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Shadows of the State

A 90-minute investigative simulation involving a poisoned lake, six interconnected factions with secret alliances and shared guilt, and a town seeking to identify the culprit.



Greenwell Lake, in the once-struggling town of Merrinport, is dying. Industrial waste, fashion-factory runoff, political negligence, complicit media, wealthy hypocrisy and working-class survival shortcuts have all played a part. Six factions sit around the investigator's table to debate a single question: which faction is the biggest threat to the lake? Each faction has one public alliance and one secret liability with another faction. Strategic 'true-action' cards let factions deflect blame in dramatic moments. The vote at the end appears to find a culprit, but the educational pivot of the debrief is that the search for 'the' culprit is itself the trap.



CHECKMATE
to Climate Misinformation

Game at a Glance

Theme	Climate change, industrial pollution, systemic responsibility, and how blame gets distributed (or evaded) in a polluted system
Format	Investigation-style faction game with reflection and debate stages, leading to a vote on the 'biggest threat'
Duration	Approximately 90 minutes
Participants	6 factions of 2–3 players each (12–18 total), plus 1 facilitator playing the Investigator
Recommended age	16+
Difficulty	Medium - short but emotionally and structurally complex
Space	One room with six clearly-separated faction tables and a central facilitator position
Materials	Character cards, case files, faction-tie cards, fact cards, misinformation cards, true-action cards, faction-colour name tags, lake/town map (optional), voting cards
Central question	Which faction poses the greatest threat to the health of Greenwell Lake?
Special feature	Every faction has one public alliance and one secret liability with another faction. No faction is innocent. The educational point is systemic responsibility, not finding 'the' culprit.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the simulation, participants will be able to:

1. Recognise that pollution rarely has a single cause, and that the search for 'the' guilty party can itself become a way to evade collective responsibility.
2. Distinguish factual claims from misinformation in the heat of accusation and counter-accusation.
3. Experience how alliances and hidden interests shape what a faction is willing to say in public, and how that shapes the public picture of the truth.
4. Practise active listening and argumentation in a fast-paced, time-bounded debate.
5. Reflect on systemic responsibility for environmental harm: every group justified its choices in survival, growth, prestige or political necessity terms, the lake still got sick.

The Story

It is the year 2030. The country of Euronía, a mid-sized EU member state, has committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in line with the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement.

Transport remains Euronía's Achilles' heel, responsible for nearly a quarter of all carbon emissions. Despite progress in renewable energy and urban sustainability, the number of petrol and diesel cars on the roads has continued to rise. Public concern is growing: summers are hotter, wildfires more frequent, smog has become a recurring winter phenomenon. Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Environment and Transport has proposed a historic measure: by 2035, the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned nationwide.

The proposal has divided the nation. Supporters hail it as a turning point, the policy that will finally put Euronía on track toward a clean, modern economy. Critics call it unrealistic, elitist, or even dangerous for jobs and rural mobility.

Meanwhile, the information landscape has become chaotic. Social media is overflowing with articles, videos and influencer takes on EVs, some accurate, others misleading or emotionally charged. Hashtags like #GreenFuture, #CarFreedom and #BatteryTruths dominate online discourse. Politicians watch public opinion closely. The government insists that science and environmentalists support the ban, pointing to studies showing that EVs emit 65% less CO₂ over their lifetime compared to petrol cars. But viral posts claim battery production causes more harm than good, and that 'electric cars pollute more than diesel.'

In this tense environment, the government has convened an Urgent Society Meeting, a public consultation bringing together the country's most influential stakeholders.



The Story

Merrinport was once little more than a handful of fishing huts and scattered farmland on the verge of being erased from the maps. The lake that sustained the town, Greenwell Lake, was small but clean, and life was harsh but simple. Families struggled to survive, schools were underfunded, and the streets were often empty.

Everything changed when Viktor Goldbane, an ambitious industrialist, arrived with the promise of revitalisation. He established steel mills, chemical plants and shipping operations near the lake. His factories promised jobs and economic revival, but at the cost of bending environmental regulations. The local population, desperate for opportunity, flocked to these new industries.

Around the same time, Miranda Vain, a charismatic entrepreneur in textile and fashion, saw potential in Merrinport as a hub for 'eco-luxury'. She opened dyeing workshops and fashion factories, promising both prestige and jobs. However, her chemical processes were far from benign, and she relied on the existing industrial infrastructure for waste disposal, creating hidden, shared pollution pathways.

