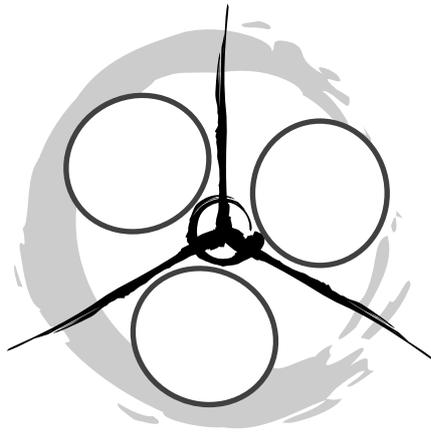


Scarab

by Gregor Hutton*
Version 1.06 · For use with ERP†

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Ancient Adventure

Scarab is a role-playing game setting of high adventure, of swords and sorcery, and of deserts and dust. The world is magickal, with more than a hint of Egypt, Sinbad and Conan. For use with Elegant Role-Playing (ERP).

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Introduction

Scarab is a land of diverse cultures and characters.

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Music

For background music I recommend that you check out Peter Gabriel's 'Passion' and 'Passion: Sources'. The former was used as the soundtrack to 'The Last Temptation of Christ' a film by Martin Scorsese, while the latter is traditional music that helped inspire Gabriel.

Geography

Language

Scripts, Hieroglyphs and Runes

History

Gods

Anubis

Jackal-headed deity, the most powerful God of the Underworld.

Jhavun

A former Felmar Emperor who was elevated to lesser deity status when he died. He is worshipped widely across the Felmar empire, and is the God of public buildings and learning.

Maulkrot

Orcish deity, who the Orcs believe is the only real God.

Magick

Glory

Tales of the Desert _____

Creatures of Courage _____

Humans

Humans are the most common adventuring race on Scarab. They range widely in height and weight. Skin colour varies from pale white in the far north to dark brown in the far south of the Felmar empire.

Outlanders

Outlanders are barbarians organized in tribes worshipping a variety of Gods, mostly animal and nature totems. The tribes often war with one another but generally band together when faced with a common enemy (such as the Panzian Empire to the west of the Outlands). However, the Outlanders have been known to attempt unprovoked assaults on Panzia themselves, and the Panzians have constructed an impressive stone wall along the entire border between the two cultures. Some Outlanders are of Panzian stock, stolen from slaughtered parents and raised on hatred for their former families. That is not to say that Outlanders are uncaring or callous. While they are a barbarian culture they do also have deep family ties and they record their history in moving songs and dances. A typical Outlander adventurer is a Barbarian or Reaver, carrying an Outlander Axe and Warhorn.

Freelanders

Freelanders are physically similar to Outlanders, which is not surprising since they are direct descendants. Captured Outlanders were made slaves by the Felmar to the east many centuries ago. They were used to build the great temples and pyramids that characterize the Felmar empire. As a result of this there were many slaves in the Felmar lands and they were highly valued by their feline masters. It was in the reign of the Third Dynasty of the Emperor Jhavun that all slaves were given

their freedom and became known as Freelanders. Felmar history states this was a reward for the slaves who had fought in the defence of the Felmar empire from the fourth and last incursion by the Orks. In reality, the reason was more pragmatic. If the slaves had chosen to revolt, the depleted Felmar armies would have been in no position to stop them, so heavy had their losses to the Orks been. Since then the Freelanders have been staunch supporters of the monarchy of the Felmar and while many Freelanders tend the arable lands and provide crops for the empire, many other Freelanders take up arms or work in the many libraries and buildings of government. There is no such thing as a typical Freelander adventurer as the Felmar empire offers a wealth of opportunities to its peoples.

Panzians

Panzia is an empire of humans to the very west of the Outlands. The boundary of the empire is marked by a massive stone wall that stretches from the frozen north to the tropical south. On the Panzian side of the wall there are deep forests that stretch for many weeks of travel on foot. In the interior of the empire they have fabulously jewelled temples and cities constructed of stone, cloth and paper. Meeting a Panzian outside of their empire is a very rare act. If any are to be found they are probably outcasts from the strict social hierarchy of the Panzian empire. They wear fabulous silk garments and their weapons are ornate as they are deadly.

Orcs

Orcs are second only to humans in number of all the civilized peoples of Scarab. Orcs are widely mistrusted in the Felmar empire and the Outlands, and adventuring Orcs are trusted far less than that when they return to their own homelands. The Panzians have never warred against Orcs and are unfamiliar with them.

There has not been a major war between the Felmar and the Orcs for many centuries and so Orcs can be found in small numbers across the whole empire. However, Orcs occupy vast swathes of land to the north and east of the Felmar lands where they live in relative isolation.

