



The Yiddish Policemen's Union: A Novel (P.S.)

By Michael Chabon

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The *New York Times* bestseller, now available in paperback—"an excellent, hyperliterate, genre-pantsing detective novel that deserves every inch of its...blockbuster superfame" (New York).

For sixty years Jewish refugees and their descendants have prospered in the Federal District of Sitka, a "temporary" safe haven created in the wake of the Holocaust and the shocking 1948 collapse of the fledgling state of Israel. The Jews of the Sitka District have created their own little world in the Alaskan panhandle, a vibrant and complex frontier city that moves to the music of Yiddish. But now the District is set to revert to Alaskan control, and their dream is coming to an end.

Homicide detective Meyer Landsman of the District Police has enough problems without worrying about the upcoming Reversion. His life is a shambles, his marriage a wreck, his career a disaster. And in the cheap hotel where Landsman has washed up, someone has just committed a murder—right under his nose. When he begins to investigate the killing of his neighbor, a former chess prodigy, word comes down from on high that the case is to be dropped immediately, and Landsman finds himself contending with all the powerful forces of faith, obsession, evil, and salvation that are his heritage.

At once a gripping whodunit, a love story, and an exploration of the mysteries of exile and redemption, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* is a novel only Michael Chabon could have written.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Chabon's storytelling, in this alternate history of a world where Jews were settled in Alaska after World War II, is vivid enough, with inventive metaphors packed in like tapestry threads, but Peter Riegert's versatile voice makes the invented society even more tangible. Told through the eyes of Meyer Landsman, a police detective investigating a murder, the novel occurs in a strange time to be a Jew, as several characters ruefully put it: the special Jewish district will soon be controlled by Alaska again. In a bonus interview on the last disc, Chabon relates his desire to write about a place where Yiddish was an official language. The book is shot through with Yiddish phrases and names, which melodically roll off Riegert's tongue. He gives Landsman and his tough but warmhearted partner Berko similar yet distinct gruff voices that contrast well with the effeminate-sounding sect leader and the Southern-accented Americans who come to start the land reversion process. Riegert's pacing increases the enjoyment of this expertly spun mystery.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Does *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* live up to Michael Chabon's formidable reputation? There is no consensus: some critics called the novel the spiritual heir to the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* (2000); others thought it a disappointing aberration. As in *Kavalier & Clay*, Chabon explores issues of identity, assimilation, and mass culture, but he also pays homage to the noir detective novel—with mixed results. *The New York Times* called Landsman "one of the most appealing detective heroes to come along since Sam Spade or Philip Marlowe," while the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* felt that the work "came nowhere close to making the cut of a Raymond Chandler novel." Critics similarly disagreed about the writing, the convoluted plot, the symbolism of the Jewish-Native American conflict, and the controversial use of Yiddish slurs and caricatures. If not a glowing success, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* nonetheless illustrates the rare talents and creativity of its author.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Like Haruki Murakami in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1991), Chabon plays with the conventions of the Chandlerian private-eye novel, but that's only one ingredient in an epic-scale alternate-history saga of Jewish life since World War II. The premise draws on an obscure historical fact: FDR once proposed that Alaska, not Israel, become the homeland for Jews after the war. In Chabon's telling, that's exactly what happened, except, inevitably, it hasn't gone as planned: the U.S. government now has enacted a policy that will evict all Jews without proper papers from Sitka, the center of Jewish Alaska. In the midst of this nightmare, browbeaten police detective Meyer Landsman investigates the murder of a heroin-addicted chess prodigy who happens to be the disgraced son of Sitka's most powerful rabbi. No one wants this case solved, from Landsman's boss (his ex-wife, Bina) to the FBI, but our Yiddish Marlowe keeps digging, uncovering apocalypse in the making. Chabon manipulates his bulging plot masterfully, but what makes the novel soar is its humor and humanity. Even without grasping all the Yiddish wordplay that seasons the delectable prose, readers will fall headlong into the alternate universe of Chabon's Sitka, where black humor is a kind of antifreeze necessary to support life. And when Meyer, in the end, must "weigh the fates of the Jews, of the Arabs, of the whole unblessed and homeless planet" against a promise made to a grieving mother, it's clear that this parallel world smells a lot like home. Chabon's *Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* ran the book-award table in 2000, and this one just may be its equal. *Bill Ott*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Riggins:

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important usually. The book The Yiddish Policemen's Union: A Novel (P.S.) ended up being making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The reserve The Yiddish Policemen's Union: A Novel (P.S.) is not only giving you far more new information but also to get your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship with all the book The Yiddish Policemen's Union: A Novel (P.S.). You never really feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

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