

THE LAST WARM PLACE

CHAPTER EIGHT

STAY





19 OCTOBER. THE MORNING AFTER
THE ARC FLASH.

Still critical. Bring
back the part. Do
not bring me
another patient.



Measured points. Not promises
about the gaps.

We'll measure again as we climb.



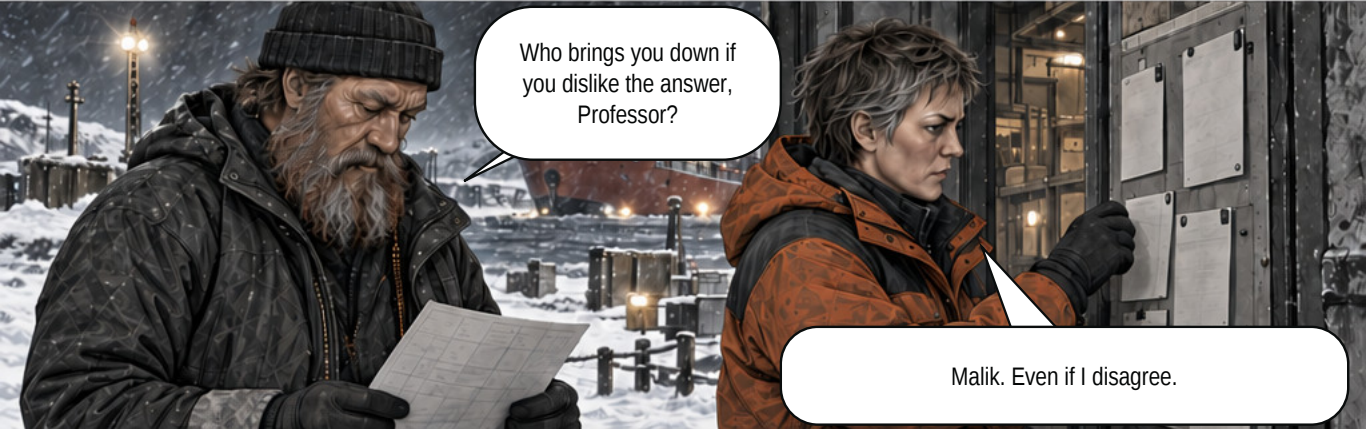
Dose, wind,
visibility: first
limit ends the
trip.

RETURN MARGIN RESERVED / NO
EXTENSION FOR EXTRA SALVAGE



You do the buckles. I tell
you when we turn.

Fair trade.



Who brings you down if
you dislike the answer,
Professor?

Malik. Even if I disagree.

PLATÅBERGET. SEVERAL KILOMETERS
UPHILL.

The road was still a road. That did not mean
it was still passable.

Petter / RADIO

Support holding at the bend.
Report before the crest.

Mara / RADIO

Five people accounted
for. Proceeding one
section.

Higher beside the barrier.

Mara / RADIO

Then nobody waits there.
Move the staging point.

The meter doesn't
measure the road
disappearing.

How much working time?

Malik / RADIO

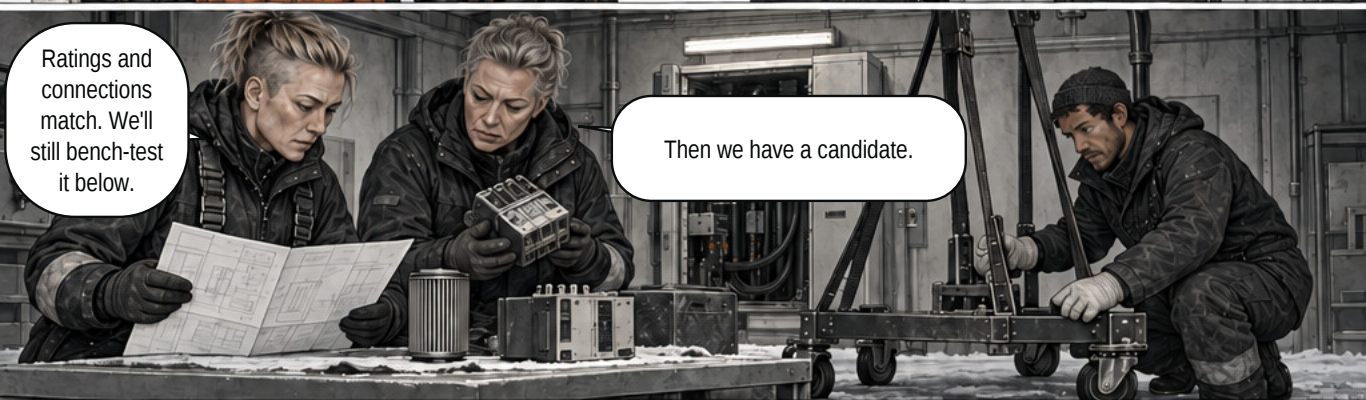
Cabinet. Then down. No
second building.

