

The Rain Collector's Secret

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

The square's taps are dry while an upper cistern overflows. A repair sleeve and three public carts are the town's only ready resources before the next shower.

Content notice: Flooding and scarce water, without illness or injury scenes. All pipe operations are fictional tabletop procedures, not real engineering instructions.

GM overview

The coming-shower clock has six work windows in the short game and eight in the full game. Travel and discussion are free; physically committing crews or equipment spends printed windows. Put one sleeve and three cart tokens on the table. Draining one cart plus fitting the sleeve restores the pipe; reserving two carts for a distribution circuit bypasses the pipe but postpones other deliveries. The high cistern must be relieved before either final supply action. Jun opens the valve house on arrival and explains the crack without a persuasion test. A dry inspection walkway links valve house and cistern after relief; before then use the cart depot and roof approaches. No success depends on dangerous climbing. At one window, bring both remaining supply choices into the conversation.

What is really happening

Jun isolated a cracked low-district pipe and diverted too much flow into the high cistern. Draining excess into one cart buys the conditions for a sleeve repair. A two-cart distribution circuit also relieves the cistern, but those carts then cannot carry market goods. No one stole the water.

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.

Asha holds an empty cup under the dry square tap. On the roof above, a gutter spills continuously. Bo arrives with one copper sleeve. Wren arrives with three cart tokens. Neither asks who should be blamed first.

Time and preparation

120 minutes: Let both districts see the allocation

Opening agreement: 10 minutes

Compare records and hear both districts: 20 minutes

Assign carts and the roof watch: 25 minutes

Inspect, drain, and complete physical work: 35 minutes

Choose equal flow or a public delivery circuit: 20 minutes

Closure and debrief: 10 minutes

Play Wren's watch as a deliberate labor investment, and let the group negotiate which deliveries wait. Eight windows permit checking both approaches; the single sleeve and three carts still prevent unlimited experiments.

Starting information: Discover cards in play

Starting state: Work windows before the shower = 8; Uncommitted public carts = 3; Matching repair sleeve = 1; Cracked branch isolated = false; Cistern excess relieved = false; Sleeve fitted = false; Distribution circuit reserved = false; Roof overflow watch posted = false

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

If the group gets stuck

The depot-cistern ground road bypasses a blocked roof walk. With the sleeve unavailable, cart-circuit followed by publish-rota provides water at a visible transport cost. With no carts or time, reserve-supply suspends normal collection and states that repair is unfinished.

Dry square

Read aloud: Asha has divided the board into two columns: water and everything waiting for water.

GM: Asha asks players to decide which deliveries a cart rota would displace. Public reserve water sustains everyone if the group closes with emergency supply.

Choice: Compare dry and overflowing records

Ask: Show Asha how the two observations might describe the same diversion.

Requires: Available. Reveal Two-district flow record

Result: The group can account for the water without accusing a missing carrier.

Choice: Start the public cart rota

Ask: Name the first streets served and the displaced deliveries that Asha must explain.

Requires: Distribution circuit reserved is true. Spend 1 Work windows before the shower

Result: The square's first cups fill from a scheduled delivery while the crack stays isolated.

Closure: Water takes the road

Pipe workshop

Read aloud: Bo rolls the sleeve across the bench until its painted mark meets the pipe drawing.

GM: The sleeve is already available as inventory. Inspecting provides the sequence; there is no extra purchase or equipment hunt.

Choice: Review the sleeve sequence with Bo

Ask: Who checks isolation, who receives the drain load, and who fits the sleeve?

Requires: Available. Reveal Bo's repair sequence

Result: Bo confirms the single sleeve matches the cracked branch.

Public cart depot

Read aloud: One cart carries bread baskets, one repair timber, and one an empty tank.

GM: Any of the three can be reassigned. Ask whose delivery waits when two are committed; do not secretly declare one cart unusable.

