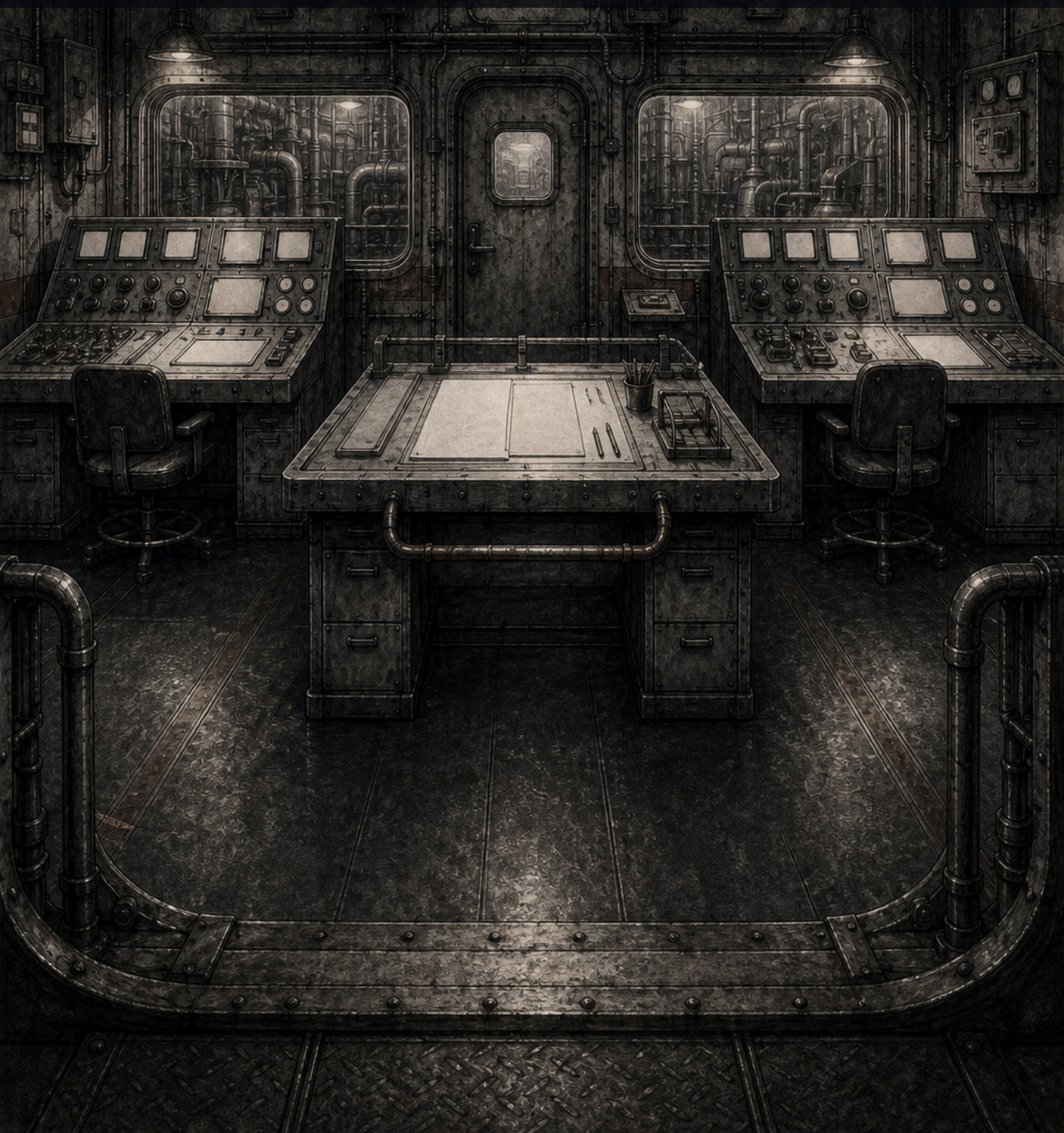


THE LAST WARM PLACE

CHAPTER TWO · REACHABLE



15 SEPTEMBER.
DAY ONE.

ENGINEERING,
BRIDGE. RUN
HER ON ONE
REACTOR.
MAKE IT LAST.

YOU HEARD
THE CAPTAIN.
ONE
REACTOR.
DASHA, THE
LOAD SHEET.

ALREADY ON IT. I
STARTED WHEN THE
PHONE RANG, ILYA.



