

# Holiday House Readers' Guide

## Grand Prize Winner of the 2009 Green Book Festival

- ★ "Deeply compulsive and urgently compulsory reading."—*Booklist* (starred review)
- ★ *School Library Journal* (starred review)
- ★ *The Horn Book* (starred review)

### Take Your Eco-Knowledge Further

**United States Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.epa.gov/epahome/learn.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epahome/learn.htm)

The official site discusses important environmental issues and suggests ways that citizens may become involved with protecting the environment.

**Environmental Defense Fund**  
[www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org)

This site explores issues related to global warming and asks individuals for contributions to fund research and educational opportunities.

**World Health Organization**  
[www.who.int/en/](http://www.who.int/en/)

The official website of the WHO draws the connection between the environment and health and focuses on specific programs sponsored by this organization.

**Sustainable Energy Coalition**  
[www.sustainableenergycoalition.org](http://www.sustainableenergycoalition.org)

The official site of this coalition of more than 60 organizations that promotes increased federal support for energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.



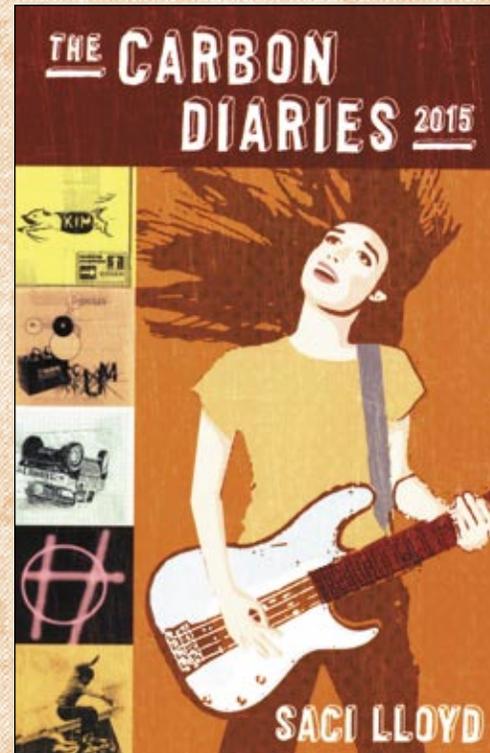
### About the Author

**Saci Lloyd** has written a screenplay and worked as a script editor in the film industry. She also enjoys graphic design. She is the head of media studies at a sixth form college in London, where she lives. This is Saci's first novel.

THE CARBON DIARIES 2015 is printed on environmentally responsible paper, 30% post-consumer waste. In addition, the printing process and ink reduce VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) emissions and use less energy.

Guide prepared by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

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**THE  
CARBON DIARIES  
2015**  
Saci Lloyd

**Told in short diary entries filled with scrapbook clippings, this riveting ecothriller is about one girl's attempt to stay grounded in a world where disaster has become the norm.**

It's the year 2015, a time when global warming has begun to ravage the environment. In response, the United Kingdom becomes the first country to mandate carbon rationing—a well-intentioned plan that goes tragically awry. When her carbon debit card arrives in the mail, sixteen-year-old Laura is just trying to pass her exams, manage her ecopunk band, and catch the attention of her gorgeous classmate Ravi. But as multiple natural disasters strike and Laura's parents head toward divorce, her world spirals out of control. A severe drought sparks fires and deadly riots; then the highest-category hurricane in recent history strikes London. With the death toll in the thousands and climbing, Laura and her family face the unimaginable as her older sister clings to life.

## Questions for Discussion

- Check out the “Brown Family New Year’s Luxury Item List” (p. 2) and discuss what the list reveals about each character. Julia Brown says that she didn’t realize the family was so polarized. How does the family become more polarized as the living conditions in London get worse? Why does Laura feel that her parents are in denial about their family’s problems? Apply the words that Laura writes on the “Conflict Tree” (p. 206) to her family. What advice would you give to the Brown family as they attempt to fix their broken relationships?
- There is a lot of friction between Laura and her sister, Kim. Contrast their personalities. Kim says, “You don’t know anything about me. At least I live in the real world, instead of some moral fantasy” (p. 131). Describe Kim’s real world. How is her real world almost her demise? Why does Kim think that Laura’s life is a moral fantasy? Laura does admit that she sometimes admires Kim. How does this admiration evoke jealousy? Discuss Laura’s reaction when Kim tells her that she is afraid of Tracey Leader. What is the irony in this revelation? Explain the metaphor and the symbolism of Laura’s dream about a “messed-up bird” (p. 286). Who is the bird? What is the glass?
- Describe Laura’s relationship with Kieran, the Carbon-Dating entrepreneur who lives next door. He tells Laura, “Life is what you make it” (p. 96). How does Kieran model this advice? Kim helps Kieran work out the plans for his Carbon Dating business. Why is this a safer and more positive path for Kim?
- Laura says, “We’re addicted to oil and gas. . . . And the drug’s running out” (p. 20). How is Kim’s involvement with Tracey Leader and the sale of carbon ration cards on the black market similar to illegal drug dealing? Discuss our nation’s addiction to oil and gas. How might this foreshadow more environmental issues and problems facing our nation?
- Why does Laura say the energy crisis is about greed? How does panic buying create a greater crisis? Explain the connection between the energy crisis and the need for stricter anti-terrorism laws.
- Kim refuses to open her ration card. Explain why she feels that the card is a symbol of lost youth. How might American teenagers have similar feelings should they be forced to ration energy?
- Julia Brown says that her generation messed it all up for the kids. How might this be a warning for the current generation? Teens of the 1970s were caught up in social causes. They thought that they were serving the good of society. How do you think these causes might actually have contributed to selfishness?
- How do the hardships created by carbon rationing affect the way Laura and her friends view education? What is the purpose of the Environmental Saver A-level exam? Debate Laura’s view that there is no point in “studying something you’ll never do” (p. 40). Gwen Parry-Jones says, “Education is freedom” (p. 115). Discuss how Laura might see irony in GPJ’s statement. Why is knowledge the key to understanding global issues?
- Laura experiences the emotional ups and downs common to most adolescents. How is this especially revealed in her relationship with Ravi Datta? What other typical adolescent emotions does Laura experience? Why might she feel that she has been robbed of her teenage years? At what point does Laura begin to discover inner power?
- Carbon is the fourth most abundant element in the universe and the chemical basis of all life. Explain why the British government volunteered to impose carbon rationing after the Great Storm. Debate whether this was a political decision. After a cholera epidemic breaks out, Gwen Parry-Jones says that they are now living in a Third World. What constitutes a Third World country? Discuss how natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and others may cause a global, ecological, economic, and health crisis. How did Hurricane Katrina create a Third World feeling on the Gulf Coast?