Amid this growth, a political figure emerged: Conrad Lumen, a man of ambition and charm. His election as Mayor was quietly supported by Goldbane's industrial shadow and Vain's sponsorship of public projects. Lumen promised prosperity for all, touting green initiatives and economic recovery. In return, he relaxed oversight, gave tax exemptions and provided permits without thorough scrutiny, creating a fragile but thriving system of dependency.

The Media Circle, represented by Seren Quill, played a subtle yet powerful role. Their outlets celebrated Merrinport's rise, glorifying 'eco-progress' while ignoring the creeping environmental hazards. They received sponsorship and access from both industrial and fashion enterprises, amplifying their narrative while suppressing inconvenient truths.

The population divided naturally along lines of wealth and opportunity. Wealthy townsfolk like Sally Hollow profited from investments in factories, fashion brands and real estate, enjoying luxury estates along the lake while quietly dumping private chemical waste. Poor townsfolk like Bran Harrow worked in hazardous conditions, burned waste for warmth, or used cheap chemicals for farming, unwittingly contributing to runoff.

Now the lake is sick, the town is anxious, and the truth is hidden beneath layers of convenience, loyalty and moral compromise. Every faction is complicit, yet each believes they can escape accountability.

Lake Greenwell, once the heart of the town, is showing alarming signs of decline. Residents have reported fish dying along the shores, unusual coloration and odours in the water, and changes in local wildlife behaviour. The lake's condition has sparked public concern, and questions are arising about what is causing the disruption.

There is disagreement over the source of the contamination, who is responsible for protecting the lake, and how to act quickly while balancing economic and social concerns. The situation is tense, and all groups have been called to a town debate to assess the situation, share perspectives and propose solutions.

Roles Overview - Four Dimensions

Six factions sit around the table. Each faction has a colour, a representative character and a set of public concerns. Each also has one alliance and one secret liability with another faction (see Annex 4B). Print the metadata below as a master reference; the full character cards and faction-tie cards are in the annexes that follow.

Business Syndicate	Viktor Goldbane - Industry & infrastructure, progress that bleeds the land
Fast Fashion Guild	Miranda Vain - Commerce & culture, glamour and denial
Mayor's Council	Conrad Lumen - Politics & authority, order at any cost
Media Circle	Seren Quill - Information & manipulation, narrative for profit
Rich Citizens	Sally Hollow - Wealth & influence, luxury built on pollution
Working Class	Bran Harrow - Labour & survival, harm justified as necessity
The Investigator (the facilitator)	Julian Cross - the town's appointed Investigator. Unlike in the other CHECKMATE games, you have an in-game character, a neutral mediator who introduces the case, distributes clues, and presides over the rounds. Julian asks questions but does not steer toward a verdict. Your job is to keep the debate productive, time-bounded and inclusive.

Step-by-Step Facilitator Flow

Phase 0 - Setup (before participants enter)

- Arrange six clearly separated faction tables. Place a colour-coded name tag on each (use the colours in the roles table above).
- Lay out each faction's case file face-down: character profile, public summary of concerns, and the faction-tie card (Annex 4B).
- Optional: print and post a simple map of Greenwell Lake and surroundings on a central wall.
- Have the fact, misinformation and true-action cards (Annex 4C) ready in three separate piles, kept out of sight.
- Test your timer; this game runs in 90 minutes and time discipline is essential.

Phase 1 - Briefing (10 min)

Introduce yourself as Julian Cross, the Investigator. Read the situation summary aloud (the lake-in-crisis text from Annex 4 background). Explain the rules:

- Each faction will receive a case file containing their character profile, their public concerns, and a confidential faction-tie card showing one alliance and one secret liability.
- The faction-tie card is private. Do not show it to anyone outside your team.
- During debate phases, only one person speaks at a time. The Investigator manages the queue.
- At the end of the game, all factions will vote on which faction is the biggest threat to the lake.
- You may attack arguments, never people. Disagreement is welcomed; insults are not.

Distribute the case files. Read out the central question once more: 'Which faction poses the greatest threat to the health of Greenwell Lake?'