A CARRIES
EVERYTHING. I'VE
CHECKED IT TWICE.

CHECK IT A
THIRD TIME.

YOU KNOW
YOU'RE ALLOWED
TO TRUST ME.

I TRUST YOU.
NUMBERS I
TRUST THE
THIRD TIME.



THIRD TIME.
SAME
ANSWER.

GOOD. NOW I
BELIEVE IT.



TAKE B OFF
THE LINE.

TAKING B OFF
THE LINE.

OPEN B'S
BREAKER.

A HAS
THE LOAD.

FREQUENCY
STEADY. VOLTAGE
STEADY. SHE HASN'T
EVEN NOTICED.

B OPEN.

CHK-THUNK

NNNNNNNNNN...

RODS IN.
WATCH EVERY
CHANNEL, NOT
JUST ONE.

I KNOW HOW
A SHUTDOWN
WORKS, ILYA.

I KNOW
YOU KNOW. I'M
SAYING IT FOR
HIM.

HE MEANS
ME. HE
ALWAYS
MEANS ME.

DECAY HEAT
DOESN'T CARE
THAT THE
TURBINE'S QUIET.

A SLEEPING REACTOR STILL
BREATHES. YOU KEEP THE
COOLING ON UNTIL IT'S
FINISHED BREATHING, NOT
UNTIL YOU'RE BORED.

LECTURE THREE.
YOUR SON USED TO
MOUTH ALONG TO
THAT ONE.

B'S ASLEEP.
COOLING STAYS
ON IT.

ONE HEART
AT A TIME.

THREE HOURS
LATER.

SHOW ME.

POWER-CONTROL
MODULE. WE
HAVE ONE.

THE SHELF
SAYS ZERO.

THE SYSTEM
SAYS ONE.

I SIGNED THIS. I
REMEMBER THE
PEN. IT WAS A
NICE PEN.

WE FITTED
IT IN APRIL.

AND THE
REORDER CLOSED
WITH THE JOB.

SO WE HAVE A
SPARE ON PAPER.
NOWHERE ELSE.

NOTHING'S
BROKEN.

THEN THIS IS
WHEN WE LEARN
WHAT BREAKS
NEXT.

I COULD SIGNAL THE
DEPOT. MURMANSK
KEEPS THREE, THEY
COULD --



THREE?

THREE WHO
CAN STAND A FULL
WATCH ALONE.

DARIA
SERGEI
NIKOLAI



YOU LEFT FOUR
QUALIFIED
PEOPLE OFF.

YOU SIGNED
THEIR PAPERS
YOURSELF. YOU
SIGNED MINE.

THREE I CAN
SPARE FROM
WATCH.

FOUR WITH
PAPERS. PAPERS
AREN'T HANDS.



IT'S A BAD
MONTH,
DASHA. NOT
AN ACADEMY.



WE HAVE
ONE SPARE
MODULE.
AND ONE OF
YOU.

I'M NOT A SPARE
PART, DASHA.

NO. PARTS, WE
CAN ORDER.

