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Opening extract from

All About Alfie

Written by

Shirley Hughes

Published by

Bodley Head Children's Books

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Alfie's World
Annie Rose is my Little Sister
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The Big Alfie and Annie Rose Storybook
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ALL ABOUT ALFIE
A BODLEY HEAD BOOK 978 0 370 33194 2

Published in Great Britain by The Bodley Head,
an imprint of Random House Children's Books
A Random House Group Company

This edition published 2011

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS
61–63 Uxbridge Road, London W5 5SA

www.**kidsatrandomhouse**.co.uk
www.**alfiebooks**.co.uk

Addresses for companies within The Random House Group Limited can be found at: www.randomhouse.co.uk/offices.htm

THE RANDOM HOUSE GROUP Limited Reg. No. 954009

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in

ALFIE

All About Alfie

Shirley Hughes

THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON

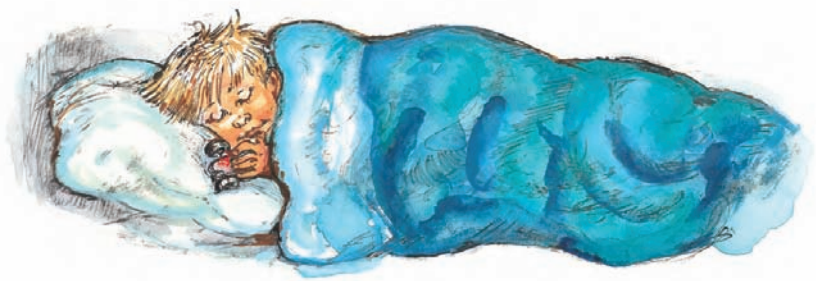
Where's Alfie?

Where's Alfie?
Nobody knows.
Annie Rose is calling him.
She wants him to play with her.
But there's no answer.
Because Alfie's in his secret den
At the bottom of the garden.
He's in there among the leaves
Where nobody can see him.
Not answering when he is called.
Flumbo is in there with him.
They've got provisions: a sandwich,
a bottle of orange juice and three biscuits.
That should last for a bit.
They're planning to be a secret gang one day,
like Robin Hood and his outlaws living in the forest.
But in the meantime, Alfie's got some special things
in there, which nobody knows about.
There's an old key that he found in the ground,
And a precious piece of china with a blue and white pattern on it,
And a little plastic teddy.
Alfie keeps them under some leaves, where nobody can find them.
Because this is his special place.
It's his secret den.
He could even stay out here all night if he felt like it.
Well, until bedtime anyway.

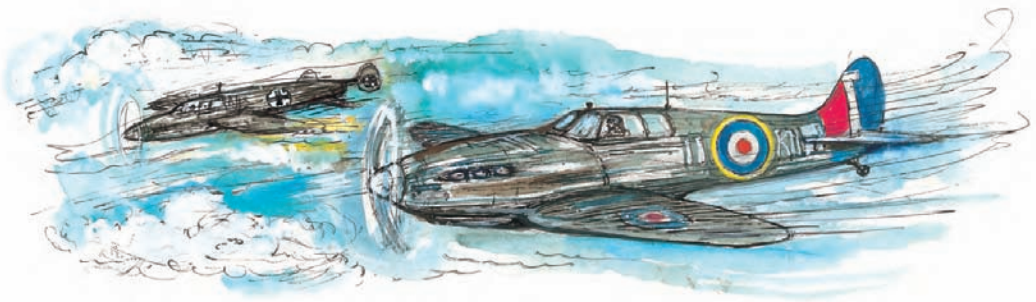
The Very Special Birthday

Alfie had plenty of friends at nursery school, but his best friend was Bernard. They often played together after school. Bernard had a huge collection of cars and trucks and aeroplanes. When Alfie came to play at his house, they got them all out and raced them across the floor.

Bernard didn't have a special cuddly toy that he liked as much as Alfie liked his dear old knitted elephant, Flumbo. Usually Bernard took his favourite racing car to bed with him.



For his birthday, Alfie had given Bernard a book full of pictures of aeroplanes, which he liked a lot. He knew the names of most of them, even the old-fashioned ones. He had seen them in a museum.



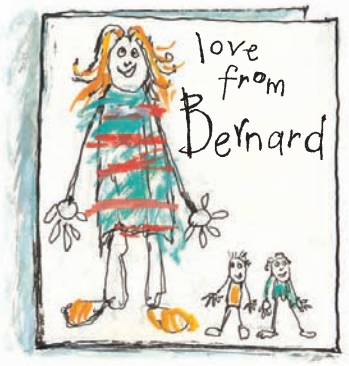
One day Bernard came to play at Alfie's house and he brought his aeroplane book with him. After they had looked at it for a while, Mum asked them if they would like to help her ice a cake for another very special birthday. It was for Alfie's Great-Grandma Hilary.

Mum told them that she was ninety years old today, and that was very old indeed.

Alfie and Bernard helped Mum to spread the chocolate icing on the cake and make it smooth. Then they put nine candles on it (one for every ten years), and wrote a big '90' in the middle in tiny jelly sweets.

Mum said that after lunch they were going to drive to the home where Great-Grandma Hilary lived with some other elderly ladies and gentleman, and she asked Bernard if he would like to come too.

Alfie did not think that this sounded like a very interesting plan. He thought it would be much nicer to stay at home and play with Bernard. But Bernard thought it was an excellent idea. He had never met a great-grandma before and he wanted to see what she looked like. He imagined she would be very big, perhaps even a giant.



So while Mum was wrapping up Great-Grandma Hilary's present of a beautiful silk scarf, Alfie and Bernard made birthday cards for her. Alfie drew a cake on his and put a big '90' on it in coloured dots. Bernard drew a huge lady with two tiny people standing next to her, who were himself and Alfie.