

# THE STORIES THEY STEAL

STEALING  
STORIES  
for the  
DEVIL™  
BY MONTE COOK







# THE STORIES THEY STEAL



# INTRO DUCTION



You've read *Liars*, and since you're the GM, you've also read *The Devil*. You're ready to play, right? You've already got what you need, right? So what's this little book?

Well, after hours of playing this game, we figured there are a few things a GM will need at their fingertips. Basic reference for events that will come up and places you'll need to create or describe. While *The Stories They Steal* doesn't entirely make up for your own research (only you know what you do and don't know), the material here is useful for any GM to know before they run this game. Read through this book, and keep it handy while you're running your sessions. In the breaks between Acts, refer to it for ideas or to check a detail or two.

If you're the GM and you put something in the game and say it's so, it's so. But hopefully, this book will help give you the confidence that what you say about the surveillance system is plausible, or that what you say the fire captain does as the fire engines come rolling up because the alarm got pulled is believable.

Ultimately, it's the GM's role to guide the whole group into creating the stories that the Liars steal. The information here is to help you during the game while you do just that. Stealing Stories for the Devil isn't really the kind of game with rules meant to be referenced a lot during play. However, the information in this book isn't rules, per se, it's the building blocks for any and all of the stories your group will create. There's nothing wrong with flipping through these pages when you are crafting a location or NPC the story needs. That's what it's here for.

# SECURITY SYSTEMS

## *CHAPTER 1*

As a heist game, *Stealing Stories for the Devil* is going to deal with security systems of all kinds. You should be at least passingly familiar with such things to run the game. This chapter offers an overview of everything you'll need to know.

## CENTRALIZED VERSUS INDEPENDENT

One thing to consider before going further is whether a location's security systems are centralized or a series of multiple independent systems. A centralized system is much easier to control, but a series of independent systems is more difficult to disable. In the mission, independent systems means that a series of different Scenes (possibly in different locations) would be needed to turn off a variety of alarms, camera systems, motion sensors, and so on. A centralized system means that only one such task might be required.

## ACCESS CONTROL

Security mainly comes down to access control. Who can get into a location, or who can get at certain valuables.

### DOORS

The easiest way to keep people out of a place is a locked door. Most door security measures prevent brute force, while locks attempt to prevent more subtle approaches (lockpicking).

- Reinforced doors use steel plates on both sides to make the door very difficult to break or cut through.
- Special security doors have strike plates reinforcing the door and the frame to keep it from being bashed in.
- Specialized hinge screws keep the door from being pulled out by removing the hinge pins.
- Steel sheet plates can reinforce the wall around the deadbolt.

### BARRIERS

Turnstiles are metal barriers that turn one way as a person steps through a small, round cage-like enclosure. They don't turn the other way, making the access point a one-way trip.

Other barriers are often meant to prevent vehicles from entering, using retractable ramps, sturdy bollards, or simply heavy barricades that are difficult or impossible to drive through. None of these, however, will keep out people.

### GATES

Like doors, gates can be locked to keep people or vehicles out. They're made of metal and can withstand a lot of force.

Sometimes a door has a locked gate that slides down (or from the side) in front of it for extra security. Often, very non-secure doors, such as glass doors, have this feature.

### SALLY PORTS

Also known as an access control vestibule or a "mantrap," this is a small room with a security door on each end that one must pass through to get to a secure area. One door won't open until the other is closed, and security personnel can seal both doors easily, trapping intruders inside. These areas often have metal detectors or other systems that look for weapons or other dangerous items.



## LOCKS

Simple interior doors—if they have locks at all—are spring latch doors, easy to shim or wedge open. Secure doors use some form of deadbolt lock, a police lock, or sometimes an electromagnetic lock.

A deadbolt is a mechanism that, when locked, inserts a metal pin from the door into the doorframe. A police lock comes in two forms: a floor-mounted steel bar that connects to a door at a 45-degree angle, and a crossbar with two steel bars that stretch across the width of the door and into brackets on the doorframe.

An electromagnetic lock uses a powerful electromagnet to attach the door to a metal plate. These can be set to deactivate when depowered or activate when depowered. These latter locks are called “fail secure” and are typically used on security doors, as cutting the power won’t allow an intruder to bypass them.

### PHYSICAL LOCKS

Physical locks require a key or a combination to open. A key lock can be picked with various tools, and a combination can be cracked by sensing the workings of the mechanism (using sight, sound, touch, or all of these methods).

Sophisticated key locks use magnets so that to turn the lock, the key must have not only the correct shape, but also tiny attached magnets in precisely the right arrangement.

Some physical locks require multiple keys, multiple combinations, or a mixture of the two. Large vault doors may require keys that are large, specialized, or elaborate. A vault in a bank in England requires multiple keys, each 3 feet (1 m) long!

Sometimes for additional security, the needed keys or combinations (or portions of combinations) are in the possession of different people on the premises, so that no one person can open the lock alone.

Physical locks are usually only deadbolt or police locks.

## ELECTRONIC LOCKS

Electronic locks require a special card, password, or other trigger to open them. Some might have physical keys as a backup, but many do not. Electronic locks can be used with all the types of locks (deadbolt, police, or electromagnet).

Electronic locks can be programmed to close the door automatically after a specific time or when specific conditions are met.

The “key” for an electronic lock might be:

- **Security card.** Issued by the security personnel in the location, sometimes an employee name tag or badge serves as a security card. The card has a magnetic strip and is inserted or touched to a reader.
- **Code.** Usually typed on a keypad, the code can be anywhere from 4 digits to 16 or more. A particularly tricky keypad might include symbols and letters as well as numbers.
- **Fingerprint or hand scanner.** You have to touch a pad to open the door, and your specific fingerprints are identified by a computer.
- **Facial recognition.** The lock opens if a security camera recognizes your face (this could also be operator controlled, with an actual human doing the recognizing).
- **Voice recognition.** A computer system knows the voice signatures of authorized personnel who speak into a transmitter.
- **Multifactor authorization.** An electronic lock might require two different keys, such as a card and a code.