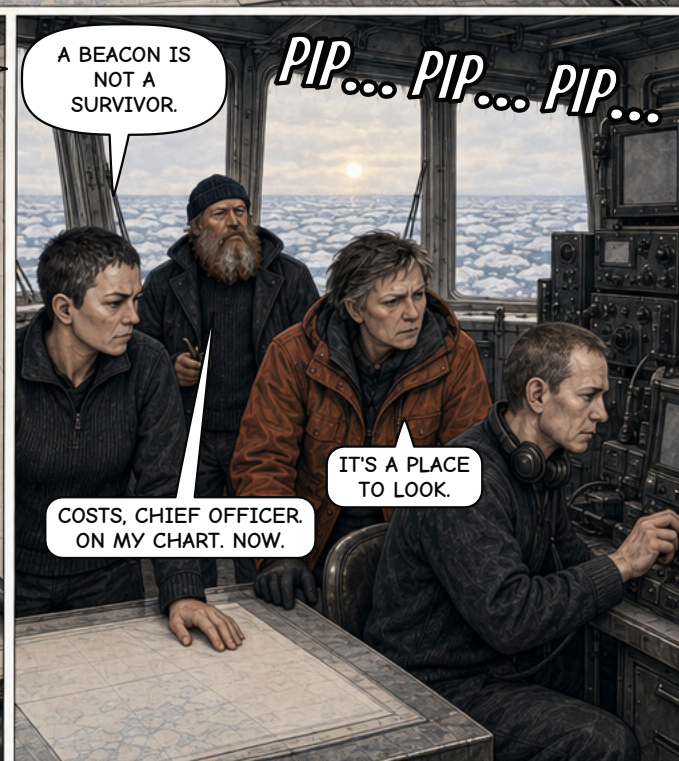


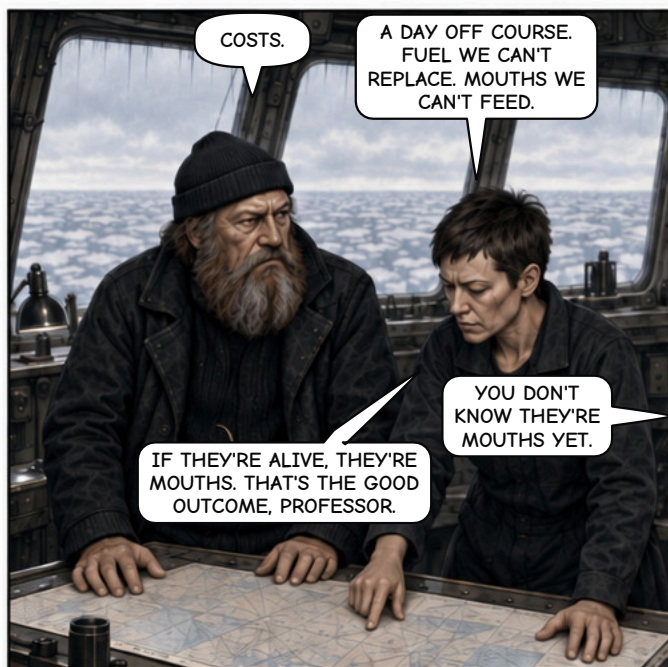
WRITE THE
LONGER LIST,
CHIEF.

CAPTAIN TO RADIO.
EMERGENCY BEACON.



...AYE,
CAPTAIN.











KESTREL IN SIGHT. ...WHAT'S LEFT OF IT.

RUNWAY'S BROKEN. A RIDGE WENT THROUGH THE SLEEPING MODULE.

MOVEMENT. THE ORANGE TENT.

FIVE IN THE LEE. NOT MOVING.

DON'T COUNT THOSE YET. COUNT THE ONES STANDING.



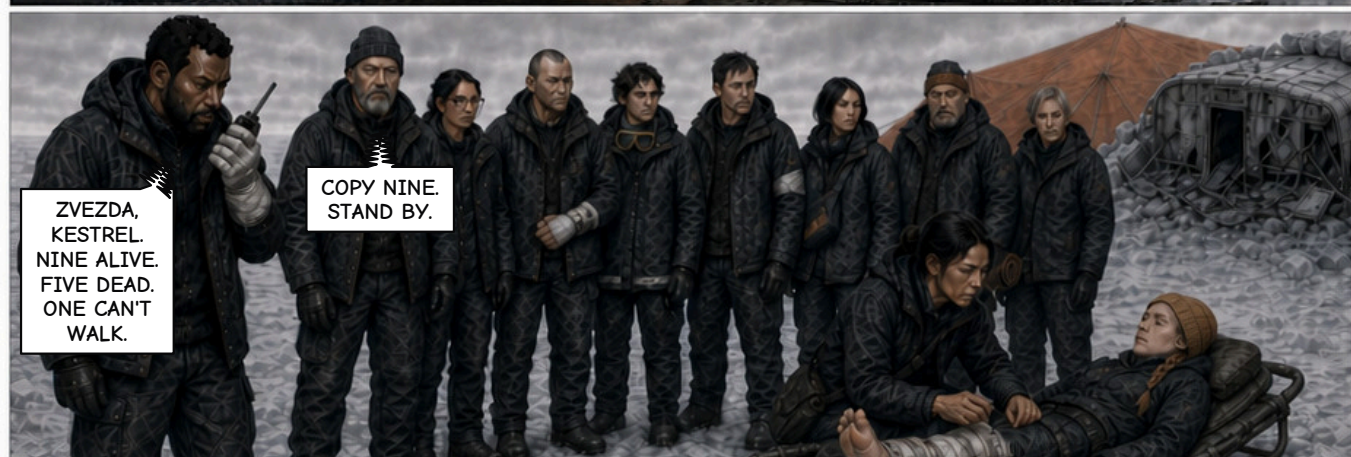
THE AIR'S CLEAN ENOUGH TO LAND.

