

The Carbon Diaries 2017

Saci Lloyd

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First published in the United States of America by Holiday House in 2010

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Printed and Bound in December 2009 at Maple Vail, Binghamton, NY, USA.

www.holidayhouse.com

First American Edition

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lloyd, Saci.

The carbon diaries 2017 / by Saci Lloyd.—1st American ed.

p. cm.

Sequel to: The carbon diaries 2015.

Summary: Two years after England introduces carbon dioxide rationing to combat climatic change, eighteen-year-old Laura chronicles her first year at a London university as natural disasters and political upheaval disrupt her studies.

ISBN 978-0-8234-2260-9 (hardcover)

[1. Protest movements—Fiction. 2. Rationing—Fiction. 3. Energy conservation—Fiction. 4. Climatic changes—Fiction. 5. London (Eng.)—Fiction. 6. England—Fiction. 7. Diaries—Fiction.] I. Title.

PZ7.L77874Cas 2010

[Fic]—dc22

2009020412

This book is dedicated to the memory of

Victor Hugo Daza, 17

Carlo Giuliani, 22

*And all the others who have fallen
in the defence of human rights*

Author's Note

About three years ago I walked past a newspaper stand and the lead story in one paper was all about how we were going to fry, and in another how we were going to freeze to death unless we tackled climate change. I remember thinking, "Whoah! Which one is it?" before stepping aboard a roller-coaster research ride of heart-stopping bad news about how much we're messing up the world. But the strange thing was, the more I found out, the less scared I got and the more I wanted to start fighting for a future. Plus after all that doom, I wanted to have a laugh. As a teenager, I was always drawn to books that asked big questions about the world, but I also loved funny books, with lead characters who never wanted to teach you a thing: Holden Caulfield, Adrian Mole, Huckleberry Finn.

Laura Brown would be furious if she knew I'd published her secret diary. I ain't telling her anytime soon.

Saci Loyd, 2009

FOCUS ON: THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS. Is 2017 the year of the

USA: OGALLALA AQUIFER

Current Status: 5 years remaining.
Source of 1/5th of all US farm water.
Extraction: 12 bilcubic metres P.A.

Conflict status: Civil unrest/state troops mobilised 4 times in 2016.

SPAIN: EBRO RIVER

Current Status: Lowest recorded levels.
Channel project completed in 2014 to re-route water to Southern Spain has brought region to crisis point.

Conflict status: Severe civil unrest/state wide strike in Catalonia, Aragon/border disputes with France.

CHINA

Current Status: 420 da
China p

Conflict status: 12.6 m
River p
people

MEXICO CITY

Current Status: Clean water failure. Severe cholera outbreak in 2015/16
City has sunk to extreme danger levels due to over pumping of aquifer.

Conflict status: Forced evacuation of districts.

BRAZIL/PARAGUAY ITAIPU DAM CONFLICT

INDIA/PAKISTAN GANGES RIVER DISPUTE

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Current Status: Sea of Gallilee at crisis levels. Israel's main reservoir now in danger of complete salination.
Severe drought in Palestine & Jordan.

Conflict status: Massive civil unrest/Israeli military strikes on Gaza strip/escalating Jordanian border conflict.

AFRICA: N

Current Status: Nile at lowest
Intense comp
Africa, Lake C

Conflict status: Nile in 2015,
disputes. Civil
Chad, Carere
displaced or l
massive rise l

Water Stress Indicator



Low/Mid Stress

High Stress

Extreme Stress (Conflict)

e first water war?

A: YELLOW RIVER

Status: Lower reaches dry for
period. Water table on North
plain dropping by 2 metres PA

status: Forced relocation of
million people in Yangtze/Yellow
project. Estimated 40 million
at starvation levels.

UZBEKISTAN/KAZAKSTAN
ARAL SEA COLLAPSEIRAQ
WETLAND COLLAPSEAUSTRALIA
DARLING RIVER
CRISIS

NILE RIVER-LAKECHAD

status: Severe drought in many areas.
levels in recorded history.
petition for resources. In Central
had is at 2% of previous levels.

status: Egyptian military defense of
Ethiopia & Sudan in border
Vigilante River Patrol in Niger,
poon. Estimated 150 million
living at starvation level,
in illegal entry to Europe.

