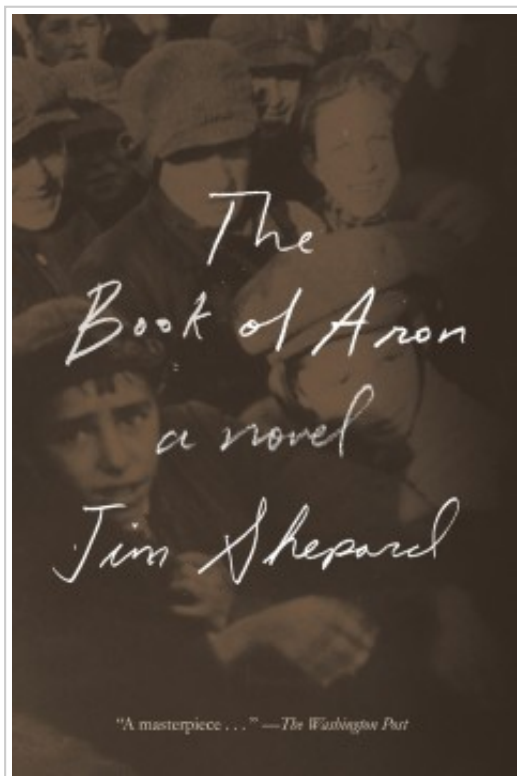


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## The Book of Aron

by Jim Shepard

**Price: \$23.95**(Hardcover)

Published: May 12, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

**From the Publisher:** The acclaimed National Book Award finalist —“one of the United States’ finest writers,” according to Joshua Ferris, “full of wit, humanity, and fearless curiosity”—now gives us a novel that will join the short list of classics about children caught up in the Holocaust.

Aron, the narrator, is an engaging if peculiar and unhappy young boy whose family is driven by the German onslaught from the Polish countryside into Warsaw and slowly battered by deprivation, disease, and persecution. He and a handful of boys and girls risk their lives by scuttling around the ghetto to smuggle and trade contraband through the quarantine walls in hopes of keeping their fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters alive, hunted all the while by blackmailers and by Jewish, Polish, and German police, not to mention the Gestapo.

When his family is finally stripped away from...

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## What We Say

It's funny! Yes, this is a story about a little boy who becomes a scavenger in the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. Yes, it's bleak and awful as we see his world slowly close in, the walls go up, the family members die off or disappear. But in his saddest, sharpest novel yet, author Jim Shepard captures the vein of black humor that runs through the despair of the Jewish people. The bickering of a husband and wife, the kvetching of the neighbors, the bleak wisdom of kids -- it's all here, all musical in the dialogue you can't help but speak out loud, all captivating and alive even as they slowly starve to death. Aron is, I suppose, a survivor, a boy who just tries to stay one step ahead of fate. (Good luck with that.) Morality doesn't come into it, but he steals and scavenges and helps feed his family and gets by. Aron is almost deliriously unaware of any other way of existing; everyone is always saying "Aron only looks out for himself" but Shepard shows this boy in all his humanity, a kid wondering exactly what he was supposed to do when pushed by everyone into talking with the local collaborators or when he has a gun held to his head and is told to do this or that or the other. He had a choice? Shepard's tale is bristling with tragic details -- Aron is always crying, it seems -- but it's a joy to read. One of the Warsaw Ghetto's tragic figures -- the child advocate Janusz Korczak -- figures prominently and beautifully, but like everyone else he is fully complex and contradictory and alive. The tale builds and builds but this isn't a story about what happens to Aron. It's richer, more satisfying than that. You'll read it quickly and then want to read it again. Unforgettable. -- Michael Giltz

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## What Others Say

"A masterpiece. . . a remarkable novel destined to join the shelf of essential Holocaust literature. . . a story of such startling candor about the complexity of heroism that it challenges each of us to greater courage. . . Shepard has created something transcendent and timeless." —Ron Charles, The Washington Post

"[Shepard's] narrow perspective creates an uncanny tension and lets us feel the horror in a way that feels fresh and freshly devastating. . . The Book of Aron doesn't let you put it down, doesn't let you stop reading until you get to the end [and] you've lived a lifetime with Aron—for better and for worse, you've done what he's done and thought what he's thinking." —Tony Perez, Tin House

"This magnificent tour de force will hold a prominent place in the literature of compassionate outrage. . . Shepard, a writer of extraordinary historical vision, psychological acuity, and searing irony, presents a profoundly moving portrait of Korczak; explores, with awe, our instinct to adapt and survive; and through the evolving consciousness of his phenomenally commanding young narrator, exposes the catastrophic impact of war and genocide..."

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