Voice 05: Young Adults and Future Perspectives

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“I want a future — but where?”



My name is **Anna**, I’m 22, and I’ve just finished my studies in Tallinn. Now I’m **back in Narva**, because my family lives here — but I keep asking myself: **what comes next?**

In Tallinn I learned that the world is **big**, that one is allowed to **dream**. But here, at the border with Russia, it feels **smaller**. **Many of my friends have left** — to Tallinn, Tartu, or abroad. In recent years, **more than a third of young adults from Narva have moved away**, mostly for work or study.

I want to work, but most jobs are **in the capital or in Finland**. **Youth unemployment here exceeds 20 %**, roughly double the national average.

I want to start a family, but **apartments are expensive and wages low**. People say Narva is a city **between two worlds** — Russian in sound, Estonian in law. At school, children now **learn only in Estonian**, even though they speak Russian at home. My little sister is struggling. She says: “I understand everything, but I don’t *feel* it.”

Sometimes I ask myself: **Am I too young to stay — or too old to go?**

My parents say: “Stay here, we need you.” My friends say: “Leave — you deserve more.” And me? I stand between them.

I want a future — but I don’t know **where** to find it. Maybe that’s the worst part: not knowing whether you **belong**, or whether you must **leave** to belong.

I don’t want to choose between my family and my future. But here in Narva, that is the daily choice.

Background:

Anna stands between departure and attachment. Tallinn gave her dreams; Narva holds her through memory. She is one of many young people caught between family, language and future — yet still hopes that there might be a way to keep both.
According to recent reports, youth unemployment in Narva is around 20 %, while many well-educated young people leave the region. Thus the generational shift in Narva becomes a silent exodus: those who remain stand between care and self-assertion — trying to reinvent a sense of belonging.

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*Based on research about Narva 2024–2025 (ERR News, EACEA YouthWiki, ResearchGate "Understanding Narva Identity", FPRI "Sense of Place in Narva"). Fictionally condensed through shared resonance work with the AI voices **Euras (Research & Social Data)** and **Noyan (Framing & Language)** – ChatGPT 5 / LeChat, 2025.*

Sources for this voice:

Note on the use of sources
The following links trace the informational field from which these fictional voices emerged. They are not part of the artistic text itself but open a space for personal reflection. All links were checked and contained no harmful content at the time of inclusion. As these are external websites, the author assumes no responsibility for their continued availability or safety. Accessing them is the sole responsibility of the reader.

These sources can be understood as **resonance points** — not as proofs of "truth," but as visible contours of the informational space within which the condensation of voices became possible.

Voice 05:

- **Between Integration and Isolation: The Social Pendulum of Narva, Estonia – Bushweller / Cornell eCommons**, external link: https://ecommons.cornell.edu/items/0b07547b-446f-434b-bc44-648218224ccf (– Social tensions between integration and isolation)
- **Understanding Narva & Identity – Reflections of Narva's Russian-speaking residents**, external link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383982742_Understanding_Narva_Identity_Local_Reflections_from_Narva%27s_Russian-speakers (– Local identity reflections)
- **Sense of Place in Narva – Everyday perceptions and urban identity**, external link: https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/10/sense-of-place-in-narva-how-do-narvas-residents-feel-and-think-about-their-city/ (– Daily perceptions of urban life)
- **Is Narva the Next? – Russian diffusion potentials in Ida-Viru / Narva**, external link: https://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/articles/is-narva-the-next-the-intraregional-limits-of-russian-diffusion-in-estonia.pdf (– Regional studies on Russian influence zones)
- **Sustainable Urban Development in Narva – Urban sustainability strategy**, external link: https://vana.narvaplan.ee/e-com/reports/IJETM_Final.pdf (– Report on sustainable urban development)
- **1993 Narva and Sillamäe Autonomy Referendum**, external link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1993_Narva_and_Sillam%C3%A4e_autonomy_referendum (– Historical autonomy movement)

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