



Design Doc - Rogue

HERO IDENTITY

Class Fantasy: Shadow operative who strikes from the darkness, accumulating wealth through precision kills and explosive combo turns.

Core Mechanics:

1. **Stealth** - Enter and maintain invisibility, immune to enemy spells until broken by hero attack damage
2. **Pay** - Spend gold for powerful card effects, creating tension between shopping and immediate power

Playstyle: Combo/Economy deck that sets up explosive turns through Stealth + Pay synergies. Kill minions for gold → build resources → chain effects → overwhelm.

The Loop:

- Enter Stealth (various cards or Hero Power)
- Get bonuses while In Stealth (cheaper Pays, stronger effects, spell immunity)
- Kill minions for gold (amplified by Stealth)
- Pay gold for powerful effects
- Chain multiple plays in one turn
- Buy equipment to accelerate advantage
- Finish with burst damage or The Heist explosion

STEALTH MECHANIC (NEW KEYWORD)

Definition: A state you can enter and maintain. While In Stealth, you can't be targeted by enemy spells.

Rules:

- Track with token on hero board (binary: In Stealth or not)
- Enter Stealth through cards/abilities
- **Persists across turns** (doesn't auto-reset at end of turn)
- **Broken when:** You take damage from enemy hero's Attack ability
- **Not broken by:** Minion combat damage, spell damage to your minions
- Multiple "Enter Stealth" effects don't stack (you're just In Stealth)

Strategic Depth:

- Defensive (spell immunity)
- Offensive (bonus effects on cards)
- Economic (amplifies gold generation)
- Decision: Stay In Stealth for safety vs break it for tempo

Example Cards:

- *"Shadow Initiate - When this kills a minion, Enter Stealth"*
- *"Backstab - Deal 3 damage. Stealth: Deal 6 instead"*
- *"Phantom Blade - 2 mana 3/2. Stealth: This costs 0"*

PAY MECHANIC (EXISTING KEYWORD)

Definition: Spend gold to activate powerful effects.

Syntax: "Pay X: [Effect]"

Rules:

- Gold spent on Pay effects counts toward level-up progress
- Can Pay during Main Phase whenever you can afford it
- Pay is a cost (must pay fully or not at all)
- Multiple Pay effects can be chained in one turn

The Tension:

- Gold is used for BOTH shopping AND card effects
 - Every Pay decision is "power now vs equipment later"
 - Creates hidden information (opponent doesn't know your gold total until shopping)
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LEVEL-UP SYSTEM

Condition: *"Spend 15 gold (on Pay effects or in shop)"*

Tracking: Use d12 as tracker

- Increment whenever you spend gold
- Pay 3 for effect → +3 on die
- Buy 5g equipment → +5 on die
- When total reaches 15+, immediately level up

Timing: Turns 6-8 (mid-game power spike)

Passive Bonus: *"Your Weapon Attacks deal double damage to the enemy hero while In Stealth"*

Why This Works:

- Rewards both playstyles (spending on Pays OR shopping)
- Weapon damage 3 → 6 when In Stealth = huge burst potential
- Combined with Attack Upgrade (Stealth: Cost 0) = free burst damage
- Creates "Enter Stealth → Attack face for lethal" finisher pattern

Ultimate Access: The Heist becomes playable (game-ending explosive turn)

HERO ABILITIES

HERO POWER - "Shadowstep"

Base: *"Cost 1 mana: Enter Stealth"*

Simple, always useful, enables your entire gameplan. Think of it as "1 mana: can't be targeted by spells this turn + activate all your Stealth bonuses."

Upgrade: "Calculated Strike" (3 mana to play, permanent replacement)

"Cost 1 mana: Enter Stealth and deal 1 damage to target enemy minion"

Adds chip damage for finishing off survivors or triggering kill effects. Now your Hero Power can kill 1-health minions while entering Stealth.

ATTACK - "Blade Strike"

Base: *"Cost 2 mana: Deal weapon damage to target enemy minion or hero. Take damage back equal to their Attack/weapon. (Taking damage from enemy hero attacks breaks your Stealth)"*

Standard Attack but with Stealth break reminder. Use carefully when In Stealth.