## OTHER SECURITY MEASURES

While locked doors are the most obvious way to keep intruders out, other systems are often used, usually in conjunction with locks.

### CREDENTIAL ACCESS

Perhaps the simplest and lowest-tech form of access control is that only people wearing specific name tags or uniforms are allowed in. This could also be a spoken password. It's practically no control at all, but if used in conjunction with other measures, this method can be useful.

### VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Cameras can be set up to monitor secure areas. Security guards can watch the live camera feed, or the cameras can record intruders so they can be identified later—or both.

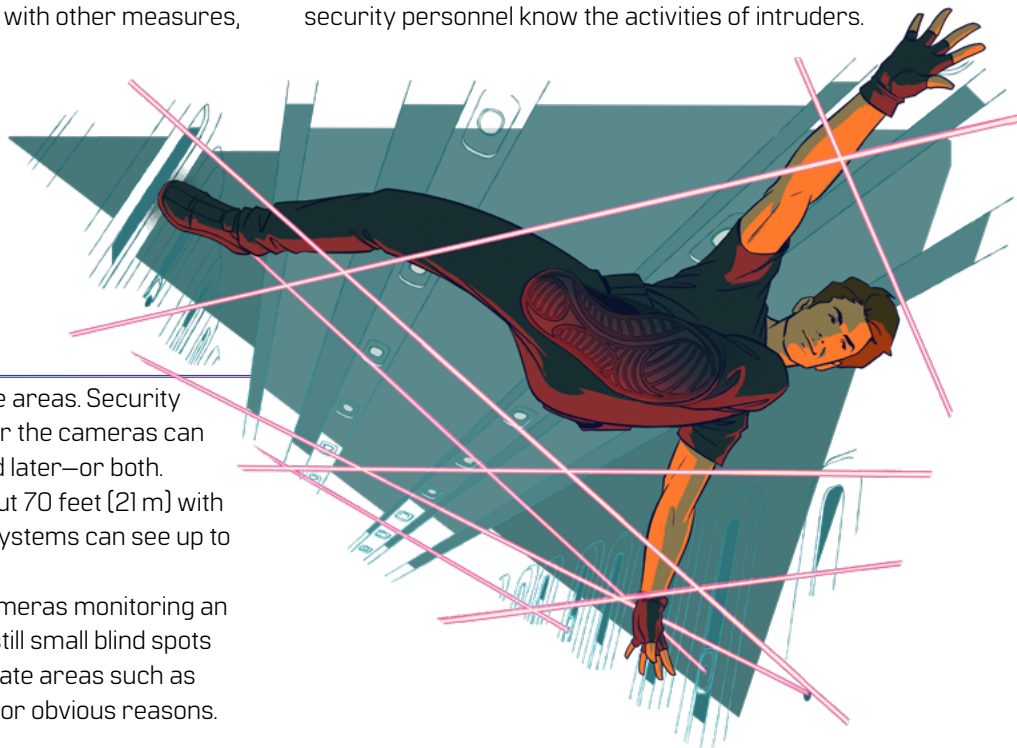
Low-grade cameras can see up to about 70 feet (21 m) with clarity, while sophisticated professional systems can see up to 700 feet (210 m).

A location can be filled with security cameras monitoring an entire building, but most likely, there are still small blind spots where no camera is looking. Further, private areas such as restrooms typically don't have cameras for obvious reasons.

### ALARMS

While a typical alarm might be a blaring klaxon, it can also be nothing more than a red light on a security guard's monitoring equipment. So-called "silent alarms" are useful because an intruder might not know that they've tripped it. Some alarms automatically alert the local police.

Alarms are simple, but the sensors that trigger the alarm can be varied and complex. Often a sophisticated security system uses multiple sensor types, likely tied to different alarms so that security personnel know the activities of intruders.



Different sensors or triggers include:

- **Door and window sensors.** When a magnetic connection is broken—such as if the door or window is opened—an alarm is sounded.
- **Perimeter sensors.** Using an electrostatic field or audio inputs, these sensors trigger an alarm if someone enters an area. While they can be used in a secure site, they are frequently used as an early warning system on an outside perimeter fence or simply on an outside border (which may or may not be marked).
- **Glass break sensors.** As the name suggests, these sensors can detect if a particular window is broken and trigger an alarm.
- **Photodetector.** This sensor detects obstruction of a light beam (usually infrared). These are often called electric eyes. They're not common in modern security systems, having been replaced by more sophisticated motion detectors.
- **Motion detector.** Typically using optical, microwave, or ultrasonic sensors (or a combination of two or more kinds), a motion detector can sense movement in an area, triggering an alarm. Other types of motion detectors use video cameras, sometimes with infrared illumination to detect motion even in the dark.
- **Temperature sensors.** These sensors are tripped when a room or area's temperature changes from a preset temperature. The presence of a person's body heat can set off the sensor, as can fire, additional light, and so on. These are often used in museums or high-security computer server rooms, where temperature changes alone can be a threat.









## SAFES AND VAULTS

When people put their valuables in a safe or vault, they're doing so usually to protect from both theft and calamity. Most safes and vaults are fireproof. Sophisticated examples with electronic locks sometimes have their own individual power source.

Safes are often hidden, sometimes built into the structure (on the wall, behind a painting or bookshelf, or in the floor under a rug) or built into innocuous-appearing objects such as a book, a globe, or a sofa.

