

# Timor Adventure:

**Blurb:** Takes place in the time after the fall of the monarchy and the reign of Councilman Hemlest, with security and paranoia at an all-time high. In a desperate grasp at hope, an unlikely coalition devise a plan to steal not only items of magical power, but to seek a secret heir to the throne that could oust the emergency council. But the plan is interrupted by the death of a clockmaker, and none of the conspirators trust each-other. Can a party out outsiders solve the murder?

**DM's summary:** This adventure is a murder mystery, where the players have to figure out which of four faction leaders killed the clockmaker. To do this they must examine the body and snoop around five key locations. But there's a second, secret m

## Factions:

**The Castlestreet Commune:** Composed of roughly 50 members, all hailing from poor backgrounds, they moved into a block of townhouses when the city's population became too low for anyone to care. They believe in communal ownership, but rarely have much worth sharing. They haven't historically been influential, but of late anyone who can call upon a few dozen good workers, or the same in armed men, can tip the balance of power.

Officially, they are a group of equals, but in reality Grendal Sykes runs this group.

**The Vaynor Lodge:** This secretive society has its origins in the labour rights movements during the construction of the city. Based on the traditions of craftsmen, they developed codes and trusts to organise against the brutal workload of the old queen. But time has mellowed their feelings towards the old regime; After all, life used to be hard but prosperous, while now it is hard without reward. Though founded by a mix of social classes, common craftsmen have been hedged out by the supervisors, architects, and artists that worked alongside them, as the lowest labourers were drawn to more effective unions and rebel groups. Those who remained were those who were unwilling to upset the social order too much, as they were just well-off enough to lose out in a full societal upheaval.

While actual construction has come to a halt in the city, they still help with repairs on essential structures, but the members now use their fraternity to influence the city, and exploiting their knowledge of secret passages that their members have woven through the buildings they designed.

Phineus Kirk leads the group currently, famous for being the chief engineer of many of the city's aqueducts, and less famous but perhaps more importantly the city's sewer system.

**The Tosher's Guild:** Their namesake is a sly joke at the haughty artisans that proliferated during the major construction phase, they were universally vagrants, all those tossed aside by the system. Often they had some physical disability that made them ill-suited to construction work, or simply chafed under the petty tyrants that supervised each job site, but could scrape a living by sifting the streets and sewers for dropped coins and jewels, begging,

and foraging the urban environment. The disorganised rabble became the Guild as they coordinated to avoid guards and share survival tips, eventually becoming the undisputed authority on surviving the sub-city.

Redips is the Guildmaster, by virtue of being the longest serving member, a qualification in itself in their harsh lives.

**The Timor Historical Society:** While all members share an enthusiasm for local history, their banal name covers up a more dangerous and desperate movement: The Historical Society are wizards, all that remain after Helmless' purge of the arcane arts. They seek to preserve magical knowledge and eventually bring it back into the light. Of all the factions, they are the most secretive and paranoid, terrified of being revealed but can strike powerful blows when desperate, against a nation that has largely been disarmed against them.

Fassoway is the leader under the title "Court-mage in exile", and who trained under Nevin but who's studies were cut short when Nevin was occupied full time at the court.

### The set-up

The players are hired to investigate a murder (by who?) of a clockmaker and his wife who live at the Commune. The conspirators don't trust each other, and so feel the need to call in a neutral party to adjudicate. The party need to figure out who killed the clockmaker, and why.

*Answer: Redips killed the clockmaker by swapping his dead truffles for fear-inducing mushrooms. He did this because he realised the plot was based on falsehoods and wanted to punish them for trying to restore the tyrannical monarchy.*

Untangling the murder requires untangling the secret plot that the clockmaker was part of.

- Sykes seeks to plant false evidence of the Princess having a child with the wizard, and that his "son" is that heir. He offers his experience as a burglar.
- Kirk seeks to restore the monarchy, not realising Sykes's son is an imposter. His knowledge of architecture gets them underneath the palace.
- Redips doesn't care for the monarchy, but hates the royal marikith hunters and thinks a royal decree could disband them. He knows how to survive underground.
- Fassoway originally sought the reintroduction of magic, claimed to simply be a royalist, but as a hive Queen thrall seeks to identify the heir and kill them. As a claimed historian, he helps with finding spares for the machine from other known machines.

If found guilty, Redips will point the players towards unravelling the whole conspiracy.

### The scene

The clockmaker was killed at dusk, at the intersection between the Commune, the Avlile manor, and the Cloth Market. A witness from the Lodge and commune saw the clockmaker by a marikith.

