



You Think That's Bad

Jim Shepard

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Following *Like You'd Understand, Anyway*—awarded the Story Prize and a finalist for the National Book Award—Jim Shepard returns with an even more wildly diverse collection of astonishingly observant stories. Like an expert curator, he populates the vastness of human experience—from its bizarre fringes and lonely, breathtaking pinnacles to the hopelessly mediocre and desperately below average—with brilliant scientists, reluctant soldiers, workaholic artists, female explorers, depraved murderers, and deluded losers, all wholly convincing and utterly fascinating.

A “black world” operative at Los Alamos isn’t allowed to tell his wife anything about his daily activities, but he can’t resist sharing her intimate confidences with his work buddy. A young Alpine researcher falls in love with the girlfriend of his brother, who was killed in an avalanche he believes he caused. An unlucky farm boy becomes the manservant of a French nobleman who’s as proud of his military service with Joan of Arc as he’s aroused by the slaughter of children. A free-spirited autodidact, grieving her lost sister, traces the ancient steps of a ruthless Middle Eastern sect and becomes the first Western woman to travel the Arabian deserts. From the inventor of the Godzilla epics to a miserable G.I. in New Guinea, each comes to realize that knowing better is never enough.

Enthralling and unfailingly compassionate, *You Think That's Bad* traverses centuries, continents, and social strata, but the joy and struggle that Shepard depicts with such devastating sensitivity—all the heartbreak, alienation, intimacy, and accomplishment—has a universal resonance.

From the Hardcover edition.

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From reader reviews:

Jeremy Richards:

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Wendy Hartnett:

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