

A Short, Hopeful Guide to Climate Change

Oisín McGann

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Brimming with positive ideas for environmental action and communicating a wealth of accessible scientific information, this climate change primer delivers. Zippy illustrations and a humorous, conversational tone make it a smashing introduction to climate change for all.

Oisín McGann is optimistic that there is still time to address the climate emergency. Though humans are “weird” and “motivated more by emotion than by logic,” they are also inventive and creative, having coalesced international efforts to overcome problems that seemed insoluble before, like nuclear weapons proliferation, holes in the ozone layer, and smallpox. He recognizes that young people may have eco-anxiety and feel overwhelmed by the enormity and urgency of the climate crisis; thus, he delivers reassuring advice about being able to channel such feelings into action and solidarity with like-minded people and organizations.

McGann does an expert job of breaking down the complex historical and scientific developments that led to this “unprecedented situation.” His lighthearted illustrations are welcome breaks from the more serious text, as are the book’s many sidebars with quotes, factoids, and motivational ideas for further research, as well as for individual and collective action. Its suggestions include simple steps, like cutting down on eating meat and buying fewer new clothes.

The book summarizes big ideas about geopolitics, energy issues, and climate justice, but also focuses on distinct climate problems in Ireland, where McGann is from, including the effects of burning peat bogs and the potential for harnessing tidal energy. Its descriptions of what it is like to be a climate change refugee are thoughtful and effective, and even the most serious topics are presented in upbeat, positive terms.

A Short, Hopeful Guide to Climate Change is a fresh, dynamic overview of a serious and complicated issue. It includes plenty of inspirational, empowering ideas for young environmentalists.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (May / June 2022)

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