

The Festival of Silent Drums

120-minute plan | 4 players | No combat

The festival drums move but make no sound. A performer has stopped rehearsing, and the crowd is divided over who gets the opening beat.

Content notice: Public performance pressure; players can describe a beat instead of performing it.

What is really happening

Drummer Lio accepted an enchanted silence cloth to prevent the council from drowning out small performers. The cloth now covers every shared drum. An inclusive call-and-response lifts it; replacing the shared drums with handclaps lets the festival proceed while the dispute waits.

Prepare and play

Use your own rules or play without dice. State the goal, choose an approach, explain a reasonable cost and let the players decide. Plausible careful actions succeed; uncertain actions can succeed with delay, spent supplies or a favour owed. Evidence is always available through its described action. Each player creates an ordinary person with a useful skill, a reason to help, and an item. No character sheet, monster statistics or proprietary rulebook is needed.

Take 10 minutes to introduce characters, read the premise and discuss the content notice. Anyone may say "pause", pass on a description, or ask to move an uncomfortable moment offstage. Agree on no combat and on treating consequences as delay or repair, not permanent harm. Give one player the route map and another the time sheet.

Time plan

120-MINUTE PLAN

0-10: Opening agreement

10-20: Arrival

20-35: Records and tools

35-50: An independent trail

50-55: Break

55-75: The immediate problem

75-95: The final choice

95-110: Home and aftermath

110-120: Closing and epilogues

Follow both investigations; take the break before the immediate problem.

At 75 minutes, settle the immediate problem using a safe approach without another roll. At 95 minutes,

finish the final method and begin the return.

With 10 minutes left, first secure the immediate goal: Use the clap-only opening and schedule the unresolved instrument discussion after the festival. Mark the immediate goal safe only once the people or resource are secured. Then, if no final method was used: Ring the bell once and begin the agreed handclap opening. Mark the fallback method and read the cost ending. Give each character an epilogue; do not bypass the safety step.

4 PLAYERS

Negotiate an opening that leaves room for every performer.

Two pairs take observation and action tasks. Resolve them in two short alternating turns.

Start the festival without overriding the agreement.

Work in two pairs, one following the method and the other preparing a fallback or record.

Arrival - 10 minutes

Place: Festival square

Read aloud

Drumsticks bounce in perfect rhythm, but the square hears only shoes on stone. Toma lowers his opening banner.

Run this scene

The silence follows the cloth, not the whole festival. The festival can continue with a modest alternate arrangement. Begin with the concrete request in the premise. Ask each character why they care and give them one ordinary useful item. Read both public observations without requiring a roll. Explain that the marked routes are safe to investigate, and offer a choice of the records or the visible trail. Let the group appoint a map reader; do not use hidden travel rolls to block the first lead.

Choices

1. Visit Costume tent
2. Follow the trail to Rehearsal steps

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Silent stage. A missing method can be found again at Bell balcony; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Toma: Open the festival without humiliating anyone Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome. Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Timeline record: Only the shared drums are silent; shoes, voices and claps still sound. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: The silence follows the cloth, not the whole festival.

Fallback instruction: A clap-only opening requires no enchanted instruments. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: The festival can continue with a modest alternate arrangement.

Records and tools - 15 minutes

Place: Costume tent

Read aloud

Rue unfolds a cloth that seems to drink the rustle of its own folds. Four coloured tabs mark its corners.

Run this scene

An inclusive sequence releases the cloth. Lio waits on the stage. Put the method card and destination note on the table. Ask what the two objects suggest, then answer direct practical questions from their wording. The maker can trade tools for help carrying or recording them, but refusal never removes these public documents. The trail remains another route. A check, if your rules use one, changes the time or tidiness of the work rather than whether this evidence exists.

Choices

1. Proceed to Silent stage
2. Compare evidence at Rehearsal steps

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Silent stage. A missing method can be found again at Bell balcony; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Rue: Give every performer an audible turn Lends supplies if a character helps carry or catalogue them. Public instructions remain available. Voice: Quick, exact words; point at tools while speaking.