There are compressors up there.



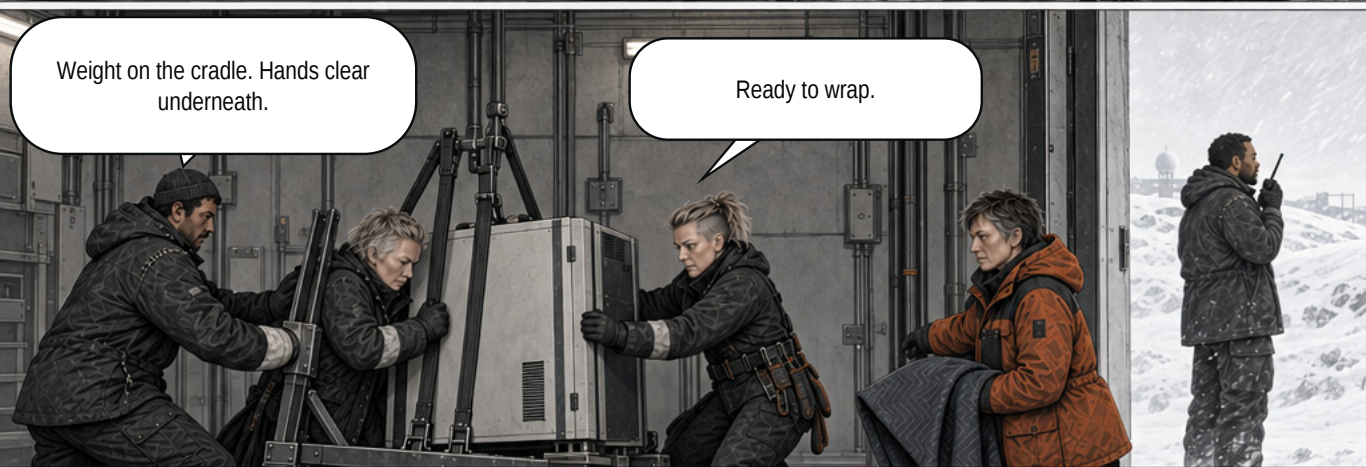
Maintenance annex. We used to swap this unit with the mine shop.

Same frame doesn't guarantee the same protection.



Ratings and connections match. We'll still bench-test it below.

Then we have a candidate.



Weight on the cradle. Hands clear underneath.

Ready to wrap.



Ten minutes could buy us months.

Malik / RADIO

We haven't got ten minutes to sell.



The cabinet is the mission. We leave the rest.

I know.



Track buried. Recovery means digging out the downhill side.

No one goes below it.



Other carrier: five plus sled?

Yes. This one stays.



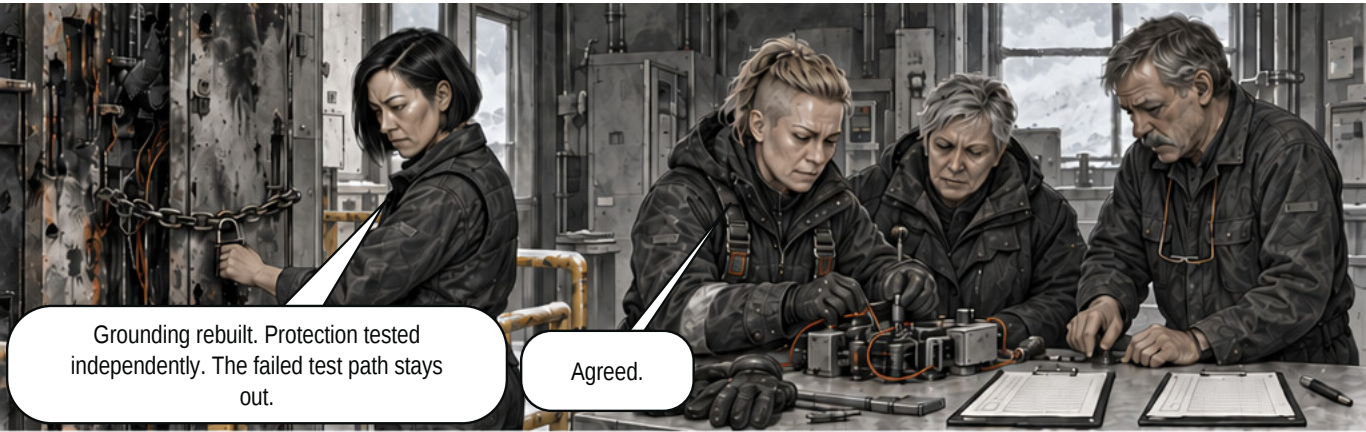
Five returned. One carrier abandoned. No extra salvage.

