The Sixth Knock

What happens when you keep knocking on Riven's village door

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November 22, 2026

Abstract

Everyone who explores the cliffside village on Jungle Island in *Riven* (1997) tries knocking on the carved wooden hut door, and the patient ones know that five knocks make a child peek through the shutter. What the game never tells you is that there is a second act right after that peek: knocking a sixth time without stepping away plays an otherwise unheard voice clip behind the door and locks the peephole for good. Leaving the hut, riding the maglevs to other islands, or even linking to Tay will not reset it.

Walking along the hanging walkways of Jungle Island's village, you pass a domed mud hut with a carved wooden door (Jungle:499). Stepping up to it (Jungle:554) puts a star-shaped wooden knocker right in front of you. Most players click it once or twice, hear hollow wood, and move on.

The five-knock Easter egg itself is well known: knock five times, wait five seconds, and a carved panel slides down so a young villager can peer out at you before slamming the shutter closed. Some players who kept clicking noticed that the shutter stopped opening altogether and assumed it was a one-time event per playthrough. **In reality, Cyan hid a sixth-knock reaction right behind the wood**, complete with an exclusive hushed voice line and a lockout that survives almost everything you do next. To my knowledge, this sixth-knock voice clip, the lockout state, and its lone reset condition have not been documented before.

Version of the game: Riven 1.0 (September 1997, Macintosh) tested live. The village door behaves identically in the 1998 DVD edition (1.2). Card labels follow the Riven Graph and open each place directly.

How to Reproduce It

You can trigger the sixth knock directly in a single visit. There is no need to leave the door in between.

1. Walk to the carved wooden hut door in Jungle Island's cliffside village (Jungle:499) and step up to the knocker (Jungle:554).
2. Click the knocker **five times** in a row, letting each knock finish.
3. Wait **five seconds**. The small upper-right shutter drops open, a child peeks out at you, and the panel slams shut.
4. Stay at the door and click the knocker a **sixth time** before stepping back. You hear a hushed adult voice speak from behind the wood, and the peephole is now locked.
5. Step back to the walkway, return to the door, and knock five times again. The knocker still clacks, and the shutter will no longer open.

Cite as: Guillaume Lethuillier, "The Sixth Knock", glthr.com, November 22, 2026. https://glthr.com/riven-the-sixth-knock
Interactive figures, animations and videos of the web page are shown here as still images or addresses.

Live on 1997 Macintosh Riven 1.0

Here is the full sequence recorded in one continuous take on unmodified September 1997 Macintosh *Riven* 1.0, with the sound turned up so the muffled voice after the sixth knock is audible. To show the contrast between stopping at five knocks and adding the sixth, the recording first stops after five knocks and steps back to the walkway to show that the peephole still resets and opens again. On the second visit, knocking six times in a row triggers the voice behind the door and locks the shutter shut.

Methodology: *I generated the runs by having an agent navigate with the graph of Riven that I created, so that it was effectively playing the game.*



Video: https://media.glthr.com/riven-the-sixth-knock/riven-sixth-knock.mp4



Live 1997 Macintosh 1.0 at Jungle:554: closed door during knocks 1–4 (left) and the peephole opening five seconds after knock 5 (right).

Inside the `jpeek` Counter

Reading the card's script in `J_DATA.MHK` shows exactly how the door keeps count. Every press of the knocker (`HSPT 10`) plays the knocking animation (`554_jvpeepkn.mov`) and then runs two switches on a single global variable, `jpeek`:

```
// Jungle:554 (HSPT 10, knocker)
on mouse_down {
  play_movie_blocking([1]);        // 554_jvpeepkn.mov
  disable_movie([1]);
  switch (jpeek) {
    case 6:
      play_sound([108, 256, 0]);   // 554_jvvclose2_1 (55,702 B)
      jpeek += 1;                  // permanently locks at 7
      break;
    case 7:
      break;
    default:
      jpeek += 1;
      break;
  }
  switch (jpeek) {
    case 5:
      jpeek = 6;
      delay([5000, 0]);
      play_movie_blocking([2]);    // 554_jvpeephl.mov
      disable_movie([2]);
      break;
  }
}
```

Meanwhile, stepping back to Jungle:499 and returning to Jungle:554 fires `on card_enter`:

```
// Jungle:554 (CARD)
on card_enter {
  switch (jpeek) {
    case 7:
      break;
```

```
    default:
      jpeek = 0;
      break;
  }
}
```

Put those two handlers together and the three states fall straight out:

1. **Five knocks and leave (`jpeek: 0 → 6, then 0`).** Knocks one through four count up. The fifth knock hits `case 5`, jumps `jpeek` straight to `6`, pauses for five seconds, and opens the shutter. If you step back to the walkway and return, `on card_enter` resets `jpeek` to `0`, so the child will peek out again as many times as you like.
2. **A sixth knock in the same visit (`jpeek: 6 → 7`).** If you stay at the door after the shutter slams shut and knock a sixth time directly, `jpeek` is already `6`. The knocker plays `tWAV 108` (`554_jvvclose2_1`, stored in `J_DATA2.MHK`), a hushed adult voice speaking right behind the wood, and raises `jpeek` to `7`.
3. **Permanent silence (`jpeek == 7`).** Once `jpeek` reaches `7`, `on card_enter` refuses to reset it. You can step away, walk around the village, come back, and knock five times again. The knocker still clacks, and the shutter never opens.

All the other villager chatter in Jungle Island's audio archive is labeled `jvvfar1_1` or `jvvfar3_1`, heard from a distance along the walkways. `554_jvvclose2_1` is the sole `jvvclose` clip in the entire game, and this single `case 6` branch is the only place in any script that calls `play_sound(108)`.

The One Place That Resets the Door

If `Jungle:554` never clears `jpeek = 7`, can anything else in the game unlock the shutter again?

Scanning every script across all eight Mohawk archives turns up only **one** other write to `jpeek` in all of *Riven*. Leaving Jungle Island via any of its three maglev cars (Jungle:406 to Survey Island, Jungle:610 to Boiler Island, or Jungle:813 to Temple Island) resets Jungle's other temporary flags (`jbeetlepool`, `jwarning`, and the submarine position) and leaves `jpeek` alone. Linking to Tay (Jungle:227) leaves `jpeek` alone too.

The lone exception sits inside Jungle Island's Fire-Marble Dome. Clicking Gehn's linking book to Age 233 at Jungle:343 (`HSPT 8`, `linktooffice`) executes:

```
// Jungle:343 (HSPT 8, linktooffice)
glviewpos = 0;
jbeetlepool = 0;
jpeek = 0;
jwarning = 0;
```

Only linking to Gehn's office from the Jungle dome convinces the household behind the carved door to forget that you would not stop knocking.

Conclusion

It is easy to see why almost nobody hears `554_jvvclose2_1`. Anyone who finally gets the peephole to open after five patient knocks has already gotten their reward and steps back to explore the village, resetting `jpeek` to zero without realizing there was a sixth state waiting. Only someone persistent enough to bang on the door one more time gets told off from behind the wood, and then ignored until they link off to another Age.

How to cite this article

> Guillaume Lethuillier, “The Sixth Knock”, glthr.com, November 22, 2026. https://glthr.com/riven-the-sixth-knock

For BibTeX:

```
@misc{lethuillier2026sixth,
  author = {Lethuillier, Guillaume},
  title  = {The Sixth Knock},
  year   = {2026},
  month  = nov,
  url    = {https://glthr.com/riven-the-sixth-knock},
  note   = {glthr.com}
}
```

Your questions and leads are welcome: myst@glthr.com

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