers which will try to drop onto the PCs passing below them.

The crows will not fly off or make any noise as the PCs pass them by unless attacked or driven off somehow by the Player Characters. They are there merely for the ominous creepy factor.

## 3 – Tower Door:

The path leads up to the battered and flame scarred heavy rusting iron bound wood door of the small tower. Attached to the tower wall above the door is a sun bleached ursine-like beaked skull. A heavy pull ring red with rust is about three feet from the bottom of the door, near the right hand edge.

The door is difficult to open, the hinges nearly welded closed by so many years of rust and no maintenance. It will take two moderately strong people (STR 13+ each) to push it open, possible due to the absence of the interior bar that was once used to secure it. As the door opens, the rusty hinges will at first give a loud crack as the rust breaks loose followed by a long drawn out and even louder shriek of metal on un-oiled metal not even a harpy could imitate.

## 4 – Reception:

The interior of the tower is dark due to the absence of windows. What is revealed by the light spilling in through the door past the bodies in the doorway reveals a floor layered in undisturbed dust. It is also plain that the spiders have made full use of the dark corners and various cracks in the stonework over the years.

Once a proper light source is in use more of the room can be seen. To the left, a narrow stairway is visible leading down into darkness, cobwebs stretched across its passage like veils. To the right, a narrow stair descends from above, landing near a door in the middle of the right hand wall. Near the far wall is a desk with a large cloaked figure seated behind it. Odd dust covered shapes lay scattered about on the floor surrounding the desk. The figure begins to stand as the adventurers enter the room revealing its height of almost eight feet yet its face remains hidden in the shadows of its cloak. Slowly,

almost dramatically, the figure raises an arm, the cloak and robes falling away to reveal a discolored hand. Its raspy voice, courtesy of a Magic Mouth spell, echoes through the chamber. "Leave. Now."

If the PCs have not left the tower within three rounds or continue advancing into it, the cloaked figure will move to attack until they do flee or it kills them all. The figure will be revealed as combat starts to be a Flesh Golem.

### **Flesh Golem (1) Large Construct**

HD: 7d10 (hp: 58); MV: 30'; AC: 18; Attacks: 2 Slam (2d8); Special: Berserk, Immunity to Magic; Saves: P; XP: 721 (full stats found on page 59-60, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

The shapes on the floor are old brittle bones of various humans and humanoids among the unlucky not to escape the ruins. There is nothing of value in the chamber no matter how thorough of a search is made.

### **5 – Tower Second Floor:**

The next floor up reeks of mold and mildew even strong enough to notice while still ascending the stairs. Arrow slits, two per wall, allow shafts of light into the room. Dust, debris from outside such as leaves and small twigs, and the bones of small birds and vermin litter the floor. At the center of the room are the partially collapsed rotting remnants of bunk beds. Mushrooms are visible peaking up from various spots amidst the wreckage.

In the far corner of the room is another narrow stair leading upwards. The mushrooms and fungus growing amid the bed wreckage are all harmless. In the corners opposite of the stairs, the remnants of what may have been shelving or racks of some sort can be discovered by those searching the room more thoroughly.

### **6 – Tower Third Floor:**

The next floor up reeks of mold and mildew even strong enough to notice while still ascending the stairs. Arrow slits, two per wall, allow shafts of light into the room. Dust, debris from outside such as leaves and small twigs, and the bones of small birds and vermin litter the floor. At the center of the room are the partially collapsed rotting remnants of bunk beds. Mushrooms are visible peaking up from various spots amidst the wreckage. In the southeast corner is the rusted hulk of what may have been an iron potbelly stove. The chimney pipe to the outer wall has collapsed and rusted almost completely through.

Against the stairwell walls in both corners are the rotted and broken remains of what may have been free standing cupboards. The splintered remnants of a table are against the center of the south wall. An

empty weapons rack that has by some miracle survived intact over the decades is against the center of the east wall, empty. At the top of the rising stairs in the far corner of those from below, is a closed trap door in the ceiling. The trap door is not locked or secured but it does have some things atop it making it a chore to open (STR check CL+1).

Should the players make a Listen check or maintaining some state of vigilance in some other manner, three rounds after arriving on this floor, they may hear the sound of something fairly large impacting the ceiling from above. Otherwise, they are unlikely to hear anything of the sort.

### **7 – Tower Top:**

As the trap door opens, the most notable thing is a foul eye-watering stench of carrion and offal. Bones, partially eaten decomposing bodies, and bodily waste from some animal are practically burying the stone of the tower. Above in the rafters of the rotting and hole filled roof is a crude nest-like collection of branches and boughs, though the snarling human-like face with the winged leonine body staring at you with hate and hunger definitely has more of your attention.

The Manticore just returned from hunting and was the source of the noise that the PCs potentially heard from the room below. It will defend its lair ferociously with no quarter given, only fleeing to preserve its own life if reduced to 25% of its hit points. At 50% of its hit points it will take to the air outside of the tower and make strafing runs with its tail spikes.

#### **Manticore (1) Large Magical Beast**

HD: 6d10 (hp: 47); MV: 30'/fly 50'; AC: 17; Attacks: 2 Claws (1d3), Bite (1d6), 6 Tail Spikes (1d6); Special: Tail Spikes, Dark Vision 60', Twilight Vision; Saves: P; XP: 492 (full stats found on page 81-82, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

The nest will take a little effort to get to. Within it can be found several small bags, pouches, and coin purses. Also buried amidst the disgusting refuse of the nest are three vials and a slimy, drool covered stick of onyx and holly wood about fifteen inches long.

### **8 – Tower Cellar:**

The room is dark and so musty that it is hard to breath. The floor appears to be covered in a layer of filth and fungus that gives significantly under your feet with each step. There is a muffled crunch every-so-often walking about the room as something covered by the layer of filth gives way to the weight placed upon it.

