

The Glasshouse After Midnight

120-minute plan | 4 players | No combat

The royal glasshouse changes its paths after midnight. A night gardener is inside, and the morning inspectors want every door sealed.

Content notice: Moving enclosed spaces; offer the open porch route immediately for claustrophobia.

What is really happening

The glasshouse follows moonlight through rotating beds. A cloud shutter stuck open makes its paths rotate continuously. Gardener Edda shelters in the central potting room. Closing the shutter restores stable paths; opening the outer service doors lets everyone leave but exposes delicate plants to cold.

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 outer service passage and open the room's service hatch. Mark the immediate goal safe only once the people or resource are secured. Then, if no final method was used: Open the outer doors and move the seedlings to the sheltered porch. Mark the fallback method and read the cost ending. Give each character an epilogue; do not bypass the safety step.

4 PLAYERS

Bring Edda out of the room without being separated by a rotating bed.

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

Choose how to stop the glasshouse moving.

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

Arrival - 10 minutes

Place: Glasshouse porch

Read aloud

The door opens onto a path that was not there a moment ago. Fen holds a coat for a gardener who has not come out.

Run this scene

Moonlight drives the rotation, not random magic. Evacuate through the doors if the roof repair takes too long. 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 Potting annex
2. Follow the trail to Moon pool

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Central room. A missing method can be found again at Roof shutter; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Fen: Find Edda before the inspectors arrive Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome. Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Timeline record: The beds move when the moon pool receives a direct beam. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Moonlight drives the rotation, not random magic.

Fallback instruction: Outer service doors open from either side and lead to the sheltered porch. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Evacuate through the doors if the roof repair takes too long.

Records and tools - 15 minutes

Place: Potting annex

Read aloud

Ari waters pots lined with silver thread. The roots all lean toward the same white glow.

Run this scene

Blocking direct moonlight stabilizes the paths. Edda is sheltered centrally. 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 Central room
2. Compare evidence at Moon pool

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Central room. A missing method can be found again at Roof shutter; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Ari: Keep the rare seedlings warm 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: Free the vine, then slide the cloud shutter across the moon beam. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Blocking direct moonlight stabilizes the paths.

Destination note: Edda's slate says CENTRAL POTTING ROOM: wait for the third breath. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Edda is sheltered centrally.

An independent trail - 15 minutes

Place: Moon pool

Read aloud

The moon pool reflects a beam from the roof. Sol's chalk arrow now points at a wall of leaves.

Run this scene

A visible guide reaches Edda without a chart. A witness independently locates the gardener. 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 Central room
2. Compare evidence at Potting annex

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Central room. A missing method can be found again at Roof shutter; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Sol: Chart a path that stays open long enough to cross Guides the party if they share a plan. If refused, points to the visible trail. Voice: Cautious, distinguish observation from assumption.

Physical trail: Silver watering thread runs into the central potting room. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: A visible guide reaches Edda without a chart.

Witness statement: Sol heard Edda knocking from the central room, not the roof. Give it: Ask any direct question, or read the witness's signed statement if conversation is refused. GM inference: A witness independently locates the gardener.

The immediate problem - 20 minutes

Place: Central room

Read aloud

Edda knocks from the potting room. A rotating bed passes the door, then leaves it clear for three breaths.

Run this scene

The glasshouse follows moonlight through rotating beds. A cloud shutter stuck open makes its paths rotate continuously. Gardener Edda shelters in the central potting room. Closing the shutter restores stable paths; opening the outer service doors lets everyone leave but exposes delicate plants to cold. 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. Wait for the three-breath pause and cross together using the silver thread.
2. Use the outer service passage and open the room's service hatch.

If the group gets stuck

Use the outer service passage and open the room's service hatch. Explain a five-minute delay before they accept it; mark the immediate goal safe when the people or resource are secured.

People and evidence

Edda: Free the shutter without abandoning the plants 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: Beds pause for three breaths beside the room; crossing on the pause is safe. The service doors never rotate. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Time crossings or use the constant outer passage.

Encounter and party adaptation

Bring Edda out of the room without being separated by a rotating bed.

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

Wait for the three-breath pause and cross together using the silver thread.

Use the outer service passage and open the room's service hatch.

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: Roof shutter

Read aloud

The cloud shutter rattles on its rail. A vine has threaded through the catch like a needle through cloth.

Run this scene

Blocking direct moonlight stabilizes the paths. Time crossings or use the constant outer passage. 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. Free the vine and close the cloud shutter.
2. Open the outer doors and move the seedlings to the sheltered porch.

If the group gets stuck

Open the outer doors and move the seedlings to the sheltered porch. Mark the fallback method, keep the immediate goal safe and read the cost ending. Do not repeat a failed test.

People and evidence

Ari: Keep the rare seedlings warm Lends supplies if a character helps carry or catalogue them. Public instructions remain available. Voice: Quick, exact words; point at tools while speaking.

Edda: Free the shutter without abandoning the plants 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: Free the vine, then slide the cloud shutter across the moon beam. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Blocking direct moonlight stabilizes the paths.

Fallback instruction: Outer service doors open from either side and lead to the sheltered porch. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Evacuate through the doors if the roof repair takes too long.

Encounter and party adaptation

Choose how to stop the glasshouse moving.

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

Free the vine and close the cloud shutter.

Open the outer doors and move the seedlings to the sheltered porch.

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: Glasshouse porch

Read aloud

Dawn softens the glass. The inspectors see a room full of people holding plants, and lower their sealing tools.

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

Fen: Find Edda before the inspectors arrive Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome. Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Edda: Free the shutter without abandoning the plants 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 shutter clicks shut. Paths settle in their daytime positions, and Edda labels the vine for pruning instead of punishment.

First secure the immediate goal at Central room. Use final method A at Roof shutter before choosing this ending.

Resolution with a cost

People and seedlings reach the porch. The open glasshouse cools, and several tender plants need a season of careful recovery.

First secure the immediate goal at Central room. Use final method B at Roof shutter before choosing this ending.

Free the vine and close the cloud shutter remains for a later visit.

Handout answers

h-order: Moonlight drives the rotation, not random magic.

h-fallback: Evacuate through the doors if the roof repair takes too long.

h-method: Blocking direct moonlight stabilizes the paths.

h-note: Edda is sheltered centrally.

h-trail: A visible guide reaches Edda without a chart.

h-witness: A witness independently locates the gardener.

h-safe: Time crossings or use the constant outer passage.

Clue reasoning

Moonlight drives the rotation, not random magic.: c-order

Proceed to Central room: c-note OR c-trail OR c-witness

Time crossings or use the constant outer passage.: c-safe / marked safety fallback

Choose how to stop the glasshouse moving.: c-method OR c-fallback

Map descriptions

GM route atlas: Start at Glasshouse porch. Potting annex and Moon pool are independent investigation routes; both connect to Central room, which leads to Roof shutter. All marked connections are bidirectional. Return uses the known route to Glasshouse porch.

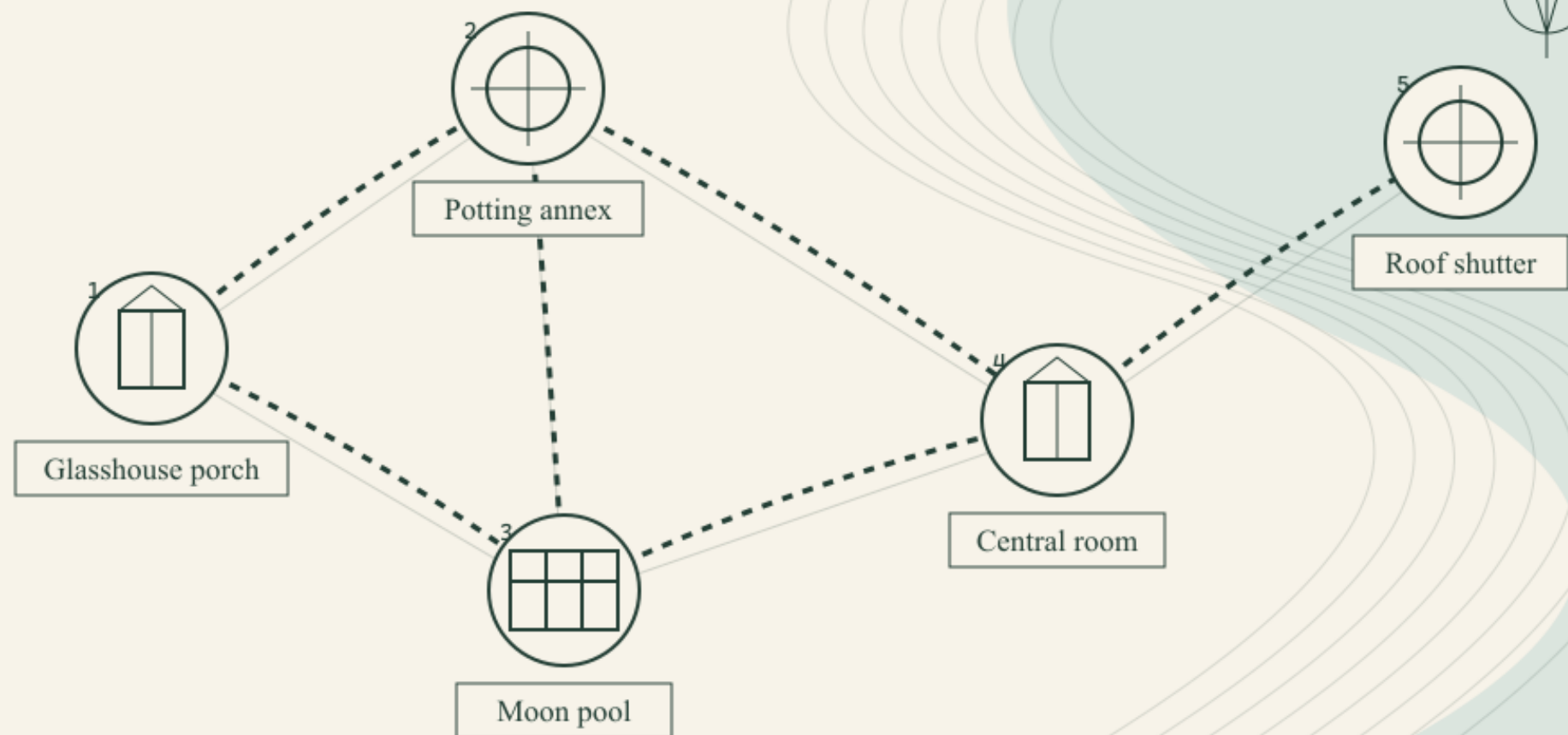
Central room - approach plan: At Central room, the marked entrance reaches the immediate problem.

