

The Orchard That Forgot Spring

120-minute plan · 4 players · Bring people together

Spring reaches every field except one orchard. Its caretaker blames a sleeping tree spirit; a dry channel suggests a more practical secret.

Content notice: Crop loss and scarce water; no starvation scenes. A player may speak for an invented household without discussing their own needs.

GM overview

Play three parties with different powers: Lena and Anja represent the nursery and control its gate; Daro represents orchard growers and supplies the lifting crew; Moss represents the fair and can reassign its volunteers. The pear spirit witnesses the result but cannot create water. Put three water counters on the allocation card. No party agrees to a vague promise: nursery needs its one-share floor, growers need two shares and a public inspection, and the fair needs either blossom or a named smaller programme. Invite players to make a concrete proposal, then use the matching action. There is no secret persuasion roll. Anja admits the diversion when shown the frost record; blame neither grants nor removes water. After two negotiations, ask each player which duty their character will take.

What is really happening

Anja diverted irrigation to the nursery during a frost. A pear root then jammed the return sluice. The tree spirit is awake and withholding blossom to conserve water. The sustainable split is one share to the nursery and two to the orchard; emergency buckets preserve saplings but cannot restore the full blossom this week.

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.

Bare branches frame a lane of yellow flowers. Moss ties blank ribbons to the gate. "The nursery wants water, the growers want water, and the fair wants an answer. Please bring back a plan that someone can actually carry."

Time and preparation

120 minutes: Hear the alternatives and staff the rota

Opening agreement: 10 minutes

Inspect the record and hear Anja: 20 minutes

Compare full flow with carrying duty: 25 minutes

Trade the procession for volunteers: 25 minutes

Staff the rota and meet the spirit: 30 minutes

Closure and debrief: 10 minutes

Visit shed - bank - gate - bank - sluice - pear. Five crew turns allow both proposed bargains to be heard before choosing; the recommended bucket branch preserves spare channel water and sacrifices the procession, not the nursery.

Starting information: Discover cards in play

Starting state: Available channel shares = 3; Crew work turns = 5; Nursery accepts protected share = false;

Growers accept public inspection = false; Fair plan = undecided; Shared flow restored = false; Bucket rota staffed = false; Channel split understood = false; Well route checked = false

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

If the group gets stuck

If a faction declines, repeat its concrete minimum once, then offer the other programme. If the split record is unavailable, well-survey and fair-small establish a complete independent bucket branch. At any point pause postpones the fair with the orchard problem visibly unresolved.

Orchard gate

Read aloud: Moss puts three cups on a bench. "Tell me who gets each one, and who does the carrying."

GM: Moss has three fair volunteers. Reassigning them replaces the blossom procession with a ribbon supper. A public inspection needs only a posted name and date, not an extra token.

Choice: Book a blossom fair after verified flow

Ask: What does the notice say if the repair must wait?

Requires: Available. Fair plan: blossom

Result: Moss prints a conditional programme and keeps the smaller supper ready.

Choice: Trade the procession for carrying shifts

Ask: Which part of the fair becomes the smaller ribbon supper?

Requires: Well route checked is true. Fair plan: supper

Result: Three pairs of fair volunteers accept bounded carrying shifts. The procession is cancelled openly.

Seed shed

Read aloud: Lena opens a blanket just far enough to show new green leaves. A frost date is written on every tray.

GM: Inspect the split to receive two observations: emergency timing and the measured channel. Lena accepts one reliable share; she refuses a plan that makes saplings depend on leftover water.

Choice: Compare frost dates and measure the split

Ask: Which fact concerns the emergency, and which concerns the water today?

Requires: Available. Channel split understood: true. Reveal Seed tray record, Three-cup allocation board

Result: The minimum shares fit exactly. Lena places her nursery counter beside the one-share mark.

Choice: Guarantee the nursery share

Ask: Who checks the nursery gauge after the sluice opens?

Requires: Channel split understood is true. Spend 1 Crew work turns. Nursery accepts protected share: true

Result: Lena accepts the protected share; Anja lends her brace and agrees to post the diversion record.

Nursery bank

Read aloud: Daro lays his shovel across the bridge. "We can lift together. We cannot agree that the orchard gets whatever is left."

GM: Daro supplies the root crew once two shares and an inspection are promised. The well footpath stays dry; checking it supports the bucket alternative.

Choice: Promise two shares and an inspection

Ask: Name the first inspection pair and a day when the public can attend.

Requires: Nursery accepts protected share is true. Spend 1 Crew work turns. Growers accept public inspection: true

Result: Daro brings the lifting crew. The inspection duty remains after tonight's story.

Choice: Check the well route

Ask: Mark who can carry and who can organise relief without carrying.

Requires: Available. Well route checked: true. Reveal Carrying rota

Result: The dry route can support a bucket rota; it cannot restore all the flowers.

Choice: Start the signed bucket rota

Ask: Read the first two names and the relief time aloud.

Requires: Well route checked is true and Fair plan is supper. Spend 2 Crew work turns. Bucket rota staffed: true; Nursery accepts protected share: true

Result: The first carriers start work. The nursery can wait for a repair crew, while the orchard stays mostly bare.

