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The Powers That Be: Global Energy for the Twenty-first Century and Beyond

Scott L. Montgomery

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Thirty years ago, our global energy landscape did not look remarkably different from what it does today. Three or four decades from now, it certainly will: dwindling oil reserves will clash with skyrocketing demand, as developing nations around the world lead their citizens into the modern energy economy, and all the while, the grave threat of catastrophic climate change looms ever larger. Energy worries are at an all-time high—just how *will* we power our future?

With *The Powers That Be*, Scott L. Montgomery cuts through the hype, alarmism, and confusion to give us a straightforward, informed account of where we are now, and a map of where we're going. Starting with the inescapable fact of our current dependence on fossil fuels—which supply 80% of all our energy needs today—Montgomery clearly and carefully lays out the many alternative energy options available, ranging from the familiar, like water and solar, to such nascent but promising sources as hydrogen and geothermal power. What is crucial, Montgomery explains, is understanding that our future will depend not on some single, wondrous breakthrough; instead, we should focus on developing a more diverse, adaptable energy future, one that draws on a variety of sources—and is thus less vulnerable to disruption or failure.

An admirably evenhanded and always realistic guide, Montgomery enables readers to understand the implications of energy funding, research, and politics at a global scale. At the same time, he doesn't neglect the ultimate connection between those decisions and the average citizen flipping a light switch or sliding behind the wheel of a car, making *The Powers That Be* indispensible for our ever-more energy conscious age.

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