

Slaves of Time

A fantasy roleplaying game adventure

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1. About *Slaves of Time*

Slaves of Time is a fantasy roleplaying game adventure designed for 4 players of level 6. The scenario is uses the free **d20 system** (system rules reference <http://www.d20srd.org/>). The scenario is designed to be a one-shot game of about 4 hours length. Because the d20 license does not specify rules for creating characters, ready-made characters are not included in the package.

Slaves of Time is a participant in the Ropecon 2011 scenario writing contest.

2. The world and starting setup

Slaves of Time takes place in a 'bubble world'. It has its own small map and is not part of any pre-built world. It is designed to be detached from a large world for easier understanding in a one-shot game. Due to the time limitations of one-shot games, the adventuring area is small and has only few meaningful locations. The adventuring party is assumed to know each other and have adventured together before. The adventure starts as the party enters a small village called 'Land's End' on a typical summer evening.

Land's End

The village is more like a marketplace for the surrounding farmers and herders than an actual village. It is barely large enough to have a tavern and a shop in it. The people are friendly though a bit suspicious and careful around the potentially dangerous adventurers since the place is in a relatively remote area.

Some people of Land's End:

Feywind Albertos: The town administrator, elder, spokesman, whichever you prefer. He is a thin man of about 40 years and a streak of silver in his hair. His clothing is coarse blue silk and he is not a local originally. He is very observant and subtle in his movements. He is very charismatic and makes everyone feel relaxed.

Andrigos Strang: The tavern keeper is a stocky short man with long blonde hair and a preference to blue shirts and brown pants. He is always in a good mood and welcomes visitors from far away lands. He likes to hear their stories.

Junghan Daraghon: The town sheriff is a well muscled man who seems to watch everyone and everything. His uniform is brown work-clothes and a silver badge showing his status as sheriff. The most work he has done as sheriff is some drunken brawls and broken fences. Everyone likes him and say he is a fair man.

Annelion Wingard: The shopkeeper is a young, strong woman with short black hair. She wears mostly red shirts and pants, and thus everyone refers to her as Red Lady. She is lively and happy, and enjoys the chance to do business with strangers for exotic goods. She has no problem trading things for things and not using money at all. She inherited the shop from her father who died a couple years ago.

The Dragon's Lair

The dragon's lair opens up in an earthquake at midnight of the night of the party's arrival in the village. Before midnight there is no clue anywhere that it even exists. The lair is located 100' deep underground and the entrance there is a crack in the earth opened up by the earthquake. The Blue Wyrms stir in his slumber in the cave, and its minions are already partly awake. The entrance is due west of the village.

The Wizard's Tower

A grey-robed wizard named Esteban the Quick set up a tower near the village 20 years ago. The wizard is a kind of a hermit, and has been for years. He never visits the village and the villagers leave his tower alone. There have never been any problems between the wizard and anyone else, in fact the villagers remember him as a nice man back when he still visited over 10 years ago. The tower is on a hill north of the village.

3. The Adventure

The adventure is listed in a 'likely' order. Other orders are also possible depending on the players, however it may not make sense to travel back and forth. It is logical to start with The Village, as the party arrives late in the evening and is probably seeking a tavern to rest in.

3.1 The Village

The village Land's End is a small self-sufficient farming community of about 300 people mostly spread out in the surrounding farms. The village itself consists of a few houses, a tavern, a general store, town hall, a small chapel, a marketplace and some other establishments. The villagers are in general friendly and helpful (though some don't like 'troublemakers' they view violent adventurers as), and the surroundings are peaceful.

The wizard's tower is visible at night due to the blue arcane glow always present there, but nobody in the village mentions the wizard unless asked. This is mainly because they have pretty much forgotten about him since he has been a hermit for years already. If they are asked, they will generally think of him as a nice man. He did walk really fast (Expeditious Retreat) all the time though. Children sometimes go near the tower despite what their parents tell them but nobody has actually seen Esteban in years.

