

## All About Alfie

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People ask about Alfie. He turned one year old on April 1st, and here he is, four days later, this morning at 6:30 AM, in the mud of my garden (April IS the cruelest month). It is hard to tell his size in a photo; he weighs about 26 pounds, the size of, oh, a large cocker spaniel. He needs a good combing and I should have waited before taking his picture and made certain he was clean and fluffy and photo-worthy. But this is how he *usually* looks: a little scruffy and unkempt. He is a sweet and affectionate dog; also mischievous and exuberant...still chewing things, though I think he's getting a little better (or maybe we have just gotten better at keeping closet doors closed and most things out of his range).

Recently someone told me about her dog named Elvis. They called his crate "Graceland."

Alfie doesn't have a crate. He had one, and hated it. But he does have a lair, a dark place behind the couch in the TV room, and he goes there to hide out or to take a snooze. But he can be sound asleep in his lair, and wake instantly at the sound of someone taking ice cubes out of the freezer. Ice cubes are among his favorite things. Among his other favorites are the hedgehog he got for Christmas, the only toy that has remained intact....it must have been an especially well-made hedgehog; it still squeaks after all these months.

He still hates being left alone, though he understands, "No, you stay" when we are at the door

with coats on and car keys in hand, and he turns back with his tail drooping in disappointment, and makes me think, always, of the last line of the Dorothy Parker poem:

*I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.*

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