

The Glasshouse After Midnight

120-minute plan · 4 players · Explore changing places

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; the fixed outer service route is available immediately. Keep any cold damage to plants offstage.

GM overview

Give the public ring of rooms at once. The central crossing is blocked until players observe the pool rhythm; the fixed service route reaches Edda without that discovery. Eight places have different purposes: porch is safety, annex supplies wraps, pool explains timing, fern gallery reaches the roof, central room holds Edda and the seed-vault key, service walk bypasses motion, seed vault holds portable plants, and shutter ends the rotation. Work turns represent approaching dawn, not every conversation or move. Use the first spent turn to demonstrate the repeated three-breath pause. A full repair needs a steadying cord or Edda's help. A blocked roof route changes the outcome to evacuation; it never traps the party. Ask whether preserving the collection is worth spending the last work turns after everyone is safe.

What is really happening

A vine holds the cloud shutter open. Direct moonlight on the moon pool rotates the beds; their three-breath pause is predictable. Edda waits safely in the central potting room. Closing the shutter stabilises the collection; opening the service doors rescues people and portable seedlings but chills rooted plants.

Opening agreement and read-aloud

Agree on subjects to soften or skip. Each player names an ordinary skill and a reason to help. Evidence does not require a successful roll; uncertainty changes time, cost or obligations.

The glass door opens onto a path that has moved since Fen last looked. He offers Edda's coat. Inside, leaves sweep past like a slow green curtain; three knocks answer from the centre.

Time and preparation

120 minutes: Read the rotating paths and restore the roof

Opening agreement: 10 minutes

Equip and map the fixed edges: 20 minutes

Observe the pool and discover its shortcut: 25 minutes

Reach Edda and compare rescue priorities: 20 minutes

Repair the shutter and return: 35 minutes

Closure and debrief: 10 minutes

Use annex - pool - central via the discovered crossing, then service - fern - roof and return through fern - service. Nine turns permit optional tray packing after the repair; extra wraps consume one of those remaining turns.

Starting information: Discover cards in play

Starting state: Work turns before inspection = 9; Plant wraps = 2; Three-breath crossing understood = false;

Steadying cord taken = false; Edda accompanies the group = false; Shutter catch freed = false; Beds stationary = false; Portable seedlings wrapped = false; Seed vault located = false

With 4 players: share the roles of mapper, evidence keeper, speaker and timekeeper.

If the group gets stuck

A blocked pool-to-centre crossing has the porch/service route. A blocked fern-to-roof stair prevents full restoration but leaves the vault evacuation. No wraps or no work turns means close-for-night: a complete people rescue, explicitly incomplete plant work.

Glasshouse porch

Read aloud: Fen sets an empty bench under a wool awning. "Bring people here first. We can decide about pots after."

GM: Every service door opens toward this fixed exterior. Finish evacuation here. Inspectors will accept an honest closure and a count of people.

Choice: Mark the fixed return route

Ask: Who keeps the head count?

Requires: Available. Reveal Fixed service route

Result: The safe outside route is marked before anyone enters.

Choice: Report stable paths and bring Edda home

Ask: What maintenance mark will help the next night gardener?

Requires: Beds stationary is true and Edda accompanies the group is true.

Result: Edda takes her coat. The inspectors enter a still, warm glasshouse.

Closure: Daytime paths before dawn

Choice: Open the service doors and shelter the trays

Ask: Who accounts for the people and the labelled carriers?

Requires: Edda accompanies the group is true and Portable seedlings wrapped is true.

Result: Everyone and the rare trays reach shelter; the rooted collection will need recovery from the cold.

Closure: A nursery on the porch

Potting annex

Read aloud: Ari lifts a coil that glitters against the soil. The neighbouring pots all lean toward one patch of moonlight.

GM: Take the cord freely; spending a work turn here produces two extra wraps. The north gallery gives ordinary roof access.

Choice: Take the silver steadying cord

Ask: Who carries the cord and who reads the shutter sketch?