Approach A: Wait for the three-breath pause and cross together using the silver thread. Approach B: Use the outer service passage and open the room's service hatch. Both reach the onward route. Layout is

schematic, with no combat grid or movement scale.

Player route map: Public route map: Glasshouse porch connects to Potting annex and Moon pool; either reaches Central room, then Roof shutter. Routes work in both directions. Retrace the route to return. No hidden information is marked.

GM route atlas

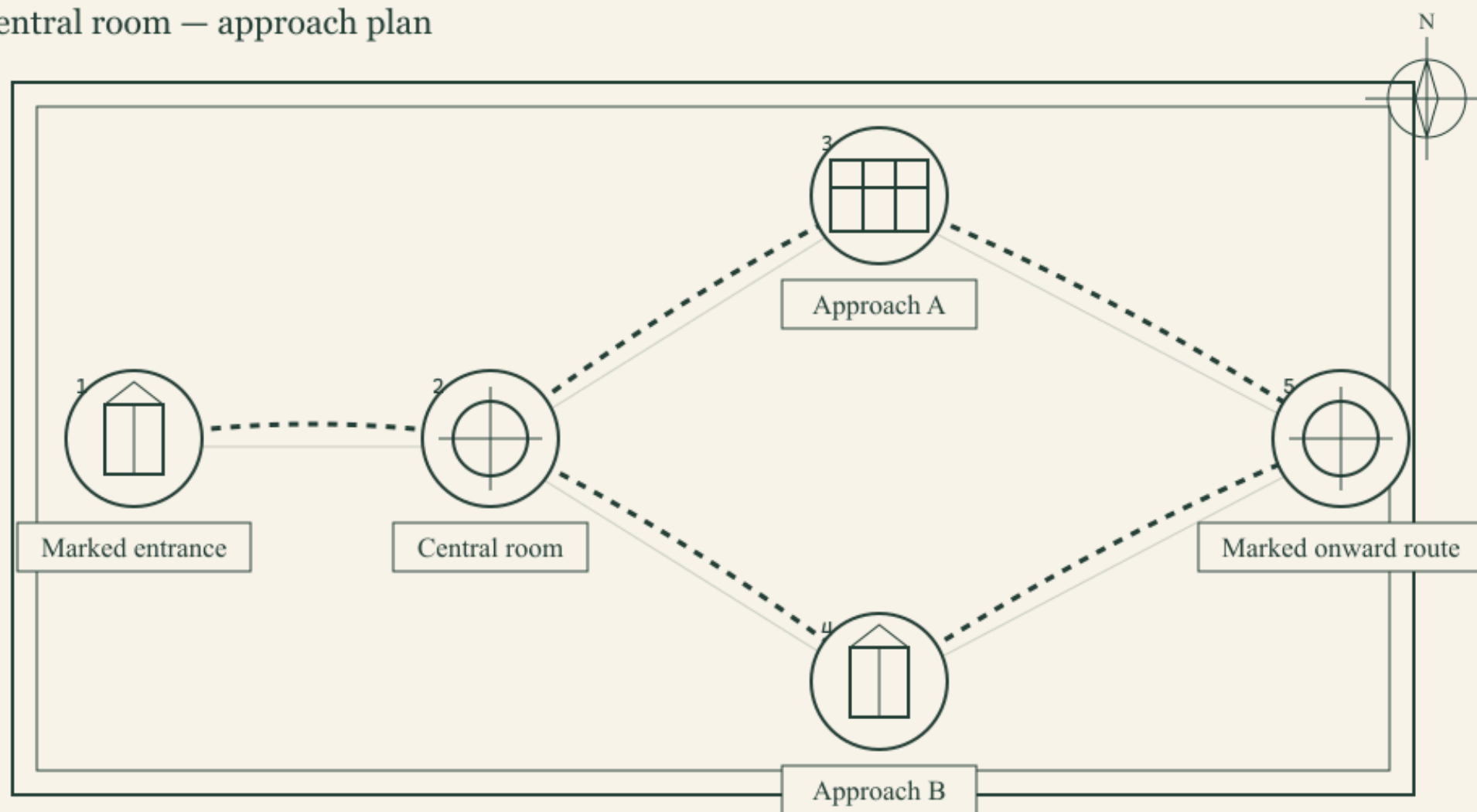


C-SAFE / immediate problem

C-METHOD or C-FALLBACK

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Central room — approach plan



Wait for the three-breath pause and cross together using the silver thread.

Use the outer service passage and open the room's service hatch.

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