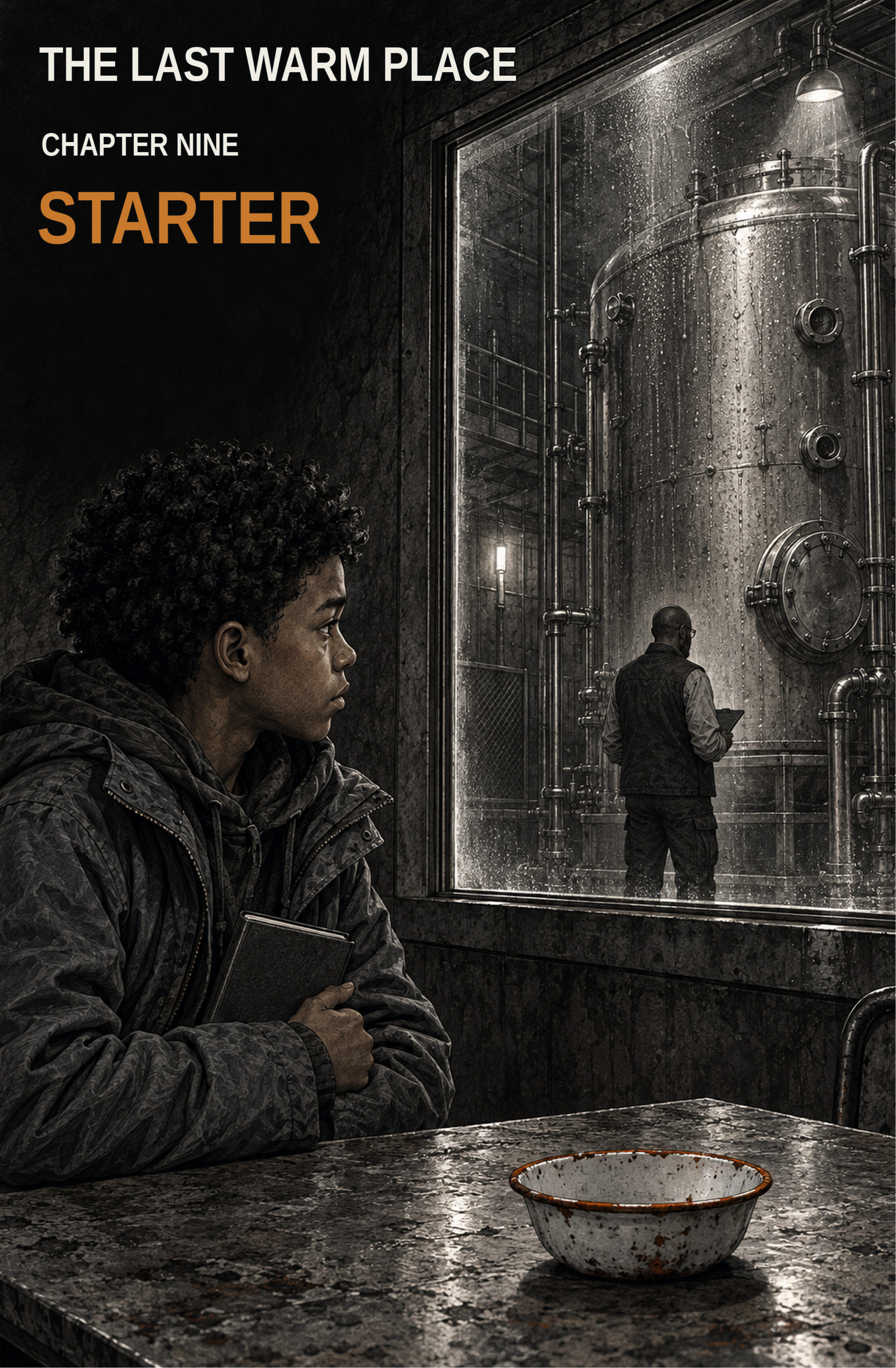


THE LAST WARM PLACE

CHAPTER NINE

STARTER







20 NOVEMBER. DAY SIXTY-SEVEN.

The first full batch is ready for release testing.



Composition is inside the early limits.

Keep the contamination check open.



Can I tell them it's food?

The vessel worked. Its contents haven't been released.



Those are for the usual meal until someone signs otherwise.

I know.



Elias. This doesn't match the reference.





We lose the batch and the days. What can cooking recover?

We don't have a validated way to make this batch safe.



