

The Copyright of Silence

Hints

There are spoilers here. But the more explicit ones appear later.

This is not by any means a walkthrough. There are many strategies and ways to finish the game. And there is much more to discover and do in the game than what you'll learn here.

Talking

The conversation part of the game is made to be just as replayable as the strategy part. To understand the backstory, your motivations; to get hints, jokes, and to solve puzzles, you will have to try many paths through the (quite sprawling) dialogue tree. Staying silent isn't just a strategical decision in your quest for the optimal total time of silence, it will also open up new dialogue paths – which ones depend on where in the conversation you are. John will reply to silence in many different ways. You'll have to experiment.

If you don't enjoy the conversation, please feel free to focus on the strategic part of the game – and vice versa! But ideally, they should complement each other.

Extra topics

Some things you see or experience will bring up extra topics in the form of questions. These are marked purple and get queued up: last in, first out. They are sometimes crucial (e.g. for searching the piano – see the section about dealing with dog).

Time

Each turn takes 7 seconds. You have 7 minutes (60 turns) before John ushers you out from his apartment at 7 p.m.

Silence

You must pick up the stopwatch to be able to time your silence. But just carrying the stopwatch isn't enough. John must also have spoken while you are carrying the stopwatch. Now you can time the silence that really counts – the insulting kind.

Scoring

The longer you manage to stay continuously silent, the higher you will score. But keep in mind that the longest time won't bring you to the highest-scoring ending. For the highest *overall* score you must stay silent for **just the right length of time**.

Objects that you find in the study and in the piano (and elsewhere) are sometimes useful, sometimes just jokes, sometimes part of the story, sometimes (rarely) neither. But all will add to your score. Making proper use of the useful objects will add even more to your score and, of course, help you in the game.

Making John say and do certain things will also add to your score. Some of John's lines are much harder to elicit than other ones and will generally earn you a higher score. Finally, making John angry or making him feel neglected will reduce your score.

NPC movements

The Dog

The dog, once awakened, moves in a regular pattern back and forth between the study and the kitchen, where it stays for one extra turn. You can put it back to sleep if you find the right object in the piano.

To find this object you need to know the right piano key. The key is revealed in a postcard that arrives in the entrance hall about mid-game. But there are lots of postcards and you might need to play the game many times before finding this specific one. You also have to be careful so that John doesn't pick it up before you get a chance to find it (this makes John happy though). Anyway, you do NOT need the object to get to the best ending. It just makes it a little easier.

And the dog is far from all bad. It is only a threat when you, John and the dog are in the same room. It is also very useful as it protects you from attacks from the parrot.

The Parrot

The parrot moves randomly but often stays put in a room for a few turns. Just like the dog it never moves more than one room per turn. When encountered, it always makes a quick escape to one of the adjacent rooms (with one notable exception at 7 p.m. if it is in a specific room and two other conditions are met). It does, however, never enter the study (you should be able to find the reason for this if you search the study).

There is a way to control the parrot. You must get John to talk about a certain subject and then demonstrate it for you in a spectacular way. There is also an object in the piano that comes in handy if the parrot bothers you. Its location can be found on a postcard. But it is perfectly possible to finish the game and **reach the best ending** without the object and without control over the parrot. They are just meant to make the game easier. They are essentially rewards for those who have played through the game many times.

John Cage

John leaves the study

- when the doorbell rings (you can now search his desk)
- when there is smoke in the kitchen (you can now search the study)
- when you let in a cold draught by opening the kitchen window wide open to peek out (you can now search the study – open the window again and again if you need more time to search).

If you don't want John to leave the study, you can turn off the stove before smoke appears. If you want him to leave the study later, you can turn off the stove and then put it back on again a little later.

Strategies

Once you have figured out how **long** you should stay silent, you need to figure out **how**. The trick is mostly about knowing how to avoid sneezing and screaming. There are two main strategies that become obvious once you have understood how the dog and parrot act.

- Follow the dog to use it as a shield against the parrot. Drawback: you can't follow it into a room in which John is.
- Stay silent in the study and leave each time the dog is about to enter. Drawbacks: (1) The parrot might surprise you in the lounge. (2) John will feel neglected and might stop talking to you, thus locking you out of dialogue that might aid you and/or award you a higher score.

