

BILLY ELLIOT

v.4.0

Written by

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"DANCER"

FADE IN:

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

INT. KITCHEN. BILLY'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

BILLY, a boy, 11, plonks two eggs into a saucepan, puts it on the stove and rushes upstairs.

INT. BILLY'S ROOM. THE SAME.

Two single beds. A poster of Karl Marx. A poster of Marc Bolan. A tattered teddy on one bed. The other unmade. BILLY rushes in.

BILLY turns on the battered record player. It clicks into action and a record flops onto the turn-table. The music starts. COSMIC DANCER by Marc Bolan.

CUT TO an empty space on the wall. In our vision are the posters but the effect is rather abstract. The music is playing:

"I was a dancer when I was twelve/
I was a dancer when I was
twelve..."

BILLY'S head moves up into our view in extreme slow motion. BILLY is bouncing up and down on the bed to the music. He is dancing freely, we feel his joy and the freedom of his movement.

"I was a dancer when I was out. I
was a dancer when I was out...."

We gradually PULL OUT to reveal more of him, but still we see his intimate grace as he moves in and out of the frame, seeming to fly like a humming bird almost frozen in flight.

MUSIC

"Danced myself right out the womb.
Danced myself right out the womb.
Is it strange to dance so soon."

BILLY'S hands lift into an almost balletic position. The extreme slowness and close up is strangely moving juxtaposed to the Marc Bolan song.

MUSIC

"Danced myself into the tomb/ Is
it wrong to understand/ What dwells
inside a man/ What it's like to be
alone....."

We freeze on his face mid-air.

INT. STAIRS. HOUSE. THE SAME.

BILLY runs down. The music is still playing.

"Danced myself right out the
womb..."

INT. KITCHEN. HOUSE. THE SAME.

BILLY takes the eggs off the stove. He puts them in egg
cups with slices of bread on a tray.

INT. STAIRS / HALLWAY UPSTAIRS. HOUSE. THE SAME.

MUSIC still playing. BILLY comes upstairs and pushes
open the door to GRANDMA'S room with his foot.

INT. GRANDMA'S ROOM. HOUSE. THE SAME.

BILLY looks at the bed, which is empty. He drops the
tray onto the bed and rushes out.

INT. SITTING ROOM. HOUSE. THE SAME.

Over COSMIC DANCER, BILLY runs into the room. He looks
for GRANDMA. She is not there. BILLY rushes out.

EXT. BACK YARD. THE SAME.

BILLY runs through the yard. The camera follows him up
the back lane.

EXT. BACK LANE. THE SAME.

Running up the back lane. Past the backs of the
terraces and further onto the field at the end of the
street.

EXT. FIELD AT THE END OF THE STREET. THE SAME.

BILLY runs into the long grass. To BILLY it is almost a
jungle. The camera follows him at his own eye level
running and running as the Marc Bolan track reaches its
climax. Through the long grass a figure emerges. BILLY
gets closer and we realise it is GRANDMA. She is
wearing her night dress and is wandering aimlessly in
the field in a daze. BILLY, out of breath, reaches her
and clings to her side in a desperate cuddle.

GRANDMA looks at him incredulously as the music comes
to an end. BILLY looks up at his GRANDMA sadly. The old
woman is close to tears in her confusion.

BILLY
Grandma. Your eggs.

BILLY looks up at GRANDMA. The camera pulls out. In the distance, at the brow of the hill we see a police van with policemen pouring out in riot gear. They seem to be dark crows on the horizon, an almost surreal, malevolent prescence, quite at odds with the fragility of BILLY and GRANDMA. BILLY starts to lead GRANDMA back to the house.

END OF TITLE SEQUENCE

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

DAD and BILLY and GRANDMA sit eating their soft-boiled eggs in silence. Suddenly a huge pair of boots smash down into the plate of bread in the middle of the table. From our angle they look surreally enormous.

DAD

What the hell are they?

TONY appears he is in a pinny.

TONY

What do you think they are?

DAD

Well, I don't know.

TONY

Boots.

DAD

I know they're bliddy boots, man. What are they doing in the middle of my soldiers.

TONY

They were on the friggin' floor, weren't they?

DAD

Well, it's a darn sight more appropriate than in my bloody breakfast.

TONY

How many times have I told you. Leave the friggin boots outside.

BILLY carries on eating oblivious to the argument. GRANDMA is quietly humming a tune.

DAD

Oh here we go. Josef Stalin.

TONY

Don't bloody well start with me.

DAD

The point is I was just eating me breakfast and I nearly get clobbered by by a pair of hobnailed boots.

TONY

The point is, Dad, you never do owt. All you do is mope around on your fat arse like a complete twat.

DAD

Don't you dare talk to me like that.

TONY

Fuck you. I've had enough.

DAD

I'll belt you in a minute, son.

TONY takes the pinny off and throws it on the floor.

TONY

Howway then. At least it'd prove there's still some life left in you.

TONY is ready for a fight. DAD sits there. He looks at TONY. We see the defeat in his eyes. TONY walks out in disgust.

TONY (CONT'D)

For fucksake.

DAD

Will you stop that bloody humming.

GRANDMA stops abruptly. BILLY looks at DAD.

DAD (CONT'D)

What are you looking at. Take those bloody boots through.

EXT. HILLSIDE ABOVE THE PIT. MORNING.

BILLY and MICHAEL, a young lad of BILLY's age, are sitting looking at the vista.

MICHAEL

So your Tony does all the cooking?

BILLY

He has to. Me Dad could burn water.

MICHAEL

Does he wear a pinny?

BILLY

Why like?

MICHAEL

I just wondered.

They look down at the pithead and the village below.

BILLY

Do you know why they're on strike.

MICHAEL

Wey aye.

BILLY

Why like?

MICHAEL

Cos of Maggie Thatcher, isn't it.

BILLY

Oh.

They look out.

BILLY

So what's she done like?

MICHAEL

I'm fucked if I know.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE HILLSIDE. A LITTLE LATER.

BILLY and MICHAEL are walking down.

BILLY

Are you sure you're not going to come?

MICHAEL

Am I fuck. It's a right load of old bollocks.

BILLY

No it's not.

MICHAEL

Kicking people in.

BILLY

Anyway, it's not kicking people in. It's skillful.

MICHAEL

Fuckin' boxing?

BILLY

Well what would you do if somebody tried to hit you then?

MICHAEL

Run away.

BILLY

But what if they caught you? And belted you one.

MICHAEL

Cry.

BILLY

You're mental you.

MICHAEL

Anyway, I don't know why you bother.

BILLY

I'm good at it.

MICHAEL

Dick Peverly says you're the worst of the lot. Look at them gloves, man. They went out with the ark.

BILLY

Hey. They're me Dads.

MICHAEL gives BILLY a look, as if to say: "Exactly."

BILLY

I'm gonna be late.

INT. VILLAGE HALL. THE SAME.

In the hall there is a makeshift boxing ring in the centre of the room. Boys are at one side warming up and sparring with each other.

Along the other side of the hall is a row of nervous girls all in pink tutus ready to do their dancing exams. We hear the sound of a piano in the other room. GEORGE WATSON addresses the room, as he steps into the ring.

GEORGE

As the school hall's been used as a dormitory for the pickets from Kent, I have kindly let Mrs Wilkinson use the room next door for her ballet exams. So I want no hanky panky. Understood?

BILLY is peering through the window in the door, obviously watching the girls in the side room doing their exams. He sees MRS WILKINSON. She seems like tough old war horse.

GEORGE

Elliot. Over here. Now.

BILLY goes over to the other side of the hall and starts hitting a punchbag, rather tragically. DEBBIE, a plump girl with ginger hair, is watching him. He is aware of her attentions and aims to hit harder, but the punchbag rebounds almost knocking him over.

The piano music gives a lightness of touch to the grim surroundings.

GEORGE

OK. Greaves and Elliot.

BILLY goes over to the ring and climbs in. He looks over at GREAVES. GREAVES is a fat lad a good few inches taller than BILLY.

GEORGE

Lets be having you.

BILLY comes tentatively out of his corner. There is a determination in his face but his punches just don't seem to land. He gets whacked. GEORGE grabs his left hand.

GEORGE

Keep your gloves higher, Billy.

GEORGE lets them spar again. BILLY dances around lashing out but only hits GREAVES in the stomach. It seems GREAVES has enough padding to resist Mike Tyson. BILLY carries on.

GEORGE

Concentrate Elliot. This isn't a bloody tea dance.

The door to the side room opens and the music is louder for a second. We hear the sound of a little girl crying. BILLY glances over and catches sight of her running out of the room in floods of tears. He turns back to GREAVES but we see a huge glove coming straight towards his face. Bang.

BILLY is flat out on the ground.

GEORGE

For Christsake.

BILLY lies there fazed by the punch. The girls giggle. BILLY looks round embarrassed. DEBBIE is watching him. She smiles and turns away.

EXT. PICKET LINE. LATER.

BILLY is with DAD he has a black eye. There are a few men huddled by a burner. BILLY has his boxing gloves around his neck, he is sitting on a pillar-box talking to DAD. Across the road from the pickets are about a dozen policemen. DAD is making a roolly.

BILLY

Dad. Why is there so many policemen?

DAD

They're keeping the peace, Billy.

BILLY

But there's nowt going on.

DAD

They're doing a good job, aren't they.

DAD lights his fag.

DAD

Has your Grandma had her dinner yet?

BILLY

I've only just got out of boxing.

DAD

Look, go and see to your grandma.

BILLY

Can I not stay here?

DAD

No. Bugger off home and do as you're told.

BILLY looks at DAD reluctantly. DAD gives him a stern look. BILLY jumps down from the pillar-box and walks by the POLICEMEN on his way home.

POLICEMAN

Look, it's Joe Bugner.

A SECOND POLICEMAN bends down as if to spar affectionately with BILLY. BILLY simply stares at him too nervous to join in the game. DAD watches from across the street.

POLICEMAN TWO

You'll not get very far with that attitude. I could have had you.

BILLY just stares. The POLICEMEN laugh as BILLY runs off. DAD looks on.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM. MORNING.

BILLY is in the class. He is sitting next to MICHAEL. They are all listening to the teacher, who has a diagram of the earth on the board. She is explaining what coal is.

TEACHER

So gradually over hundreds of thousands of years, layer upon layer pushed the forests down, and the pressure of all this caused the trees and plants to change. Into coal.

SANDRA

So what happened to the dinosaurs, Miss?

TEACHER

They became crushed as well. Sometimes if they fell into mud they were preserved. That's what fossils are.

MICHAEL

(to BILLY)

That must have been what happened to her.

TEACHER

If you have something to say you can say it to the whole class.

MICHAEL

Nothing miss.

DICK PEVERLY

Who put the coal there again, Miss?

TEACHER

I've just explained. No one put the coal there. It was formed by the forces of nature.

DICK PEVERLY

Miss. So the coal is just there. It didn't belong to anyone.

TEACHER

It's just there. I suppose it belongs to whoever dug it out.

DICK PEVERLY

The miners?

TEACHER

No, to the people who owned the mines.

A girl, SUSAN, stands up.

SUSAN

No it didn't, Miss.

TEACHER

Of course it did. What do you mean?

SUSAN

Coal is the commonwealth of the people, Miss, and it's been robbed by enemies of the working class.

TEACHER

I beg your pardon.

SUSAN

We've been exploited by class interests, Miss.

TEACHER

Who told you this?

SUSAN

My Dad. Miss.

TEACHER

Well, I don't think we can really get into that now. The coal is owned by the government.

DICK PEVERLY

Miss. What about God?

TEACHER

What about God?

DICK PEVERLY

Didn't God put the coal in the ground and that?

TEACHER

Well, I suppose he did in a wider sense.

SUSAN

But God doesn't exist. Miss.

TEACHER

That's merely a matter of opinion.

SUSAN

Miss. My Dad says God doesn't exist and that he was only invented to prevent people from realising their own potential.

The poor teacher is totally defeated and decides to change the subject.

TEACHER

Class. Time is pressing on. Open your books and copy this diagram. You have five minutes.

SUSAN

But it's true, Miss, isn't it that God never really existed?

TEACHER

This is geography, Susan. We'll
keep our discussions of God until
R.E.

MICHAEL

I hate geography.

MUSIC: "The Children of the Revolution" by Marc Bolan.

EXT. STREET. LATER

Home time. The kids are walking home. BILLY is on his
own. DEBBIE catches him up.

DEBBIE

Hija.

BILLY

Hello.

DEBBIE

I saw you at boxing.

BILLY

I know.

DEBBIE

You're not very good are you?

BILLY

I was just caught off guard.

They walk along the road and stop at a small play
ground overlooking the pit.

BILLY

Did you get your exam then?

DEBBIE

No. But my Mam says I definitely
will next time.

BILLY

How does she know?

DEBBIE

She's the teacher.

BILLY

She's your Mam! I'm glad I'm not
you, like.

DEBBIE

What does your Mam do like?

BILLY

Nowt.

DEBBIE
She must do something.

BILLY
She's dead.

DEBBIE
Oh.....What was she like?

BILLY
I dunno. Like a Mam.

DEBBIE
What about your Dad?

BILLY
He works in there. What's your Dad do?

DEBBIE
I don't really know.

BILLY
Is he on strike inall?

DEBBIE
He's against the strike or something. I never take much notice. Do you miss your Mam then?

BILLY
Sort of.

An awkward silence.

DEBBIE
Do you want to see some ballet.

BILLY
If you want.

DEBBIE does some ballet for BILLY as he sits on the swings.

DEBBIE
What do you reckon?

BILLY
Is that ballet?

DEBBIE
Course.