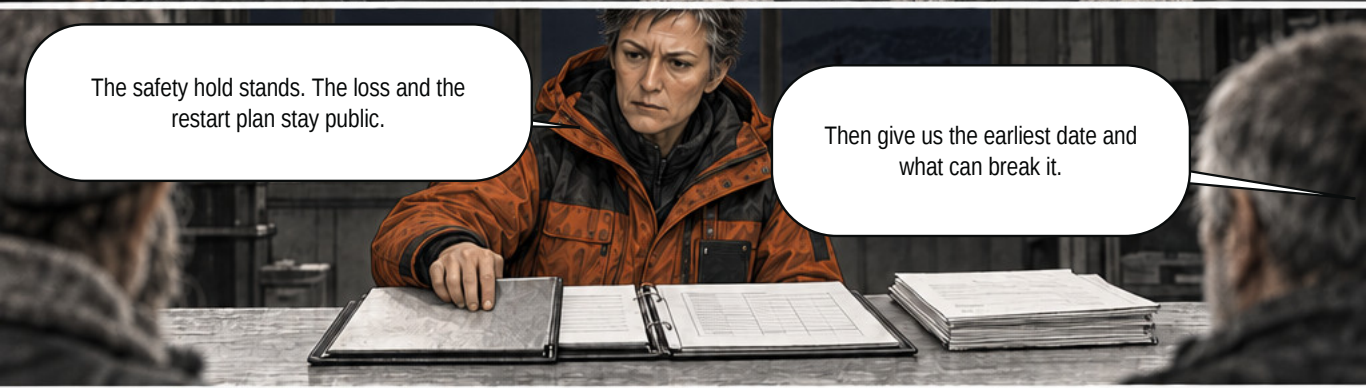
Surely boiling kills whatever's alive.

It may kill organisms. It doesn't establish that their toxins are gone.



If someone volunteers?

One sick volunteer cannot tell us what's safe for everyone.



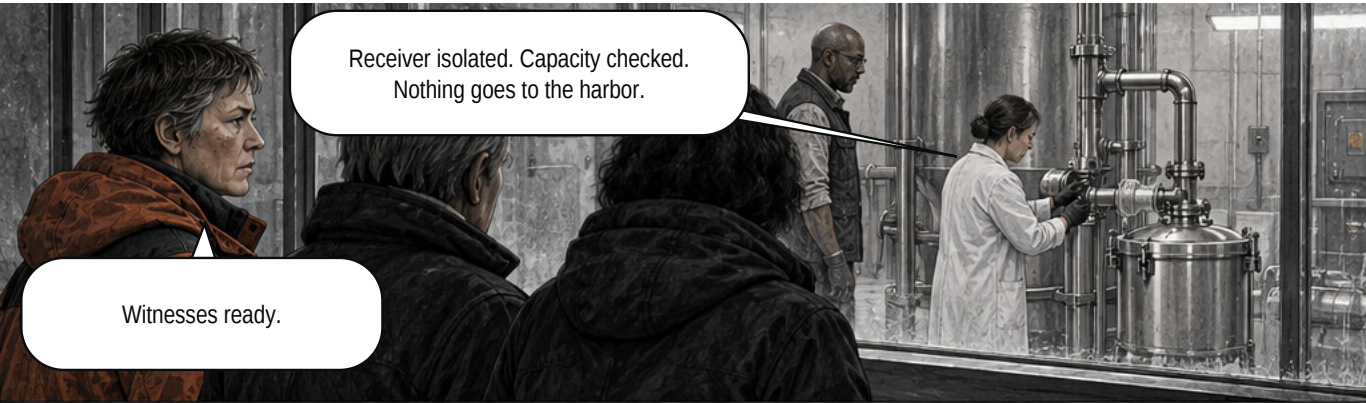
The safety hold stands. The loss and the restart plan stay public.

Then give us the earliest date and what can break it.



At least eleven more days to another attempt. Longer if checks fail.

NEXT ATTEMPT — NO EARLIER THAN 1 DECEMBER / NO RELEASE PROMISE



Receiver isolated. Capacity checked.
Nothing goes to the harbor.

Witnesses ready.



Samples retained.
Clean stock separate.

Record the whole rejected batch. No edible yield.



Open the waste transfer.



20 NOVEMBER / FIRST FULL BATCH —
REJECTED AND CONTAINED / EDIBLE
YIELD — ZERO



I'll still be here
when they ask
again.