The crunching is due to old brittle bones from past explorers and deceased vermin. There is a door bound in rusty red iron in a wall opposite the stairs. It is not locked but the built up detritus on the floor

makes it nearly impossible to open between the rusty hinges and blockage (STR check CL+3 unless floor in front of it is cleared. This difficulty is reduced to CL+1 if the floor is cleared first).

### 9 – Tower Cellar Cells:

The chamber is dark, chill, and smells of mildew and earth. There appears to be little dust on the smooth stone floor. A good sized stone basin is in one corner with a rusted water pump next to it. To the right of the pump is a wall belonging to one of two small rooms. Each of these small rooms has bars with a closed gate in place of a doorway and more stone. There is a closed wooden door in the corner of the room opposite of the cells though it looks to have suffered from dry rot.

The cells are empty except for cell (b). The dust covered skeletal remains of a humanoid skeleton sits chained to the back wall. Neither gate on the cells will open due to the internal lock mechanisms having rusted into solid masses. The bars are also quite rusty and only an inch in diameter. A few solid blows is likely to break right through them. There is nothing special about the skeleton.

The door opposite the cells, while appearing to be a victim of dry rot, is actually the most dangerous thing in the room. It is a very, very hungry mimic that will attack the nearest creature coming within five feet of it. It is not picky and will be more than happy to be served seconds once it has devoured its first substantial meal in years.

#### Mimic (1) Large Aberration

HD: 7d8 (hp: 41); MV: 10'; AC: 15; Attacks: Slam (3d4); Special: Adhesive, Crush, Dark Vision 60', Immunity to Acid (full), Mimic Shape; Saves: P; XP: 962 (full stats found on page 83, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

A thorough investigation of the wall to the left of the water pump and basin bears the possibility of revealing the presence of a narrow secret door (Find Secret Door check). This door opens by means of a hidden switch in the water pump base. It is not locked but it is trapped (Find Traps CL+2 / Disarm Trap CL+3). Opening the door without disarming this trap will fill a 20' area around the door with poison gas (Type V poison).

### 10 – Tower Cellar Toilet:

The small room beyond the mimic is dark, smells really bad, and is empty of all but a low set narrow ledge bearing a hole in its center and the remains of a bucket below the hole. A whole host of mushrooms grow over the bucket remains and its immediate surroundings.

### 11 – Tower Cellar Hidden Stairs:

The small room is dark with a narrow passage descending into the depths of the earth, the stone steps almost hidden behind thick veils of cobwebs. The rusted remains of a broken sword at the top of these steps is the only evidence of human passage at some point in the past.

### 12 – Bridge:

The stones this bridge is made from are scarred and broken in some places. Years of debris has piled up in the lee of the stone railings, sodden piles of dead leaves and branches in varying stages of decay. The bridge arcs across the cleft in the hill, the narrow trail that ascended to the tower dozens of feet below.

At the other end of the bridge, opposite the tower, is a wood door. Its face bearing many signs of violence and the iron binding the thick planks together red and flaking with rust. Above it is a draconic looking skull, weather bleached and firmly affixed to the stone of the domed building looking down onto the bridge. The door has no visible handle or pull ring.

Should a living creature come within ten feet of the door the eyes of the skull will begin to glow with a sickly green eldritch light and a deep voice growls out the following riddle in trade tongue (common);

I am always hungry

Harnessed but seldom tame

I enlighten all

Now what is my name.

If the correct answer is given (Fire) the door will swing open with a shriek of protesting rusted hinges and the glow of the skull's eyes will fade away. If the incorrect answer is given the skull will begin to laugh menacingly and the glow of its eyes turns black. Within moments the laughter is overwhelmed by the sound of the thousands of swarming wasps and other stinging insects pouring out of the black eyes to attack all players upon the bridge. The CK should treat these insects exactly as if a 12<sup>th</sup> level Summon Swarm spell had been cast. The swarm will persist for 1d4+2 rounds before dispersing and vanishing.

Should the door be attacked or an attempt made to force it, the skull will roar loudly, possibly attracting any other monsters or creatures in the area, and breathe a blast of flames burning all in a 15'x15' area before the door (4d6 damage, half with successful DEX save to avoid). The skull has 60 hit points and an AC 8 though due to enchantment may only be damaged by +1 magic weapons or better.

### 13 – Observatory Lower Gallery:

The chamber is lightless other than the light streaming in through the open door. The walls are rounded and what appears to be a curving wall or column seems to be centered in it. The stone of the floor is almost dust free and few cobwebs are visible around the entry area.

There is a narrow gap in the floor at the base of the large column in the center of the chamber. If probed, it has no bottom. Should something be dropped into it no impact will be heard.

If a strong light is introduced to the room, there is a wide air gap between the top of the column twenty feet or so up and the stones of the ceiling. A narrow bridge can be seen crossing between gap above the entry area and something large atop the column is dimly reflecting light in places. Heavy shadows deny the view of any details.

The outer walls of this chamber are covered in mosaics of what appear to be constellations. No words or runes. Just depictions of stars and lines connecting them though none of the constellations depicted are recognizable from the night skies of the regions of the world you are familiar with.

There are four secret doors in the outer wall of this chamber (Find Secret Door CL+1). Each is opened by pressing the correct ‘star’ button in the constellation map adorning the corresponding door. None are trapped with the exception of the button for the secret door to Area 17. This button has a Glyph of Warding upon it and will do 12d4 electrical damage to anyone within five feet of the PC pushing it unless they succeed in making a saving throw to reduce the damage by half. If a non-conductive material is used to push the button instead, then damage can be avoided.

The Glyph (12<sup>th</sup> level) is active until erased or dispelled.

### 14 – Observatory Store Room:

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## 16 – Observatory Stair Room:

The room is dark and smells musty but also a bit bitter-sweet. The stone of stairs ascending in the back corner is visible for a moment before a loud cacophony of many voices, loud and soft, fills the air and the shadows to the left begin to move...