Method diagram: Four tabs correspond to four opening turns: quiet, newcomer, ensemble, reply. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: An inclusive sequence releases the cloth.

Destination note: Lio's rehearsal board says SILENT STAGE: listen before the bell. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Lio waits on the stage.

An independent trail - 15 minutes

Place: Rehearsal steps

Read aloud

Esen rehearses a handclap pattern with children on the steps. Every clap sounds clear.

Run this scene

Follow the material to its source. A witness establishes the destination. Describe the physical trail before asking for a decision. The witness tells what they actually observed and admits what they did not see. If the group refuses conversation, the physical route supplies the destination. Let a character compare the timeline and another trace the map. For a divided group, take one short turn per side, then reunite at the meeting; do not add another travel encounter.

Choices

1. Proceed to Silent stage
2. Compare evidence at Costume tent

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Silent stage. A missing method can be found again at Bell balcony; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Esen: Keep a path clear through the audience Guides the party if they share a plan. If refused, points to the visible trail. Voice: Cautious, distinguish observation from assumption.

Physical trail: Coloured cloth threads run from the tent to the silent stage. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Follow the material to its source.

Witness statement: Esen saw Lio spread the cloth over the shared drums. Give it: Ask any direct question, or read the witness's signed statement if conversation is refused. GM inference: A witness establishes the destination.

The immediate problem - 20 minutes

Place: Silent stage

Read aloud

Lio sits beside the silent drums. "A loud opening left no room," they say, "so I asked for room."

Run this scene

Drummer Lio accepted an enchanted silence cloth to prevent the council from drowning out small performers. The cloth now covers every shared drum. An inclusive call-and-response lifts it; replacing the shared drums with handclaps lets the festival proceed while the dispute waits. State the immediate stakes and offer both listed approaches. Before resolving action, ask who observes, who acts and who helps. Make any cost visible before a player accepts it. Avoid demanding a special ability or spell. When a plan fails, use the slower listed route and mark its time cost; people remain recoverable. Once the goal is safe, mark the immediate goal safe and continue. A refusal by the keeper cannot hide the marked safety instructions.

Choices

1. Offer the four invitations and let each participant choose their sound.
2. Use the clap-only opening and schedule the unresolved instrument discussion after the festival.

If the group gets stuck

Use the clap-only opening and schedule the unresolved instrument discussion after the festival. Explain a five-minute delay before they accept it; mark the immediate goal safe when the people or resource are secured.

People and evidence

Lio: Secure an opening where quieter performers are heard Explains both solutions when the party agrees to protect the immediate goal; the marked instructions are available regardless. Voice: Calm under pressure; admit the decision and its cost.

Safety marks: Each tab lifts only after its performer is invited, not commanded. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Consent and turn-taking resolve the encounter.

Encounter and party adaptation

Negotiate an opening that leaves room for every performer.

A delay leaves less time for the final repair or decision. Explain costs before resolving an action.

Offer the four invitations and let each participant choose their sound.

Use the clap-only opening and schedule the unresolved instrument discussion after the festival.

Two pairs take observation and action tasks. Resolve them in two short alternating turns.

Mark the immediate goal safe after either safe approach; a setback costs time, not access to the next

scene.

The final choice - 20 minutes

Place: Bell balcony

Read aloud

From the balcony, the whole stage can be seen. The bell rope hangs next to a card with four opening spaces.

Run this scene

An inclusive sequence releases the cloth. Consent and turn-taking resolve the encounter. Reveal the method and fallback together. Ask the group which tradeoff it accepts and give every character a small contribution. Mark the complete method for the first choice or the fallback method for the second. A risky improvisation should inherit one of these outcomes after its cost is explained, rather than create a third unprepared lock. Keep the immediate goal safe. Return by the known marked route; no new location needs to be invented.

Choices

1. Perform the four call-and-response turns and lift the cloth.
2. Ring the bell once and begin the agreed handclap opening.