Upgrade: "Assassin's Strike" (3 mana to play, permanent replacement)

"Cost 2 mana: Deal weapon damage +1 to target. If you kill target, don't take damage back. Stealth: Cost 0 instead"

- Bonus damage helps kill bigger threats
 - No retaliation if you kill = favorable trades
 - **Stealth: Cost 0** = FREE burst damage when setup
 - Level-up passive makes this: **0 mana, deal 6+ to hero, stay In Stealth**
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COMPLETE CARD LIST (40 cards)

MINIONS (11 unique, 24 total cards)

1-COST MINIONS:

Shadow Initiate - 1 mana 2/1 (1g bounty) - **3 COPIES** *"When this kills a minion, Enter Stealth"*

Your early aggressor. Teaches the basic Stealth entry pattern. 2 attack kills most 1-drops and 2-drops, rewards trading.

Street Thief - 1 mana 1/2 (1g bounty) - **3 COPIES** *"When you Enter Stealth, this gets +1/+1 until end of turn"*

Scales with your gameplan. Every time you Enter Stealth (Hero Power, other cards), this becomes a 2/3. Defensive stats hold board early, grows into threat.

2-COST MINIONS:

Cutpurse - 2 mana 2/2 (1g bounty) - **3 COPIES** *"When this kills a minion, gain +2 gold"*

Your gold printer. Trade this into their 2-drop, gain 3g total (1g bounty + 2g effect). Accelerates your economy aggressively.

Shadow Dancer - 2 mana 2/3 (1g bounty) - **3 COPIES** *"Pay 2: This gets +2 Attack until end of turn"*

Your first Pay card. Simple, teaches the mechanic. Turns gold into combat stats. 2/3 → 4/3 for 2g kills most 3-cost threats.

Phantom Blade - 2 mana 3/2 Prepared (1g bounty) - **2 COPIES** *"Stealth: This costs 0"*

Tempo bomb. If you're In Stealth, free 3/2 Prepared that can immediately kill a minion. Rewards setting up Stealth before playing this.

3-COST MINIONS:

Guild Enforcer - 3 mana 3/3 (2g bounty) - **2 COPIES** *"When this enters, Pay 2: Enter Stealth"*

Stealth enabler on a body. 3 mana for 3/3 is fair, but paying 2g more gives you Stealth for the turn. Flexible—play as vanilla 3/3 or invest for Stealth.

Treasure Hunter - 3 mana 2/4 (2g bounty) - **2 COPIES** *"When this kills a minion, draw a card. Pay 3: Untap this minion"*

THE ENGINE. This card is insane if it sticks. Kill → draw → Pay 3 → untap → kill again. Can chain multiple kills/draws in one turn with enough mana and targets.

4-COST MINIONS:

Master Assassin - 4 mana 4/3 (2g bounty) - **2 COPIES** *"When this kills a minion with 4+ cost, gain its bounty twice. Stealth: This has Duelist"*

Big-game hunter. Killing a 5-cost minion (3g bounty) nets you 6g total. Stealth bonus gives Duelist = kills before taking damage = stays alive longer.

Shadow Broker - 4 mana 3/4 (2g bounty) - **2 COPIES** *"Your Pay costs are reduced by 1 while In Stealth"*

Key synergy piece. Enter Stealth → all Pays cost 1 less. Stacks with Crime Lord. Opens up explosive turns.

5-COST MINIONS:

Crime Lord - 5 mana 4/5 (3g bounty) - **1 COPY** *"Your Pay costs are reduced by 1"*

THE build-around from original design. Unconditional Pay reducer. If this sticks for 2+ turns, you're drowning in value. Single copy makes drawing it feel special.

6-COST MINIONS:

Night Stalker - 6 mana 5/5 (3g bounty) - **1 COPY** *"When this enters, Enter Stealth. While In Stealth, your minions have +1/+1"*

Late-game threat. Enters and immediately gives you Stealth + buffs your board. 5/5 → 6/6 itself. Your 2/3s become 3/4s. Powerful closer.

