

# SWINDLER

A sneaky game for 2 - 4 players  
Play time approx. 45 - 60 minutes

## THE GAME

*This is Victorian London. You are a group of swindlers. Moneybags run the city – but you are not one of them. Most of the time they don't even take note of you. But ignorance can be bliss! Your goal is to become the richest swindler in London. To do this, you'll have to relieve the rich of their jewellery, their money and their front door keys... it's okay, they won't miss it. But be careful: some of the rich are more attentive than you would like them to be. One wrong move and all the spoils will be gone! Or have you been conned by the accomplice of another swindler? They don't begrudge you the dirt under your fingernails and will do anything to spit in your soup. So stay one step ahead of the others and don't be afraid to resort to dirty tricks yourself. No one has ever become rich with honest work...*

## CONTENTS



1 Game Board



6 Coins



1 Start Player Marker



20 Wanted Posters



6 neutral Loot Tiles (with a white background)



40 Order Cards (8 A-cards, 32 B-cards)



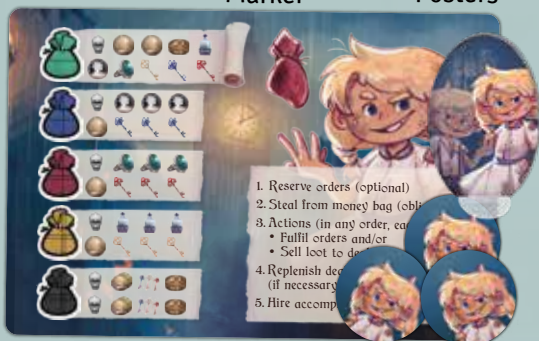
27 Accomplice Cards



12 Dealer Tiles



6 double-sided cards "Master Thief/Jailed"



4 Player Boards (double-sided), each with 1 matching Point Marker (cardboard standee) and 3 matching Reservation Markers



6 Skull Tiles in the colours of the 5 bags



36 Loot Tiles in the colours of the 5 bags



5 (Money) Bags in red, blue, yellow, green and black

# SETUP

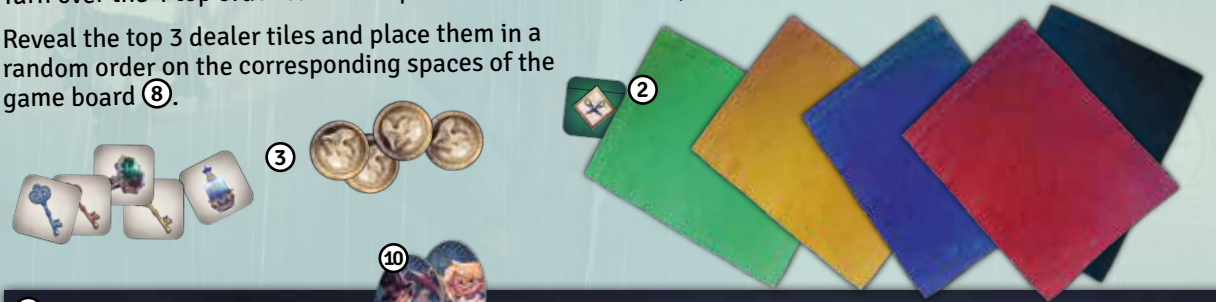
Place the **game board** in the centre of the table **①**.

Sort all the **loot and skull tiles** with coloured backgrounds into the bags of the matching colour (i.e. tiles with a red background into the red bag, tiles with black background into the black bag, etc.) **②**. Place the loot with a white background and the coins separately in a supply next to the game board **③**.

Sort the **order cards** according to their backs into 2 decks (A and B decks, respectively). Shuffle the **accomplice cards**, the **dealer tiles** and the two order card decks separately. To build the order card pile, first place the deck of B-order cards on the bottom **④** and then place 2 cards per player from the A-deck on top of the B-cards (i.e. 4 A-cards for 2 players, 6 A-cards for 3 players, and all 8 A-cards for 4 players) **⑤**. Put surplus A-cards back into the box without looking at them. You don't need them for this game of Swindler. Place the decks face down on the appropriate space on the game board **⑥**.