A Gibbering Moulder has taken to lairing here in the comfort of the darkness. It will move immediately to attack the meals that delivered themselves to it. There is nothing else of value in the room.

### Gibbering Moulder (1) Medium Aberration

HD: 4d8 (hp: 26); MV: 10'; AC: 19; Attacks: 6 Bites (1d3 blood drain), Spittle (1d4); Special: Gibbering, Spittle, Blood Drain, Engulf, Amorphous, Dark Vision 60'; Saves: P; XP: 264 (full stats found on page 57, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

## 17 – Observatory Stair Room:

The room is dark and musty smelling. An angular shadow blacker than the ones hiding the corners of the odd shaped room is visible in the opposite corner. Little dust has collected on the floor.

Closer inspection reveals a narrow descending stairwell choked with veils of cobwebs and a faint draft of air rising from it.

Twenty feet down the stairs from the top one of the steps will depress if stepped upon and trigger dozens of long spikes to spear outwards from the walls. (Find Traps CL+2 / Disarm Trap CL-1)

There is a 1 in 4 chance of any given player stepping on the trigger step as they pass this point. The trap may only be triggered once. The spikes are two feet long and cover the area ten feet to each side of the trigger step. The unlucky PCs in this area will suffer 1d6(d4) damage with no way to avoid the spikes due to how narrow the passage is.

## 18 – Observatory Upper Gallery:

The large chamber that the stairs emerge into is occupied almost entirely by the large telescope and many geared support assembly atop the column rising from below. A low stone balustrade circles around the edges of the ten foot air gap between the floor of the chamber and the column top except where a narrow platform extends outwards to beneath the smaller end of the telescope assembly. Above all of this is a hemisphere of a star-filled night sky, clouds of bright colors and dark shadows visible here and there, the brightest stars in the heavens sometimes within them.

Each of the four walls of the chamber is pierced by four narrow windows of thick glass. A black iron shutter is next to each window with a latch hook on the opposite side.

Close attention to the starscape of the ceiling gives characters that studied the constellation murals in the lower gallery a chance to recognize several of them above them. The telescope seems to be pointing at one particularly large and dark cloud formation in the starscape. This dark cloud gives those gazing at it an uneasy feeling.

The balustrade actually rests on an iron plate with a rail below it allowing the platform and balustrade to rotate with the telescope. The platform has two three foot tall side rails of iron and a single palm-sized plate with two four arrows carved into it within easy reach of the telescope's eye piece. The left and right arrows will result in the telescope rotating in each direction. The up arrow raises the large end of the telescope to a maximum angle of 50-degrees. The down arrow lowers the large end though it will not descend any farther once it is parallel to the floor.

Centered against the west wall are the collapsed remains of a wooden desk, the pieces of which are in an advance state of dry rot and will crumble to pieces if disturbed. A sextant of silver and gold can be found amidst the debris if thoroughly searched (1500 gp value). The shutters will block off any light entering in through the windows if shuttered. It is best if they stay open, the reasons soon to be apparent.

Should any character have the bad idea to look through the telescope without moving it from the position they discover it in, which is focused on the deepest, darkest, most dangerous part of the large creepy space cloud, they must immediately make a saving throw vs Death Magic. The magic of the sky formed by a poorly worded wish and magic of the telescope combined to pierce the boundaries between planes, ending by looking directly into the Plane of Madness and observing directly the eldest beings of chaos dwelling upon it. If the saving throw succeeds the foolhardy PC will recoil in horror from the indescribable horrors so briefly witnessed. Should the saving throw fail the unlucky PC will have their sanity broken, immediately suffering one of the following effects (roll 1d4);

1. Start gibbering unintelligibly and fall into a catatonic state shutting out the world, their eyes staring in horror at something terrible only they can see.
2. Start raving and screaming in extreme paranoia about needing to attack before IT does. This state quickly escalates from words to crazed violence as the victim attacks anything that moves as the paranoia consumes their perceptions.
3. Start screaming in absolute terror and railing on about endless torments coming to the doom of the world. This behavior soon escalates into extreme attempts of suicide to escape the perceived coming apocalypse.
4. Start foaming at the mouth and spewing lunatic rants about needing to fall down and worship the gods of chaos in everyone's face, even getting violent should they be ignored.

If the PCs have shut all of the window shutters and eliminated all light within the chamber before looking through the telescope or do so at night without any light of their own, there is a 20% chance of

attracting the attention of the chaos they observe to their detriment. This increases to 50% if the person looking through fails their Death Magic saving throw. While the PCs are dealing with the stricken person a dim green light will create a bridge between the dark of the cloud and the large end of the telescope. One round later an oozing mass will begin pouring out of the eye piece onto the platform and rising as an eight foot tall humanoid toad-like being with skin like a jelly fish and a mouth that is more of a hole surrounded by a dozen very long spider legs and tentacles for arms. This chaos beast will waste no time attacking any living creature present.

### **Chaos Beast (1) Large Extra-Planar Aberration**

HD: 12d10 (hp: 103); MV: 20'; AC: 22; Attacks: 2 Tentacles (1d8), Bite (10d3); Special: Magic Weapons to hit, MR 5, Acid Slime (1d4), Constrict (2d6), Dark Vision 60'; Saves: M&P; XP: 5411 (full stats found in the New Monster Appendix at the end of this document)

### **19 – Observatory Basement:**

The room is quite large with a high ceiling. At the center of the dust covered room is the same large column as above. Several large humanoid figures can be seen in place around it, each with a heavy beam before them which is protruding from the column. The floor has numerous dust covered lumps of various sizes and shapes scattered all over.

A descending stairway is against the same wall as the stairs coming down into this room. The descending stairs are almost unnoticeable from the stairs above them unless on the floor looking towards the upper stairs and the archway below them.

