

The Inn with Two Dawns

120-minute plan | 4 players | No combat

Every guest sees dawn twice. A breakfast cup remembers its old crack, and the innkeeper is keeping somebody's departure letter locked away.

Content notice: Separation and time loops; use a departing friend, and retain all player discoveries.

What is really happening

Innkeeper Mara used a farewell charm to delay her brother's departure by one morning. A looping guestbook resets dawn while the letter remains unread. Reading it with consent releases the morning; removing the charm stops resets but leaves their farewell unfinished. The loop never removes players' recorded knowledge.

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: Ask permission to unhook the charm and arrange a later farewell. Mark the immediate goal safe only once the people or resource are secured. Then, if no final method was used: Unhook the charm and leave the letter sealed for later. Mark the fallback method and read the cost ending. Give each character an epilogue; do not bypass the safety step.

4 PLAYERS

Help Mara let the guest decide whether to read the letter.

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

Let the morning advance.

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

Arrival - 10 minutes

Place: Inn porch

Read aloud

A rooster crows twice with the same wobble. Cole's coach ticket now says "valid this morning" in fresh ink.

Run this scene

Knowledge persists; no replay should erase player progress. A reversible stop exists without forcing the conversation. 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 Breakfast room
2. Follow the trail to Stable yard

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Guestbook nook. A missing method can be found again at East window; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Cole: Leave before the coach gives up Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome.
Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Timeline record: Scratches and player notes remain even when breakfast resets. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Knowledge persists; no replay should erase player progress.

Fallback instruction: Unhooking the charm stops new resets but leaves the sealed farewell unread. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: A reversible stop exists without forcing the conversation.

Records and tools - 15 minutes

Place: Breakfast room

Read aloud

Wes turns a cup to show its old crack. A tally scratched underneath has survived both dawns.

Run this scene

Consent to read is the complete resolution. The innkeeper waits by the book. 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 Guestbook nook
2. Compare evidence at Stable yard

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Guestbook nook. A missing method can be found again at East window; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Wes: Keep a physical record across the repeated dawn 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: The charm releases when the intended reader willingly opens the farewell letter. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Consent to read is the complete resolution.

Destination note: Mara's room slate: guestbook nook, before the second dawn. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: The innkeeper waits by the book.

An independent trail - 15 minutes

Place: Stable yard

Read aloud

Ina's horses eat fresh hay from a bin that should be empty. One wheel rut refuses to reset.

Run this scene

A trail reaches Mara. A witness independently points to the nook. 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 Guestbook nook
2. Compare evidence at Breakfast room

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Guestbook nook. A missing method can be found again at East window; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Ina: Feed the coach horses while time repeats. Guides the party if they share a plan. If refused, points to the visible trail. Voice: Cautious, distinguish observation from assumption.

Physical trail: Ink drips from the breakfast receipt toward the guestbook nook. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: A trail reaches Mara.

Witness statement: Ina saw Mara tuck a letter into the guestbook. Give it: Ask any direct question, or read the witness's signed statement if conversation is refused. GM inference: A witness independently points to the nook.

The immediate problem - 20 minutes

Place: Guestbook nook

Read aloud

Mara presses a closed letter into the guestbook. "One more breakfast," she says, without meeting your eyes.

Run this scene

Innkeeper Mara used a farewell charm to delay her brother's departure by one morning. A looping guestbook resets dawn while the letter remains unread. Reading it with consent releases the morning; removing the charm stops resets but leaves their farewell unfinished. The loop never removes players' recorded knowledge. 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 a private reading with only the decision shared afterward.
2. Ask permission to unhook the charm and arrange a later farewell.

If the group gets stuck

Ask permission to unhook the charm and arrange a later farewell. Explain a five-minute delay before they accept it; mark the immediate goal safe when the people or resource are secured.