3.2 Awakening

At exactly midnight a cataclysmic earthquake shakes the village, collapsing buildings and injuring a few people. Nobody is killed but everyone is alarmed, a crowd (only dozens of people, since most live on farms and it takes time to arrive) quickly gathers in the street. A loud grumbling roar is heard 10 minutes afterwards from the direction of the now exposed Dragon's Lair.

The villagers, led by the town administrator Feywind Albertos, quickly turn to the party to help them investigate what is happening. Since the village doesn't have any kind of military except for the local sheriff (who is only level 1 and thus not at all experienced in relation to the party), it might be extremely dangerous for them.

***DM notice:** The quake is caused by a Blue Wyrms (a 38 HD gargantuan dragon, CR 23, obviously a highly impossible challenge in a fight for a level 6 party) stirring in its slumber near the village and the roar is the same Wyrms groaning as his surroundings shifted. He is no longer deep asleep but not yet awake either. Him waking up would be a complete disaster for the surroundings.*

3.3 To the Dragon's Lair

The way to the crack on a hillside is clear, but there will be a battle waiting once the party gets there. **3 Salt Mephits** (CR 3 each, should not be a big challenge for the party) have ascended from the dragon's lair and are preparing to scout around as the party arrives. The mephits are hostile and will fight to the death.

After dispatching the mephits, the party finds a route down to the dragon's lair. The way down is a hard climb (DC 20 climb, 100 feet down. Up DC is also 20. With proper ropes the DC drops to 5.), but with ropes it will be safe to send down one scout (at a time). The scout will very quickly see the gargantuan blue monster in the lair and hopefully will call for a tactical retreat from the slumbering beast. There are also other mephits in the lair still, but they can be avoided unless the party

specifically wants to attack them or otherwise make loud noises (such as shoveling gold pieces from the dragon's enormous hoard)

The dragon will not wake up yet, and it should be clear to the players that if he does, they will ALL die horrible deaths within seconds. This beast is an ancient one, and it would be best for everyone it remained asleep. It should also be clear that the dragon will be awakening soon if nothing is done about it. It will also awaken immediately if someone actually manages to damage it through its armorlike hide and high spell resistance. For the sake of the adventure (and sanity), don't let the players wake the dragon.

Hopefully the party will either go straight to the wizard's tower or go back to the village with their findings. The villagers then have only two options to offer: they all run for their lives, or the party saves them all by slaying the dragon. The villagers only have one thing they can think of to help: Esteban's tower (clearly visible due to the blue glow at night). They will also be a bit reluctant to run off and leave their homes. Some will be willing (but not very able, being level 1 villagers) to fight the ancient monster.

3.4 The Wizard's Tower

The wizard's tower is a 4 story high round stone tower with a pointy roof. It is in excellent condition, and appears to be brand new. The blue glow seems to come out of the stone walls themselves. This gives the surroundings a mystical, if spooky, feel.

The villagers know there hasn't been any movement in the tower for years, and the powerful wizard who has been living in the tower for years without anyone ever seeing him. Nobody has dared to climb the walls though, since the light sometimes changes (due to Esteban's experiments).

The villagers also know there is a big **Clay Golem** (11 HD, CR 10, a deadly opponent for the party) guarding the entry hall, banning entrance into the tower. They also know the golem won't leave the tower and that a magical barrier prevents anyone from attacking the golem from outside the tower.

As the party enters, they will quickly discover the only way inside the tower will be past the golem. The golem will step in front of the door leading up from the entry hall and say 'Password?'. Any attempts to talk to the golem will be replied with 'Wrong. Password?' (*Only Esteban knows the password*). At the 3rd wrong answer, the golem will say 'Wrong. Die, intruders' and immediately attacks. If anyone attacks the golem, it will defend itself. As soon as the fight begins (but before the golem has a chance to actually attack anyone), the **First Time Walk** happens.

