

The Yiddish Policemen's Union by Michael Chabon.  
4<sup>th</sup> Estate 2007.

This is a joy of a book and though you don't have to be Jewish to get a lot of pleasure out of it if you are the pleasure is doubled!

Set in a fictional Jewish mini-state, Sitka in Alaska, established after the collapse of the State of Israel in 1948, it features as rich a cast of fictional Jewish characters as one could wish to encounter, headed by the homicide detective Meyer Landsman, whose professional and personal life lies at the centre of the story.

As the sands of time run out for Sitka and its return to Alaskan control draws near, Landsman struggles to hold his own life together. Chabon writes with a fine style, reminiscent in some ways of Raymond Chandler at his best, but replete with superb one liners and suffused by both Jewish humour and melancholy. If this is the first Chabon novel that you have read – as it was for me – I think it a safe bet that it won't be the last.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh