

The Lighthouse in the Forest

120-minute plan · 4 players · Explore changing places

A lighthouse shines among the trees. Migrating birds circle it instead of finding their river, while its keeper insists the light saved a lost child.

Content notice: Heights and migrating animals. Use the ground-level service cord instead of the platform if preferred; no animal injury occurs.

GM overview

This is a landscape navigation problem, not a battle with birds. The camp connects to the ranger hut, bird clearing and cache; the river overlook confirms east independently of the chart. The clearing reaches the beacon by a slow quiet path, while old search ribbons reveal a shorter cache-to-stair route. The mirror platform offers direct adjustment; the service cord at the stair offers an accessible ground-level alternative with an extra work turn. Finite lanterns can be spent on a complete replacement trail or on one guarded camp refuge. End with the flock's direction and the actual travel service: fixed east beacon, slower lantern trail, or dark beacon with travellers waiting at camp.

What is really happening

Hessa lit the beacon during a successful child search. Its rotating mirror now imitates a river glint and traps the flock in a circle. The real river is east. A fixed eastward beam lets birds follow the real river while keeping a guide; extinguishing the beacon and marking the ranger trail also works but slows travellers.

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.

Pax counts silver wings circling a beam between the trees. A returned child's scarf hangs on the ranger sign. The search has ended; the great mirror is still searching.

Time and preparation

120 minutes: Compare the beacon with the walking trail

Opening agreement: 10 minutes

Read the chart and observe the birds: 25 minutes

Explore the supply loop and ribbon shortcut: 25 minutes

Lay the complete fixed-light route: 30 minutes

Darken the beacon and guide a group: 20 minutes

Closure and debrief: 10 minutes

Use hut - camp - clearing - hollow - cache, discover ribbons, lay the trail at hollow, then cache - stair - clearing - camp. Three lamps allow an actual replacement service; the alternative platform branch uses rest plus an extra overlook visit.

Starting information: Discover cards in play

Starting state: Quiet work turns = 8; Fixed trail lanterns = 3; Real river bearing verified = false; Search ribbon shortcut found = false; Flock resting rhythm observed = false; Mirror hinge secured = false; Mirror lowered for service = false; Mirror fixed east = false; Three-lantern trail laid = false; Great lamp extinguished = false

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

If the group gets stuck

If the stair-to-platform edge is blocked, the lowered-mirror actions provide a full alternative at the stair. If fewer than three lanterns remain, do not claim a complete trail: choose the fixed mirror or camp-until-dawn. Both recovery choices allow birds to leave without chasing them.

Forest camp

Read aloud: Pax offers a seat to a traveller who has stopped following the wandering beam.

GM: Camp is a safe waiting place. Final endings describe whether travellers can continue or must wait here.

Choice: Keep the fixed river guide

Ask: What rule will end the next search mode after a rescue?

Requires: Mirror fixed east is true.

Result: The flock departs and travellers keep a steady, useful beacon.

Closure: One steady line to the river

Choice: Open the slower fixed-lantern trail

Ask: Who walks the first group along the three stations?

Requires: Three-lantern trail laid is true and Great lamp extinguished is true.

Result: The flock leaves and the ranger trail carries travellers slowly to the river.

Closure: Three lights below the trees

Ranger hut

Read aloud: Demi weights the chart with pinecones. The north arrow points away from the lamp.

GM: The chart gives three trail stations and the service-cord instructions. It suggests east, but visit the overlook to verify the river rather than treating the chart alone as proof.

Choice: Read the night route and service cord

Ask: What can a traveller follow after the beacon is dark?

Requires: Available. Reveal Ranger trail chart

Result: The replacement trail and ground-level mirror option are public.

Bird clearing

Read aloud: Rin raises one finger when wings settle, then another when the beam returns.

GM: Observe a rest cycle to permit a quiet platform approach. The long stair route is always navigable, but direct mirror work waits for rest or uses the lowered service option.

Choice: Observe one quiet resting interval

Ask: Who will watch the flock while another works inside the rail?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Quiet work turns. Flock resting rhythm observed: true. Reveal Rin's quiet counts

Result: A calm platform approach is timed to the birds' rest.