Phase 2 - Faction meeting (25 min, private)

Factions read their case files privately, discuss strategy with their team, and decide what they will say publicly and what they will hold back. Walk between tables; clarify procedure but not content. Pay particular attention to whether teams have understood their faction-tie card, the alliance and the secret liability are central to their strategy.

TIP - If a team is stuck

Ask them three questions: 'What is your public message? What is your private worry? Who is your most useful ally and your biggest risk in this room?'

Phase 3 - Round 1: First Clues (15 min)

Reconvene as the town debate. Read the first batch of fact and misinformation cards aloud, pull from the piles in Annex 4C, mixing two facts and two pieces of misinformation. Hand printed copies to all factions.

After reading the cards, open the floor. Each faction has up to two minutes to make an opening statement: who they are, what they believe is happening, and what they think the council should do. Hold the time strictly. Do not yet allow rebuttals.

Phase 4 - Round 2: Debate (10 min)

Open the debate. Factions may now question and respond to each other. Speaking time remains two minutes per intervention; use the placard system.

This is the round in which alliances and frictions emerge. Watch for the moment a faction publicly defends another (the alliance) versus the moment a faction redirects pressure toward another (the secret-liability dynamic). Do not name what you are seeing, let the players feel it.

Optional twist: deal one true-action card to each faction at the start of this round. The card is a strategic resource, they may play it at any time during the remaining rounds to deflect blame, expose someone, or reinforce their innocence. They are not obliged to play it.

Phase 5 - Round 3: Revelations (5 min, optional)

If you are running the longer (90+ min) version of the game, introduce a single revelation here: read out one further fact card AND one further misinformation card. Allow factions a brief huddle. This round sharpens the picture before the final vote.

Skip this phase?

If your group is moving fast and the debate has already reached an emotional pitch, skip Phase 5 and go straight to the final debate and vote. The revelations phase exists to inject new energy in groups that have stalled. Use your judgement.

Phase 6 - Final debate & verdict (10-15 min)

Open the final debate. Each faction has one closing statement (up to two minutes) summarising why they are NOT the greatest threat, and, if they choose, naming who they think is. After all six closing statements, call the vote.

The voting question is: 'Which faction poses the greatest threat to the health of Greenwell Lake?' Each faction casts one vote. Factions cannot vote for themselves. Tally on the flipchart; announce the verdict.

Crucially: the verdict is not the moral of the game. The moral comes in the debrief, when you reveal that every faction was complicit. The vote is dramaturgy, not justice.

Phase 7 - Debrief (15-20 min)

Step out of the simulation. The educational pivot of Shadows of the State is that the search for the single biggest threat distracts from the actual answer: every faction contributed, every faction had reasons, every faction is partially right and partially complicit. Use the debrief questions on the next page to surface this.

Debrief - Specific Questions for This Game

Use the 4Fs questions from Chapter 7 of Part I as your scaffold; the questions below are tailored for the systemic-responsibility lesson at the heart of this game.

- Which faction did you vote for as the 'biggest threat'? Why?
- If you played a faction: at what moment did you feel most under attack? At what moment did you feel safest?
- Did your alliance hold? When did your secret liability come close to being exposed?
- Looking back at the case files, can you reconstruct WHY your faction acted the way it did? Was your character malicious, or were they making understandable choices in a bad system?
- Pollution in the real world rarely has a single cause. How does the urge to find 'the' guilty party affect how we respond to climate change and environmental harm?
- Can you spot mis-, dis- or malinformation in any of the cards or in arguments people made during the game? Where?
- If Merrinport were a real town, what would actually need to change? Whose job would the change be?

THE REVEAL - FACILITATOR'S SCRIPT

After the vote and the questions above, name the design of the game explicitly. Suggested wording:

'Whichever faction received the most votes, they were not THE answer. Every faction in this room poisoned the lake, every faction had reasons that made sense to them at the time, and every faction was tied to at least one other faction by an alliance or a secret liability. The Investigator's verdict, in the end, is that there is no single villain. There is a system. And in that system, the question is not who do we blame, but what do we change?'

Annex 4A - Character Cards

Print one card per character. Distribute confidentially to each faction at the start of Phase 2.

Each card includes a backstory, public concerns, and a behavioural profile.





