# The Clockwork Vault

*A tabletop handout pack*



A stolen master gear, a hidden schematic,
a punch-card key, and a bounty.

### BEHIND THE SCREEN

GM brief & print notes
GM-only solutions

### AT THE TABLE

The archivist’s letter
The drive-train schematic
Message plate & cut-out card
The city’s wanted bill

Original content. System-neutral tabletop accessory.
Not affiliated with any game publisher.

FOR THE GAME MASTER

# One door. Four clues.

The master gear has vanished from beneath the Brasswright Guildhall. The inner door turns uselessly on its old setting. The night archivist has assembled the papers she trusts; the party must work out how and when to reset the mechanism.

## About ten minutes at the table

1 **The commission · 2 minutes**

Give out the letter and wanted poster together. Sera offers payment for the gear's return. Let the group connect the theft, the deadline and Cinder Vane.

2 **The old drawing · 3 minutes**

Give out the schematic when they inspect Sera's packet or reach the vault. Ask which drive stations still connect, then what word the lock expects.

3 **The reader · 3 minutes**

Give out the message plate and pre-cut overlay. Let players align the brass dots and read the exposed type in ordinary reading order.

4 **The next winding · 2 minutes**

Players state the combination, watchword and time. Use that as the vault-door puzzle's resolution, or as their plan for a short pursuit of the thief. Any chase or gear recovery is yours to stage.

### Prepare before play

Print at **100% / Actual Size**, single-sided. Warm cream or parchment paper is optional. Use opaque cardstock for the overlay; color is best for the poster. Cut the overlay's outer dashed square and all twelve circular apertures. Keep its four corner dots intact.

**Hand out only the player PDF, or pages 4–8 of the complete pack.** Keep this page and the solution sheet behind the screen. The four handouts occupy five sheets because the reader has a separate backing plate and overlay.

GM ONLY · SOLUTIONS · DO NOT HAND OUT

KEEP BEHIND THE SCREEN

# The working answers

## Schematic

Ignore dashed paths. Solid path visits **Sun → Key → Eye**. The lock's combination word is **DAWN** (the winding hour), not a concatenation of glyphs.

*Hint if stuck: reread Sera's line about returning the gear before the next winding at dawn, and the schematic note about the winding hour.*

## Punch-card

Align brass dots; revealed text is **WIND AT DAWN**.

*Hint if stuck: the card is an overlay, not a code to substitute; hold it up to a lamp if needed.*

## How they fit

Players should conclude they must **wind / set the vault at dawn using the surviving punch-card watchword**. Cinder Vane is the thief named on the poster; the letter and poster corroborate each other.

## The letter

Letter contains no extra secret beyond those clues.

### Physical reader check

Keep both headers upright. Match all four labeled corner dots. Read only exposed cells, left-to-right and then top-to-bottom; a middle dot marks a word break. There are ten letters and two word-break apertures: twelve holes in total.

Do not make an acrostic of Sera's paragraphs or count the gears' teeth as a second cipher. The tooth counts belong to the workshop drawing; the intact solid drive path and winding note carry the clue.

# A matter for the dawn watch

the night after the third bell

To: _____

I have recorded the loss twice, and neither entry improves it. Last night someone stole the Clockwork Vault’s master gear from beneath the guildhall. The inner door is now spinning on a dead combination. Please do not attempt to arrest it by hand.

I hid the old drive schematic in this packet, together with a spare punch-card from the door’s reader. Study the schematic’s drive path: the solid arrows still describe useful work; the dashed ones do not. The card reads the watchword when the brass corner dots are aligned.

The city has posted a bounty. The name on the bills is Cinder Vane. I cannot certify a likeness, but I can certify an empty spindle, and would prefer not to enter either in tomorrow’s ledger.

If the gear is returned before the next winding at dawn, the Guild will pay. Dawn is when the vault is wound; the keeper has never permitted a second hour for it.

Bring the gear to the east stair. Ask for me, rather than the day clerk. He will require forms.

