

Things to consider after viewing the film

1. What is the real nature of prejudice against ballet shown by Billy's father and brother? To what extent are these prejudices evident in our society today?
2. Does Billy's struggle parallel or contrast with the fight back of the striking miners?
3. Did dancing always come easy to Billy?
4. Billy's family had a lot of problems but they had one thing going for them. What was it?
5. What does the film suggest about loyalties within closed communities such as Everington?
6. How are working-class communities portrayed? What does the film suggest is the only means of escape from such communities?
7. Describe the concept of masculinity in Billy's family and community.
8. How do the scenes of Billy dancing compare with other scenes set in Everington and the scenes shot in London when he does for his audition?
9. Do you think that by making it through the audition and into the Royal Ballet School Billy has really discovered who he is?
10. Filming through windows, notice how often characters observe and are observed through glass or windows. Give examples of this and suggest why this voyeuristic technique has been used.
11. Billy's mother is represented in the film by her piano. Does the way Billy plays the piano contrast with his dancing? What happens to the piano?
12. Billy is surrounded by violence but remains aloof from this violence. How is he able to express his emotions without using violence? Why does he punch another dancing hopeful, a boy from a rich background, at the ballet school audition?
13. *Swan Lake* is another motif that runs through the film. Where is it first evident? During the trip on the ferry Billy and Mrs Wilkinson are listening to the music of *Swan Lake*. She tells him the story of the ballet how a trapped woman meets a prince who tries to rescue her. What happens in the film to both her and Billy? (Do some research on the history of the ballet *Swan Lake* to enhance your understanding of why this particular ballet is integrated throughout the film)
14. The film concludes with a scene that takes place in the present. His father and brother are sitting waiting for Billy's performance in a ballet concert to begin. They are seated next to Michael who is there with his boyfriend to see Billy perform in *Swan Lake*. How does Billy's family react to Michael at the performance of *Swan Lake*?
15. Why does the final scene include a flashback to the beginning of the film?