

ALL BUT ALFRED

ALICE BY HEART

ALICE

Don't listen to them, Alfred. I'll read to you.
You'll feel better.

START

RED CROSS NURSE

Alice Spencer!

Thirty-thousand dead up there – and you, with your head in Wonderland.

(The RED CROSS NURSE makes a grab for ALICE's book – but ALICE holds onto it.)

Back! To! Your! Bed!

And button up that blousey, Mousey.

ALICE

(Heads to her cot)

But it is – all buttoned. It's just grown smaller, really.

TABATHA

(With a knowing, survivor's grin)

Funny how that happens, when the boys start growing bigger.

CLARISSA

(Suddenly panicked)

Oh my God – my pearls! Where are my pearls?

DODGY

(Withdrawing the strand from his neck)

They insisted.

(DODGY begrudgingly hands CLARISSA the pearls. As NIGEL rocks, ALICE looks again toward ALFRED.)

NIGEL

My Mummy's coming for me today.

My Mummy's coming for me today.

My Mummy's coming for me today...

(HAROLD PUDDING, a young soldier with PTSD, reaches for ALICE, thwarting her cross to ALFRED and leading her to his own cot.)

HAROLD PUDDING

Shall we have some tea? Shall we?

Tea for two? For him and me – and me.

CLARISSA

(Ironic)

Absolutely.
With just a spit of jam—

DODGY

And a spot of Spam.

HAROLD PUDDING

Spam! Spam! What is Spam?
Spam is ham that didn't pass its physical.
But me, I'm sound. I'm all sound now, me.
This time I'll pass...
(ANGUS – edgy, working-class – leans toward HAROLD.)

ANGUS

You've passed, Harold. It's past.

HAROLD PUDDING

I have? Sir, yes, Sir!
Pudding. Harold Pudding, reporting for duty, Sir.
(DODGY and CLARISSA exchange a look. ANGUS chastens them:)

ANGUS

You try losing your wits on the front, then coming home to the Blitz.
(ALICE is about to head to ALFRED's cot, but DR. BUTRIDGE is right there.)

DR. BUTRIDGE

Misplaced Wits:
Hypnagogic Hallucinations due to—

RED CROSS NURSE

Dr. Butridge!

DR. BUTRIDGE

(Hard of hearing)

Whaaaaaat?

DODGY

(Making fun)

Whaaaaaat?

END