Choice: Lay out all three cart commitments

Ask: Which deliveries could wait if water needs two carts through tomorrow?

Requires: Available. Reveal Three cart commitments

Result: Asha records the deliveries that a water circuit would displace.

Guarded roof walk

Read aloud: Bright cloth is tied to every turn of the rail. Wren watches the water instead of the street below.

GM: Posting Wren here costs a work window but adds one later usable window when the warning event fires. The ground route remains equally legitimate.

Choice: Give Wren a dedicated overflow watch

Ask: Spend one window now so Wren can catch a later safe pause in the shower?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work windows before the shower. Roof overflow watch posted: true

Result: Wren stays at the marked lip and signals the next useful pause.

Valve house

Read aloud: Jun steps away from the wheel. "I stopped one leak and moved the problem uphill. Here is exactly where."

GM: Isolating the cracked branch is required for a sleeve repair. Jun operates the fictional mechanism after the players name their plan.

Choice: Ask Jun to mark the entire diversion

Ask: Trace the cracked branch, cistern, and ground drain together.

Requires: Available. Reveal Jun's marked branch map

Result: Jun's map makes both routes and the closed branch public.

Choice: Secure the cracked branch for Bo

Ask: Keep the damaged branch closed while the other crew drains excess?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work windows before the shower. Cracked branch isolated: true

Result: Jun confirms that the cracked branch is isolated.

Choice: Spend the sleeve on the isolated crack

Ask: Give Bo two windows for a documented repair while the cistern stays relieved?

Requires: Cracked branch isolated is true and Cistern excess relieved is true. Spend 2 Work windows before the shower; Spend 1 Matching repair sleeve. Sleeve fitted: true

Result: The sleeve is fitted and Bo marks the repair on the public map.

Choice: Restore equal flow to both districts

Ask: Reopen the repaired configuration and show Asha both wheel marks?

Requires: Sleeve fitted is true and Cistern excess relieved is true. Spend 1 Work windows before the shower

Result: Both districts receive the same modest pressure.

Closure: Two modest running taps

High cistern service court

Read aloud: The drain outlet has room for a cart hose. Above it, the overflow lip shines wet.

GM: Both drain actions occur from the service court. A single cart drain supports later pipe repair; a two-cart circuit commits transport to the bypass supply.

Choice: Relieve the cistern into one cart

Ask: Commit one cart and one window, keeping two carts free for other work?

Requires: Available. Spend 1 Work windows before the shower; Spend 1 Uncommitted public carts. Cistern excess relieved: true

Result: The overflow stops and the inspection walkway dries.

Choice: Reserve a two-cart distribution circuit

Ask: Bypass the damaged pipe and postpone the chosen deliveries until tomorrow?

Requires: Available. Spend 2 Work windows before the shower; Spend 2 Uncommitted public carts. Cistern excess relieved: true; Distribution circuit reserved: true

Result: Two carts begin a repeating circuit, and the cistern falls below its lip.

Connections and changing routes

Dry square - Pipe workshop: Craft lane. Available.

Dry square - Public cart depot: Cart road. Available.

Pipe workshop - Valve house: Pipe service lane. Available.

Public cart depot - Guarded roof walk: Guarded stair. Available.

Public cart depot - High cistern service court: Ground-level drain road. Available.

Guarded roof walk - Valve house: Railed return walk. Available.

Guarded roof walk - High cistern service court: Court stair. Available.

Valve house - High cistern service court: Dry inspection walkway. Cistern excess relieved is true.

Asha - Square organizer

Goal: Provide a fair, visible water schedule.

Offers: Delivery records and access to the emergency reserve.

Will not accept: Will not promise equal pipe service while the crack remains open.

Voice: Asks which street is next.

Bo - Pipe craftsperson

Goal: Fit the sleeve only after the branch is isolated.

Offers: One matching sleeve and practical labor.

Will not accept: Will not conceal the remaining crack under a supply announcement.