TEMPERATURES RISE AGAIN BY 0.35°
CARBON RATIONING CARD TO GO GLOBAL

Historic agreement reached today in
Vancouver. 160 countries sign up to global
carbon rationing card & trade permit
system to set global limit for CO2 pollution.

International environment ministers worked through the night to reach a dramatic 11th hour global agreement to lower carbon emissions on the last day of the Vancouver Emergency Climate Sessions. The agreement is in response to drastic new data, revealing that greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere have risen to an historic high of 400 parts per million and average global temperatures have recorded their fifth annual rise. There are two main elements to the plan.

- 1) A massive new global infrastructure in which every citizen will be issued with a carbon rationing card to limit his/her annual carbon emissions according to internationally set targets. The system will be based on the existing EuroZone trials.
- 2) A global limit to be set for industrial carbon pollution. Permits will be issued to companies extracting or refining fossil fuels. Failure to comply

will ...

...

January

Mon., Jan. 2

So exhausted. My family is in a deathlike trance after the village New Year's Eve Organic Goose Fayre. After 2 days of meat-induced coma, I finally dragged myself out of bed and walked the five Ks into Abingdon to check out the sales. I'd just got to the market square when I heard this creepy jingly sound and a bunch of Morris men rocked up in ribbons and bells with little sticks and started dancing around like idiots. I observed them closely, with their piggy eyes and big bellies. City people, bringing back traditions that have died out because they suck; the country is full of them.

Dad was super happy when I got home. He saw me by the gate and opened the kitchen window.

"Mail from Kim. Come on!"

I crunched moodily up the driveway.

it's your world...

Hi guys ☺ quick mail before the power goes.
Having such a blast here ☺ Last night we were
to the opening of a new temple. We got there
on a bus with about 200 people inside and 30
hanging on outside. It was about 1 million degrees
in there, everyone laughing and singing and
sneaking Thai whiskey in the back. They [d s
up a screen on the roof playing crazy Chinese
music vids through 12 banging speakers. It was
so loud it [s like when you go deaf. The temple
was massive and golden, full of monks, a sea
of orange robes and flower garlands and so we
bought our own robes for 30 bhat and circled
the wat 4 times before doing some stuff with
candles and incense. In the end we threw our
robes into a hole in the new wat and a monk
poured holy oil and set them on fire. The flames
shot up so high my mate John nearly lost his
eyebrows.

Leaving town tomorrow, heading for the beach ☺
oh yeah

Love ya
K x



Later I lay in bed thinking and got dead mad. How does my sister
get that life? She left her old job as promoter for Carbon Dating with

Kieran last summer and got a job in Thailand working for an eco tour holiday company called LoveWorks, which basically charges € 5,000 to fly guilty white people out to Thailand to build bad log huts for skinny villagers in rain forests. So there she is off her head on 100% proof Thai whiskey and here I am, 18 and lying on a single bed on a farm in Oxfordshire. I was supposed to be up in Glasgow with Adi for a massive New Year's Eve party, but guess whose mum washed a carbon card on heavy spin with an old knapsack? I'm totally grounded till I get that puppy back on line. Money ain't enough these days. Got to have a card to live.



Wed., Jan. 4

It's so definitely time to get out of here. I came downstairs this morning to find a local community farmer meeting happening in the

kitchen. I walked in as Dad was turning from his laptop to face the group. “I’ve got something I’d like to put before you. Many of us keep pigs here, but what if we were to extend our facilities—and, and . . .”—he glanced at Mum’s face—“and start converting our pig manure into crude oil!”

Mum gave an involuntary jerk. “Jesus.”

He pushed on. “Look, oil and gas prices are at an all-time high, oil is \$250 a barrel—and it’s only going to rise. This recession is biting deep; we’ve simply got to make our own fuel. They did it in the oil crisis in the 1970s, so the technology exists. Look . . .” Dad jabbed his finger at the screen and it sprang to life, revealing a weird-looking machine. The farming randoms muttered.