Vaults are more like rooms unto themselves, and sometimes have inner areas with yet another level of security (such as a gate or door). The insides of vaults can have cameras and alarms as well. Modern vaults are made of concrete plated with steel.

Safes and vaults can have combination locks, key locks, electronic locks, or a mix of some or all of these types. Vaults frequently have time locks that prevent the vault from opening at certain times of the day, or timers so that even when unlocked, they don't open for a few minutes to prevent quick thefts.

## TRAPS

Most security systems don't have defensive measures that act against intruders. "Traps" are more for deterrence than protection—barbed wire or electrified gates, for example, are to keep people from trying to break in more than to hurt intruders so much that they can't enter.

And yet, the Bank of Spain's gold vault in Madrid is designed to flood with water if thieves break in, drowning them. Sometimes a safe is rigged to explode.

Disabling a trap system is often very much like disabling an alarm or surveillance system. In fact, most rely on alarm triggers or cameras to function.

It's worth noting that traps designed to kill people are illegal in most places. Most professional security systems, for example, will not include such measures. Military sites may use traps meant to maim or kill (the United States Bullion Depository—also known as Fort Knox—uses land mines, for example). Criminals or those otherwise operating outside the law (casinos? private compounds?) might also use such measures.

Traps come in many forms. Here are a few:

- **Simple traps.** This is a general category for spring traps (jaw traps or bear traps), snares, or something the kid in *Home Alone* might rig up with a paint can on string or something to slip or trip people on a stairway. This kind of trap might kill a small animal (and most spring traps are designed to do just that), but they won't kill a human. They might injure or, in the case of a snare or spring trap, immobilize an intruder, at least for a while.

Most places Liars go into won't have such primitive defenses, and even if they did, most Liars would probably see them a mile away.
- **Marking traps.** These traps are rigged to spray an intruder with permanent dye or (perhaps more deviously) ink that's visible only under certain conditions, like UV light. They help in catching a thief later.
- **Area denial methods.** Another general category, this includes land mines, caltrops, and punji sticks. Mostly, these kinds of methods make an intruder move slowly through an area rather than quickly, so they can be more easily apprehended.

- **Mantrap.** While technically a mantrap is any trap meant to harm humans, the term has become attached to the sally port or airlock-style access control method. In other words, it's a small enclosed room with a lockable security door on both ends that someone must pass through to get to a secure area. It's designed to be easy to lock both doors so an intruder can be trapped in the room.
- **Tire disabling methods.** Spike strips and traffic spikes designed to destroy tires and bring a wheeled vehicle to a quick stop. These can be permanent fixtures in an area to control traffic (typically the spikes can be driven over safely in one direction), or they can be strips or nets deployed on short notice.
- **Immobilizing foam.** Also called sticky foam, this can be sprayed into an area to block, entangle, or otherwise impair individuals. There is a serious risk, however, that a person could be suffocated if caught in the foam.
- **Poison gas.** A vault or the area right before the vault can be rigged—often with a motion sensor or something similar—to fill the area with toxic gas. The gas might incapacitate intruders (like tear gas), render them unconscious, or potentially even choke and/or kill them. Most types of gas also greatly obscure vision, making it difficult to operate. Ideally, the trapped area is small and sealed; otherwise, it's too easy for the subject to get out of the gas.

The most basic, jury-rigged form of this trap might be something set to emit pepper spray.

- **Flooding.** Many vaults are located underground, making it possible to flood them with water if breached. This drowns intruders while the vault's contents are secured in sealed containers or aren't affected by water—such as bars of gold.
- **Rigged explosives.** A tripwire attached to a mine is likely the simplest rigged explosive. But a floor, door, wall, or other surface (or object) can be rigged to trigger an explosive, such as C4. Obviously, you don't use a trap like this unless you're confident that what you're trying to protect won't be harmed in the explosion (like a heavy vault door) or you don't care. Sometimes you'd rather that something be destroyed than end up in the hands of someone else.
- **Electrified objects.** Usually it's fences that are electrified, but it's possible to electrify a wall or floor to harm or stun an intruder (if the voltage is powerful enough). The outer surface of a safe or vault conceivably could be electrified.
- **Active Denial System.** It may sound like sci-fi, but some militaries in the world have created a "heat ray" that fires invisible energy at intruders within a perimeter, functioning a bit like a microwave oven. While not technically lethal, it inflicts first- and second-degree burns and greatly incentivizes the subjects to leave the area.

## PEOPLE (AND CREATURES)

People who work in secure locations all have some form of security training. Although it's obvious, the first rule of security is:

**DON'T LET  
STRANGERS IN**

This one concept makes life very difficult for thieves, trespassers, and, of course, Liars. People are trained that if they see a stranger, they report it. If they see someone without proper credential access (name tags, uniforms, and so on), they report it.

### SECURITY GUARDS

At least in the early part of the twenty-first century, no security system is as good as a team of well-trained, well-led security professionals.

On the low end, a security guard can be the retired cop hired to watch over a building at night, armed with a nightstick, a flashlight, and a cellphone, checking doors on a routine schedule and perhaps catching the occasional nap. On the other end, it can

be a team of paramilitary professionals with state-of-the-art weapons, armor, and gear. Security guards usually wear a uniform, a badge, or some other kind of insignia that makes their position clear.

Security guard duties include:

- **Maintain security checkpoints.** Sometimes one or more guards are positioned at an entrance, verifying the credentials of those who pass through. They may have a metal detector or body scanner to look for weapons or dangerous materials.
- **Monitor surveillance cameras.** A location with an extensive surveillance system probably has a control center with a variety of monitors to keep track of all the cameras and alarms. From here, one or more guards can alert other guards to threats and can coordinate their actions as well as summon the authorities or emergency services if needed. Or, if the staff is small, they can move to respond to intruders themselves.
- **Patrol.** A single guard might make their rounds throughout (or around, or both) the location and check the locks on all the doors. Larger numbers of guards might have a patrol routine so there are always guards moving around the location in a steady rotation. This routine can include a perimeter walk as well as a patrol into and through any interior areas.

Certain locations might have permanent stations where guards on watch keep vigil from high points (such as a tower) or from a hidden vantage. These locations can change from watch points to sniper positions very quickly.

- **Respond to threats.** When an alarm sounds or guards are summoned via a comm system, they move in to check on the situation. In low-security areas, guards are usually not armed or armed only with pepper spray and perhaps a nightstick. High-security work, however, calls for guards trained for weapons use. These guards carry firearms and sometimes wear body armor of various types. Some even have night vision equipment.

Most security guards carry flashlights and handcuffs as well. All have cellphones, radios, or some other means of communication with each other and perhaps the authorities.

The weakness of security guards is their regimented routine. Shift changes, patrols, and so on happen on a schedule. A smart commander will vary the schedule, but there's still a schedule. Liars can use the knowledge of this schedule to pick the perfect time to move through an area.

## BOUNCERS

---

A bouncer is a specific type of security guard. They typically watch the entrance of a public establishment in which patrons might get unruly—a bar, music venue, or strip club, for example. Their main job might be to check IDs, but they also frequently escort unwanted patrons out of the business. They are rarely armed with more than pepper spray or perhaps a hidden knife.

## BODYGUARDS

---

Bodyguards are security guards that protect a person rather than a location. Like security guards, they range from someone who's unarmed (but probably capable in a fight) to someone who's heavily armed and perhaps armored, like secret service agents protecting the president, vice president, and their families.

Bodyguards are almost always extremely observant. If there are multiple bodyguards, they typically operate with efficient teamwork, often with standardized and practiced protocols. For example, if their client is threatened by someone armed with a gun, one or two bodyguards might forcibly get their client to cover or to the ground while the others respond to the assailant with deadly force.

## GUARD DOGS

---

Dogs serve as a frightening deterrent and an alarm system. Most guard dogs, in fact, are meant to intimidate and alert others of the presence of intruders with their barking. Such dogs are an actual threat only if physically confronted and probably dangerous only to an unarmed human or if encountered in large numbers.

A trained attack dog, on the other hand, can quickly take down and incapacitate a human. A pack of such dogs is a real threat to the lives of intruders.

While dogs are a security system that can't be disabled by cutting the right wire or hacking into a computer, they can be fooled, particularly with scent. They can be distracted by food and incapacitated by drugged or poisoned food.





# CHAPTER 2 REALISTIC RESPONSES

As the GM, one of your chief responsibilities will be to determine how the NPCs in the mission react.

## RESPONSE TIMES

At some point, emergency services will be called into the mission. As this will come up fairly regularly, the main question you'll want to answer is: how long does it take for the police/fire department/EMTs to get there?

In most major cities, response to a priority one emergency (an imminent threat where lives are at serious risk) is five to ten minutes. In these same cities, a priority two emergency (an imminent threat where substantial property damage is a serious risk) might prompt a response in up to twice that amount of time.

This is true of smaller cities and large towns, as well, but in rural areas, the response times are likely to be three times as long.

As a general rule, if you set all response times in cities and towns to be around ten minutes, and twenty to thirty minutes in rural areas, you'll never be too far off. However, an interesting use of a Twist Card is that the police station is right next door, or a patrol car happens to be driving by at the moment the call goes out. Just as much of a Twist in certain situations would be that the local police or fire station is overwhelmed with other calls, so they arrive much later than usual.

## FIRE/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Sometimes in the course of a heist, something catches on fire. Other times, the Liars may pull a fire alarm or fake a fire as a distraction or to clear an area.

Because people need to get to safety, areas containing people will be *less* secure during a fire. Alarms and electronic locks might be deactivated near exits. Conversely, sometimes places without people will be *more* secure during a fire. The latter might include a server room, a sealed area in a museum, and so on. In these cases, doors might automatically seal or very sturdy fire doors (think of these more as vault-like walls than doors) might close automatically.

### BUILDING FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Smoke detection equipment is ubiquitous, sounding an alarm. Most major buildings will also have manual fire alarm triggers throughout the structure. Certain doors might be rigged with fire alarms if they are opened (and thus are used only in a fire or similar emergency). In key locations throughout the building, there are likely to be standpipes for connecting fire hoses directly to the water system.

Almost all major buildings have internal fire sprinkler systems, triggered by heat or smoke or both. Activated sprinklers are normally localized, so if tripped, just that room or area of a large room gets the spray of water. Museums or other places that can suffer damage from water sometimes have a double-trigger system that is much harder to activate accidentally or through mischief (the “hold a lighter up to the sprinkler” trick).

Areas where water is a serious threat, such as the electronics in a server room, use fire-suppressing chemicals (either dry or wet) rather than water. These chemicals may be hazardous to people.

A high-rise or other large, newer building will have a fire command center in the lobby or otherwise near the entrance, where someone can monitor all fire systems (alarms, sprinklers, and so on) and can even control them. This control panel will also have elevator controls, a manual release for automatic doors, fan-driven smoke control systems, a public address system, and a direct line to the local fire department.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT ON THE SCENE

If the fire department comes to the location of the mission in response to a fire (real or not), the head officer of the team will assess the situation. Their first order of business will be to identify potential hazardous substances that might be present. This includes materials that are particularly flammable or even explosive, as well as materials that might produce dangerous fumes or other threats.