The large figures are made of stone and might be initially mistaken as statues. However, each is actually a Stone Golem waiting for commands to rotate the column (and the telescope atop it) which they do by pushing on the beams. The golems will ignore intruders unless they are attacked first at which point all four will move to attack the perpetrators of the violence. The golems cannot leave this room due to their size.

The odd shapes covered in dust on the floor are numerous humanoid bones that snap and crumble when stepped on or disturbed due to their age. There is nothing of value here.

### **Stone Golem (4) Large Construct**

HD: 12d10 (hp: 101 ea); MV: 20'; AC: 26; Attacks: Slam (3d8); Special: Slow, Immunity to Magic; Saves: P; XP: 3887 ea (full stats found on page 61, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

## 20 – Crypts and Catacombs:

Ceilings low enough to touch without stretching, dust covered stone floors, decades, if not centuries, worth of cobwebs crisscrossing the silent, dark passages as far as can be seen with pairs of shelf-like niches built into the walls like bunk beds are the hallmarks of this place. The stale air holds the musty odor of earth and decay close to itself. Most of the shelves appear to have shroud wrapped forms reclining within their shadowed recess.

The chaos cult from long ago modified this area from its original purpose and expanded it to house their dead and for other uses. The shelves hold the fragile remains of said members that will crumble to dust if disturbed without a high degree of care and numerous insects will scurry from under the body in search of new shelter. Nothing of value is buried with them since they were only cultists and not the priests or their gods.

## 21 – Disposal Room:

The room is very dark and permeated with a feeling of wrongness. The majority of the room save for a narrow ledge with edges of chipped and broken stone, is a black pit. The air is stale and reeks of decay and other unidentifiable odors.

The door to this room was unlocked and made of heavy wood.

The pit is deeper than lantern or torch light can shine. Should something be dropped into it there will be no sound if it hitting bottom no matter how long someone waits. This pit is built over one of the clefts into the very bowels of the earth. It is also one of the two entrances within the complex of rooms and passages below the Observatory to where the chaos beast that originally crossed into the world dwells. The dropping of objects into the pit is all that is needed to wake it from its decades of slumber and start looking for a long overdue meal.

The first sign that PCs will have that something is wrong after dropping whatever into the pit is the sudden rush of air gusting upwards from it and making any torches or lanterns gutter alarmingly. The second will be the three very large black tentacles covered in slime and embedded with hundreds of plate sized golden bird-like eyes rising out of the pit and slashing towards them. The tentacles break stone like it was dry bread merely brushing against it and can elongate all the way back to the room entry.

The tentacles will grab hold of any unlucky person and drag them into the abyss as they crush the life from their victim. Anyone lost in the pit is gone with no hope of recovery short of powerful magic like a wish spell. Should a tentacle be defeated it will slide back into the black of the pit. Three rounds later it, or another just like it, will return to the quest for food. The tentacles will continue the battle until all the PCs are consumed or the survivors have fled back into the catacombs beyond the doorway.

### **Tentacle Terror (3?) Huge Extra-Planar Aberration**

HD: 15d12 (hp: 144 ea); MV: 50'; AC: 27; Attacks: Grab (2d12); Special: Magic Weapons to hit, MR 8, Improved Grab, Constrict (2d20), Regeneration 3; Dark Vision 120'; Saves: M&P; XP: 12860 ea (full stats found in the New Monster Appendix at the end of this document)

### **22 – Shrine of the Abomination:**

This room is bathed in an eerie green light emanating from the green flames burning in the eye holes of a hulking statue centered against the curving line of the far wall. The statue is a dozen feet tall, humanoid in form with four muscled arms ending in clusters of tentacle-like fingers and a face resembling the worst combination of features between a squid and toad. It looms over a rectangular slab of black stone set on end towards it. There is an atmosphere of wrongness permeating the room. The walls are decorated with painted images of chaos, violence, and worse. The arching ceiling is painted black with numerous white points to resemble a night sky.

The heavy wooden door into this room is not locked or trapped.

The stone slab is not only an altar, but a secret door concealing a descending stairway below it (Detect Secret Door CL+1). The stone slab will slide to the wall on the statues left and is not trapped. However, opening the secret door without being insane will release the guardians of the shrine.

The green flames within the eye sockets of the statue will blaze up and fall to the floor on either side of the statue. Each will quickly reveal itself to be a very large fire elemental, though corrupted by the powers of chaos dwelling within the depths of this place. They will attack intruders and pursue them even to the surface structures above if the PCs flee but will not leave the walls of the observatory complex.

### **Corrupted Fire Elemental (2) Medium Elemental**

HD: 13d8 (hp: 84 ea); MV: 50'; AC: 19; Attacks: Slam (2d6); Special: Burn, Corruption (+1d4 dmg), Darkvision 60', Immunity to Fire, Regeneration 2; Saves: P; XP: 1750 ea (full stats found on page 40-42, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

Should the fire elementals be defeated and the statue searched, the PCs will discover a dark green emerald the size of a walnut within each eye socket. (5000 gp each) A bless spell will be required to neutralize the influence of chaos on each gem. Should the bless spell not be applied, the possessor of either gem will start to be afflicted by the powers of chaos and within six months have to make weekly saving throws or go quietly mad. Three months later, if the owner has resisted so far, the saving throws become daily and if still resisted, the saving throws become hourly three months after that.

### 23 – Crypt:

Beyond the formerly sealed stone door is a dark, almost airless small chamber layered in centuries of dust and strands of cobweb all over. Centered against the back wall and oriented so the narrow end is pointed at the entry is a dust covered stone coffin sealed with lead. The room appears otherwise empty.

The stone door was sealed with lead as well though unlocked and without traps.

Inside the coffin is a layer of dust inches deep, scraps of badly decayed shroud, and bits of crumbling human bone. Sifting through the dust thoroughly will net the following rewards;

Two small blue sapphires (100 gp ea), a large pink diamond (1200 gp), three pieces of jet carved into the shape of bears (50 gp ea), a necklace of gold and silver strands wove together (200 gp), a pair of heavy gold rings (20 gp ea), and small ivory flute (300 gp).