Desert Orcs

Desert Orcs are the most common Orcs encountered by non-Orcs. They alternately raid merchant routes and trade with humans and Felmar depending on the whim of their tribal leader. Desert Orcs have a reputation for determination and grim humour. They inhabit a harsh environment and the life of a Desert Orc is often short and painful. They breed rapidly and only the high mortality rate ensures that there is not a population explosion. Still, they are excellent craftsmen and hard workers. Orcs are said to inhabit vast dungeon-cities in the deepest reaches of the eastern deserts.

Rumours that they cannot swim are mostly untrue, although they commonly have a fear of the open sea. They are well adapted to life in the desert. Desert Orcs worship their God Maulkrot, although they disagree with Mountain Orcs on many facets of their God.

Mountain Orcs

Mountain Orcs are more misunderstood than their Desert cousins. Mountain Orcs have long lives and a highly complicated society of warriors, shamans, artists and philosophers. However, all Mountain Orcs are forbidden from talking of their society to outsiders, including Desert Orcs. Any Mountain Orc trying to do so is said to be struck down dead by

Maulkrot. Recently the Mountain Orcs have united under a common leader for the first time since the Fourth Incursion. The new leader Ferros, meaning Orc of Steel, is unknown to all but the Mountain Orcs. His name is written as the symbol for iron with a crown atop. The Mountain Orcs sometimes trade and often war with the Mountain Dwarves but these contacts and conflicts have all but ceased since Ferros came to power.

In the distant past Mountain Orcs ruled over their Desert cousins, who they view as generally ill-disciplined and less cerebral than themselves. Mountain Orcs are devoutly religious.

Spirit Peoples

Elves

Nymphs and The Fae

Mountain Dwarves

Felmar

A race of cat-people descended from an ancient civilization that vanished long ago leaving a legacy of mystery behind.

Dogmar

A race descended from the God Anubis, mostly embalmers and priests to his cult. These creatures are jackal- or dog-headed with long faces and sharp pointed ears. Their bodies are humanoid and covered in pallid skin but their heads are coated in a short black fur. They are found wherever there are temples for the dead in the Felmar empire. However, you could count the number of Dogmar in any given city on your fingers. Silent and secretive they know more than they will divulge. The dead speak to them.

Archetypes

Fighter, Warrior, Soldier, Barbarian, Mercenary

A typical Fighter has no trouble finding work, whether it is as a soldier of the Emperor or protecting a trade caravan from bandits. The job is hard but the rewards can be great, for the lucky ones who survive a long life as a warrior that is.

Typical Skills: Armed Combat, Unarmed Combat, Riding, Survival, World Lore, Missile Combat, Gambling, Marching, Chariot, Navigation, Singing, Tactics, Bravado.

Typical Outfit: Ring Mail, backpack, dagger, sword, rope, water-skins, food, blanket, bone dice, a poor-quality horse, a bow, some arrows.

Suggested Gifts: **Favoured** (you are a particular favourite of a God and they watch over your adventures), **Herculean Strength** (you can perform extraordinary feats of Strength such as lifting boulders in exchange for Wounds of exertion, it has no combat effect), **Eyes of a Hawk** (you can see far farther than normal), **Rapid Healer** (you can heal quicker than normal), **Runner** (you are able to run faster and for far longer than other characters and creatures).

Social status: Trusted across Scarab, fighters are a vital part of all cultures. Most follow some code of honour and many townspeople and farmers were fighters at one point in their life. A brave fighter is never short of a meal or somewhere to stay the night. People may not like you personally, but they respect you and your job.

Thief, Rogue, Burglar, Cut-throat, Charlatan

A Thief is someone that makes their living by taking from others, whether by skill or deception. Still, this does not necessarily make the thief unpopular. Spreading the stolen wealth around their compatriots certainly helps their friends turn a blind eye to their less-than-lawful ways.

Typical Skills: Lockpicking, Tracking, Climbing, Stealth, Streetwise, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, Pickpocket, Armed Combat, Unarmed Combat, Forgery, Mimicry.

Typical Outfit: Ordinary clothes, satchel, dagger, short sword or club, rope, padded leather armour, a cloak, several sacks, some cheap stolen jewellery.

Suggested Gifts: **Light Fingered** (you are supernaturally talented at picking pockets and purses without getting caught), **Cat's Feet** (handy for a burglar, you are able to fall large distances and land relatively safely), **Magickal Specialist: Thief** (you are adept at 'thief's magick', which is useful for hiding and acting silently), **Connected** (you are connected to a large guild of thieves and can call on fellow thieves for help), **Stolen Magickal Item** (you possess a magickal item that is reasonably powerful, say a ring of invisibility; the downside is that it is very much sought after by others...)

