The Imitation Game
Alan Turing Decoded
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nicole Sclama and, before her, Joan Hilty edited the story. Things you might have found unclear are no doubt the result of us ignoring one of their many excellent suggestions. Nick Abadzis worked through the dialogue, correcting our idioms and suggesting better and more British ways to say things. Kat Hagedorn and Carol Burrell worked behind the scenes to make this edition possible, and the folks at Tor.com gave the story its first run around the house. At Abrams, thanks also to Orlando Dos Reis (Editorial), Pamela Notarantonio (Design), Chad W. Beckerman (Design), Charles Kochman (Editorial), Jen Graham and Leily Kleinbard (Managing Editorial), Elizabeth Peskin (Production), and Alison Gervais (Production).
The game is played with three people: a man...

A woman...

...and an interrogator in a room apart from the other two.

A room in a house!

If you like...
This is called "Round-the-Garden Chess." The rules are:

Allow me. The rules are simple, but first, it's not "Round-the-Garden Chess."

It's "Round-the-House."

Alan! Is that you?

Did... he make a move?

You'll have to figure that out for yourself.

No-huff. I can see he didn't.

...it is simply chess. With running, you make your move, then you run around the house.

Hufff

...I think he was deciding between queen to go and bishop to go.

Oh, you mean the running and such. Alan always did love games.

This one combines two of his favorite things.

G-g-g "Hit" off you go.

If your opponent hasn't made his move by the time you get back, he forfeits his turn and must run a lap himself.

Huzzah! Here he comes, where he comes.
RUNNING HARD AND THINKING WELL SEEM TO BE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, SO EVEN A GOOD RUNNER DOESN'T GAIN MUCH ADVANTAGE IF HE RUNS TOO HARD.

THE TRICK IS TO FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE.

I PREFERRED TO DO MY BIT AS A LINESMAN.

TURING'S FOND OF THE FOOTBALL FIELD FOR THE GEOMETRIC PROBLEMS THE TOUGH LINES YIELD.

ACTUALLY...

...IT WASN'T ON THE FIELD NOT A GOOD DEFENSEMAN, YOU SEE—I NEVER GOT THE HANG OF WELL, RUNNINGS TOWARDS THE BALL.

ONE COULD CALCULATE THE ANGLE AT WHICH THE BALL WENT OUT AND USE THAT AS AN AID TO MAKING THE CORRECT CALL.

THANK-YOU...I THINK!
HE WAS NEVER SO GOOD IN SCHOOL... AT LEAST IN CERTAIN SUBJECTS.

YES. INDEED, ALAN'S MARKS ARE MOST COMMENDABLE, AND WE VALUE MATH HIGHLY HERE, TOO.

BUT THE AMOUNT OF TIME HE SPENDS ON ADVANCED MATHEMATICS IS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WORK ELEMENTARY WORK.

WELL, SCIENCE AND MATH HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HIS SPECIALTIES— I STILL REMEMBER HIS FIRST RESEARCH PAPER.

MOTHER, PLEASE.

IT WAS CALLED "ABOUT A MICROSCOPE" AND I STILL REMEMBER THE COMPLETE RITE— "FIRST YOU MUST SEE THAT THE LITE IS RITE."

MIS-SPELLING LIGHT AND RIGHT, YOU SEE. SO CHARMING!

WELL, YOU MUST SEE MY FOUNTAIN PEN LEAKS A LITTLE. THE INK I'VE DEVISED FOR IT IS VERY FINE—

ENOUGH.

THE WORK ONE MUST MASTER IN BASIC MATH AND OTHER SUBJECTS BLOCKS ENTRY FOR ONE TO MATRICULATE.

ALAN, WE NEED YOU TO TRY HARDER. YOUR MOTHER CAN NOT TUTOR YOU AT HOME FOREVER, AND I AM REQUIRED TO RETURN TO INDIAN SHORTLY.

V-YES, FATHER, BUT I...

NONE OF THAT, NOW.

HE STARTED HIM AT A PREPARATORY SCHOOL WHEN HE WAS SIX, BUT HE DID NOT TURNE THERE.

... AND THE PAPER BOATS FATHER, ALL HEAD OUTSIDE OF CLASS WAS MADE FOOLISH LITTLE...

YES, JOHN, WE HEARD ABOUT THIS HOBBOY OF YOUR BROTHERS, AS WELL.

... Y-YES, FATHER, BUT I...

BUT WHY MUST IT GO FROM LEFT TO RIGHT? THE OTHER WAY WOULD WORK, TOO, WOULDN'T IT?

OF COURSE, HEADMASTER. WE'LL SEE TO IT.

WELL, I SUPPOSE IT COULD, DEAR.

THEN WHY DOESN'T IT?

IF ONE BOTH GO COULD "WAYS, YOU SEE, YOUR HAND WOULDN'T EVER "TO MOVE ALL THE WAY "HEAVEN'S THE "OF THE NEXT LINE, WITH "WHATEVER THINGS "TO DO!

BUT HE DID LOVE TO READ, FOR ALL THAT, AND WHEN HE GOT HEADMASTER'S BOOK, HE BECAME POSITIVELY OBSESSED.
NOT OBSESSER NO.

FASCINATED, RATHER, TO SEE THAT SCIENCE AND MATH AREN’T ARBITRARY, LIKE SPELLING AND GRAMMAR.

IN CHEMISTRY, FOR INSTANCE, WE FIND THAT NOTHING IS SIMPLY ONE THING, AND USEFUL SUBSTANCES CAN BE EXTRACTED FROM THINGS OF LITTLE VALUE.