3.4.1 The First Time Walk

The First Time Walk is seen as a split-second burst of green flashes around the room. The characters of course won't know anything about any time walks and will see only an amazingly hasted flash and loud noise that can't be reliably described. After the flash is over, the golem will lay on the floor in a puddle of clay and a fist-sized glowing blue gem can be seen in the middle. The gem is clearly magical, and was used as a magical source of power for the golem. (The gem can and will also be used as a power source for the Second Time Walk ritual a little bit later.)

The First Time Walk is in effect the party arriving from the future to destroy the golem using a prepared ritual up in the tower.

DM notice: *It is advised to limit the exact information about what the party sees during and after the green flash, and what injuries the golem may sustain as the fight later may not go exactly as planned. Not to mention a certain kind of player likes to try to mess with it,*

specifically trying to create a fault in the logic and creating a hard-to-explain situation for the DM.

After the golem's surprising demise, the party is free to explore the rest of the tower. The tower has a circular staircase going up around on the outer wall of the tower. There is a small landing and a door on each of the 3 above ground floors. The whole tower is lit by an ambient blue glow emanating from the stone walls everywhere.

The ground floor (where the golem is) contains some wooden boxes and barrels filled with everyday supplies and fresh foodstuffs. Though Esteban does not eat and has not received supplies in years, the magics of the tower keep these still fresh.

The 2nd and 3rd floors will contain one big round ritual room each. There is an almost completed arcane ritual with magical circles and candles and bowls of arcane components all laid down precisely on the floor. The party's arcane specialist can quickly determine the ritual (whatever it is) is almost completed. The ritual's purpose will be impossible to determine, but if the specialist is really good (spellcraft DC 28), he can determine it has something to do with slowing time.

3.4.2 Meeting with the Wizard

The top floor contains the wizard's main study, complete with (encrypted) spellbooks, some idle components. The room also contains the wizard's closed chest. Esteban the Quick is also here, totally immersed in his research. If the party listens at the door, they can hear him shifting in the room. He does not know anyone is in the tower until someone either knocks or opens the door.

When the party enters (or knocks on the door), Esteban will greet them, closing the book he was reading. He will offer the party refreshments and pleasant company. He will also talk about his temporal research at length if asked, and the party's arcane specialist will soon realize Esteban is a really high level wizard (20+). He specializes in Transmutation, and especially magics that deal with time such as haste and slow.

If the party mentions the dead golem, he will shrug and acknowledge the waking dragon is more important than a golem. If the party has not yet mentioned the wyrm, he will be slightly annoyed at the destruction of his guardian for no good reason. Esteban will ask for the powerstone back, and will put it on his desk 'to be wiped from all this mud later'.

When the party asks for help on the dragon problem, Esteban will ponder a while and claim he has a sleeping potion for the dragon. Then he will ask the party for their help downstairs. Esteban opens his closet and gives everyone a green hooded cloak (part of the protective gear for the ritual he is about to finish). Esteban will then lead the party downstairs to the 3rd floor ritual room. He will carry a powerstone just like the one the party retrieved from the golem along with a green swirling magical potion he picked up from his **chest** at the foot of his bed. He will make sure the party understands the robes are a **CRITICAL** protective gear and should be worn at all times.

3.4.3 The First Ritual

Esteban will then light the candles and places the powerstone in the cup in the middle, ask everyone to stand inside the circle and recites the final magic words 'Temporum Invocatum'.

The party and Esteban will experience time slowing to a halt, then seeing themselves detach from the world and see time moving backwards followed by a bright flash as they are sent into **The First Time Walk**, and to the death of the golem downstairs. The Party will now be left on the ground floor with an extremely slowed Clay Golem and of course themselves from earlier on. Esteban will look around, perplexed, then swears and says 'We were not supposed to be in this time.. or this

place'. He then throws his hood back in frustration, catches himself a bit late and yells 'Noooo' and vanishes again as the party sees the magical energies flow into him (the hood no longer protects his head and Esteban is thrown into another time, for another adventure).

