

When World War II began, it was a predominantly Western European affair, with the United States remaining neutral, Soviet Russia having a pact with Nazi Germany and Japan absorbed in a war in China. The Nazis had supporters in much of Europe during the late 1930s and were often organised into groups that sought to influence policy, often through violence. In the US, there was a strong desire not to become involved in another European war. *Restless* by William Boyd is largely set during this period but opens in Oxford in 1976. Ruth Gilmartin is going to leave her son Jochen with her mother, Sally, for the afternoon and discovers her in a wheelchair. It turns out that Sally is concerned that someone is trying to kill her. Sally then hands Ruth a folder entitled *The Story of Eva Delectorskaya*. When asked who this is, Sally replies that it is her real name.

The chapters are written alternately from the point of view of Ruth, in the first person, and Eva, written in the third person. The summer of 1976 may be thought of as a completely different age from the 1930s, but the presence of various terrorist groups in Europe at the time, such as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, indicated similarities. Eva's story starts with her in Paris just before the War, having been to her brother's funeral. She discovers that Kolia had been murdered while working for Lucas Romer on behalf of the British Government who were monitoring the behaviour of Nazi groups in Paris. Romer persuades her to join his organisation and she changes her name to Eve Dalton, travelling to Scotland for training. This involves learning techniques of observation, forging documents and how to lose a tail, or 'shadow'.

Following the declaration of war, she is posted to Ostend as part of a small news agency that had been set up by Romer on behalf of the Propaganda Warfare department. This organisation fed larger agencies with false reports, ostensibly to influence German plans. Her assignment then changes with a trip with Romer to Holland, which involves observing contact between British agents and an anti-Hitler group in Germany. The operation is a disaster and when Eva discovers that Romer had returned to Ostend saying she was either dead or captured, she begins to think she may have been betrayed.

After the invasion of the Netherlands and France, she and Romer become lovers and are posted to the United States. Their mission is to try and persuade the Americans to join the War by planting false information about Nazi activities that could potentially be a threat to them. As part of the mission, Eva is sent to New Mexico with a map supposedly showing details of German activities in Brazil. Despite all her precautions against being followed, she is arrested, but soon realises that it is so she can be murdered. She succeeds in killing her abductor and returns to Washington convinced that she was betrayed. The death of Morris, one of her compatriots, points to Romer as her betrayer. She escapes to Canada, then returns to London. Yet, despite the end of the War, Eva feels that Romer could still find a way of killing her.

The alternate chapters to Eva's story deal with her daughter, Ruth, who is working teaching English to overseas students while at the same time half-heartedly pursuing a PhD at Oxford. She had been part of the rebellious 60s while in Germany, where Jochen was conceived, but was now pursuing a more conventional life, though maintaining a political conscience. Ruth's discovery of her mother's wartime activities introduces more confusion into her rather disordered life. She becomes more involved in the story and agrees to help Sally track down Romer. They discover that he had been elevated to the aristocracy and is now Baron Mansfield. Sally travels to London and confronts him, saying that she will publish details of his treachery in the knowledge that the prospect of him being unmasked as a traitor would

make him take his own life. He would then die a hero, rather than face ignominy. It turns out that his treachery was acting on behalf of the Soviets rather than the Nazis, with the aim of preventing the Americans entering the War and having influence in Europe.

The operations in Holland and in the US really did happen, though details were changed in the book. William Boyd gives interesting detail on training techniques and shows good knowledge of the layout of cities such as Washington and Ottawa. He also understands how living a life where you 'trust no-one' can affect your mentality, even when it is no longer necessary. Sally still can't help looking over her shoulder in case someone comes to take her away. She remains restless.