If there is no fire (a false alarm), it takes a thorough search of the building to confirm that. Depending on the size of the structure and the sophistication of the fire command center, this search may take a few minutes or as much as an hour or more.

If there is a fire:

- Dangerous utilities (gas and probably electricity) are shut off.
- Hose lines are run to the heart of the fire as quickly as possible, with two firefighters per line. Alternatively, the firefighters using hoses might remain outside the building and attack the fire from there.
- A bare minimum of two other firefighters are on search and rescue duty, going through the entire structure looking for people that might need help.
- Once a fire is out, firefighters remain on the scene for a considerable time afterward to ensure that the fire truly is out, that areas rendered unsafe are identified, and so on.







## POLICE PROCEDURES

The Liars are committing a heist. If they're spotted or caught, it's extremely likely that the police will be alerted of a robbery taking place.

### RESPONSE TO ROBBERY

Robbery (as opposed to simple theft) implies violence or the threat of violence. Police responding to a robbery in progress go in expecting danger from suspects that are likely still present. (If the police don't respond until after the Liars are gone, none of this even matters.)

- Their first priority is their own safety. They go in alert for suspects that might pose a danger or those that are fleeing the scene.
- Their second priority is the safety of victims or bystanders, with any injured people addressed first. They will clear the area of all people as quickly as possible.
- Third priority is the preservation of obvious physical evidence.
- Fourth priority is searching for suspects that got away.
- Only then do they begin an investigation, which includes questioning suspects, searching for evidence, and so on.

### RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE

Police responding to a scene with violence (in particular a shooting) go in ready to use lethal force.

- Depending on the circumstances, they may use tear gas, pepper spray, or flash-bang weapons (devices that create a flash of very bright light and intense sound) to gain quick control of the situation. These tactics are often used if the suspects may be in close proximity to bystanders.
- If the police believe that the situation is particularly dangerous, they may equip themselves with bulletproof vests, helmets, rifles, and shotguns rather than standard-issue handguns.
- Many police departments have access to night vision technology and infrared technology (which can even allow them to detect people behind closed doors or walls).
- Officers typically call out a warning to suspects before using their weapons, saying to stand down, freeze, or put hands in the air.
- Given time, as officers move into a situation, they are very likely cordoning off streets outside the perimeter of the incident and (if possible) positioning snipers on nearby buildings.
- Officers will not let anyone leave the crime scene until the situation is fully under their control and all witnesses have been identified and questioned.



## REACTIONS TO COVERS LIARS MIGHT USE

Disguises go a long way. Sometimes they allow the Liars to waltz right into a location that otherwise they could never enter. When the whole team uses the same false identity, it's easiest to think of it as a cover, as in a cover story or going undercover.

It's very likely that a group of Liars will use a cover to infiltrate a location at least once. This is a great tactic, but for variety, encourage the group to use different covers on different missions if you can. The following sections present covers the Liars might use, along with the challenges faced with each. Make use of some of those challenges as potential Twist ideas.



## MAINTENANCE WORKERS

This might be the go-to cover for Liars. A set of coveralls (particularly with a logo) and some tools allow them to walk into almost anyplace. But the fact that this is such an obvious choice means that there might be security measures meant to prevent its abuse.

Obstacles Liars might face:

- **Security checks.** Workers might be asked to show proper ID.
- **Checking work authorization orders.** In a location with tight security, maintenance people can't just show up and say they need to check the plumbing. They'll probably need work orders with proper signatures.
- **Verifying with the maintenance company.** If the Liars pose as workers from an outside company, security might call that company to verify their story.
- **Lack of access to certain areas.** In a building with electronic key card access, a maintenance worker's key card might only get them into the area where they need to work and no others.
- **Real maintenance workers.** Probably the people best suited to spot fake maintenance workers are real ones. If any are present in the location, they may confront the Liars and potentially see through the deception.
- **Real maintenance issues.** When someone sees a Liar in a maintenance uniform, they might insist that the "professional" come look at an issue in the building that needs fixing.











## CATERERS

---

Everyone has to eat, and many places will have food brought in by an outside service. Catering isn't a bad cover, but of course the Liars probably need to have some food or at least food containers.

Obstacles Liars might face:

- **Security checks.** Caterers might be asked to show proper ID. Obviously, if the people in the location weren't looking for (or don't use) caterers, this will be a poor cover.
- **Verifying with the catering company.** A quick call to the catering company for verification can punch holes in the Liars' story.
- **Lack of access to certain areas.** A caterer who is away from where the food is being prepared or served will raise red flags. In a building with electronic key card access, a caterer's key card might only get them into the area where they need to work and no others.
- **Real catering issues.** From complaints about food from customers to special requests from event organizers, the Liars might have to handle all manner of things that crop up.

## INVESTORS/BUYERS

---

One reason why well-dressed strangers might be poking around a location is that they're interested in buying the place or investing in the business.

Obstacles Liars might face:

- **Security checks.** Investors might be asked to show proper ID. It will also seem odd if they arrive without an appointment of some kind.
- **Escorts.** It's rare that anyone would allow a potential buyer or investor to walk around a property unescorted. If for no

other reason, someone will probably want to give them a guided tour to make sure they see all the right areas (and none of the wrong ones) and get any questions answered. That makes this particular cover better for casing a location than getting in to steal anything.

## INSPECTORS

---

Walking around with a clipboard can sometimes go a long way, and a bluff like "We're from the main office" can too. An inspector could also be a government inspector (health and safety, perhaps) or simply some kind of police detective.

