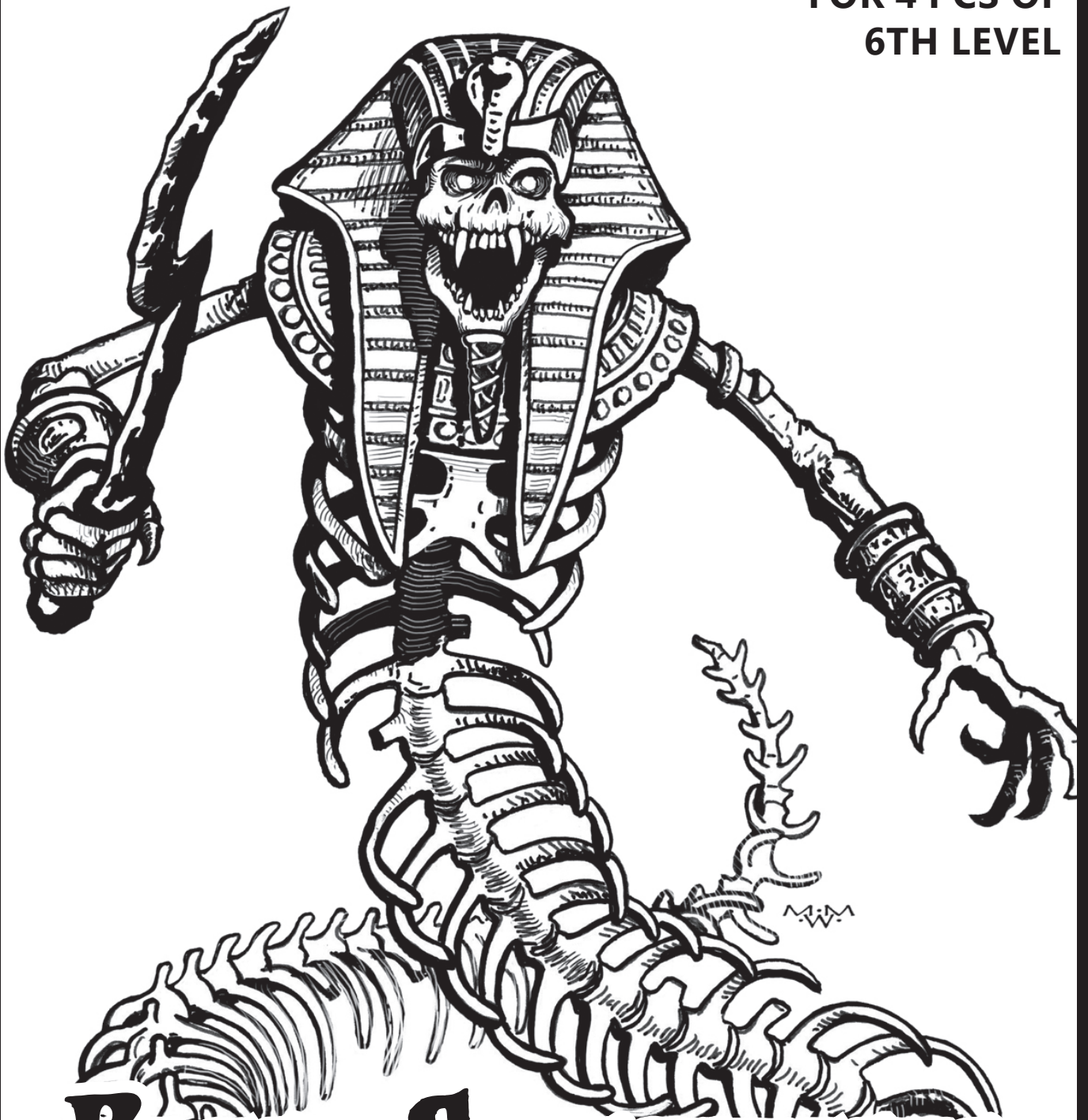


FOR 4 PCS OF
6TH LEVEL



BLACK SARCOPHAGUS

A 5E WARLOCK ADVENTURE
BY CHRIS LOCKEY

BLACK SARCOPHAGUS

Background

For countless years, the Tomb of Xulthas-Ka has eluded even the most intrepid of explorers. The only things known about the sorcerer king whose remains are interred within the tomb are that he owed allegiance to unholy powers and that he possessed an unparalleled collection of arcane secrets. The name Xulthas-Ka is a legend among scholars and graverobbers alike, who whisper tales of items of unfathomable power that rest in a black sarcophagus in the lightless depths of his profane vault. The tomb itself hides amidst the deadly southern jungles and is recognized by the massive ebony slab that marks its entrance. This solitary doorway is cut into the side of a sheer cliff face and has remained sealed since the tomb was constructed.