People and evidence

Mara: Face the departure without forcing her brother to stay 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: PAUSE unhooks the charm; RELEASE follows a willing reading. Do not repeat more than one dawn at the table. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: A bounded loop keeps the session finite.

Encounter and party adaptation

Help Mara let the guest decide whether to read the letter.

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

Offer a private reading with only the decision shared afterward.

Ask permission to unhook the charm and arrange a later farewell.

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: East window

Read aloud

The east window catches the same pink cloud. The farewell charm hangs from its latch beside an unread letter.

Run this scene

Consent to read is the complete resolution. A bounded loop keeps the session finite. 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. Let the intended reader open the letter and release the latch.
2. Unhook the charm and leave the letter sealed for later.

If the group gets stuck

Unhook the charm and leave the letter sealed for later. Mark the fallback method, keep the immediate goal safe and read the cost ending. Do not repeat a failed test.

People and evidence

Wes: Keep a physical record across the repeated dawn Lends supplies if a character helps carry or catalogue them. Public instructions remain available. Voice: Quick, exact words; point at tools while speaking.

Mara: Face the departure without forcing her brother to stay 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: The charm releases when the intended reader willingly opens the farewell letter. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Consent to read is the complete resolution.

Fallback instruction: Unhooking the charm stops new resets but leaves the sealed farewell unread. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: A reversible stop exists without forcing the conversation.

Encounter and party adaptation

Let the morning advance.

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

Let the intended reader open the letter and release the latch.

Unhook the charm and leave the letter sealed for later.

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: Inn porch

Read aloud

A different cloud crosses the window. The coach waits with its door open, and the table has room for one ordinary goodbye.

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

Cole: Leave before the coach gives up Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome.

Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Mara: Face the departure without forcing her brother to stay 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 second dawn becomes a new morning. Mara packs breakfast for the journey and lets the coach leave with a wave.

First secure the immediate goal at Guestbook nook. Use final method A at East window before choosing this ending.

Resolution with a cost

Time advances when the charm comes down. The letter remains sealed; the inn keeps a place for a farewell on another day.

First secure the immediate goal at Guestbook nook. Use final method B at East window before choosing this ending.

Let the intended reader open the letter and release the latch remains for a later visit.

Handout answers

h-order: Knowledge persists; no replay should erase player progress.

h-fallback: A reversible stop exists without forcing the conversation.

h-method: Consent to read is the complete resolution.

h-note: The innkeeper waits by the book.

h-trail: A trail reaches Mara.

h-witness: A witness independently points to the nook.

h-safe: A bounded loop keeps the session finite.