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Beyond the formerly sealed stone door is a dark, almost airless small chamber layered in centuries of dust and strands of cobweb all over. Centered against the back wall and oriented so the narrow end is pointed at the entry is a dust covered stone coffin sealed with lead. The room appears otherwise empty.

The stone door was sealed with lead as well though unlocked and without traps.

Removing the seal on the coffin and opening it will release the vengeful ghost of the chaos cult founder to wreak havoc and death among the PCs and any other inhabitant of the observatory structures that is still alive.

#### **Ghost (1) Medium Incorporeal Undead (Extraordinary)**

HD: 10d8 (hp: 64); MV: 30'; AC: 20; Attacks: Slam; Special: Touch of Death, Frightful Moan, Telekinesis, Incorporeal; Saves: M; XP: 3040 (full stats found on page 52-53, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

Inside the coffin is a layer of dust inches deep, scraps of badly decayed shroud, and bits of crumbling human bone. Sifting through the dust thoroughly will net the following rewards;

A pair of crystal lens (Eyes of the Eagle), a walnut sized ruby (2800 gp), a pair of large moonstones (150 gp ea), A small clay jar filled with platinum pieces (50 total), a heavy gold ring (20 gp), a silver torc with the ends carved in the images of snakes with eyes of red spinel (400 gp), and the rusting remains of a heavy mace.

## 25 – Crypt:

Beyond the formerly sealed stone door is a dark, almost airless small chamber layered in centuries of dust and strands of cobweb all over. Centered against the back wall and oriented so the narrow end is pointed at the entry is a dust covered stone coffin sealed with lead. The room appears otherwise empty.

The stone door was sealed with lead as well though unlocked and without traps.

Opening the coffin will release the large black pudding that has been preserved in stasis for several centuries. It will pursue prey throughout the underground areas of the observatory. The stone secret doors leading from the upper levels will effectively block its pursuit.

### **Black Pudding (1) Large Ooze**

HD: 10d10 (hp: 77); MV: 10'; AC: 3; Attacks: Acid (3d6); Special: Acid, Constrict, Split, Immunity (full)-Cole and Electricity; Saves: P; XP: 3170 (full stats found on page 89-90, Monsters and Treasures 4<sup>th</sup> printing)

There is nothing of value within this crypt.

## 26 – Crypt:

Beyond the formerly sealed stone door is a dark, almost airless small chamber layered in centuries of dust and strands of cobweb all over. Centered against the back wall and oriented so the narrow end is pointed at the entry is an open dust covered stone coffin, its lid leaning against the far wall to the right of it. The room appears otherwise empty.

The stone door was sealed with lead as well though unlocked and without traps.

## 27 – Secret Passage:

The narrow passage is dark, cobwebs blowing gently in the breeze brought from the outside like wisps of silk veils hung in the wind. The low ceiling gives the passage a rather closed in feel. A thick layer of dust covers the stone floor.

The passage is only five feet high and wide. Any character over four feet ten inches tall will need to bend down to avoid bashing their head against the overhead stone.

## 28 – Temple of Chaos:

This room is bathed in an eerie green light emanating from the green flames burning in the seven eye holes of a hulking statue centered against the curving line of the far wall. The statue is twenty feet tall, a humanoid insect in form with six tentacles for arms, each ending in a sickle-like claw, and a face resembling the worst combination of features between a spider and bighorn goat. It looms over a pit ringed by broken stones wide enough to drop a wagon down. There is an atmosphere of wrongness permeating the room. The walls are decorated with painted images of chaos, violence, and worse. The arching ceiling is painted black with numerous white points to resemble a night sky.

Stairs descend along the back wall from Area 19. As they enter into the room, the drop to the floor is thirty feet. The ceiling height is forty feet from the floor.

The wood doors set in the east and south walls are damaged with many gouges and stained by unknown fluids in random splashes. Neither is locked nor are they trapped. Nor are they strong enough to keep what lurks within the pit from breaking them down.

The seventeen foot wide pit is deeper than lantern or torch light can shine. Should something be dropped into it there will be no sound if it hitting bottom no matter how long someone waits. This pit is built over one of the clefts into the very bowels of the earth. It is also one of the two entrances within the complex of rooms and passages below the Observatory to where the chaos beast that originally crossed into the world dwells. The dropping of objects into the pit is all that is needed to wake it from its decades of slumber and start looking for a long overdue meal.

The first sign that PCs will have that something is wrong after dropping whatever into the pit is the sudden rush of air gusting upwards from it and making any torches or lanterns gutter alarmingly. The second will be the three very large black tentacles covered in slime and embedded with hundreds of plate sized golden bird-like eyes rising out of the pit and slashing towards them. The tentacles break stone like it was dry bread merely brushing against it and can elongate all the way back to the room entry.

The tentacles will grab hold of any unlucky person and drag them into the abyss as they crush the life from their victim. Anyone lost in the pit is gone with no hope of recovery short of powerful magic like a wish spell. Should a tentacle be defeated it will slide back into the black of the pit. Three rounds later it, or another just like it, will return to the quest for food. The tentacles will continue the battle until all the PCs are consumed or the survivors have fled back up the stairs or into the secret tunnel (area 27).

### **Tentacle Terror (3?) Huge Extra-Planar Aberration**

HD: 15d12 (hp: 144 ea); MV: 50'; AC: 27; Attacks: Grab (2d12); Special: Magic Weapons to hit, MR 8, Improved Grab, Constrict (2d20), Regeneration 3; Dark Vision 120'; Saves: M&P; XP: 12860 ea (full stats found in the New Monster Appendix at the end of this document)

A 12-inch wide by 24-inch tall secret panel (Detect Secret Doors CL+1) may be found in the base of the idol statue. The panel is locked (Open Locks CL+2) though not trapped. Inside is a deep hollow containing a wooden chest in the first stages of dry rot and locked by a piece of solid rust that may have once been a padlock. The chest is not trapped either.

