

A seasoned Huana woman rests her elbow on the drum like it's the only thing keeping her upright. She pats the hide skin, the percussion no more effortful than a sigh. She opens her eyes as you approach. Smiling, she rests her palm on the skin of her drum.

Player: "Who are you?"

Tipping her head to the side, her mouth curves up in a cautious smile. She touches her brow with two fingers. Then she gives the drum a pair of playful taps. You recognize the first gesture as one of tribal greeting, gratitude, or both. The second was more personal - an introduction.

Player: "What do you do here?"

Exaggerating her movements, she shields her eyes and scans the horizon. Then she points off at the distance, kicks her legs up with youthful glee, and pretends to pound on the drum with wild, enthusiastic beats. Shrugging, she lets her hand fall to her sides once again.

Player: "Don't you speak?"

A deep, wrinkled scar traces a winding path down her neck. She tilts her head to the side and beckons you to look closer. The angle and shape look like the mark of a boar's tusks. She raises one finger and points down to a dried hoof knotted to her belt. Then she makes a gesture of pulling back and releasing a bowstring several times in rapid succession. Grinning, she snaps her fingers and leans once more against the drum with a satisfied sigh.

Player: [Tap on the surface of the drum.]

You play a short, hesitant beat. She bites the inside of her cheek and considers before drumming a quick response with her knuckles. Then she beats a harder, faster rhythm and steps back, grinning at you.

Player: [Start a beat you can share, humming under your breath.]

Her eyes widen and she steps back, taken by the rhythm of your beat. She glances up at the drum, as if for the first time, and pauses to caress its hide.

She eases in closer, your shoulders touching, and beats on the drum fast enough to build tempo without outpacing you. Her rhythm response changes the tune, introducing complexity while keeping the spirit of the original alive. She closes her eyes and sways in place. The flow of her movements makes

the beat look effortless, but her arms are a constant blur. In the village below, heads begin to bob.
Furrowed brows momentarily relax.

Finally she breaks the rhythm and steps back, shaking out her arms and sucking in deep breaths. She tips her head to you - gratitude and recognition mingling with her exhaustion.