

Gears of the Damned

A CAML Adventure for Levels 6-10

An engineer's occult field manual recovered from Umberwatch's archives.

Steampunk-Ornate Edition

Written by Everdice DM Toolkit

How to Run CAML Adventures

- Tags represent narrative state. Track and update them during play.
- Gates control when encounters and events occur.
- Failure opens alternate paths; embrace meaningful consequences.
- Record session logs after each session: update tags, NPC states, and locations.
- Use the provided ledgers and trackers to manage complexity.

Quick Reference Legend

- **NPC:** Questgiver, Ally, Enemy
- **Encounter:** Combat, Social, Puzzle
- **Quest:** Main, Side, Optional

Campaign Control: State Tracking Ledger

Campaign Control: Reality & Pressure Tracker

Reality Instability Tracker

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Political Pressure Dial (Umberwatch)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Low High

DM Guidance: Agency & Railroading

Rewarding Player Agency:

Encourage creative solutions and allow players to pursue their own goals. When they deviate from expected paths, adapt the narrative by shifting tags and altering NPC agendas.

Preventing Railroading:

CAML adventures are designed to be flexible. Gates ensure that events occur at meaningful moments, not predetermined times. Use consequences and drift to evolve the story rather than block choices.

Escalation Without Chaos:

If players ignore a plot thread, consider how factions respond. Increase the pressure gradually, reflecting a living world where NPCs act offscreen and unseen forces advance their plans.

Umberwatch

Tags: city

A sprawling metropolis filled with steam-powered inventions and shadowy alleys, where the old and new collide.

Features:

- Clockwork towers
- Bustling markets

Connections:

- Forward → Old Umberwatch

Sensory Cues:

- The whir of gears and the scent of oil permeate the air.
- Bustling chatter and fragrant aromas of street food fill the streets.

Umberwatch

Encounters Here:

- Clockwork Ambush (CR 7)
 - The Ghostly Orchestra (CR 6)
 - The Coven's Test (CR 8)
 - Reality Rift (CR 10)

NPCs Present:

- Professor Thaleon Gearwin (questgiver)

If players stall...

Delays here allow the Clockwork Coven to tighten its grip on Umberwatch. Mechanical anomalies increase, and factions may act without the players' influence.

Notes:

Old Umberwatch

Tags: wilderness

The crumbling remnants of the city, haunted by spirits and overgrown with mechanical vines.

Features:

- Ruined clock towers
- Ghostly echoes

Connections:

- Forward → The Coven's Lair

Incoming:

- Umberwatch (from forward)

Sensory Cues:

- Crumbled stone and echoes of forgotten voices linger.

Old Umberwatch

Encounters Here:

- None

NPCs Present:

- Lady Erzabeth Ravenshade (enemy)

If players stall...

Delays here allow the Clockwork Coven to tighten its grip on Umberwatch. Mechanical anomalies increase, and factions may act without the players' influence.

Notes:

The Coven's Lair

Tags: dungeon

A secretive hideout filled with traps and forbidden magic, guarded by clockwork constructs.

Features:

- Arcane symbols
- Mechanical sentinels

Connections:

- Forward → The Depths Beneath

Incoming:

- Old Umberwatch (from forward)

Sensory Cues:

- The atmosphere is thick with mystery and the unknown.

The Coven's Lair

Encounters Here:

- None

NPCs Present:

- Roderick Flint (neutral)

If players stall...

Delays here allow the Clockwork Coven to tighten its grip on Umberwatch. Mechanical anomalies increase, and factions may act without the players' influence.

Notes:

The Depths Beneath

Tags: dungeon

A labyrinthine network of tunnels and chambers housing the ancient 'Gears of the Damned'.

Features:

- Ancient machinery
- Subterranean rivers

Connections:

- Forward → The Steamworks

Incoming:

- The Coven's Lair (from forward)

Sensory Cues:

- The atmosphere is thick with mystery and the unknown.

The Depths Beneath

Encounters Here:

- None

NPCs Present:

- Zephyr (ally)

If players stall...

Delays here allow the Clockwork Coven to tighten its grip on Umberwatch. Mechanical anomalies increase, and factions may act without the players' influence.

Notes:

The Steamworks

Tags: building

A bustling hub of invention and industry, where steam power reigns supreme.

Features:

- Huge boilers
- Gadget workshops

Connections:

- Forward → Ravenshade Manor

Incoming:

- The Depths Beneath (from forward)

Sensory Cues:

- The atmosphere is thick with mystery and the unknown.