PERSONAL INFORMATION (CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **VIKTOR GOLDBANE**

Faction: **Business Syndicate**

You are the cold-hearted face of the Business Syndicate, a sprawling network of factories, financiers and power-brokers that controls the region's economy with an iron grip. A master of manipulation and ruthless tactics, you have built your empire on exploitation and environmental degradation, profiting from industries that poison the land, air and water. Behind your sharp suit and polished demeanour, you value money and power above all else, and you will do whatever it takes to preserve your control.

Your public message:

- The Syndicate gave Merrinport its second life. Without your factories, this town would have died decades ago.
 - Your operations meet every applicable regulation. The lake's problems must lie elsewhere.
 - If anyone is to blame, look at the unregulated activities of small operators, the burning, the dumping, the casual chemicals that poor families use because they have no alternative.
-

What you secretly know:

Your industrial pipelines have been quietly used by the Fast Fashion Guild for dye disposal. The arrangement was discreet, untraceable, and recently you have begun hinting to others that Vain is the real culprit. You believe shifting blame is your best move. (See your faction-tie card.)

Behavioural profile - how Viktor speaks:

Cold, smooth, never raises his voice. Speaks in short sentences with long pauses. Knows everyone's weakness in the room.

Fluent in corporate language: 'scale', 'efficiency', 'compliance regime'. Treats environmental concerns as 'externalities'.

Watchwords: 'Let's be realistic', 'the alternative is decline', 'who else would have built this town?'.



PERSONAL INFORMATION (CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **MIRANDA VAIN**

Faction: **Fast Fashion Guild**

You built your empire on colour: deep violets, shimmering silks and the promise of beauty without consequence. As the glamorous face of the Fast Fashion Guild, you transformed textile production into a cultural phenomenon, persuading the townsfolk that style symbolised progress. Your signature 'Violet Luxe' dye became an emblem of wealth and refinement. Recently, you have embraced the eco-fashion movement, presenting yourself as a leader in sustainable luxury.

Your public message:

- Eco-fashion is the future. You have invested heavily in sustainable processes.
 - The lake's contamination cannot be linked to your factories, your dyes are certified safe.
 - It is unfair that your industry, which employs hundreds of women in skilled work, is being scapegoated.
-

What you secretly know:

Your factories dispose of dye waste through the Business Syndicate's pipeline, and Viktor has begun hinting that you are the main polluter. If he exposes the deal, your eco-luxury brand collapses overnight. You also rely on Sally Hollow's social patronage and on Seren Quill's friendly press to maintain your image.

Behavioural profile - how Miranda speaks:

Charm offensive. Compliments people, name-drops, performs concern. Cries on cue if challenged.

Fluent in eco-marketing: 'conscious luxury', 'ethical sourcing', 'our journey toward'. Hates direct questions about specific chemicals.

Watchwords: 'our community of artists', 'we are leading the way', 'the real conversation should be about...'.



PERSONAL INFORMATION (CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **CONRAD LUMEN**

Faction: **Mayor's Council**

You have dedicated your leadership to the safety and well-being of Merrinport's citizens. Your responsibilities extend to environmental policies and the management of the town's natural resources. You have served as Mayor for three years and have been a loyal member of the Social Party since the start of your political career. You remain committed to your vision of supporting those in need and fostering a community built on fairness and progress. Yet, as the demands of governance grow more complex, you often find it challenging to stay true to the values that once guided you.

Your public message:

- You have presided over the town's renaissance: more jobs, better schools, modern infrastructure.
 - The Council takes environmental concerns seriously and has commissioned reviews.
 - Hasty accusations damage public trust. The proper way to handle this is through formal investigation.
-

What you secretly know:

Goldbane's industries financed your 'Clean Growth' platform; you protect his operations publicly even when they violate standards. You also hold a stack of unanswered petitions from Bran Harrow about toxic waste in his district. If those letters surface, your image as 'the Mayor who saved Merrinport' is destroyed.

Behavioural profile - how Conrad speaks:

Measured, pastoral, paternalistic. Gestures broadly. Loves the camera; loves a sweeping vision. Fluent in political reassurance: 'we are listening', 'due process', 'together as a community'.

Watchwords: 'we will not rush to judgement', 'the people of Merrinport deserve better than blame games', 'a fair process'.