Log each person's reading. Survey the cabinet before it crosses.



You kept the return margin.

We spent a vehicle keeping it.



Grounding rebuilt. Protection tested independently. The failed test path stays out.

Agreed.



20 OCTOBER / EXPORT — 1.8 MW /
HOLD AND OBSERVE

Let it become boring before you trust it.



Water. Heat. A lamp that did not dim when the pump started.

None of it was a cure.



21 OCTOBER / EXPORT — 3.2
MW / ESSENTIAL LOADS ONLY

Hospital, heat, water, sanitation.
Borealis gets a controlled
commissioning supply.



Now we can clean it. We
still haven't earned food.

BOREALIS — COMMISSIONING
/ EDIBLE OUTPUT — ZERO



Cable goes to the hospital. This wing loses its heat.

Give me time to carry the papers.



Families move before buildings close.

The hotel pump fits the return loop.



Of course.

Can you do the back? I keep missing it.



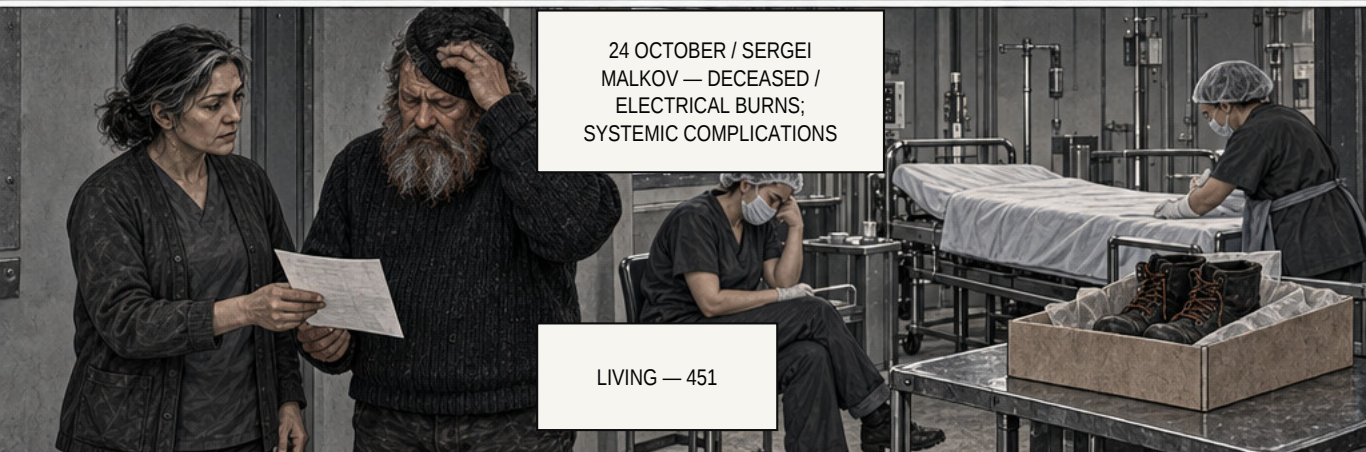
The treatment system is still unusable. I'm sorry.