SPELLS (7 unique, 11 total cards)

1-COST SPELLS:

Smoke Bomb - 1 mana - **2 COPIES** *"Enter Stealth. Draw a card"*

Cantrip that enables everything. 1 mana, cycles, gives Stealth. Always useful. Play this before casting other spells with Stealth bonuses.

Cheap Shot - 1 mana - **2 COPIES** *"Deal 2 damage to target enemy minion. Stealth: Deal 4 instead"*

Early removal that scales. Turn 2: kills 2-health minions. Late game with Stealth: kills 4-health threats. Efficient at both stages.

2-COST SPELLS:

Quick Draw - 2 mana - **1 COPY** *"Draw 2 cards. Pay 3: Draw 2 more cards"*

Card advantage. Base mode (draw 2 for 2 mana) is fair. Upgraded mode (draw 4 for 2 mana + 3g) is bonkers when you need gas.

3-COST SPELLS:

Backstab - 3 mana - **2 COPIES** *"Deal 3 damage to target enemy minion. Stealth: Deal 6 damage and gain the target's bounty if it dies"*

Premium removal when setup. Without Stealth: kills 3-health minions. With Stealth: kills 6-health minions AND gives you their gold. Massive swing.

Shadow Vault - 3 mana - **1 COPY** *"Pay 4: Enter Stealth and gain 6 gold"*

Gold conversion. Spend 4g now, get 6g back later + Stealth. Net cost: 4g for Stealth (effectively paying 4g to enter Stealth but you get 6g back, so it's really costing you nothing long-term). Economic engine for control builds.

4-COST SPELLS:

Vanish - 4 mana - **2 COPIES** *"Return target enemy minion to its owner's hand. Stealth: Return all enemy minions instead"*

Tempo swing or board wipe. Base mode bounces one threat. Stealth mode clears entire board (denies all bounties, sets opponent back massively). Game-winning if they're wide.

5-COST SPELLS:

Blood Money - 5 mana - **1 COPY** *"Gain 5 gold and draw 2 cards. Pay 6: Gain 10 gold and draw 4 cards instead"*

Big refill. Base mode is solid (5g + 2 cards for 5 mana). Pay mode is explosive (10g + 4 cards for 5 mana + 6g investment). Enables huge turns.

UPGRADES (2 cards, 1 copy each)

Calculated Strike - 3 mana to play - **1 COPY** *"Replaces Hero Power: Cost 1 mana: Enter Stealth and deal 1 damage to target enemy minion"*

Adds chip damage to your Hero Power. Can now kill 1-health survivors or trigger kill effects on your minions while entering Stealth.

Assassin's Strike - 3 mana to play - **1 COPY** "Replaces Attack: Cost 2 mana: Deal weapon damage +1 to target. If you kill target, don't take damage back. Stealth: Cost 0 instead"

Makes your Attack better in every way. Free attacks when In Stealth is busted, especially post-level-up (0 mana: deal 6+ to hero).

ULTIMATE (1 unique, 3 copies)

The Heist - 7 mana ultimate - **3 COPIES** "Gain gold equal to twice the total bounty of all enemy minions. For the rest of this turn, your Pay costs are 0"

THE finisher. If opponent has 4 minions worth 10g total bounty, you gain 20g. Then all your Pay effects cost 0 this turn. Chain: Blood Money (Pay 0) → gain 10g draw 4 → Quick Draw (Pay 0) → draw 2 more → Shadow Vault (Pay 0) → gain 6g more. You end the turn with 36g, 6 new cards, and total board control.