Requires: Available. Steadying cord taken: true. Reveal Shutter and vine sketch

Result: Ari supplies the cord without a bargain.

Choice: Pad two extra carriers

Ask: Is the extra packing time worth spending before dawn?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before inspection. Plant wraps: +2

Result: Two more padded carriers are ready.

Moon pool

Read aloud: A leaf touches the water. The nearest bed turns, pauses for three breaths, then turns again.

GM: Observation opens the short pool-to-centre crossing. The pool also reveals a vault reflection after Edda describes its brass hatch.

Choice: Count a complete rotation

Ask: What repeats, and which path can you cross during the pause?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before inspection. Three-breath crossing understood: true. Reveal Three observations at the pool

Result: The direct crossing to the central room is now usable.

Fern gallery

Read aloud: Fronds brush the underside of a railed walkway. A shutter cord rises into the roof.

GM: This is the reliable roof approach if the pool crossing is blocked. A slate states that the roof rail is fixed and does not rotate.

Central potting room

Read aloud: Edda holds a kettle beside a closed service hatch. "I waited where the floor stays still."

GM: Recruiting Edda costs one work turn, locates the seed vault, and provides an alternative steadying partner. Edda can leave by the service walk even if players never understand the pool.

Choice: Bring Edda into the travelling group

Ask: Do you head for the roof, the seed vault, or the porch?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before inspection. Edda accompanies the group: true; Seed vault located: true. Discover Seed vault

Result: Edda joins you and points out the brass seed hatch; she is ready to leave whenever you are.

Cloud shutter

Read aloud: The vine is alive and unhurried. Each tug on the stuck catch sends another bright beam to the pool.

GM: Free the vine for two turns, then close the shutter for one. Cord or Edda steadies the work. Fictional mechanism: no climbing or tool knowledge is required.

Choice: Steady the catch and guide the vine free

Ask: Which person steadies while another guides the vine?

Requires: (Steadying cord taken is true or Edda accompanies the group is true). Spend 2 Work turns before inspection. Shutter catch freed: true

Result: The vine rests in its spare hoop. The shutter can now slide.

Choice: Slide the shutter across the moonbeam

Ask: Who watches the pool to confirm the beds stop?

Requires: Shutter catch freed is true. Spend 1 Work turns before inspection. Beds stationary: true

Result: The moon pool darkens; the turning beds settle into their daytime positions.

Outer service walk

Read aloud: Your footsteps stay level while the indoor paths continue turning beyond the panes.

GM: The reliable porch-to-centre alternative is always open. A marked door reaches the fern gallery, creating a second loop. Opening all vents is part of the evacuation ending.

Seed vault

Read aloud: Each tray has two handles and a little paper label: TAKE THE ROOT BALL, LEAVE THE STAND.

GM: Edda reveals this hidden room. Two wraps and two turns pack the rare seedlings. It is optional for repairing the shutter but required for the protected-seedling evacuation.

Choice: Pack the portable seedlings

Ask: Which labels do you keep attached to each carrier?

Requires: Available. Spend 2 Work turns before inspection; Spend 2 Plant wraps. Portable seedlings wrapped: true. Reveal Portable collection inventory

Result: The rare trays are ready to travel without stripping the rooted collection.

Connections and changing routes

Glasshouse porch - Potting annex: Main door. Available.

Potting annex - Moon pool: Fixed potting curb. Available.

Moon pool - Fern gallery: North gallery. Available.

Fern gallery - Cloud shutter: Railed shutter stair. Available.

Glasshouse porch - Outer service walk: Exterior doors. Available.

Outer service walk - Central potting room: Fixed service hatch. Available.

Outer service walk - Fern gallery: Long perimeter walk. Available.

Moon pool - Central potting room: Three-breath shortcut. Three-breath crossing understood is true.

Central potting room - Seed vault: Brass seed hatch. Seed vault located is true.

Seed vault - Outer service walk: Tray delivery door. Seed vault located is true.

Fen - Porch attendant

Goal: Bring Edda out before the inspectors arrive.