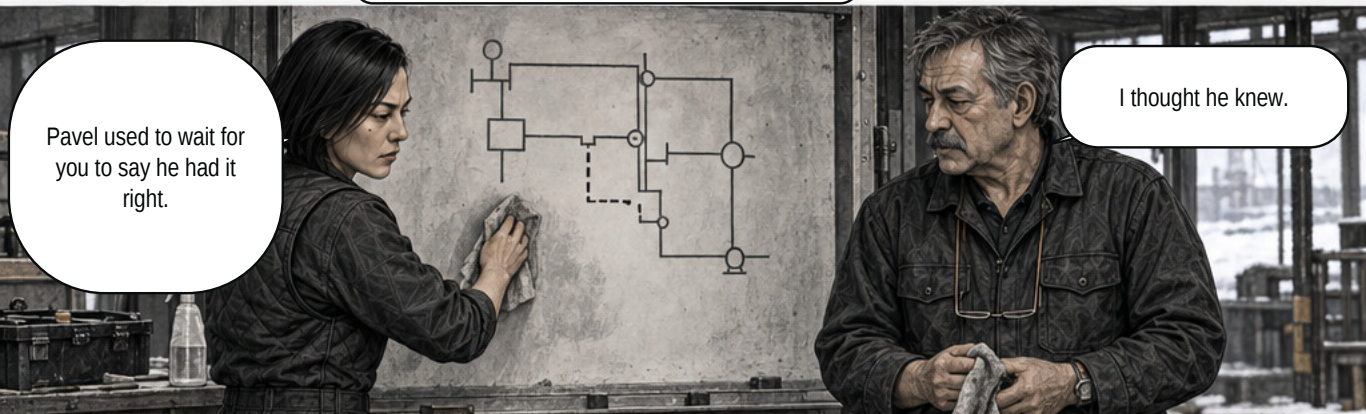
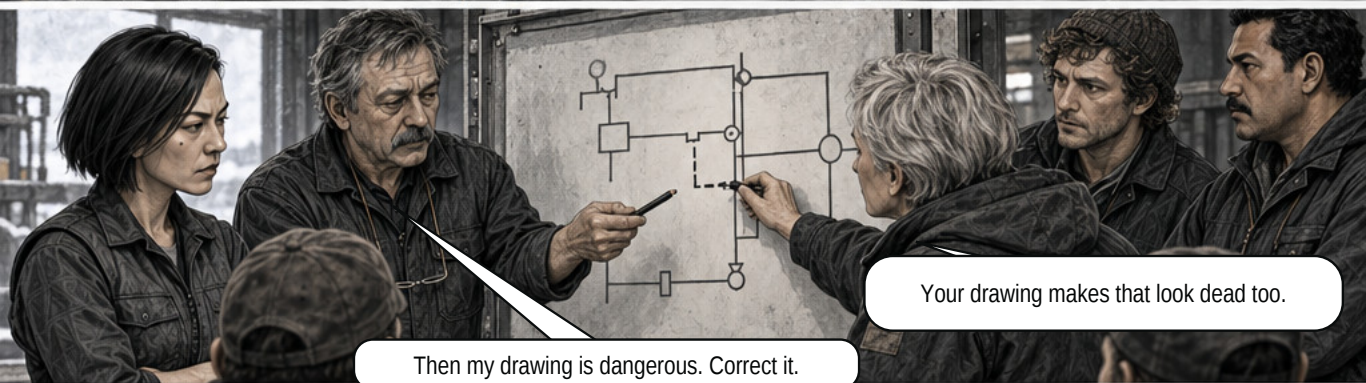
Even with the electricity?



21 OCTOBER /
YURI ANTONENKO
— DECEASED /
RENAL FAILURE;
DIALYSIS
UNAVAILABLE

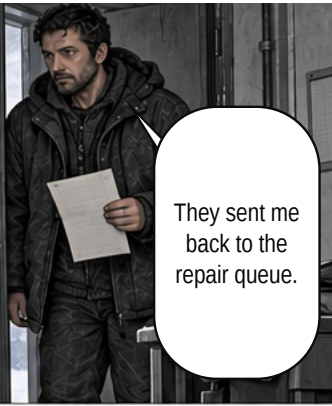
LIVING — 452







Did they give you a room?