Root sluice

Read aloud: Anja stops tugging and shows you the root brace. "I saved the nursery in the frost. Then I could not get the water back."

GM: One crew turn frees the root only after both allocation parties agree. Follow the chalk split; do not ask players for real irrigation technique. The root is supported, never cut.

Choice: Lift the brace and divide the channel

Ask: Who calls the lift, watches the nursery notch, and records the new flow?

Requires: Nursery accepts protected share is true and Growers accept public inspection is true. Spend 1 Crew work turns; Spend 3 Available channel shares. Shared flow restored: true. Reveal Anja's brace marks

Result: The root settles safely. One share runs to the nursery and two to the orchard; no spare share remains.

Old pear tree

Read aloud: Two branches creak like a chair being pulled to a table. "I can spare flowers when the roots can spare water."

GM: The spirit observes actual flow. It offers one symbolic blossom for a staffed temporary rota, full blossom for restored flow, and no magical substitute for an unstaffed promise.

Choice: Show the flow and keep the inspection promise

Ask: What will the characters check at next week's public inspection?

Requires: Shared flow restored is true and Fair plan is blossom.

Result: Water reaches the old roots; white buds open along the fair lane.

Closure: Three shares, one spring

Choice: Ask for one blossom for the smaller fair

Ask: Who carries the single blossom, and who takes the next bucket turn?

Requires: Bucket rota staffed is true.

Result: The spirit gives one flower. The blank ribbons become part of the supper rather than a false promise.

Closure: A flower and a carrying song

Connections and changing routes

Orchard gate - Seed shed: Seed lane. Available.

Seed shed - Nursery bank: Tray path. Available.

Nursery bank - Root sluice: Dry footbridge. Available.

Root sluice - Old pear tree: Root bank. Available.

Old pear tree - Orchard gate: Ribbon walk. Available.

Orchard gate - Nursery bank: Public well path. Available.

Seed shed - Old pear tree: Keeper's orchard path. Available.

Moss - Fair committee

Goal: Give the village a fair it can honestly support.

Offers: Three volunteers and the fair noticeboard; can replace the procession with a ribbon supper.

Will not accept: Will not advertise full blossom before water runs; volunteers need a dated, bounded duty.

Voice: Count the jobs on your fingers, then ask who takes each.

Track: Fair plan

Lena and Anja - Nursery partnership

Goal: Keep frost-damaged saplings supplied and admit the diversion.

Offers: Access to the nursery gate, the measured split, and Anja's root brace.

Will not accept: One of the three channel shares must remain the nursery's; no night-long bucket duty for one person.

Voice: Lena states the minimum; Anja explains the mistake plainly.

Track: Nursery accepts protected share

Daro - Orchard growers

Goal: Restore two shares and make future diversions visible.

Offers: A cooperative lifting crew and a weekly inspection rota.

Will not accept: No unrecorded diversion; growers do not provide a crew for an allocation that leaves their roots dry.

Voice: Ask for a date, a mark on the gauge, and a name.

Track: Growers accept public inspection

Discovery card: Seed tray record

Give only when revealed in play.

Frost night: nursery gate opened. Next morning: orchard gauge dry. Four days later: root brace delivered, return lever still jammed. All nursery trays bear the frost date.

Player task: Arrange the entries and distinguish the emergency decision from the continuing fault.

GM answer: The diversion answered a real frost; the continued drought comes from the jam, not a sleeping

spirit.

Discovery card: Three-cup allocation board

Give only when revealed in play.

Three equal channel shares are available. Nursery minimum: 1. Orchard flowering level: 2. Write each destination beside a cup. Space below: inspection day, named pair, public gauge reading.

Player task: Place three counters, negotiate their destinations, and sign the inspection duty.

GM answer: The feasible full-flow agreement is nursery 1 / orchard 2 with public review.

Discovery card: Carrying rota

Give only when revealed in play.

The public well path is dry. Morning, noon, evening: write two willing carriers beside each turn. Fair volunteers can cover three pairs if the procession becomes a ribbon supper. Buckets keep young trees alive; they do not fill the orchard channel.

Player task: Assign invented volunteers and cross out the programme that loses their time.

GM answer: A staffed rota protects saplings and earns one symbolic blossom; it has a visible fair cost.

Discovery card: Anja's brace marks

Give only when revealed in play.

The root rests on a padded brace. Two handprints mark the lifting places; the lever arrow starts after the root-clear line. Two channel notches are marked ORCHARD and one NURSERY.

Player task: Explain the order and nominate a caller before committing the crew.

GM answer: Once the agreement exists, a single careful crew turn frees the jam and sets the agreed split.

State sheet

Available channel shares: 3 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 3)

Crew work turns: 5 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 5)

Nursery accepts protected share: false (stance)

Growers accept public inspection: false (stance)

Fair plan: undecided (stance)

Shared flow restored: false (flag)

Bucket rota staffed: false (flag)

Channel split understood: false (knowledge)

Well route checked: false (knowledge)

Event: The crew needs its next assignment

Trigger: Crew work turns at most 1

Daro asks for one final useful job. Repair needs one turn after agreement; a new bucket rota needs two. Make the remaining choice visible.

