

Billy Elliot



Chapter 1 Billy: 'I love to boogie'

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Who are you?' she said.

'It's me, Nan. Billy!'

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

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

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

'Are they here for us?' she asked.

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

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

* * *

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

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

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

'Billy! Stop that!'

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

'Why ...?' Then I say the wrong thing. 'If it was Mam ...' Dad comes over. He closes the piano with a BANG! 'I'm not telling you again!'

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

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