But the vault has finally been breached. An industrious and foolhardy adventuring trio managed to thwart the magical and mechanical barriers protecting the crypt. Their use of a large alchemical explosion in the side of the cliff face exposed one of the tomb's internal passages. Their success, however, was short-lived. One-by-one they perished at the hands of Xulthas-Ka's immortal protectors and their own unsound decisions. The obsidian sarcophagus has gone undiscovered.

Only the most learned of sages know the truth of Xulthas-Ka and his Black Sarcophagus—the sorcerer king was a serpentfolk archpriest of the Great Old One Yig, and his tomb is actually a temple built in service to the Serpent God's endlessly sinister agenda. Those who would defile the tomb in search of wealth are promised mortal peril by the wily traps and undead horrors that lurk within. Even still, the mystery of the Black Sarcophagus beckons...

Adventure Hooks

- An opportunistic merchant lord (or crime boss) hires the party as sellswords to investigate the tomb with (false) promises of full shares of whatever treasures are found within.
- The party encounters a blind soothsayer in a crowded tavern or market square who whispers enticing tales of a “black sarcophagus of the sorcerer king” through opium-stained teeth. Conveniently, he has a rare map to offer them—for a price.
- A cabal of serpentfolk yearns to know the secrets of Xulthas-Ka and hires the party in secrecy to excavate what they suspiciously refer to as “a site of archeological interest.”

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Publisher: Wolfgang Baur

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Using this Lair

The *Black Sarcophagus* can be easily adapted to any campaign. In the Midgard setting, the Tomb of Xulthas-Ka is located in the Southlands, cut into the western face of the mile-high cliffs surrounding Black Lotus Mesa. It is highly suitable for any similar geography.

This lair references Void exposure and includes a magic item in the sarcophagus itself that gives PCs who attune to it access to Void magic spells. If you do not use Void exposure or Void magic in your game, then you can replace Void exposure with short-term madness and the magical tome in the sarcophagus with a *tome of clear thought*.

Exploring The Tomb of Xulthas-Ka

Until recently, the tomb of Xulthas-Ka has remained undisturbed for centuries unknown. The air of its unseen chambers hangs heavy with the stale odors of dry earth and ancient decay. The walls and floors throughout are lined with irregular patterns of a squamous mosaic of multihued limestone tiles. Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings of the tomb are 10 feet high. Once opened, the stone doors and sarcophagi inside the tomb automatically close at the break of dawn the following day.

1. THE BLACK DOOR

A wide slab of black rock has been set into the cliff face. Its tall, ageless surface is remarkably smooth, defying the countless seasons of exposure it has endured here at the edge of civilization.

This oppressive, 10-foot wide, 12-foot tall stone door marks the entrance to the Tomb of Xulthas-Ka. It is sealed by powerful magic and can only be opened with its corresponding key, the true nature and current location of which are entirely unknown. The Black Door is locked from both sides and is seemingly immune to all damage.

2. THE BREACH

A massive hole in the cliffside reveals a tiled passage that stretches north and southward into the darkness beyond. Blackened rubble and burnt stone debris litters the ground around this yawning, earthen maw.

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the cause of the breach: the blackened and burnt earth are the result of an alchemical explosion that ruptured the exterior wall of the tomb. Furthermore, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals the weathered tracks of three booted humanoids that disappear into the darkness of the tiled tomb.

3. TRAPPED GALLERY

The walls and floor of this unlit chamber are strewn with cobwebs and dust. The rotting corpse of a tomb robber hovers at the southern end of the room, skewered from beneath by a giant spike.

The walls to the east and west are adorned with bas-relief murals that depict a race of hooded serpent people engaged in epic battle with other humanoid races. To the east, they war against a united army of allied races—humans, elves, and dwarves among them. To the west, the serpentfolk raise blade and fang against a stranger enemy—likewise robed, but thronged by a hideous horde of amorphous mutants and terrors from the Void. The shape of an ouroboros frames a central setting sun on each mural. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes this mural as an account of an ancient conflict between the serpentfolk and the servants of Yig, monstrous servitors to the Great Old One known as the Father of Serpents.

Floor spike traps fill the spaces marked with a “T” on the map, and the unfortunate impaled fellow fell victim to one.

Floor Spike Trap. This trap is activated when a creature steps on a hidden pressure plate, releasing a 6-foot spring-loaded vertical stone spike from a hole in the floor. The trap activates when more than 20 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate. The spike makes a melee attack with a +5 bonus against the target (vision is irrelevant to this attack roll). (If there are no targets in the area, the spike doesn’t hit anything.) A target that is hit takes 11 (2d10) piercing damage and is grappled (escape DC 10). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained.

Prevention. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the presence of pressure plates from variations in the mortar and stone used to create them when compared to the surrounding floor. Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating.