If the group gets stuck

Ring the bell once and begin the agreed handclap opening. Mark the fallback method, keep the immediate goal safe and read the cost ending. Do not repeat a failed test.

People and evidence

Rue: Give every performer an audible turn Lends supplies if a character helps carry or catalogue them. Public instructions remain available. Voice: Quick, exact words; point at tools while speaking.

Lio: Secure an opening where quieter performers are heard Explains both solutions when the party agrees to protect the immediate goal; the marked instructions are available regardless. Voice: Calm under pressure; admit the decision and its cost.

Method diagram: Four tabs correspond to four opening turns: quiet, newcomer, ensemble, reply. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: An inclusive sequence releases the cloth.

Fallback instruction: A clap-only opening requires no enchanted instruments. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: The festival can continue with a modest alternate arrangement.

Encounter and party adaptation

Start the festival without overriding the agreement.

The complete method preserves the planned service; the fallback preserves the immediate goal at a visible cost.

Perform the four call-and-response turns and lift the cloth.

Ring the bell once and begin the agreed handclap opening.

Work in two pairs, one following the method and the other preparing a fallback or record.

Mark the complete method for the first approach or the fallback method for the second. Both allow return and an ending.

Home and aftermath - 15 minutes

Place: Festival square

Read aloud

The crowd takes a breath together. The first sound is small enough that everybody has to listen.

Run this scene

Choose a complete resolution or a resolution with a cost, then ask the group what happens next. Read the ending matching the selected outcome. Invite each character to add one ordinary detail to the aftermath, then ask the keeper for a concrete next action. Record who accepted the cost and which clues went unused. Spend the last few minutes on one enjoyable moment and one thing to change next time. Characters need not solve every optional inference to earn a resolved ending.

Choices

1. Describe who follows up tomorrow
2. Ask who helped whom and what it cost

If the group gets stuck

If no method was chosen, first confirm the immediate goal is safe, use the final fallback method and then read the cost ending. Record the unresolved work and give every character an epilogue.

People and evidence

Toma: Open the festival without humiliating anyone Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome. Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Lio: Secure an opening where quieter performers are heard Explains both solutions when the party agrees to protect the immediate goal; the marked instructions are available regardless. Voice: Calm under pressure; admit the decision and its cost.

Endings

Complete resolution

The cloth folds itself into four ordinary scarves. The drums answer the quietest opening beat, and the crowd leaves space for the reply.

First secure the immediate goal at Silent stage. Use final method A at Bell balcony before choosing this ending.

Resolution with a cost

Hands carry the opening rhythm across the square. The drums stay silent, but the festival proceeds, with an honest promise to revisit their use.

First secure the immediate goal at Silent stage. Use final method B at Bell balcony before choosing this ending.

Perform the four call-and-response turns and lift the cloth remains for a later visit.

Handout answers

h-order: The silence follows the cloth, not the whole festival.

h-fallback: The festival can continue with a modest alternate arrangement.

h-method: An inclusive sequence releases the cloth.

h-note: Lio waits on the stage.

h-trail: Follow the material to its source.

h-witness: A witness establishes the destination.

h-safe: Consent and turn-taking resolve the encounter.

Clue reasoning

The silence follows the cloth, not the whole festival.: c-order

Proceed to Silent stage: c-note OR c-trail OR c-witness

Consent and turn-taking resolve the encounter.: c-safe / marked safety fallback

Start the festival without overriding the agreement.: c-method OR c-fallback

Map descriptions

GM route atlas: Start at Festival square. Costume tent and Rehearsal steps are independent investigation routes; both connect to Silent stage, which leads to Bell balcony. All marked connections are bidirectional. Return uses the known route to Festival square.