Turn over the 4 top order cards and place them on the corresponding spaces **⑦**.

Reveal the top 3 dealer tiles and place them in a random order on the corresponding spaces of the game board **⑧**.



Now have each player choose one of the double-sided **player boards**. The front features a female player character, while the back features a male player character. The side you choose has no influence on the game.

Take the **point marker** and the 3 **reservation markers** that belong to your chosen character. Place the point marker on the marked space on the scoreboard (3 victory points) ⑩ and place the reservation markers in front of you ⑪.

Each player then takes 1 **coin** from the supply and places it in front of themselves ⑫.

The player with the shadiest laugh becomes the starting player and receives the **start player marker** ⑬.

Shuffle all 6 **Master Thief/Jailed cards** blindly. For each player, draw 1 card and reveal it. Put the rest of the cards back into the box. You won't need them for this game. Starting with the player that goes last in turn order (the player sitting right from the starting player) and then going back in counter-clockwise order, each may choose 1 card with a unique Master Thief ability.

**Alternatively:** You can also choose to shuffle all 6 cards and distribute 1 card randomly to each player. Put excess cards back into the box.

Each player places the card in front of themselves ⑭, above their player board. Place it with the Master Thief ability face up. Place all order cards that you complete during the game face down to the right side of the card. Your opponents must be able to see the number of your completed orders at any given time.

This will ensure that you notice immediately when your special ability is unlocked (see section **MASTER THIEF** on p. 5). This will also give a clear indication if the game is nearly over (see section **END OF THE GAME** on p. 7).

**For inexperienced swindlers:** If you don't feel ready to be a Master Thief, you can ignore the special ability altogether. Place the cards above your player board anyway and place completed orders on the right side of it. That allows you to see how far through the game you are (see section **END OF THE GAME** on p. 7).

## GAMEPLAY

The starting player begins their turn and the game will then continue in clockwise order. When it is your turn to play, you perform the following steps in order. You will also find these steps pictured on your player board.

1. **RESERVE ORDERS** (optional)
2. **STEAL FROM MONEY BAG** (obligatory)
3. **ACTIONS** (in any order, each optional)
  - FULFIL ORDERS and/or
  - SELL LOOT TO DEALERS
4. **REPLENISH DEALER TILES & ORDER CARDS** (if necessary)
5. **HIRE ACCOMPLICES** (optional)

**The above order must be followed.** You may **not** steal from a money bag first and then reserve an order. Accomplices can only be used from the beginning of the following turn. Therefore, hiring accomplices is always the last action of a turn.

**Steps 1, 3 and 5 are optional.** For example, you may skip reserving an order and start your turn directly with step 2 instead. Likewise, you may choose not to carry out step 3 or perform it only partially, i.e. not fulfilling previously chosen orders or not selling loot to the dealers even if it would be possible. However, you must not skip step 2, **STEAL FROM MONEY BAG**. Each player must draw from one of the bags at least once during each of their turns.

Only perform step 4, if dealer tiles and/or orders were completed during step 3.

The game ends at the end of a round once a player has completed a certain number of orders (see section **END OF THE GAME** on p. 7).

## LOOT TILES

- The background colour of the tokens indicates which bag they belong in. Neutral loot tiles belong to the supply.
- Tokens must always be exposed so that all players know which and how many tokens are left in which bag.
- On your player boards, there is an overview of which items appear in which bags and how often.
- Skull tiles are not loot tiles. They are never put before you. They are always returned to their bag.
- When tiles are discarded, they are always returned to the bag of the corresponding colour. Neutral tiles are returned to the supply. **Exception:** If you place the loot tiles on a dealer tile, they remain there until the dealer tile has been completely filled (i.e. all 3 pieces of loot have been placed on it).
- Coins are not loot tiles. But there are loot tiles showing coins. Those loot tiles are not accepted by dealers (why should they buy money from you?), but you can use them as any regular coin: spending them to hire accomplices or completing orders requiring coins. They also earn you victory points at the end of the game.

