

The Starlight Caravan

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

A caravan must cross a misty meadow before its reception closes. Three star lamps and four water flasks can support either a marked ridge crossing or a slower sheltered hollow.

Content notice: Night travel and tired travelers. No one is abandoned; a staffed warm shelter remains available under every outcome.

GM overview

This is a route-budget decision with eight turns before reception closes, or six in the short game with weather already understood. The ridge plan spends two lamps placing markers before mist, one flask resting travelers, and the only cover for a two-turn crossing. The hollow plan spends one guide lamp, two flasks and two turns preparing the longer walk, then one turn arriving. At four turns remaining, mist prevents any new ridge marking; existing markers remain useful. At one turn, reception closes and arrival endings are unavailable, so the staffed meadow shelter becomes the partial outcome. Retrieving the optional star chart costs a lamp and two turns. It can fit some extended plans, but it must never silently consume the travelers' water or create extra daylight.

What is really happening

Mist covers the ridge when four work turns remain. Two star lamps placed early keep its markers readable. A rested party with one weather cover can then cross quickly. The hollow uses one guide lamp and more water to support a longer walk; it needs no ridge markers. Recovering a fallen star chart is useful tomorrow but consumes today's remaining margin.

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 star lamps glow beside four sealed water flasks. Across the meadow, the reception house lowers one shutter. A guide points toward a high ridge and a sheltered hollow.

Time and preparation

120 minutes: Tomorrow's chart has today's cost

Opening agreement: 10 minutes

Compare weather, route reserves and the chart: 30 minutes

Commit to a complete route: 35 minutes

Make the crossing or accept the staffed shelter: 35 minutes

Closure and debrief: 10 minutes

The hollow can recover the chart and still arrive: guide¹, chart², preparation², arrival¹ spends six of eight turns. An additional forecast turn consumes the final arrival margin and forces a real choice.

Starting information: The caravan's travel tally

Starting state: Turns before reception closes = 8; Star lamps = 3; Sealed water flasks = 4; Weather covers = 1;

Mist timing understood = false; Ridge markers lit = false; Travelers rested = false; Hollow guide supplied = false; Long walk prepared = false; Mist on the ridge = false; Reception closed = false; Fallen chart recovered = false

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

If the group gets stuck

After a late unmarked ridge, switch to the hollow only if a lamp, two flasks and four turns remain. Otherwise use the staffed shelter. A recovered chart is retained as a future benefit in a partial ending, but it never substitutes for the travelers' route preparation.

Meadow staging camp

Read aloud: The reception's far shutter lowers by a finger's width.

GM: Give the resource card. The warm shelter is staffed independently of these travel resources; using it cancels tonight's arrival, not anyone's safety.

Choice: Rest and water the travelers

Ask: Spend one flask and a turn before the faster crossing?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Turns before reception closes; Spend 1 Sealed water flasks. Travelers rested: true. Reveal Two complete travel plans

Result: The whole caravan rests together and checks its cover.

Weather watch

Read aloud: The guide has drawn a line at four remaining turns.

GM: Read the forecast as a fixed game fact, not a roll. It explains the marker deadline and can be skipped in the short route because the card is already available.

Choice: Read the mist and reception marks

Ask: Spend one turn confirming when the routes change?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Turns before reception closes. Mist timing understood: true. Reveal Mist and reception marks

Result: Nell confirms the four-turn mist and one-turn closing marks.

Ridge marker gate

Read aloud: Beyond the cups, white stones fade into drifting mist.

GM: Mark early with two lamps. Existing lamps keep the route readable after mist; a late unmarked ridge cannot be repaired by merely knowing the forecast.

Choice: Light both ridge markers early

Ask: Commit two lamps before the mist arrives?

Requires: Mist timing understood is true and Mist on the ridge is false and Turns before reception closes at least 5. Spend 1 Turns before reception closes; Spend 2 Star lamps. Ridge markers lit: true

Result: Two star lamps remain visible along the high route.

Choice: Cross by the marked ridge

Ask: Use the cover and two turns to reach reception together?

Requires: Ridge markers lit is true and Travelers rested is true and Reception closed is false and Turns before reception closes at least 4. Spend 2 Turns before reception closes; Spend 1 Weather covers

Result: The lit markers guide the covered caravan across the ridge before reception closes.

Closure: Two stars across the ridge

Sheltered hollow

Read aloud: A guide waits beneath a sign showing a longer but sheltered walk.

GM: Supply one guide lamp and prepare two flasks for the longer walk. The two-turn preparation represents a genuine slower route, not conversation that can be waived.

Choice: Supply the hollow guide's lamp

Ask: Commit one lamp to the longer sheltered route?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Turns before reception closes; Spend 1 Star lamps. Hollow guide supplied: true.

Reveal Two complete travel plans

Result: Oru lights the low approach and stays with the caravan.

Choice: Prepare the longer walk

Ask: Spend two flasks and two turns supporting the entire group?

Requires: Hollow guide supplied is true. Spend 2 Turns before reception closes; Spend 2 Sealed water flasks.

