

THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

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Phantom Burglar At Large

BY CURT WOODMAN — 2026-07-19



Police investigating bizarre theft wave

An unusually sophisticated criminal appears to be operating throughout the virtual world, targeting one thing and one thing only: *gifts*.

The pattern is as baffling as it is consistent. Beautifully wrapped presents arrive exactly as intended. The ribbons are untouched, the wrapping paper immaculate, and the accompanying greeting cards safely tucked inside. Yet when the recipient opens the box, the gift itself has vanished without a trace!

"It doesn't make any sense," one victim told the gazette. "My friend sent me a beautiful necklace. The card even says, 'I hope you enjoy wearing this!' The card is there. The box is there. Apparently the necklace decided it had other plans."

Similar reports have been pouring in all evening. Dresses have disappeared. Shoes have vanished. Jewelry has been spirited away. Teddy bears, perfumes and countless other gifts have all suffered the same mysterious fate. Whatever is behind the thefts seems to have no preference for value or rarity: if it fits inside a gift box, it appears to be fair game.

Naturally, theories have begun circulating. Some residents are convinced a legendary master thief has arrived in the city, capable of slipping valuables out of sealed packages without leaving so much as a crease in the wrapping paper.

Others blame a mischievous ghost with expensive tastes. One particularly vocal citizen insists the culprit is a raccoon, although experts remain divided on how a raccoon might navigate a virtual inventory.

The gazette reached out to several experienced gift collectors, many of whom expressed cautious optimism that the mysterious crime spree would be short-lived. History has shown that strange phenomena in 3DX have a habit of appearing suddenly, causing widespread confusion for a day or two, and then disappearing almost as mysteriously as they arrived. Until then, residents are advised to keep a close eye on any suspiciously empty gift boxes. If you believe you have been visited by the Phantom Burglar, please report the incident to absolutely everyone you know. Chances are they've been robbed too...

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