

= Alfie (Lily Allen song) =

" Alfie " is a song by British recording artist Lily Allen from her debut studio album , *Alright, Still* (2006) . Written by Allen and Greg Kurstin , the song was released as the fourth and final single from the album , on 5 March 2007 , by Regal Recordings . In the United Kingdom , it was marketed as a double A @-@ side single , along with " Shame for You " . While the melody incorporates a sample of Sandie Shaw 's " Puppet on a String " , the lyrics directly describe Allen 's real life younger brother , actor Alfie Allen , criticising him for his lazy behaviour .

Contemporary critics gave the song mixed reviews , some complimenting the production , while others considered it fell flat as the album 's last song . The single peaked inside the top 20 of the charts in New Zealand and on the UK Singles Chart , where it became her third single to do so . The accompanying music video portrayed Allen 's brother as a puppet while the storyline follows the lyrical meaning of the song . The song was performed live by Allen during her 2007 concert tour , as part of the encore .

= = Background = =

Musically , the song is set in common time and has a tempo of 120 beats per minute . While it is played in the key of C major and has backing piano and guitar sounds , " Alfie " also uses a sample from Sandie Shaw 's 1967 Eurovision Song Contest winning song " Puppet on a String " . In an interview with Pitchfork Media , Allen stated that the song 's lyrics describe her younger brother , Alfie Allen . She further explained :

When I wrote " Alfie " , nobody really knew who I was . At first he was really upset about it , because he thought that I was just pointing out all of his bad points and attacking him . I thought it was really flattering [Laughs] . I thought he 'd be really , really happy because it proved to him how much I loved him , that I care about him , and I want him to do something with his life . I suppose his paranoia ? induced by smoking so much weed ? made him think , " Why are you trying to be mean ? "

In the song , she tries to persuade him to emerge from his room and stop wasting his life away , while complaining that he is spending too much time stuck in his room smoking weed , watching television and playing computer games . Alfie Allen treated the song with good humour , but declared that his sister was also lazy when she was pregnant : " She 's at home in bed and everyone is running around after her . Mind you , you have to look after Lily even if she isn 't pregnant . "

The cover of the single released in the United Kingdom is different from the EP one used in Japan , as it also shows " Shame for You " written on it . " Alfie " was performed live , as part of the setlist of Allen 's 2007 concert tour .

= = Critical and commercial reception = =

Rosie Swash from *The Guardian* described the song 's sound as " fairground pomp " . She then suggested that Allen has fused together a " uniquely acidic brand of pop " , with the icing on the cake being " that brutally barbed tongue " . Rob Webb from *Drowned in Sound* considered that " Alfie " rescued the lack of wit and imagination of some previous tracks on the album , while *Blender* reporter Jon Dolan thought that the " silly waltz @-@ rap " of the song is an example at how Allen " casually and wittily blurs the line between fan and friend " . *Sal Cinquemani* from *Slant Magazine* praised the production of " Alfie " , as well as " Shame for You " , with " plenty of catchy melodies and clever samples " , but claimed that Allen lacks charisma . Heather Phares of *Allmusic* gave a negative review for the song , claiming it " falls especially flat as the album 's final song " , with the album losing steam at the end , and *NME* 's Priya Elan considered that if " the pop dreams get slightly tarnished by the graffiti put @-@ downs of ' Not Big ' and ' Alfie ' , then that 's not too worrying , as with a personality this size , this isn 't the last time you 'll be hearing from [Allen] " . It was considered by reviewer Ronan Hunt @-@ Murphy from *Two Way Monologues* that the song

could be used for a children 's TV show , if the swearing and drug references were cut .

The single failed to achieve commercial success . It debuted at 44 and peaked inside the top 20 of the UK Singles Chart , at number 15 for only one week , where it charted as the double A @-@ sided single , " Alfie " / " Shame for You " . Other moderate chart peaks include Ireland , at 31 , and New Zealand at 15 . In Japan , " Alfie " was only released as an extended play , made exclusively for that country , which was ineligible to chart on the Singles Chart , so it peaked on the Albums Chart at 226 . In Europe , it reached position 55 on the Eurochart Hot 100 Singles compiled by Billboard .

= = Music video = =

The music video was directed by Sarah Chatfield , who wanted to do a Tom and Jerry @-@ like video , where the human character is cut off at the waist . Hence Allen was not going to be part of it originally . However , she did appear on the video . The singer declared on her official blog that ,

I did a video shoot for the next single , which is Alfie , and that was quite a lot of fun , Alfie was played by a puppet and the whole thing looks like an episode of a mixture Tom and Jerry and Roger Rabbit , you 'll understand when you see it . The whole day was a pleasurable experience [...]

The video starts off with an opening title parodying Looney Tunes and shows Allen in the kitchen preparing a cup of tea , while Alfie , impersonated by a puppet , smokes in his miniature bedroom , watching television . The singer enters the room and takes away his bong , as he unsuccessfully tries to get it back . Next , Allen irons his tuxedo and marks a job announcement called " The Puppet Show " in the newspaper , as the lyric " You need to get a job because the bills need to get paid " is sung . Meanwhile , Alfie is in his bed , staring at a magazine in which there are undressed dolls , titled " Roxy & Babs get it on ! " and proceeds to masturbate . Allen walks in on him with the newspaper and suit as he does so , but immediately exits out of embarrassment . With the start of the bridge , puppet birds sing outside the home , while Alfie sneaks out of his room and tries to get beer out of the refrigerator , but is ultimately caught by Allen . She then takes off his " stupid fitted cap " , as he scrawls a picture of her , which is also the cover of " Littlest Things " . The final scene happens at night , in the kitchen , where Allen is lying on the floor , watching her brother dance . After the last lyrics , " Please don 't despair , my dear , mon frere " is sung , he punches her and the video ends .

There is also an alternate version , where the words " weed " , " THC " and " twat " are blanked , the bong is replaced by a joystick , Alfie does not smoke , and , when Allen walks in on him masturbating , there is a big " censored " sign . The video won " Best Pop Video " and " Best New Director " at the CADs Music Vision Awards in June 2007 , and nominated at the 2007 Q Awards for " Best Video " , but lost to " Ruby " by Kaiser Chiefs .

= = Track listing and formats = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Lead vocals ? Lily Allen

Written by ? Lily Allen and Greg Kurstin

Produced by ? Greg Kurstin

Mastered by ? Tim Burrell , Tim Debney

Audio mixing ? Greg Kurstin

= = Charts = =

Notes :