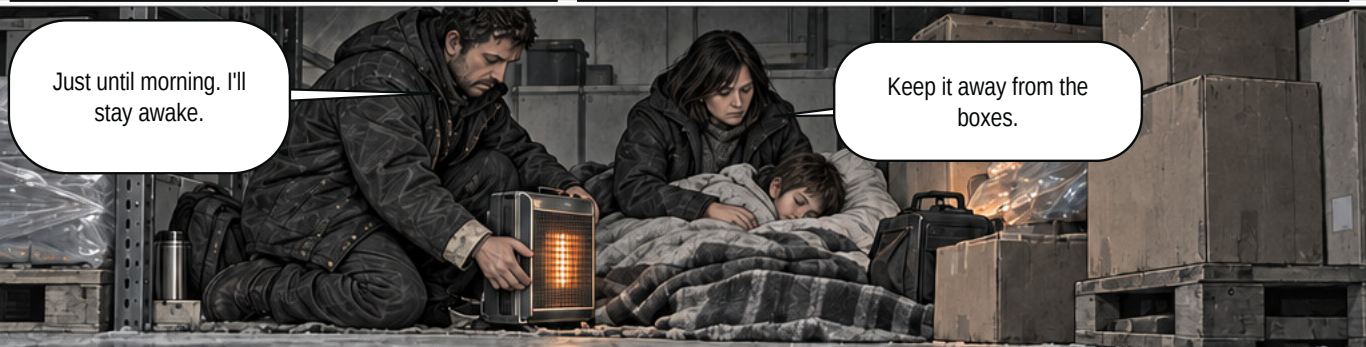


They sent me back to the repair queue.



The request had been received.

Nobody had been made responsible for answering it.



Just until morning. I'll stay awake.

Keep it away from the boxes.



Out! Leave everything—use the side door!

CLANG CLANG CLANG



All three outside.
Child breathing.
Take them to the
hospital.

Our things are still—



Protect the adjoining store. Nobody enters
without the fire team.

Another hose on the way.



Separate them for
assessment. Don't
put anything back on
appearance alone.

Some of the bags look sealed.



Detain the
adults.
Controlled
access to every
store.

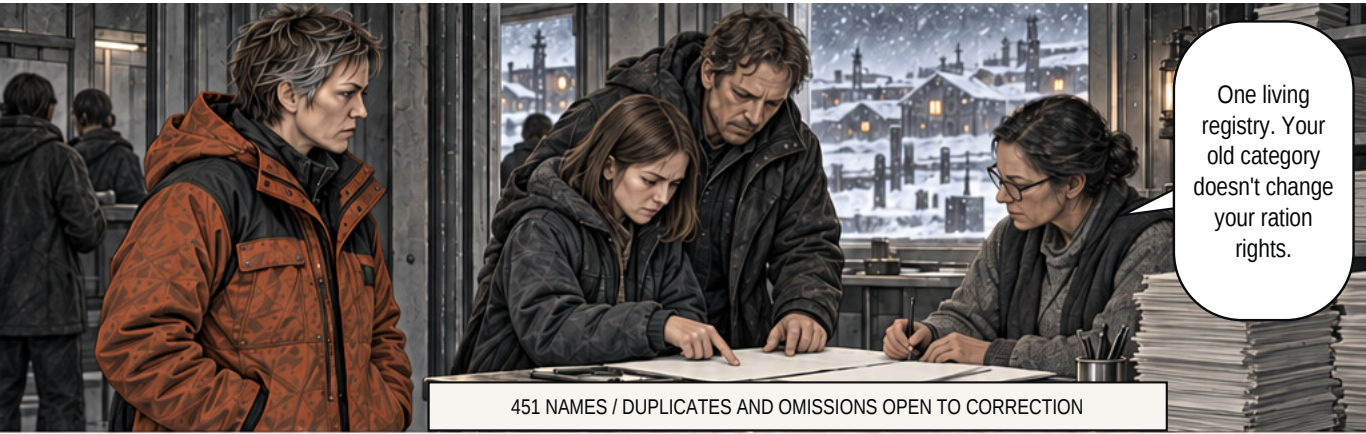
Secure the stores.
Hear the detention
case—and that
unanswered request.



