

The Likely Mistaken Rules of

TIME WIZARDS!

A roleplaying game of Time, Wizards, and Time Wizards

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v1.0

What is *Time Wizards!*?: A running joke that started during D&D games in the early 2000's regarding a typo in a splatbook forgotten by history, and ended up in roughly what you see here. The original version of the rules were just a bunch of nigh-incoherent mechanics scribbled on old notebooks, specifically intended to be obtrusive and problematic. The version you see here is essentially the same thing, but slightly better formatted.

What Will You Do in *Time Wizards!*?: In *Time Wizards!* you will take upon the role of a Time Wizard, a long-bearded master of the arcane arts that has transcended mere material boundaries and has become one with time itself. Essentially, this means you will play as a specific moment of time, using causality to alter events and achieve your probably pointless, but nonetheless heroic, goals. Your cosmic powers will depend on what happened during you (that's it, what transpired during the time period you became).

Why Should You Play *Time Wizards!*?: You should not play *Time Wizards!*.

What do You Need to Play *Time Wizards!*?: You will need as many d4s and d12s as you can find, giving 2 of each to each player and leaving at least 4 more of each for the Time Master, as well as a dice cup (you can actually use d20s instead of d12s, since it is not the numbers that matter, but the shape. See "*The Slap Phase*", page 5, for more details). If there are not enough dice for all players, you can use the "*Combo Wizard*" option, in which case you will need one boxing glove or pillow per player playing as a combo wizard.

You will also need some kind of liquid readily available; though original play was intended for soda, water and alcoholic beverages are allowed. Cooking oil is discouraged, but not forbidden. This liquid is labeled as *The Beverage of Choice!* (the exclamation must be used

when referring to it. See *Time Distortions*, page 7, for more details).

Finally, having a beard gives an edge, so grow one if time allows.

Starting the Game

The following pages detail the things that need to be done when starting a *Time Wizards!* adventure.

THE OPENING

Every game of *Time Wizard!* must begin with at least one individual yelling "*MEANWHILE, THE TIME WIZARDS!*"; other potential participants have until The Opening has been completely enunciated to join in the yelling. Failure to do so will disqualify them from Time Mastery until the session ends.

THE TIME MASTER

The Time Master (or TM) is the player in charge of running the story; he's the theme-appropriate Game Master. He will determine the flow of events, control non-player characters, and in general do his best to make players fail.

How to Determine the Time Master

Once The Phrase has been yelled, the role of TM can be determined by four methods:

-Yeller's Choice: If only one participant enunciated The Opening, he is awarded with the title of TM automatically. If two or more participants managed to yell it in time, they can agree between themselves who will take the place of the TM. Should consensus not be reached, fisticuffs are advised, after which you should refer to one of the other three methods. Should consensus be reached, fisticuffs are still advised as a method of

masculine assertion.

-Hat Method: The player with the biggest hat is the TM. Top Hats, Mexican Sombreros, and anything with a Propeller that can be somehow fastened to the head (loose propellers do not count, but model airplanes with propellers do) automatically earns Time Mastery, regardless of size. Should two or more of those hats be present, each contestant uses the hat as a dice cup and rolls 4d4s. The highest result becomes the TM.

-Beard Method: Alternatively, or if all players are wearing Top Hats, Mexican Hats or Propeller Hats, the player with the greatest beard can choose who is the TM, even among those normally disqualified. Beard greatness is determined first by length, then by percentage of the face covered. If a tie persists, or if players only have short beards, pick a number of plates equal to the number of players with some form of facial hair and evenly put potato chips on them. Then have each player roll his cheeks on the plate for up to 5 seconds -per cheek- and then lift their faces (note that butt cheeks are still considered cheeks for the purposes of this rule, regardless of the amount of hair they feature). The player who managed to stick the most potato chips (or pieces) is declared the TM; the chips must remain there at least 5 seconds to be valid. Players without any form of facial hair cannot be elected TM by this method if someone else has at least a moustache (long sideburns and hairy warts are not considered facial hair for purposes of this rule).

-Bribery: Finally, at any moment, a player can offer money or food to the rest in order to be declared TM. If the bribing player can get a simple majority (51% or more of players), he becomes TM, even if he was previously disqualified. Unpaid promised bribes are not punished; the gullible player who fell for that is instead to be ridiculed. Money used for the bribery must be of a legally recognized denomination issued by the country in which the game is being played, however.