Long walk prepared: true

Result: The travelers take the slower sheltered stages together.

Choice: Complete the sheltered arrival

Ask: Spend the final walking turn while reception is still open?

Requires: Long walk prepared is true and Reception closed is false and Turns before reception closes at least

3. Spend 1 Turns before reception closes

Result: The caravan reaches the low reception gate with the guide.

Closure: The longer sheltered welcome

Fallen chart arbor

Read aloud: The map's corners shine behind a lattice of safe but awkward branches.

GM: Recovery spends one lamp and two turns. The chart is tomorrow's planning benefit; it is not necessary to reach tonight's reception.

Choice: Recover the fallen star chart

Ask: Spend a lamp and two turns on tomorrow's planning?

Requires: Available. Spend 2 Turns before reception closes; Spend 1 Star lamps. Fallen chart recovered: true.

Reveal Tomorrow's recovered stars

Result: The chart comes free intact; tonight's travel clock keeps running.

Reception house

Read aloud: Someone checks the clock beside a table of empty cups.

GM: Arrival is expressed by the ridge or hollow ending after the crossing action. Reaching this map node alone does not teleport the caravan or certify arrival.

Connections and changing routes

Meadow staging camp - Weather watch: Visit the weather guide. Available.

Weather watch - Ridge marker gate: Follow the high approach. Available.

Meadow staging camp - Sheltered hollow: Take the sheltered approach. Available.

Sheltered hollow - Fallen chart arbor: Visit the low arbor. Available.

Fallen chart arbor - Ridge marker gate: Use the marker service trail. Available.

Ridge marker gate - Reception house: Inspect the ridge reception path. Ridge markers lit is true.

Sheltered hollow - Reception house: Inspect the guide's low approach. Hollow guide supplied is true.

Ves - Caravan steward

Goal: Arrive together with a truthful supply count

Offers: Three lamps, four flasks and one cover.

Will not accept: No traveler is left behind to save time.

Voice: "Count a plan for everyone."

Nell Vale - Ridge guide

Goal: Mark the ridge before mist

Offers: Two marker cups and a fast crossing.

Will not accept: No unmarked crossing after the mist line.

Voice: "A lamp placed early is different from a lamp still in your bag."

Oru - Hollow guide

Goal: Support a longer sheltered walk

Offers: A route using one lamp and two flasks.

Will not accept: The extra walking time and water must be budgeted.

Voice: "The low path asks for patience, not bravery."

Discovery card: The caravan's travel tally

Give only when revealed in play.

Three star lamps. Four water flasks. One weather cover. Ridge: two lamps, one rest flask, one cover. Hollow: one lamp, two walking flasks. Chart recovery: one lamp and two work turns. Choose a complete plan for everyone.

Player task: Allocate supplies to a route and decide whether the chart fits.

GM answer: The two routes leave different reserves. The optional chart consumes timing margin even when materials remain.

Discovery card: Mist and reception marks

Give only when revealed in play.

At four turns remaining, mist reaches the ridge. Markers already lit remain readable. At one turn remaining, reception closes. Ridge crossing takes two turns; hollow arrival takes one after its two-turn preparation.

Player task: Work backward from a real arrival deadline.

GM answer: Ridge must be marked early; start a two-turn crossing with at least four turns so the arrival remains before closure.

Discovery card: Two complete travel plans

Give only when revealed in play.

Ridge: mark, rest, cross under the cover. Hollow: supply the guide, prepare the longer walk, arrive together. A staffed shelter at camp remains open even after reception closes.

Player task: Assign the preparation jobs and keep a complete fallback.

GM answer: Doing only a route's first job is insufficient. The shelter preserves safety while forfeiting tonight's arrival.

Discovery card: Tomorrow's recovered stars

Give only when revealed in play.

The chart shows seasonal routes beyond tomorrow's destination. It does not shorten tonight's paths. Mark recovered [] and the lamp and turns spent [].

Player task: Record a future benefit and its present opportunity cost.

GM answer: Chart recovery is deliberately optional; it must not grant a hidden time refund.

State sheet

Turns before reception closes: 8 (clock, minimum 0, maximum 8)

Star lamps: 3 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 3)

Sealed water flasks: 4 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 4)

Weather covers: 1 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 1)

Mist timing understood: false (knowledge)

Ridge markers lit: false (flag)

Travelers rested: false (flag)

Hollow guide supplied: false (flag)

Long walk prepared: false (flag)

Mist on the ridge: false (flag)

Reception closed: false (flag)

Fallen chart recovered: false (flag)

Event: Mist reaches the ridge

Trigger: Turns before reception closes at most 4

The ridge disappears into mist. Existing marker lamps remain usable; new marking is no longer possible.

Mist on the ridge: true

Event: Reception closes

Trigger: Turns before reception closes at most 1

The final reception shutter closes. The staffed meadow shelter remains available.

Reception closed: true

At any place: Recount the route supplies

Check the remaining time and supplies for the entire group?