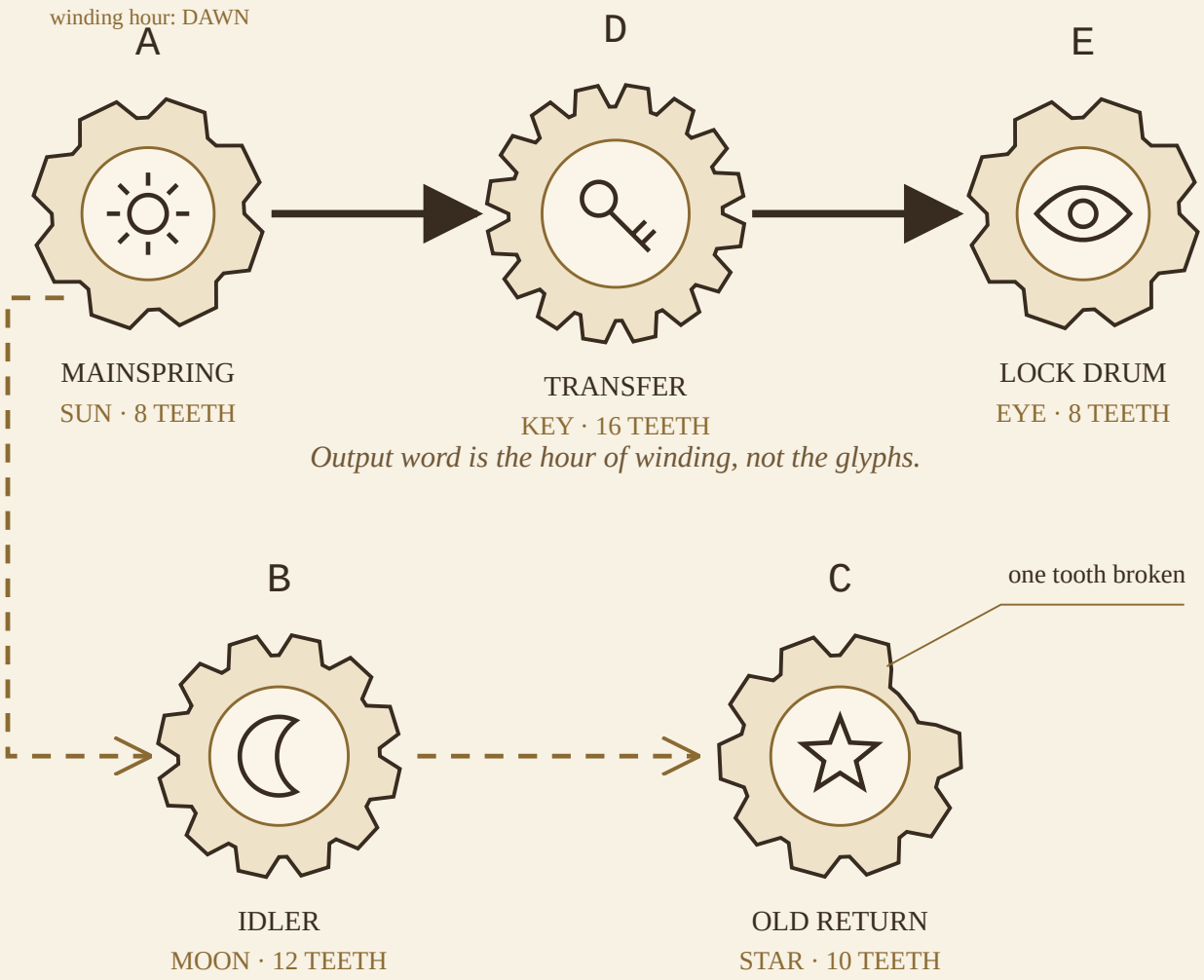
*With due precision,*

*Sera Voss*

Night Archivist, Brasswright Guild

# Clockwork Vault — Drive Train

EAST DOOR / SUPERSEDED / NOT TO SCALE




*Output word is the hour of winding, not the glyphs.*

EAST DOOR / DRIVE RECORD 04 — SUPERSEDED · RETAIN IN ARCHIVE

*Follow filled arrows only. Dashed lines are abandoned trains. The lock reads the three stations the drive visits.*

*Filed beneath the old winding schedule. Do not discard until the replacement drum has passed inspection.*

# Vault Reader — Message Plate 12

EAST DOOR / RETAIN WITH SPARE MASK

Set the mask over the type. Match the four brass dots, corner I to corner I, and keep the headings upright.




