

# THE IMITATION GAME

## CHAPTER 1 War

On September the 1st, 1939, Adolf Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany, sent his army into Poland. He received a message from Britain and France. It said: 'You must order your army to leave Poland.' Hitler did not order his army to leave Poland.

On September the 3rd, 1939, people all over Britain sat close to their radios as Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain spoke. 'I have to tell you now that this country is at war with Germany.'

The Second World War had started.

\* \* \*

Euston station in London was crowded with city children. They were carrying small suitcases and soft toys, and saying goodbye to their parents. Britain was at war, and the children were going to safer parts of the country, away from the German planes and their bombs.



A young man of twenty-seven walked through the family groups on Platform 5, where a train waited. He didn't seem to notice the sea of sadness around him as he climbed onto the train. Like the children, he carried a suitcase. In his pocket was a ticket to a place called Bletchley.

As the man searched for an empty seat, he noticed a boy aged about nine. While the other children around him were shouting and laughing, this boy was quietly doing a crossword puzzle. For the first time that day, the man smiled. 'Just like me,' he thought.

An hour later, the man left the train at Bletchley. He walked through the pretty village until he came to some high metal gates and a sign that said, 'Bletchley Radio Company'. Two men in uniform with guns stepped forward.

The man showed them his letter from the government, and they opened the gates. He walked up a road to a large country house. In the gardens around it were long, low huts, each with a number above the door. The place was busy, with people going in and out of the buildings, many carrying files.

The man went into the house and soon found himself sitting alone in front of a large desk in a large office. He waited.

Suddenly the door opened and an officer came in. He had grey hair and looked unfriendly.

'What are you doing in my office?' he asked rudely.

'The secretary told me to wait,' answered the man.

'In my office?' said the officer, surprised. He didn't believe him. 'Who are you?'

'Alan Turing.'

'Ah, you're the mathematician.'