

Paper Sails Before the Rain

120-minute plan · 4 players · Make time and supplies count

A magical canal can carry sealed invitations to three hill gardens before rain flattens its paper boats. Four sheets and two lengths of twine decide how many arrive today.

Content notice: Weather and fragile craft. Invitations remain sealed; use imaginary canal rules rather than real boating instructions.

GM overview

Display seven work turns, four sheets and two twines; the short route has six turns and starts with the wind chart understood. The convoy uses three sheets, one twine and three work turns before launch, delivering all three bundles. The covered relay uses two sheets, both twines and two work turns before launch, reaching only two gardens while preserving two sheets. At two turns left a gust closes the open-basin launch, so the convoy must be ready earlier. A discovered culvert gives access from the covered shed to the receiving stand after the basin path closes; it does not reopen the convoy. An optional canopy protects tomorrow's blank stock at a cost of one sheet and one turn, which may consume the convoy's safe window. Every sealed bundle left behind is returned intact.

What is really happening

A predictable crosswind reaches the open basin at the second rain marker. A trimmed convoy of three sailboats can reach all gardens before that marker. A tethered covered relay carries invitations to two gardens after the wind rises, retaining spare paper but delaying the third invitation.

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.

Three sealed invitation bundles wait on a dry table. Beyond it, a paper sail catches a breeze and bends toward a dark cloud. The canal keeper sets down four sheets and two lengths of twine.

Time and preparation

120 minutes: A wider weather window with a narrower covered route

Opening agreement: 10 minutes

Read weather and discover the dry passage: 30 minutes

Compare reach with saved materials: 35 minutes

Build the chosen route and account for the third bundle: 35 minutes

Closure and debrief: 10 minutes

Reading weather costs a turn. The covered route can spend a turn finding the culvert without losing launch access, but only two gardens are reached regardless of extra discussion.

Starting information: Four sheets, two twines

Starting state: Work turns before rain = 7; Dry sail sheets = 4; Lengths of guide twine = 2; Crosswind understood = false; Three boats folded = false; Convoy trimmed = false; Covered relay moorings = false; Two relay boats folded = false; Basin crosswind arrived = false; Covered culvert found = false; Tomorrow's stock covered = false

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

If the group gets stuck

A late convoy cannot launch into the gust. If two sheets and both twines still remain, build the covered relay; otherwise return the sealed bundles dry. The culvert bypasses the closed footpath without pretending the open water is calm.

Invitation table

Read aloud: The bundles bear garden emblems, not open messages.

GM: Give the stock card. Players select delivery scope, not which private contents deserve a journey. Every undelivered bundle stays safe.

Choice: Cover tomorrow's blank paper

Ask: Spend one sheet and a turn protecting tomorrow's stock?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before rain; Spend 1 Dry sail sheets. Tomorrow's stock covered: true

Result: A paper canopy keeps the spare stock dry, using some of today's time.

Wind-vane stair

Read aloud: A blue ribbon points across the open basin.

GM: Studying costs a turn and reveals the exact two-turn gust threshold. No unpredictable weather roll changes the agreed resource puzzle.

Choice: Read the crosswind markers

Ask: Spend a turn learning the exact launch cutoff?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before rain. Crosswind understood: true. Reveal The two-turn crosswind mark

Result: Bev identifies the gust marker at two remaining turns.

Open sail basin

Read aloud: The first paper wake draws a thin silver line.

GM: Fold and trim convoy here. The gust blocks launching, even if players can physically remain at the basin.

Choice: Fold the three-sail convoy

Ask: Commit three sheets and two work turns to all three gardens?

Requires: Available. Spend 2 Work turns before rain; Spend 3 Dry sail sheets. Three boats folded: true. Reveal Two boat patterns

Result: Three paper hulls settle into their separate launch grooves.

Choice: Trim the convoy to the known wind

Ask: Spend one twine and a turn on the shared trim?

Requires: Three boats folded is true and Crosswind understood is true. Spend 1 Work turns before rain; Spend 1 Lengths of guide twine. Convoy trimmed: true

Result: The three sails point along the measured wind line.

Choice: Launch the three invitations before the gust

Ask: Send all three sealed bundles now?

Requires: Convoy trimmed is true and Basin crosswind arrived is false.

Result: Three separate wakes carry the sealed bundles toward all garden bells.

Closure: Three bells before the rain

Covered relay shed

Read aloud: Twine hooks run along the dry side of the canal.

GM: Mooring spends both twines, making the convoy trim unavailable. Fold two boats separately, then launch the relay. The culvert is discovered by checking a dry maintenance notice.

Choice: Rig the covered relay moorings

Ask: Commit both twines to the weatherproof route?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before rain; Spend 2 Lengths of guide twine. Covered relay moorings: true. Reveal Two boat patterns

Result: Two guide lines run below the roof.

Choice: Fold two covered relay boats

Ask: Spend two sheets and accept that the third bundle travels later?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before rain; Spend 2 Dry sail sheets. Two relay boats folded: true

Result: Two boats settle beneath the cover.