PERSONAL INFORMATION (CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **SEREN QUILL**

Faction: **Media Circle**

As the leading voice of the Media Circle, you have mastered the art of storytelling: turning crises into headlines and headlines into influence. Your calm, melodic tone gives weight to every report, soothing even as it stirs unrest. Some admire your courage in exposing corruption; others whisper that your pen is guided less by principle than by profit. You insist your only loyalty is to the truth, though what that means depends on the day, the story and the audience.

Your public message:

- The media's role is to serve the public; you are here to ensure the truth comes out.
 - You have been investigating this story for weeks and intend to publish a definitive account.
 - The public deserves clarity, not propaganda from any side.
-

What you secretly know:

Vain provides exclusive access, sponsorship and ad revenue; in exchange, you have ignored evidence of her violations. Sally Hollow secretly holds a stake in your media outlet, and you have praised her foundation publicly, even though your staff discovered her drainage system pollutes the lake. Exposure of either tie ruins your credibility.

Behavioural profile - how Seren speaks:

Articulate, melodic, slightly performative. Loves a quotable line. Pivots between gravitas and outrage.

Fluent in narrative framing: 'the real story here is...', 'sources tell me', 'our investigation reveals'.

Watchwords: 'the public's right to know', 'follow the evidence', 'a story worth telling'.



PERSONAL INFORMATION

(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **SALLY HOLLOW**

Faction: **Rich Citizens**

Born into a wealthy family, you enjoy the comforts of a luxurious life surrounded by opulence and privilege. Your estate stands in stark contrast to the environmental degradation that surrounds it, an elite enclave built on the very pollution you turn a blind eye to. Deep down, you know that the prosperity you enjoy is funded by industries that harm the planet, but rather than confront this truth, you contribute to charities. These donations cleanse your conscience, masking complicity with acts of superficial goodwill. Despite your good intentions, you remain blissfully unaware of the deeper consequences of your actions, living in a bubble of luxury while the world outside suffers.

Your public message:

- You are a major patron of environmental charities and have a long record of public service.
 - Your tax contributions and donations keep this town's services running.
 - Wealth is not a crime; you should not be punished for being successful.
-

What you secretly know:

Your estate's drainage system quietly releases waste into the lake. Bran Harrow's family once worked your land before you privatised it; he has long resented you and probably knows. You sponsor Miranda Vain's shows and present her 'ethical brand' as a model of virtuous wealth, together you have crafted the illusion that luxury and morality coexist.

Behavioural profile - how Sally speaks:

Warm, slightly distant, used to being listened to. Talks about her foundation a lot. Laughs nervously when the lake is mentioned.

Fluent in philanthropic language: 'giving back', 'doing my part', 'our family has always cared deeply about...'.

Watchwords: 'I have always supported this town', 'surely we can be civilised about this', 'my heart is with the lake'.



PERSONAL INFORMATION (CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **BRAN HARROW**

Faction: **Working Class**

You have spent your life on Merrinport's worn edges, where the hum of machinery never stops and fuel clings to the wind. A skilled mechanic at the Greenwell Lake docks, you kept the town's boats and engines alive while the town above you glittered. You know every bolt, every motor, every shortcut people take when the inspectors aren't looking. Power was never handed to people like you, but you have learned to use what influence you can find. When the water grew darker and the air thicker, you saw proof: the wealthy's comfort came at the cost of your people's health. Part activist, part survivor, you don't care what they call you, as long as someone finally listens.

Your public message:

- The lake is killing your community first. Your kids are sick, your neighbours are scared, and nobody in power has listened.
 - You have been petitioning the Mayor for years, the only response - silence.
 - The wealthy and the industries blame each other; the working class pays the price either way.
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What you secretly know:

You hold copies of the Mayor's ignored petitions, your strongest leverage against political negligence. You also know the people in your own community use cheap chemicals, burn waste for warmth, and cut corners, not from malice, but from poverty. If you reveal everything, you might endanger jobs and subsidies for your neighbours. You are not innocent either.

Behavioural profile - how Bran speaks:

Direct, working-class register, blunt, occasionally bitter. Doesn't bother with polite language when angry. Fluent in lived experience: stories, not statistics. Names neighbours, names places, names symptoms.

Watchwords: 'we know what's happening down by the docks', 'nobody up the hill cares', 'my kids breathe this every day'.