River overlook

Read aloud: The water keeps its silver line when the lighthouse turns away. The false line on the leaves vanishes.

GM: Verify east for one turn. This is the landscape observation that makes the final mirror choice grounded.

Choice: Compare the real river with the moving glint

Ask: Point to the line that stays when the beacon turns away.

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Quiet work turns. Real river bearing verified: true. Reveal Two silver lines

Result: The group has an observed eastward bearing.

Beacon stair

Read aloud: Hessa holds the returned scarf. "It brought the child home. I did not notice it was keeping everyone else here."

GM: Lowering the mirror costs two turns and secures its hinge without platform access. The stair connects to clearing and overlook, so the party can circle the tower.

Choice: Use the service cord to lower and secure the mirror

Ask: Who calls the movement while Hessa handles the cord?

Requires: Available. Spend 2 Quiet work turns. Mirror hinge secured: true; Mirror lowered for service: true

Result: The mirror reaches a ground-level cradle, allowing the same adjustment without the platform.

Choice: Set EAST in the cradle and raise the fixed mirror

Ask: Who checks the fixed direction after Hessa raises it?

Requires: Real river bearing verified is true and Mirror lowered for service is true. Spend 1 Quiet work turns.

Mirror fixed east: true

Result: The secured mirror rises on its eastward mark and the birds follow the river.

Choice: Extinguish the great lamp

Ask: Which service is ready for travellers once the turning beam is gone?

Requires: Available. Great lamp extinguished: true

Result: The false river disappears. Birds orient toward the real water; travellers need the fixed trail or camp shelter.

Mirror platform

Read aloud: A narrow band of reflected light runs across the leaves like water that never flows away.

GM: With a rest observation, secure the hinge in one turn and align east in one more. Without platform access, lower and align from the stair.

Choice: Secure the hinge during the resting interval

Ask: Name the watcher and the hinge worker.

Requires: Flock resting rhythm observed is true. Spend 1 Quiet work turns. Mirror hinge secured: true

Result: The mirror is fixed under control inside the rail.

Choice: Fix the secured mirror on EAST

Ask: Confirm the beam joins the observed river line.

Requires: Real river bearing verified is true and Mirror hinge secured is true. Spend 1 Quiet work turns. Mirror fixed east: true

Result: The glint becomes a steady continuation of the real river. The flock begins to turn outward.

Lantern cache

Read aloud: The box lid carries three station symbols. A scarf-coloured ribbon disappears up a short path behind it.

GM: Inspect to reveal the search-ribbon shortcut and placement card. The 90-minute route has two lamps because one is already with a departing patrol; that lamp cannot return tonight. The 120-minute route has all three. Laying the complete trail spends three actual lamps.

Choice: Trace the old search ribbons

Ask: Add the short path to the shared map and count the lamps.

Requires: Available. Search ribbon shortcut found: true. Reveal Search ribbons and lamp hooks

Result: A short cache-to-stair route is discovered.

Sheltered trail hollow

Read aloud: The wandering beam cannot reach this dip. A fixed lamp hook waits at an ordinary walking height.

GM: Lay the three-lantern trail here as an abstract crew task covering the chart's three stations. It costs two turns; the path loops back to camp through the cache.

Choice: Place all three fixed lanterns

Ask: Name the three stations from departure to river approach.

Requires: Available. Spend 2 Quiet work turns; Spend 3 Fixed trail lanterns. Three-lantern trail laid: true

Result: Each bend has its next fixed light. The trail is slower than the beacon route but continuous.

Connections and changing routes

Forest camp - Ranger hut: Ranger path. Available.

Ranger hut - River overlook: Charted ridge. Available.

River overlook - Beacon stair: East descent. Available.

Forest camp - Bird clearing: Quiet woodland path. Available.

Bird clearing - Beacon stair: Long resting-bird trail. Available.

Beacon stair - Mirror platform: Railed stair. Available.

Forest camp - Lantern cache: Supply path. Available.

Lantern cache - Sheltered trail hollow: Marked lantern route. Available.

Sheltered trail hollow - Bird clearing: Lower trail. Available.

Lantern cache - Beacon stair: Discovered search-ribbon shortcut. Search ribbon shortcut found is true.