BILLY
It looks like a piece of piss.

DEBBIE
It's not though. It takes loads of practice.

BILLY
Anybody could do that.

DEBBIE
You come and try it then.

BILLY
Fuck off.

EXT. STREET. LATER.

BILLY and DEBBIE are walking.

DEBBIE
Plenty of boys do ballet, you know.

BILLY
Do they nick. What boys do ballet?

DEBBIE
Nobody here, but plenty of men do.

BILLY
Puffs.

DEBBIE
Not necessarily puffs.

As they walk up the street they pass a row of policemen with riot shields. BILLY and DEBBIE walk past them completely oblivious.

BILLY
Who like?

DEBBIE
What about Wayne Sleep. He's not a puff.

BILLY
Oh.

DEBBIE
He's as fit as an athlete.

BILLY
I bet he couldn't beat Daley Thompson.

DEBBIE
Maybes not in a race but in stamina. Why don't you come tomorrow? You could just watch.

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

They have reached the corner of the street. DEBBIE stands awkwardly not wanting to leave and still oblivious to the rows of Policemen. BILLY starts to go his own way home.

DEBBIE
Please yourself. See you around then.

BILLY
Yeah. See you. Tarra.

BILLY goes off. DEBBIE watches him.

EXT. GRAVEYARD. LATER.

BILLY is in the graveyard with GRANDMA. He carries a little posy of flowers he has collected. They come to MAM's grave. It is covered in beer cans and it has been defaced (but not badly) by an aerosol spray.

BILLY
Ah, look what they've done.

He rushes over and starts to clear it up. He is engrossed in clearing away the cans, then realises GRANDMA is not with him. He looks round. He gets up panicked, but quickly finds her sitting next to another grave. He slowly approaches her. He takes her by the hand.

BILLY
Grandma. It's this one here.

GRANDMA looks at MAM's grave. She isn't really taking this in. She looks around blankly and starts to wander off. BILLY stares at the grave and then starts to follow her.

INT. BILLY'S ROOM. NIGHT

BILLY in one bed awake, TONY in the other, almost asleep.

BILLY
Tony. Do you ever think about death?

TONY
Fuck off, will you.

There is a silence.

BILLY
Night, night, then.

EXT. SCHOOL HALL. MORNING.

Lots of LITTLE GIRLS go into the ballet class.

INT. CHANGING ROOMS. THE SAME.

We see girls running around getting changed. MRS WILKINSON is outside talking to the PIANIST, a right old duffer who chain-smokes. Suddenly there are screams from inside. MRS WILKINSON comes running into the changing room to see what is going on. There is an unholy commotion of shocked ballerinas. She sees BILLY wandering through, slightly shocked by the racket. He has a pair of boxing gloves round his neck

MRS WILKINSON

What the bloody hell's going on here?

MRS WILKINSON grabs BILLY by the collar and drags him outside. BILLY is shaken.

BILLY

I just wanted to watch.

MRS WILKINSON

Watch! You little bastard.

BILLY

The ballet and that.

DEBBIE appears from the changing room.

DEBBIE

Mam. I told him to come.

MRS WILKINSON

This isn't a floor show. If you're that interested you can bloody well join in.

She grabs BILLY.

BILLY

But Miss. I divvint want to join in. I only popped round for five minutes.

MRS WILKINSON

You're coming with me, young man.

MRS WILKINSON drags BILLY away DEBBIE smiles at BILLY. BILLY looks back bewildered.

INT. THE HALL. LATER.

BILLY is standing in his ballet shoes and shorts. He looks quite comical. MRS WILKINSON takes the boxing gloves from round his neck and puts them on the side.

WILKINSON

Calm down. There's nothing to laugh at. Right first exercise. NOW!

The class convenes terrified of MRS WILKINSON. As WILKINSON goes through the exercise BILLY watches intently. The girls are fascinated by BILLY, giggling between themselves. When the class starts to dance to the music MRS WILKINSON comes over to BILLY and goes through it.

WILKINSON

Feet closer together. Like this.

DEBBIE watches BILLY. He is struggling, embarrassed. DEBBIE enjoys the moment.

WILKINSON gives another exercise.

WILKINSON

Right now, girls, starting in third position.....

The girls go through it. DEBBIE is going through the motions proudly, but very badly. MRS WILKINSON comes over to her and gives her direction. Straightening her back. DEBBIE tries really hard. MRS WILKINSON'S eye is caught again by BILLY, who is finding it hard work. We keep cutting to the PIANIST, who is smoking like a trooper.

WILKINSON comes over to him spending some more time with him.

WILKINSON

See. It's not as easy as it looks.
Is it son.

When she goes DEBBIE whispers to BILLY.

DEBBIE

I told you.

This humiliation spurs BILLY. We see him grit his teeth and work harder.

CUT TO: BILLY really sweating and finding it difficult. They are now moving across the room. The camera is low down, moving amongst the kids to really capture the effort of their movement. We feel the concentration and the nerves. We move with BILLY through the exercise, he is trying hard, ignoring the girls. Who now seem to be taking him more seriously. The PIANIST is playing passionately - a long end of ash is hanging from his cigarette.

WILKINSON

Really stretch and keep your head straight up. Look where you are looking. Good next group.

He is still stony faced with concentration.

WILKINSON

And finally, I want to do a little bit of freestyle. I just want you to move to the music.

The music starts and BILLY starts dancing rather falteringly. MRS WILKINSON suddenly sees something in BILLY and focuses in on him. He is clearly on to something. BILLY feels like he's getting somewhere.

MRS WILKINSON

At least look like you're enjoying it.

This spurs BILLY on and he suddenly lets go and we suddenly see his immense talent. As he jetées across the floor we see his face break out into a huge grin. This is the first sign that BILLY is enjoying the lesson. He reaches the other side of the hall, and whispers to DEBBIE.

BILLY

See a piece of piss.

INT. HALL. LATER.

The girls form a queue shaking MRS WILKINSON's hand in the formal manner. BILLY is last. The girls run to change their shoes.

WILKINSON

I want a word with you?

BILLY

Miss, I can't. I'll get in trouble.

BILLY gives her the shoes and runs off.

INT. LIVING ROOM HOME. LATER.

GRANDMA is sitting watching FRED ASTAIRE sing on the telly. BILLY is exasperatedly trying to deal with GRANDMA.

BILLY

Grandma you must know wether you've had it or not.

GRANDMA

I honestly can't remember.

BILLY

Didn't Dad leave it out for you?

GRANDMA

Yes. I think he did. I must have put it somewhere.

BILLY starts looking around the room for it.

BILLY

Are you sure you haven't eaten it?

GRANDMA

It was here a moment ago.

GRANDMA joins the hunt.

BILLY

Sit down, will you.

BILLY sits GRANDMA down.

GRANDMA

I'm sure I had it somewhere. It was a nice pasty.

BILLY starts opening drawers in the side board.

GRANDMA

Who is this again?

BILLY

Fred Astaire, Grandma. It's your video tape.

GRANDMA

Me and your Grandad used to go dancing all the time. We used to save up and go to the Oxford Ballrooms in Newcastle. Marvellous.

BILLY

Here it is.

BILLY brings out the plate. On it is a half eaten pasty.

BILLY

You never finished it.

GRANDMA

Oh.

BILLY

Why did you put it in the draw, Grandma?

GRANDMA

I can't remember.

BILLY heads towards the kitchen.

GRANDMA

Oi. Where're you going with that. It's not even finished.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

BILLY looks in the mirror. He has on blackface. He makes a gesture like a Black and White minstrel.

INT. STAIRWAY. NIGHT.

TONY is waiting. BILLY comes through with a black cap on

BILLY
Is this any good?

TONY
Come here.

TONY rubs BILLY's face viciously and covers it with some black make up.

BILLY
Urggh. It went in me mouth.

TONY
Well you should keep it shut.

TONY smears it on his own face.

TONY
We'll have to go out the back so
the old cunt doesn't see us.

They sneak quietly out of the back as DAD is cutting GRANDMA's nails.

EXT. NCB PROPERTY. NIGHT.

A night mission. The handheld camera follows TONY as he scurries along the ground in a crouched position like a commando. He makes it to some long grass. He looks behind him. He is very tense. He hears a scuttle then BILLY comes flying into vision. He dives right next to him. BILLY hits the deck. He is breathing heavily and terrified.

BILLY
Fuck.

TONY
Shut up you stupid bastard.

TONY and BILLY duck into the long grass.

In the distance a SECURITY GUARD appears with a dog. The dog barks. The SECURITY GUARD looks into the distance and shines his torch in the direction of BILLY and TONY. They are terrified. He misses them and carries on.

SECURITY GUARD
(to the dog)
Quiet, will you.

The GUARD traipses back to his hut. We follow him. He gets in. We see his whisky bottle through the window.

BACK TO: BILLY and TONY, who make a run for it and reach a fence.

TONY
Give uz the clippers.

BILLY
What clippers?

TONY
The fuckin' clippers, man.

The dog barks. TONY looks at BILLY incredulously.

BILLY
I thought you had them.

TONY
Jesus christ. I'll have to give you a bunk.

TONY gives BILLY a bunk over the fence. BILLY gets caught on the top. TONY climbs over.

TONY
Come on. Jump.

BILLY
I can't. I'm stuck.

The dog is barking. The GUARD comes out of his cabin.

TONY
For fuck's sake.

The GUARD comes nearer and starts shining his torch. We think he is going to catch sight of BILLY, but BILLY jumps and the GUARD's light just misses him. The GUARD curses at his dog and goes back inside.

TONY.
Now, run for it.

The run towards a huge hill of coal about fifty yards away. They run through a floodlit section of the yard and disappear into the darkness.

EXT. MOUND OF COAL. THE SAME.

BILLY and TONY in the pitch black. Almost only their eyes can be seen. BILLY holds the bag whilst TONY starts filling it up. They go to work with their bare hands. Then suddenly in the dark they glimpse a FIGURE. It is a middle aged woman, MRS JONES, loading a shopping trolley.

MRS JONES

Alright lads.

EXT. LANE. LATER.

TONY and BILLY are walking home with their bags of coal.

BILLY

Tony. What happened to that lass.

TONY

What do you think?

BILLY

I don't know.

TONY

Nothing happened with that fucking lass.

BILLY

Why not?

TONY

Because I've got nowhere to take her, cos I have to share a room with you.

BILLY

Well, it's not my fault.

TONY

It's not my fault I have to do your cooking and your washing, and the cleaning of your arse. It's no wonder I get sick of the sight of you. Is it?

BILLY

I thought you might quite like having a brother around.

Silence. They walk on. TONY feeling a bit guilty for his outburst.

BILLY

Tony. Do you miss Mam?

TONY

Of course, I do.

INT. BATHROOM. BILLY'S HOUSE. LATER.

BILLY and TONY are in the bath. CLOSE UP of BILLY's face as TONY pours water over his head with a pan. The water washes away his black-face.

TONY

I'm sorry. What I said before. But you know.

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE. LATER.

TONY and BILLY comes in, clean. DAD is sitting watching the telly. He indicates the new coal by the fireplace.

DAD

Where did that come from?

TONY

British Home Stores.

DAD

I though you'd have more sense.

TONY

What do you want, like? To chop up the fucking furniture.

DAD

What I don't want is you in the bloody nick over a bag of coal.

TONY

When are you going to realise this is a fucking battle for survival, man, Dad. You know I used to look up to you.

TONY leaves DAD fending the fire.

INT. BEDROOM. LATE.

BILLY is lying in bed. Tony is in his bed. Lights go out.

BILLY

Have you ever been to the Oxford Ballrooms?

TONY

What?

BILLY

Have you ever been dancing with a girl at the Oxford Ball Rooms? -

TONY

Who the fuck do you think I am?

BILLY
I was only asking.

Pause.

TONY
You're not having a wank are you?

BILLY
No.

TONY
You better not be, you little
bastard.

INT. SCHOOL CHANGING ROOMS.

BILLY and MICHAEL get changed with the other lads.

MICHAEL
Did you know that the male seahorse
carries the babies not the female.

BILLY
What? The bloke seahorse gets
pregnant?

MICHAEL
No. It doesn't get pregnant, but
the embryos grow up in a little
pouch.

BILLY
Fuckin' hell, can you imagine if we
had to have babies?

MICHAEL
I wouldn't mind. At least it'd get
you out of games.

EXT. THE FELL. MORNING.

The LADS run across the fell in the pouring rain. BILLY
and MICHAEL sneak behind a wall and watch the others
pass by.

MICHAEL
Howway. Down here.

BILLY and MICHAEL take the short cut.

MICHAEL
So you could do it and everything?

BILLY
Do what?

MICHAEL
The ballet.

BILLY

Wey Aye. Apparently the wife thinks
I'm cush.

MICHAEL

How do you know.

BILLY

That Debbie telt is.

MICHAEL

How the hell does she know.

BILLY

It's her mother you divvy. She said
I was promising.

MICHAEL

What's that supposed to mean?

BILLY

I divvint knaa.

MICHAEL

Do you like Debbie?

BILLY

She's alright.

MICHAEL

I think she's weird. Are you going
to go back, then?

BILLY

Where to?

MICHAEL

Ballet.

BILLY

Am I fuck.

INT. HALL. LATER.

CLOSE UP of BILLY in the lesson. His concentration. He repeats an action, each time getting better. We see his perseverance and perspiration. MONTAGE of BILLY's progress in the lesson. From simple stuff to more complex stuff in the centre. DEBBIE looks at him admiringly, but a chord of jealousy creeps in as MRS WILKINSON pays attention to her limitations, whilst leaving the novice BILLY to his own devices.