FIRE LOSS —
APPROX. 8.6
MILLION KCAL

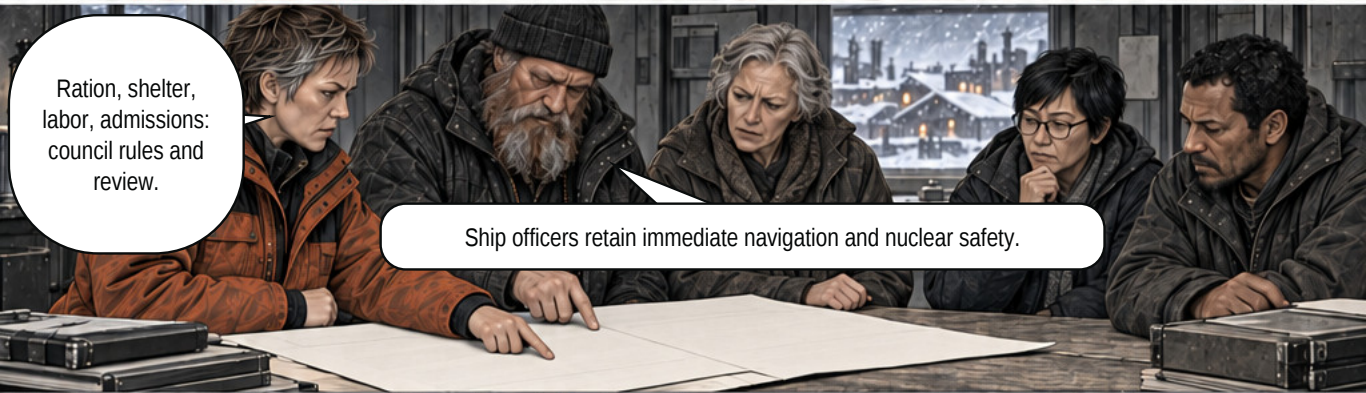
ABOUT 12% OF THEN-COMBINED DRY STORES /
CHILD SURVIVED





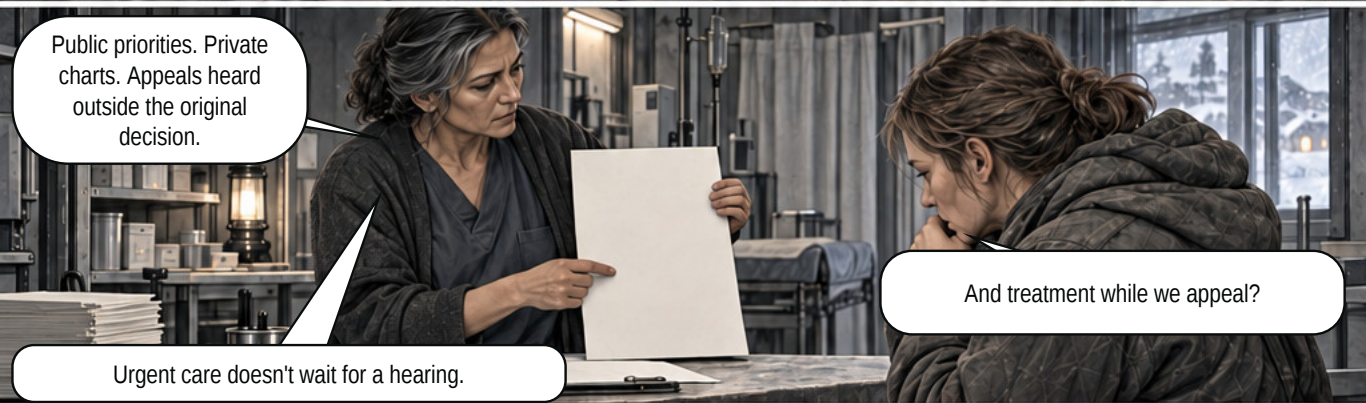
One living registry. Your old category doesn't change your ration rights.

451 NAMES / DUPLICATES AND OMISSIONS OPEN TO CORRECTION



Ration, shelter, labor, admissions: council rules and review.