The Steamworks

Encounters Here:

- Boiler Room Brawl (CR 9)

NPCs Present:

- Lord Alistair Bracken (questgiver)

If players stall...

Delays here allow the Clockwork Coven to tighten its grip on Umberwatch. Mechanical anomalies increase, and factions may act without the players' influence.

Notes:

Ravensshade Manor

Tags: building

A grand, foreboding estate on the outskirts of the city, home to Lady Erzabeth.

Features:

- Darkened halls
- Gothic architecture

Connections:

Incoming:

- The Steamworks (from forward)

Sensory Cues:

- The atmosphere is thick with mystery and the unknown.

Ravenshade Manor

Encounters Here:

- None

NPCs Present:

- None

If players stall...

Delays here allow the Clockwork Coven to tighten its grip on Umberwatch. Mechanical anomalies increase, and factions may act without the players' influence.

Notes:

Professor Thaleon Gearwin

Role: Questgiver

Race/Class: Gnome Artificer

Description:

A wizened, eccentric gnome with wild white hair and a penchant for tinkering.

Personality:

Inquisitive, forgetful, and slightly paranoid.

Motivations:

Discovering new technologies and safeguarding his inventions.

Attitude: Neutral

Starts at: Umberwatch

Relationship Deltas:

- Friendly if players respect their goals
- Hostile if players thwart them
- Neutral if interactions remain transactional

Offscreen Actions:

When not with the party, Professor advances personal projects and reacts to the players' choices.

Lady Erzebeth Ravenshade

Role: Enemy

Race/Class: Human Warlock

Description:

A tall, imposing woman clad in dark, elegant attire, her eyes burn with an unnatural light.

Personality:

Manipulative, ambitious, and secretive.

Motivations:

To awaken the 'Gears of the Damned' and seize power.

Attitude: Neutral

Starts at: Old Umberwatch

Relationship Deltas:

- Friendly if players respect their goals
- Hostile if players thwart them
- Neutral if interactions remain transactional

Offscreen Actions:

When not with the party, Lady advances personal projects and reacts to the players' choices.

Roderick Flint

Role: Neutral

Race/Class: Human Rogue

Description:

A wiry man with quick fingers and a faster smile, his eyes constantly scan his surroundings.

Personality:

Cunning, resourceful, and opportunistic.

Motivations:

Survival and profit amidst the chaos.

Attitude: Neutral

Starts at: The Coven's Lair

Relationship Deltas:

- Friendly if players respect their goals
- Hostile if players thwart them
- Neutral if interactions remain transactional

Offscreen Actions:

When not with the party, Roderick advances personal projects and reacts to the players' choices.

Zephyr

Role: Ally

Race/Class: Kenku Bard

Description:

A feathered musician with a knack for mimicry and a soulful tune in every note.

Personality:

Melancholic, expressive, and loyal.

Motivations:

To inspire change and freedom through music.

Attitude: Neutral

Starts at: The Depths Beneath

Relationship Deltas:

- Friendly if players respect their goals
- Hostile if players thwart them
- Neutral if interactions remain transactional

Offscreen Actions:

When not with the party, Zephyr advances personal projects and reacts to the players' choices.

Lord Alistair Bracken

Role: Questgiver

Race/Class: Half-Elf Politician

Description:

A charismatic leader with a sharp mind and a sharper tongue.

Personality:

Charismatic, strategic, and uncompromising.

Motivations:

Maintaining power and stability in Umberwatch.

Attitude: Neutral

Starts at: The Steamworks

Relationship Deltas:

- Friendly if players respect their goals
- Hostile if players thwart them
- Neutral if interactions remain transactional

Offscreen Actions:

When not with the party, Lord advances personal projects and reacts to the players' choices.

Clockwork Ambush

Type: Combat | CR: 7

Description:

A group of clockwork soldiers attack in a narrow alley, seeking to capture the players.

Setup:

Triggered as players investigate the city streets.

Tactics:

Coordinated attacks and strategic use of alleys.

Outcomes:

Success:

- Add tag: encounter.clockwork_ambush.defeated
 - Grant item: Mechanical components that can be crafted into a new gadget.

Failure:

- Add tag: encounter.clockwork ambush.fled

Treasure:

Mechanical components that can be crafted into a new gadget.

Notes:

The Ghostly Orchestra

Type: Social | CR: 6

Description:

Haunted musicians in Old Umberwatch perform an eerie symphony that traps souls.

Setup:

Players must participate or disrupt the performance.

Tactics:

Use music to manipulate emotions and sow discord.