## 1. RESERVE ORDERS

You **may** reserve up to 3 of the 4 orders on the table. To do so, place your reservation marker(s) on the corresponding orders. You have now reserved the order(s). In principle, you may only fulfil reserved orders (unless you have unlocked the appropriate Master Thief ability). If you do not manage to fulfil reserved orders by the end of your turn, your reservation markers remain on the corresponding orders.

However, you risk having to cancel orders and thus losing 2 victory points per cancelled order. This can happen:

- If another player accepts the same order. In that case, you get your reservation marker back.
- If you cancel the order yourself, e.g. because you want to place your reservation marker on another order.

You may only kick other swindlers off their orders by placing one of your own reservation markers on the same order.

You can always remove your own reservation markers from orders (cancel the order), but you should only do so if necessary.

**You cannot drop your point marker below 0 points.** For example, if you are at 1 point and would lose 2 points by cancelling an order, set your point marker to 0 points.

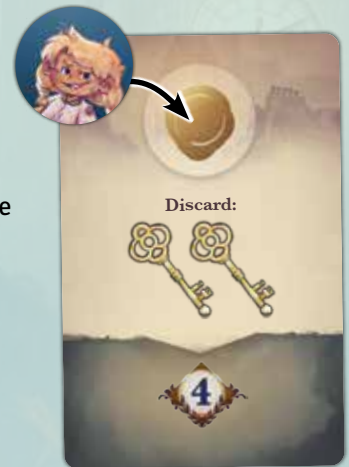
**Note:** Reserving orders can be risky, seeing as you lose 2 points per cancelled order. However, it is usually advisable to try to fulfil orders as this can generate a lot of victory points. Also, this is the way you unlock your ability as a Master Thief and can trigger the end of the game.

## 2. STEALING FROM THE MONEY BAG

After you have optionally decided on orders, you **must** steal from a money bag. This is the core part of the game in *Swindler*. To do this, choose one of the money bags and draw as many loot tiles from it as you like – taking each tile one by one.

If the tile shows loot (i.e. no skull), your attempt of stealing was successful. Put the tile in front of you, but keep it apart from your other loot tiles that were stolen in previous rounds for the time being. You may now decide to steal another tile from the same bag. But keep in mind that each tile you steal increases the risk of drawing a skull and getting caught. After you have drawn the first loot tile, you may voluntarily stop stealing at any time to keep all the stolen loot tiles.

If you draw a skull, you have been caught and must throw the skull **and all other tiles with the same background colour you have in front of you** back into the bag. It doesn't matter if you nabbed the tiles this turn or in a previous turn! You have been caught red-handed, and the rest of the stolen goods from this victim have been found in your possession during the subsequent investigation. Loot tiles in front of other players or those you have already brought to a dealer in previous turns are not affected. You may keep tiles that you have



captured from other bags. There was no way to prove that they were stolen goods... lucky you! Drawing a skull ends your stealing attempt in any case. You may not start a new attempt to steal from a money bag during for the remainder of this turn. But don't worry: Even if you got caught, you may perform the other actions on your turn as normal!

**Important:** Once you have chosen a bag, you must stick with that bag. You are not allowed to change bags during the robbery unless one of your accomplices specifically allows you to do so.

If the first tile you draw is a skull, you're really out of luck. Sometimes life is just sh... mean. In this (and only in this) case, you get a coin from the supply as compensation.

### 3. ACTIONS

After you have finished stealing, you may perform the actions - FULFIL ORDERS and/or SELL LOOT TO DEALERS. This is allowed even if you drew a skull earlier in the turn. You may also decide to perform only some of these actions, e.g. fulfilling only one order but not selling loot to the dealer, even if you would have fulfilled the requirements (whether this makes sense or not is another question). The order is up to you. You may fulfil orders and/or sell loot to dealers as often as you wish, as long as you meet the requirements.

All victory points are immediately recorded on the victory point track.

#### Action: FULFIL ORDERS

On most order cards there is a condition: **OWN**, **DISCARD** or **DRAW**.

**OWN:** You must merely possess (have displayed in front of you) the specified items to complete the order. You do **not** have to give them away.