Role of the Time Master

The TM is in charge of running the game. Knowing the rules is important, but not mandatory (see “*Clueless Time Masters*”, below). In particular, the TM will:

Explain the Uninteresting Week: Fundamental in the process of Wizard Making. See “*Enter the Wizards*”, page 3, for more information.

Wrestle the Story: The flow of events and the way

the plot moves is determined by the TM. Note that he still needs to abide to the general guidelines set during the “*LET ME TELL YOU A STORY OF HIGH ADVENTURE!*” step (see page 4 for details).

Determine Complications: Every time a player wants to do something that could potentially fail, the TM must set a complication value. See “*Determining Complications*”, page 5, for more details.

Changing Time Masters

It is possible for a player to take the role of TM in the middle of a game. This can happen either as the result of a bribery (see above), a change of hats (see “*Hat-off*” for more details), a player suddenly growing a beard, due to a cosmic imperative, because the current TM has gone silent for too long (see “*LET ME TELL YOU A STORY OF HIGH ADVENTURE*”, page 4, for details) or because someone rolled a d8 (see “*Using the Wrong Dice*”, page 7, for details). Whenever this happens, the new TM gains all the faculties of the role.

Should the new TM be also playing as a Combo Wizard, then he and all the players involved in the combo become Combo Masters. See “*Combo Wizard*”, page 6, for more details.

Clueless Time Masters

Due to the above, it is likely that a player who has no proper understanding of the rules will end up as TM. Should this happen, he is considered a Clueless Master, in which case he must abide to the following rules:

Make Up Rules: Since it is not expected that a Clueless Master has read these rules to begin with, he is endowed with the ability to make up all the rules, so long as none of them involve spoons, empty glasses, wooden objects that have not been burnished, taking off the left shoe or the word “*pineapple*”.

Note that whenever a Clueless TM takes hold of the game, anyone else can steal Time Mastery after 10 minutes have passed as long as they can recite, from memory and without looking at this specific text, the following phrase:

Shoes. Shoes shoes shoes shoes, shoes shoes shoes shoes shoes. And shoes shoes, with shoes shoes shoes. Shoes.

If the person attempting to steal Time Mastery through this method makes a mistake while saying it, the person closest to his left arm must hit him in the right shoulder with his left elbow, upon which the first

player able to punch the right elbow of the hitting player with the right hand becomes TM. This includes the Clueless TM himself, which can potentially lead the group into an endless spiral of elbow-punching. These rules offer no easy exit from such scenario.

Exception: If the person reciting the phrase does so in a sufficiently convincing Scottish or Argentinean accent, he can choose to take a second chance should he make a mistake. Whether it is convincing or not is determined by a commission of two players chosen at random by the current TM by taking out his right shoe and throwing it in the air twice, selecting the closest player to the shoe each time. If two or more players are equidistant to the shoe, they must take out their respective right shoes, step away from the TM's shoe 3 metres (10 feet), throw their shoes at the aforementioned shoe, and select for the commission the player whose shoe falls the closest. Players without right shoes may instead use any nearby burnished wooden object. If there are none, the commission is scrapped and the player must spin on his right foot until a new TM is chosen by any method.

ENTER THE WIZARDS

Once the TM has been determined, it is time to create the time wizards everyone else will be playing.

Back in My Day...

The first step consists in figuring out who your time wizard was the week before he suddenly managed to master time. There are no limitations on the setting, time period or naming conventions used when creating the wizard, but some main guidelines must be observed:

-He Must be Uninspiring: Becoming a time wizard is such awesome an event that the process sent shocks back in time and altered his own history to make it even more appealing by contrast. This means your wizard must have been as dull as you can possibly imagine.

-He Must Have a Beard: No matter what, a wizard is not a wizard if he has no beard or at least substantial muttonchops. That's why they invented sorcerers. Non-humanoid wizards are not required to have a beard-chin correspondence, however.

-All Wizards Must Have Been Together: Your time wizards used to be part of the same covenant/group/bridge club or at least must have been living in the same deteriorated tropical condo during the week prior to their timemification.