Pax - Camp watcher

Goal: Let the birds depart before their rest period.

Offers: A safe camp and a direct observation of the circling flock.

Will not accept: Will not send waiting travellers onto an unmarked dark trail.

Voice: Give a count, then a direction.

Demi - Ranger

Goal: Keep a usable night route for travellers.

Offers: The lamps currently at camp, a chart and staffed shelter.

Will not accept: The full night trail needs all three stations, not a token lamp at the entrance.

Voice: Ask what a traveller sees after the next bend.

Rin - Bird observer

Goal: Show where the real river lies without disturbing the flock.

Offers: Rest rhythm and the river overlook.

Will not accept: No chasing or startling birds to force a result.

Voice: Pause to watch before speaking.

Hessa - Beacon keeper

Goal: Keep the search light's benefit without trapping migration.

Offers: Mirror access and a ground-level service cord.

Will not accept: Hinge must be secured before alignment; she will extinguish rather than leave a loose mirror.

Voice: Begin with the rescue she values, then accept evidence of the new cost.

Discovery card: Ranger trail chart

Give only when revealed in play.

Three fixed-light stations: camp departure, sheltered hollow, river approach. The real river lies east. A complete night route requires all three stations; otherwise travellers wait at camp. Beacon service cord lowers the mirror to the stair.

Player task: Budget lantern counters and compare a walking route with a fixed beacon.

GM answer: All three lanterns support the alternative travel service; the service cord avoids the height route.

Discovery card: Two silver lines

Give only when revealed in play.

River line: remains visible when the beacon turns away; runs east beyond the trees. Leaf line: appears only under the turning mirror. Draw an arrow from the tower toward the line that stays.

Player task: Choose the bearing from observed landscape, not from the moving beam.

GM answer: Fixing the beam east joins the real river glint and releases the flock.

Discovery card: Rin's quiet counts

Give only when revealed in play.

Beam over leaves: wings circle. Beam away: wings settle. During the settled interval, two people can reach the inside rail without passing under the flock. Mark one watcher and one hinge worker.

Player task: Plan the quiet platform approach and assign two roles.

GM answer: The rest knowledge permits the one-turn hinge action.

Discovery card: Search ribbons and lamp hooks

Give only when revealed in play.

Scarf-coloured ribbons: cache - short wooded rise - beacon stair. The trail needs three lanterns. Count the lamps actually in the box; a lamp still with a patrol cannot be used here. Hooks on the ranger chart match the three symbols on the box lid.

Player task: Add the discovered shortcut to the map and place each lantern on a station.

GM answer: The shortcut connects supplies directly to Hessa; the lamp symbols enable the alternative trail.

State sheet

Quiet work turns: 8 (clock, minimum 0, maximum 8)

Fixed trail lanterns: 3 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 3)

Real river bearing verified: false (knowledge)

Search ribbon shortcut found: false (knowledge)

Flock resting rhythm observed: false (knowledge)

Mirror hinge secured: false (flag)

Mirror lowered for service: false (flag)

Mirror fixed east: false (flag)

Three-lantern trail laid: false (flag)

Great lamp extinguished: false (flag)

Event: The flock's long rest approaches

Trigger: Quiet work turns at most 2

Rin asks for a final decision. Two work turns can finish a prepared mirror or lay the lantern trail; camp shelter always remains.

At any place: Ask Hessa to darken the lamp and hold travellers at camp

How will the camp welcome those whose journey must wait?

Requires: Available. Great lamp extinguished: true

Hessa extinguishes the lamp by its service cord. Birds leave; travellers wait safely at camp until daylight.

Ending: One steady line to the river

Requires: Mirror fixed east is true

The birds follow the joined silver line. Hessa keeps a fixed guide for travellers and posts a rule for ending future search rotations.

Next: Demi and Rin review the search setting together before the next migration.

Ending: Three lights below the trees

Requires: Three-lantern trail laid is true and Great lamp extinguished is true

The great beacon goes dark. Birds find the river, while travellers follow a slower but continuous chain of small fixed lights.

Next: Assign a ranger to collect the finite lanterns after the last group arrives.

