HESTER and JEAN. Act One Scene Five

(The secretarial offices of MI5. HESTER LEGGAT is a dignified, quiet woman in middle age. JEAN LESLIE is a newbie, bursting at the seams with excitement)

HESTER. Today's schedule, take note please – in Conference Room Three, we have the briefing on the invasion of Sicily.

(JEAN takes out her notebook and starts writing)

JEAN. The invasion which *is* happening?

HESTER. Yes, then in Conference Room Five, we have the meeting on the invasion of Sardinia.

JEAN. Which *isn't* happening.

HESTER. Yes, then in Conference Room Six –

JEAN. Wait, the *invasion* isn't happening –

HESTER. Exactly.

JEAN. Or the *meeting* isn't happening?

HESTER. The meeting *is* happening about how the invasion *isn't* happening.

JEAN. Right.

HESTER. Right, then Colonel Bevan will want coffee.

JEAN. Well, at least that's definitely happening!

HESTER. No. Caffeine's bad for him, get him tea.

JEAN. OK.

HESTER. One tea, no coffee. Meeting Room Three, after the meeting about what's happening and before the meeting that's happening about what's not happening – can you make that happen?

JEAN. I don't know what's going on.

HESTER. Welcome to the British Government.