1 DECEMBER. ELEVEN DAYS
LATER.

RESTART
VERIFICATION
INCOMPLETE /
RELEASED PRODUCT
— ZERO



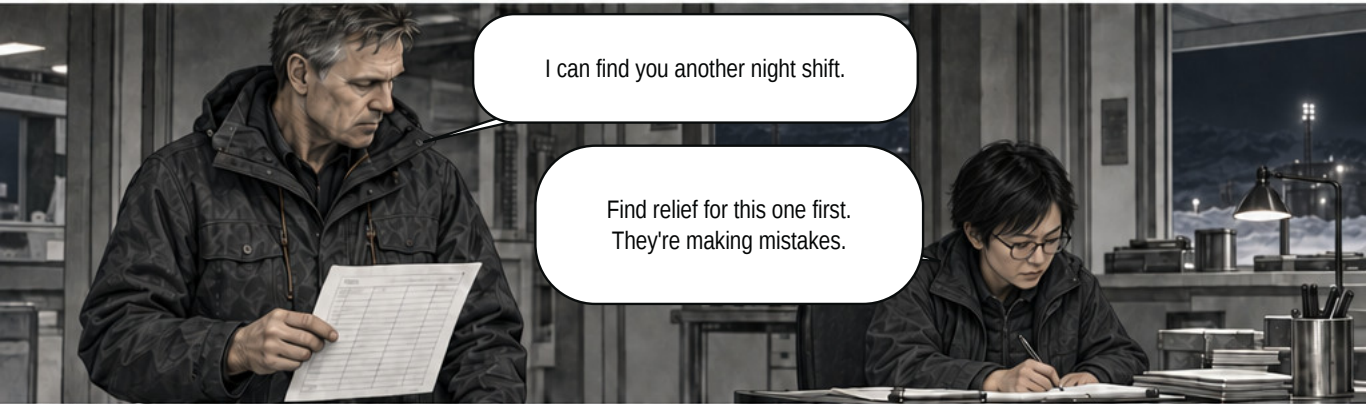
The seal was changed. The
follow-up check isn't
recorded.

Then we verify it. A
missing record isn't a
complete cause.



I can find you another night shift.

Find relief for this one first.
They're making mistakes.



Borealis wants continuous
power while they test.

The watch needs rest. The pump doesn't care
why we're tired.



This pushes the date
again.

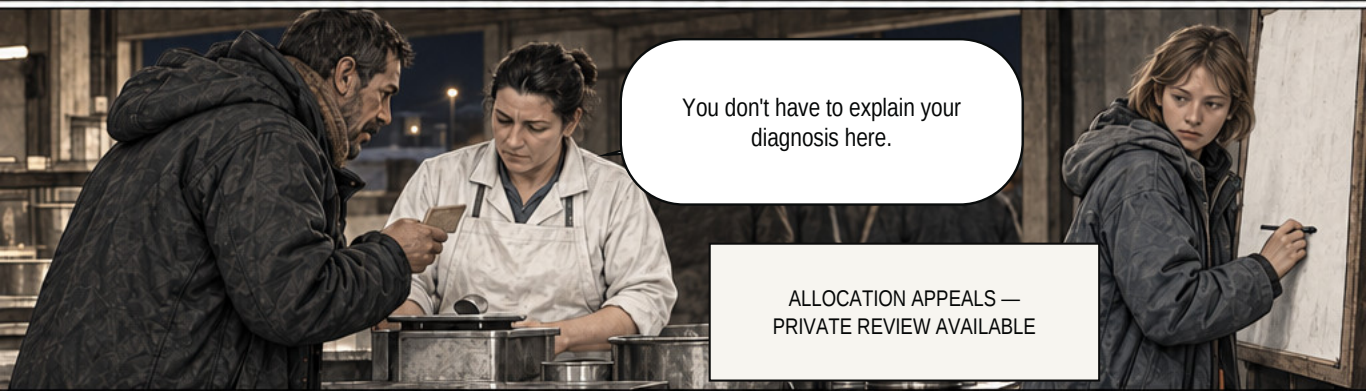
Put that on the same sheet. Don't hide what
rest costs.





The smaller portion is the rule, not an error at the counter.

STANDARD ADULT RATION
— 1,450 KCAL / HIGHER
ALLOCATIONS: CHILDREN,
ILLNESS, HEAVY WORK



You don't have to explain your diagnosis here.

ALLOCATION APPEALS —
PRIVATE REVIEW AVAILABLE



Save me the end seat. I refuse to climb over everyone twice.

You'll hear less gossip there.



I never liked these.