Offers: A warm refuge, head count and directions to the fixed doors.

Will not accept: Will not seal a door while anyone remains inside.

Voice: Count people before pots.

Ari - Seedling keeper

Goal: Keep the portable rare collection warm.

Offers: Two wraps, cord, and two more wraps after a work turn.

Will not accept: Will not carry loose unwrapped trays through cold vents.

Voice: Name each plant by its label, never by its price.

Sol - Path surveyor

Goal: Replace an unreliable chalk map with an observed rhythm.

Offers: Counts three breaths and marks fixed architecture.

Will not accept: Does not promise that a turning bed will stay still.

Voice: Observe one cycle before stating a rule.

Edda - Night gardener

Goal: Leave safely and stop the damaging rotation.

Offers: A steadying partner and the seed-vault key.

Will not accept: Will not cut the old vine just to save a minute.

Voice: Speak from a safe place, then propose a careful step.

Discovery card: Fixed service route

Give only when revealed in play.

PORCH - OUTER WALK - CENTRAL HATCH. The paving and doors do not rotate. The outer walk also reaches the fern stair. Doors open from either side. Write the names of people returning to the porch.

Player task: Trace the evacuation route and keep a head count.

GM answer: This route bypasses the timing puzzle and remains available when the direct crossing is blocked.

Discovery card: Three observations at the pool

Give only when revealed in play.

Beam on water: bed turns. Leaf passes the white notch: bed pauses. Three slow breaths later: bed turns again.

With the beam covered by Sol's board, the bed stops until the board is lifted.

Player task: Predict the next pause and point to the source of motion.

GM answer: The pause opens the shortcut; blocking direct moonlight permanently stops rotation.

Discovery card: Shutter and vine sketch

Give only when revealed in play.

Fixed rail; silver cord eye; catch wrapped by a living vine; shutter slides across the beam only after the catch is clear. Mark who steadies the cord and who guides the vine into its spare hoop.

Player task: Assign the two jobs and order the work.

GM answer: Cord or Edda permits freeing the vine; closing the freed shutter restores stable paths.

Discovery card: Portable collection inventory

Give only when revealed in play.

Two padded carriers are needed for all rare trays. Leave heavy stone planters rooted. The porch awning protects portable trays; opened exterior vents cool the remaining collection.

Player task: Spend two wrap counters and decide what remains inside.

GM answer: Wrapping trays makes the evacuation a seedlings-saved ending, with rooted-plant damage retained as the cost.

State sheet

Work turns before inspection: 9 (clock, minimum 0, maximum 9)

Plant wraps: 2 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 4)

Three-breath crossing understood: false (knowledge)

Steadying cord taken: false (flag)

Edda accompanies the group: false (flag)

Shutter catch freed: false (flag)

Beds stationary: false (flag)

Portable seedlings wrapped: false (flag)

Seed vault located: false (knowledge)

Event: Inspectors at the gate

Trigger: Work turns before inspection at most 2

A bell sounds outside. Two work turns remain at most; list the repair still needed and the direct service evacuation before another action.

At any place: Call the porch crew and close the collection for inspection

Which work is unfinished when you hand over the fixed service map?

Requires: Available. Edda accompanies the group: true

Fen leads Edda out through the fixed service doors. Plants stay inside; the collection closes until a daylight repair.

Ending: Daytime paths before dawn

Requires: Beds stationary is true and Edda accompanies the group is true

The shutter closes, Edda returns, and the plants keep their warmth. A new vine hoop makes tonight's cause visible to the morning crew.

Next: Sol publishes a map distinguishing fixed architecture from moving beds.

Ending: A nursery on the porch

Requires: Portable seedlings wrapped is true

The rare seedlings and every person reach the warm porch. Opening the service doors chills the rooted collection; a season of careful recovery remains.

Next: Ari assigns trays to temporary carers and records which plants stayed rooted.