Obstacles Liars might face:

- **Security checks.** Inspectors might be required to show ID—not just normal identification, but ID specific to the location (company ID, military ID, government ID, and so on).
- **Checking authorization papers.** In a location with tight security, someone can't just show up and say they need to inspect things even if they have the right ID. They'll probably need orders with proper signatures or a warrant.
- **Verifying with the inspectors' office.** Presumably, someone sent the inspectors, and a savvy person will check on their story.

## FRIENDS OR RELATIVES

---

All one needs for this cover is an employee name, and you can show up and say, "They left their lunch, I'm just going to take it to them."

This won't get the Liars past any rigorous security. What it can do, however, is get the Liars into a low-security but still restricted area—an employee-only space.



CHAPTER 3

# THE HIDDEN SIDE OF BUILDINGS

We all know what most locations look like generally—hotels, office buildings, airports, museums, and so on—but the parts we see are the public areas. When the Liars are committing a heist, they're likely to spend more time in the back rooms than in public areas. This means sneaking about in service corridors and mechanical rooms rather than waltzing through the lobby and taking the main elevator. (Although depending on their plan, they might also do just that.)

Overall, don't worry about being extremely accurate or realistic when portraying these places in the game. Logic is more important than reality in this case. Would there be an employee-only restroom in a museum? Seems reasonable enough that no player's suspension of disbelief will be harmed if you say there is.

The following section offers a few ideas of areas the Liars might find their way into on a mission.

## SERVICE ROOMS

This general category is for custodial supply rooms and closets, janitorial sink rooms, and employee restrooms. Often, the entrances to these rooms are innocuous and/or marked as "employees only."

## UTILITY AND MAINTENANCE ROOMS

A small building might have a single utility room with an HVAC system, a water heater, main distribution piping, a breaker box, and perhaps a backup generator.

A larger building might have separate rooms for electrical systems and mechanical systems (a "boiler room") or even multiple mechanical rooms, such as one for the HVAC system and one for the main distribution pipes and water pumps (servicing not just the standard plumbing in the building, but also its sprinkler system and associated pumps). Such rooms are often in the basement.

A building with elevators will likely have one or more separate rooms just for the mechanisms required. These are often on the roof.

A very large building such as a high-rise might have an entire floor (or multiple floors) called a mechanical floor for such equipment. It's not unreasonable to think that at least one out of every ten floors in a building is a mechanical floor. The Empire State Building, for example, has fifteen mechanical floors out of a total of 102 floors.

Mechanical floors can be clustered in blocks, and some are spread out throughout the structure. In a skyscraper or similarly large building, multiple redundancies are built into the systems. Cutting off the water to an entire high-rise apartment at once is perhaps more difficult than you might think, for example.

## STORAGE

---

The need for storage rooms is so ubiquitous that if a Liar looks around for a storage room to hide in, you can safely assume there is one nearby.

- Stores keep stockrooms with additional merchandise.
- Custodians need storage for cleaning supplies and equipment as well as replacements for consumables used in the building (paper towels, toilet paper, hand soap, and so on).
- Offices frequently have storerooms with extra office furniture and others for various office supplies.
- Museums have extensive backrooms for storing pieces not currently on display.

## STAIRWELLS

---

Buildings with multiple floors will have two stairwells with access on every level. Tall buildings will have three or even more. Stairwells in modern high-rise buildings usually have special ventilation systems to keep them relatively free of smoke during a fire. They also have emergency lighting for use during evacuation.

## EMERGENCY EXITS

---

All buildings must have at least two exits for evacuation during emergencies. Many large structures have multiple exits designed only for emergencies. Exits must open into an area that is safe, so a large building's main entrance often doesn't count if it opens onto a busy or narrow street. Likewise, a door that opens into a closed-off area or one filled with potentially hazardous trash or equipment doesn't count as an emergency exit.

Fire exit doors can't be locked while a building is occupied, so a business can lock these doors at night but a hotel or apartment building cannot. Most such doors are made so they can be opened from the outside only with a specific key, but they can always be opened from the inside.

## DELIVERY ENTRANCES

---

Many businesses and facilities of any real size have dedicated entrances for deliveries. Often, this is also where maintenance or other service workers enter the building.

Delivery entrances can be a sort of back door, or they can be a full loading dock with access for large delivery trucks, depending on the building. Even in low-security buildings, they are frequently locked and monitored with a camera.