***DM Notice:** Removing their protective robe is a potential way for the players to die and fail the adventure. Make sure the players realize something terrible happened to Esteban to prevent them from trying it themselves. If they try it anyway have anyone who removes their robe return to the time they left before the others. If they all try to leave like this, have the golem be destroyed by magical forces of the ritual as the last person is leaving.*

There is a blue glow around the room (similar to the magical energy that made Esteban vanish), preventing the party from leaving the room. A similar blue glow will protect the 'past tense' party and all other objects in the room except the golem. The only thing the party can do to move on now is hack the golem to pieces. Because of the time stop that is going on (really an extremely powerful haste/slow), the golem won't be able to put up a fight and this will consist of the party chopping at the golem until it is finally destroyed (do not start a combat sequence needlessly). As soon as the golem dies, it crumbles on the floor (remember to describe whatever you described before when the party entered the first time) and leaves the powerstone. The magical energy will then pull the party back to the ritual room from where they started, only Esteban is gone.

***DM Notice:** Do not allow the party to take the powerstone with them. It belongs in the past time and would essentially duplicate the item if taken. The temporal mechanics present in this adventure do not allow duplicating items via time travel.*

The ritual will now be used and Esteban nowhere in sight. The party probably will go back up to the study to find a way to deal with the dragon themselves. No doubt they will go for the wizard's chest sooner or later, and the chest will vanish in the **Second Time Walk** as soon as the party approaches it.

3.4.4 The Second Time Walk

A split-second green flash around the chest and the whole thing is gone. The Second Time Walk is essentially the party coming back in time to retrieve the chest and its contents. This timewalk is much shorter than the first one because retrieving the chest is a shorter affair than whittling down the clay golem was. The chest will be retrieved upon going back in time using the rituals on the rooms below. The party will of course not know who took the chest, how or why, but the pressure of a waking Wyrms as well as adventurer's natural curiosity should drive them to experiment with the rituals.

Browsing Esteban's books will reveal an extended research into haste and slow, as well as an alchemical manual on sleeping potions. This should raise the party's interest as there may be a convenient way to keep the dragon asleep.

Reading into the potion manual will yield a formula to create a powerful sleeping potion. The manual will also mention that the effect is enhanced if the subject is already asleep. There are detailed instructions on how to craft the potion, however some of the ingredients are mentioned to be in the chest (which has just a little while ago vanished in the **Second Time Walk**.)

Esteban's notes on the table will reveal how to operate the final steps of the **Time Walk** ritual;

1. Put on the green robe for protection against possible temporal side-effects. Make sure the robes are intact as the temporal forces may be erratic and dangerous.
2. Stand firmly inside the circle
3. Light the ritual candles

4. Place the power source in the cup in the circle center
5. Say the magic words 'Temporum Invocatum'

The notes will also describe how the ritual makes the world around you slow down, then go to a halt, then start moving backwards until you reach your destination time. The outside world will appear to be on real slow motion during the time at the destination (causing the Time Walk to appear like a lightning blur of action for those observing it).

3.4.5 The Second Ritual

By now it should be obvious that the second ritual would be the answer to the vanishing chest dilemma. The green flashes from before could be explained by the extremely hasted green robed party entering and leaving. And besides the party must do *something* or the Wyrms will eat everyone and everything.

The second ritual works just like the first one, only the party completes it from the instructions (and use the golem's powerstone). As the ritual is completed, time is again rewound and the party is thrown into **The Second Time Walk** and into the wizard's study where someone is JUST about to reach for the wizard's chest. As the party (in the time walk) retrieve the chest, the time walk ends and they are transported back to the ritual circle, with the chest and its contents intact.

Brewing the sleep potion from Esteban's instructions is a relatively simple matter (DC 20 spellcraft to make it in an hour, otherwise it takes two hours). Armed with the potion, the party can now return to the wyrm and use it.

3.5 The Ending

The party should next make its way back to the dragon's lair. Climbing down into the den is again DC 20 or DC 5 with a rope, but getting to the dragon can be problematic as the lair is crawling with dust mephits.