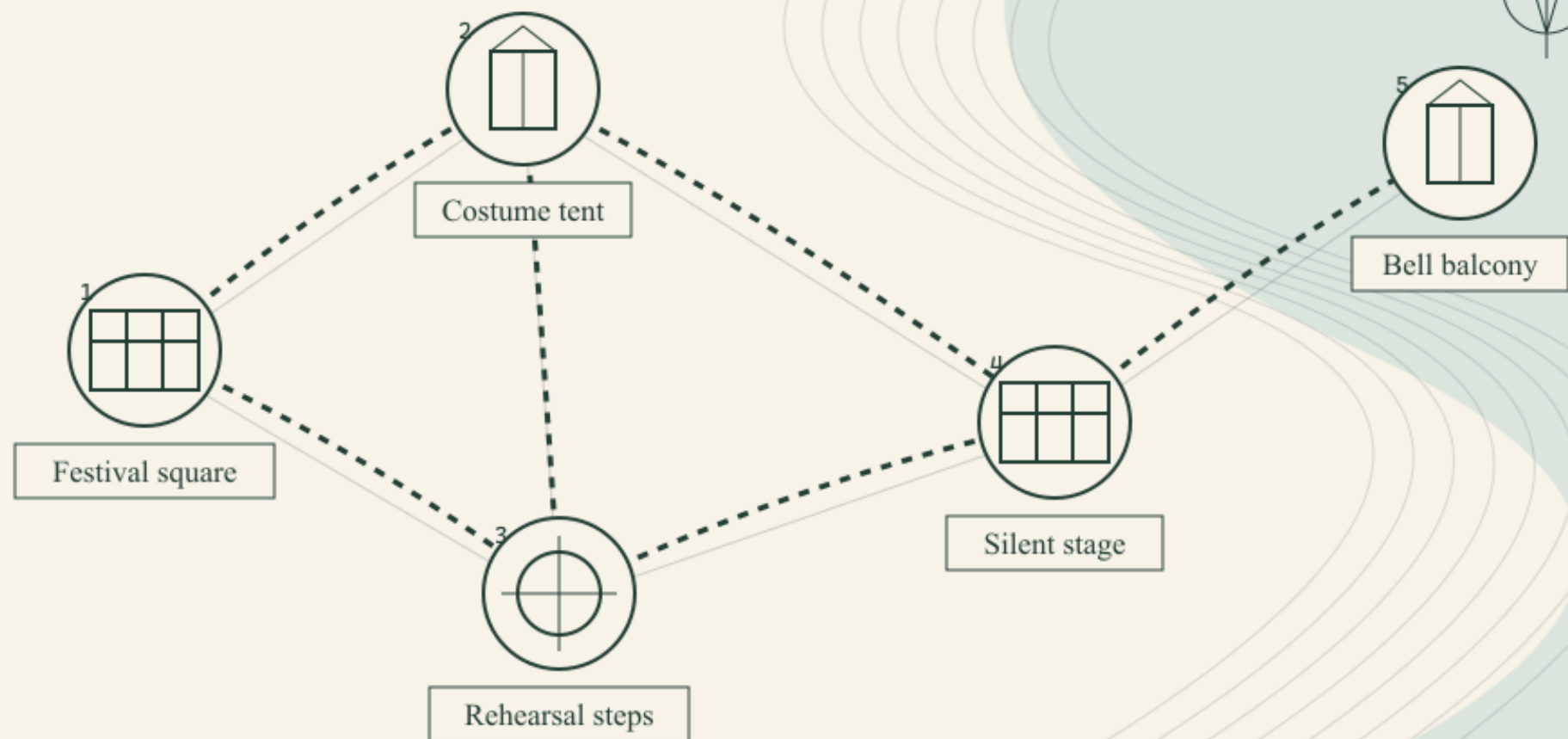
Silent stage - approach plan: At Silent stage, the marked entrance reaches the immediate problem.

Approach A: Offer the four invitations and let each participant choose their sound. Approach B: Use the clap-only opening and schedule the unresolved instrument discussion after the festival. Both reach the

onward route. Layout is schematic, with no combat grid or movement scale.

Player route map: Public route map: Festival square connects to Costume tent and Rehearsal steps; either reaches Silent stage, then Bell balcony. Routes work in both directions. Retrace the route to return. No hidden information is marked.

