

Follow your dreams...



Billy Elliot

 SCHOLASTIC

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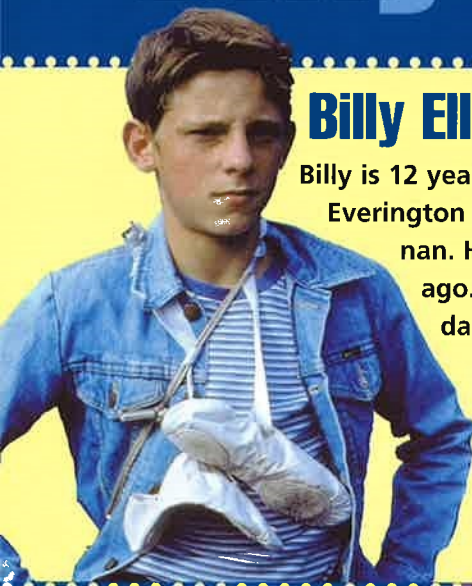
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Billy Elliot



Billy Elliot

Billy is 12 years old. He lives in Everington with his dad, brother and nan. His mum died two years ago. He loves music and dancing.



Jackie Elliot

Billy's dad. He's a miner. He's on strike.



Tony Elliot

Billy's brother. He's 20 years old. He's a miner and he's on strike too. He hates the police and he hates scabs.

Mrs Wilkinson / 'Miss'

Billy's ballet teacher. She lives with her husband and daughter Debbie. She teaches ballet at the Social. The girls and Billy call her 'Miss'.

Michael

Billy's best friend.

Nan

Billy's grandmother. She's 80. She loved dancing when she was young.

Places

Everington is a mining town near Durham in the north-east of England. Most of the men here are miners.

The story starts in 1984. Mines are closing all over Britain. The miners are angry. They want to keep their jobs. There are no other jobs for the miners in Everington. They decide to go on strike.

But some miners still go to work. They want the money. The strikers call them 'scabs'.

The Social is a club for the people of Everington. They meet their friends here and have a beer. There are boxing lessons and ballet lessons at the Social.



Police and miners in 1984.



Billy and his family live in a street like this.



The Royal Ballet School is a big school in London. They teach ballet here.

Billy Elliot



Chapter 1 Billy: 'I love to boogie'

I hate my brother. He's stupid but he has got some good music. I listen to his music when he's out at work with my dad. Well – they're not at work, not now. They're on strike. But they still go to the mine every day.

Nan loves the music too. Tony and Dad leave in the morning, then the music goes on. I make breakfast for us and we both dance. I can hear her in her bedroom. She tries to dance but she can't walk very well now – well, she is eighty.

This morning, I made the eggs and danced to her bedroom.

'Hey, Nan! Breakfast!' I called. I opened the door with my foot and ... Oh no! Not again! Her bed was empty.

I put the eggs on the kitchen table and ran out of the house. Where was she? She does this a lot. She forgets things – she forgets her name.

I looked up the street. 'Nan! NAN!' Which way? Then I had an idea. I ran to the end of the street and up to some trees. There she was. She often goes there. Why? Who knows? Maybe she played there when she was little. She looked frightened.

'Who are you?' she said.

'It's me, Nan. Billy!'

She didn't look very happy. Then we both heard something. Behind us ... on the road ... we saw them ... lots of them. The police. Their clothes were black and they had batons.

Nan looked at me. 'What are they?' she asked.

'Police, Nan. It's the police.'

'Are they here for us?' she asked.

'No, Nan. Not us.' I said.

'Is it Jackie? Is it Tony?' she asked. I didn't answer. I didn't want to know the answer. I took my nan's arm and we walked slowly home.

* * *

'I love to boogie / Jitterbug boogie ...' I'm trying to play 'Cosmic Boogie' on the piano and thinking about Mam*. It was her piano. Mam's dead. She died two years ago. I think about her a lot.