The Uninteresting Week

Once the players have designed their uninteresting wizards, the TM proceeds to explain the events that transpired during a week, culminating in the sudden and no-explanations-provided transformation from a mere time experimenter into a proper time unit. For reasons unknown, all timemifications happen on a Saturday afternoon at 3:47 PM, so the uninteresting week must start on the previous Saturday afternoon at 3:48 PM.

The amount of detail is left for the TM to decide, although it must consist of events scrapping on borderline catatonia; anything more interesting than "*And then you reorganized your socks according to colour*" or "*So the water faucet was, in fact, open*" is probably beyond the scope of the uninteresting week.

Choosing the Time Frame

Once the TM finishes detailing the uninteresting week, the players must choose a specific moment of said week into which they transform. The longer the period, the more powerful the wizard, so the players should define ahead of time the system they will be using:

Instant Wizard: Your wizard barely managed to take over an infinitely short period of time, thus giving you no power at all. Only play this if you don't want to play Time Wizards!.

Second Wizard: You became a second of the week, gaining causality control over a single event or a piece of one. Your powers might range from "*Opening the Door*" to "*Begin Pouring the Milk*".

Minute Wizard: You became a minute of the week, and your powers extend over up to three events in total, which can be consistently more elaborate. Examples include "*Donning the Underwear*" and "*Setting up the Network as Homegroup*".

Hour Wizard: You became an hour of the week, and your powers extend over up to ten events in total. These events can be of great complexity, thanks to how long the period is. Examples include "*Watering the Garden*", "*Getting the Tan*", and "*Hitting the Vending Machine Long Enough So You Can Get a Free Soda, but Finally Getting Nothing*".

Note that, unless playing combo wizards, the time segments chosen by each player must not overlap. If two or more players are adamant about taking the same time

unit, resort to fisticuffs. In this particular scenario, the fisticuffers may not necessarily be the players involved in the dispute.

Determining Your Powers

As mentioned, the powers of a time wizard depend on the events that transpired during the specific section of time into which they became. This means some powers can encompass entire events or just part of them. However, all powers must always describe actions which cause the events. Beyond that, there are no specific rules for power selection, besides the TM determining whether you can get full control of an event or just a section of it. The whole point of *Time Wizards!* is for you to get creative with how to apply otherwise pointless events in order to create new situations.

Keep in mind that, while more elaborate events give you a greater deal of control over the results (for instance, “*Walking into the Bathroom*” is less to the point than “*Washing the Teeth With Strawberry-flavoured Toothpaste*”), they also become narrower in their uses, so try to find a proper balance between the two extremes.

Once you have chosen your powers, write them down exactly as you want them. This is very important, as powers are to be used literally (though what they accomplish is open to interpretation depending on the context. See “*Using Powers*”, below, for more information).

VOILA!

Now your group is ready to play *Time Wizards!* Hats may be removed at this time (beards may not be shaved, however). If at least one person keeps his hat on 10 seconds longer while the rest removes them, that person instantly takes Time Mastery.

Should anyone actually say “*Voila!*” at this point, two things can happen:

-If he’s the TM, he immediately loses Time Mastery, which is handed over to the player with the least amount of hair covering his ears. If no ears are covered with hair (or there are no ears), players roll 4d4s. Then the first person to say, with a French accent, “*But Marie, this is not my baguette!*” becomes the TM.

-If he’s a player, he instantly becomes the TM and hands his character over to the previous TM, who must play it as it had permanent constipation.

Playing This Thing

Once the formalities have been dealt with, it’s time to play this thing. How do we do that is the subject of this section.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY OF HIGH ADVENTURE!

The TM has the duty of igniting the session with a plot, which must always, without exception*, begin with the phrase “*LET ME TELL YOU A STORY OF HIGH ADVENTURE!*”. It need not be an actual story of high adventure, however.

**Exception:* If the TM is sitting with his back to the rest of the players, he can simply mumble or hum without significance. Then the player closest to his left arm must interpret the meaning and announce his personal interpretation of the opening line.

Silent TM: Should the TM fail to convey further story elements for 10 or more minutes (which can be the result of any number of things, including a bathroom break), players can vote to reassign Time Mastery. On a 3/4ths majority, Time Master can be reassigned as per the rules indicated under Starting the Game. If the vote does not pass, then the players will need to find another way to change the TM, or enjoy a very uneventful story.