The conspirators refuse to involve the authorities, and don't trust each other either. But all agree that a Marakith killing in an open space, especially with daylight still creeping over the horizon, was highly unusual, and suspect foul play.

## The body

The body was brought inside the commune to be guarded by Syke's people, to whom the clockmaker belonged. A DC 10 medicine check concludes that the clockmaker died from his wounds, which were inflicted by pentadactyl claws.

On his person is a scroll case containing a wad of hand-drawn diagrams a strange machine. Any of the conspirators can explain that the machine is of the ancient type found under the city. On one of the pages, in red ink, the diagram is marked with a triangle bisected by a straight line.

Additionally, he had a pouch of dried fungus. A local can tell they are probably dead truffles, and the conspirators can all tell that they were supplied by Redips. A DC 15 intelligence nature or herbalism kit check identifies that another mushroom species has been mixed in. Consuming the contents of the bag also reveals this (see below).

## The Machine

If the players make the dangerous journey to the heart of the heist, they will encounter The Machine, an archaic device of unclear function. Supposedly, Kirk documented its existence during the construction of the sewers, and recalled the clockmaker, one of his engineers, to get it working again. The two of them believed that with sufficient repairs, it'd dig a tunnel into the royal palace dungeons.

The area surrounding The Machine have been lightly fortified with barricades and bright lights to keep the Marikith away. The Ratcatcher's Guild patrol the area when works are underway and hunt marikith that get too close.

Tools and workbenches are set up in front of the centrepiece, that itself is embedded in a wall. Spare parts, procured by Fassoway, are spread around neatly on tarpoulins. A DC 12 insight check on the site reveals that the person conducting the work was careful and methodical.

The Machine is unlike any found on the surface, but comparing it to the diagrams will allow the players to conduct a DC 17 intelligence (investigation) or (smiths tools) check to identify which component matches the struck-though triangle symbol on the schematic. Close examination of the component reveals it is a reservoir of grease, but with some sort of gritty powder contamination.

A player that passes that check and is proficient with gunpowder weapons, or that then spends 1 minute testing it with an alchemist's kit, identifies the contamination as gunpowder.

A DC 12 intelligence (nature), alchemists supplies, or brewers supplies check when examining the grease reveals that is refined from a strange mould that grows on these machine relics, and is a niche commodity that can be traded by those who explore underground.

If Redips thinks the players are investigating too well, he'll make an excuse about a Marikith attack, and offer to lure them away. He will then abandon the party and hope they die unprotected. He will steal any dead truffles from the players before he leaves.

## The Castlestreet Commune

Within Timor, the medium-wealthy who want to enjoy access to the city centre for work and leisure can buy apartments in the nicer parts of town. Arranged in a square around a central courtyard, with balconies for each dwelling, the common labourers that built them would never have lived here.

But since the population dwindled, many residences have become vacant, available for anyone to move in. The residents have turned the courtyard and balcony over to farmland to supplement what they can gain through trade, fortified the bottom floors against marikith attacks. A tall gate, formerly for horse-drawn carriages, is now the only official entrance, and is guarded at all times.

The people inside are sombre, but they have a strong communal spirit. The ground floor apartments have been converted to storage, where communal stocks of food and equipment are kept. A practice area for wielding pikes and crossbows can be found also.

Any of the residents can be spoken to, but none are informed as to the work the clockmaker was involved with, only that he was doing secret work for Grendel Sykes. Aside from Grendel, his adopted son Pieter is the only member of the commune that knows of the heist.

Grendel will allow the players access to the clockmaker's apartment. He lived alone, and like most of the commune without much luxury. He has the room that leads to the balcony set up as a workshop for the sunlight, and many dismantled trinkets, primarily clocks but also crossbows, flintlocks, and musical instruments. His supply of grease can be investigated and found to be free of contaminants.

Grendel won't allow unsupervised access to his apartment, which is kept locked (DC 15 dexterity (sleight of hand) to unlock. Opening the door will trigger a bell and a crossbow trap. A DC 18 or higher when unlocking the door will allow the door to be opened without triggering the bell or trap. All the window shutters are closed but can be unbolted from the inside. A desk stands out as being a particularly lavish piece of furniture.

A player examining the desk can see a plentiful amount of calligrapher's supplies of high value quite at odds with the rest of the commune. Alongside them are sheets of parchment with messy or repetitive writing on them. A DC 12 wisdom (insight) or calligrapher's supplies check suggests that this is evidence of someone practising their calligraphy with determination. Also on the desk are an assortment of old books on varied subjects. A DC 15 intelligence (investigation), calligrapher's supplies, or forgery kit check reveals that all of these books have extensive edits made to them in a way that is intended not to be noticed, and that someone was likely practising a delicate forgery.