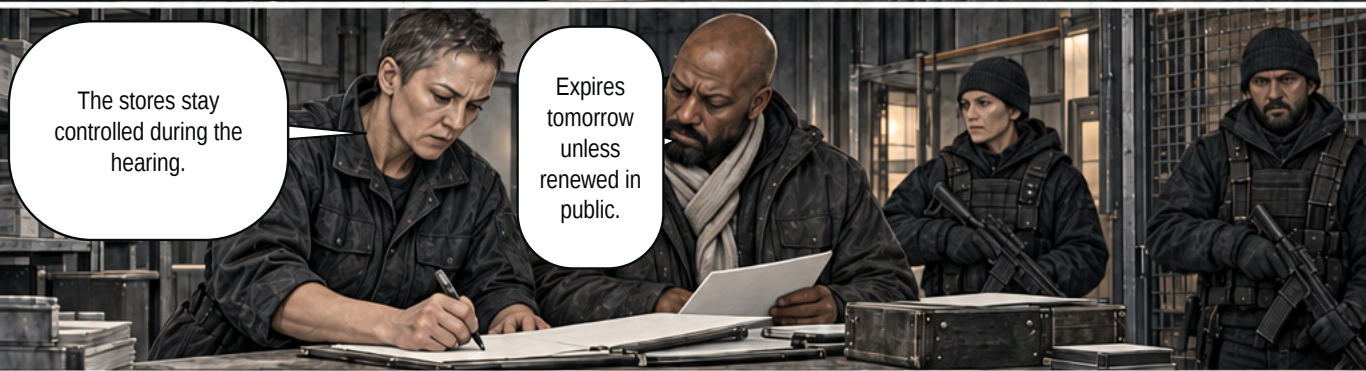
Ship officers retain immediate navigation and nuclear safety.



Public priorities. Private charts. Appeals heard outside the original decision.

And treatment while we appeal?

Urgent care doesn't wait for a hearing.



The stores stay controlled during the hearing.

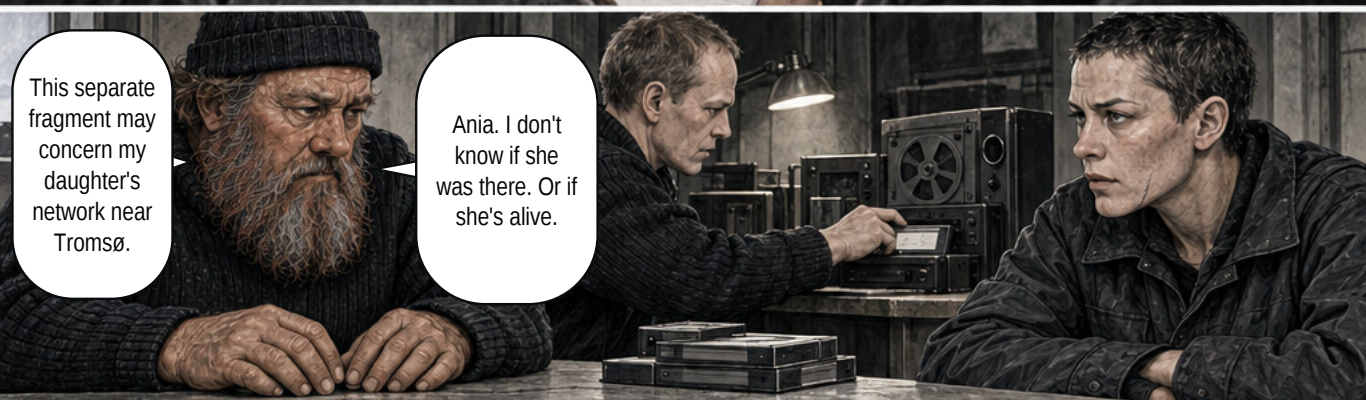
Expires tomorrow unless renewed in public.



Write your name where I can find it.

Your room is ready. I'll check the radiator before evening rounds.







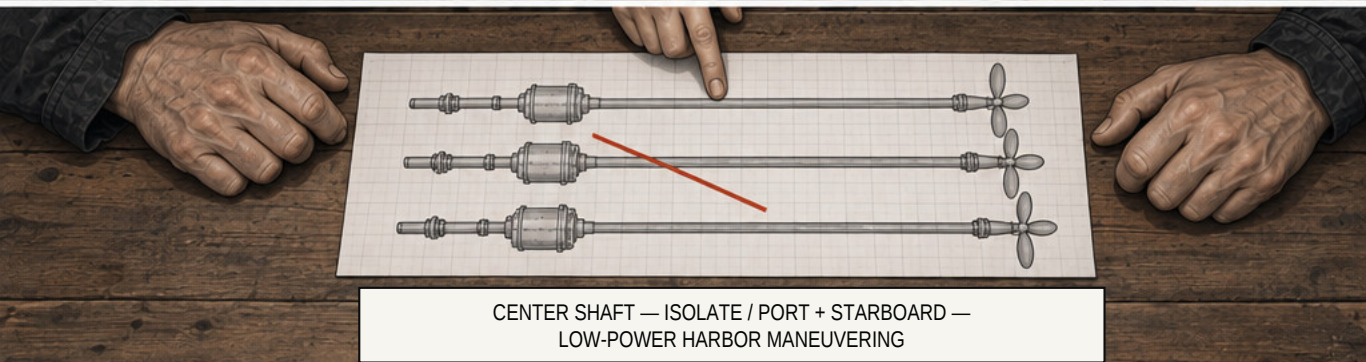
That wasn't in the previous sample.

