

The Secret Purposes by David Baddiel.
Little Brown 2004.

For anyone whose knowledge of David Baddiel is limited to comedy and football *The Secret Purposes* will come as a surprise – and a very positive surprise at that. As his appearances elsewhere have long suggested, Baddiel is a highly intelligent and perceptive man, and these traits are to the fore in this, his third novel.

The Secret Purposes, which has links with the author's own family history, details the experience of a Jewish refugee family, the Fabians, (Mrs Fabian is actually not Jewish) who escape from the clutches of Nazism to what they assume to be the safe haven of Britain.

Unfortunately in 1940 the British government passes a law which interns 'enemy' aliens on the Isle of Man and so Isaac Fabian finds himself separated from his family but together with an eclectic mix of the cream of German Jewish society.

His experience in captivity, and that of his wife and daughter in his absence, form the substance of the book – and a very fine novel it is too. Baddiel writes with conviction, humour and great sensitivity; this is a story that does its author great credit and cries out to be made into a film.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh