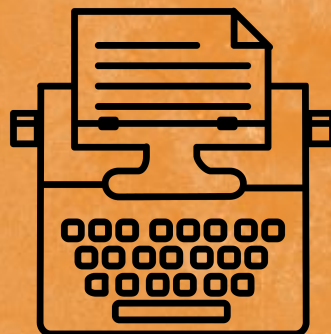


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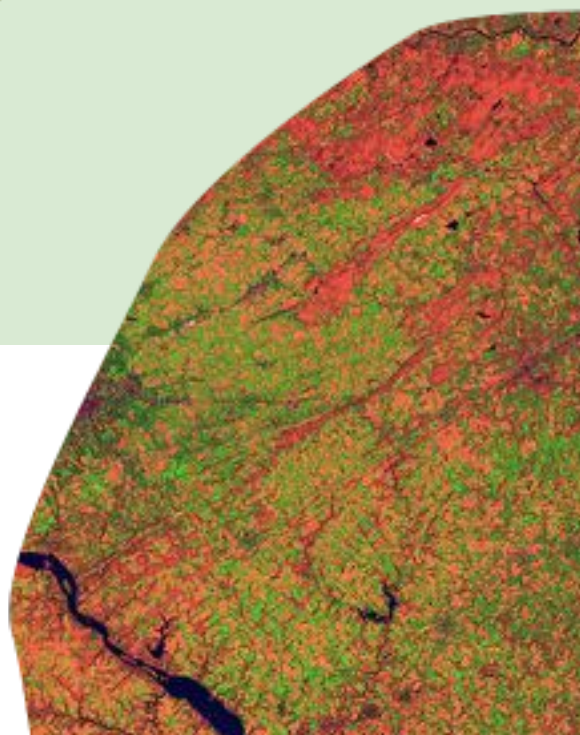
*Author:*

# Occupy Climate Change (OCC!)

*Creative story  
entry*



FORMAS



# Lyon

*Isabelle Martinier*

## **Chapter 1 - The city of Workers**

In the sewers of the city of Lyon in ruins, Tallulah is waking up as her stomach reminds her she has not eaten since two days. Despite the shrill whistle of the siren, Tallulah did not wake up on time this morning and she will be late at the farm. Her boss is going to take a pay-day off her wage, which is already scanty. As Tallulah is less than 15 years old, she is still assigned to a "child labor": eight hours a day, she deals with animals breeding and plantations maintenance. The majority of the farm products goes directly to the City of Lights, as the government is paying the Workers a misery, who are too poor to buy what they produce.

In three years, she will be considered as an adult and her boss - according to his degree of appreciation - will give her a job as a worker in the recycling of waste, agriculture, slaughter or power plants. Given the relationship with the boss, she may end up in recycling or in one of the power plants, where the life expectancy does not exceed thirty years due to all the toxic products they are forced to use and the high radioactivity.

Her watch indicates that she is already an hour late. Tallulah grabs her shoulder bag, cram the few stuffs that belongs to her inside, and rushes out of the sewers. The bright light dazzles her, despite the dust and clouds from the air pollution. However she does not let her eyes get used to it and goes to the farm. Far away, she can see the high scintillating wall that separates her from the City of Lights. The farm is near the wall, and every morning she walks past it, under the harsh look of the militia guarding it. Miradors, guards, electric field, barbed wire, and of course Rhone and Saone rivers, everything was set up to make the City of Lights impenetrable. Only a few exceptions can move between the two areas, but the process is so complex that no one has yet managed to enter by cheating.

The City of Lights. How much has she dreamed of getting in there? Her mother had been there a few times before she was finally taken, and she had described a world very different from the one she is used to. Everything was beautiful, clean, like those real estate advertisements you can sometimes found in old newspapers. The Lighters themselves seemed more beautiful, despite their almost identical clothes and their imperturbable faces. She had even seen a tree there. In the City of Workers it does not exist anymore since the disaster of 2147, and the only plants they can see are the vegetables and fruits in the farm. The natural land does not let anything grow because of its high toxicity. So for the plantations, special clay and seeds are given by the government, to allow them to grow plants.

If her mother had to go to the City of Lights, it was because she was able to procreate. It was by bringing Tallulah into the world that it was revealed. She had tried to hide her daughter for a long time, living in the most remote places of the city and forbidding her daughter to move when she was working in the fields. But the authorities finally discovered her, and when Tallulah was six years old, her mother was arrested. After some verification tests, she had been definitely enlisted, and never returned. Few women are able to give birth, so as soon as authorities realize that a woman is able to do it, she becomes a Procreator. Their duty is to give their ova to the community, or even be surrogate mother for the Lighters, until their reproductive system is off. There are so few Procreators that their task is even harder, and they generally end up dying of exhaustion. When her mother was taken away, one of her friends had supported Tallulah, but when she started working at the age of seven she stole the little wage she earned. So Tallulah left.