Inside the chest are hundreds of coins centuries old. In total there are 553 copper pieces, 1649 silver pieces, 776 gold pieces, and 19 platinum pieces. If sold to a collector or someone with an interest in ancient coins, the PCs can gain up to another 30% in value of current currency. Buried under the coins is what appears to be a short sword with a strange hilt. This is actually a +3 spear with a collapsible haft. It can be used as a spear when extended or a short sword when collapsed.

### 29 – Study:

The room is dark, the collapsing contents layered with dust and lace-like curtains of cobwebs. The odor of old death and decay hangs heavy in the stale air. One wall is one large bookshelf, its contents long ago consigned to dust and decay. A partially collapsed desk with the busted remains of what may have been chairs before takes up most of the center of the rear part of the room. A larger chair is behind the desk with the mummified remains of a human pinned to it by a corroded bronze javelin. A smaller set of collapsed shelves is along the rear corner wall opposite the larger shelves.

There is another wood door here that is partially open (to Area 30). The smaller shelves mask a secret door in the wall that swings into the passage it conceals (Detect Secret Door CL+1). Opening the secret door will complete the destruction and collapse of the shelves fronting it.

The desk will fall apart into rotted chunks of wood if handled roughly. Its contents have long been looted or decayed away to dust. Crudely written words are carved haphazardly into the top of the desk in an incomplete message. "They are watching us b..."

The mummified body is covered in so many cobwebs they almost resemble funeral wrappings. This is the body of the original builder of the Observatory and first victim of the Abomination of Chaos lairing in the depths below. The javelin pierces through the body and the back of the chair. The bronze blade and haft discolored and misshapen from years of corrosion almost like it was afflicted by leprosy. The hands and fingers of the body are broken and bent at odd angles.

### 30 – Bedchamber:

Beyond the partially open wood door a scene of carnage awaits, hidden by darkness and layers of dust and cobwebs accumulated over the centuries. The rotting remains of a large bed, night stands, a large standing dresser, vanity with a broken mirror, all of which appear to have been hacked apart at one time lay in pieces all over the floor. A pair of broken open chests can be seen in the corner to the left of the door, both long empty.

Under the remains of the bed is a secret panel in the floor approximately four feet square (Detect Secret Door CL+3). It is magically trapped with a Glyph of Ice (Find Trap CL+2) and can only be rendered safe if the glyph is erased or dispelled (12<sup>th</sup> level casting). If the glyph is triggered a blast of cold will affect everyone within five feet of the secret panel and they will need to make a saving throw. Successfully saving reduces the 12d4 cold damage by half. Removing the panel reveals a shallow hole containing a small stone statuette of a dancing maiden (200 gp), a small brass coffer (no lock or trap) containing a medallion (+1 INT), a large sack of gold coins (2003 centuries old gold pieces that can be sold for up to a 30% increase in value), a small corroded copper jewelry box containing a dozen pea sized fire opals on a velvet cushion (350 gp ea), four well preserved journals (the astronomer's personal research notes worth 2000 gold to other astronomers), and a bone scroll case containing an arcane scroll with four level 3 spells upon it.

### **31 – Library:**

The room is dark and smells of dust and staleness. The broken remains of bookshelves fill the room. All are layered with dust and cobwebs. The remains of several books and scrolls are visible amidst the wreckage. To the right of the door, in the far corner, is a toppled writing desk and broken stool.

Most of the scrolls and books here are too far gone to salvage. Careful searching though can garner half a dozen scrolls and two books bearing notes and findings on stellar observations that are worth roughly 1000 gold to other astronomers. Of course, not all of the books are so innocent. Several are actually carnivorous books and they will swarm the adventurers once they start searching the debris.

#### **Carnivorous Book (6) Small Aberration**

HD: 1d8 (hp: 6 ea); MV: Fly 10'; AC: 8; Attacks: Bite (1d4); Special: Blindsight, Camouflage, Imprint Page; Saves: M; XP: 21 ea (full stats found in the New Monster Appendix at the end of this document)

### **After the Madness:**

After the player characters have accomplished their mission in the ruins there remains what to do about the chaos abomination(s) dwelling in the depths below the observatory and what to do with the observatory itself and its enchanted dome showing the distant reaches of chaos.

### **Author's Notes:**

It should be no surprise that certain elements of this dungeon bear rather obvious inspiration from a rather well known work of horror popular in certain corners of the gaming and literary world. The Castle Keeper should feel free to expound upon the material presented herein as I have only a passing familiarity with said works and a personal aversion to horror for various reasons. However, the cool factor of said particular works cannot be denied.

The birth of this dungeon actually began in 1991 with an idle doodle that I just could not seem to put aside. Many reams of paper and scores of other dungeons later, you hold the actual completion of that old idea in your hand. I hope you and your players enjoy it.

## ***APPENDIX – NEW MONSTERS:***

### **CARNIVOROUS BOOK**

No. Appearing: 1-12

Size: S

MV: 10' fly

AC: 8

HD: 1d8

Attack: Bite (1d4)

Special: Blindsight, Camouflage, Imprint

Saves: M

Int: Inferior

Align: NE

Type: Aberration

Treasure: Nil (incidental)

XP: 15+1

Carnivorous Books are cousins of the Mimic family. At cursory inspection, they appear as nothing more than old, worn tomes approximately an inch or two thick. Commonly found in old libraries or in the depths of less visited archives, they prey on those unprepared and unguarded. If not for their ability to capture victims with their imprint ability they might be considered as nothing more than a disagreeable nuisance.