“All you need is this small-scale thermo chemical conversion reactor. It basically puts heat and pressure on the pigs’ . . . doings . . . and that breaks the manure’s long hydrocarbon chains down into shorter ones.”

“What does that mean?” asked Daniel. He’s the only one I know by name cos he’s super gorgeous. He’s an ex-city broker with curly chestnut hair and hazel eyes who lives in a cottage in a bog with a really bossy blonde woman called Rachel who breeds llamas with big teeth. (Her, not the llamas. They are cute.)

“I’m not sure of the precise details, but it says here that each 5-liter batch of manure converts to a liter of oil. With the right amount of pigs we’d be self-sufficient.”

Big Teeth spread her hands on her llama-wool-trimmed leggings. “And how many animals would that take? A few hundred?”

Dad nodded. “Yeah, Rachel. Give or take.”

Mum groaned. “Oh, Nick, no, tell me you’re joking.”

Dad stared back at her; the group stared. Not a smile between them. Big Teeth turned to Mum and spoke clearly, like to a slow learner. “Well, with the economy the way it is, the unemployment, the inflation . . . not to speak of the flooding and land prices rising because of everyone leaving the cities . . .” She checked Mum’s eyes

to make sure she was following. “Under these conditions I’m sure you’ll agree we have to take every chance we can.”

Poor old Mum.

Thurs., Jan. 5

Got a replacement card today. Freedom. Not that I’ve got any points left for the month. I had to give loads to Mum and Dad to power up the van so they could move their farm shit around over Xmas. Santa had the right idea with those reindeer.

Fri., Jan. 6

I sneaked out this afternoon to throw some spuds to Larkin the pig. (My life is a roller coaster right now.) Although as pigs go, he is an uber pig. What other animal could go missing for 2 weeks in flooded London and make his way home in such style? Anyway, I’d finished with the potatoes and was giving his ears a scratch when Dad suddenly appeared. “Fancy some company?”

I smiled sweetly, mentally counting the seconds till he said the P word. 1, 2, 3, 4 . . .

Dad put his hand on the swing gate. “So what do you reckon to my pig manure plan?”

Impressive. Not for the first time I found myself wondering if he’s OK in the head. He gets fixated on things, like those autistic savants that only get little bits of light shining in their brains at any one point, ’cept their brilliance is usually piano solos or molecular physics where my dad’s shiny bit is pigs, which kind of takes some of the style away. Nobody’s gonna make a movie about him.

I glanced up at him. “Dad, if you want to start up an oil factory that’s fine, but you’ve got to get the others to lay off Mum a bit. I mean the way old llama legs was talking to her was dead mean.”

He bit back a smile. “I know, but . . . your mum just won’t get involved . . .”

“Surprise, surprise, Dad. The woman doesn’t want to spend her life rolling in hoofed mammal crap. Ever occurred to you she’s the normal one?”

“But that’s just it . . .”

“What?”

He frowned. “There is no normal anymore.”

We stood there a moment in silence. Deep silence. Although I swear Larkin winked at me. Cheeky little porker.

Sat., Jan. 7

I was packing my stuff up when Mum came in, sat on the bed, and reached for a sock.

“I envy you, y’know. Back off to London . . .”

Uh-oh. I folded a T-shirt in silence.

“Your father is completely happy, of course, buried in the country.”

“How’s your library job going?”

She balled up a pair of mismatched socks. “It’s fine, I mean, really it is. It’s not publishing, of course. . . . And I’m very grateful to have a job right now, but . . .” She paused.

But. Seems to me there’s always a *but* in everyone’s life. I was saved by a horn tooting from outside. Mum jumped up. “Oh, God, the work bus!” She hugged me super tight. “Maybe I could come down and see you some time?”

My eyes widened in alarm, but she just kissed me and shot out. I watched from the window as she clambered into a little beaten-up minivan, full of local people going to work. A man in the back row looked up and waved at me. It was like the special-needs bus at school. Heartbreaking.

Mon., Jan. 9

Mum made a special farewell dinner last night and as a special treat, Dad uncorked a bottle of his vintage homemade carrot wine. He