**DISCARD:** You must discard the specified items (usually by putting them back into the bag of the corresponding colour) to complete the order. Neutral loot tiles are put back into the supply. If you fulfil an order with the help of an accomplice card, the card is then placed face up next to the game board (to form the discard pile for accomplice cards).


**Important:** The loot tiles from the black bag that depict 3 keys count as 1 joker. These loot tiles can be substituted for any 1 key of your choice!

**DRAW:** You need to accomplish this requirement during step 2: STEALING FROM THE MONEY BAG.

You receive various rewards for fulfilling orders:

**VICTORY POINTS:** You receive as many victory points as indicated on the fulfilled order cards. Advance your victory point marker along the corresponding number of spaces on the victory point track.

**COINS:** If there are coins on the fulfilled order cards, you receive the corresponding number of coins from the supply.

**NEUTRAL LOOT TILES:** If neutral loot tiles  are shown on the fulfilled order cards, you may take the matching number of neutral loot tiles of your choice from the supply.

**WANTED POSTERS:** If there are wanted posters on the completed order cards, you must take a corresponding number of wanted posters from the supply.

Fulfilled order cards are placed face down to the right of your Master Thief card. Empty order card spaces are refilled during step 4: REPLENISH DEALER TILES & ORDER CARDS.

#### MASTER THIEF

When you have completed a certain number of orders (5 orders for 2 players, 4 orders for 3 players and 3 orders for 4 players), you have earned the title of Master Thief. From this point on, you may use your unique ability as stated on the card.

### **Action: SELL LOOT TO DEALERS**

You can sell your loot to the dealers. To do so, place your loot tile(s) on the respective fields of the dealer tiles to earn the corresponding number of victory points.

You may sell as many loot tiles as you like to the dealers within a single turn. You may also sell to more than one dealer at a time during a turn.

If you are the one to complete one or more dealer tile(s), you receive 2 additional victory points as a reward for every completed dealer tile. There is a reminder of this printed on the game board below the loot tiles. It doesn't matter if you completed the dealer tile entirely by yourself or if someone else had previously sold some loot to that dealer.

As soon as a dealer tile is completed, the loot tiles on it are returned to their respective bags. Neutral loot tiles are returned to the supply. The dealer tile is then discarded to a discard pile (next to the game board). Empty dealer tile spaces are refilled during step 4: REPLENISH DEALER TILES & ORDER CARDS.

### **4. REPLENISH DEALER TILES & ORDER CARDS**

This step is only performed if you completed any dealer tiles and/or orders in the previous step.

#### **DEALER TILES**

If you completed one or more dealer tiles in the previous step, place them on the discard pile. Refill the empty spaces so that you have 3 dealer tiles available again. Dealer tiles that have yet to be completed remain on their spot until they are completed.

If the supply of dealer tiles is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile and place it face down on the appropriate space. Then, if necessary, reveal more dealer tiles.

#### **ORDER CARDS**

If you completed any orders, reveal new orders now – one by one – so that there are 4 order cards available again. If during that process you reveal a **police raid**, this will be carried out immediately. That police raid card is removed from the game (put it back into the box). If you reveal any more police raids, put them aside for now without executing them. Continue revealing order cards until you have 4 order cards available again. Now shuffle any set-aside police raids that you **did not execute** back into the order deck pile again.

#### **POLICE RAID**

Police raids affect not only the player that revealed them, but every swindler that is currently at large. Depending on which police raid was revealed, you must compare the number of your loot tiles and/or wanted posters with the instructions on the police raid.

**Loot Tiles:** If the police raid tells you to do so, every affected swindler must count all of their loot tiles (coloured and neutral) in front of themselves. If the number of tiles is equal or bigger than the number given on the police raid, you must return the appropriate number of loot tiles of your choice. As always, coloured tiles are returned to the corresponding bag, neutral tiles are returned to the supply.

**Wanted Posters:** If the police raid tells you to do so, every affected swindler must count all of their wanted posters. If the result is equal to or bigger than the number given on the police raid, that swindler was too greedy (or perhaps too flashy... or both!) and will be sent to jail. You must sit out for 1 round.