A DC 20 move silently check (DC 22 if the party took two hours to fix the potion, the minions are more alert then. Don't forget to mention more and more minions seem to be waking up so that the players feel there is a hurry) will allow a person to sneak to the dragon's mouth without being detected and pour the potion. Another DC 20 (or 22) check to get back to the exit and leave without aggroing the mephits. If either of those checks fail, two more mephits come to attack the party EACH ROUND until they leave in a hurry or get overwhelmed by sheer numbers. The party should be able to cover one person using the potion and then everyone exiting to the surface. 4 mephits will chase outside if the party gets there.

DM notice: *Make sure the party realizes there are hundreds of mephits in the lair, not to mention probably something more horrible as well. Fighting them all will be suicide.*

Looting the dragon's hoard should appear too risky to try with all the monsters in the lair. However if the potion carrier successfully sneaks to the dragon, he can loot some gold from the ENORMOUS pile the dragon is sleeping on.

Loot is not an important part of a single-shot scenario though so this will be left to the DM if he should wish to incorporate *Slaves of Time* into his ongoing campaign or otherwise want to distribute loot.

Now that the dragon is asleep again, all that remains is blocking off the opened passage so that mephits stay out. The party can block it off hastily and have the villagers work to pour stones and sand into the hole, sealing it for good.

Next the villagers will throw a banquet in honor of the adventurers who have saved the day, and this will be the end of the adventure.

4. Appendices

List of materials

The adventure *Slaves of Time* contains the following material:

- This document, the adventure text itself (slaves_of_time.pdf)
- Map of the Wizard's Tower (wizard_tower.jpg)
- Map of the adventuring area (surroundings.jpg)
- A D&D 3.5ed empty character sheet; the sheet is compatible with the d20 system.
- Copy-paste of the Salt Mephit's stat block from d20srd.org (dust_mephit.pdf) (<http://www.d20srd.org/srd/monsters/mephit.htm#saltMephit>)
- Copy-paste of the Clay Golem's stat block from d20srd.org (clay_golem.pdf) (<http://www.d20srd.org/srd/monsters/golem.htm#clayGolem>)

Software used

- OpenOffice.org Writer
- GIMP 2.6.11 Gnu Image Manipulation Program
- AutoREALM 2.1 (map drawing program)

Discussion on Time travel

The main gimmick in this adventure is the two time walks. There are many ways for different people to imagine how the flow of time and different worlds/futures/continuums should work. For the purposes of this adventure a certain mindset is required, otherwise the time walks will seem to work illogically (if you can talk about time walking and logic in the same sentence). Essentially, everything that happens, has happened and will happen has been predetermined. There is only one world, one future, one present and one past. You cannot change the events that have occurred and all attempts to redirect will only cause the original result anyway.

In a philosophical sense, time walking is really pretty futile since you can't change anything. On the other hand if you time walk somewhere, it 'had been written' that you would do it, thus you couldn't have done anything else anyway.

Certain types of players will often try to thwart the master plan when presented with a nifty toy such as time walking. You as the DM must make sure the events that have been perceived earlier, must happen during the time walk. For example, if you describe the golem having its head chopped off, you must remember it **MUST** happen during the fight with the golem somehow, regardless of what the players do to try avoid it. This is a good reason to avoid going into much detail about what the players see during the green flashes, and to avoid describing peculiar injuries on the golem's body.

On the other hand, if you can pull it off, it will be all the more convincing and more fun for everyone once they realize they are indeed *Slaves of Time*.

Salt Mephit

Size/Type:	Small Outsider (Earth , Extraplanar)
Hit Dice:	3d8+6 (19 hp)
Initiative:	-1
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)
Armor Class:	16 (+1 size, -1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/+2
Attack:	Claw +7 melee (1d3+3)
Full Attack:	2 claws +7 melee (1d3+3)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Breath weapon , spell-like abilities , summon mephit
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2
Saves:	Fort +4 , Ref +2 , Will +3
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15
Skills:	Bluff +8 , Escape Artist +5 , Hide +9 , Listen +6 , Diplomacy +4 , Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Move Silently +5 , Spot +6 , Use Rope -1 (+1 with bindings)
Feats:	Power Attack , Toughness
Environment:	Elemental Plane of Earth
Organization:	Solitary (1), gang (2-4 mephits of mixed types), or mob (5-12 mephits of mixed types)
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually neutral
Advancement:	4-6 HD (Small); 7-9 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment:	+3 (cohort)

Salt mephits come from the Elemental Plane of Earth.