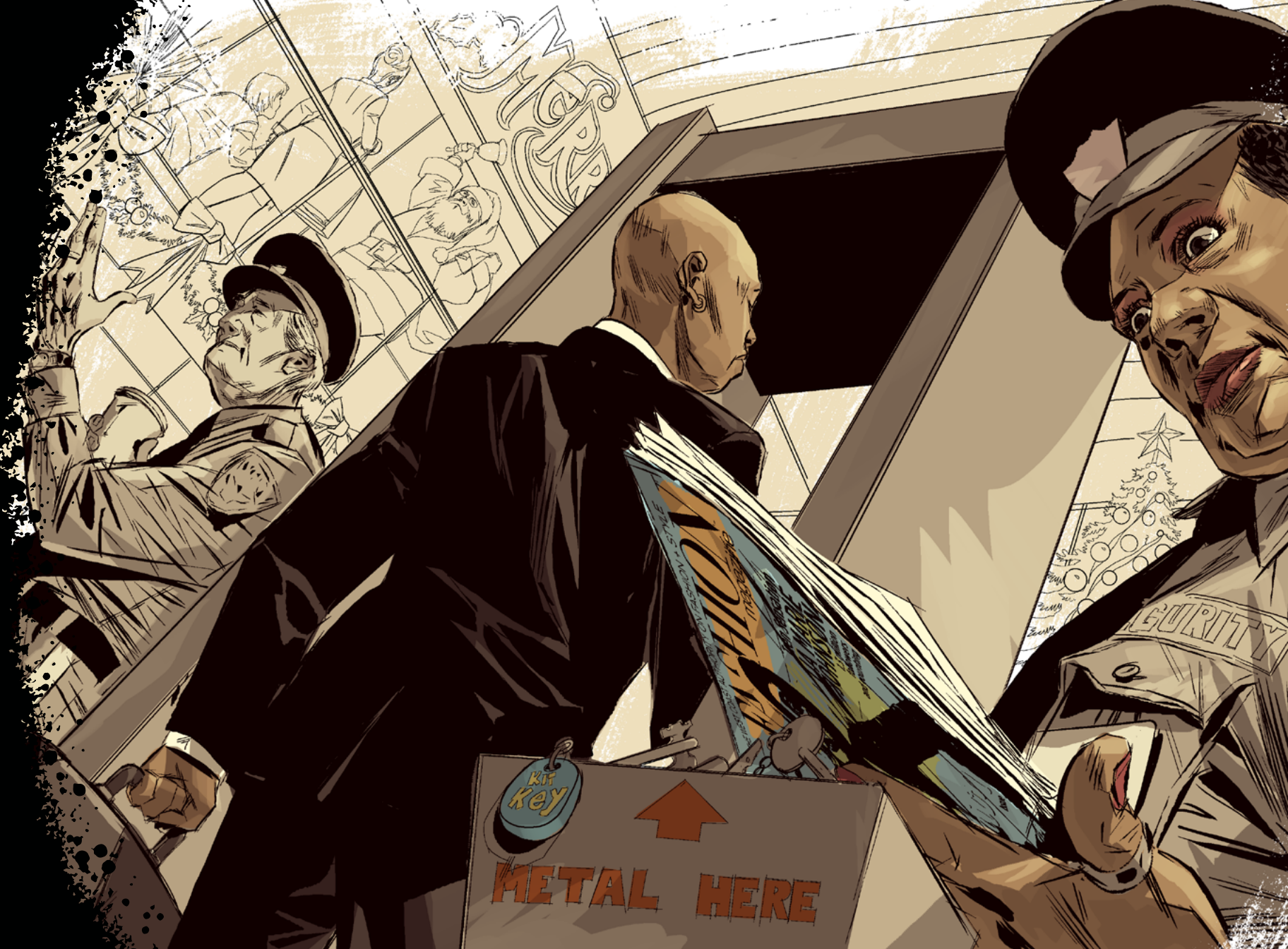
## VENTILATION

---

Most buildings don't have vents and ducts large enough to crawl through. And in those that do, the passages are very narrow, very difficult, and very unpleasant. For the most part, vents and ducts aren't meant to be crawled through—sharp metal edges are common, weak areas won't hold your weight and will collapse, and they are filthy.

But some buildings do have large and extensive ductwork, so if the Liars' plans involve crawling through the ventilation system to get where they're going, it's such a staple of fiction that you should allow it. But the difficulties mentioned could certainly be fine Twists.





# NPCs

CHAPTER 4



In *Stealing Stories for the Devil*, NPCs often need to be created quickly. But you still want them to be interesting and dynamic. Use these names and traits to make a memorable NPC in seconds.

## NPC NAMES

Robert McLean	Archie Johnson	Jay Jolie	Yash Mehta	Maxine Colfur
Charles Keserk	Sherman Maxwell	Goku Hagiwara	Jane Francesca	Luka Allen
Aanandi Lahiri	Sarah Osborn	Juliet North	Rachel Cooper	Nathaniel Target
Alexandra Jefferies	Jason Vick	Erik Martinez	Chidinma Abebe	Melanie Harper
David Morales	Taylor Ellis	Hen Barak	Brandon Olsen	Sadhil Kumar
Theresa Ehrlich	Isabel Shapira	Matt Friedlander	Mike Shapiro	Rin Hano
Niles Norton	Erika Tate	Hakeem Okafor	Dan Patton	Maeve Custer
Bruce Heywood	Valentina Garcia	Levi Mazzig	Laura Hitchens	Jasper Adams
Shaun Chen	Daniele Luciana	Beth Kovac	Mary Louise Booth	Leo Ephriem
Catori Alexander	Caspar Smythe	Simon Balfour	Ricardo Mann	Tom Damon
Aki Zhang	Herman Solinger	Eric Banks	Reba Brown	Branimir Miltchev
Mona Ayers	Wagner Propson	Justin Jones	Lara McGrath	Aiden Eaton
Celia Hickman	Chi Morales	David Appleby	Tammy Butler	Blake Godfrey
Xiao Chen Wang	Shelby Lawrence	Kaia Acharya	Bob Perry	Luke Chaney
Irina Gramble	Steve Mays	Lotte Janowitz	Rosemary Thomsen	Andre Garner
Anna Alyona	Agustin Hanson	Giotto Vacchi	Kyle Kerney	Thomas Wilson
John Cooke	Donny Baird	Taara Laghari	Ben Ali	Cody Gould
Meghan Callahan	Saiko Fukuda	Johan Kalish	Aaliyah Burns	Carly Doyle
Nora Wong	Kathleen Dougherty	Kaitlin Case	Grady Noble	Kevin Tucker
Alice Parker	Veronica McAllister	Susan Nash	Abdalla Tinibu	Emma Glass
Juan Perez	Sahun Kim	Wyatt Stephenson	Summer Plathe	Jerry Gordon
Riley Sutton	Dallas Key	Zoe Dubois	John Zimmer	Kate Hilton
James Deere	Sloane Jilliana	Nicolas Gagnon	Hans Pedersen	
Cameron Li	Adlei Ryn	Gian Singh	Vida Nilsen	

