



Bad Jews and Other Stories

Gerald Shapiro

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New in paperback, *Bad Jews and Other Stories* is a comic vision of life, love and spiritual adventurism among the determinedly secular class of contemporary American Jews. "Shapiro is an original voice on the contemporary Jewish American literary scene - a voice that registers in richly comic, profoundly moving ways."-*Forward*.

"Brimming with keen insight into the psyches of hilarious, lovable losers...Shapiro is a writer to watch."-*Publishers Weekly*

"*Bad Jews* dissects the character of middle-class, middlebrow Jewish-American men muddling through life."-*The Plain Dealer*

"Gerald Shapiro casts an incisive eye over his contemporaries."-*The New York Times*

Gerald Shapiro is the editor of *American Jewish Fiction: A Century of Stories*, and the recipient of the Edward Lewis Wallant Award. He lives in Lincoln, Nebraska.

An excerpt: Worst-Case Scenarios

Spivak leaned forward in his chair, ready to pounce. "Let me give you a for-instance," he said, and reached for the telephone that sat in front of him on the polished rosewood conference table. A group of elderly women sat across from him, some tapping their fingers on the tabletop, others holding their purses in front of them like shields. The air in the conference room was lush with the scent of perfume. "Now, let's just say that you're home alone," Spivak began. "It's nighttime. Very late - one, two in the morning." He punched some buttons on the phone. "Okay - the telephone rings."

And it did. The ring blasted into the conference room, and the group of elderly women flinched at the sound. Spivak leaned forward and adjusted the volume on the side of the phone. He looked intently across the table at a tall, buxom woman in a navy blue dress. Her silver hair was thick and piled high on her head, and a broad streak of white shot straight up through the middle of it, rising off her forehead like a runway.

"What should you do?" he asked her. "Should you answer it?"

The phone rang again, just as she was about to speak. "I'd be in bed," she said. "My husband would answer it. The phone's on his side."

The phone rang again. "He isn't there," Spivak snapped.

"He's not?" the

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