GM route atlas

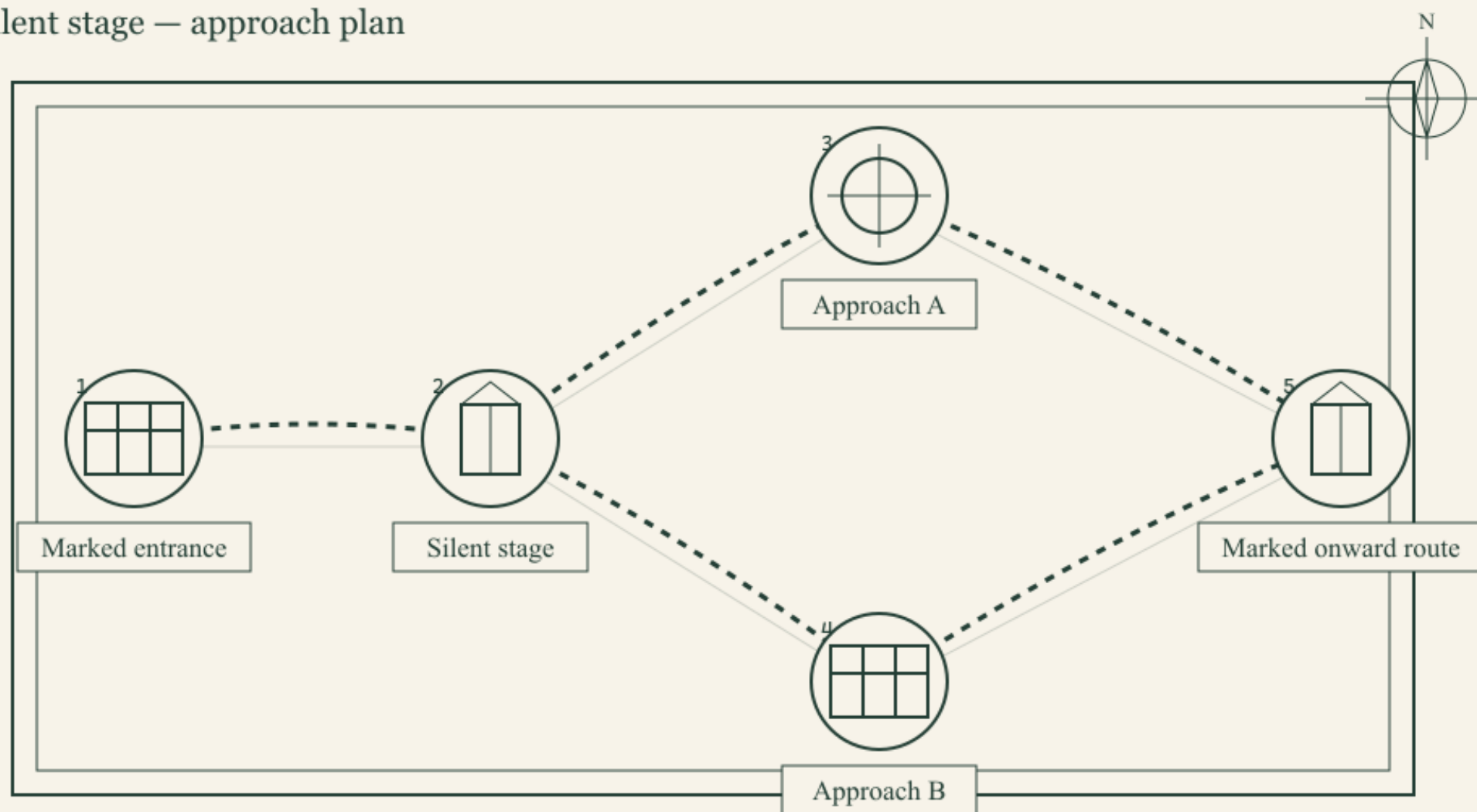


C-SAFE / immediate problem

C-METHOD or C-FALLBACK

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Silent stage — approach plan



Offer the four invitations and let each participant choose their sound.

Use the clap-only opening and schedule the unresolved instrument discussion after the festival.

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