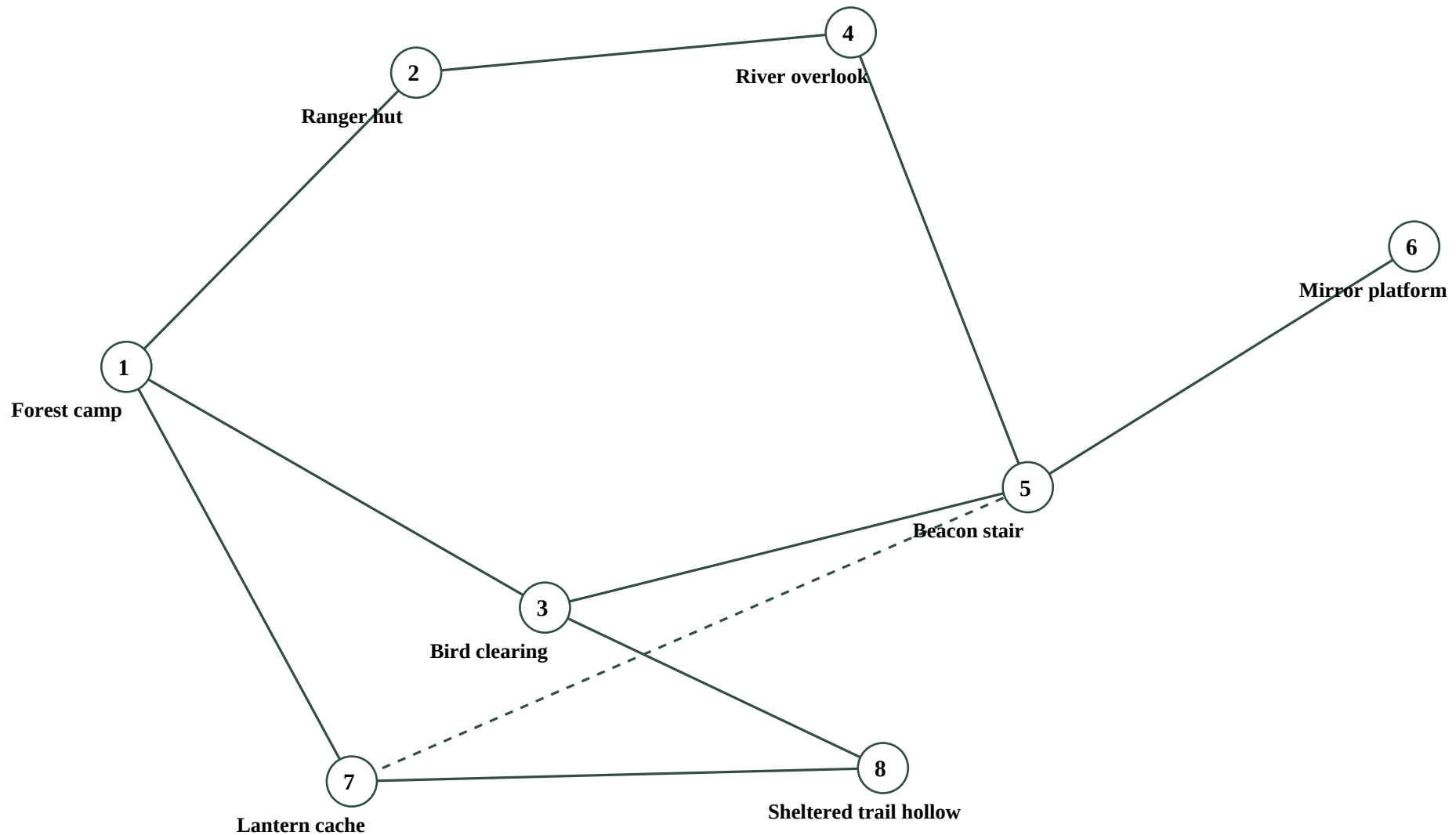
Ending: A quiet wait beneath the branches

Requires: Available

The beacon is dark and the birds depart. Travellers share the camp until morning; no one claims the night route is open.

Next: Hessa and Demi choose tomorrow's permanent guide using the observed river bearing.

The Lighthouse in the Forest - GM decision map



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