CUT TO: Class is over. The last of the girls shake MRS WILKINSON's hand and head for the changing rooms.

BILLY

Do you want your shoes, Miss?

WILKINSON

You can borrow them. You are coming back, aren't you?

BILLY

I dunno.

MRS WILKINSON

I thought you enjoyed it.

BILLY

It's just I feel a right cissy.

WILKINSON

That's cos you are a cissy.

BILLY

What do you mean like?

WILKINSON

If you put some real effort in, you'd know what I mean. I'll take them if you want son.

Billy looks at her as if to say: "Fuck you".

BILLY

No. It's alright. Miss.

BILLY takes the shoes and leaves.

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

BILLY is watching FRED ASTAIRE. It is EASTER PARADE and FRED is dancing up the walls and onto the ceiling in the famous scene. During the scene BILLY is trying to climb the walls. Each time we go back to him he is further up the wall.

GRANDMA

So how's your boxing going?

BILLY

Grandma. Will you promise not to tell Dad? But I haven't been going. I've been doing dancing.

GRANDMA

Me and your Grandad used to go dancing at the Oxford. You know.

BILLY

I know. Were you any good?

GRANDMA

People said I could have been a professional if I'd had the training.

BILLY

Why didn't you become a dancer then?

BILLY is now on top of the cupboard with his feet on the ceiling.

GRANDMA

It wasn't the done thing in them days.

BILLY

What about Ginger Rodgers?

GRANDMA

You know Fred Astaire was such a stickler that when she finished dancing she used to pour blood out of her shoes.

BILLY

Who Ginger Rodgers?

GRANDMA

He was a perfectionist Fred Astaire.

BILLY

Was Ginger Rodgers not a perfectionist?

GRANDMA

I don't know.

BILLY

Did she not get bad feet?

GRANDMA

I suppose she got used to it.

BILLY

Grandma. How come you can remember some things and you can't remember others?

A pause.

GRANDMA

I don't know, son. I don't know.

DAD comes through from the kitchen and sits down. He looks at BILLY, who has fallen onto the floor. TONY comes through dressed to kill. He is combing his hair.

DAD

Where the hell are you going dressed like that?

TONY

Out.

EXT. GRAVEYARD. EVENING.

BILLY and MICHAEL are creeping through the gravestones. They step over various couples fucking. They are all too engrossed to notice the two kids.

MICHAEL

I thought you said you weren't going back.

BILLY

Well, I changed me mind. Anyway, sssshhh, if we get caught I'll get slaughtered.

BILLY crouches down by a gravestone and looks over the top.

BILLY

There they are.

MICHAEL is crouched with him. He looks over the top too.

MICHAEL

Fuckin' hell is that really your Tony? Look. She's got her tits out.

BILLY

What do you reckon?

MICHAEL

I think they're a very nice pair, actually.

Through the undergrowth we see TONY is making out with a girl.

BILLY

Are they having a fuck?

MICHAEL

I don't know. I can't really see from here.

BILLY

It's not very romantic doing it in a graveyard.

MICHAEL

I dunno.

BILLY indicates to MICHAEL and they creep to a gravestone nearer to the action. We can hear TONY and his partner in the midst of their passion. BILLY and MICHAEL listen in silence. We sense their awkwardness and their own proximity as they huddle together. Suddenly, BILLY moves and a twig snaps.

The GIRL suddenly starts. BILLY and MICHAEL freeze terrified.

GIRL
What was that?

TONY
It was nothing.

She pulls away.

GIRL
I think it's starting to rain.

TONY
Look. Just another five minutes,
pet.

GIRL
If its owt like last time, you'd
need another five hours. That's if
me luck was in.

The girl gets up. TONY is indignant.

TONY
Howay. There's no need for that.

GIRL
Take uz home will you.

TONY gets up humiliated.

MICHAEL
Can your Tony not get it up, like?

INT. BATHROOM. ANOTHER DAY.

BILLY makes sure no one is around. He locks the door.
He takes out his book and perches it on the top of the
loo.

INT. HALL. MORNING.

The pianist is laconically playing: "Who Wants to be a
Millionaire." a fag dangling from his mouth. We move
around the class and explore the dramas therein.

INT. BATHROOM.

We see BILLY is looking at the old fashioned book from
the library. He looks at the pictures and starts
copying them.

INT. HALL

Ballet class. BILLY who is concentrating like mad, trying to ignore the girls. He is watching the teacher avidly and although he sometimes makes mistakes and gets behind he is vastly improved. He is working hard and something in his confidence tells us he is overcoming his innate boyish clumsiness.

INT. BATHROOM.

BILLY does an arabesque. He reads.

BILLY

"The important thing is to get the arm in a straight line with the leg."

BILLY tries it again.

INT. HALL.

BILLY in class doing an arabesque.

INT. BATHROOM.

BILLY doing various movements. Plié, pas jeté, échappé, etc. He is seriously hampered by the cramped surroundings. He bumps into the shelf which contains the family deodorants and has to hurriedly put them back. At one point he falls into the bath.

INT. HALL

BILLY tries to do a pirouette. He falters several times.

INT. BATHROOM.

BILLY tries a pirouette.

INT. HALL

BILLY falters.

INT. BATHROOM.

BILLY finally he does a magnificent turn, which goes round at least twice. BILLY looks at himself in the mirror proudly and does an acknowledgement more fitting with jazz.

BILLY

Chaaaa!

There is a banging on the door. BILLY is totally caught off guard and gathers up his book in a fluster, dropping it in the loo. He fishes it out and flushes the loo. He tries to hide the sodden book but can't seem to find anywhere suitable. He sticks it down his trousers.

TONY (OFF)

What the fuck are you doing in there?

INT. HALL.

WILKINSON calls the end of the class. BILLY is exhausted.

WILKINSON

See. You have to put your back into it...

INT. CORRIDOR. THE SAME.

BILLY comes out passing TONY.

TONY

Have you been at it again?

BILLY

No I have not.

TONY

Well, what are you sweating for?

INT. HALL

As BILLY walks past MRS WILKINSON.

WILKINSON

You're gettin better, you little wanker.

BILLY turns and smiles at WILKINSON. Who looks pleased with herself.

INT. WORKINGMEN'S CLUB. LATER.

TONY is sitting with DAD and a group of YOUNG MINERS. GARY WILSON comes into the bar, there is a moment when conversations grow a little dim. GARY looks over to TONY. TONY turns away. We see GRANDMA is sitting with them.

TONY

I'll kill that little bastard when I get hold of him.

EXT. STREET. LATER.

BILLY is running down the street carrying his ballet shoes and his boxing gloves round his neck. Ballet music is playing underneath. As he runs he turns and leaps repeating actions he has just learnt. The effect is joyous. We follow him past dirty buildings now just a fantastic backdrop for his balletic progress. He passes an old lady who looks at him bemused. The music swells as he goes, but all of a sudden his progress comes to a dramatic halt as he bumps into someone. He looks up to see GEORGE.

GEORGE

Billy. Where the hell have you been hiding?

BILLY

I've been poorly.

GEORGE

You don't look very poorly to me running down there like Brendan Foster.

BILLY

I was just seeing if I'd got me strength back.

GEORGE

Well, just make sure you've got your strength back up next week, or I'll have to have a word with your Dad. I rely on those fifty pences. Anyway, you're Dad's looking for you. Your Nana's turned up at the club.

BILLY

Shit.

GEORGE spots the ballet shoes.

GEORGE

What's all this?

BILLY

Aw nowt. I'm just carrying them for this lass.

GEORGE

Just make sure you're there next Saturday morning. Or you're for the high jump, sunshine. You better get going or he'll murder you.

He clips BILLY round the head in a boxing manner.

INT. WORKINGMEN'S CLUB. THE SAME.

Tony is at the bar counting out his small change. GARY comes up.

GARY
Can I get you a drink, Tone?

TONY
Fuck off. You scab bastard.

EXT. STREET. THE SAME.

BILLY runs down it stuffing his ballet shoes down his jumper.

INT. WORKINGMEN'S CLUB. THE SAME.

GARY and TONY at the bar are now screaming at each other.

GARY
I've got two kids and a mortgage.

TONY
First rule of a union. You never cross a picket line. We're all fucked if you forget that.

GARY
We're all fucked anyway you daft twat.

GARY tries to walk away. TONY grabs him. BILLY walks into the mayhem.

TONY
You thick fuckin' cunt. I'm trying to give you a chance, man.

GARY
Just leave me alone.

DAD grabs TONY just before he hits GARY.

DAD
He's not worth it.

BARMAN
(to GARY)
I think you better fuck off, mate.

BILLY is standing open mouthed.

DAD
Where the fuck have you been?

GRANDMA comes up to join the fray.

GRANDMA

That was Gary Poulson, wasn't it?
What a lovely, lad.

TONY and DAD swing round to tend to GRANDMA.

TONY

Howay, let's get out of here.

They turn to go. BILLY is trying desperately not to let the ballet shoes slip out. GRANDMA comes up to BILLY as they leave.

GRANDMA

Have you been dancing again, son?

TONY clocks what GRANDMA has said. We see BILLY desperately hoping no one will take her seriously.

INT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

DAD alone. He goes over to the sofa tips it over and tears off the hessian lining underneath and fishes around. He finds some money, some sweet papers and a biro. He puts the money with a pile of other change he has collected on the table.

He sits and stares at it. His attention drifts to a picture on the table of him and MUM. They are at the seaside smiling gormlessly into the camera. His hand reaches to it. TONY comes in and sees DAD with the picture.

TONY

Are you alright?

DAD doesn't answer.

INT. BEDROOM. EVENING.

DAD alone again. He is looking at MUM's jewelry.

INT. SUPERMARKET. DAY.

DAD and TONY are doing the shopping. TONY is pushing the trolley. DAD goes to the shelf and picks up a pack of bacon.

TONY

What are you doing?

DAD

For me breakfast.

TONY

We can't afford bloody bacon, man.
Stick to the list.

DAD

Christ.

TONY takes it off DAD. They carry on. DAD has a list of stuff and is putting stuff in the trolley.

TONY

Dad. We're going to have to take the money out of the building society.

TONY still has the bacon. He sticks it in his coat when nobody is looking. DAD is oblivious to what TONY is doing.

DAD

What's left in the bank, like?

TONY

There's nothing left in the bank. There hasn't been anything for the last month.

DAD

What have we been using?

TONY

Grandma's money.

DAD

What?

A SHOP WORKER looks suspiciously at DAD as he walks by. He does not see TONY take this opportunity to stuff a packet of biscuits into his jacket.

TONY

I get her to sign a bit paper, she doesn't know the difference.

DAD

But that was for you and Billy.

TONY

What do you think I've been spending it on?

DAD has a tin of salmon in his hand. He looks at it and puts it back.

DAD

Listen, have you noticed anything weird about our Billy lately.

TONY

What you after like, a list?

TONY slips some eggs into his jacket and carries on.

INT. SCHOOL HALL. THE SAME.

BILLY dancing.

EXT. STREET. NEWCASTLE.

DAD alone with bucket. He is stood outside a Bridalwear shop.

DAD
Dig deep for the miners.

INT. SCHOOL HALL. THE SAME.

BILLY dancing.

EXT. PAWN SHOP. NEWCASTLE.

DAD looks down at the jewelry on the counter.

PROPRIETOR
Thirty quid for the lot.

DAD
The neckless cost fifty quid twenty year ago.

PROPRIETOR
Take or leave it, pal.

DAD looks at him in disgust.

EXT. PICKET LINE. NIGHT.

There is a huge crowd. The police are pushing and shoving in amongst the crush GEORGE has a word with DAD. Their concentration is focussed on the immense scrum the picket line has become.

GEORGE
Listen mate. If it's the fifty pee a session, we could just forget about it. I don't do it for the money you know.

DAD
What you on about?

GEORGE
The boxing, man, I haven't seen hide nor hair of him for months. I didn't want to say owt in case it was embarrassing.

DAD
First I knew about it. He never has them gloves off.

GEORGE
Well, just send him round to me. I'll sharp knock some sense in to him.

A voice has overheard.

JEFF PEVERLY

You couldn't knock sense into a wet paper bag.

GEORGE

Watch it! I'll have you.

Then suddenly GEORGE is hit full on in the face by a truncheon. It really hurts and completely changes the mood. We see the miners making sure he is alright as they know direct anger is futile being penned in.

DAD

Are you alright?

GEORGE is bleeding.

INT. MORNING. STAIRS.

BILLY is stuffing his ballet shoes down his trousers. He has his boxing gloves slung as usual over his shoulders. DAD emerges in his pyjamas from the bathroom.

BILLY

Bye!

DAD looks at him with great suspicion

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

DAD comes in still in his pyjamas.

DAD

What the hell's he up to?

TONY hands him a plate with bacon and egg.

DAD

What's this?

TONY

What the bloody hell do you think it is?

DAD

Where did it come from?

TONY smiles.

TONY

Redistribution of wealth.

DAD doesn't seem to be amused. He puts his knife and fork down.

DAD

I've warned you.

TONY carries on. DAD is in a nark, but looks at the food. He is trying to resist temptation. Finally, he picks up his knife and fork and tucks in.

EXT. SCHOOL GATES. LATER.

BILLY looks around him to see no one is watching and then heads into the ballet class.

INT. SCHOOL HALL. THE SAME.

BILLY is dancing to the music. MRS WILKINSON is paying him particular attention. The music is playing and she is encouraging him.

MRS WILKINSON
Come on. That's pathetic.

BILLY tries the movement again. He fails. MRS WILKINSON.

MRS WILKINSON
Again.

BILLY is getting rather upset. He tries again.