*Read the open stations from left to right, then downward.*
*A point between words is a pause, not a letter.*

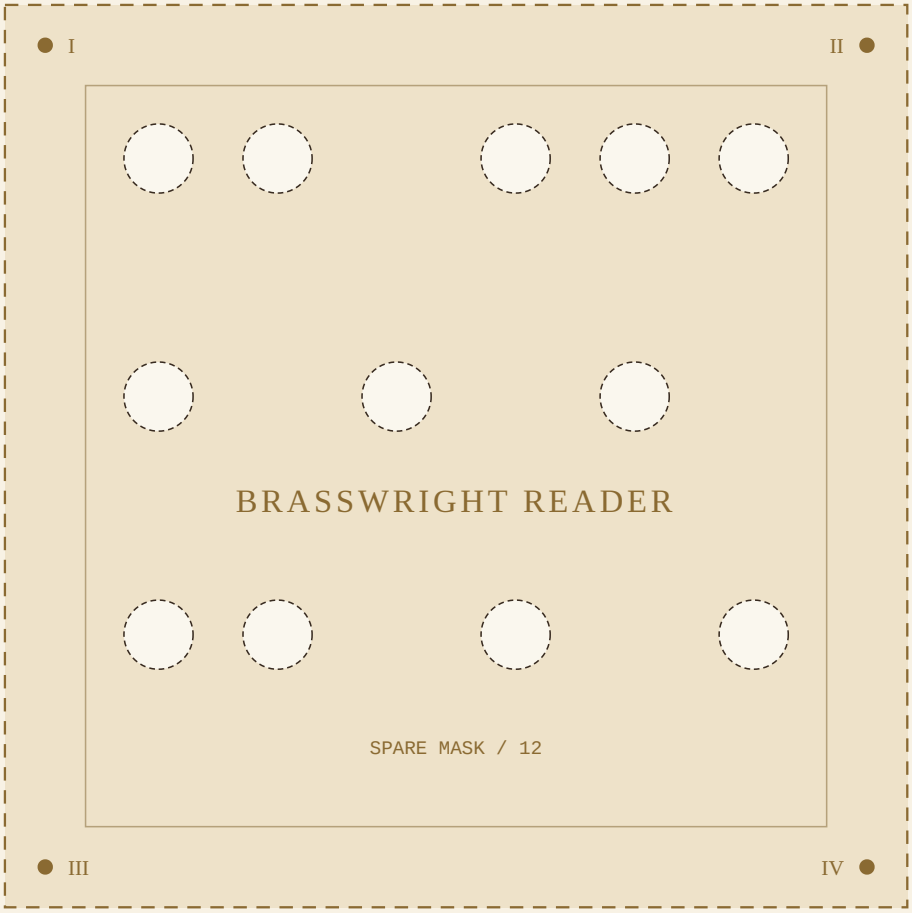
Do not trim this plate. Preserve the corner marks.

# Spare punch-card

MASK 12 / CUT BEFORE USE

Cut along the dashes. Align the brass dots with the message plate.

*Remove each dashed circle as well as the outer waste.*
*Leave the four solid brass corner dots untouched.*




*An uncut mask admits no message.*

Use opaque card. Keep flat against the plate.
The two sheets must be printed at the same scale.

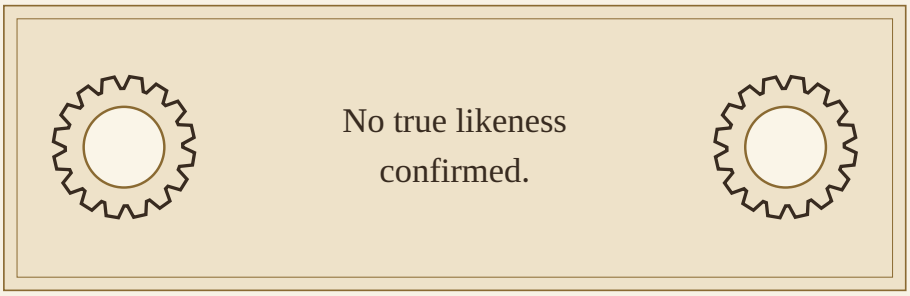
One inch · proof of scale

BY ORDER OF THE CITY WATCH

# WANTED

## CINDER VANE

*“The Mainspring Thief”*




FOR THE THEFT OF THE CLOCKWORK VAULT’S MASTER GEAR

## 50 guild-marks alive

20 guild-marks for the master gear alone

Lean; burn-scarred left hand;
smells of machine oil and citrus;
brass ear cuff; slight limp.

**Last seen:** the Brass Market
after third bell.

Do not open the vault door
without a guild witness.

ISSUED BY THE BRASSWRIGHT GUILD / CITY WATCH