Then I'll take one. Not your whole dinner.





It's healing slowly.
Keep the lighter
assignment.

My hand agrees. My
supervisor needed
the argument.



My periods have stopped.

We'll check. Hunger and
stress can do that. It isn't
your fault.



We'll lose a desk.

Then lose a desk.



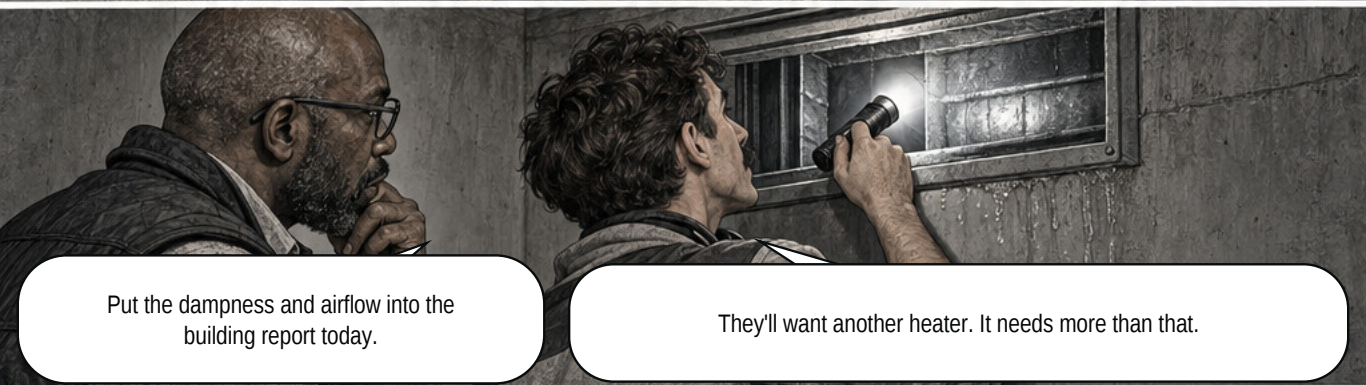
Shorten it. Show me what
we won't finish.

They're cold before
starting. The old shift
length isn't the old job.



I dreamed about toast. It
was boring until I woke
up.

You can keep drawing.



17 DECEMBER.

The pneumonia is making your lung disease harder to manage.

Am I going to get better?

We're treating the infection and helping you breathe. I can't promise recovery.

Leave that there. People borrow needles as if needles grow.

I'll tell them.

Sit down. I'd rather hear you.

I fixed the left side.

That would improve some films.

I once repaired a cinema speaker that only worked during the quiet scenes.





22 DECEMBER. THE SHELTER'S AIR HAD NOT BEEN SEPARATED.



It's not easing.

I'm calling the clinic.



Stay with me. Help is coming.