MRS WILKINSON
Come on. You have to work at it,
Billy.

BILLY
Miss. I can't.

MRS WILKINSON gives him a harsh look.

MRS WILKINSON
Do you think I'm doing this for the
good of my health?

He is cowed and does it again. This time successfully. He beams at MRS WILKINSON. She is only vaguely impressed.

LATER: Another exercise. MRS WILKINSON is concentrating her vitriol on some of the smaller girls but we know she is watching BILLY out of the corner of her eye. BILLY is going from strength to strength. He is doing some movements. They are riveting to watch, as he is obviously elegant and confident. The camera slowly CIRCLES him as he practices and in the process we get a panorama of the stories of the class going on around him. As the camera moves we see: The preening girl, the jealousies, the incompetence - all in the background to BILLY's dancing. He looks blissfully contented. As the exercise comes to a close the camera has come full circle and we notice DAD standing in the doorway watching BILLY intently. The music comes to a standstill. BILLY looks round and sees his DAD.

MRS WILKINSON

Can I help?

DAD

You. Out. Now.

The mood has been fractured by DAD's aggressive tone. Everybody stares at DAD. BILLY is shitting it. He gives an embarrassed look to MRS WILKINSON and starts to walk out embarrassed.

MRS WILKINSON

Hang on a minute.

DAD simply ignores her and walks out. The doors flap. MRS WILKINSON starts towards the door. BILLY turns to stop her.

BILLY

Please Miss, don't.

She stops in her tracks and watches BILLY follow DAD out.

INT. THE HOUSE. MORNING.

BILLY is standing in the kitchen. DAD is trying to interrogate him but GRANDMA is sitting at the table.

DAD

Ballet? (PAUSE) Are you trying to take the piss or something?

GRANDMA oblivious to the seriousness of the situation keeps interrupting. DAD tries to ignore her by giving curt answers and donating most of his attention to BILLY.

GRANDMA

Peter, have you seen my hermesetas?

DAD

(to GRANDMA) No I haven't. (to BILLY) How long has this been going on?

BILLY

A couple of months.

DAD

I don't believe what I'm hearing. You've been pretending to be boxing when all the time you've been prancing round like a fruit.

BILLY

I'm sorry.

DAD

I'm busting me balls to find you those fifty pees. And you're off squandering it on this nonsense.

BILLY

It's not nonsense. I like it.

DAD

What running round like a puff?

BILLY

It's not just puffs do ballet.

GRANDMA

I'm going upstairs.

DAD

Sit down, will you. (to BILLY)
Listen, normal lads do rugby, or football, or boxing. Not bloody ballet lessons.

GRANDMA gets up. DAD suddenly loses it with her.

DAD

Sit down!

GRANDMA suddenly sits down quietly because DAD has got angry.

DAD

I didn't see any other boys there.

BILLY

I'm the only one.

DAD

Exactly.

BILLY

Some ballet dancers are as fit as Daley Thompson. It's not just puffs, Dad. What about Wayne Sleep. He was a ballet dancer.

DAD

Wayne Sleep. He's bent as a five bob note.

BILLY

Is he?

DAD

Well, you can forget about these ballet classes and get yourself back to boxing.

BILLY

But I like ballet.

DAD

I don't care. I'm not having you going round lying to me.

BILLY

But...

DAD

That's final.

BILLY

Just because it's ballet.

DAD

It is not because it's ballet. It's the principle.

BILLY

The teacher said that I have exceptional promise.

DAD

I'll promise you something exceptional if you don't do as your told.

BILLY bubbling.

BILLY

But I've gone off boxing.

GRANDMA

I think it's quite nice that the lad is doing dancing.

DAD

That's not the point.

GRANDMA

They used to say I should have been a professional dancer.

BILLY

See.

DAD

For lasses. For your Nanna. Not for young lads, Billy. Grow up will you.

BILLY

I hate you.

DAD

I'll clip you good and proper if you speak to me like that again.

GRANDMA

I remember me and Davey at the Oxford.

DAD

(to GRANDMA) Look, shut up for a minute. (to BILLY) I'm just trying to be reasonable.

BILLY

You're not being reasonable you're being a bastard.

DAD

That's it.

DAD lunges for BILLY. BILLY runs cowering into the corner. DAD lifts his arm to hit BILLY. BILLY whimpers. Then suddenly, the door bursts open. SHEILA BRIGGS, the next door neighbour, runs in. She is evidently upset and out of breath.

SHEILA

I think you better come. There's trouble.

DAD

What do you mean?

SHEILA

They've already got our Jimmy.

DAD turns round. SHEILA has already gone. DAD runs out of the house into the backyard. BILLY follows.

EXT. BACKLANE. THE SAME.

DAD is running at full pelt up the street. BILLY is trying to catch up. At the top of the street there are a number of people running. POLICEMEN begin to emerge. They are heading down the lane.

Suddenly we see TONY being chased. At the top of the street he runs through someone's garden chased by two POLICEMEN. TONY vaults a small garden wall and runs through someone's runner beans. The COPPERS are closing in. TONY gets to the back gate which leads on to the lane. He jumps over it.

The FIRST COPPER falls and TONY is getting away. The SECOND COPPER leaps it easily and starts to gain ground. TONY looks behind him. ANOTHER COPPER is coming from a different route. BILLY watches in amazement.

DAD shouts to TONY.

DAD _

Tony!!!!

SLOW MOTION: as TONY turns he sees that ahead of him the lane is strung with washing: rows and rows of white sheets. The camera follows TONY as he runs through the middle of the washing pursued by the COPPERS. Horses start pounding down the street which has become a surreal battle ground.

TONY running through sheet after sheet. It looks quite surreal and quite beautiful. The sheets flap in the wind. TONY's face in panic as he runs. TONY runs into a sheet that completely covers him. Again the image is very stylised and beautiful as he collapses to the ground.

The COPPERS pile in on him. TONY is rolling on the ground in the white linen like a winding sheet. The COPPERS are kicking him mercilessly.

BILLY watches DAD run over. DAD turns one COPPER round and punches him in the face. The COPPER goes down. The OTHER COPPER turns to face DAD. He tries to belt DAD with his truncheon. DAD is too fast for him and dodges the blow. TONY staggers to his feet and hits the COPPER, then hoofs the one on the deck in the balls. ANOTHER COPPER piles in catching DAD a blow and knocking TONY to the ground.

Suddenly, TWO FIGURES appear from nowhere. It is GEORGE and his son FRANK. They grab TONY and pull him out of the way of the COPPERS. FRANK pulls a big COPPER away from DAD and nuts him. The COPPERS back off.

TONY and DAD are whisked away by GEORGE and FRANK. THE COPPERS retreat through the washing.

BILLY is left standing. A copper screams at him.

COPPER
(TO BILLY)
You fuckin' abortion.

As the coppers retreat BILLY suddenly rises into the position he adopted in the ballet class and as he repeats the elegant and controlled movement in defiance of the police he spits the words:

BILLY
Bastards. Bastards. Bastards.

Suddenly a hand on his shoulder. He spins round in panic. It is Sheila.

SHEILA
Inside. Now.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM. LATER.

TONY is standing naked against the wall. His whole body is cut and bruised.

TONY

They weren't fucking coppers. This isn't a frigging strike anymore. This is war. I'm serious. We need to arm ourselves.

SHELIA admonishes him sternly.

SHELIA

Stand still.

FLASH. As SHELIA takes a poloroid. BILLY stands in the doorway cowed by the days events

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

TONY is sitting up in bed. His face is swollen, bruised and cut. His hands are bandaged, as is some of his face. He is staring out in front of him. He is smoking a joint. Although he is almost immobile and says nothing we feel his anger.

BILLY is lying watching his brother in fear and awe. BILLY is evidently shaken by the days events but does not know what to do. TONY stubs the joint out. And sighs.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. LATER.

BILLY comes up the backlane. We hear the sound of a tuba playing. It gets louder as BILLY comes down the street.

BILLY stops outside a house. He goes into the backyard. He looks in the outside loo and sees MICHAEL'S DAD playing his tuba. BILLY ignores him and shouts up to MICHAEL.

BILLY

Micky. Howway out.

As BILLY waits he looks in at MICHAEL'S DAD concentrating hard. He doesn't look at BILLY once. He just carries on with his playing, looking at the music on the music stand.

EXT. BACKLANE. THE SAME.

BILLY and MICHAEL walk up the backlane.

BILLY

Why does your Dad play his thing on the bog?

MICHAEL

Mam won't let him in the house.

BILLY

I'm not surprised.

EXT. GRAVEYARD. DUSK.

BILLY and MICHAEL are in the graveyard eating from a bag of chips.

MICHAEL

What you gonna do.

BILLY

I dunno.

MICHAEL

Well, what do you need to take lessons for?

BILLY

To get better you divvy.

MICHAEL

Do you get to wear a tutu?

BILLY

Fuck off that's only for lasses. I wear me shorts.

MICHAEL

You want to ask for a tutu.

BILLY

What for?

MICHAEL

For to dance in you spacker.

BILLY

I'd look a right fanny in tutu.

MICHAEL

I think you'd look lush.

BILLY

You're no help at all.

A head appears from behind a gravestone. It is a YOUNG LAD obviously out snogging in the churchyard.

YOUNG LAD

Will yous two fuck off.

EXT. A STREET OF POSH HOUSES. LATE AFTERNOON.

BILLY is walking down the street. The start of the song DEBBIE by Marc Bolan.

SONG

"Deboree-deb-deboree-debreedah,
Deboree-deb-deboree-debreedah,
Deboree-deb-deboree-debreedah,
Oh-oh-oh, Deborah....."

BILLY is looking at the posh houses and is particularly interested in the cars outside, and in the driveways. This is not a big estate but is just a collection of larger houses above the village.

BILLY comes to a halt. He looks at a house. He surveys it carefully and tentatively goes up the driveway. We can tell already he is uncomfortable. He passes a big Ford Granada. He reaches the bell and it rings.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE. THE SAME.

BILLY walks in through the front door and into the hallway.

BILLY
You know me Dad'll kill me if he
knows I'm here.

BILLY looks around in amazement at the house.

BILLY
You've got plenty books haven't
you?

DEBBIE
There Mam's.

BILLY
Is she quite brainy then your Mam?

BILLY stops under a framed poster of a picture by Klimt. He stares at the woman's bare breast.

MRS WILKINSON
I see you like Klimt.

BILLY has not heard her and is a little surprised.

BILLY
I was only looking at her dress.

MRS WILKINSON
Would you like a cup of coffee?

BILLY
I don't know. I suppose so.

BILLY is sitting awkwardly on the sofa. MRS WILKINSON goes out.

BILLY
Can we not just play out?

DEBBIE
Mum doesn't like me going out of a
night time.

BILLY
We could go upstairs.

DEBBIE

What about supper?

BILLY

Could we not have a pasty in your room or something?

MUM comes back with the coffee. BILLY is very self-conscious that he is rather ragged and dirty compared to his company.

MRS WILKINSON

How are you, Billy?

BILLY

Alright.

MRS WILKINSON

Things can't be very easy at home. With the strike and everything.

BILLY

It's not that much different from normal.

An awkward moment.

MRS WILKINSON

So why haven't you been to dancing?

BILLY

I dunno. I just got bored and that.

MRS WILKINSON

Billy.

BILLY

Miss. I've been banned.

MRS WILKINSON

What do you mean you're banned?

BILLY

I'm not even allowed to do owt. Not even boxing. Dad says I have to stay and look after me Nan.

MRS WILKINSON

Well, I'll have a word with him.

BILLY

Please. Don't Miss. He'll go stotty. He thinks I'm at Dick Peverley's right now. He used to be better when Mam was alive and that. But now he gets in a right nark about everything.

MRS WILKINSON

Well, that's no reason to stop you from dancing.

BILLY

Please. I think he doesn't know what to do about things anymore 'cos before Mam used to sort out everything; like grandma and that.

MRS WILKINSON

Still that's no reason....

BILLY

Miss. Just leave it, will you.

MRS WILKINSON

Come on. Supper's ready.

INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM. THE SAME.

BILLY, DEBBIE, MR and MRS WILKINSON sit round the table.

MR WILKINSON

So your Dad works in the pit then?

BILLY

Yeah.

MR WILKINSON

It must be hard on the family being out on strike. He is out on strike isn't he?

BILLY

Course.

MR WILKINSON

I shouldn't worry. They won't last long.

MRS WILKINSON

Tom.

MR WILKINSON

If they had a ballot they'd be back tomorrow. It's just a few bloody commies stirring it up. But lets face it they don't have a leg to stand on.

DEBBIE

Who doesn't?

MR WILKINSON

The miners.

BILLY

Why not?

MR WILKINSON

Look. It stands to reason. Some pits are just uneconomic aren't they? If it costs more money to pay everybody to dig the coal out than you get for the coal when you sell it, what does that tell you?

BILLY thinks about it carefully.

BILLY

I don't know.

MR WILKINSON

Well, you want to think about it don't you, son.

MRS WILKINSON

Tom.

BILLY sits in silence and they eat their food.

BILLY

What's this?

DEBBIE

That's an olive.

MRS WILKINSON

Look. Just leave them on the side.

INT. BEDROOM. LATER.

BILLY and DEBBIE. The bedroom is typically feminine with it's pinks and cuddly toys. Again, BILLY seems uncomfortably out of place.

DEBBIE

I'm sorry about Dad he goes on a bit.

BILLY

I know I thought he was going to hit me or something.

DEBBIE

Don't be stupid. He's just under a lot of pressure at work. That's what Mum says. I think it's because he drinks too much.