CARD COUNT VERIFICATION

Minions: $3+3+3+3+2+2+2+2+2+1+1 = 24$

Spells: $2+2+1+2+1+2+1 = 11$

Upgrades: $1+1 = 2$

Ultimates: 3

TOTAL: 40 cards ✓

MANA CURVE BREAKDOWN

CostCountCards110Shadow Initiate (3), Street Thief (3), Smoke Bomb (2), Cheap Shot (2)29Cutpurse (3), Shadow Dancer (3), Phantom Blade (2), Quick Draw (1)39Guild Enforcer (2), Treasure Hunter (2), Backstab (2), Shadow Vault (1), Upgrades (2)46Master Assassin (2), Shadow Broker (2), Vanish (2)52Crime Lord (1), Blood Money (1)61Night Stalker (1)73The Heist (3)

Smooth curve with heavy early game (1-3 cost), solid mid-game (4-5), and explosive late game (7). Perfect for combo/tempo.

KEYWORD DENSITY CHECK

Unique cards with Stealth interaction: Shadow Initiate, Street Thief, Phantom Blade, Guild Enforcer, Master Assassin, Shadow Broker, Night Stalker, Smoke Bomb, Cheap Shot, Backstab, Shadow Vault, Vanish, Hero Power, Attack Upgrade = 14 cards

Unique cards with Pay interaction: Shadow Dancer, Guild Enforcer, Treasure Hunter, Shadow Broker, Crime Lord, Quick Draw, Shadow Vault, Blood Money, The Heist = 9 cards

Total unique cards: 11 minions + 7 spells + 2 upgrades + 1 ultimate = 21

Keyword carriers: 15-16 unique cards touch Stealth or Pay

Density: $15/21 = 71\%$ ✓ Perfect range (60-70% target)

BOUNTY DISTRIBUTION

Total bounties if all minions die:

- 1g: 6 minions \times 1g = 6g
- 1g: 4 minions \times 1g = 4g
- 2g: 6 minions \times 2g = 12g
- 3g: 2 minions \times 3g = 6g

Total: 28g available (slightly higher than average due to kill-focused gameplan)

EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES

Shopping Strategy:

Primary: Jewelry (gold generation)

- Ring of Avarice (gold per minion kill)
- Greevil's Greed (bonus gold on kills)
- Skull of Dire (drain gold when killing)

Secondary: Weapon (burst damage)

- Post-level-up, weapon damage doubles to hero when In Stealth
- Monkey King Bar (pierce armor)
- Desolator (armor reduction)
- Maelstrom (bonus damage on kills)

Tertiary: Chest (survival)

- Vanguard (damage reduction)
- Heart of Tarrasque (HP regeneration)

Situational: Relic (utility)

- Drums of Endurance (untap minions = more kills)
 - Blink Dagger (reposition for kills)
 - Black King Bar (spell immunity redundancy)
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GAMEPLAY PATTERNS

EARLY GAME (Turns 1-4) - Establish

Goal: Build board, Enter Stealth, start gold generation

Typical Turn 1-2:

- Play Shadow Initiate or Street Thief
- Use Hero Power to Enter Stealth (Street Thief becomes 2/3)
- Trade favorably

Typical Turn 3-4:

- Play Cutpurse, kill minion, gain 3g total
 - Play Guild Enforcer, Pay 2 to Enter Stealth
 - Use Smoke Bomb to cycle and Enter Stealth
 - Start accumulating gold tracker (moving toward 15g level-up)
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MID GAME (Turns 5-8) - Leverage

Goal: Level up, play engines, chain effects

Key Turn (Turn 6-7):

- Play Treasure Hunter (3 mana)
- It kills minion → draw card
- Pay 3 → untap
- Kill another minion → draw again
- You've drawn 2 cards, killed 2 minions, gained 4g+ bounties
- **Level up achieved** (spent 15g on Pays + shopping)

Post-Level-Up:

- Passive active: weapon damage doubled to hero when In Stealth
 - Ultimates now playable
 - Start setting up explosive turns
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LATE GAME (Turns 9+) - Explode

Goal: Chain Stealth + Pay combos, finish with burst

The Heist Turn (Turn 10):

1. Opponent has 4 minions (2g, 2g, 3g, 3g = 10g total bounty)
2. Enter Stealth (Hero Power, 1 mana)
3. Cast **The Heist** (7 mana) → gain 20g, Pays cost 0 this turn
4. Cast **Blood Money** (5 mana, Pay 0) → gain 10g draw 4
5. Cast **Quick Draw** (2 mana, Pay 0) → draw 2 more
6. Total: 30g in bank, 6 new cards, 5 mana left
7. Play whatever you drew, opponent can't recover