USING POWERS

Everything in *Time Wizards!* involves using the powers acquired by the time wizards, a process which is academically known as Slapping (which is different from the mechanical *Slapping*, which we’ll see in short). While the rules will actively try to get in your way, in the end it is all about applying the concept behind a power to something and seeing what happens. The exact application of powers is something players and TM should discuss together, but some basic guidelines should be observed/fought over:

Straightforward Is An Option: If your power reads something like “*Straightening the Slightly-bent Wire*”, you can use to straighten slightly-bent wires. Do not be afraid to use your powers exactly as they are written.

Context Notwithstanding: But also keep in mind that you are a time wizard, which means you have cosmic powers over causality and other fancy-sounding stuff. So try to think of what the power means: What does it mean to “*Straighten the Slightly-Bent Wire*”? One

interpretation is that it simply un-bents a wire, but another is that it can straighten wiry things that are slightly bent. A man walking has to slightly bend his legs to move, and if he's lean we could say he's wiry, so maybe you can stop him right on his feet with this power. Maybe the bank has wired money to the wrong account, so you could try to straighten it so it gets where it should; perhaps the money was sent to the right account, but the account holder's name is Stephen, while yours is Steven, and you could try to make the case of a slightly-bent name. Trying to find clever uses for your powers is where the fun is. Keep in mind that the further you interpret, the more complications you might encounter when using the power.

Example: Tuesday Afternoon Fifteen Past 4 o' Clock counts "Getting the Tan" among his powers. He's attempting to deal with a bunch of particularly angry peasants, so in order to sneak away he causes the surrounding air to darken, by having it get a tan. Alternatively, he could use his power to get an excellent tan while being murdered by peasants.

THE SLAP PHASE

Whenever you try to use a power, it's time for the *Slap Phase*, where failure or success is determined. During a *Slap Phase*, TM and players alike will use their d4s and d12s to bet and try to get the upper hand and get on with their plans.

Every *Slap Phase* follows the same process:

1.-Presenting the Case

You pick a power and tell the TM what you want to use it on and how. While the TM has the power to say no to your request, if you can present a convincing argument, pretty much anything can be accepted. Whenever you present a case, try to create a logical trail of thoughts, no matter how deranged the final idea is.

Example: Saturday Evening Between Nine-Thirty and Nine-Thirty-One wants to buy a new plasma TV, but he doesn't have enough money for it. So he goes to the seller to negotiate. He's a Minute Wizard, and one of his powers is "Donning the Bathing Suit". He presents the case that donning a bathing suit is something you can do to relax as part of a vacation, and relaxing a price might be a way of saying something gets cheaper. So he asks the TM if he can cause the TV's price to drop a bathing suit in order to get a discount.

2.- Determining Complications

Complications are tools the TM can use to make the player's life more difficult. They are not actually difficulty values to be beaten, but rather problems that may or may not be present.

A complication can be anything the TM chooses, from a very specific kind of venereal disease to a catastrophic result of the time wizard's meddling with causality. However, they should always be in line with the degree of change brought by the case presented by the player. Examples may include causing a wizard's pants to fill with dead squirrels, forcing him to speak in whistles for an entire day, or causing an effect opposite of what was originally intended. Judgement is important here, as while complications should be a clear indication that playing with time has its perils, they shouldn't make the game unplayable (we have other rules for that).

Complications happen if the player doesn't tackle them. In order to tackle a complication, a player needs to spend dice taken during the Slapping Them Dice step (see below).

Number of Complications: The number of complications a TM can determine vary depending on how complicated is the interpretation being used to apply a power. Powers used literally allow 1 complication; powers that are being slightly interpreted can allow 2; very strange interpretations, 3 or more. In addition, some extra factors can allow the TM more complications. These include, along with their complication modifier:

- There is no food within the TM's reach: +1
- There is no drink within the TM's reach: +1
- The power affects/involves gorillas: +2

The TM can determine less complications than his maximum allowance if he so chooses.

3.- Slapping Them Dice

Once the complications have been determined, the TM picks, in secret, a number of d4s and/or d12s equal to the number of complications he determined (for slaps with 2 or more complications, he can choose to put 1 less die than necessary), and puts them inside a cup. He then moves the cup toward the centre of the table/closest flat surface; the first person (including the TM) to slap the dice with his open, bare hand takes the dice.