PERSONAL INFORMATION

(CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT)

Full Name: **JULIAN CROSS**

Faction: **The Investigator (facilitator)**

You play the Investigator. Your job is to preserve balance and encourage meaningful debate without steering the players toward any particular conclusion. Help participants uncover connections, challenge misinformation, and reflect on collective responsibility.

Your tasks:

- Introduce the setting and distribute character kits and faction-tie cards.
- Clarify rules, timing and objectives.
- Read fact and misinformation cards aloud at the appropriate moments.
- Manage the queue, time, and flow between rounds.
- Stay strictly neutral until the final debrief.
- In the debrief, name what was misinformation, what was true, and what was systemic.

Annex 4B - Faction-Tie Cards

Each faction receives one tie card.

The card lists their alliance with one faction and their secret liability to another.

The tie card stays inside the faction; it is not shown to other tables.



BUSINESS SYNDICATE

VIKTOR GOLDBANE

ALLIANCE - Mayor's Council

You and Mayor Conrad Lumen built Merrinport's 'revival' together. You funded his campaigns; he relaxed industrial safety regulations. Your partnership is highly visible, too public to fail and too risky to be exposed.

SECRET LIABILITY - Fast Fashion Guild

Miranda Vain's factories use your chemical disposal network. Her dyes are colouring the lake faster than your steel runoff, and she has begun hinting that YOU are the main polluter. If she speaks, both your operations are at risk.

FAST FASHION GUILD

MIRANDA VAIN

ALLIANCE - Rich Citizens (Sally Hollow):

Sally is your social patron. Her elite circles wear your designs and fund your 'eco-fashion' shows. You rely on her influence to maintain the public image of innocence.

SECRET LIABILITY - Business Syndicate:

Your factories quietly dispose of dye waste through Viktor Goldbane's industrial pipeline network, which empties into the lake. The arrangement was discreet, efficient and untraceable, until now. Viktor has begun hinting to others that you are the true source of the contamination. If he exposes the deal, your eco-luxury image and entire reputation collapse overnight.

MAYOR'S COUNCIL

CONRAD LUMEN

ALLIANCE - Business Syndicate:

Goldbane's industries finance your 'Clean Growth' platform. Your political career depends on this partnership; you protect his operations publicly even when they violate environmental standards.

SECRET LIABILITY - Working Class (Bran Harrow):

Bran Harrow has petitioned you repeatedly about toxic waste in his district, but you ignored him. If those letters ever surface, your image as 'the Mayor who saved Merrinport' could be destroyed.

FAST FASHION GUILD

MIRANDA VAIN

ALLIANCE - Fast Fashion Guild:

Miranda Vain provides exclusive access, sponsorship and ad revenue. In exchange, you have ignored evidence of her environmental violations, trading integrity for prestige.

SECRET LIABILITY - Rich Citizens:

Sally secretly holds a stake in your media outlet. You have praised her foundation publicly, but one of your staff discovered that her estate's drainage system pollutes the lake. Exposure could ruin your credibility.

RICH CITIZENS

SALLY HOLLOW

ALLIANCE - Fast Fashion Guild:

You sponsor Miranda's shows and present her 'ethical brand' as a model of virtuous wealth. Together, you craft the illusion that luxury and morality can coexist.

SECRET LIABILITY - Working Class (Bran Harrow):

Bran's family once worked your estate before you privatised the land. You have concealed the fact that your drainage system still releases waste into the lake. He knows, and harbours resentment.

FAST FASHION GUILD

MIRANDA VAIN

ALLIANCE - Rich Citizens (Sally Hollow):

You once maintained Sally's boats, preserving a tenuous connection despite old resentments. Her influence could amplify your voice and give your community leverage.

SECRET LIABILITY - Mayor's Council:

You hold copies of the Mayor's ignored petitions. These are your only leverage against political negligence, but revealing them could endanger jobs and subsidies for your neighbours.

Annex 4C - Clue Cards

Three types of cards are used during the game.
Print one set, cut along the lines, and keep them in three labelled piles, read aloud during Rounds 1 and 3.

Hand one card to each faction at the start of Round 2. The faction may play the card at any time during the remaining rounds, by reading it aloud, to deflect blame from themselves and onto another faction. They are not obliged to play it.



