

## Story 4: A close-knit village!

**Background:** In this story of the future, the world is divided into continental trading blocs. Free trade agreements have been strengthened between Mexico, the United States and Canada. Quebec, which possesses many strategic resources, such as water, renewable energy and arable land, has obligations to contribute to increasing the self-sufficiency of the North American bloc. The sharing of Quebec's resources with its neighbours is an important source of revenue for the province, but also for local pollution and social tensions.

Summer 2050, Grande-Marée Village

6:30 a.m., the alarm clock sounds. Today will be a hot and humid day. The temperature is 32 degrees already! Doryna wonders how she will get through it. She misses her morning coffee, as coffee has become scarce. She also fears that the heat will worsen her heart problem. Especially since today, she has to work two hours in the village's collective garden. It's a lot for her, but this summer's drought has put pressure on people to work more hours to save crops. The good thing is that these hours spent in the garden increase her pension and access to basic food like potatoes, carrots, and fresh fruit, such as raspberries and blueberries, at a much lower cost than at the grocery store. This is how she makes ends meet. However, to replace rice, which has become scarce, one must be imaginative. However, North American agreements provide grain at a still reasonable cost. When there are any!

Fortunately, despite budget cuts to the health system, Grande-Marée has managed to keep a small clinic in the village. Doryna is worried about her mother, who persists in staying in her seaside home in a village 30 km from emergency services. She would be safer in a seniors' residence built far from the coastal erosion zone!

After a cold shower, Doryna manages to regain her enthusiasm and jumps on her electric bike to ride it to the garden. There, she meets new workers from Mexico hired to make up for the lack of labourers. She likes to share dinners with them and hear about stories from where they come. These workers, like climate refugees, often live in housing that is too small. They asked Doryna for help as she sits on the municipal planning committee.

This afternoon's committee is about whether to approve or not the small electric dam project in the village's backcountry. Quebec Government has signed an agreement to supply more clean electricity to the United States. The total electricity supply is not always enough to support demand, which causes periodical power outages. This is why citizens who have moved inland have set up an energy coop that would operate off the national grid. This self-sufficient source of energy would power the residents of the area in addition to the small local logging company. This project has been on stage for a long time, but tensions between the founding members have slowed down its development.

And now, a group of activists opposing the construction of the dam stopped the project. The discussions are getting heated in the village and in council meetings! The dam risks lowering

water levels in the summer and jeopardizing the salmon river's ecosystem and, in turn, access to this food for residents.

Doryna has sympathy for the activists, but on the other hand, she is aware of the immense needs of her community. Local businesses bring in revenue that the municipality can hardly do without. The school is falling into ruin, and there is a dire need for affordable housing for low-income people. Fortunately, in her village, the debates are more respectful than elsewhere! Grande-Marée is not doing so bad after all. People are resourceful and supportive. In recent years, the municipality has built a solar panel park that heats the municipal buildings at a lower cost and provides businesses with low-cost premises, which has helped maintain jobs.

However, job losses remain a major obstacle for many. Her lover, Michèle, lost her full-time job at the lobster processing plant due to the automation of her workstation. Michèle now works part-time and asked Doryna to live with her. Doryna is delighted with the idea, but she first must talk to her daughter Éléonore. Éléonore plans on coming back and living in Grande-Marée with her husband and children. They have talked about building a multi-generational home to reduce housing costs, and Doryna likes the idea of living with her grandchildren. Doryna has mixed feelings about what life has become for her. She thinks back with nostalgia to the days when salaries were enough to travel and spoil herself a little more. But she notes at the same time that the pace of living is less stressful than before.