

Sneaking and Stealing

**A ttRPG Sourcebook About Snooping Around Places You
Shouldn't Be**

By Aaron Der Schaedel

v 1.0

DISCLAIMER

This document is neither a guide for, nor an endorsement of criminal activity of any kind.

This document is only meant to be used for entertainment purposes!

We assume no liability if you do something stupid like flagrantly breaking the law breaking into someplace.

There's no shortage of Dungeon Randomizers in the tabletop RPG space; not that you really need them, since the formula of "Go into a strange place, beat up whatever is inside, and take anything remotely valuable they had" is pretty well ingrained into the sub-culture.

Which is also to say nothing about how "bash monsters into oblivion" is the primary abstraction in a lot of games.

"Be the change you want to see in the world," or so I've been told. So rather than lament how difficult it can be to find other activities that are gameified besides busting skulls and kicking butt, I decided to devise something of my own, something removed from any particular game system, that can ideally be imported into other games with a little bit of work.

Something that also addresses a common complaint about the oft loathed "Stealth Mission," where one bad roll is often all it takes to start that battle cry at least half the table wanted to go with in the first place: "Roll for initiative!"

So I present to you...

Sneaking and Stealing

This system borrows from Heist's as they appear in the browser game *Fallen London*; though with all the specific rules and processes gutted and replaced with methods that are slightly more tabletop RPG friendly.

Important!!

This system is designed to be system agnostic – meaning you'll need to know the rules of the game you're running.

No specific numbers are listed, so you'll need to know what's considered Easy, Medium, or Hard difficulty checks for your game. You'll also need to make some judgment calls about what skills or stats should be used for your checks.

This system also makes use of Progress Clocks, as they appear in games like *Blades in the Dark* and *Fabula Ultima*. The short explanation is that they count up until a certain thing happens.

The longer? Check out <https://bladesinthedark.com/progress-clocks>

Heists

The three phases of a Heist are:

Preparation Phase – Player Characters decide what Location will be the target of the Heist

Heist Phase – The Heist proper, where most of the gameplay will take place

Payout Phase – Claiming rewards and accepting punishments that await the player characters

Preparation Phase

Before any Heist, player characters need to know the Location they'll be performing the heist in. This can be as simple and obvious as "That mansion high atop the hill," but striking houses at random is unlikely to provide any major payout.

Thus, the GM may require a little bit of leg work on the part of the player characters before they can find a suitable Location that'll guarantee a major payout.

Once the player characters have decided on a Location, they then have the option of searching for items and information that can help during the Heist Phase.

These can be acquired by finding folks who would be familiar with the Location through the use of social skill checks, and may require some side-quests of their own.

Examples of items:

Uniform/Disguise – Makes it easier to lie about your reasons for being present.

Falsified Documents – They look official enough.

Useful Key – It'll open a door somewhere, but where?

Examples of information:

Dirty Secret – You know something about somebody; something they don't want known.

Location Layout – You know a little about how to make your way around the location.

Regular's Routine – Habits of the people there you can exploit.

The player characters can also devise an **Escape Plan**, which can be used to abort the Heist and minimize negative consequences.

Heist Phase

Two clocks, can be raised or lowered based on GM's preferences. Defaults are

Progress 6

Suspicion 4

Both start at Zero.

Progress represents finding your way through the location, overcoming security measures, and bringing yourself closer to your goal. Reaching 6 allows you to end the Heist, and move onto the **Payoff Phase**. (Though, you may continue to snoop around further if you believe there's more to be found!)

Suspicion represents attention being called to the fact that you don't belong at the location. When it maxes out (By Default, at 4) you've failed, and will likely be dealing with hostile forces who will seek to arrest, harm, kill, or otherwise remove you as a threat.

Heists only end in one of three ways:

- 1) Filling the **Progress** Clock and choosing to end the Heist.
- 2) Immediately when the **Suspicion** Clock is filled.
- 3) Using an **Escape Plan**

Heist Phase

This is where the bulk of the action will take place.

The tables are suggestions for what's happens and how the situation might be resolved – you're encouraged to go along with clever ideas the players suggest, even if the chart doesn't explicitly include it as a solution.

There's also a blank chart in the back included for you to make up your own results.

In any situation where there's an NPC encountered, the player may opt to fight them instead. In this case, at the end of every combat round, advance **Suspicion** by 1.

When combat is over, advance **Progress** by 1. If the combat happens to end on the first combat round, Suspicion does not advance. (The NPC was dispatched quickly enough that it didn't raise an alarm!)

2d6 Table

| 2d6 Table of Heist Events | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 2 | <p><i>Curse your clumsiness! You bumped into something, and it made a loud clattering noise!</i></p> <p>Difficult Dexterity Check Success: +1 Suspicion Failure: +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 3 | <p><i>"I know you're there! You better leave while you have the chance!" you hear somebody call out. Do you believe them? Or are they bluffing?</i></p> <p>Stay and stick to your plan: +1 Suspicion OR Hard Difficulty Intimidation Check: Success: +1 Progress, -1 Suspicion Failure: +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 4 | <p><i>"You're not supposed to be here..."</i></p> <p>Let them escort you out: -1 Progress, +1 Suspicion OR Medium Bluff Check Success: +1 Progress, +1 Suspicion Failure: -1 Progress, +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 5 | <p><i>They look distracted, you should have no problem sneaking along.</i></p> <p>Medium Difficulty Stealth Check: Success: +1 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion OR Hard Difficulty Stealth Check: Success: Gain a Dirty Secret Failure: +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 6 | <p><i>That hallway is long, and there's no good hiding places along it. But it leads exactly to where you need to go!</i></p> <p>Medium Difficult Stealth Check Success: +2 Progress Failure: +1 Progress, +1 Suspicion Find Another Way: Reroll</p> |
| 7 | <p><i>It's quiet, and dark. Sneak along carefully, and you'll be fine. But wait, what's that over there?</i></p> <p>Easy Stealth Check Success: +1 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion OR Medium Search Check Success: Find a Small Treasure Failure: +1 Suspicion</p> |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| <p>8</p> | <p><i>You think there's a shortcut here...</i> Use "Location Layout": +2 Progress Medium Intelligence Check: Success: +1 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion Don't Risk it: Reroll</p> |
| <p>9</p> | <p><i>This is where you need to go but, the door is locked! Didn't you find a key somewhere?</i> Use a "Useful Key": +2 Progress Medium Lock Picking Check Success: +2 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion (May retry) Look for another way: Reroll</p> |
| <p>10</p> | <p><i>"I can be convinced that I didn't see anything..." But what do they want?</i> Give "Dirty Secret": +1 Progress, -1 Suspicion Medium Persuasion Check Success: +1 Progress, -1 Suspicion Failure: +1 Suspicion</p> |
| <p>11</p> | <p><i>This looks like a good hiding place, you can take a breather and wait for things to calm down some here.</i> -1 Suspicion</p> |
| <p>12</p> | <p><i>There they are, fast asleep and dead to the world. It's all too easy.</i> +1 Progress OR Medium Pickpocket Check Success: Useful Key or a Small Treasure First Failure: The sleeper tosses in their sleep, but doesn't wake. Second Failure: The sleeper wakes up. +2 Suspicion</p> |

d20 Table

| 1d20 Table of Heist Events | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <p><i>Curse your clumsiness! You bumped into something, and it made a loud clattering noise!</i></p> <p>Difficult Dexterity Check Success: +1 Suspicion Failure: +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 2 | <p><i>"I know you're there! You better leave while you have the chance!" you hear somebody call out. Do you believe them? Or are they bluffing?</i></p> <p>Stay and stick to your plan: +1 Suspicion OR Hard Difficulty Intimidation Check: Success: +1 Progress, -1 Suspicion Failure: +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 3 | <p><i>"You're not supposed to be here..."</i></p> <p>Let them escort you out: -1 Progress, +1 Suspicion OR Medium Bluff Check Success: +1 Progress, +1 Suspicion Failure: -1 Progress, +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 4~5 | <p><i>They look distracted, you should have no problem sneaking along.</i></p> <p>Medium Difficulty Stealth Check: Success: +1 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion OR Hard Difficulty Stealth Check: Success: Gain a Dirty Secret Failure: +2 Suspicion</p> |
| 6~8 | <p><i>That hallway is long, and there's no good hiding places along it. But it leads exactly to where you need to go!</i></p> <p>Medium Difficult Stealth Check Success: +2 Progress Failure: +1 Progress, +1 Suspicion Find Another Way: Reroll</p> |
| 9~12 | <p><i>It's quiet, and dark. Sneak along carefully, and you'll be fine. But wait, what's that over there?</i></p> <p>Easy Stealth Check Success: +1 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion OR Medium Search Check Success: Find a Small Treasure Failure: +1 Suspicion</p> |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 13~15 | <p><i>You think there's a shortcut here...</i></p> <p>Use "Location Layout": +2 Progress Medium Intelligence Check: Success: +1 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion Don't Risk it: Reroll</p> |
| 16~17 | <p><i>This is where you need to go but, the door is locked! Didn't you find a key somewhere?</i></p> <p>Use a "Useful Key": +2 Progress Medium Lock Picking Check Success: +2 Progress Failure: +1 Suspicion (May retry) Look for another way: Reroll</p> |
| 18 | <p><i>"I can be convinced that I didn't see anything..." But what do they want?</i></p> <p>Give "Dirty Secret": +1 Progress, -1 Suspicion Medium Persuasion Check Success: +1 Progress, -1 Suspicion Failure: +1 Suspicion</p> |
| 19 | <p><i>This looks like a good hiding place, you can take a breather and wait for things to calm down some here.</i></p> <p>-1 Suspicion</p> |
| 20 | <p><i>There they are, fast asleep and dead to the world. It's all too easy.</i></p> <p>+1 Progress OR Medium Pickpocket Check Success: Useful Key or a Small Treasure First Failure: The sleeper tosses in their sleep, but doesn't wake. Second Failure: The sleeper wakes up. +2 Suspicion</p> |

Payoff Phase

Maxing out the **Progress** Clock doesn't immediately end the Heist; since you have the option to keep snooping around, hoping to find some more minor rewards through events.

As long as there are no events being resolved, if the **Progress** Clock is maxed out, then the players involved in the heist may end it at any time and collect their rewards.

Furhtermore, if the player characters max out the **Suspicion** Clock, the heist ends in a dramatically appropriate fashion: they're chased out of the building, arrested, or the heist goes loud and violence becomes necessary.

The player characters, at any time, can use an **Escape Plan** to safely abort the Heist – even if **Suspicion** gets maxed out.

Other Ideas

Try creating a Table of Events that Uses Playing Cards, and then build a heist using a specific packs of cards! (Hint: Different suits and values could represent different kinds of challenges.)

This system also works well with Information Items; in addition to valuables, you could find all manner of incriminating documents lying around while snooping around someplace!

Tweaking the Scenario

You can increase the amount of progress needed, or make certain challenges more difficult, depending on how difficult you want the Heist to be.

Additionally, you can also devise your own tables using the blank provided.

2d6 Table of Heist Events

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

1d20 Table of Heist Events

1

2

3

4~5

6~8

9~12

13~15

16~17

18

19

20

Card Table of Heist Events

A

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Jack

Queen

King

Contact

E-mail: Aaron.d.Schaedel@gmail.com

Website: <http://aaronderschaedel.xyz>