



Act 3

Cyril Allinson: The events of Sunday, the second of May, 1915, have left all of us in a state of shock. Early this morning, Alexis Helmer left his dugout to check on a wounded soldier. He managed to get only a few yards from the dugout when it happened. A German shell struck him. The shell burst, and Alexis was killed instantly.

Nurse Hathaway: His scattered remains were gathered in an army blanket for burial that evening.

Cyril Allinson: On his body we found a picture of his fiancée. It had a hole right through it. We decided to bury it with him.

Nurse Hathaway: His burial was in the cemetery right next to the hospital. We called it Flanders Fields. Sometimes in the morning we could hear the larks singing during the brief silences between the bursts of the shells. It was strange when we did.



Cyril Allinson: We had watched that cemetery grow for the last 17 days. Even when there was only a 10-minute lull in the fighting, we would see it happen. Soldiers from the nearby infantry unit would creep silently in to bury their dead. Day by day it grew, and soon there were rows and rows of simple white crosses. Alexis's cross would soon be added to the rest.

Nurse Hathaway: There was no chaplain, so Dr. McCrae said he'd perform the funeral ceremony himself.

Cyril Allinson: Dr. McCrae barely spoke to any of us. He was too overcome with grief. I wasn't sure he would be able to perform the ceremony. But when the time came, he recited some of the passages he remembered from the Church of England's "Order of Burial of the Dead."

Dr. John McCrae: "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."



Act 4

Nurse Jillian: I'm very worried about my uncle. He's heartbroken and totally silent; I've never seen him like this. When I made an attempt to talk to him earlier, he wouldn't even look at me. It was like he was walking in a dream. I didn't know how to comfort him, and I don't even know where he is now.

Cyril Allinson: I saw him sitting on the ambulance earlier. He had paper, and he seemed to be writing something. He kept looking back and forth, over and over at Alexis's grave, and then writing on the paper. It was almost like he was in a trance. I didn't speak to him at all.

Nurse Hathaway: I watched him for a little while, too, and I know what you are saying. Sometimes, he would just stop and stare at the poppies blowing softly in the breeze by the grave markings.

Cyril Allinson: Look over there. There's one bit of good news this morning. Robert Smith has not just survived, he's actually walking around. Why, he's coming here now.



Robert Smith: Have any of you seen Dr. McCrae? I wanted to thank him myself. I really didn't expect to wake up again after he removed the bullet, and I can't believe I am walking again. I also wanted to thank that young soldier who stayed with me. I think his name was Alexis.

Cyril Allinson: I'm afraid you can't do that, soldier. Alexis was killed yesterday, and Dr. McCrae is very upset. Look, I see him now. He's way over there by the ambulance.

Robert Smith: I'm so sorry to hear about Alexis. Maybe I can speak to Dr. McCrae later.

Nurse Hathaway: Wait a minute; I think Dr. McCrae is getting up now. Robert, you may get your chance to thank Dr. McCrae. Look, he's walking in this direction.

Cyril Allinson: Dr. McCrae, are you okay? Is there anything we can do for you?