#### **Abilities:**

**Imprint-** Victim within 10' must save vs magic or be sucked into the book and imprinted upon a page. The book then feeds on them at a rate of 1 hit point per round. When their hit points reach zero they disappear forever. A dispel magic or remove curse can release an imprinted victim if cast on the book before the victim is consumed. Up to 10 victims at one time can be imprinted in this fashion but only one is consumed at a time

## **CHAOS BEAST**

No. Appearing: 1

Size: L

MV: 20'

AC: 22

HD: 12d10

Attack: 2 Tentacles (1d8), Bite (10d3)

Special: Magic Weapons to hit, MR 5, Acid Slime (1d4), Constrict (2d6), Dark Vision 60'

Saves: M & P

Int: High

Align: CE

Type: Extra-Planar

Treasure: Nil (incidental)

XP: 4175 + 12

Chaos Beasts are actually more soldiers or greater servants in service to the powers of Chaos from within the Plane of Madness. Their appearance is rarely similar and almost always random in a manner befitting chaos. The one thing they share in common however is that whatever form they take it is always terrifying and incomprehensible to the mortal mind. While capable of complex planning and manipulation the overall purpose of the chaos beast is to sow chaos, terror, and death through the mortal realms. The greater the terror inducing slaughter and subsequent chaos, the better and more pleasing it is to their master(s). Chaos Beasts will only pause to negotiate with mortals if the mortal in question is chaotically evil to the point of depraved insanity and if they have live offerings, the more intelligent and prone to terror the greater the chance of living through the parley with the Chaos Beast the mortal has.

This particular Chaos beast does such damage with its bite due to the numerous spider leg-like appendages surrounding its flexible mouth. The appendages stab into their prey and forcibly shove it into the mouth of the beast over and over again until it is swallowed.

### **Abilities:**

**Magic Weapons to Hit** - Chaos Beasts only suffer damage from weapons of +2 or greater enchantment. Weapons of Law will do double maximum damage against them automatically due to their inherent nature.

**Acid Slime** – The slime covering the Chaos Beast is highly acid in nature and will do (1d4) damage to all organic matter that comes into contact with it.

**Constrict** – If the Chaos Beast successfully hits an enemy with a tentacle attack and the enemy fails a STR check, the tentacle has coiled about the victim and can squeeze for (1d8) damage on each following round until the victim breaks free.

## **TENTACLE TERROR**

No. Appearing: 1-6 (tentacles only from the main body)

Size: L

MV: 50'

AC: 27

HD: 15d12

Attack: Grab (2d12)

Special: Magic Weapons to hit, MR 8, Improved Grab, Constrict (2d20), Regeneration 3; Dark Vision 120'

Saves: M & P

Int: Genius

Align: CE

Type: Extra-Planar

Treasure: Nil (incidental)

XP: 10700 + 12

The main body belonging to the tentacles has never been seen by a living or sane person. Rumors state that it is the size of a large castle or even a small town and so horrifying that the very sight of it causes the mortal mind to literally melt out of its skull being unable to process the raw chaos that is the titan. What is normally seen are the very large black tentacles covered in slime and embedded with hundreds of plate sized golden bird-like eyes that function as both feeding and scouting appendages. The eyes embedded in each tentacle are fully capable of vision and the tentacles are strong enough to break stone like it was dry bread merely brushing against it. Each tentacle can stretch up to 100 feet long from wherever it is they emerge from. Those unlucky enough to be grabbed by such tentacles are seldom seen again, alive or otherwise.