## The Hound's Pit Inn

In its time known as the inn that won't turn anyone away, it gets its name from the illegal dog fights that once took place here. But now it's the headquarters of the Toshers Guild, acting as a trading hall for the things they find. The kennels are still in use, but the hounds themselves serve a much more useful purpose: The Tosher's believe that a mastiff's sensitive nose can foil a doppelganger's disguise. This claim has limited merit, but most doppelgangers don't see the guild as worth infiltrating. Nevertheless, mastiff companions can be found at the Pits and underground with the Toshers for their keen truffle-hunting noses and to give early warning against marikiths.

The cellar connects directly to the sewer network, though the hatch is kept heavily barred at all times. A secret knock (a player that knows thieves cant can imitate it with a DC 13 charisma (deception) check) will allow access from below, and thus the Toshers can move around unnoticed.

The old betting office next to the fighting pit is Redips' office. He doesn't keep many records on account of his illiteracy, but has a pair of young children working as his clerks. They are amenable to persuasion and bribes, so long as none of the adults are there to caution them away. Most of the notes are of little interest, but there is an old tome that is distinct for being out of place. The tome appears to details the genealogy of the old royal family. The most recent page shows Queen Orenia, notes her lack of children by the old king, and list two children: A princess who's name has been blacked out by mould, and a prince fathered by the court mage Nevin who's name is Pieter. A DC 16 intelligence (investigation), calligrapher's supplies, or forgery kit check reveals that the branch of the family tree showing Pieter and his paternity have been subtly added much more recently than the rest of the page.

### Avlile Manor

Built for the prestigious Avlile family, this city-centre mansion was supposed to be a place of prestige for a family that had contributed greatly, and painfully, to the old Queen's taxes. When the Queen's paranoia began to draw unwelcome attention to them, they escaped the city via the secret passages their trusted architect had installed for them. Said passages, which allow for discreet entry and exit, were exactly the type of feature the Vaynor Lodge were looking for in their headquarters, and that the architect, a member of the Lodge, could share with them.

With a splendid garden on two sides, the lot sits along Castlestreet at the intersection with the Museum, which the Avlile family were patrons. Officially the primary resident is Phineus Kirk, but unofficially the many guest rooms frequently house members of the Lodge who need safe harbour. Jewels and gold have lost much of their value, but the manor's extensive wine collection and decadent fruit trees still provide barter goods to fund the Lodge's activities. And its high iron fences, solid foundation, and well-stock armoury provides some protection.

The basement storehouses contains a variety of supplies for artisans, everything from paints & plaster to marbles & timber. A small window to the garden can be seen high on the wall, and at a glance it appears that the bars of the window have been sawed and fixed back in place with wax. A DC 10 wisdom (stealth) or (athletics) check suggests that the window is far too small for an adult to fit through. A DC 10 survival check of the grass outside the window shows some prints that have been scuffed as to obscure the details, and some paw prints.

Notably, it also houses gunpowder for demolition. A DC 12 intelligence (investigation) check of the stocks paperwork will show that all items are accounted for barring three pouches of gunpowder.

### The Museum of Ancient Timorian History

A showcase to what was paved over in Queen Orenia's quest for a legacy, the lack of context for most of the artefacts makes the museum a dull and confusing visit. Of archaic machines and reconstructed mosaics the builders of Timor knew nothing, other than they could display them for prestige. Without written records, the displays are merely decorative. Orenia cared not for the history of the previous city, and so no care was taken to document it before work began.

As a defensive structure, it's wide open corridors and many doors make it an unappealing place for anyone who has survived this long to live. Without natural light, even the small window boxes that most Timorians keep cannot grow herbs here. The artifacts have no monetary value in this time where survival is the main concern, and no practical value either.

Therefore, it's sole resident, Dorander Fassoway, is free to stalk the halls and mutter to himself. He has spent many days going mad in the archives hoping that some magical trinket has escaped the purges in the badly notated collection, or some scrap of text might reveal hidden lore. Other members of the Historical Society will seek him out there and pay tribute to the only wizard with even a hint of true magic in the domain, though he is pitiful compared to the wizards of before.

Fassoway's illusions scare away intruders but frequently guests can fall prey to them too. While harrowing, the museum is not dangerous, though it may not seem to at first.

In the basement archives, there are no lights, and any lit shed half the amount they usually do. Broken statues and stone tables are arranged in eerie displays. Marikiths can be found here too, but usually stay hidden until Fassoway tells them to attack.