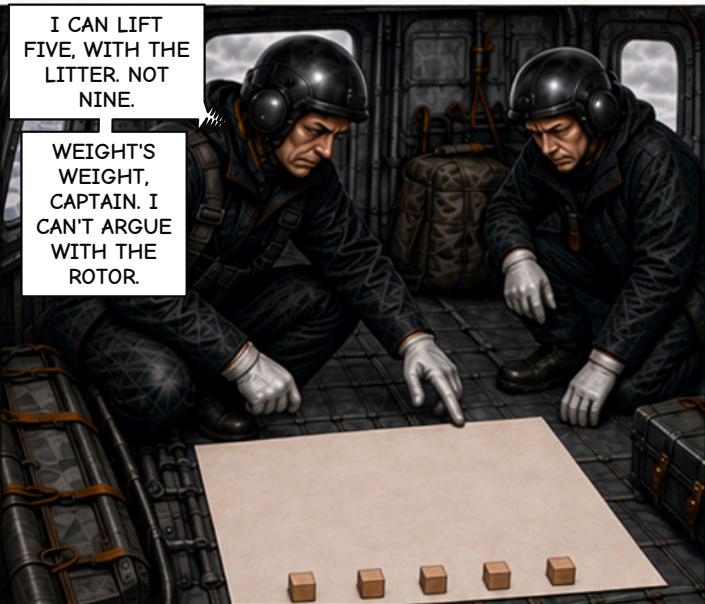
THAT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THEM.

IT SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT US. I'LL TAKE IT.



KESTREL TO AIRCRAFT. NINE LIVING.





I CAN LIFT FIVE, WITH THE LITTER. NOT NINE.

WEIGHT'S WEIGHT, CAPTAIN. I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THE ROTOR.



THERE'S NO WEATHER FOR A SECOND TRIP. AINO AND FOUR FLY.

I'M SORRY. THAT'S THE CHART TALKING, NOT ME.



THEN FOUR WATCH IT LEAVE.