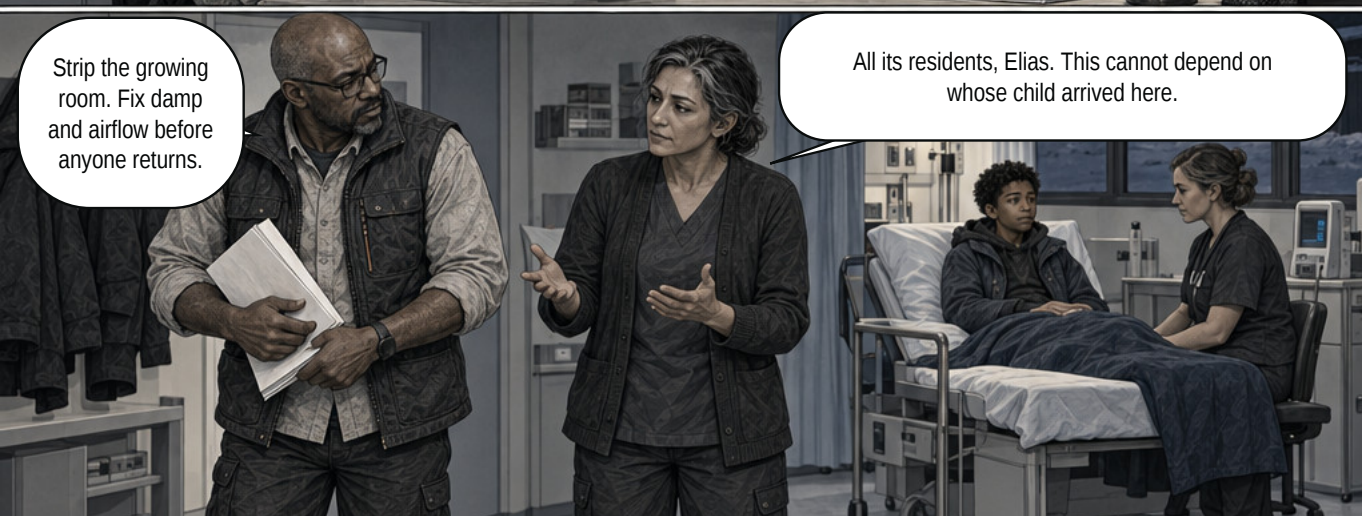
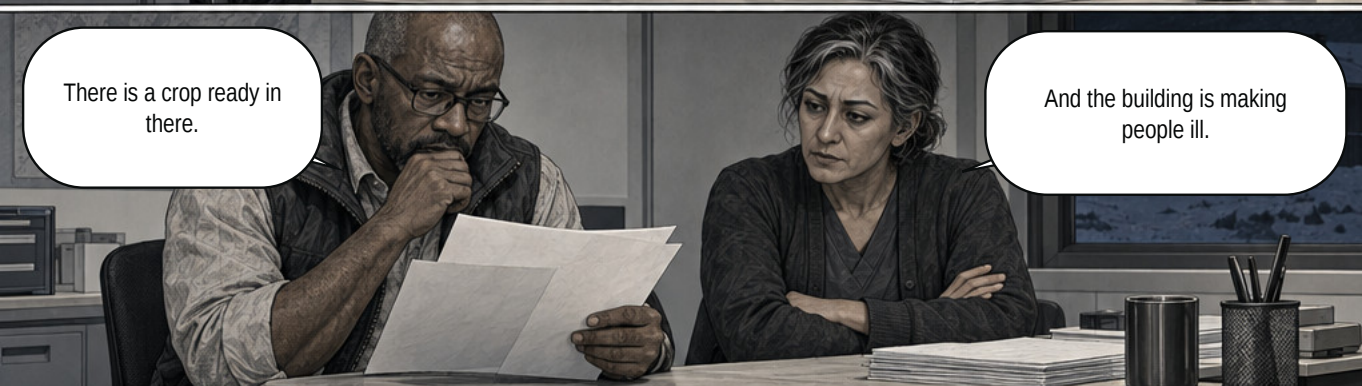


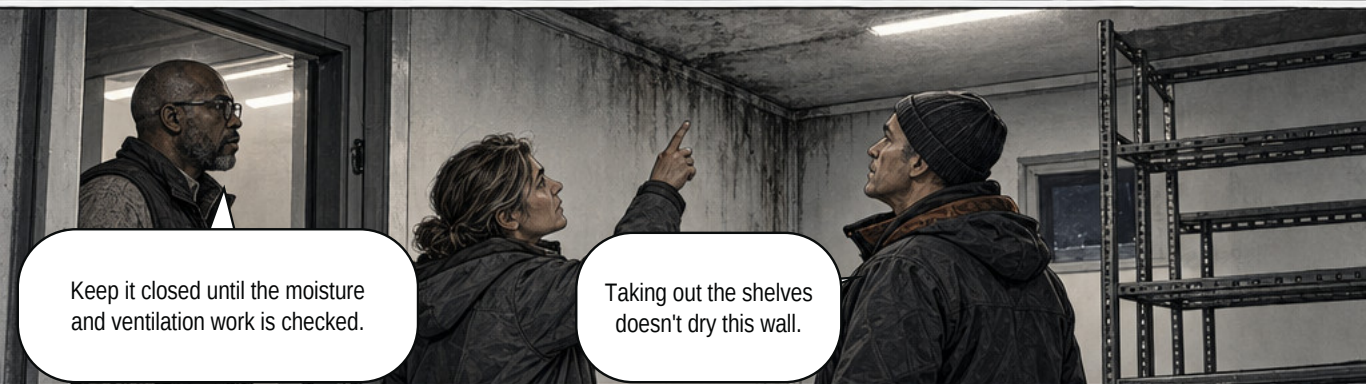
Severe asthma attack. Bring the oxygen and treatment kit.

Elias, make room here.



I'm here. You don't have to talk.







The lights went off. The settlement did not.



I can't sleep there. I don't want everyone told why.

We can talk privately.



Long. Even when I'm exhausted.

How have the nights been?