HIDING INSIDE KELD IS IODINE — ONE MUST SIMPLY KNOW HOW TO GET AT IT. JUST A LITTLE UNCONVENTIONAL HYDROGEN PEROXIDE, SULFURIC ACID, CARBON TETRACHLORIDE, AND HEAT...

IN OTHER WORDS... ADD POISON TO SAWDUST AND YOU GET A DISINFECTANT. LOVELY.

I WAS GRATEFUL WHEN MATH BECAME THE PRIMARY OBSESSION, REALLY.

DO YOU RECALL ANY OTHER SUBJECTS OF INTEREST?

NO, IT WAS ALWAYS JUST MATH. I CAN’T THINK... WELL, PERHAPS ASTRONOMY, BUT THAT WAS LATER, WHEN I ATTENDED SHERBORNE SCHOOL.

HE DID MUCH BETTER THERE. THAT PLACE MADE AN IMPRESSION ON HIM.
AND HE ON IT.

I AM TURING.

WHERE DID YOU... WHERE DID YOU RIDE IN FROM, BOY?

SOUTHAMPTON.

PLEASE, THAT'S 60 MILES, AND THE LETTER TURING'S MOTHER SENT WITH HIS PARCEL OF CLOTHES SUGGESTED HE PLANNED TO LEAVE YESTERDAY.

V-V-V-V-YES, SIR, AND THAT IS WHAT I DID.

AFTER HIS FIRST YEAR, THE HOUSEMASTER EXCUSSED HIS RATHER LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE TO US.

... A FTER ALL, HE DID BICYCLE HERE.

IN ANY CASE, HIS WAYS SOMETIMES TEMPT PERSECUTION, UNEVENLY NOT A "NORMAL" BOY.

NOT THE WORSE FOR THAT, MIND YOU, BUT PROBABLY LESS HAPPY.

I WOULDN'T AGREE. HE WASN'T UNHAPPY, OR ANTI-SOCIAL—MORE SIMPLY, NOT SOCIALE.

WELL, HE WON A MATHEMATICS PRIZE! FOUND THE LOCUS OF SOME OBJECT OR ANOTHER.

WELL, PERHAPS REGARDLESS, ARE YOU IMPLYING THINGS UNIMPLORED THERE?

NONSENSE. THE BOY IS A GENIUS AND OUGHT TO BE MOVED UP.

COLONEL RANDOLPH, I MUST INSIST, HIS WORK IS SO ELL-PRESENTED HE MUST BE HELD BACK.

I SUPPOSE THAT KIND OF THINGS IS WHAT MY HUSBAND COULD NEVER BREATHE TO LOOK AT HIS SCHOOL REPORTS BEFORE HE'D HAD A COUPLE OF PIPES, READ THE TIMES, AND EATEN HIS BREAKFAST.

 REGARDLESS, I DO THINK HE CAME INTO HIMSELF THERE. ONE CAN NEVER TELL WHEN OR WHY SUCH THINGS OCCUR, BUT OCCUR IT DID.
I noticed him not long after I arrived at Sherborne.

I didn’t have the opportunity to make his acquaintance for another year or so, however.

1-1-1, I’m Turing.

Sure, the bicycle, wizard in maths, too. Am I right? A pleasure to make your acquaintance, I’m Morcom.

Yes, you are. I—mean, I know.

When it finally happened, it was as if having and I had known each other for quite a long while. Very comfortable.

I’ll be in my lab. Just got a letter from a fellow named Morcom, who I know.

My God, Turing. Is that what passes for a laugh with you? 让我数一数我讲了多少个笑话！

Who’s that again, Alan?

Alan?

They were, Alan was always most forthcoming about his school chums.
WE TALKED ABOUT MATH, CHEMISTRY, ASTRONOMY...

HE WAS A KEEN AND CAREFUL OBSERVER.

WE COMPARED STAR SIGHTINGS THROUGH LETTERS.

AND OUR EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AS WELL. HE WAS AN EXCELLENT CORRESPONDENT, AND I KEPT ALL OF HIS LETTERS.

ALAN SAID THE BEST WEEK OF HIS LIFE WAS THE ONE SPENT WITH CHRISTOPHER. I CAN'T REMEMBER THE YEAR, BUT...

THE BEST WEEK OF MY LIFE BEGAN DECEMBER 9, 1929.

I WAS OFF TO CAMBRIDGE TO TAKE THE SCHOLARSHIP TESTS FOR UNIVERSITY, WITH CHRIS.

WHAT'S THAT THEN?

I THINK THEY'RE TRYING TO SLEIGHT COURTREY. A FELLOWS CALLED HEBDEN, WHO I KNOW, TOLD ME ABOUT IT.

ONE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE A CIRCUIT BEFORE THE MOON BEGINS TO RISE.

...AH, AH-ALMOST 400 YARDS!

T-THE INTERVAL IS... THEY HAVE LESS THAN 45 SECONDS, AND IT MUST BE...

IN ANY EVENT, WE'LL MEET HEATHER LATER. HE'S INVITED US TO COME VISIT THE OBSERVATORY, IF THE WEATHER IS FINE.

SO WE DINED AT TRINITY COLLEGE...
...played games until all hours, broke curfews...

we even went to the cinema... Christopher's treat!

so, i'm not ready to turn in just yet. let's visit the conservatory.

nah, let's see if we can find a pub.

c'mon then, turing.

never mind that lot, let's go.

well, he said to come if the weather was fine.

i suppose one idea of what's fine is different from his, then.

quiet down there, it's almost midnight, you lunatics.

must get some rest anyway, i suppose, for tomorrow's exams.

see you in the morning, turing.

and, turing, remember, standard notation for the calculus. nobody understands that stuff you made up for yourself, so don't use it here.

th-thanks, charles. i'll remember. good night.