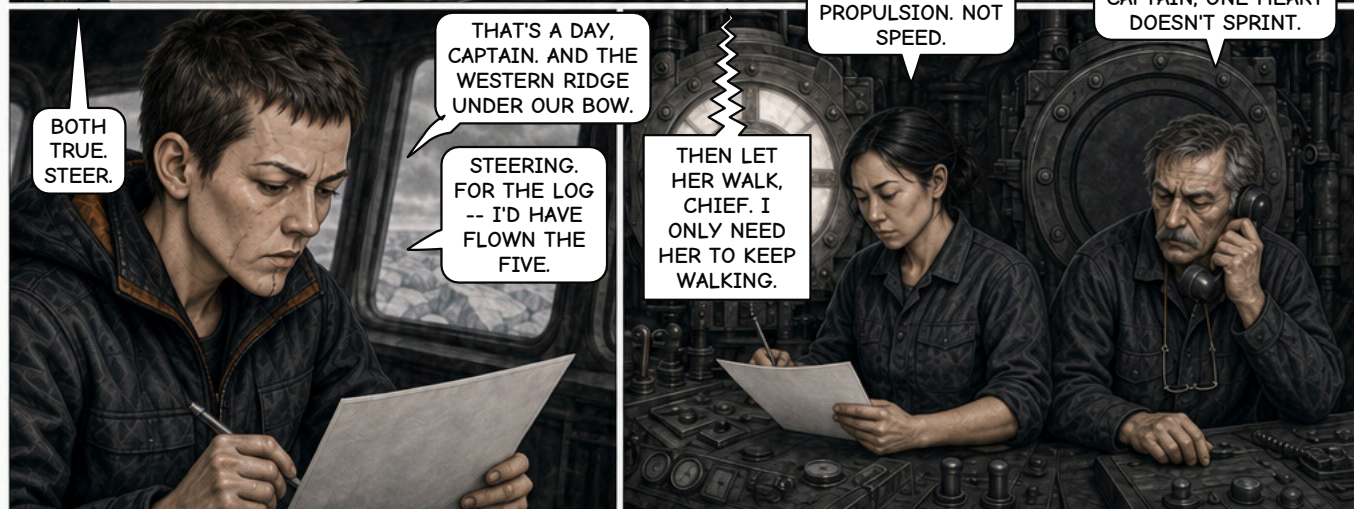
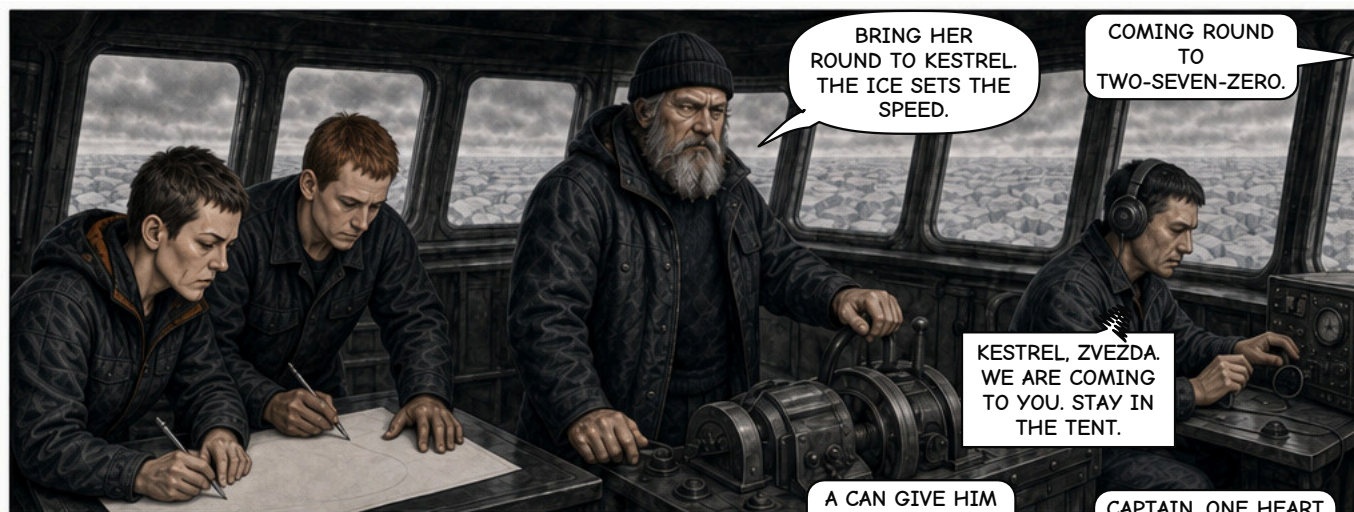


NO PARTIAL LIFT.
WE BRING THE SHIP.

ALL NINE?



ALL NINE.



KRUMM-KRRRSH



THIRTY-SEVEN MILES WAS A COORDINATE. THE ICE MADE IT A ROUTE.





SIX HOURS INTO THE DIVERSION.

IS THE SHIP REALLY COMING? OR IS THAT JUST SOMETHING YOU SAY TO PEOPLE IN TENTS?

NOBODY TOUCHES THAT DRESSING BUT ME.

I DON'T SAY THINGS, LIV. NEITHER DOES MALIK. ASK HIM -- HE'LL SAY EVEN LESS.



YESTERDAY'S ICE IS A RUMOR.

THIS WAS OUR CRAWLER ROUTE YESTERDAY.

KESTREL READS. STILL NINE.

IT WAS A RUMOR THAT HELD A FOUR-TON CRAWLER.

YESTERDAY. I'LL TAKE TODAY'S WORD FOR IT.

KESTREL, ZVEZDA. RADIO CHECK.

STILL NINE. 13:40. LOGGED.



GRRNNK-KRAK

TELL THEM. AND TELL THEM WE COULD BE WRONG.

THEN SAY "WRONG" FIRST.

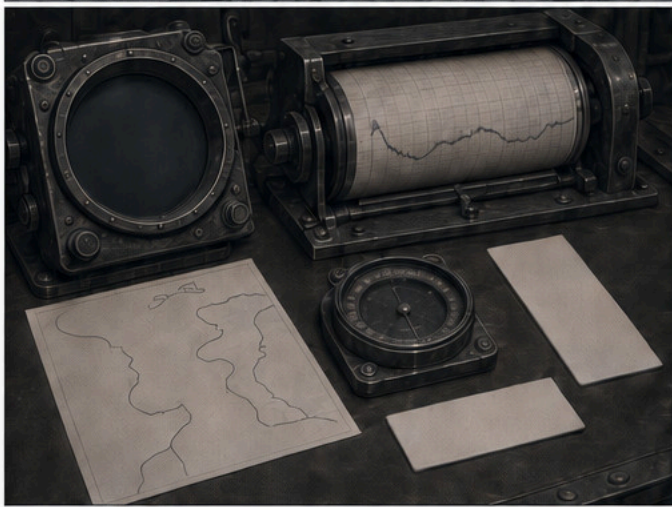
AT THIS RATE, AFTER MIDNIGHT.