Clue reasoning

Knowledge persists; no replay should erase player progress.: c-order

Proceed to Guestbook nook: c-note OR c-trail OR c-witness

A bounded loop keeps the session finite.: c-safe / marked safety fallback

Let the morning advance.: c-method OR c-fallback

Map descriptions

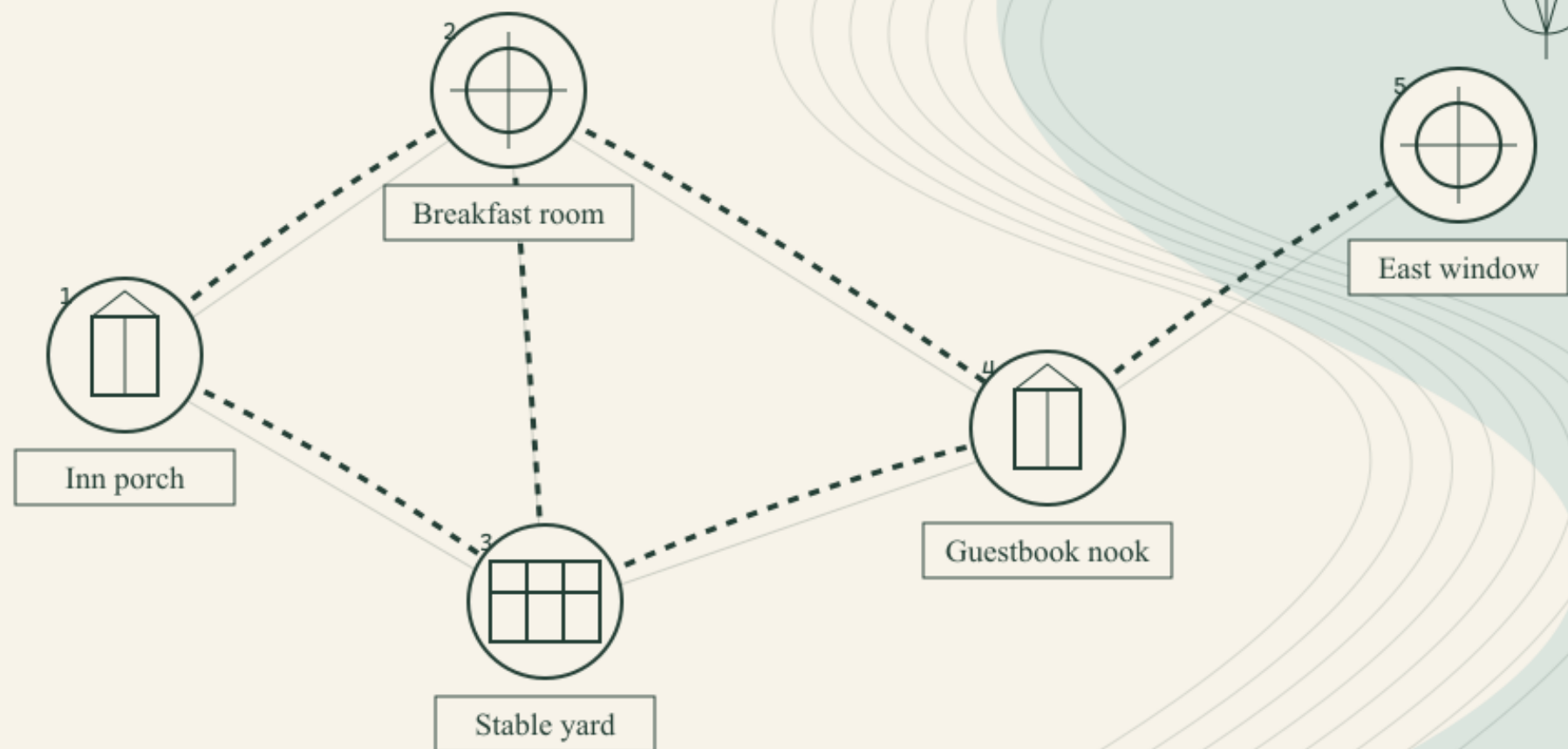
GM route atlas: Start at Inn porch. Breakfast room and Stable yard are independent investigation routes; both connect to Guestbook nook, which leads to East window. All marked connections are bidirectional. Return uses the known route to Inn porch.

Guestbook nook - approach plan: At Guestbook nook, the marked entrance reaches the immediate problem. Approach A: Offer a private reading with only the decision shared afterward. Approach B: Ask permission to unhook the charm and arrange a later farewell. Both reach the onward route. Layout is

schematic, with no combat grid or movement scale.

Player route map: Public route map: Inn porch connects to Breakfast room and Stable yard; either reaches Guestbook nook, then East window. Routes work in both directions. Retrace the route to return. No hidden information is marked.