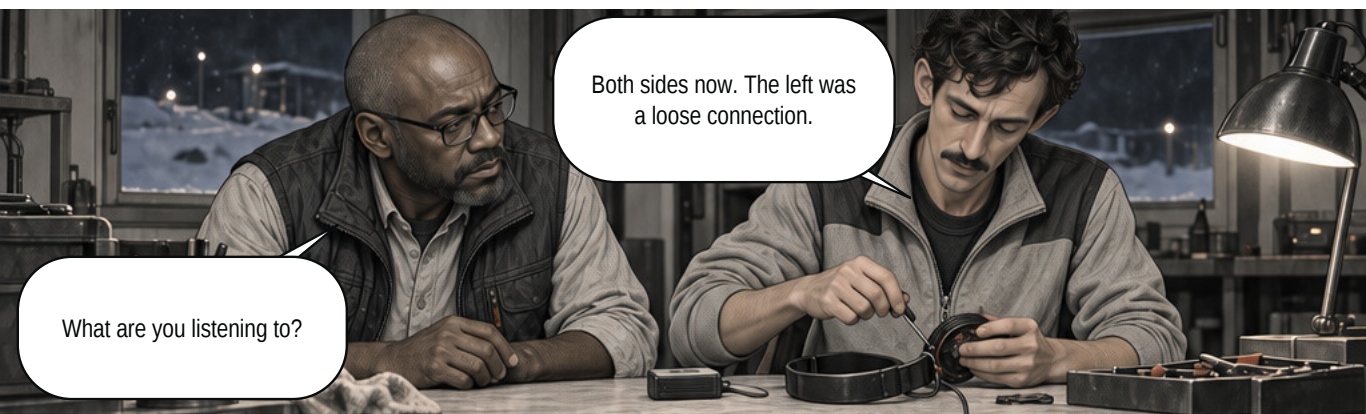
Let's keep meeting. We can change your rest and work arrangements.

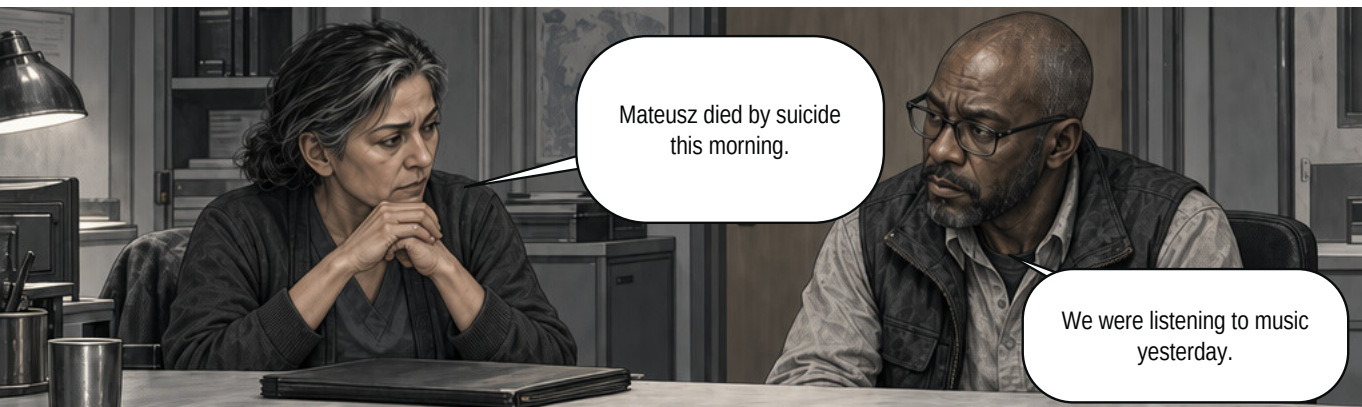
I'd like that kept off the meal board.



This corner is quieter. Tell me if the door keeps waking you.

Thank you.







LIVING — 449 / FIVE DEATHS
SINCE LONGYEARBYEN / NO
NEW ARRIVALS

HANNE WILBERG /
MATEUSZ ZIELINSKI —
REMEMBERED

Keep tomorrow's sample time.
And go home when your relief
arrives.

BOREALIS — RESTART
WORK CONTINUES /
CERTIFIED EDIBLE
CONTRIBUTION —
ZERO

A — CONTROLLED LOAD /
B — COOLED RESERVE /
SHORE — 3.2 MW

CENTER SHAFT
LAID UP / HARBOR
ONLY / KA-32 —
29.40 HR, NO
FLIGHTS

Write down why you stop here
before every watch.

Start with what you
hear.