



Like You'd Understand, Anyway (Vintage Contemporaries)

Jim Shepard

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Following his widely acclaimed *Project X* and *Love and Hydrogen*—“Here is the effect of these two books,” wrote the *Chicago Tribune*: “A reader finishes them buzzing with awe”—Jim Shepard now gives us his first entirely new collection in more than a decade.

Like You'd Understand, Anyway reaches from Chernobyl to Bridgeport, with a host of narrators only Shepard could bring to pitch-perfect life. Among them: a middle-aged Aeschylus taking his place at Marathon, still vying for parental approval. A maddeningly indefatigable Victorian explorer hauling his expedition, whaleboat and all, through the Great Australian Desert in midsummer. The first woman in space and her cosmonaut lover, caught in the star-crossed orbits of their joint mission. Two Texas high school football players at the top of their food chain, soliciting their fathers' attention by leveling everything before them on the field. And the rational and compassionate chief executioner of Paris, whose occupation, during the height of the Terror, eats away at all he holds dear.

Brimming with irony, compassion, and withering humor, these eleven stories are at once eerily pertinent and dazzlingly exotic, and they showcase the work of a protean, prodigiously gifted writer at the height of his form. Reading Jim Shepard, according to Michael Chabon, “is like encountering our national literature in microcosm.”

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