Choice: Send the two sheltered invitations

Ask: Use both prepared channels and return the third bundle sealed?

Requires: Covered relay moorings is true and Two relay boats folded is true.

Result: Two sheltered bells answer. The third bundle goes into Fenn's return box.

Closure: Two sheltered bells

Choice: Check the dry maintenance passage

Ask: Spend a turn finding a route around the open walk?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before rain. Covered culvert found: true. Reveal Dry service passage.

Discover Garden receiving stand

Result: The roofed culvert opens behind the pattern boards.

Garden receiving stand

Read aloud: Two sheltered bells and one open bell wait for deliveries.

GM: The relay reaches two sheltered bells; the third invitation remains at the table. The receiving stand can be reached through the culvert after the open approach closes.

Rain-marker alcove

Read aloud: Each ribbon bends at the same second-to-last rain marker.

GM: The alcove independently records the same predictable crosswind. Comparing ribbons costs a turn and teaches wind timing if players bypass the exposed vane. It does not create more work turns.

Choice: Compare the recorded wind ribbons

Ask: Spend one turn learning when the repeated crosswind arrives?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work turns before rain. Crosswind understood: true. Reveal The two-turn crosswind mark

Result: The sheltered records confirm the two-turn crosswind threshold.

Connections and changing routes

Invitation table - Wind-vane stair: Climb to the weather marks. Available.

Wind-vane stair - Open sail basin: Follow the upper canal. Available.

Invitation table - Covered relay shed: Enter the covered work area. Available.

Covered relay shed - Open sail basin: Use the launch ramp. Available.

Open sail basin - Garden receiving stand: Cross the open basin walk. Basin crosswind arrived is false.

Covered relay shed - Garden receiving stand: Use the discovered dry culvert. Covered culvert found is true.

Wind-vane stair - Rain-marker alcove: Enter the sheltered rain-marker alcove. Available.

Ori Reed - Paper boat folder

Goal: Make an honest delivery plan

Offers: Four dry sheets and two folding patterns.

Will not accept: Cannot turn scraps into an extra full sail today.

Voice: "Tell me the number we can really send."

Bev - Canal keeper

Goal: Keep sealed invitations dry

Offers: Two twines and covered channels.

Will not accept: No open-basin launch after the crosswind marker.

Voice: "The sheltered route reaches two bells."

Fenn - Garden messenger

Goal: Leave no undelivered invitation unaccounted for

Offers: A safe return box for the third bundle.

Will not accept: Will not read contents to rank recipients.

Voice: "Late is a status we can write clearly."

Discovery card: Four sheets, two twines

Give only when revealed in play.

Convoy: three sheets to fold, one twine to trim. Covered relay: two twines for moorings, two sheets for boats.

Optional stock canopy: one sheet. Three invitation bundles remain sealed.

Player task: Allocate finite material before choosing a launch.

GM answer: Convoy and relay cannot both be fully prepared with two twines; canopy is affordable in paper but costs time.

Discovery card: The two-turn crosswind mark

Give only when revealed in play.

At two work turns remaining, the crosswind reaches the open basin. Launch a trimmed convoy before that marker. The covered relay remains usable. Draw the latest safe order of folding and trimming.

Player task: Plan backward from the known gust threshold.

GM answer: Fold takes two turns and trim takes one. Six starting turns leave three before launch; a further optional work turn reaches the gust and closes the convoy plan.

Discovery card: Two boat patterns

Give only when revealed in play.

Three-sail convoy: serves all three garden bells. Two-boat covered relay: serves the two sheltered bells; return the third bundle sealed. Tick boats only after they are folded.

Player task: Choose delivery scope and track actual preparation.

GM answer: The plans differ in reach, material reserve and wind tolerance.

Discovery card: Dry service passage

Give only when revealed in play.

A maintenance notice shows a roofed passage from this shed to the receiving stand. Its entrance is behind the stacked pattern boards. Mark it on your map before the open walk closes.

Player task: Discover a route around the closed basin walk.

GM answer: Discovery opens shed-stand; it changes access, not weather or delivery capacity.

State sheet

Work turns before rain: 7 (clock, minimum 0, maximum 7)

Dry sail sheets: 4 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 4)

Lengths of guide twine: 2 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 2)

Crosswind understood: false (knowledge)

Three boats folded: false (flag)

Convoy trimmed: false (flag)

Covered relay moorings: false (flag)

Two relay boats folded: false (flag)

Basin crosswind arrived: false (flag)

Covered culvert found: false (knowledge)

Tomorrow's stock covered: false (flag)

Event: Crosswind across the basin

Trigger: Work turns before rain at most 2

The open walk and convoy launch close. The roofed relay and any discovered culvert remain usable.

Basin crosswind arrived: true

At any place: Account for the sealed bundles and material

Check how many invitations the remaining stock can carry?