Requires: Available. Reveal The caravan's travel tally

Ves lays out the remaining lamps, water and cover.

At any place: Use the staffed meadow shelter

Give up tonight's reception and rest together before an ordinary morning crossing?

Requires: Available.

A shelter attendant welcomes the whole caravan into warm rooms.

Ending: Two stars across the ridge

Requires: Ridge markers lit is true and Travelers rested is true

The caravan arrives together by the fast ridge. Two lamps and the weather cover are committed, while most water remains for tomorrow.

Next: Who retrieves the marker lamps when the weather clears?

Ending: The longer sheltered welcome

Requires: Hollow guide supplied is true and Long walk prepared is true

The group arrives by the hollow. The slower walk uses more water and preserves the weather cover and any unspent lamps.

Next: What should be replenished before the next long walking stage?

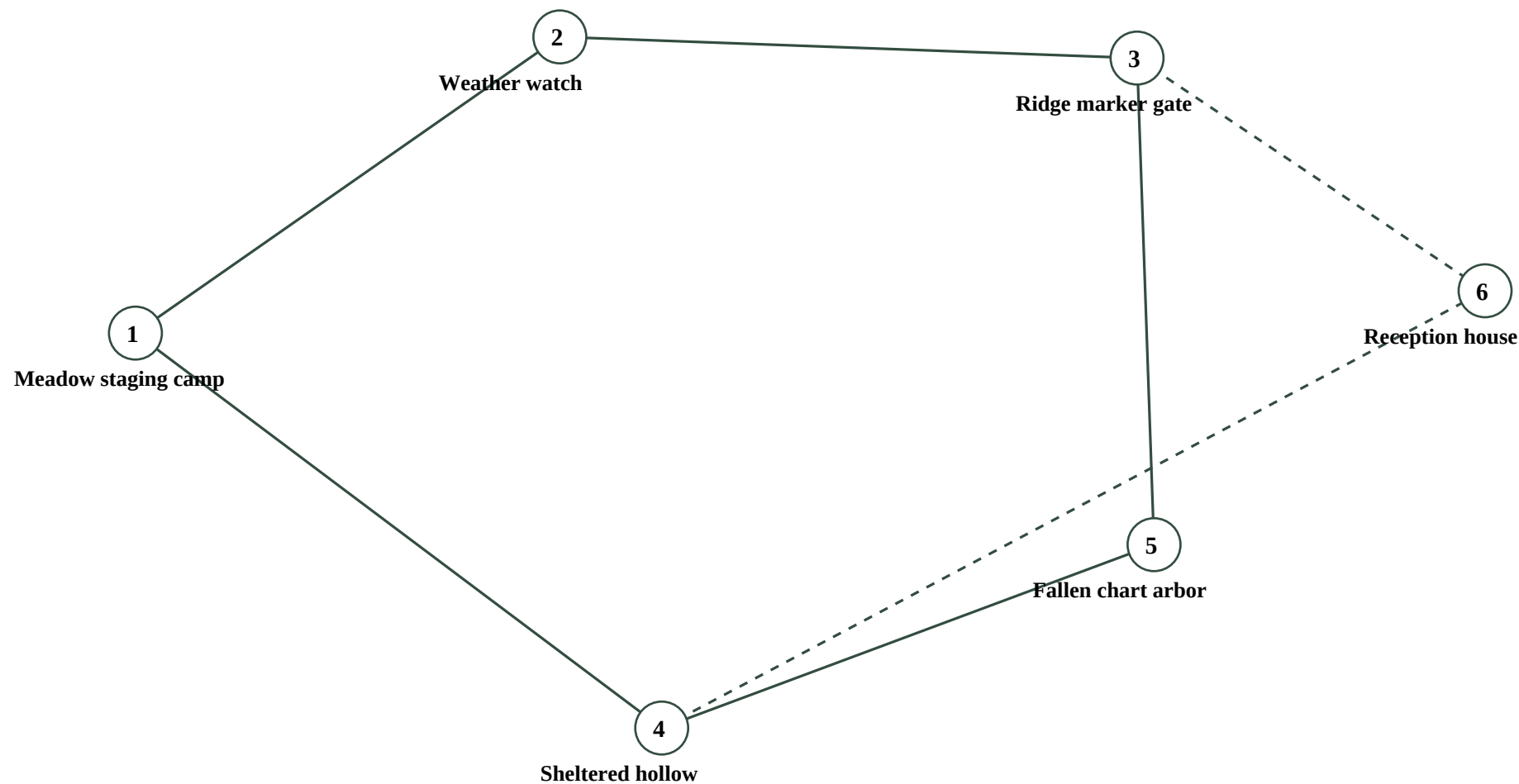
Ending: A warm night before the next crossing

Requires: Available

Tonight's reception is missed. Everyone rests in the staffed shelter, keeping whatever travel supplies remain for a morning departure.

Next: Which unfinished task belongs on tomorrow's first page?

The Starlight Caravan - GM decision map



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