BILLY

Does he drink too much like?

DEBBIE

He's always pissed. Once he pissed himself.

BILLY

Your Dad?

DEBBIE

Cos he's unhappy and that, because they sleep in separate beds.

BILLY

Why do they sleep in separate beds?

DEBBIE

So they can't have sex.

BILLY

Do they not have sex like?

DEBBIE

Dad does it with this woman from work but they don't think I know. Do you miss your Mum?

BILLY

I don't really miss her, as such. It's more like just feeling sad. Specially when I remember her all of a sudden when I'd forgot she was dead and that. What about your Mam? Does she not have sex?

DEBBIE

No. She's unfulfilled. That's why she does dancing.

BILLY

She does dancing instead of sex?

DEBBIE comes closer to BILLY. He seems uneasy with her advance.

BILLY

You're family's weird.

DEBBIE

No they're not.

BILLY

They are though. They're mental.

BILLY surprises DEBBIE by hitting her on the head with a pillow. DEBBIE scrambles for a pillow to hit BILLY back but this just presents an opportunity for BILLY to bash her a few more times. DEBBIE retaliates and BILLY yelps and jumps back. They both end up on the bed having a pillow fight. BILLY hits her. His pillow bursts and feathers scatter everywhere. DEBBIE screams. BILLY is on top of her.

The feathers fly everywhere. DEBBIE is laughing. The feathers drift down. BILLY suddenly notices he is on top of DEBBIE. There is a sudden moment of sexual tension. They are both very still. DEBBIE reaches a hand up and touches BILLY tenderly on the cheek. She stares at him intently. BILLY is very uneasy for a moment.

BILLY

See you're a nutter you.

BILLY breaks the moment and he is back to being a little boy. He slumps to the other side of the bed and surveys the debris. DEBBIE is hurt by this moment of rejection, but is trying hard not to show it.

MRS WILKINSON

(off)

Deborah. I think it's time for Billy to go.

INT. THE STAIRCASE. DEBBIE'S HOUSE. THE SAME.

BILLY is ready to go. MRS WILKINSON has her car keys ready. DEBBIE is skulking on the stairs.

MRS WILKINSON

I'll drive you. Don't you have a coat?

BILLY

I never brought a coat.

MR WILKINSON appears from the doorway. He has a large short in his hand. He looks a little more dishevelled than before. BILLY looks up at DEBBIE who looks down from the stairs. BILLY follows MRS WILKINSON out.

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

MRS WILKINSON drops BILLY off.

BILLY

Just here's fine.

MRS WILKINSON

Are you sure about this, Billy.

BILLY

Miss. I don't see what else I can do.

MRS WILKINSON

It's just sad. I mean before all this happened I was thinking of putting you down for auditions.

BILLY

What for.

MRS WILKINSON

It's nothing. Just the Royal ballet school come up once a year to Newcastle.

BILLY

Straights?

MRS WILKINSON

It would have been a hell of a lot of work.

BILLY

Do you think I could go to a proper ballet school?

MRS WILKINSON

You never know until you try, do you? We'd have to do extra lessons.

BILLY

Miss, I couldn't afford it. They've stopped me pocket money. And anyway, me Dad'd just gan stotty.

MRS WILKINSON

If he knew.

She stares at BILLY intently. BILLY is uncertain to know what to do.

BILLY

Miss. You don't fancy me do you?

MRS WILKINSON

It's alright, Billy. I don't fancy you. You'd be doing me a favour.

BILLY

Do you really think I could be a dancer?

MRS WILKINSON

There's only one way to find out.

BILLY looks unsure. He gets out of the car and heads off up the road.

INT. SCHOOL HALL.

BILLY comes in. He is to practise in private. MUSIC starts: GET IT ON by T Rex.

INT. HALL. LATER.

BILLY's dancing in progress. Montage: We see him dance. We see him come on in leaps and bounds. But the dancing is done to the sound of Marc Bolan. He stumbles, he gets better and better. In the middle eight, Billy slumps exhausted.

INT. GRANDMA'S BEDROOM. LATER.

BILLY comes into GRANDMA's room. She is sleeping. He brings in a cup of hot chocolate. He sits by her bedside. She is mumbling in her sleep. BILLY just stares at her. We feel her fragility. Her immobility and sadness.

She gradually wakes. She is slightly dribbling from her mouth. BILLY is still staring at her. She sees him, but hardly moves. She stares straight into his eyes. He stares back.

INT. HOME. TEATIME.

BILLY comes in. MUM is working in the kitchen. BILLY acts as if this is perfectly natural.

MUM

Where the hell have you been?

BILLY

We got put on detention again.

BILLY goes to the fridge and pours himself a glass of milk.

MUM

Again. What have you been up to Billy?

BILLY

It was the whole class. Honest.

MUM

You're going to have to buck your ideas up, my lad. Especially if you want to get into this school.

We focus on BILLY's face. When the camera pulls back the room is empty and MUM has disappeared. BILLY stands alone with his glass of milk in his hand, shaking slightly.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. EVENING.

BILLY comes into the yard. He knocks on the back door. A head appears from the window above, but it is in shadows.

MICHAEL

Hang on a minute.

BILLY waits. Suddenly the back door opens and MICHAEL appears, he is wearing a dress. BILLY looks amazed.

MICHAEL

Are you coming in or what?

INT. MICHAEL'S PARENT'S BEDROOM. THE SAME.

BILLY and MICHAEL come in the room.

BILLY
What are you doing?

MICHAEL
Just dressing up.

BILLY
Who's dress is that?

MICHAEL
It's me sister's.

BILLY
Did she give you it?

MICHAEL
She doesn't know. Do you want to
try? You could have one of me
Mam's.

BILLY
No, you're alright.

BILLY looks round the room. He looks back to see
MICHAEL trying on some lipstick and some blusher.

BILLY
What are you doing that for?

MICHAEL
I'm just trying it on.

BILLY
Christ.

MICHAEL
Come here.

MICHAEL grabs BILLY for a moment. BILLY squirms.

MICHAEL
Stay still.

BILLY acquiesces. MICHAEL puts on some lipstick.

MICHAEL
There.

BILLY
Won't we get in trouble?

MICHAEL
Don't be stupid. Me Dad does it all
the time.

BILLY

What he dresses up in your Mam's clothes?

MICHAEL

Only when he thinks everybody's out.

MICHAEL is now fiddling about looking for shoes.

MICHAEL

Have you got a tutu yet?

BILLY

Do you think being a ballet dancer would be better than being a miner?

MICHAEL

I don't know.

BILLY

It's just I'm going for this audition in Newcastle in a couple of weeks.

MICHAEL

What for?

BILLY

For to go to ballet school.

MICHAEL

What? You'd have to move to Newcastle?

BILLY

To London.

MICHAEL

With your Tony and everybody?

BILLY

No. By meself.

MICHAEL

That's a bit steep. Can't you be a ballet dancer here like?

BILLY

Divvint be stupid.

MICHAEL

So when are you going there then?

BILLY

I don't know. I haven't even got in yet.

MICHAEL

What does your Dad say?

BILLY

He doesn't know.

MICHAEL

Fucking hell. Are you not going to tell him?

BILLY

Not yet anyway.

MICHAEL

He might be quite pleased about it. He could rent your room out.

BILLY

He couldn't. What about our Tony?

MICHAEL

I think you shouldn't bother.

BILLY

Why not?

MICHAEL

I'd miss you.

BILLY

Fucking hell.

INT. BEDROOM. VERY EARLY.

TONY gets out of bed early. He tries not to wake BILLY.

BILLY

Where are you going?

TONY

Go back to sleep.

BILLY

It's four o'clock.

INT. KITCHEN. THE SAME.

TONY goes into the tool box which is in the cupboard under the sink. He is rooting through it, he takes out a big spanner and a claw hammer. He hasn't noticed DAD sitting waiting. TONY looks at DAD.

DAD

You weren't thinking of taking them with you?

DAD looks at TONY.

TONY

Look at my face, Dad.

DAD

For christsake, Tony.

TONY

Listen. If you want to just stand round getting the shit kicked out of you that's fine. But I'm going to even out the playing field.

DAD

It's bad enough getting done for disturbing the peace, nevermind grievous bodily harm.

TONY

I don't plan on getting caught.

BILLY appears.

BILLY

What's going on?

DAD

Get back to bed.

TONY

Fuck you.

TONY goes to pick the spanner up.

DAD

Put it down.

TONY

Are you going to stop me?

DAD

I'm warning you.

He puts it in his donkey jacket. DAD grabs the spanner.

TONY

What are you going to do about it, like?

They face each other.

TONY

Howway, then?

DAD hits TONY in the face. TONY staggers back.

BILLY

Stop it.

TONY goes for DAD. DAD out classes him by giving him a sharp punch to the stomach and TONY drops to the floor. DAD stands shaking. TONY is winded and his nose is pouring with blood.

BILLY stands there terrified. TONY gets up grabs the spanner. For a moment we think he might use it on DAD but he puts it into his pocket. TONY is shaken too but he leaves. DAD makes no attempt to stop him. DAD sits down at the table. BILLY stares at him.

DAD
What are you looking at?

INT. THE SCHOOL HALL. LATE AFTERNOON.

BILLY is dancing. We see him in several positions trying several moves. He is trying to perfect each movement. The music is a bad piano accompaniment, which stops and starts and fractures almost like a child practising - mirroring BILLY's mistakes. The action and music overlap and contradict each other in a fascinating mosaic of haplessness.

We sense the real hard work, the sweat, the chalk on the floor, the sheer physicality and mental anxiety of what BILLY is doing.

BILLY
Miss. I can't do it.

MRS WILKINSON
That's because you're not concentrating.

BILLY
Miss, I am concentrating.

MRS WILKINSON
You're not even trying.

BILLY
I am, Miss.

MRS WILKINSON
Do it again.

BILLY
I can't.

MRS WILKINSON
Do it again.

MRS WILKINSON is at her most tyrannical. BILLY is frozen in hopeless indecision, terrified by her. He then builds himself up to a small defiance.

BILLY
No.

MRS WILKINSON
NOW!

BILLY looks at her and runs out.

EXT. YARD. THE SAME.

BILLY is crying. MRS WILKINSON comes up tentatively.

MRS WILKINSON

I'm sorry, Billy.

BILLY

It's alright for you. It's not you who has to do it.

MRS WILKINSON

I know.

BILLY

You don't know anything. What do you know in your posh house with your husband that pisses his self. You're the same as everybody else all you want is to tell me what to do.

MRS WILKINSON

Look, I know what it's like, Billy, my Dad was a miner too.

BILLY

Look, I don't want to do your stupid fuckin' audition. You only want me to do it for your own benefit.

MRS WILKINSON

Billy....

BILLY

Because you're a failure.

MRS WILKINSON

Don't you dare talk to me like that.

BILLY

You haven't even got a proper dancing school. You're stuck in some crummy school gym. Don't pick on me just cos you've fucked up your life.

MRS WILKINSON slaps BILLY. She realises what she has done. BILLY just stares at her. She is shaken. She reaches out to hug BILLY we don't know whether he will run away. Suddenly he bursts into tears and hugs MRS WILKINSON. We see MRS WILKINSON is in tears too. Finally, BILLY pulls away.

BILLY

Shall we go back in?

EXT. BUS SHELTER. DAY.

BILLY and DEBBIE are sitting in the shelter looking out at the rain. BILLY is discretely allowing his feet to run through the steps to a routine.

DEBBIE

So when is the audition?

BILLY

In a couple of weeks.

DEBBIE

I'll miss you if you go away.

BILLY

Who do you think is better Gene Kelly or Fred Astaire?

DEBBIE

I don't know.

BILLY

What do you think of Jennifer Beal?

DEBBIE

Billy. Do you not fancy me?

BILLY looks at her.

BILLY

I don't know. I've never thought about it.

DEBBIE

If you want I'll show you me fanny.

BILLY

Look, it's alright. I better be going.

EXT. SCHOOL. AFTERNOON.

MICHAEL and BILLY are standing behind a wall watching the other lads play football.

MICHAEL

So did you have a look at it?

BILLY

What would I want to look at a fanny for?

MICHAEL

Have you seen one before like?

BILLY

Course. Our Tony had this magazine.

MICHAEL

Well, what was it like, like?

BILLY

I dunno. Sort of like a coconut.

MICHAEL

A coconut?

BILLY

You know. Hairy and that.

MICHAEL

Are you nervous for your audition?

BILLY

Not really. Debbie's Mum says I'm doing very well indeed.

MICHAEL

She doesn't fancy you as well does she?

BILLY

I don't know.

INT. SCHOOL HALL. LATE AFTERNOON.

BILLY is dressed and at the barre.

MRS WILKINSON

Demi-plié, grande-plié, relevé, relevé...

BILLY is going through the lesson. BILLY is dancing in time to taped music.

BILLY moves on to more difficult things. He ends his barre work with some Grands Battenments jetés.

MRS WILKINSON

No, start again. Watch me.

MRS WILKINSON demonstrates it. BILLY is tired and sweating already.

MOVE ON: to the centre. BILLY is performing twelve double frappés on the floor and ending in a small pose croisé, pointe tendue on the floor in plié.

The CAMERA moves around him. BILLY goes on to more complicated moves.

MRS WILKINSON

OK. We'll try your freestyle.

MRS WILKINSON puts on the tape recorder. BILLY hesitates and then starts dancing. The camera follows him round. We see the hard work, and the grace, and his pleasure. BILLY starts off gently and as the music builds, we feel him gaining in confidence and energy. Finally, he begins to take off. His performance is committed and moving. We see how much he has progressed. He finishes the piece with a devastating flourish. When it ends he stands vulnerably for a second, as he has exposed himself. Then to compensate BILLY sends the whole thing up with the shaking of his hands in a mock 'Al Jolson' type gesture.