Voice: States the order before touching a tool.

Wren - Overflow watcher

Goal: Keep the route and cistern level visible.

Offers: A warning watch and the cart allocation board.

Will not accept: Cannot watch the lip and drive a cart simultaneously.

Voice: Reports measurements, then the time to act.

Jun - Rain collector

Goal: Undo the unequal diversion and make its reason public.

Offers: Valve access, the crack map, and either supply plan.

Will not accept: Will not reopen the damaged branch before a sleeve is fitted.

Voice: Admits what he changed in the first sentence.

Discovery card: Two-district flow record

Give only when revealed in play.

Low pipe stopped at dusk. High cistern overflow began the same night. Total collected rain unchanged. Place an arrow showing where you think the missing flow went.

Player task: Trace a conservation-of-water explanation before choosing a repair.

GM answer: The records describe a diversion between districts, not vanished or stolen water.

Discovery card: Bo's repair sequence

Give only when revealed in play.

One matching copper sleeve. Isolate cracked branch. Drain high excess to a cart. Fit sleeve. Reopen both balancing wheels equally. Mark each completed step in order.

Player task: Assign separate isolation, drain, and repair roles and check dependencies.

GM answer: Pipe restoration requires both isolation and relief; fitting uses the only sleeve.

Discovery card: Three cart commitments

Give only when revealed in play.

Cart 1: empty tank. Cart 2: bread baskets. Cart 3: repair timber. One relief load returns a cart later. A distribution circuit reserves two carts through tomorrow. Cross out the deliveries your circuit postpones.

Player task: Make the transport opportunity cost visible before spending cart tokens.

GM answer: The two-cart route is reliable, but it consumes transport that other work needs.

Discovery card: Jun's marked branch map

Give only when revealed in play.

West branch: low-district crack. East branch: overfull cistern. Ground drain reaches service court. Inspection walkway stays wet until the cistern is relieved. Equal wheel marks belong to the repaired configuration.

Player task: Choose an approach and trace a route that avoids the wet walkway.

GM answer: The map permits a ground approach before relief and a shortcut afterward.

State sheet

Work windows before the shower: 8 (clock, minimum 0, maximum 8)

Uncommitted public carts: 3 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 3)

Matching repair sleeve: 1 (resource, minimum 0, maximum 1)

Cracked branch isolated: false (flag)

Cistern excess relieved: false (flag)

Sleeve fitted: false (flag)

Distribution circuit reserved: false (flag)

Roof overflow watch posted: false (flag)

Event: Wren spots a useful shower gap

Trigger: Roof overflow watch posted is true and Work windows before the shower at most 3
Wren's warning gives the crews one additional work window before they must shelter.
Work windows before the shower: +1

Event: Rain darkens the roof

Trigger: Work windows before the shower at most 1
One work window remains. Read out the available final supply choices and the reserve-water closure.

At any place: Use reserve water and suspend normal collection

Call the reserve team and accept rationed deliveries until the pipe is checked?
Requires: Available.
Asha opens the public reserve and Jun suspends collection. Repair and ordinary transport wait.

Ending: Two modest running taps

Requires: Sleeve fitted is true
Both districts receive water through the repaired system. Jun's map keeps the crack and the repair visible instead of hiding the diversion.
Next: Who witnesses tomorrow's pressure check?