# NPC TRAITS

Thinks they're funny	Often inappropriately loud	Sweaty
Legitimately funny	Inconsiderate	Bears an obvious birthmark
Always smoking	Swears and curses more than necessary	Notable for their high-pitched laugh
Always eating	Extremely polite	Notable for their deep guffawing laugh
A little too fascinated by fire	Belligerent and rude	Always patting people on the back with gusto
More interested in animals than in people	Capricious	Surprisingly ignorant of very basic things
Always scratching	Oblivious	Extremely nearsighted
Always reading	Hard of hearing	Talks in a monotone
Dissatisfied with current situation	Has a speech impediment	Obviously a veteran of a recent war
Indefatigable	Has a facial tic	Speaks in a surprisingly high-pitched tone
Always looking for an easier way	Extremely soft-spoken	Speaks with a surprisingly low, gravelly voice
Conducting illegal activities on the side	Dislikes bright light	Fixated on one particular topic
Conspicuously hiding a secret	Bad body odor	Secretly, amorously obsessed with someone
Overly generous	Always unkempt	Meticulously tidy
Likes to give people nicknames	Meticulously groomed	Pedantic
Surprisingly fixated on their hat	Smells strongly of cologne	Boisterous
Prejudiced against a group	Very easily distracted	Heterochromatic
Brandishes an overdeveloped vocabulary	Scoffs at anything perceived as "fancy"	Has no facial hair (including eyebrows)
Always forgetting the words for things	Violates personal space	Has distinctive facial hair
Frequently uses malapropisms	Easily offended	Bears a distinctive hairstyle
Often hums without realizing it	Twirls their hair	Walks with a slight limp
Breaks out into song or sings when you expect them to talk	Focused on the appearance of people and things	Inflects statements so they sound like questions
Overly focused on the reasons behind things	Self-deprecating	Jaundiced
Prone to make out-of-context comments	Always smiling	Always tired
Devoutly religious	Frequently gets lost	Walks with a bounce in their step



Always attempting to compose a poem or song	Frequently repeats back what others say to them	Hateful detractor of an organization or public figure
Wears mismatched shoes	Frequently sneezing	Speaks with unique slang
Always fidgeting with something	Indecisive	Overly formal
Always taking notes	Distrustful	Always regaling everyone with stories
Jangles when they walk	Always chilly	Frequently uses clichéd sayings
Talks to themselves	Overly, effusively emotional	Obsessed with time and punctuality
Clothes are inexplicably dirty or stained	Obsessed with food and food preparation	Focused on gossip
Always bearing tools or other useful items	Inebriated	Speaks with an accent no one can quite place
Jumpy	Extremely forward and blunt	Always cracking their knuckles (or neck)
Imperturbable	Aloof	Frequently trying to buy or sell nearby objects
Sleepy	Fascinated with how things are made	Grieving the loss of a loved one
Always name-dropping	Always complaining	Compulsive liar
Prone to self-aggrandizement	Stalwart	Honest to a fault
Very complimentary	Always making wagers	Addicted to an illicit substance
Genuinely interested	Speaks very quickly	Has a hyperactive sweet tooth
Looking for something they lost	Speaks very slowly	Always sketching in a sketchbook
Seems to use very limited vocabulary and syntax	Staunch supporter of an organization or public figure	Trying to hide the fact that they are guilty of a crime
Always cleaning or straightening	Lonely	Always makes eye contact
Careful not to offend	Doesn't enunciate well	Has a peculiar handshake
Gassy	Argumentative	Easily offended
Easily confused	Overenunciates	Resents advice or suggestions
Extremely insightful	Overly fixated on odors	In the middle of an argument with their significant other
Always practicing sleight of hand	Flirtatious, but harmlessly so	Seems to know everyone, and everyone knows them
Shuffles when they walk	Moves and walks rigidly	
Always coughing	Mind is always on other things	





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIARS

Introduction: Pants on Fire	2
Chapter 1: Indoctrination	6
Chapter 2: Characters	10
Chapter 3: Creating a Liar	22
Chapter 4: Playing This Game	34
Chapter 5: Mission Cards	56
Chapter 6: Managing Scenes	64
Chapter 7: A Session	72
Chapter 8: Backgrounds	92
Chapter 9: The Value of Stories	106
Chapter 10: Advancing Liars	108
Chapter 11: (Really) High Tech	120
Chapter 12: Being a Liar	134

## THE DEVIL

Introduction	2
Chapter 1: Being the GM	4
Chapter 2: Improv GMing	28
Chapter 3: Let's Talk About the History of the Future	40
Chapter 4: Let's Talk About Improbability Zones	44
Chapter 5: Let's Talk About the Devil	50
Chapter 6: Let's Talk About the Whole Story	52

## THE STORIES THEY STEAL

Introduction	2
Chapter 1: Security Systems	4
Chapter 2: Realistic Responses	16
Chapter 3: The Hidden Side of Buildings	26
Chapter 4: NPCs	30

# CREDITS

**DESIGNER**

Monte Cook

**DEVELOPER**

Sean K. Reynolds

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Teri Litorco

**EDITOR/PROOFREADER**

Ray Vallese

**ADDITIONAL PROOFING**

Tammie Webb Ryan

**ART DIRECTOR**

Bear Weiter

**COVER ARTIST**

Roberto Pitturru

**ARTISTS**

Marcelo Basile, Gaia Degl'Innocenti, Rob Gale, Denis Medri,  
Romina Moranelli, Roberto Pitturru, Shane Patrick White

**CARTOGRAPHERS**

Bianca Buescher, Hugo Solis



**MonteCook**  
Games

© 2022 Monte Cook Games, LLC.

STEALING STORIES FOR THE DEVIL and its logo are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC in the U.S.A. and other countries. All Monte Cook Games characters and character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC.

Printed in China