GM route atlas

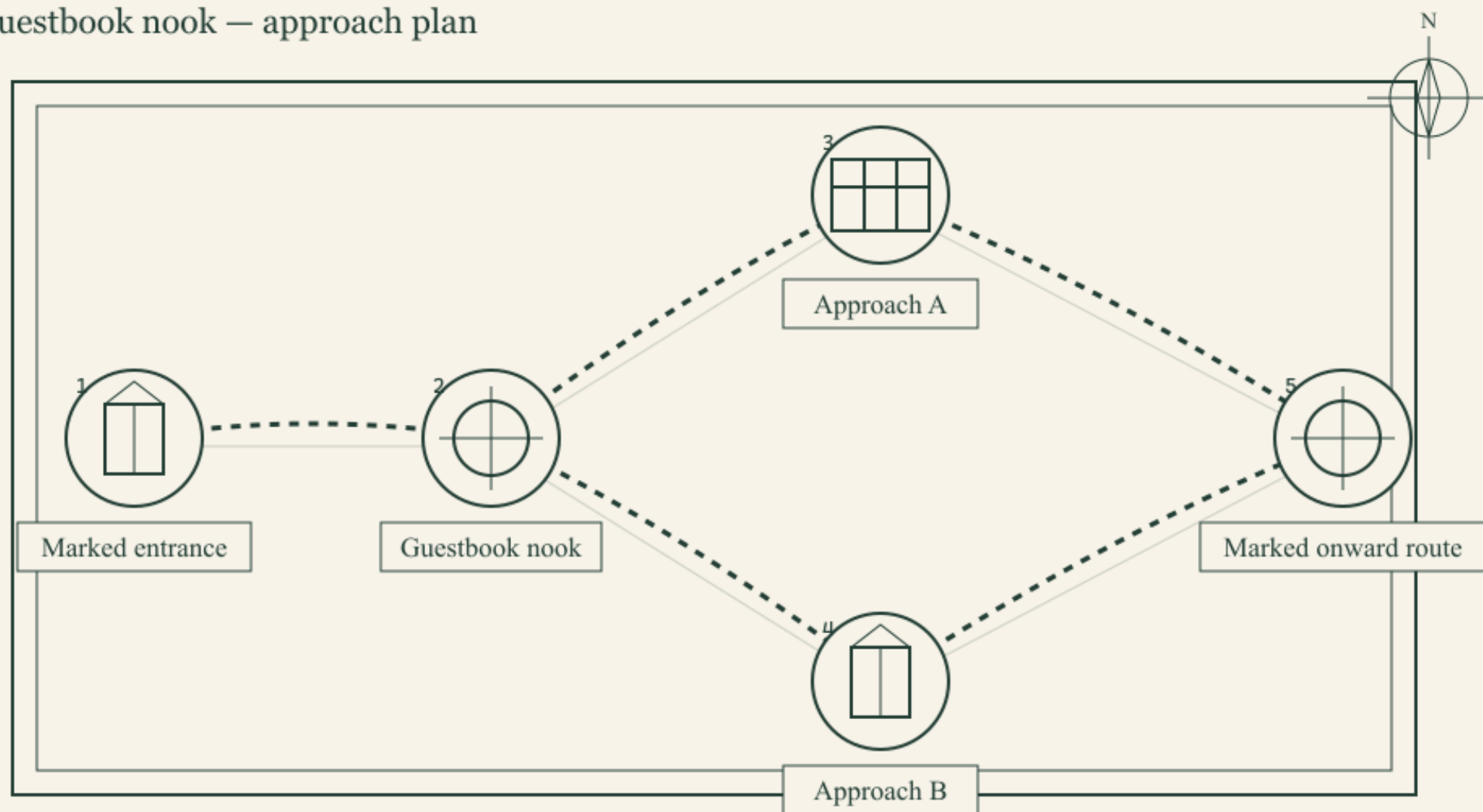


C-SAFE / immediate problem

C-METHOD or C-FALLBACK

GM ATLAS · CONNECTIONS ARE BIDIRECTIONAL · NOT TO SCALE · 1.0.0

Guestbook nook — approach plan



Offer a private reading with only the decision shared afterward.
Ask permission to unhook the charm and arrange a later farewell.

GM ATLAS · CONNECTIONS ARE BIDIRECTIONAL · NOT TO SCALE · 1.0.0