True facts (read aloud during Rounds 1 and 3)

FACT 1

Industrial wastewater is one of the main sources of lake pollution. In many regions, factories discharge untreated or partially treated wastewater containing heavy metals and chemicals.

FACT 2

Lakes near industrial zones often contain high concentrations of mercury, lead and arsenic, residues from manufacturing and mining operations.

FACT 3

The fashion industry is responsible for around 20% of global wastewater and 10% of total carbon emissions.

FACT 4

Dyeing and finishing fabrics pollute lakes with high levels of synthetic chemicals, including azo dyes and formaldehyde.

FACT 5

Linked supply chains amplify water pollution. When multiple factories share drainage or suppliers, their combined discharge overwhelms treatment capacity.

Misinformation (read aloud during Rounds 1 and 3, mixed in with facts)

MISINFORMATION 1

The new factories follow all international standards.
The foam on the lake is just harmless minerals.

MISINFORMATION 2

Both our companies invested in filtration technology years ago, there's no way
our waste leaks out.

MISINFORMATION 3

Environmentalists misinterpret fashion-waste data. Our sustainability team
found no evidence of pollution.

MISINFORMATION 4

Independent media confirmed that our dyeing processes are safe for the
environment.

MISINFORMATION 5

Each factory filters its own wastewater, so shared pipelines cannot cause
contamination.

True-action cards (one per faction in Round 2 - strategic resource)

ACTION CARD A - for the Working Class

A leaked invoice shows the Business Syndicate paid a contractor to install hidden pipes that route factory waste to lake tributaries. The contractor's report lists a Fast Fashion Guild account and a Mayor's Council 'permit-review' note.

ACTION CARD B - for the Mayor's Council

A secret source shared a video where waste was secretly routed through shared factory drains, bypassing treatment and contaminating the lake.

ACTION CARD C - for the Rich Citizens

About a month ago, the Mayor's Council cut funding for environmental inspectors, at almost the same moment that the Business Syndicate was expanding.

ACTION CARD D - for the Business Syndicate

My friend who works at the Fast Fashion Guild told me they put their dye-pool chemicals straight into the drains.

ACTION CARD E - for the Fast Fashion Guild

The Media Circle suppressed early reports of contamination after accepting sponsorship deals from both the Business Syndicate and the Fast Fashion Guild.

ACTION CARD F - for the Media Circle

Sally Hollow's estate's drainage system pollutes the lake. The Mayor's Council has been informed and has done nothing.

Annex 4D - Faction Relationship Table (facilitator reference)

Use this matrix during the debrief to walk participants through how every faction was tied to every other. The educational point is in this table: there is no single villain.



Pair	Type	Relationship before crisis	How it plays in the game
Mayor ↔ Syndicate	Mutual dependency	Mayor approved industrial expansion in exchange for political donations.	Cooperate publicly to maintain the success narrative; privately distrust each other, either could leak first.
Mayor ↔ Fashion	Political sponsorship	Mayor endorsed eco-fashion as progress; granted subsidies and permits.	Defend each other early; turn when pressure mounts.
Syndicate ↔ Fashion	Shared operations	Factories processed materials for the brand; shared waste pipelines.	United at first; blame each other once pollution data links the drains.
Syndicate ↔ Rich	Financial ties	Rich locals invested in factory stocks; corporate event sponsorship.	Rich initially defend the Syndicate; distance themselves once media attention grows.
Fashion ↔ Media	Image management	Influencers and journalists got exclusive access and perks.	Media protects them early; can betray them later for the ‘scandal of the century’.
Media ↔ Mayor	Controlled narrative	Mayor's office leaked stories through friendly reporters.	Collaboration can flip fast: media may turn to regain credibility.
Civilians ↔ Mayor	Social tension	Mayor promised to lift everyone; subsidies favoured wealthy districts.	Poor accuse the Mayor of neglect; rich defend him to protect investments.
Civilians ↔ Industries	Economic chain	Civilians depend on factory and fashion jobs.	First defend industries that feed them; turn hostile as health and layoffs mount.
Media ↔ Civilians	Emotional amplifier	Journalists feature both rich glamour and poor suffering.	Media exploits the divide; itself enabled both lifestyles.
Rich vs. Poor	Internal class conflict	Rich funded development; poor provided labour.	Each accuses the other of being the ‘real polluters’; the group may splinter mid-session.