MRS WILKINSON looks at him with raised eye-brows.

MRS WILKINSON
I'll pick you up here tomorrow. Get plenty rest. OK?

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE. LATER.

BILLY runs up the path.

INT. HOUSE. THE SAME.

BILLY runs in.

BILLY
Grandma?

BILLY runs up to her room. She isn't there.

BILLY
Shit.

INT. STAIRS/CORRIDOR. THE SAME.

We see BILLY disappear into several rooms in succession. He obviously does not find GRANDMA. He comes back out into the corridor and heads for the door.

EXT. THE STREET. THE SAME.

BILLY runs down the street trying to find GRANDMA.

EXT. END OF THE STREET. THE SAME

He arrives at the field. He looks across - there is no sign of her.

EXT. STREET HEADING TOWARDS THE PIT. THE SAME.

BILLY is in a panic. He runs down the street.

BILLY
Grandma?

He passes a WOMAN with her pram who looks puzzled by BILLY's panic.

As BILLY turns the corner which leads on to the pit entrance. He sees a figure in the distance in her dressing gown.

EXT, PIT ENTRANCE. THE SAME.

It is quiet on the picket line. Then suddenly loads and loads of police arrive. The pickets suddenly realise they've been tricked. Then the buses start to hurtle through the streets. The PICKETS are shouting both at the POLICE and at the buses as they speed fast. DAD is on the outside of this ruckus.

EXT. THE STREET. THE SAME.

BILLY sees GRANDMA. He runs towards her as she is dangerously heading for the picket line. The buses scream past. She is in her own little world.

DAD sees GRANDMA wandering along in her night-dress. He does a double take and then leaves the crowd and runs over the road.

BILLY has by now reached GRANDMA. He grabs her hand.

BILLY

Grandma.

DAD comes running over at top speed.

DAD

What the hell's going on?

GRANDMA

I can't find me pasty.

DAD

How did she get out here?

BILLY

I don't know. I just came back and..

DAD

You were supposed to be looking after her.

BILLY

Sorry, Dad.

A POLICEMAN comes over.

DAD

You've had it. Understood?

COPPER

Out the way, love.

The COPPER gets GRANDMA's shoulders.

DAD

Get off her.

COPPER

I've warned you. (to GRANDMA) Come on. Go home.

DAD

Hey.

DAD pushes between the COPPER and GRANDMA. DAD grabs the coppers arm. Another COPPER comes running over grabs DAD.

BILLY

Dad.

DAD struggles. Another COPPER arrives. DAD is dragged away shouting. BILLY runs after them. The original COPPER grabs him.

COPPER

Take her home, son.

BILLY watches DAD disappear behind the lines of COPPERS. BILLY stands stunned.

INT. HOUSE. LATER.

BILLY is standing. TONY is furiously pacing the floor. SHEILA is sitting.

TONY

But where the fuck were you?

BILLY

I just went out for five minutes.

TONY

Where were you, Billy?

SHEILA

Look, we better phone Harry and get him a solicitor.

SHEILA goes out.

TONY

I don't believe this.

BILLY

It wasn't my fault.

TONY

Who's fuckin' fault was then? You little cunt. Where the fuck were you?

BILLY

I wasn't anywhere.

BILLY starts crying. GRANDMA sits up in her chair munching away at a pasty.

GRANDMA

Is there anything wrong?

INT. HOUSE. MIDNIGHT.

BILLY is sitting with GRANDMA in the dark, only a faint fire sheds any light. BILLY picks up the phone. He takes a crumpled bit of paper out of his pocket. He looks at it and dials a number.

INT. WILKINSON'S HOUSE.

MR WILKINSON is in the living room. He is drinking. The phone rings he picks it up.

MR WILKINSON

Hello. Hello? Hello?

He puts the phone down.

INT. MRS WILKINSON'S CAR. MORNING.

MRS WILKINSON is parked by the school gates. She looks at her watch.

INT. MAGISTRATES COURT. THE SAME.

BILLY and TONY are sitting with lots of other Miner's wives and family at the back of the court.

GUY

All rise.

The magistrate comes in. He is MR WILKINSON. Everyone rises and sits.

WILKINSON

OK. Bring them in.

A line of miners shuffles in. DAD is with them. DAD looks over at BILLY forlornly. MR WILKINSON takes no notice, but we feel little justice will be done.

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE. LATER.

MRS WILKINSON gets out her car and looks at BILLY'S house. She is very uncertain but walks up the path looking through the window to see if anyone is home.

She rings on the doorbell. Waits. No answer. She looks through the window. SHEILA comes to the door next door and moves GRANDMA out of the way.

SHEILA
Aren't you Tom Wilkinson's wife?

MRS WILKINSON
I was looking for...

SHEILA
They're out.

MRS WILKINSON
I think I must have the wrong house.

GRANDMA comes to SHEILA's door.

GRANDMA
Who is it dear?

SHEILA
It's alright. Go back inside.

MRS WILKINSON
Sorry.

SHEILA looks at her suspiciously as MRS WILKINSON beats a hasty retreat.

As MRS WILKINSON goes down the path she sees BILLY.

MRS WILKINSON
Billy?

TONY appears.

MRS WILKINSON
What's going on, Billy?

TONY
Who the hell are you?

BILLY
Please, Miss.

DAD is stood there. BILLY is horrified. They all stare at one another.

DAD
I think we better go inside.

INT. HOUSE. THE SAME.

TONY, DAD, BILLY and MRS WILKINSON are crammed into the front room.

TONY
Fucking ballet!?

MRS WILKINSON
I realise I should have spoken with you before.

TONY

How long has this been going on?

MRS WILKINSON

A few months. We've been having lessons after school.

TONY

So that's where you were, then?

BILLY

Yes.

TONY

Well, why the fuck didn't you tell me?

BILLY

I thought I'd get wrong.

TONY

You were bloody right, weren't you.

MRS WILKINSON

I don't think you understand.

TONY

Listen. We've got enough on our plate without you bugging about teaching our lad dancing.

MRS WILKINSON

Please hear me out.

TONY

He's just spent the night in a friggin' cell.

BILLY

Please.

TONY

Shut it. Who do you think you are anyway?

MRS WILKINSON

Listen. This is important. I've been teaching Billy ballet because he is special. Today Billy missed an audition for the Royal Ballet School.

TONY

The Royal Ballet? _

DAD

Is this right, Billy?

BILLY nods.

DAD

But he's only been at it a few months, man.

TONY

Am I the only fuckin' one here who doesn't know about this?

MRS WILKINSON

Exactly. Obviously they are not looking for trained dancers at his age. They are looking for natural talent.

TONY

This takes the bloody biscuit.

MRS WILKINSON

I think Billy could get a place there.

TONY

Get out.

DAD

Did you never think of coming and asking us about this?

BILLY

You would have said no.

MRS WILKINSON

Look, I don't believe how stupid I've been.

TONY

Have you any idea what we're going through? We've been attacked. We've been fined. We've been arrested. The last thing we need is for some fuckin' do gooder pissing about with our family putting ridiculous ideas in their heads. Ballet. What you trying to do make him a fuckin' scab for the rest of his life? Look at him. He's only eleven for christsake.

BILLY

You've got to start training from when you're young.

TONY

Shut it. I'm not having any brother of mine running round like a right cunt for your gratification.

MRS WILKINSON

You ignorant bastard.

TONY

What did you say?

MRS WILKINSON

What are you scared of?

DAD

Listen. We're not scared of anything.

MRS WILKINSON

You're fucking terrified of anything that's different from your pig ignorant perspective.

TONY

Don't fucking start, you overweight middle class slut.

BILLY

She's not that fat.

MRS WILKINSON

Is that all you've got to say.

MRS WILKINSON looks at BILLY and leaves. DAD, TONY and BILLY are in a stunned silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATER.

DAD, BILLY and TONY all sit looking at each other in stony silence.

DAD

For fuck's sake.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB. EVENING.

A banner says "Merry Christmas - 9 months. We shall not be moved".

The club is full of people and there are many children running around. MIKE the trot, an entertainer on the stage singing:

MIKE THE TROT

And the last Xmas ditty I'd like to do today is in honor of the good men of the local constabulary who have done so much to support us this year.

MIKE starts: the LAUGHING POLICEMAN song. We cut across to DAD and TONY. Everyone in the row is wearing toy policemen helmets.

As MIKE the TROT continues his manic laughter, we pan under the tables to see the kids opening their presents.

BILLY
(reading a note)
"From everybody at the Sociology
Department, Newcastle Upon Tyne."
What's a Sociology Department?

MICHAEL
I'm fucked if I know. Open it.

BILLY pulls off the wrapping paper.

MICHAEL
What is it?

BILLY
A chemistry set.

MICHAEL
What a load of shite.

BILLY
I know. What did you get?

MICHAEL
A football strip.

BILLY
Well, its better than a chemistry
set.

MICHAEL
At least a chemistry sets
educational.

BILLY
Not for me it's not.

MICHAEL
What did you get, Suse?

SUSAN
A stupid Sindy the nurse.

MICHAEL
What you on about? That's cush.

SUSAN
Hey man, I've grown out of dolls
you know.

MICHAEL
I'll swap you then.

SUSAN
Straights? For a Sindy?

MICHAEL
What do I want a football strip
for?

SUSAN

Cush.

EXT. BACK YARD. DAY.

It is freezing. A layer of snow covers everything. DAD is in the back yard with an axe. He is hacking away at the carcass of the old piano.

BILLY

Do you think she'll mind?

DAD

Shut it, Billy. She's dead.

INT. HOUSE. THE SAME.

BILLY puts bits of the piano onto the fire and then joins everyone at the table. TONY comes through with a chicken. They are all wearing party hats. BILLY pulls a cracker with TONY. And proudly reads the joke.

BILLY

What do you get if you throw a piano down a mineshaft?

'A' flat minor.

Nobody laughs.

DAD

Well merry Christmas, everybody.

BILLY

Merry Xmas.

GRANDMA

Merry Xmas.

TONY.

Merry Xmas.

Suddenly, BILLY looks over at DAD we see tears in his eyes. HE is sitting upright as if ready to eat dinner, but he just stops staring at the food. We see that he cannot take the strain any more. BILLY looks on helplessly.

EXT. THE STREET. EVENING.

BILLY and MICHAEL alone. They are building a snowman.

BILLY

A fuckin' great Xmas this has been.

MICHAEL

Go on. Have some.

MICHAEL passes BILLY some cider.

BILLY

Where did you get it.

MICHAEL

Me Dad's got loads in the kitchen.

BILLY

Won't he notice?

MICHAEL

He never knows how much there is.

BILLY

It's quite sour.

MICHAEL

You get used to it. Maybes, you could run away or something. And join a dancing troop.

BILLY

Don't be so stupid.

MICHAEL

Well, maybe it's all for the best.

BILLY

What do you mean?

MICHAEL

Well, you won't have to go away.

BILLY

My hands are freezing.

MICHAEL

Here.

MICHAEL grabs BILLY'S hands and sticks them down his jumper. They stand very close to each other. The tension is palpable.

MICHAEL

That's better isn't it?

BILLY

What are you doing?

MICHAEL

Nothing. Just warming your hands.

BILLY

Your not a puff or owt?

MICHAEL

What gave you that impression?

BILLY

Aren't me hands cold.

MICHAEL

I quite like it.

MICHAEL can stand it no longer he kisses BILLY. BILLY pulls away.

BILLY

Just cos I like ballet, doesn't mean I'm a puff, you know.

MICHAEL

You won't tell anybody will you?

BILLY takes a long swig of cider. Then gives it to MICHAEL.

BILLY

Come on.

BILLY sticks a carrot in for the snowman's nose, and puts a toy policeman's helmet on it. They run away. We see they have already made a sign saying : "PIG" that they've put round it's neck.

EXT. BOYS CLUB EVENING. NIGHT.

BILLY and MICHAEL creep round to the entrance. MICHAEL is carrying a cassette recorder and the cider.

MICHAEL

Won't we get in trouble?

BILLY

Old George is with me Dad. Plus nobody'll know. Look here's the key.

BILLY lifts up a stone.

MICHAEL

How did you know about that?

BILLY

It's in case the cleaner forgets hers. I've seen them of a Saturday.

INT. BOYS CLUB. THE SAME.

BILLY and MICHAEL sneak in. BILLY turns on the side lights. He plugs in the tape recorder and starts to dance. There is an erotic charge to the dance which makes both the boys self-conscious. This focuses the sadness of MICHAEL who is clearly in love with BILLY. However, as the music swells their mutual appreciation is transformed through the dance as MICHAEL starts to see what we see, a real ferocity and beauty that is not just about a kid dancing but has something of art about it. The music is slow and wistful. MICHAEL watches BILLY sadly.

EXT. STREET BELOW. THE SAME.

GEORGE and DAD and several blokes are walking home.

DAD
See you, George.

MINER
Hey, have you left the lights on?

GEORGE
Fuck. I'll catch you up.

INT. HALL.

MICHAEL claps.

BILLY
What do you reckon?

MICHAEL
Do another one.

BILLY rewinds the tape.

BILLY
This is the one I was going to do
for the thing.

BILLY starts to dance.

EXT. HALL.

GEORGE hears classical music as he approaches.

INT. HALL

BILLY is dancing. We see GEORGE's face through the glass in the door. He watches BILLY dance. The BOYS don't see him. His face disappears.

EXT. STREET.

DAD is walking down the street. GEORGE comes running up.