In her group of Workers, Tallulah is one of the only natural children. The majority of the others were laid down by the authorities to the wall some morning, and then adopted by Workers' couples. Nobody knows how babies are chosen to go to the City of the Workers or to the City of the Lighters, but in order to continue to have an equilibrium (and especially a labor force), the government is giving babies to both sides.

Tallulah arrives at the farm, which is guarded, like all the production units in the city. Her boss does not even bother to call her to order, and scratches her day off the board while looking at her with a smirk. Another pay day that will end in his pocket to fatten him a little more. She no longer has a penny to buy food at the only food store of the city, which is run by the government. So to eat tonight, Tallulah will have to go search for an old can in the rubble area. Fortunately, she knows it well because when her mother was still alive, that is where they were hiding most of the time. But the "Canuts" are also living there now, and she would better not meet these rebels. The Canuts are Workers who have refused the separate system, and have abandoned their jobs. To survive, they plunder the plantations, farms, stores, and sometimes attack the Workers to get their pay or their ration of water. Since most of them have pulled their chip off their wrist, they can no longer obtain the daily water ration distributed near the wall, but it allows them to no longer be identifiable and localizable by the government, and therefore to launch offensives against the wall. So far, none has been successful.

At the end of her work, Tallulah goes to the wall to get her ration of water which she drinks in a tread (to be sure no one would stole it from her) and goes towards the rubbles. She has to cross the whole city to reach it, and it was already getting darker as the night falls. All the better, she will be less likely to be spotted this way, and she still has battery on her solar energy lamp. It was a find of her mother, which she keeps preciously because it is very expensive in the black market.

It is already 11:30 pm when she arrives in the rubble area. It is dark night, and that sharpens her sense of hearing. She is about to enter one of the old buildings, when she hears a noise behind her in the waste collecting area.

## **Chapter 2 - The city of Lights**

The lights gradually turn on in the room, indicating to Louis that in an hour his History of Earth's lesson begins. He puts his forefinger on his Analyzer, which detects him a slight magnesium deficiency, and five minutes later his breakfast was served with a blue little pill. While he is having it, his daily program is projected: classes from 8 am to 12 am, an hour lunch break, and then back-to-school with the weekly survival training until 6 pm.

Louis lives on the side of the City of Lights because his parents have passed the tests to enter the area. They are now working for the government of Lyon, in the voice surveillance department. Every day, they evaluate the sayings of each Lighters to establish profiling files. Here all movements, words, and even medical data are recorded permanently. A misstep and the government calls you to order. If too many missteps are reported, the government assigns you the role of "Cleaner", that is to say to the maintenance of the city. They are the only Lighters dedicated to a Workers type of jobs in the City of Lights, and their residential building is under heavy surveillance.

The seventeen-year-old young man leaves the family apartment and walks to the institute. The first thing he sees is the imposing wall, which separates the small peninsula of Lyon from the rest of the city. Only the elites live here, those who has passed the test, now enjoying their life and lacking nothing, while controlling the city, its resources and people. Nobody knows the exact selection process

of this test, except of course the secret dedicated department. Every year, some of the best workers are admitted to the test, which analyzes their physical and mental abilities, and establishes the psychological profile of the candidates. At the end, the Lighters are recruiting only those with the best profile and who will be the more useful to society. This totally biased system was established in 2155, during the reconstruction of Lyon a few years after the disaster. Louis was lucky enough to be born on the good side of this system, as his parents wanted to have a baby.

Louis finally joins his class of a dozen young people, and sits next to his friend Peter. Tonight after the survival training, they will try again to find an opening to pass on the side of the Workers. For 7 years now they dream of leaving the city, experiencing what the real freedom is, struggling for survival, and mostly getting rid of this dreary and barren life. They only have a few months left to pass their final exam, which will determine where they will work, so they are in a hurry. Given his current results, Louis could easily join the government, live in the best area of the city, rub shoulders with the greatest, and be at the origin of political decisions concerning the city... But that does not interest him. This system does not suit him, and his goal is to get in touch with the Canuts to create a real rebellion and change the system for a fairer one. The only way is to go to the other side. So at 10pm tonight, Louis and Peter will meet near the quarters where the Great Politicians live. This is the area where the wall is the less guarded, as people are not expecting rebellion from Politicians. The two teenagers will have taken care to demagnetize their chip by a ploy found two years ago. Thus, they will no longer be localizable. Three days ago, they found a potential passage in the wall, by passing through the waste disposal area. The escapade is risky, as they need to find a way to block the different automatic rakes and grinding systems, but they will try to block it with metal bars.

It is 9:50 pm, Louis puts on his technical equipment and his survival bag, disappears discreetly from the apartment, and ran off in the night directly to the evacuation waste tunnel.