TREASURE

The body holds a pouch containing 27 gp, a set of engraved bone dice worth 25 gp, a shortsword, and a set of thieves’ tools.

4. ANTECHAMBER

The revolving doors of this chamber are cut from thick slabs of stone and require a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to push open. The massive Black Door caps the corridor to the east.

5. WATCH-HOUSE SEPULCHRE

This spade-shaped chamber houses several dozen clay urns and a lone, basalt sarcophagus.

The room is littered with dozens of unmarked canopic jars and clay urns. If a creature moves more than 10 feet

in 1 round, it breaks some of the urns. The third time this happens, a snake-shaped **wraith** comes out of the urns and attacks. There is only one wraith waiting in the urns.

A **skeletal servant of Yig** also guards this chamber from the confines of the sarcophagus. This undead guardian remains inactive until the sarcophagus is opened, at which time it clatters to life and attacks the closest intruder. The skeletal servant of Yig will pursue all intruders to the edges of the tomb but will not leave the tomb.

Sarcophagus Trap. When the stone lid of the sarcophagus is moved, the revolving doors in Area 4 immediately swivel shut and lock. The room fills with poison gas that spews from hidden valves beneath the sarcophagus. Each creature in the room must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 11 (2d10) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't poisoned.

Prevention. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the hidden valves. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables the trigger on the sarcophagus lid. Unsuccessfully attempting to disable the trap triggers the trap. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the doors in Area 4.

6. CAVELIT CORRIDOR

A pale, yellow light pulses through the darkness in this wide, pillared corridor. The phosphorescent glow seems to be coming from large patches of tangled, lacy moss that cling to the ceiling around the two easternmost columns. The soft light reveals a multitude of canopic jars and clay urns, which line the walls and litter the alcoves beyond.

This section of the tomb is inhabited by two **cavelight moss** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 53). Each sheds dim light in a 10-foot radius. While the moss light reveals the four alcoves that line the corridor, a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check is required to discover the desiccated corpse of another unlucky adventurer tangled within the patch of moss in the middle of the room. This investigation also reveals the skeletal and partially devoured remains of several dead bats.

Similar to Area 5, if a creature moves more than 10 feet in 1 round in this corridor, it breaks several clay urns and canopic jars. Each time this happens, a snake-shaped **shadow** crawls out of the broken jars and attacks. There are five shadows lurking in the urns in this room.

Four **swarms of bats** nest in this chamber and will only attack if threatened or disturbed.

The revolving stone door to Area 7 is similar to the doors in Area 4 and can be forced open with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

TREASURE

The corpse in the second patch of moss holds 19 gp, a +1 silver dagger, and a ring of necrotic resistance.

7. TRAPPED ANTECHAMBER

The door slides open to reveal a wide rectangular room lined in bas-relief depictions of an eldritch apocalypse. Ruined cities swarmed by teeming masses of serpentfolk war with twisted creatures from beyond the Void. Strange symbols decorate a black basalt door on the far side of the room. Clay urns and canopic jars lie scattered along the walls.

The urns and canopic jars that line the walls of this chamber are empty. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes the bas-relief as a continuation of the mural in Area 3. It portrays the fall of a prehistoric serpentfolk people to the forces of Yig millennia ago. The mural's depiction of the fall appears to be more of an origin story, showing the serpentfolk's slow rejection of their traditional ways and embrace of the Great Old One. A PC that succeeded on both this check and the check in Area 3 has advantage on ability checks and saving throws against the enemies in Areas 8 and 9; however, the PC exposes itself to the Void. The PC must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw or suffer one short-term madness and gain one point of Void taint (see *Midgard Worldbook*, p. 417).

This chamber houses a deadly combination of traps: a locked and enchanted door and a 20-foot deep **hidden pit trap** at the room's center. A body clad in a +1 chain shirt rests at the bottom of the pit, an abandoned longsword on the ground beside it.

Thundering Door Trap. When a creature attempts to open the door, the trap triggers. Each creature within 20 feet of the locked door to Area 8, must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 22 (4d10) thunder damage and is pushed 15 feet away from the door. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't pushed.

Prevention. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the strange symbols on the door hide a *glyph of warding* spell. A character that knows Void Speech has advantage on this check. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 13) cast on the door destroys the trap. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools unlocks the door. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap.

8. FALSE TOMB

The air of this spade-shaped chamber sits impossibly still. On the far end of the room, a large sarcophagus sits surrounded by canopic jars. It is carved from a massive piece of black rock.

This facsimile of the famed Black Sarcophagus is a decoy and houses a deadly **sarcophagus slime** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 336). The sarcophagus slime attacks only if the sarcophagus is opened. The canopic jars in this room are empty.

