

The Kaiser's last Kiss by Alan Judd. Harper Collins, 2003.

The Kaiser's Last Kiss is a short but beautifully written novel set in the weeks following the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands and the death of the exiled Kaiser Wilhelm II in his residence Huis Doorn. The main protagonists are a young SS lieutenant, the Kaiser and his second wife, Heinrich Himmler and a serving maid who is not just Jewish but more besides. Alan Judd cleverly interweaves fact and fiction to tell a story of physical decline in a man who had epitomised the old Germany and moral decline in the new Germany, epitomised by Himmler. At the heart of the book is the young SS man, and his gradual realisation that the things he had come to accept as unshakeable truths are not what they had seemed to be.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh