

REVIEW OF *THE YIDDISH POLICEMEN'S UNION*

This is chock-full of clever phrases and similes—none of which I can recall, since I was listening to the audiobook. For the same reason, I don't know how to spell any of the characters' names. I don't regret this, because the narrator was excellent and created a perfect noir atmosphere for the story.

I was surprised to learn that the premise of the novel's alternate history—a section of Alaska being reserved for Jewish refugees—was indeed proposed to Congress in 1940.¹

One of the book's themes is the tension between viewing events as meaningful or meaningless, purposed or random. The author gives a metaphor that resonates with me: when you believe everything in your life happens for a reason, you're like the coyote from the road runner cartoons. Your belief lets you run right off the edge of a cliff and keep on running across the empty air, indefinitely. But the moment you look down—the moment you start to doubt there's actually any sense behind the events of your life—gravity reasserts itself all at once.

¹“History of the Jews in Alaska,” in *Wikipedia*, August 11, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Alaska&oldid=1169771964.