I've got a letter from her. She wrote it before she died. 'I'm still here, Billy,' she wrote. But she isn't here. She's dead.

Mam was good at the piano. She played for all of us. I'd like piano lessons but they're too expensive. We haven't got the money. My dad's always telling us that. We haven't got much. Not now that there's a strike.

'Billy! Stop that!'

It's Dad. He's going out again with Tony in a minute. Why do I have to stop? He's not going to be here!

'Why ...?' Then I say the wrong thing. 'If it was Mam ...' Dad comes over. He closes the piano with a BANG!

'I'm not telling you again!'

I go to my room. Back to Tony's music ...

*Some people in the north of England say 'Mam'. People in the south say 'Mum'.

Chapter 2 Billy: Boys don't do ballet!



'Billy Elliot - this isn't a tea party – it's a boxing lesson! Hit him!'

It's Saturday morning and I'm at the boxing club at the Social. This morning, I'm against Greavesy and he's bigger than me. I have my own ideas about boxing. It's all about your feet. So, I run and turn and jump. I move quickly. Greavesy just stands there. George, the teacher, isn't happy.

'Hit him! Don't dance around!'

BANG! I'm on the floor. Greavesy's standing over me and he's smiling. I can hear George.

'Billy Elliot! Get up! You're going to do it right. You're not going home yet.'

I get up. George pulls me to the punchbag. 'Hit it! Your poor father. He pays for boxing lessons. And this happens!' And on ... and on ... and on ...

I'm angry now. I hit the punchbag. I hate the punchbag.

* * *

'Arms up. And one – and two and three and four. Feel the music.'

On the other side of the room, there's a ballet class. Someone's playing the piano. One and two and three and four. As the music plays, I hit the punchbag.

'One and two.' And bang and hit. 'And three and four.' And hit and bang.

'That's better,' George says. 'Stay here and get it right. See you next week.'

And he goes out. All the other boys go too.

'Right, girls. And ... one and two. Debbie – don't look at me. Look in front of you! And three ... and four ...'

I go and watch. It's clever. They all dance together. Left and two, and down and two, and turn and two. I try it. I stretch out my leg. Yeah – easy!

'Why don't you try?'

It's Debbie. She goes to my school.

'Nah,' I say. Boys don't do ballet!

'Legs up!'

They all stretch their legs. Mrs Wilkinson – she's the teacher - walks around and looks closely at each leg.

I try it. Debbie laughs at me. 'Your leg's moving!'

I look down. She's right. 'I'm wearing boxing shoes,' I tell her.





Mrs Wilkinson takes a cigarette from her pocket. She smokes a lot. 'OK, girls. And ... one and two and three and four.'

I want to do it too. I try but it's difficult. I start to listen to the music. It's easier then.

'Shoes off!' Miss is in front of me.

'Not me, Miss ...' I start to say - but she's already walking down the room. I take off my shoes and then she's back again - with ballet shoes.

'Here you are,' she says, 'You can't dance in boxing shoes.'

I don't know, but then I think 'Why not?'

* * *

So, I do it. I do ballet for the first time. It isn't easy but Miss is a good teacher. We're all standing on one leg with

the other leg behind. Miss comes over.

'I like the leg,' she says, and then walks off. She doesn't say much but I'm happy.

* * *

I'm walking home later and Miss drives by. She sees me and stops the car. Debbie's sitting in the back. Oh, I think, Debbie's her daughter!

Miss is still smoking. She looks at me. 'It's 50p a lesson, you know. Bring me the money next week.'

'I can't. I'm going to boxing.'

'You're terrible at boxing!' says Debbie, and laughs.

'Be quiet!' Miss looks around at Debbie and then back at me. 'Didn't you enjoy it today?'

I don't say anything.

'It's your life,' she says and off they go.

Miss was right. I enjoyed it but the music was a bit boring. I think about Fred Astaire. My nan loves him. He can dance! I want to dance like him. I run and jump down the road. Fred Astaire's music is playing in my head and I feel great!