Why slap the dice? For the player attempting to use his power, each dice he gets this way can be spent to tackle a single complication. For the other players, these dice go to their personal pools, while for the TM, keeping these dice means both avoiding the player from tackling the complications and recovering more for his own pool. See “*Dice Pools*”, below, for more details.

Ignore the numbers on the dice, since what matters here is the shape: d4s are very painful to slap, while d12s are considerably less so (which is why you can alternatively use d20s). More potential pain means thinking it more carefully whether to slap or not, while thinking whether to slap or not can mean the difference between success and your character’s knees developing low-fi speakers that blast out Taco Bell jingles.

Dice Pools: Each player and the TM have a personal dice pool. At the start of the game, players have no dice in their pools, while the TM has as many as the group managed to muster (see “*Diceless Time Wizards!*” for what to do if there are none). Players will build up their pools as the game progresses and more Slap Phases take place, but the total number of dice can never be greater than the dice present at the table when “*LET ME TELL YOU A STORY OF HIGH ADVENTURE!*” is declared.

Whenever the TM puts dice out for slapping, he’s losing those dice unless he slaps them first himself. However, whenever a player spends a dice to tackle a complication, they go back to the TM. This forces the TM to make a bet whenever he’s putting dice out, as while most of the times players will want to tackle complications, nothing forces them to do so (and, in fact, if they are clever enough they might even profit from them), thus forcing him to evaluate how many complications he should use.

Altering Slaps: After the TM has selected the dice in secret, any player can add, also in secret, dice from his own pool to the cup. He can do this both to assist a fellow player by giving him extra dice (useful in slaps with 2 or more complications, since the TM can put less dice than necessary), or to make a slap more/less painful by adding extra d4s/d12s.

Multislaps: A *multislap* happens when more than one wizard is participating in the action. *Multislaps* work just like normal slaps, with the exception that all characters involved may spend dice to tackle complications.

4.- Results

Success or failure is not necessarily the only option, since the TM can choose to determine complications regarding other things. Still, since a common complication can be “*Your power will fail to work*”, it could also be the case that failing to tackle them will make your actions unsuccessful.

Regardless of what exactly the complications are, they take place once the *Slapping Them Dice* step (and players had the time to choose which complications to tackle, if any) has been completed.

Additional Rules

Rules covering specific circumstances are detailed here.

BETS

At any moment (except during a *Slap Phase*, unless there are un-peeled bananas on the table, in which case this can be done at any time. If there are bananas *under* the table, bets can only take place during the *Slap Phase*), players can call for a bet in order to gain some extra dice for themselves. In order to bet, the player chooses any number of dice from his pool and rolls them in secret, calling out a number. Then, starting from his left, every player (including the TM) has the option of joining in the bet. If he joins, he must also pick a secret number of dice and roll them privately, choosing either to yell “*Humbug!*” or raise the bet. If he yells “*Humbug!*”, the previous player must reveal his dice and, if the number that player had originally called is higher than the summed total of his dice, the second player can take a dice from those the former used in the bet; if the number is equal or lower, the former player gets to take a dice from those the latter bet. If, on the other hand, the second player decides to raise the bet, he must call out a number at least 1 point higher than the previous, and repeat the process with the next player.

Once a full round has been completed, a new round of bets can begin or it can be left there if the original player so chooses.

COMBO WIZARDS

A *Combo Wizard* is a time wizard controlled by 2 or more different players, an optional method you can employ when there are not enough dice to spread around. Combo Wizards behave like regular time wizards, except for the following:

Punch the Consensus

If all the players behind a combo wizard can get along and decide the actions to be taken, you can ignore this rule. But if consensus cannot be reached quickly, the TM can force them to *Punch the Consensus*. In order to do so, each player must wear either boxing gloves or pillows (or one of each per hand) and lash at each other until a single ruling has been determined.

If the players show to be specially resilient, at the TM's discretion they must put the gloves/pillows they were using to fight over their heads and balance them while boisterously voicing their preferred course of action and gesticulating; the player who lasts the longer without dropping the item gets to say what's done.