GEORGE
Peter.

INT. HALL.

BILLY is still dancing beautifully. Suddenly the doors bursts open and DAD is standing there. BILLY and MICHAEL freeze in panic. There is a long tense moment between them.

DAD
Carry on son.

BILLY looks at DAD in surprise, unsure as to what this really means.

BILLY starts to dance. He is nervous and makes mistakes. The music rises and BILLY rises to it. The scene is oddly moving. BILLY dances the best we have ever seen him. The tape runs out and BILLY is forced to stop mid flow.

DAD is staring at BILLY. BILLY is speechless and looks at DAD. DAD seems overwhelmed. He turns and walks out

EXT. WILKINSON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

DAD in his donkey jacket trudges through the snow. He sees the WILKINSON's house. He rings on the bell. MRS WILKINSON comes to the door in her dressing gown. She stares at him.

INT. WILKINSON'S HOUSE. THE SAME.

DAD is sitting with a cup of tea. They talk over each other

DAD

You reckon he could get into this school?

MRS WILKINSON

Maybe.

DAD

But I've fucked it up, haven't I.

MRS WILKINSON

Well, you haven't exactly made things easy.

DAD

Maybes you're right. The only chance Billy's got is getting out of here.

MRS WILKINSON

There are still the final auditions down in London. If you still wanted to give him the chance.

DAD

But how much is it going to cost?

MRS WILKINSON

Look, there's a big chance the council will cover the tuition fees.

DAD

I was talking about the audition.
(pause) We're living on handouts, man.

MR WILKINSON speaks from the doorway a drink in his hand.

MR WILKINSON

Look. If it's just a matter of the trip to London.

DAD recognises the magistrate. He is staggered but keeps his cool.

DAD

Hang on a minute. I didn't come here looking to be patronised.

MRS WILKINSON

No one's trying to patronise you, but we'd be happy to help out.

DAD

I might be on the bottom. But I still have my pride Mrs Wilkinson. I have to keep that.

MR WILKINSON

You're being ridiculous.

DAD

Am I?

DAD stands up.

MRS WILKINSON

Wait.

DAD

(to MRS WILKINSON)

Look. I owe you a huge favour for what you've done for Billy. I don't know whether I agree with it. I don't know what I think anymore.

DAD looks sadly at MRS WILKINSON and starts to leave.

EXT. DOORSTEP. THE SAME.

DAD goes out into the night. MR WILKINSON hold open the door for him.

MR WILKINSON

Please yourself, mate. But it's your funeral.

DAD looks at him and walks away.

INT. HOUSE. LATE NIGHT.

DAD comes along the corridor and looks into BILLY's room. TONY is snoring away. A can of beer next to his bed. BILLY is pretending to be asleep. DAD stares at him, and then whispers.

DAD

Is it what you really want, son? To try for this school and everything?

BILLY opens his eyes as he realises DAD knows he is not asleep.

BILLY

It's what I want in the whole world, Dad.

DAD

Look, Billy. Fuck it. You're going to go to London. And you're going to show these fucking bastards.

BILLY

Do you mean it?

DAD

Night, night, son.

DAD walks out.

INT. POLICE CAR. STREET. EARLY HOURS.

A patrol car passes the snowman.

COPPER

Little bastards.

The COPPER swings the car round and drives towards the snowman to knock it over. Just as the car hits the snowman the copper notices a concrete bollard nearby. His horrified look gives away that he knows he has been tricked. The patrol car smashes into the bollard that is underneath the snowman.

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM. VERY EARLY.

DAD gets up out of bed. He puts his shirt and trousers on. The clock says five thirty.

INT. CORRIDOR . THE SAME.

DAD comes out of his room. The door to BILLY's room is ajar. He looks in and sees TONY and BILLY sleeping.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY. EARLY MORNING.

DAD trudges across a field. Mist rising in the freezing weather. It is before first light. As he continues we see a crowd of men in donkey jackets and two coaches at the edge of the field. There are one or two policemen and an official with a clipboard.

DAD nervously walks up to them. He goes towards the official. A BLOKE recognises DAD.

BLOKE

Fuckin hell. I never thought I'd see you down here.

DAD

Well, things change don't they.

OFFICIAL —

Name.

DAD

Peter Elliot.

OFFICIAL

Glad to see you've come to your senses.

GARY WILSON

Who's the big man, now, eh?

DAD walks away and stands alone at the corner of the field and lights a roolly. He looks around at all the blokes. A cluster are laughing together but the whole thing has a sombre air.

OFFICIAL

Alright. All aboard the skylark.

DAD goes to get on the bus.

OFFICIAL

Oi. No smoking, mate. These are private buses.

DAD throws his fag away and gets on.

INT. THE BUS. MORNING.

The bus is full of men. They are laughing. It is driving through the town and DAD is sitting next to the window. The bus starts to slow as it approaches the picket line.

DAD looks out the window. He sees a line of police. The bus comes to a stop. DAD looks out and sees the pickets. Shouting up. DAD looks away embarrassed. The bus lurches forward and stops again. DAD looks out and sees TONY. TONY looks up in disbelief. TONY's face is a picture of devastation, then anger. He pushes his way through the crowd.

EXT. THE BUS. THE SAME.

TONY is shouting up at DAD who is half hiding his face.

TONY

Dad. Dad. What are you doing? Dad?

There is an awful moment when DAD and TONY face each other. TONY stares. DAD stares back. We see TONY speechless still staring as the bus pulls away. TONY starts to run back through the crowd.

The bus disappears. TONY runs with all his might down the side of the perimeter fence. He is spotted by a COPPER, who gives chase.

The bus parks further on. TONY is within shouting distance. He runs along the perimeter fence to get closer. He can see the men get off the bus. He is standing alone holding on to the fence. He sees DAD get off the bus. He gives a heart rending shout.

TONY

Dad!

We see TONY from DAD's side of the fence. In the distance DAD hears but turns away. We see TONY from his side. He is clutching the fence in disbelief. DAD stops in his tracks.

OFFICIAL

Come on.

DAD sees TONY across the yard.

DAD

(to the OFFICIAL)

Please. Just a minute.

DAD walks over to TONY.

TONY

What the fuck are you doing?

DAD

I don't know what else to do.

TONY

You can't go back. Not now.

DAD

But it's for the bairn.

TONY

What?

DAD

How else can we afford to send him down there.

TONY

You can't be serious?

DAD

It's what he wants.

TONY

Dad. He's only eleven for fucks sake.

DAD

Look at the state of us man. What have we got to offer the poor sod?

TONY

But you can't do this, Dad. Not after all this time. Not after everything we've been through.

DAD

But he might be a fucking genius for all we know.

TONY

For fucks sake, you can't do this, Dad.

DAD

Look, man, I'm finished. What choice have we got. Where else are we going to find the money?

TONY

Please, please, Dad. Don't do this to me. We'll find the money.

DAD

I don't know what I'm doing.

DAD breaks down. A voice from the OFFICIAL screams across the yard.

OFFICIAL

Elliot!

A group of MINERS : GEORGE, PEVERLY et al have gathered round.

GEORGE

I'll give you whatever I've got left, son.

OFFICIAL

Elliot.

PEVERLY

We'll work something out between
wi'.

TONY

Dad. For fucks sake, man.

DAD is crying. He slumps to the ground. TONY runs up at the fence and climbs over with huge urgency and emotion. He grabs DAD and cradles him. DAD is almost a child in his arms.

INT. HOUSE. LATER.

BILLY has the table covered with piles of coppers.

BILLY

Fifteen quid.

DAD looks terribly disappointed.

DAD

That's not even enough for the bed
and breakfast.

TONY

Anyway, I think you're rushing into
things.

DAD

Don't start.

TONY

I think you should think about it
carefully. What about giving him a
childhood.

BILLY

I don't want a childhood, I want to
be a ballet dancer.

DAD

We've got to support each other,
Tony.

TONY

I don't know what you're thinking
of. You can't send him away now.
Not after what we're doing. We're
fighting to keep the community
alive. The whole fuckin' point is
to keep us all together.

DAD

This is the only chance he's got.

TONY

What the hell are you on about.

DAD

WE've had it, man. We're fucked.
You must see that.

TONY

But he's only eleven. For fucks
sake let him stay here until he's
older and he can make the choice
for himself.

DAD

But it'll be too late.

TONY

But think of what he's missing. I
remember the first time I went down
with you. There we were father and
son working shoulder to shoulder.
That's what they're trying to take
away and that's what you're denying
him. It's not just about a job,
Dad, I'm trying to keep a family
together.

BILLY looks at TONY almost in tears, then suddenly
catches something out of the corner of his eye and
stands up in shock.

BILLY

Grandma!

They all look over to GRANDMA. She is standing naked in
the doorway.

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

TONY is in the kitchen on his own. There is a knock on
the back door. TONY opens it. It is GARY. He looks at
TONY in embarrassment. TONY stares at him.

TONY

What do you want?

GARY

Here.

GARY gives TONY a wadge of money.

TONY

I'm not taking owt off you.

GARY

Just take it for fucks sake.

TONY thrusts the money back. GARY doesn't take it. GARY stares at TONY for a second, turns and disappears into the darkness. TONY looks out into the night.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

BILLY and TONY lie in opposite beds in the dark.

BILLY
Why do you hate me?

TONY
I don't hate you, Billy.

BILLY
You do. You fuckin' hate me.

TONY
It's not you, Billy. It's not you.

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM. MORNING.

DAD is packing his stuff in a cheap holdall. We see that the zip is coming away and realise that this is DAD's work bag.

EXT. BUS STOP. MORNING.

BILLY and DAD stand waiting for the bus to Newcastle. DAD is in his donkey jacket. BILLY is in his coat. They look dishevelled.

DAD
Well, this is it, isn't it?

BILLY is doing some ballet moves.

DAD
Do you have to do that here.

BILLY looks at DAD. BILLY notices some of the other people looking at him strangely. BILLY is a bit embarrassed at having drawn attention to himself and stops. SHEILA comes past.

SHEILA
Good luck, son.

INT/EXT. GALLOWGATE BUS STATION. NEWCASTLE. MORNING.

BILLY and DAD rush through the station.

DAD
There it is.

They look over and see the "Clipper" a double decker that goes to London. They line up and look at the sign "LONDON" on the front. DAD gives his ticket to the driver who is standing at the door letting people on. DAD and BILLY get on.

INT. BUS. MOTORWAY. LATER.

BILLY and DAD are crushed together in the bus like in Midnight Cowboy. BILLY looks out at the motorway.

BILLY
So what's it like, like?

DAD
What's what like?

BILLY
London.

DAD
I don't know.

BILLY
Have you never been, like?

DAD
Why would I want to go there?

BILLY
But it's the capital city.

DAD
There's no mines in London.

BILLY
Christ is that all you think about?

INT. VICTORIA COACH STATION. AFTERNOON.

BILLY is asleep. DAD wakes him.

DAD
Howay, son.

BILLY and DAD get off the bus.

INT. VICTORIA TUBE STATION. THE SAME.

BILLY and DAD wander around the crowds seeming completely at a loss. DAD is struggling with the tube map on the wall. Trying to figure out how you get to the Royal Ballet School. BILLY looks tired and bored. When DAD has worked it out he signals to BILLY.

EXT. ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL. LATER.

Outside some rather posh cars pull up and posh Mums get out with posh daughters. DAD and BILLY walk past in horror and disbelief. DAD and BILLY walk to the door.

DAD

Well, this is it, son.

They ring on the bell.

WOMAN

Can I help you?

DAD

We've come for an audition. Billy Elliot.

WOMAN

Oh, yes. I see.

BILLY and DAD walk through, they are in another world. Teen-aged ballerinas run down the stairs in their tutu's giggling. There are huge wire bins full of ballet shoes. Door after door is brimming over with music. DAD and BILLY are wide eyed. DAD bumps into someone as he is not looking. It is a huge strapping dancer about seventeen.

DANCER

Terribly sorry.

BILLY and DAD reach the room. DAD looks at the group of MUMS and their DAUGHTERS who litter the room. He gets a rather surprised look back from some of them. BILLY and DAD find a seat and sit uncomfortably.

LATER: the WOMAN with a clipboard comes out.

WOMAN

William Elliot.

INT. ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL. LATER.

BILLY is getting his medical tests. DAD looks on. They measure his spine. They get him to move in certain ways. They ask to see him walk. More measurements. Each time we get a close up of BILLY looking thoroughly alienated by the whole process.

DOCTOR

Can you stand up straight, that's it.

DOCTOR is measuring his spine.

DOCTOR

Tiny curvature here.

TUTOR
How tiny?

DOCTOR
0.02.

TUTOR
I see.

DAD looks rather grim at this news. BILLY is still standing straight.

DOCTOR
Could you kneel down for me please.

BILLY disappears out of view.

INT. WAITING ROOM. LATER.

DAD sits down nervously. The WOMAN next to him looks over. He smiles.

WOMAN
I think I find these auditions more terrifying than Poppy. The fact that its so frightfully dull only increases the tension. Don't you think.

DAD
It's our first time, like.

WOMAN
Goodness, where have you come from?

DAD
Durham.

WOMAN
How absolutely delightful.
Wonderful cathedral.

INT. CHANGING ROOMS. THE SAME.

BILLY is there with a couple of other boys. One black lad, JOHN and a white lad, SIMON. BILLY goes in nervously. He starts to change. He overhears POSHY.

SIMON
You know Daniel Wilsher is on the panel. He's teaching here next year.

JOHN
Really.

SIMON
Yes. I saw him in this marvellous Coppelia....

BILLY sits terrified.

SIMON

Hello.