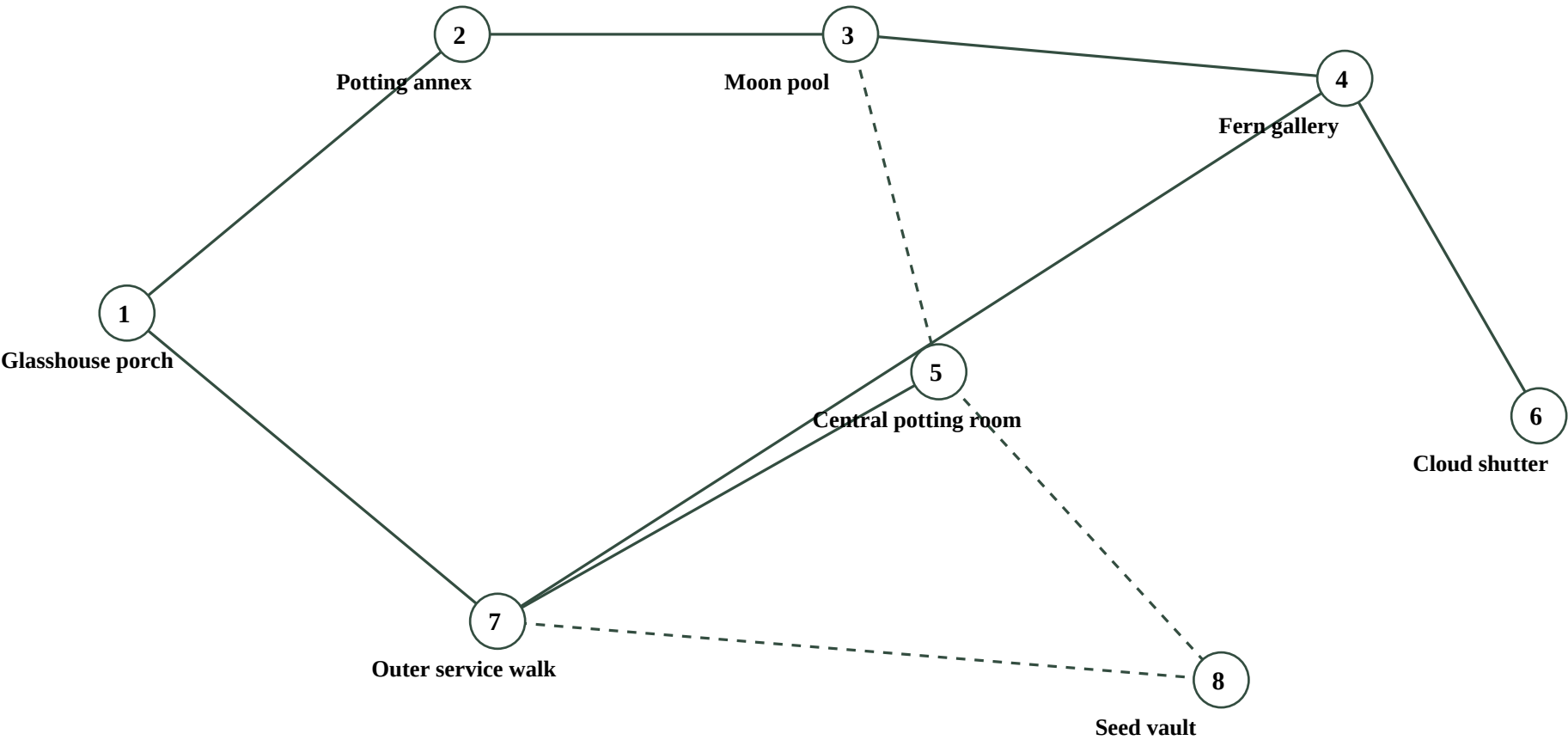
Ending: The collection waits

Requires: Available

Everyone exits by the fixed route. The glasshouse remains closed, with its rotation and plant condition for the daylight team to assess.

Next: Give the inspectors the head count and the exact last completed shutter step.

The Glasshouse After Midnight - GM decision map



Dashed paths need conditions. Read Connections and changing routes for costs and direction.