**Return 1 of your wanted posters back to the supply.** Now flip your Master Thief card to the Jailed side and place it across the image on your player board. That serves as a reminder that you have to sit out during the next round. On your next turn, instead of carrying out any of the regular actions, flip the card back to the Master Thief side and place it back to the left of your completed orders. Then the next player takes their turn as normal.

**Exception:** If you have the appropriate Master Thief ability and it is unlocked, you may reduce the total number of your loot tiles and wanted posters each by one.

## 5. HIRING ACCOMPLICES

Accomplices give you special opportunities during the game. Each accomplice costs 1 coin. You may hire as many accomplices as you wish. Put the corresponding number of coins back into the supply or back into the corresponding bag (coloured background). If you paid with a double coin from the black bag, you get a coin from the supply as change. Then draw the appropriate number of accomplice cards from the deck and take them into your hand.

Yes, you never really know what kind of accomplice you're going to get... or do you really believe that these shady characters would honestly tell you what they can or can't do?


An accomplice card can be played per the instructions on its card. If the card doesn't mention anything, you can play it at any moment. This can be during your turn, but also during the turn of a fellow player.

If several accomplice cards are played **at the same time**, carry them out in player order starting with the currently active player. It is also allowed to play an accomplice as a reaction to another accomplice just played by another swindler (e.g. the assassin).

**Reminder:** You may use the accomplice you just hired from the next player's turn.

## END OF THE GAME

As soon as a player has completed a certain number of orders, that will trigger the end of the game. All players continue taking turns and the game will end immediately once the player to the right of the start player completes their turn.



Number of players	Master Thief	End of the game
2	5 orders	9 orders
3	4 orders	8 orders
4	3 orders	6 orders

At the end of the game, every coin is worth 1 victory point. Each reserved but unfulfilled order is minus 2 victory points. Any other tokens do not earn you victory points.

The player with the most points is the richest pickpocket in London and wins the game. If there is a tie, the player who has completed the most orders wins. If there is also a tie here, you may have to acknowledge that someone else did just as well, or perhaps that's the perfect opportunity for a rematch!

## IMPRESSUM

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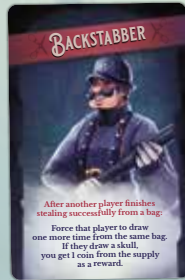


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## APPENDIX: ACCOMPLICES



**Assassin:** The Assassin neutralises any accomplice just played. That can also be another Assassin. Discard the Assassin as well as the neutralised accomplice.



**Backstabber:** If the other player draws another loot tile, they are lucky. In that case you do not get a coin.



**Beggar:** It is the affected swindler's choice if they give you a coin or a loot tile of their choice.



**Copycat:** The Copycat can be played while another swindler is stealing successfully, i.e. after they stole the first loot tile and before they possibly draw a skull. If you play the Copycat and draw a skull, nothing happens. You don't get a coin but you also don't need to return any loot tiles.



**Forger:** The forgery is simply virtual, i.e. you don't get the designated loot tile, but keep the one you want to change. Thus the loot tile does not change its background colour. But the Forger may change the colour of the key on your loot tile, e.g. changing a blue key into a red one. The forger cannot change the key colour of a Lock Picker.



**Gold Digger:** The only loot tiles to be split are the loot tiles the other player stole during this turn.



**Guardian Angel:** The Guardian Angel negates the skull as if it was never drawn. It can only be played when another player draws a skull.



**Hustler:** The Hustler is the one to choose the loot tiles of both players. This card remains in the game permanently. It can only be played again during the next player's turn and may not be used to undo the previous exchange.



**Know-it-All:** The bet includes the whole stealing process. Therefore, you must also consider other accomplices played, e.g. the Sidekick, Guardian Angel or the Backstabber.



**Lock Picker:** The Lock Picker is like a key of the displayed colour. If you use her to fulfil an order, she is discarded afterwards. The colour of the key cannot be changed by using the Forger. The Lock Picker is not regarded as a loot tile.



**Sidekick:** The Sidekick is the only way in the game to change the bag you are stealing from. If you immediately draw a skull after changing the bag, nothing happens. You don't get a coin but you also don't need to return any loot tiles.