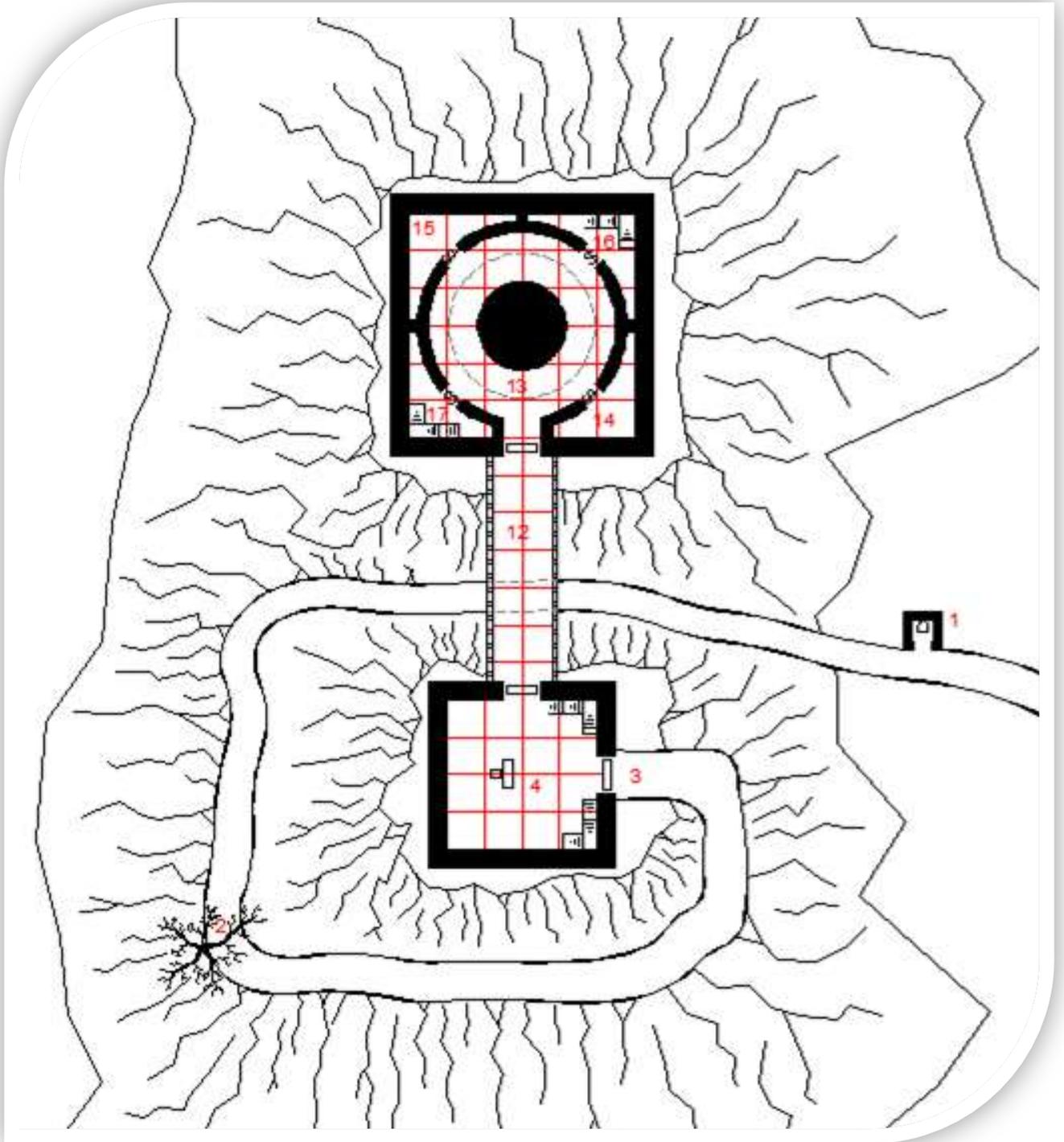
### **Abilities:**

**Magic Weapons to Hit** – The Tentacle Terror only suffers damage from weapons of +2 or greater enchantment. Weapons of Law will do double maximum damage against them automatically due to their inherent nature.

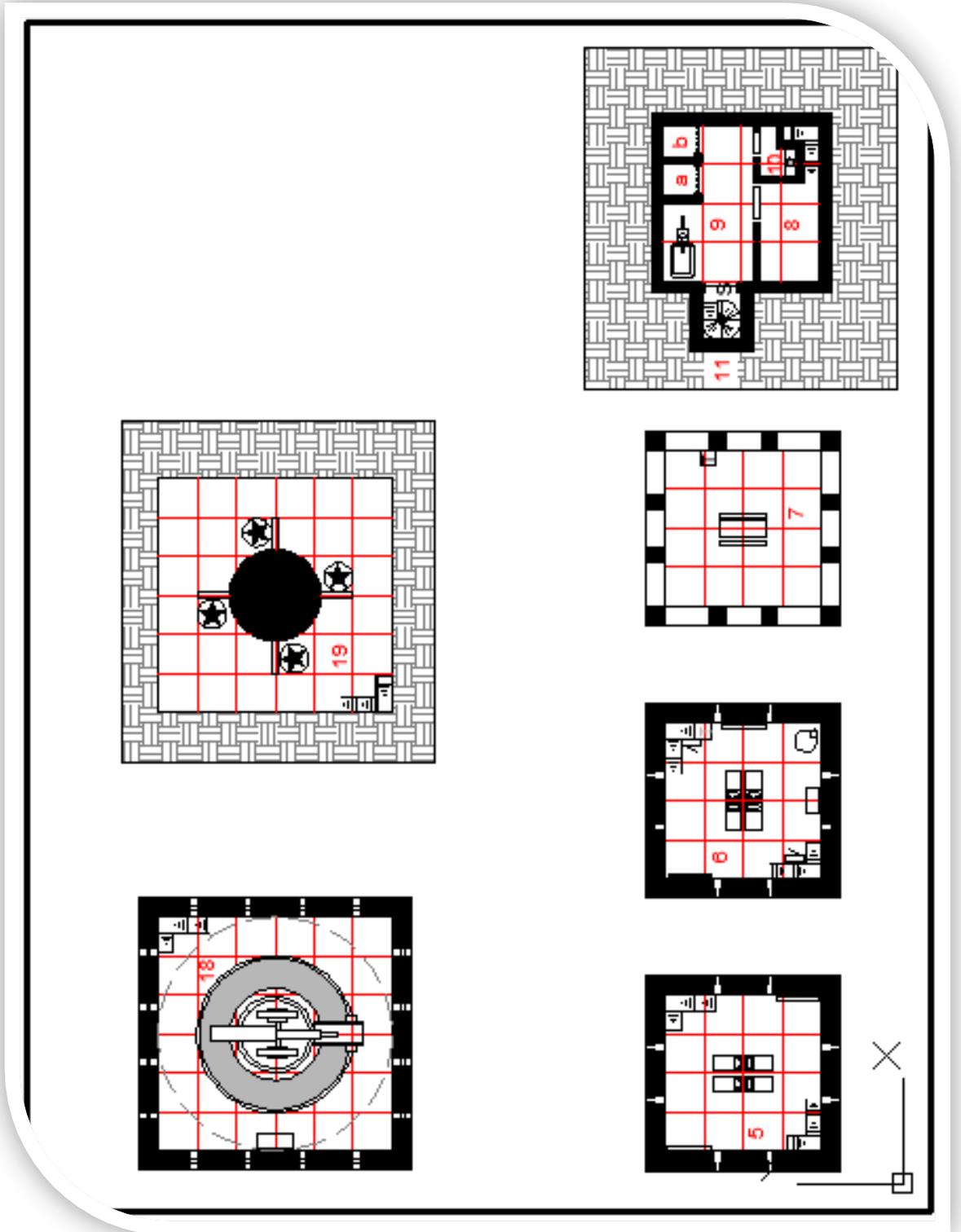
**Improved Grab** – If the Tentacle hit a victim it grabs them and may begin truly constricting them on the following rounds.

**Constrict** – A victim that the tentacle has grabbed will suffer (2d20) damage each round as it begins to crush them. The only hope is if the victim can teleport or manage to somehow make a STR check (CL+5) to escape the tentacle’s clutch.

Map – Ground Level



Map – Tower and Observatory Levels



Map – Catacomb Level