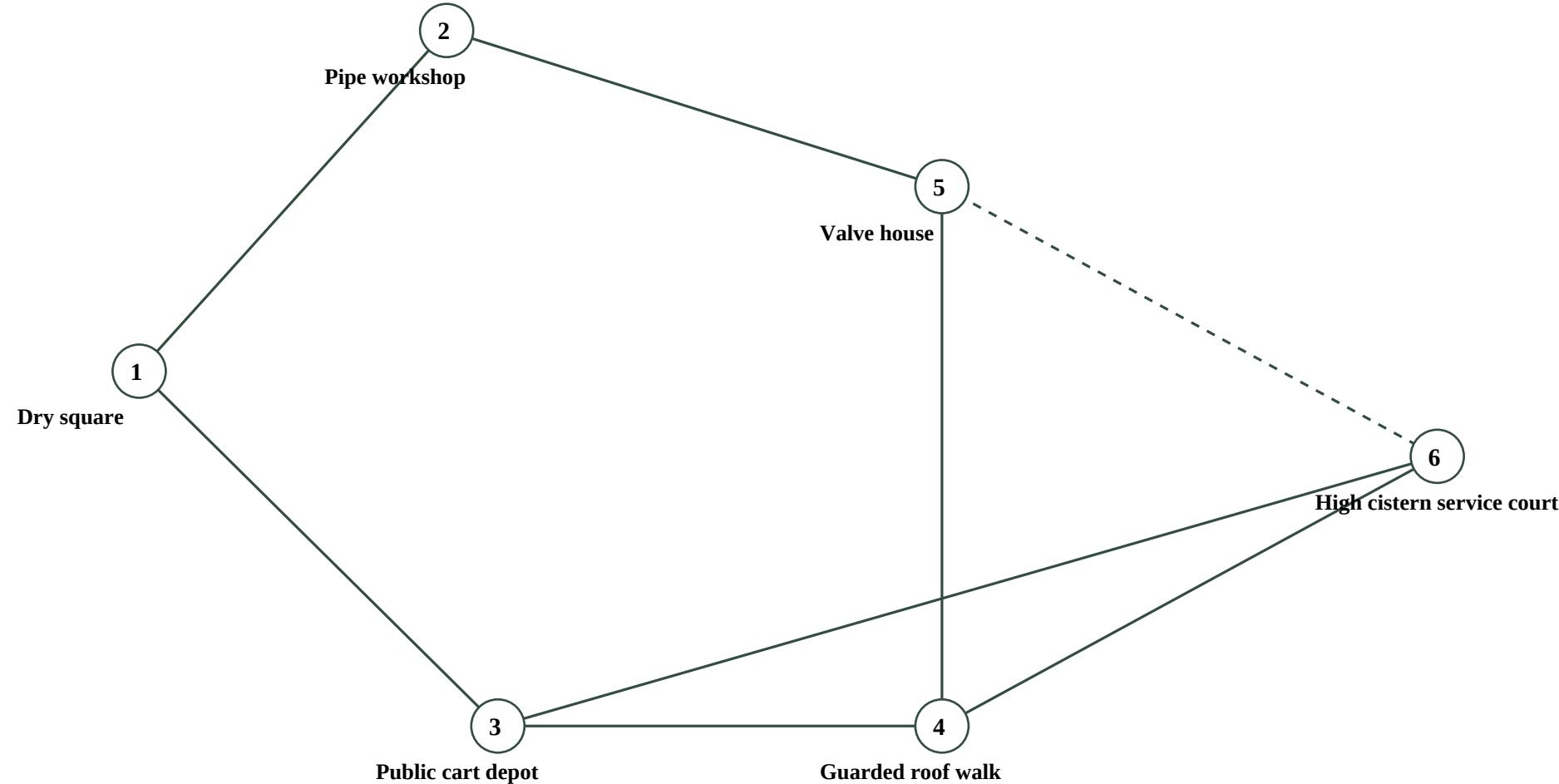
Ending: Water takes the road

Requires: Distribution circuit reserved is true
Water reaches each street by cart. Bread and timber deliveries wait, and the damaged pipe remains a named repair on the board.
Next: Which postponed delivery receives help first tomorrow?

Ending: A reserve and a repair date

Requires: Available
The town uses its limited reserve while collection is suspended. People have a clear temporary schedule, and normal supply remains unfinished.
Next: Choose the first repair appointment and its public witness.

The Rain Collector's Secret - GM decision map



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