6 NOVEMBER.



Debris, vibration, heat. The center bearing.

Isolate the shaft before the damage decides for us.



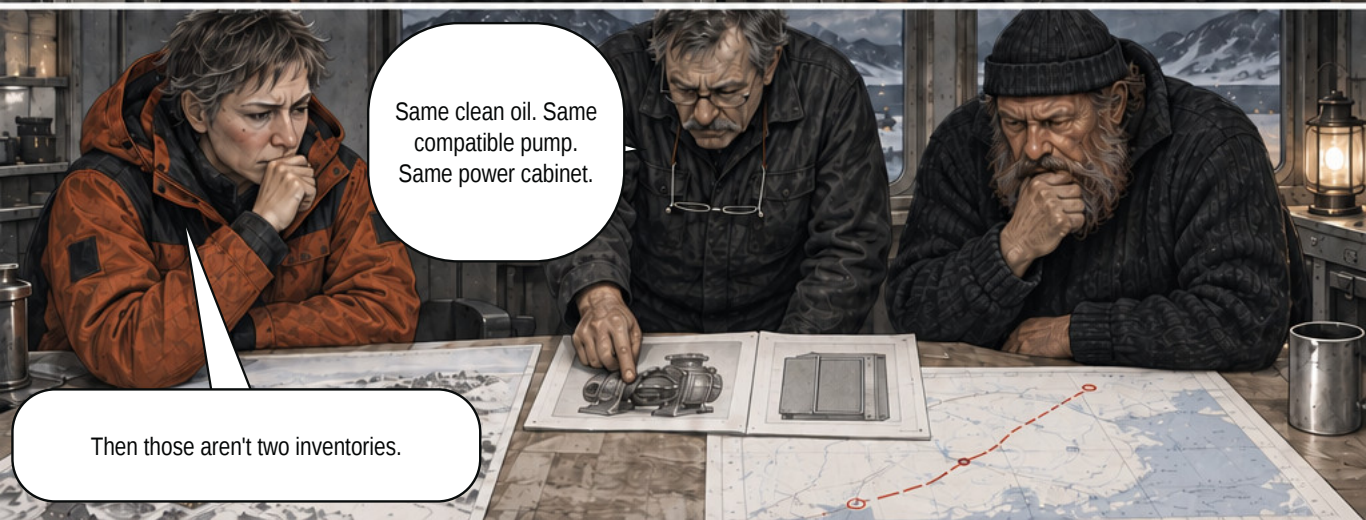
CENTER SHAFT — ISOLATE / PORT + STARBOARD —
LOW-POWER HARBOR MANEUVERING

Enough for a quay. No promise of an ocean.



We could prepare it for passage.

At what cost ashore?



Same clean oil. Same compatible pump. Same power cabinet.

Then those aren't two inventories.



Shore power and cooling need it.

Winter passage needs most for the center shaft. We can't certify both.



A seventy-two-hour weather window may open. Afterward, I can't offer this route.

And no destination has promised to receive us.



First production attempt: 20 November. Target, not guaranteed food.

BOREALIS — NO EDIBLE PRODUCT / VALIDATION REQUIRED



If we stay, a broken pump becomes our border.

Yes.



I can prepare the ship. That isn't everyone's consent.

Then each constituency answers under its own rules.







One load. One destination.

Check each item against the allocation.



Keep the maintenance record. Laid up is not abandoned.

CENTER SHAFT — LAID UP / SAFE WINTER OCEAN PASSAGE RELINQUISHED



Transfer authorized. Cutover waits for safety checks.

Yes. The vote did not close a breaker.



I voted no. We are staying. Check the next watch.

You voted to leave.



You didn't give them certainty.

I gave them my word to stay for the consequences.