At any place: Postpone the fair and request a daylight crew

What can you honestly promise before leaving?

Requires: Available. Fair plan: postponed

Moss posts a postponement. Lena keeps the existing nursery supply; the orchard repair remains unfinished.

Ending: Three shares, one spring

Requires: Shared flow restored is true

The pear tree fills with blossom. Nursery and growers can point to their own gauge marks, and Moss opens the fair beneath a public inspection notice.

Next: At the next inspection, ask Anja to report a changed water need before moving either gate.

Ending: A flower and a carrying song

Requires: Bucket rota staffed is true

One blossom sits above a smaller supper. The nursery survives on a rota, the orchard waits, and the volunteers know when their duty ends.

Next: Name the daylight repair crew and decide who covers the first missed carrying shift.

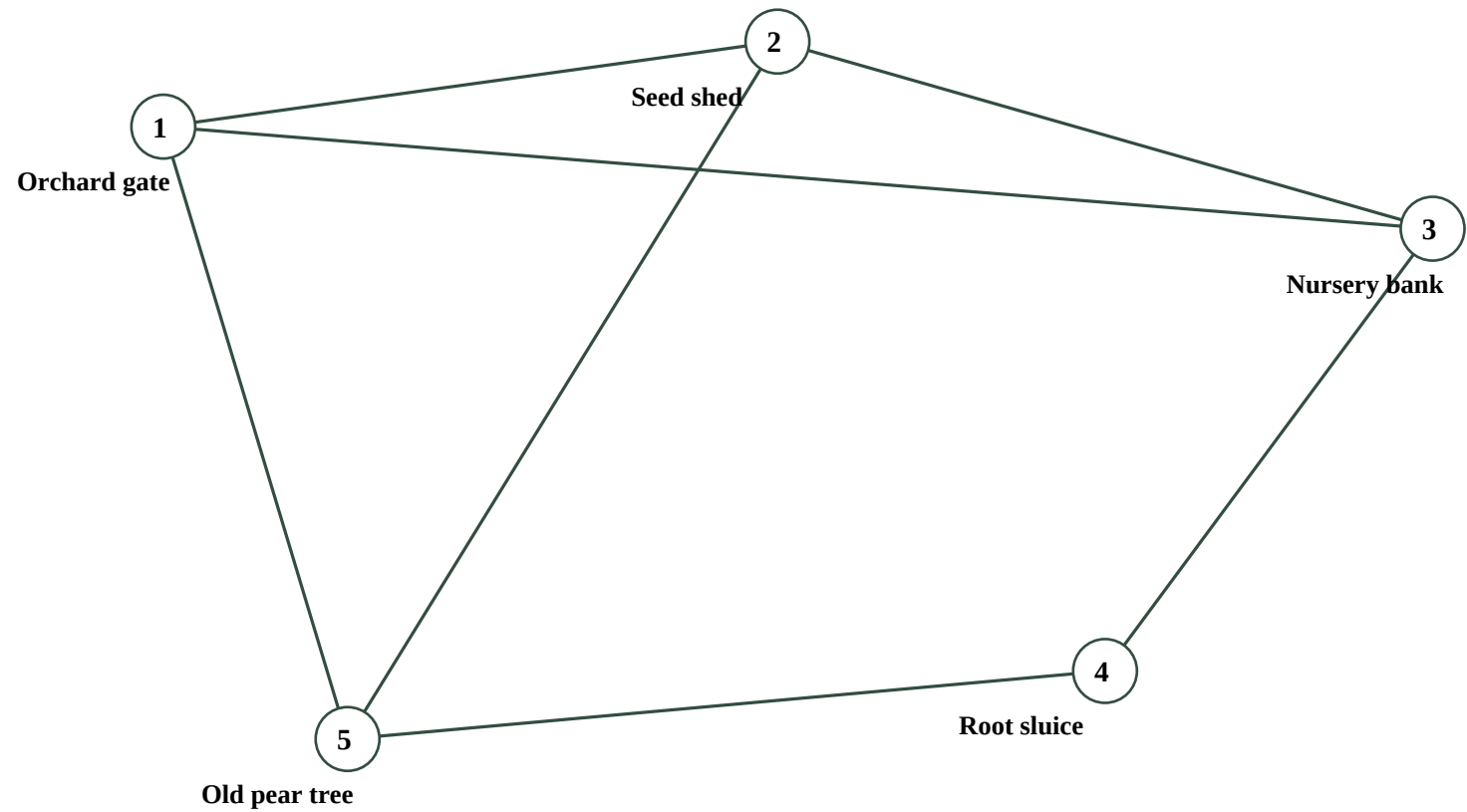
Ending: Blank ribbons kept honestly

Requires: Available

The fair waits. The nursery keeps its emergency water, but the orchard has not recovered; no one claims that a posted request is a completed repair.

Next: Moss reconvenes nursery and growers at the next daylight inspection.

The Orchard That Forgot Spring - GM decision map



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