Alternative Burst Lethal:

1. Opponent at 12 HP
2. You have weapon damage 3, Attack Upgrade

3. Enter Stealth (Hero Power, 1 mana)
 4. Attack hero (0 mana thanks to upgrade) → 6 damage (doubled)
 5. Play minions, attack with board
 6. Lethal
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KEY COMBOS & SYNERGIES

Combo 1: Treasure Hunter Loop

Setup: Treasure Hunter on board + targets to kill

Execution:

1. Treasure Hunter kills minion → draw card (trigger)
2. Pay 3 → untap Treasure Hunter
3. Treasure Hunter kills another minion → draw card
4. Repeat if mana/targets available

Result: Multiple cards drawn, multiple kills, gold generation

Combo 2: Crime Lord + Shadow Broker Stack

Setup: Both on board, Enter Stealth

Effect: Pay costs reduced by 2 total (Crime Lord -1, Shadow Broker -1 while In Stealth)

Payoffs:

- Blood Money costs Pay 4 (instead of 6) → gain 10g draw 4
- Quick Draw costs Pay 1 (instead of 3) → draw 2 more
- Shadow Vault costs Pay 2 (instead of 4) → gain 6g

Result: Chain multiple Pay effects in one turn, explosive value

Combo 3: Vanish Board Wipe

Setup: Opponent has wide board (3-4 minions)

Execution:

1. Enter Stealth (Smoke Bomb for 1 mana + draw)
 2. Cast Vanish (4 mana) → returns ALL enemy minions to hand
 3. Opponent loses board, tempo, doesn't get bounties
 4. Attack with your board unopposed
- Result:** Tempo swing worth 10+ mana, often game-winning
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Combo 4: Post-Level-Up Burst

Setup: Leveled up, weapon damage 3+, Attack Upgrade equipped

Execution:

1. Enter Stealth (1 mana)
 2. Attack hero (0 mana, Stealth bonus) → 6+ damage
 3. Play Night Stalker (6 mana) → Stealth + board buff
 4. Attack with buffed minions → additional damage
 5. Play Backstab or other removal to clear blockers
- Result:** 15-20 damage in one turn, often lethal
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Combo 5: The Full Heist

Setup: Opponent has expensive board, you have The Heist

Execution:

1. Opponent's board: 5-cost, 4-cost, 3-cost, 2-cost = 12g bounty
 2. Cast The Heist (7 mana) → gain 24g (!), Pays cost 0 this turn
 3. Blood Money (5 mana, Pay 0) → gain 10g draw 4 (total: 34g)
 4. Quick Draw (2 mana, Pay 0) → draw 2 more (6 cards drawn)
 5. Shadow Vault (3 mana, Pay 0) → gain 6g (total: 40g)
 6. Vanish (4 mana) → return their board
- Result:** 40g in bank, 6 cards drawn, board cleared, game over
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DECISION TREES

Decision Layer 1: Stealth Management

Question: "Should I Enter Stealth this turn?"

Considerations:

- Do I have Stealth-bonus cards in hand? (Backstab, Vanish, Phantom Blade)
 - Is opponent threatening lethal with spells?
 - Do I want to attack this turn? (Attacks might break Stealth)
 - Can I afford Hero Power cost?
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Decision Layer 2: Pay Timing

Question: "Should I Pay now or save for shop?"

Considerations:

- How much gold do I have?
 - What's in shop this tier? (Worth saving for 8g item?)
 - Do I have Crime Lord/Shadow Broker? (Cheaper Pays)
 - Am I behind on board? (Need tempo now)
 - Am I close to level-up? (Want to spend gold to progress)
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Decision Layer 3: Kill Priority

Question: "Which minion should I kill first?"