Requires: Available. Reveal Four sheets, two twines

Fenn sets out the sealed bundles beside the remaining counters.

At any place: Return the invitations dry

Cancel today's canal delivery and arrange a later hand delivery?

Requires: Available.

Fenn returns every undelivered bundle to its dry box.

Ending: Three bells before the rain

Requires: Convoy trimmed is true and Basin crosswind arrived is false

All three gardens receive their sealed invitations. Only one dry sheet and one twine remain unless optional work used them.

Next: Which supplies should be replaced before the next canal opening?

Ending: Two sheltered bells

Requires: Covered relay moorings is true and Two relay boats folded is true

Two gardens receive invitations through the covered channels. The third waits for hand delivery, and unused dry sheets remain for another day.

Next: Who will carry the third invitation and record its later arrival?

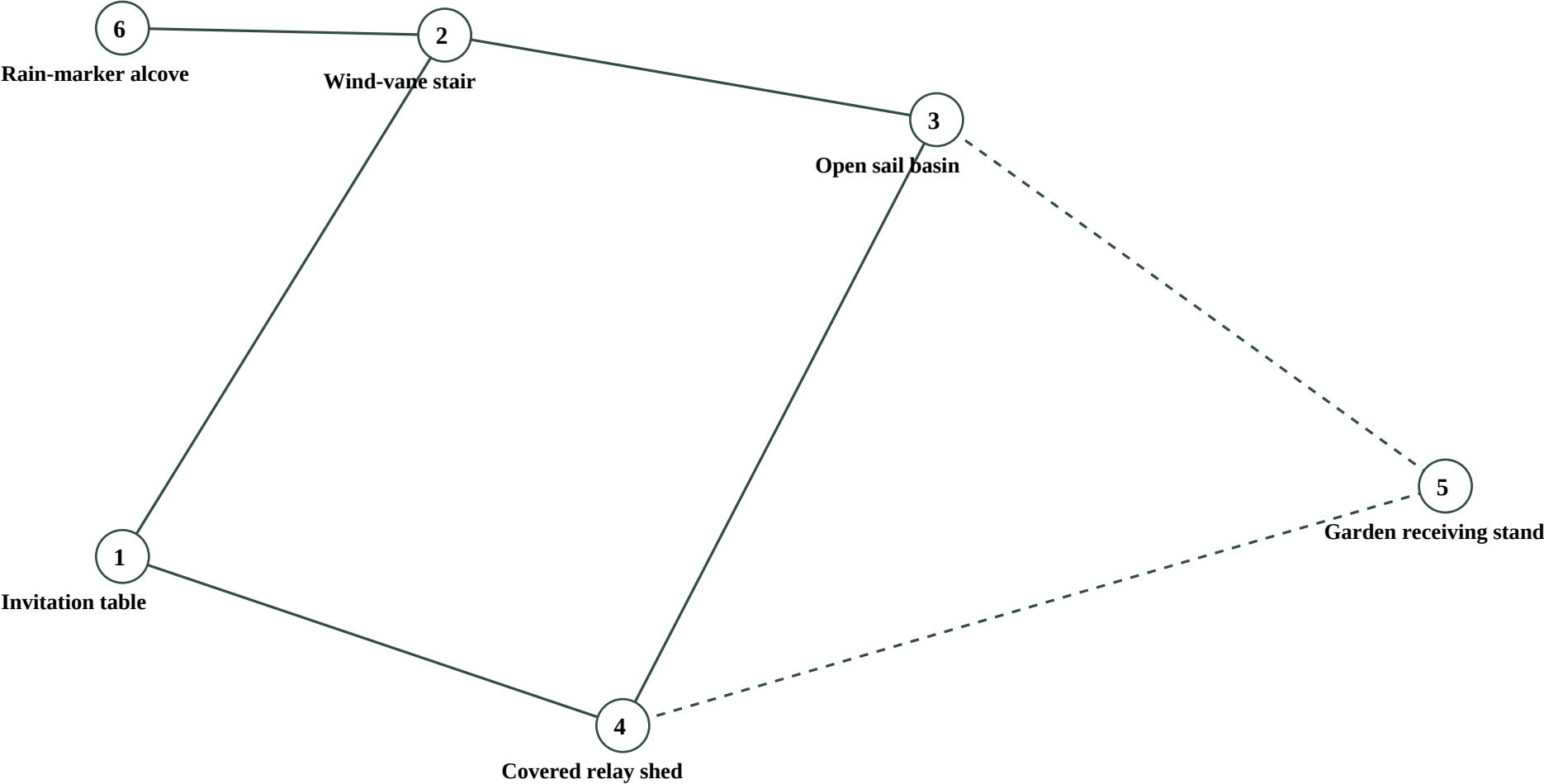
Ending: An invitation can wait dry

Requires: Available

Today's delivery is cancelled. Every bundle not delivered stays sealed and dry; the gardens will need a later invitation round.

Next: What preparation would make the next weather window easier?

Paper Sails Before the Rain - GM decision map



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