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.

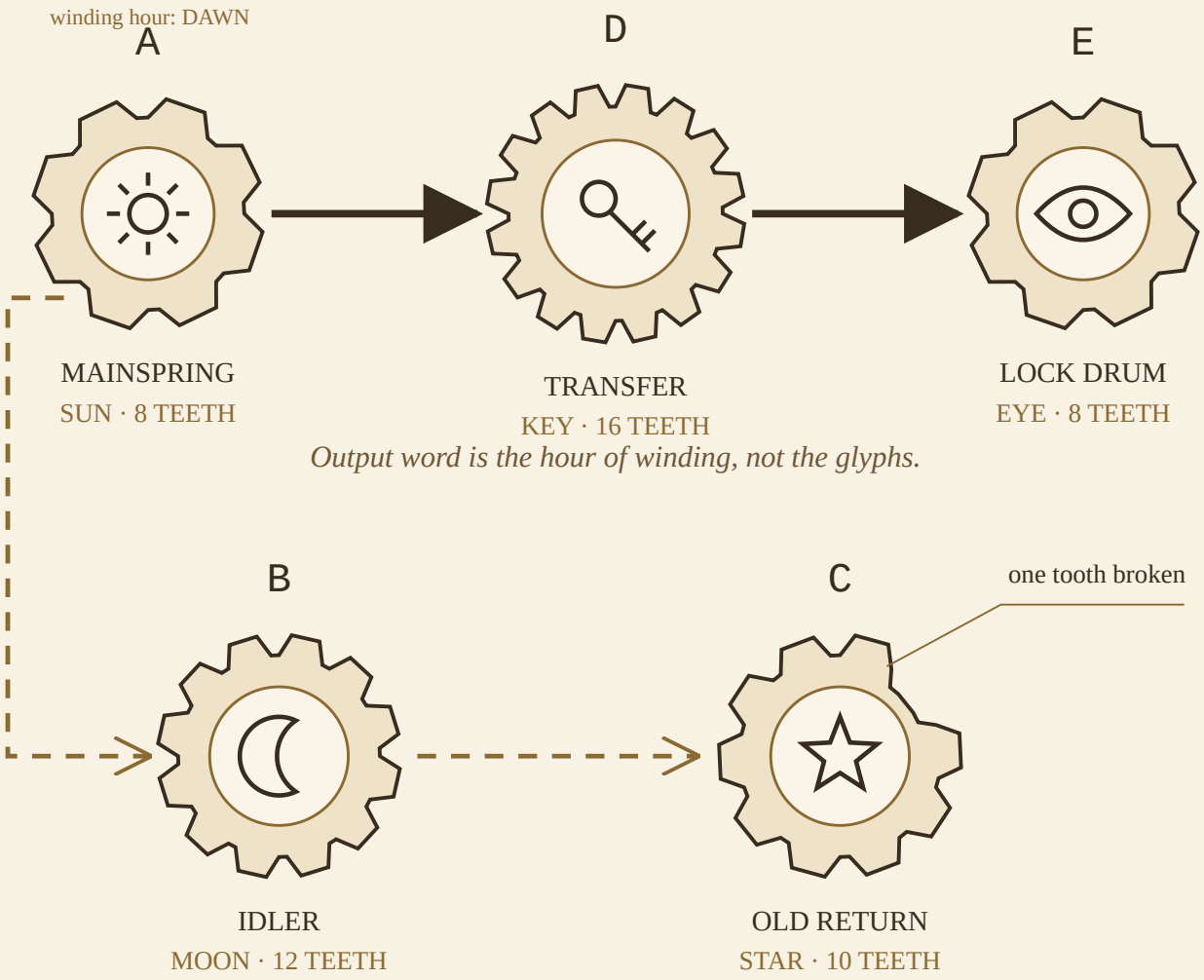
With due precision,

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EAST DOOR / SUPERSEDED / NOT TO SCALE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EAST DOOR / DRIVE RECORD 04 — SUPERSEDED · RETAIN IN ARCHIVE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.

