



149. Disasters

Sarah: Wentworth, how do you deal with this heat wave we've had for ten days?

W: Hardly, I think like anyone else at the moment. But I'm lucky to have air-conditioned in my house. Did you know that heat waves are a silent killer, mostly affecting the elderly, the very young or the chronically ill?

Sarah: I know, it killed fifteen thousand people during the summer of 2003. Actually more than two decades ago climate scientists predicted a greater frequency of "extreme" climate events, and they were right.

W: Indeed. Human activities are changing the natural balance of the Earth. That's why the risks are everywhere now, from the constant risk of coastal flooding, to the earthquakes and tsunamis, millions of people are threatened.

Sarah: Yes, I heard whole villages were wiped out by an earthquake in Nepal recently, and some scientists think we may have entered a new cycle of hurricane activity after relative calm over the previous thirty years.

W: Unfortunately. Apart from anticipating hazards, there is nothing much we can do against the freaks of nature.

Sarah: I do think that most of it is a man-made disaster more than a natural disaster.

GLOSSARY:

Disasters: les catastrophes	Earthquakes: tremblements de terre
To deal with: gérer, traiter	Tsunamis: tsunamis
To be lucky: avoir de la chance	Whole villages : des villages entiers
To affect: affecter, toucher	A new cycle: un nouveau cycle
To kill: tuer	Hurricane activity: activité cyclonique
To predict: prédire	Relative calm: une accalmie relative
To change: changer	Hazards: les risques
To be threatened: être menacé	The freaks of nature: les caprices de la nature
To wipe out: effacer, rayer de la carte	A man-made disaster : une catastrophe causée par l'homme
To enter: entrer	A natural disaster: une catastrophe naturelle
To anticipate: anticiper, prévenir	Hardly: difficilement
The heat wave: la vague de chaleur, la canicule	Anyone else : les autres
Air-conditioned: l'air conditionné	Mostly : principalement
A silent killer : un tueur silencieux	Constant : constant
the elderly : les personnes âgées	Recently : récemment
The very young : les enfants en bas âge	The previous thirty years : les 30 dernières années
The chronically ill : les malades atteints d'une affection chronique	Apart from : à part
A decade : une décennie	Nothing much : pas grand chose
Climate scientists : les climatologues	Against : contre
A greater frequency : une fréquence plus importante	Most of it : la plupart
Extreme climat events : les catastrophes climatiques	More than : plus que
Human activities : les activités humaines	
The natural balance : l'équilibre naturel	
The risks : les risques	
Coastal flooding : inondation côtière	



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