Considerations:

- Which gives highest bounty?
 - Which threatens me most?
 - Do I have Cutpurse/Master Assassin? (Bonus gold)
 - Do I need gold NOW or can I wait?
 - Does opponent have high-value targets for The Heist later?
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Decision Layer 4: Ultimate Timing

Question: "When do I cast The Heist?"

Considerations:

- Total enemy bounty on board? (Need 10g+ for value)
 - Do I have follow-up Pay spells? (Blood Money, Quick Draw)
 - Can I win THIS turn with the gold? (Buy weapon + burst)
 - Is opponent about to clear board? (Cast before they do)
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COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS

Barbarian: Linear scaling (Rage up = damage up)

Mage: Build-and-release cycle (Spell Damage → big spell → reset)

Rogue: Multi-variable optimization (Stealth state + gold resource + kill sequencing + shop timing + combo setup)

Why Rogue is More Complex:

1. **Binary state tracking** (In Stealth or not) affects card power levels
2. **Resource tension** (gold for Pays vs gold for equipment)
3. **Hidden information** (opponent doesn't know your gold total)
4. **Sequencing matters** (Enter Stealth BEFORE casting Backstab)
5. **Multiple synergy layers** (Stealth + Pay + kills + engines)

But Still Accessible:

- Each card functions standalone (no mandatory combos)
 - Stealth is simple visual (token present or not)
 - Pay costs clearly printed
 - Level-up tracker straightforward (d12 increments)
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ARCHETYPE FLEXIBILITY

Build 1: Aggressive Tempo

Focus: Kill minions early, convert gold to face damage, win turns 10-12

Key Cards:

- Shadow Initiate, Cutpurse (gold generation)
- Master Assassin (kill big threats)
- Phantom Blade (free 3/2s)
- Backstab, Cheap Shot (efficient removal)

Equipment: Jewelry (Ring of Avarice) → Weapon (Desolator) → Chest (Vanguard)

Playstyle: Trade aggressively, accumulate gold fast, buy weapons, burst face with Stealth-doubled attacks

Build 2: Control Economy

Focus: Survive early, leverage Treasure Hunter draws, win with The Heist explosion

Key Cards:

- Treasure Hunter (card advantage engine)
- Crime Lord, Shadow Broker (Pay reducers)
- Vanish (tempo swing)
- Blood Money, Quick Draw (big refills)
- The Heist (finisher)

Equipment: Chest (Heart of Tarrasque) → Jewelry (Skull of Dire) → Relic (Octarine Core for double abilities)

Playstyle: Survive, draw cards, build massive gold pool, one explosive turn with The Heist → chain everything → win

Build 3: Stealth Combo

Focus: Maximize Stealth uptime, chain bonus effects, burst with leveled passive

Key Cards:

- Street Thief (grows in Stealth)

- Guild Enforcer, Smoke Bomb (Enter Stealth repeatedly)
- Phantom Blade (free minions)
- Shadow Broker (cheap Pays when In Stealth)
- Night Stalker (board-wide buff)

Equipment: Weapon (Monkey King Bar) → Jewelry (Greevil's Greed) → Relic (Drums for untaps)

Playstyle: Maintain Stealth constantly, play minions for free/cheap, burst hero with doubled weapon attacks

BALANCE LEVERS (If Needed)

Too Strong:

- Increase Pay costs by 1 across board
- Make Shadow Broker reduce by 1 only (remove Crime Lord or vice versa)
- The Heist gains 1x bounty (not 2x)
- Reduce gold generation numbers (Cutpurse +2g → +1g)

Too Weak:

- Decrease Pay costs by 1
- Add more bounty generators
- Make Shadow Broker/Crime Lord reduce by 2
- Buff minion stats slightly (Guild Enforcer 3/3 → 3/4)

Too Complex:

- Remove Shadow Broker, keep only Crime Lord (one Pay reducer)
- Simplify Stealth (auto-ends at turn end, doesn't persist)
- Reduce number of Stealth-bonus cards

Too Simple:

- Add "when you Enter Stealth" triggers on more cards

- Add "when you Pay" triggers
- Make The Heist more complex (conditional Pays)