Social status: Tolerated in most of the empire, thieves are often very popular in large cities (as long as the crime rate isn't too high). Charismatic robbers can even be wildly popular in some areas, at long as they don't get convicted and exiled to the Salt Desert. There are licensed thieves guilds that exist in all the major cities. Mountain Orcs forbid thievery and so thieves are punished by mutilation and if they persist in their profession, death.

Reaver, Raider, Corsair, Pirate, Assassin

Adept at fighting and thievery, Reavers and their ilk travel along the trade routes seeking gold and adventure. Wherever there are thrills to be found they will not be far away. Their life is glamorous and dangerous.

Typical Skills: Armed Combat, Unarmed Combat, Stealth, Climb, Riding, Boating, Survival, Swim, Evaluate, Poison, Intimidation, World Lore

Typical Outfit: Loose clothes, backpack, dagger, short sword, rope, part of a treasure map, waterskin and some food, scarf, hood.

Suggested Gifts: **Ambidextrous** (you can fight with either hand which is useful for mounted combat and fighting on the high seas),

Social status: Untrusted in towns and rural areas, raiders and the like are more tolerated in large cities and ports, where they may even be members of a licensed guild. Some outlying islands are inhabited almost entirely by pirates and corsairs, while large areas of the Outlands are populated mainly by reavers. So in these areas they have a much higher status. Assassins tend not to admit their true profession.

Cleric, Priest, Shaman, Druid, Warlock

Religion and talk of Gods dominate the lives of the ordinary peoples of Scarab. The many Clerics spread the word of their deities and their magick too.

Typical Skills:

Typical Outfit:

Suggested Gifts: **Magickal Ability** (very powerful clerics and priests can casts spells, enchantments and so on just like sorcerers; however, should the magick user fall out of favour with their God then their abilities may temporarily stop or act in mysterious ways), **Magickal Specialist** (you are adept at a particular type of magick, such as Forest

Magick, Blessings/Enchantments, or your God's magick), **Connected** (you are an excellent organizer and popular in your sect; you have the priestly equivalent of a thief's 'Connected' ability), **Martyr** (your suffering draws plenty of followers and great tales will be told of your many trials and tribulations).

Social status:

Sorcerer, Wizard, Enchanter, Witch, Mage

Scarab is innately magickal, and spell-casters can be found all across the land.

Typical Skills:

Typical Outfit:

Suggested Gifts: Magickal Ability

Social status:

Noble, Trader, Academic, Scribe, Servant

Wherever there are people there is trade. The trade routes also foster a thriving society of historians, academics, playwrights, servants, scribes and so on.

Typical Skills:

Typical Outfit:

Suggested Gifts:

Social status:

Arms and Armour

Type of Armour

Shield

Leather Armour

Padded Armour

Studded Leather

Desert Ring Mail

Orc Scale Mail

Panzian Lamellar Armour

Chain Mail

Dwarven Plate Mail

Weapon, DM, cost

Blunt Weapons

Wooden Club, -1

2H Metal Stave, 0

2H Frelander Haft, +1

Edged Weapons

City Dagger, -2, 1 J

Dogmar Blade, 0

Desert Short Sword, 0, 5 J

Frelander Sword, 0/+1

Orc Sword, +1

Giant Sword, +2

Outlander Weapons

Outlander Axe

Outlander War Axe

Outlander Flail

Outlander War Flail

Outlander Sword

Outlander Knife

Missile Weapons

Bow
Crossbow
Sling
Spear

Spells and Spellcasting _____**Clerical Magic****Sorcerous Magic****Lands of High Adventure** _____

The Felmar Empire and tales of the ancients.

Sample Characters**A'Chulain, Outlander Barbarian**

Mastery: 6 (0: strong), Wisdom: 3, Power: 6
Skills: Armed Combat (0), Riding (1), Healing (2)
Gifts: Herculean Strength (10)
Glory: 2

Shem, Felmar Scribe

Mastery: 4, Wisdom: 7 (0: educated, 4: reasoned), Power: 4 (2: persuasive)
Skills: Literacy (0), Languages (1), History (2), Cultures (3)
Gifts:
Glory: 3

Carrie, Elven Reaver

Mastery: , Wisdom: , Power:
Skills:
Gifts:

Tupar, Dogmar Sorcerer

Mastery: , Wisdom: , Power:
Skills:
Gifts:

Voron, Freelander Mercenary

Mastery: , Wisdom: , Power:
Skills:
Gifts:

Mummat, Freelander Pathfinder

Mastery: , Wisdom: , Power:
Skills:
Gifts:

Notes

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