FOURTEEN HOURS AFTER
THE COURSE CHANGE.

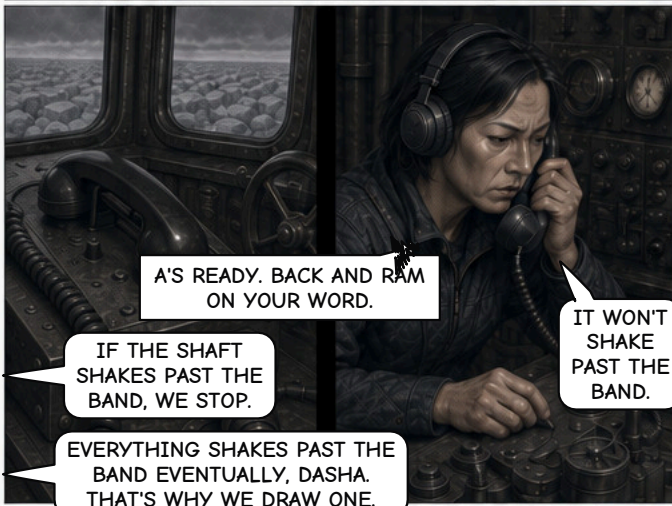
NORTH DETOUR: SIX
MORE HOURS, IF THE
LEAD STAYS OPEN.

IT'S
ALREADY
CLOSING.

THE SADDLE
IS THE SHORTER
RISK.



LOW ON TOP.
NOBODY'S SEEN
THE BOTTOM.



A'S READY. BACK AND RAM
ON YOUR WORD.

IT WON'T
SHAKE
PAST THE
BAND.

IF THE SHAFT
SHAKES PAST THE
BAND, WE STOP.

EVERYTHING SHAKES PAST THE
BAND EVENTUALLY, DASHA.
THAT'S WHY WE DRAW ONE.



TAKE THE
SADDLE. ONE RUN
AT A TIME.

THE LIMITS
DON'T MOVE
BECAUSE PEOPLE
ARE WAITING.



THRUMMMMMM—



WE SEE YOUR
LIGHTS.

ANY CLOSER AND THE
FLOE EDGE IS UNDER
OUR QUARTER.

SHE SAYS THEY'RE
WAVING. ALL OF
THEM. EVEN THE ONE
ON THE LITTER.



WE STOP
HERE.

MALIK'S WALKED IT.
THAT'S BETTER THAN
DRIVEN.

SHIP TO CAMP — 1.6 NM



ONE CRAWLER RUNS.
THE OTHER WAITS TO
RESCUE IT.

AND WHO
RESCUES THE
SECOND ONE?

NOBODY. SO IT
DOESN'T MOVE.



LITTER AND
FOUR, FIRST
TRIP. SIX
BACK THE
SECOND.

SAYS THE MAN
WHO RODE THE
ROOF IN TIKSI.

NOBODY
RIDES THE
ROOF.



BAD ENOUGH
THAT I WENT
AROUND IT.

ROUTE'S
STAKED. ONE
BAD SEAM. I
WENT
AROUND IT.