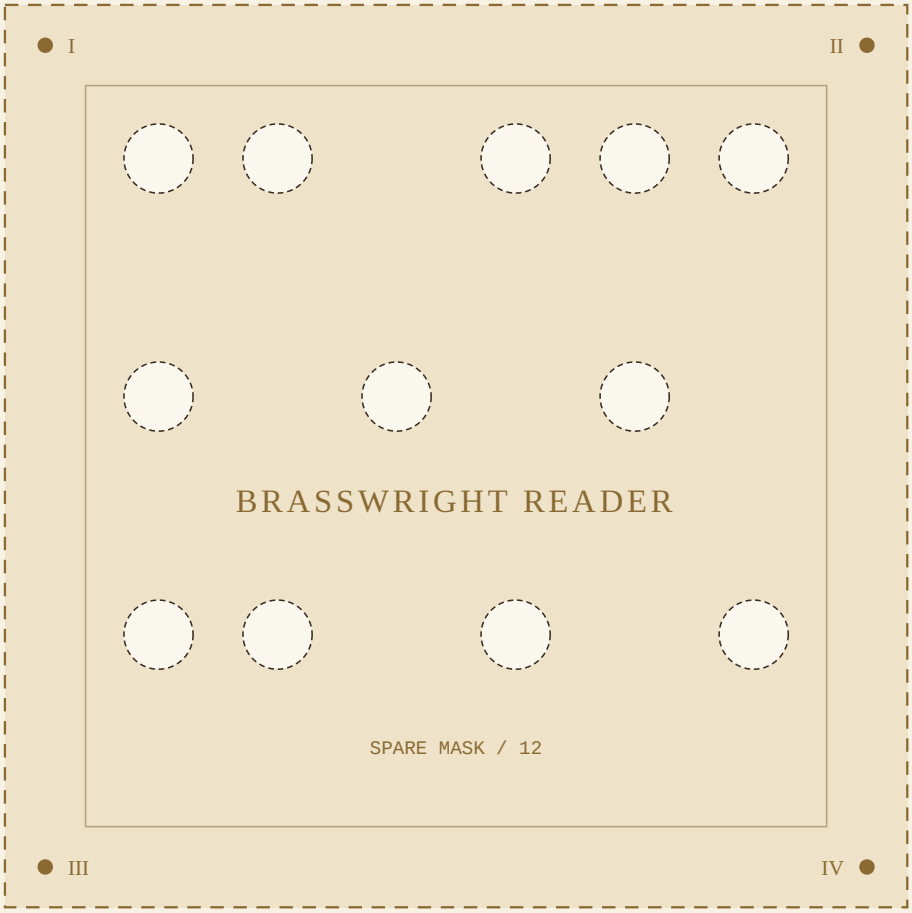
Do not trim this plate. Preserve the corner marks.

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.

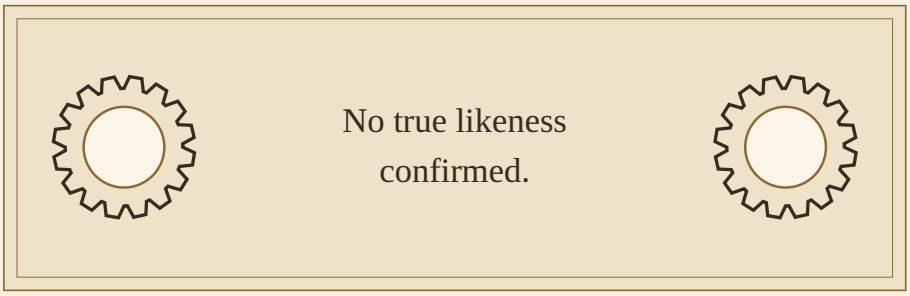
One inch · proof of scale

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