Salt mephits are sarcastic creatures who loathe water and moisture of any kind. Each one is about 4 feet tall and weighs about 80 pounds.

Salt mephits speak Common and Terran.

Combat

Breath Weapon (Su)

10-foot cone of salt crystals, damage 1d4, Reflex DC 13 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by itching skin and burning eyes. This effect imposes a -4 penalty to AC and a -2 penalty on [attack rolls](#) for 3 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Spell-Like Abilities

Once per hour a salt mephit can use [glitterdust](#) (DC 14, caster level 3rd).

Once per day it can draw the moisture from an area in a 20-foot radius centered on itself. Living creatures within range take 2d8 points of damage (Fortitude DC 14 half; caster level 6th). This effect is especially devastating to [plant](#) creatures and [aquatic](#) creatures, which take a -2 penalty on their [saving throws](#). This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Fast Healing (Ex)

A salt mephit heals only if in an arid environment.

Clay Golem

Size/Type:	<u>Large Construct</u>
Hit Dice:	<u>11d10+30</u> (90 hp)
Initiative:	<u>-1</u>
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class:	22 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +14 natural), touch 8, <u>flat-footed</u> 22
Base Attack/Grapple:	<u>+8/+19</u>
Attack:	<u>Slam +14</u> melee (<u>2d10+7</u> plus cursed wound)
Full Attack:	2 <u>slams +14</u> melee (<u>2d10+7</u> plus cursed wound)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Berserk, cursed wound
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, <u>damage reduction</u> 10/ <u>adamantine</u> and bludgeoning, <u>darkvision</u> 60 ft., <u>haste</u> , immunity to magic, <u>low-light vision</u>
Saves:	Fort <u>+3</u> , Ref <u>+2</u> , Will <u>+3</u>
Abilities:	Str 25, Dex 9, Con <u>0</u> , Int <u>0</u> , Wis 11, Cha 1
Skills:	—
Feats:	—
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary or gang (2-4)
Challenge Rating:	10
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	12-18 HD (Large); 19-33 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment:	—

This golem has a humanoid body made from clay. A clay golem wears no clothing except for a metal or stiff leather garment around its hips.

A clay golem cannot speak or make any vocal noise. It walks and moves with a slow, clumsy gait. It weighs around 600 pounds.

Combat

Berserk (Ex)

When a clay golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. Once a clay golem goes berserk, no known method can reestablish control.

Cursed Wound (Ex)

The damage a clay golem deals doesn't heal naturally and resists healing spells. A character attempting to cast a conjuration (healing) spell on a creature damaged by a clay golem must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character.

Immunity to Magic (Ex)

A clay golem is immune to any spell or [spell-like ability](#) that allows [spell resistance](#). In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A [move earth](#) spell drives the golem back 120 feet and deals 3d12 points of damage to it.

A [disintegrate](#) spell slows the golem (as the [slow](#) spell) for 1d6 rounds and deals 1d12 points of damage.

An [earthquake](#) spell cast directly at a clay golem stops it from moving on its next turn and deals 5d10 points of damage. The golem gets no [saving throw](#) against any of these effects.

Any magical attack against a clay golem that deals acid damage heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage it would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a clay golem hit by the [breath weapon](#) of a [black dragon](#) heals 7 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 22 points of damage. A clay golem gets no [saving throw](#) against magical attacks that deal acid damage.

Haste (Su)

After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a clay golem can [haste](#) itself once per day as a [free action](#). The effect lasts 3 rounds and is otherwise the same as the spell.