Outcomes:

Success:

- Add tag: encounter.the_ghostly_orchestra.resolved
 - {'modifyAttitude': {'target': 'involved npcs', 'change': '+1'}}}

Failure:

- Add tag: encounter.the_ghostly_orchestra.failed
 - {'modifyAttitude': {'target': 'involved npcs', 'change': '-1'}}}

Treasure:

A sheet of enchanted music that soothes spirits.

Notes:

The Coven's Test

Type: Puzzle | CR: 8

Description:

A magical lock requires solving a complex mechanical puzzle to proceed.

Setup:

Guarded room within the Coven's Lair.

Tactics:

Engages players' logic and teamwork to solve.

Outcomes:

Success:

- Add tag: encounter.the_coven.s_test.completed

Failure:

- Add tag: encounter.the_coven.s_test.failed

Treasure:

Access to hidden knowledge about the Coven.

Notes:

Boiler Room Brawl

Type: Combat | CR: 9

Description:

Rogue engineers use the environment of the steamworks to their advantage.

Setup:

Confronted while investigating sabotage.

Tactics:

Use steam jets and machinery for cover and damage.

Outcomes:

Success:

- Add tag: encounter.boiler_room_brawl.defeated
 - Grant item: Plans for a powerful steam engine.

Failure:

- Add tag: encounter.boiler room brawl.fled

Treasure:

Plans for a powerful steam engine.

Notes:

Reality Rift

Type: Exploration | CR: 10

Description:

A tear in reality caused by the 'Gears of the Damned' warps the environment unpredictably.

Setup:

Encountered in 'The Depths Beneath'.

Tactics:

Avoid dangerous anomalies and navigate shifting terrain.

Outcomes:

Success:

- Add tag: encounter.reality_rift.completed

Failure:

- Add tag: encounter.reality rift.failed

Treasure:

Experience from surviving the anomalies.

Notes:

The Missing Cog

Tags: main

Description:

Investigate the disappearance of key inventors within Umberwatch who hold the secrets needed to activate the ancient machine.

Quest Giver: Professor Thaleon Gearwin

Objectives:

1. Locate the last known whereabouts of the inventors
↓
 2. Uncover clues about their captors

Rewards:

Blueprints of the ancient machine providing valuable insights.

Notes:

Steam and Shadows

Tags: main

Description:

Delve into the shadowy underbelly of Umberwatch to confront the Clockwork Coven head-on.

Quest Giver: Lady Erzabeth Ravensshade

Objectives:

1. Infiltrate the Coven's secret lair
 2. Defeat the Coven's leaders

Rewards:

A rare steam-powered weapon imbued with eldritch energy.

Notes:

The Heart of Umberwatch

Tags: main

Description:

Venture into the depths beneath the city to find and stop the 'Gears of the Damned'.

Quest Giver: Roderick Flint

Objectives:

1. Navigate the labyrinthine tunnels
 2. Stop the activation of the machine

Rewards:

The city is saved, and players receive honors from the governing council.

Notes:

Echoes of the Past

Tags: side

Description:

Explore the abandoned district of Old Umberwatch to uncover lost knowledge.

Quest Giver: Zephyr

Objectives:

1. Collect ancient texts and artifacts
 2. Survive the haunting spirits

Rewards:

An uncommon magical trinket that reveals hidden truths.

Notes:

The Inventor's Plea

Tags: optional

Description:

Help a beleaguered inventor rebuild their life's work after a devastating attack.

Quest Giver: Lord Alistair Bracken

Objectives:

1. Gather rare mechanical parts

↓

 2. Protect the inventor from further harm

Rewards:

A custom mechanical companion.

Notes:

Session Log

Session Log

Index of Tags, NPCs & Locations

Tags:

- encounter.boiler_room_brawl.defeated
- encounter.boiler_room_brawl.fled
- encounter.clockwork_ambush.defeated
- encounter.clockwork_ambush.fled
- encounter.reality_rift.completed
- encounter.reality_rift.failed
- encounter.the_coven_s_test.completed
- encounter.the_coven_s_test.failed
- encounter.the_ghostly_orchestra.failed
- encounter.the_ghostly_orchestra.resolved

NPCs:

- Professor Thaleon Gearwin
- Lady Erzabeth Ravenshade
- Roderick Flint
- Zephyr
- Lord Alistair Bracken

Locations:

- Umberwatch
- Old Umberwatch
- The Coven's Lair
- The Depths Beneath
- The Steamworks
- Ravenshade Manor