Combo Masters

Should any of the players currently partaking of a combo wizard end up as the TM, all other players controlling the same character are also brought into Time Mastery, becoming a Combo Master.

Combo Masters work just like regular Time Masters, except that they too must observe the *Punch the Consensus* rules, and they must alternate in telling the story after each phrase. No previous coordination is allowed between the members of a Combo Master, unless said coordination takes place during a *Punching of Consensus* process.

Everyone's a Combo

There is always the possibility that all players end up being part of a combo wizard or, more problematic, a Combo Master.

This manual is aware of that possibility and offers no reliable way of solving such a scenario.

TIME DISTORTIONS

At some point, the story is bound to take a turn into Weird Country, with things getting so strange that players will start wondering what's going on. This may cause a Time Distortion.

In order to determine when a time distortion happens, at least 3 players must have voluntarily and spontaneously expressed confusion with phrases like "I have no idea what's going on" or "That doesn't make any sense". These comments must happen within roughly the same "scene" or situation for them to count toward unleashing a distortion.

When a time distortion finally happens, players must announce their actions while gurgling on *The Beverage of Choice!* (see "What Do You Need To Play Time Wizards!" for details). Their words are to be understood as literally as possible, without the option of further clarification, though the rest of the participants can discuss regarding what exactly they think he said.

Time distortions last until the glass or receptacle from which *The Beverage of Choice!* was drunk. Note that whenever *The Beverage of Choice!* is referred to, it must be said as if it was being sold on an infomercial, or another time distortion happens.

HAT-OFF

Whenever a hat that was previously worn during the setup or course of the game session is used by a participant different from the original, a Hat-Off takes place.

During a *Hat-Off*, the offending player must wear the hat covering his face (straps are allowed in case the hat keeps falling off) and presented with the option of slapping two different areas of the table, one with a single d4 and another empty. If he slaps the empty area, he takes the dice and ends the Hat-Off; if he slaps the d4, he must give away one dice from his pool to the original wearer of the maligned hat.

Note that the dice can be moved at any moment, even in the middle of a slap, but it must remain within the predetermined areas.

The original owner of the hat can choose to participate, wearing the offender's hat and performing the same process. If the offender had no hat, the original owner can perform the task without covering his head and slapping as gently as he wants, potentially taking all the dice from his opponent.

USING THE WRONG DICE

If, at any moment when a die must be rolled or slapped (including a *Slap Phase*, *Bet* or *Hat-Off*), a d8 is used, the story is immediately suspended and Time Mastery must be once again determined as per the methods presented in *Starting the Game*.

Should a second d8 appear latter on, the TM passes to the player to the left and everyone else must switch their characters with the player sitting to their respective lefts. Note that combo wizards are exchanged as a single character, so this may cause a normal wizard to become a combo wizard (if the character is handed to

a group of players in a combo), and a combo wizard to become a normal wizard (when the opposite happens).

Further d8s will continue to cycle characters. If characters are cycled 5 times, a time distortion happens at the fifth.

If a sixth switch happens, every character becomes Heriberto, an impolite icecream vendor with a thick latin accent who constantly makes a “POP!” sound by pulling his finger from his mouth and dances in his chair whenever a word containing the letter F is said. The exact nature of the dance is left for the player to decide, but must always include a left-right movement of the butt.

Additional d8s provoke no further effects. The effects of multiple d8s reset when a *Time Wizards!* session ends, as well as if un-peeled bananas that were previously on top of the table are removed from the room and cannot be seen by any of the participants. If the bananas are removed but can still be seen, a time distortion immediately happens, but otherwise the d8 effects reset.

DICELESS TIME WIZARDS!

No.

Some Final Words

Time Wizards! was never really intended to be a game to be taken seriously, but rather as a running joke between roleplayers who had too much time in their hands. The obtuse rules and seemingly random elements like hats, beards, burnished wood, and bananas all harken back to things that had some sort of connection back then (for instance, there was a large collection of hats in the room we used to play RPGs in back then), and are now left to make every session of *Time Wizards!* a proper ordeal.

Still, this doesn't mean you can't play a somewhat coherent story with this, at least until anvils start growing mathematical afros while toenails become really good at bingo. Just remember to have a good laugh (and avoid choking on *The Beverage of Choice!*) and maybe, just maybe, something memorable can come out of this.

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