Two **skeletal servants of Yig** lurk in the alcoves near the door and attack any intruders.

Secret Door. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the secret door to Area 9. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the hidden release button needed to open it. Once the button is depressed, a slab of tiled stone slides away to reveal a path to the chamber beyond.

9. HIDDEN CHAMBER

The slab of tiled rock slides away to reveal another spade-shaped chamber. A black sarcophagus made of solid obsidian traced with intricate arcane calligraphy sits in the center. A luminous green mist swirls into the unearthly skeletal form of an ancient, serpent-headed creature.

This chamber is attended by a serpentfolk **spectral guardian** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 358). It is accompanied by one **ghostly giant constrictor snake**.

A ghostly giant constrictor snake use the statistics for a **giant constrictor snake** except it has a challenge rating of 3 (700 XP), its constrict action deals necrotic damage instead of bludgeoning damage, and it has resistance to acid, fire, lightning, and thunder damage and bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks. In addition, it gains the following trait:

Incorporeal Movement. The ghostly giant constrictor snake can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

TREASURE

Pulling back the heavy lid of the sarcophagus reveals the corpse of Xulthas-Ka, whose serpent-headed skeletal remains have lain undisturbed for ages. He is buried with but a few of his worldly treasures: 666 gp, a *nullifier's lexicon* (*Midgard Worldbook*, p. 410), a *wand of fear*, and a +2 *Nurian hook of wounding* (*Midgard Heroes Handbook*, p. 51).

Skeletal Servant of Yig

This massive skeletal ophidian—a skeletal version of the **servant of Yig** (*Creature Codex*, p. 325)—is a hideous undead amalgam of man and snake. Its fanged humanoid skull has expressionless features and sits atop the bony frame of a serpentine body that clicks ominously as it slithers forward.

Undead Nature. The skeletal servant of Yig doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

SERVANT OF YIG, SKELETAL

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +5, Wis +1, Cha +0

Skills Perception +3, Persuasion +1, Stealth +6

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 13

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Magic Resistance. The skeletal servant of Yig has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

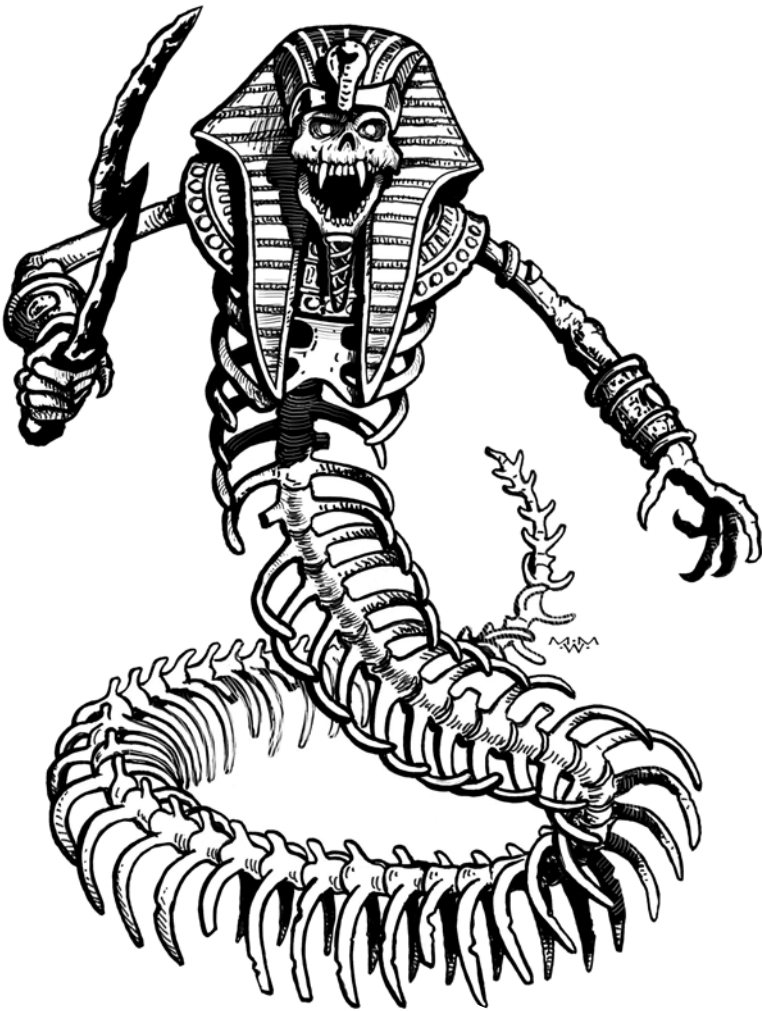
Multiattack. The skeletal servant of Yig makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws or khopesh.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Khopesh. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns, and the skeletal servant of Yig can't constrict another target.



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