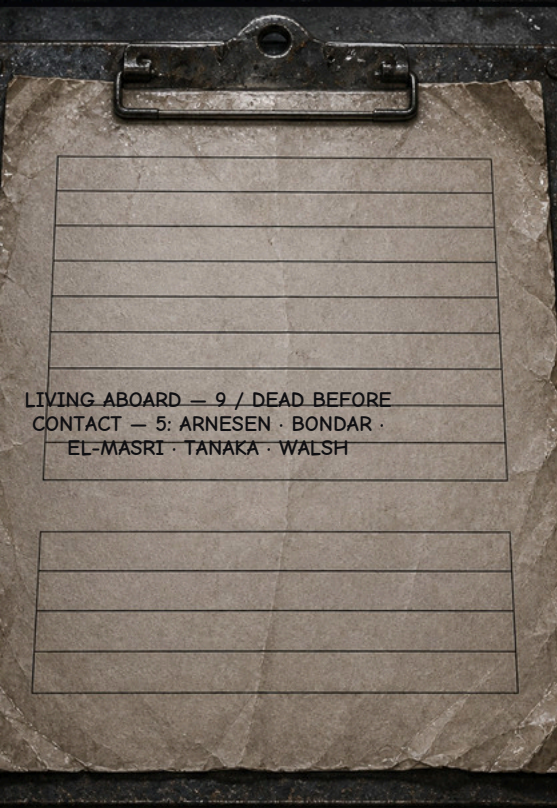
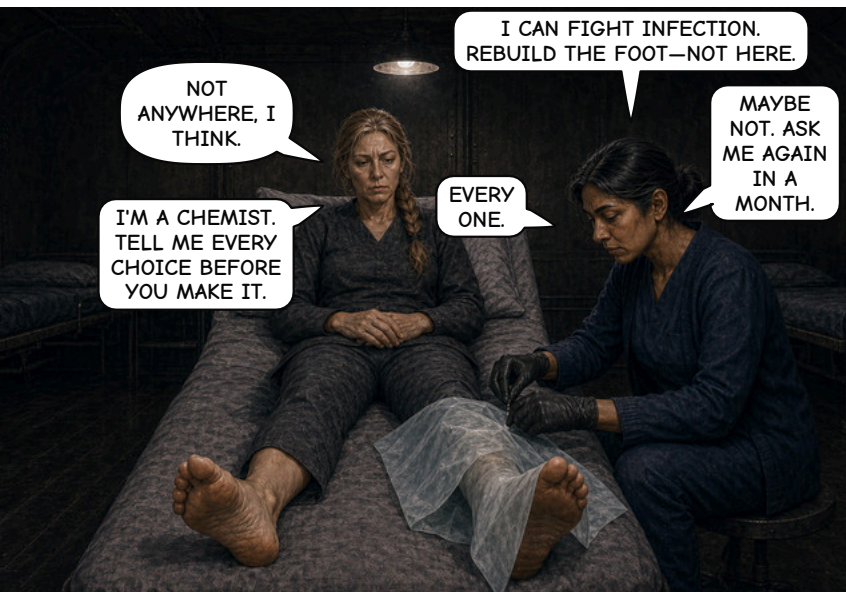
HOW BAD A
SEAM?



CLTR-CLTR-CLTR







17 SEPTEMBER.
DAY THREE.

SAME
STORES.
SAME
RATION.
NINE MORE
PEOPLE.

PUT IT
AWAY,
JUNE.

RUN IT
OUT LOUD.
I'LL CHECK
IT.

I'VE ALREADY GOT IT
IN A SPREADSHEET,
GRANT.

~~TOTAL ABOARD — 164~~
TOTAL ABOARD — 173

$49,500,000 \times 0.92 \div$
 $(173 \times 2,350) = 112.02$
DAYS

IT WAS A
HUNDRED
EIGHTEEN.

FOR A HUNDRED
SIXTY-FOUR
PEOPLE.

IT COSTS
SIX DAYS.

OFF THEIR
SHARE?

EVERYONE'S.
FIVE JANUARY.

11 JANUARY 2035



KESTREL HAD
FOURTEEN PEOPLE.
FIVE DIED BEFORE WE
CAME. NINE ARE HERE.

ALL FOURTEEN
NAMES GO ON THE
WALL. THEIRS
BESIDE OURS.

AND THE FOOD,
CAPTAIN?

DR.
OKAFOR.



ONE DAY OFF
COURSE. FUEL WE
WON'T GET BACK.

AND SIX DAYS
OFF THE END
OF THE FOOD.

OFF
EVERYONE'S
END. SAY THAT
PART TOO.

WE KNOW WHAT WE COST,
MR. CALDER. WE DID THE
SUM IN THE TENT.

NINE
PEOPLE.

AND SIX
DAYS.

BOTH STAY ON
THE BOARD.

DEAD BEFORE CONTACT — 5
RESCUED ALIVE — 9
TOTAL ABOARD — 173

~~11 JANUARY 2035~~
5 JANUARY 2035

THAT NIGHT, AT 20:10, THE
RADIO CAUGHT FOUR
SECONDS OF NOISE

FROM THE DIRECTION
OF SVALBARD.

