

Resistance by Owen Sheers  
Faber and Faber 2007

This is a work of fiction based on an alternative history, to wit on the Allies losing the Second World War and Britain being invaded by the forces of Nazi Germany. As the Germans take hold of Britain, and the government and Royal Family flee to Canada, the men of a remote Welsh valley disappear overnight, leaving their wives and children to fend for themselves.

Into their midst comes a small band of German soldiers, led by a Captain (who has studied in Oxford before the war), comrades in arms for several years. Their mission is to find a secreted art treasure for Heinrich Himmler and they take up residence in one of the deserted farm houses.

At first the Germans are viewed with universal fear and loathing, but as time passes, and especially after they aid the women who are trying single-handedly to keep their husbands' farms going, the hostility lessens and relationships between them begin to grow.

Unfortunately the outside world gradually intervenes, and the idyll which the occupiers and residents have created is shattered.

Owen Sheers writes absolutely beautifully, and his prose transports the reader to the valleys of Wales as the seasons pass and the landscape changes with them. His description of the landscape of human emotions is equally fine, and it is hard not to read parts of this book without almost feeling pain at some of the situations described.

Owen Sheers demonstrates in *Resistance* that he has enormous quality and skill as a novelist and I eagerly await his next book.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh