**Escape Room Activity: The Sinister Auction**

***The Haunted Chronicles***

**Overview**

This escape room activity immerses participants in the eerie world of *The Sinister Auction*. The players must navigate the cursed auction house, solve puzzles, and “escape” before the pocket watch claims their souls. Designed for ages 9–13, this activity is collaborative, engaging, and appropriately spooky without being too frightening.

**Setup**

* **Players:** 4–6 participants.
* **Time Limit:** 45 minutes.
* **Objective:** Solve a series of puzzles to deactivate the cursed pocket watch and escape the auction house.
* **Materials Needed:**
  + A physical or digital pocket watch replica (can use a printout with a ticking sound effect).
  + Envelopes or boxes containing clues.
  + Flashlights (if in a dimly lit room).
  + Printable puzzles (word searches, mazes, riddles).
  + A map of the "auction house" with numbered rooms (real or fictional).
  + Props such as fake keys, mirrors, and auction-themed decorations for ambiance.

**The Story**

The players are treasure hunters who stumbled upon a mysterious underground auction house. They’ve accidentally acquired a cursed pocket watch, and the auctioneer has locked them inside. The only way to escape is to deactivate the watch by solving riddles and puzzles hidden throughout the house.

**Key Challenges**

The escape room has 4 primary rooms, each with a unique challenge. Completing all challenges unlocks the final puzzle to deactivate the watch.

**Room 1: The Auctioneer’s Office**

* **Puzzle Type:** Word Search
* **Clue:** Hidden in a word search are cursed objects sold at the auction. Players must circle all the words to find the hidden message: **"Find the light to unlock the truth."**
* **Solution:** A flashlight in the room illuminates a hidden code on the wall that leads to the next room.

**Room 2: The Shadowy Hallway**

* **Puzzle Type:** Maze
* **Clue:** A maze represents the twisted corridors of the auction house. Players must guide a figure (representing Logan) to the pocket watch in the center. Along the way, there are dead ends with clues written on them.
* **Solution:** The correct path spells out the phrase: **"Whispered words reveal secrets."** Players must find a recorder or whispering device in the room to access the next challenge.

**Room 3: The Mirror Room**

* **Puzzle Type:** Reflection Puzzle
* **Clue:** Mirrors in the room show distorted versions of objects. Players must use a small mirror to piece together a fragmented sentence written on scraps of paper: **"Time ticks backward to break the curse."**
* **Solution:** Players find a “time” riddle hidden on the back of one mirror. Solving it provides a number combination (e.g., 12-3-6) to open a locked box containing the next clue.

**Room 4: The Collector’s Vault**

* **Puzzle Type:** Logic Puzzle
* **Clue:** Players must arrange five cursed objects (e.g., a locket, a clock, a ring, a book, and the pocket watch) in the correct order to “weaken” the watch’s power. Clues about the order are scattered throughout the room:
  + "The clock comes after the ring."
  + "The locket never touches the watch."
  + "The book is placed second."
* **Solution:** Arranging the items correctly unlocks the final challenge.

**Final Challenge: Deactivate the Watch**

* **Puzzle Type:** Riddle + Physical Challenge
* **Clue:** The watch begins ticking loudly, and players must solve a final riddle:

"To stop the ticking, two hands must meet,  
The numbers aligned in a mirrored feat."

* **Solution:** Players set the watch to **12:00**, aligning the clock hands. A dramatic sound effect plays, signaling the escape.

**Winning the Game**

If players successfully deactivate the watch, they escape the auction house and receive a “Certificate of Survival” or themed reward (printable bookmarks or stickers).

**Bonus Challenge**

If time permits, players can attempt an optional challenge to find hidden clues about the watch’s origin, adding depth to the game and setting up a sequel activity.

This escape room combines the spooky intrigue of *The Sinister Auction* with age-appropriate puzzles and an exciting, immersive story!