Sleeping

To get to sleep, you must talk John into hypnotizing you (he'll do this by using the same rhetorical device as in his famous *Lecture on Nothing*, and you play along by repeating another rhetorical device from the same lecture). Sleeping will reveal a lot about your state of mind and your motivations. It is, however, a risky way to control your silence as you might either be dreaming or snoring or sleep-talking!

There are several routes (some very convoluted) to the hypnosis passage. The quickest ones involve getting John to talk about Zen. Here is one example:

1. "So have I."
2. "Yes, I was thinking about how it's always lacking in your company."
3. "I guess that's why I am a writer. I always loved the silence of my own company."
4. "I'm glad to hear it. Is it a contemplative piece?"
5. Say nothing.
6. Say nothing.
7. "Yep, that's me – *making all the right noises Zen style!*"
8. "Ah, that explains your fixation. So why does Zen favor silence?"
9. "Interesting, but all this wisdom makes my brain tired." OR "Yawn! Zzzzen..."

Explicit spoilers

Dealing with the dog

Enter the lounge, return to the study and ask John about the piano. You are now able to examine the piano in the lounge (when John isn't there). Examine octave 7, pitch B and you'll find a dog whistle. Playing a lullaby on it makes the dog go back to sleep beneath the piano. It won't break the silence as it is a dog whistle and John thus can't hear it.

You can use the whistle as often as you like as long as John isn't in the same room as you (you don't want to reveal that you're messing with his stuff).

Dealing with the parrot

Examine the piano, octave 5, pitch C# and you'll find a pistachio nut. This will stop the parrot from biting you, but it will only work once. With a clever strategy, however, that is often **more** than enough.

For a permanent solution you will have to get John to talk about Zen. But to make that talk fruitful you'll first have to make some preparations. (You don't have to make them in the order stated here. It is only crucial that you do them before you get to the Zen talk.)

Leave the study and go look for the parrot. Make sure that the dog is in another room so that you get bitten. Return to the study and ask John "*How do you deal with that pest of a parrot?*" John will tell you that the ego is the problem and Zen the solution. You can continue to ask for clarification to get more hints, but it isn't necessary and won't affect John's actions, only his lines during the upcoming Zen talk.

Back to the main conversation you must now find a way to change the subject from silence to Zen. There are *many* ways to do this, but the way you choose will only affect what John has to say about Zen, not his actions. Here is one quick route:

1. "So have I."
2. Say nothing.
3. "Sorry, just recalled something. Nothing really."
4. "What the hell does that mean?"
5. "Is that Zen? Sounds like Zen to me"

If you asked about the parrot before step 5 there should now be a dialogue option that alludes to John's answer(s). If you didn't ask, there is instead a hint about what you have failed to do (click the three dots to see it).

Choose the dialogue option alluding to John's earlier, enigmatic answers. Then choose the first dialogue options until you get the option "Sounds good, but how about a practical demonstration?" Say nothing until John is done. Pick up the cage and seek out the parrot!

Searching the desk

Get the staple remover to be able to open the green folder later.

Searching the piano

No objects are crucial for getting to the best ending. They, together with the postcards, mainly comment on the story. The postcard arrives in the entrance hall after 31-34 turns and will stay there until either you or John picks it up.

Searching the room

No objects are crucial for getting to the best ending - most are there for the story and for clues. The objects in the bookcase might seem particularly hard to find, but you can figure out their locations by:

- following John when he answers the door (you get two specifics from observing what he receives, one specific from observing what he does when he returns to the study)
- reading the text after your final score
- "observing" John while you're sleeping
- observing John while he gets his manuscript (also, how many paragraphs can you get him to read?)

Endings

There are five main endings. To get the three last (and highest-scoring) ones, **you should be silent for exactly 4 minutes and 33 seconds** before you are forced to leave John's apartment:

1. Suicide (jump out of the kitchen window)
2. Concert - happy premiere for John (all total silent times that are NOT 4m 33s long). Extra points if you manage to get the parrot to attend the premiere
3. Back at John's apartment to apologize after unhappy premiere for John
4. Winning court case with testimony from parrot after unhappy premiere for John
5. Winning court case **without** testimony from parrot after unhappy premiere for John (more points, less money).

Freeing the parrot

Several conditions must be met:

- The window must be open.
- The parrot must be uncaged.
- In your final move, 7 seconds before 7 p.m., you must enter the kitchen.
- The parrot must be in the kitchen.

The parrot will flee to an adjacent room as it always does, but as it is afraid of the cuckoo, escaping to the entrance hall is not an option. It will instead escape out of the window.