BILLY nods acknowledgement.

SIMON

It's terribly nerve wracking isn't it.

JOHN

Where are you from ?

BILLY

Everington. County Durham.

SIMON

Durham. Isn't there an amazing cathedral?

BILLY

I dunno. I've never been.

INT. WAITING ROOM. LATER.

DAD hangs round. He is obviously bored. They are waiting and waiting.

The LITTLE BALLERINAS do amazing things with their legs.

BILLY comes out in his dancing gear. He stands in the doorway. DAD goes over to him.

BILLY

Dad. I've changed me mind.

DAD

Look. Get back in there, for christsake.

The CLIPBOARD WOMAN comes through. She looks at BILLY.

INT. AUDITION ROOM. LATER.

BILLY comes in. He looks over at a long desk behind which are several TUTORS all looking solemn. We see in his body language that he has lost all of his natural confidence. He looks small and vulnerable.

TUTOR

And you are?

BILLY

Billy Elliot. From Everington.

TUTOR

I beg your pardon.

BILLY

Billy Elliot.

TUTOR

Ah yes.

JUMP CUT: Billy is put through his paces.

TUTOR

And arabesque. Yes. Good. Now your routine.

BILLY

OK

Music starts. BILLY goes into the routine. He starts out nervously. We tell he is terrified and intimidated. We concentrate on the unimpressed faces of the panel which tell is the whole story. Pretty soon BILLY makes a terrible mistake. He carries on bravely, but makes another fluff and another. He battles on but then falters and comes to a stand still. He looks at the panel as the music plays on. It stops. He is almost in tears. We feel all his humiliation and devastation in one crashing blow.

TUTOR

Would you like to start again.

BILLY

No.

The TUTORS look at each other. Then at BILLY.

TUTOR

We'd like you to try again.

BILLY

Are you sure.

BILLY starts the whole thing again. This time he is less nervous and gains in confidence during the routine. The panel watch with great attention. BILLY is fighting against the odds and his guts really show. We really think he is over coming the problems, but as he goes into the final sequence he gets over confident and cocks up a few steps. He ends with a bruised flourish, and tries to smile although his confidence has been ruined by his mistakes.

TUTOR

Thank you, very much. Mr Elliot.

BILLY stands exhausted. He looks around and heads for the door. It is the wrong door and the WOMAN ushers him out the correct one.

TUTOR

I could hardly understand a word he said.

INT. CHANGING ROOMS.

BILLY is in the changing rooms. He is in tears trying to contain himself. POSHY is in there on his own.

POSHY
Are you alright.

BILLY ignores him and sits down.

POSHY
What's the matter?

BILLY
It was a waste of fuckin' time.

He bursts out crying.

POSHY
Don't be upset. It's only an stupid audition.

POSHY sits next to BILLY rather too close to comfort BILLY. POSHY puts his arm around BILLY. BILLY shrugs him off. POSHY comes back.

BILLY
Fuck off.

POSHY tries to calm him.

POSHY
It's alright.

BILLY gets up.

BILLY
Fuck off will you.

BILLY hits POSHY and throws him viciously against the bench just as the CLIPBOARD WOMAN comes in

BILLY
Bent bastard.

WOMAN
What on earth is going on here!

BILLY looks at her in horror. POSHY is lying across the benches - shocked and hurt.

INT. WAITING ROOM. THE SAME.

BILLY comes through looking like someone had died.

DAD
How did it go?

BILLY goes off his eyes full of tears.

DAD

Shit.

The WOMAN next to him gives him a look of surprise at his language.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM. THE SAME.

The panel of interviewers are behind a long desk. BILLY and DAD are facing them nervously.

TUTOR

I'm afraid Mr Elliot that mutual respect and self-discipline are absolute pre-requisites of any pupil at this school. Such displays of violence cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. Do you understand?

BILLY nods his head in embarrassment. DAD is equally embarrassed.

TUTOR

You realise that we will have to consider this very seriously and it will certainly affect our final decision.

DAD

Like I said, Billy's very sorry. He's just been under a lot of pressure.

The TUTOR ignores DAD.

TUTOR

Just a few questions to finish with. Could you tell us why you first became interested in ballet.

Long pause.

BILLY

I dunno.

DAD looks at him.

BILLY

I just was.

TUTOR

Was there any specific aspect of ballet that caught your imagination?

BILLY just stares.

BILLY

The dancing.

DAD

He dances all the time, like, every night after school.

TUTOR

Yes, we have a very enthusiastic letter from Miss Wilkinson. She has also explained your personal circumstances.

TUTOR 2

Are you a balletomane, Mr ..?

TUTOR

Elliot.

DAD

I beg your pardon?

TUTOR

Are you a fan of the ballet?

DAD

I wouldn't exactly say I was an expert or anything.

TUTOR

You realise that pupils are expected to attain the highest standards not only in ballet but also in their ordinary academic work. A child can only succeed with the 100% support of his family. You are completely behind Billy? Are you not?

There is a pause before DAD answers.

DAD

Well, yes. Of course.

We detect that the panel sense some of DAD's ambivalence.

TUTOR 2

Would you like to ask us any questions?

DAD looks blankly, then looks at BILLY. BILLY looks blank.

TUTOR

Are you sure there's nothing else you'd like to say? Well, in that case, we will let you know in due course.

DAD and BILLY look devastated. It couldn't have gone worse, but just before they get up a voice on the panel pipes up.

WOMAN

Just one more thing. Can I just ask you, Billy, what does it feel like when your dancing?

BILLY

What does it feel like? I dunno. It sort of feels good. When I'm dancing, I suppose when I start it's sort of stiff and that but once I get going then I like forget everything and I'm dancing and I sort of disappear. I sort of disappear - like I feel a change in me whole body -like there's fire in me body and I'm just there flying - like a bird. Like electricity.

TUTOR

Electricity.

BILLY

Yeah, like electricity.

Everyone has been stunned for a second by BILLY's speech.

TUTOR

Have a safe journey home. And Mr Elliot, good luck with the strike.

INT. CORRIDOR. THE SAME.

DAD and BILLY walk down the corridor in silence.

EXT. TUBE STATION. THE SAME.

BILLY and DAD walk past a man with a bucket.

MAN

Dig deep for the miners. Just a few coppers.

He rattles it at DAD. DAD looks at him in despair.

INT. HOME. DAY.

MRS WILKINSON is sitting with a cup of tea. DAD and TONY are there. They all look glum.

MRS WILKINSON

Well, at least you tried, son.

GRANDMA

I think you should get yourself a trade, son. Something useful.

DAD gives GRANDMA a stern look. She shuts up. They drink their teas in silence.

GRANDMA
I could have been a professional dancer you know.

DAD gives GRANDMA another withering stare.

EXT. FELLSIDE. DAY.

MICHAEL and BILLY look over the pit.

MICHAEL
I'm quite glad. I would have missed you.

BILLY
Hey, man. I might still get in yet.

MICHAEL
What after chinning one of the dancers?

BILLY
I never chinned him. I only pushed him over.

MICHAEL
You'll be trying for boxing school next.

MICHAEL looks at him plaintively.

MICHAEL
Well, you win some, you lose some.

INT. HOUSE. LATER.

GRANDMA sits looking out of the window. She stares aimlessly into space. In the garden, the POSTMAN comes and puts some letters through the door.

CLOSE UP of the letter, franked 'The Royal Ballet School'.

EXT. STREET. THE SAME.

BILLY is walking home. He bumps into GEORGE.

GEORGE
Heard anything yet?

BILLY
Not yet.

GEORGE
You'll have no problem. Fingers crossed, eh?

BILLY smiles, but as he turns away we see the look of anxiety on his face.

INT. HOME. LATER.

CLOSE UP of the letter on the table. DAD is sitting anxiously looking at it, smoking a roll up. TONY is there too looking stern. In the background, we hear the door open. BILLY comes into the room and looks at DAD, who looks at the letter. BILLY stands still, struck dumb with nervousness. Everyone waits with anticipation. The process is long, drawn-out and extremely nerve-wracking.

BILLY tentatively goes over to the letter. Opens it. And starts to read it to himself. DAD and TONY scrutinize his face for any indication of the letters contents. BILLY's face is, however, immobile. Then very slowly his hands shake and he breaks into silent tears. DAD and TONY look on in horror. BILLY cries. DAD and TONY are almost on breaking point. BILLY looks up.

BILLY

I got in.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

DAD running at full pelt down the street.

INT. CLUB. THE SAME.

The door bursts open. DAD runs in. He sees GEORGE et al in the corner. DAD shouts, breathlessly.

DAD

He did it. He fucking did it.

No reaction. DAD is taken aback by this singular lack of enthusiasm. He looks to the BARMAN.

BARMAN

Haven't you heard. We're going back.

INT. HOUSE. DAY.

TONY ironing BILLY's shirt. DAD is making a pig's ear of BILLY's packed lunch, much to TONY's annoyance.

INT. BILLY'S ROOM. THE SAME.

BILLY is packing his case. TONY appears at the door with the ironed shirt. He places it on the case. Then he hands an album to BILLY. It is the Marc Bolan album.

TONY

Here. Some proper music to listen to.

BILLY

Straights?

TONY

Just divvint scratch it though.

BILLY puts it in his case.

EXT. GRAVEYARD. DAY.

BILLY is sitting by his MUM's grave with DAD.

BILLY

I think I'm scared, Dad.

They stare at each other.

DAD

It's alright, Billy. We're all scared.

BILLY

Why do you never come here?

DAD

I don't know, son.

Pause.

BILLY

If I don't like it can I still come back?

DAD

You must be joking. We're renting your room out.

BILLY smiles. DAD smiles back.

EXT. BUS STATION. LATER.

We focus the whole scene on BILLY. He arrives to catch the bus with his outsized suitcase. A whole crowd are waiting for him. DEBBIE, the PEVERLY's, GEORGE, MICHAEL, MRS WILKINSON, et al. They are proud and excited. But we focus on BILLY's bewilderment - so as each of the characters kiss BILLY goodbye, we feel a real ambivalence as to whether it is right or not that BILLY should be leaving.

DAD takes his suitcase and gives it to the driver.

DAD

(to Driver)

He's getting picked up at Victoria.

BILLY kisses DEBBIE. And MICHAEL. And finally, TONY takes him.

TONY
Are you alright?

BILLY nods his head.

TONY
I'll miss you, Billy.

BILLY gets on the bus.

INT. BUS. THE SAME.

BILLY looks out of the window. He sees TONY, DAD and MRS WILKINSON waving. TONY has tears in his eyes. The bus pulls away.

INT. CHANGING ROOMS. LATER

DAD and TONY get changed in silence.

INT. CAGE. PIT. THE SAME.

All the MINERS stand in the cage ready to be taken down to work. They stand tightly packed. The lift door shuts and the lift descends plunging all the faces into darkness.

INT. COACH. DAY.

BILLY is looking out of the window going down the motorway to London.

Zoom in to the wheels spinning.

EXT. MANHATTAN. DAY. 1999.

CLOSE UP of the spinning wheels. We pull out to reveal a greyhound bus. PULL OUT further and it is crossing a bridge into MANHATTAN. The skyline.

EXT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION.

DAD and TONY get off the bus. They are fifteen years older. Dressed smartly. They look bewildered by the chaos and scale of NYC.

TONY
Fuckin' hell.

EXT. LINCOLN CENTRE PLAZA. THE SAME.

DAD and TONY nervously walk up into the crowds thronging for the first night.

INT. THE MET. THE SAME.

The crush and glamour of the opening night crowd.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM. EVENING

DAD and TONY nervously shuffle along to their seats. Now their smart clothes are looking ill-fitting and shabby in this company. They find their seats. TONY accidentally bumps the young woman next to him.

TONY

Sorry, pet.

The young woman turns. S/he is with a huge Black man.

MICHAEL

It's alright, Tony.

TONY is amazed.

MICHAEL

It's me. Michael. Remember?

TONY

What the hell are you doing here?

MICHAEL

I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

INT. BACKSTAGE.

A little kid of eleven runs through the backstage, past the ballerinas lining up, he runs through the labyrinth of passages and into a dressing room. He hands a card to a dancer preparing. We do not see the dancers face but we see the card is addressed to BILLY ELLIOT. Through the tannoy we can hear the music swirling upwards.

INT. SIDE OF THE STAGE.

The music increasing in tension. BILLY now in his early twenties is looking on to the stage. Again we don't see his face but see the back of his head as the music is playing loudly in his ears. We feel his heart beating fast. The music whells up still further.

INT. AUDITORIUM. THE SAME.

CLOSE UP of DAD and TONY. Ballerina's are on stage. Swan Lake. The music increasing in tension - yet again.

INT. SIDE OF STAGE. THE SAME.

BILLY's POV. The music gets louder and louder. The anticipation cannot get any higher. BILLY's heart pounding. He leaps onto the stage. Silence. As if we are inside BILLY's skull. The bright lights seem blinding.

Then a cranking guitar suddenly strikes in and the music accompanying BILLY's dance is not Swan Lake, but 'Ride a White Swan" by T.Rex.

SONG

Riding on out like a bird in a sky
race/ riding on out like you were a
bird/

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM. DAY. 1984.

SLOW MOTION: BILLY leaps into the air like a humming bird in pure ecstasy. As he ever so slowly bobs in and out of frame to T.REX, a title comes up.

TITLE:

"I know that we can produce a society where man will cease simply to go to work and have a little leisure, but will release his latent talent and begin to produce music, poetry, writing, sculpture, whole works of art that at the moment are literally lying dormant because as a society we are unable to tap it..."

Pause, before revealing that the source was....

Arthur Scargill. 1984

THE END