

LESSON – 8

GOING PLACES

About the author

A. R. Barton is a modern writer, who lives in Zurich and writes in English. In the story *Going Places*, Barton explores the theme of adolescent fantasising and hero worship.

Characters and Places

Sophie : A school going teenager
Jansie : A friend and classmate of Sophie
Geoff : An elder brother of Sophie
Derek : A younger brother of Sophie
Frank : Jansie's brother
Danny Casey: A young Irish football player
Tom : A great football player
United : Name of the football team
Father & mother of Sophie



INTRODUCTION

The story revolves around a teenage girl Sophie, her family and friends. She is a daydreamer, who is always lost in her dreams of becoming rich and sophisticated though in reality she belongs to a worker family. The story suddenly twists up when Sophie makes a wild imagination of meeting Danny Casey, a famous footballer. She also makes a story in front of her brother that Casey will come to meet her on a fixed day as per a promise he made to her.

TITLE OF THE LESSON

'Going Places' is an idiomatic expression meaning 'to move a step forward for one's career.' The lesson is about Sophie's wish and fantasy to come out of the drudgery of belonging to the lower strata of society to a higher one. Unfortunately, the protagonist, Sophie goes 'places' in her fantasies to fulfill her dream but failed.

BACKGROUND

The whole story is about unrealistic dreams and how we love to indulge in them knowing all the while that they have little possibility of coming true. But some, like Sophie, get too much involved in them and actually act on them. This is when disappointment makes its entrance into life. The story seems to hint at us that it is okay to dream, but dream with limits. This is the actual reality and do not believe too much in movies and novels where the characters miraculously overcome their challenges. This is an unrealistic way of looking at things, but sadly it is the true reality. Unless we are impossibly ambitious, hardworking, and have loads of patience and perseverance, such dreams are best to be kept under lock and key unless we like the taste of bitter disappointment.

GIST OF THE LESSON

- Sophie dreams to have her own boutique that will be the best in the city. She wishes to buy it as soon as she gets money. She also says that she can become an actress if she gets to run a boutique on the side. Since she has no experience and no money to make her wish come true, it can be called a dream and not a plan.
- Jansie is practical and knows that both, she and Sophie are destined to work at the biscuit factory. She advises Sophie to be sensible as she does not have the money or experience to own a boutique. Jansie is very well aware of her financial background.
- Sophie and Jansie are extremely different. Sophie is an escapist and dreams big. She wishes for things that are far away from her reach. Jansie is practical and knows her

stature. She is aware of her situation and that money and experience can take one a long way.

- Casey is a young Irish football player who plays for United. He was skilled enough to dodge the defenders easily and score goals. Sophie's father admired him even though he was majorly into the old heroes. He also had 3 colored photos of Casey on his bedroom wall.
- Sophie's dreams and disappointments are all in her head. She worships heroes and imagines meeting Casey. She turns out to be sad because of her fantasies. They are far from reality.
- The story uses a lot of metaphorical expressions.
- Sophie never really met Danny Casey. She had only seen him from a distance that too, during the football matches.
- The title 'Going Places' is suitable as the protagonist, Sophie, is a daydreamer and goes to places solely in her mind. She practically started believing that Casey was a part of her life, even though it was all her imagination. The unknown always fascinated her, the reason why she was attracted towards her elder brother's life.

Answer the following questions in 30 – 40 words.

1. Where was it most likely that the two girls would find work after school?

Ans. They were most likely to find work in a biscuit factory. They had already been earmarked for it. It was also possible that they could get work in some shop.

2. What were the options that Sophie was dreaming of? Why does Jansie discourage her from having such dreams?

Ans. She was dreaming to buy a boutique. She also dreamt to be an actress or a fashion designer. She dreamt that she could be a manager to begin with. But Jansie had her feet on the ground. She knew Sophie belonged to a poor family and all her plans were nothing but imaginary dreams.

3. Why did Sophie wriggle when Geoff told her father that she had met Danny Casey?

Ans. Sophie had great fear of her father. She knew he didn't like her mixing with outsiders. When Geoff told about her meeting with Danny, the father became very angry. He looked at Sophie in disdain. It was her fear that made Sophie wriggle.

4. Does Geoff believe that Sophie says about her meeting with Danny Casey?

Ans. Geoff doesn't believe what Sophie says. When Sophie tells about the meeting, he at once says, "It's never true". When Sophie insists that she has met him, he asks her, "All right, What does he look like?" These words clearly show that Geoff very much doubts what Sophie says.

5. How does Sophie's father react when he learns of Sophie's meeting with Danny Casey? Does he believe her story?

Ans. The father is very angry to learn that Sophie has met Danny. He doesn't believe it to be true? But he expresses his displeasure by looking at her in disdain. Later he says, "This is another of your wild stories".

6. How does the father react when Sophie says that Danny Casey is going to buy a shop?

Ans. The father doesn't believe a word of what Sophie says about Danny. When she says that Danny is going to buy a shop, the father says, "This is another of your wild stories." He further adds, "One of these days you are going to take yourself into a load of trouble."

7. What secret does Sophie tell her brother about her meeting with Danny Casey in the arcade?

Ans. Sophie tells her brother that she had asked for an autograph from Danny Casey. But neither of them had any paper or a pen. So they just talked a bit. And just as he was leaving, he offered to meet her the coming week.

8. How does Sophie include her brother Geoff in her fantasy of her future?

Ans. Sophie is an ambitious and outgoing girl. In her fantasy, she imagines herself riding behind his brother on his bike. He is wearing new shining leathers. She is wearing a yellow dress. Her cape is flying out behind. She even imagines people rising to greet them and applauding.

9. Why didn't Sophie want Jansie to know about her story with Danny?

Ans. Sophie feared that if Jansie knew the story, she would tell the whole neighbourhood. Then thousands of people would flock to her house. They would ask what the thing was all about. And when her father saw all this, he would be very angry. He could even murder her, she thought.

10. Sophie and Jansie were classmates and friends. What were the differences between them that show up in the story?

Ans. Jansie was a down-to-earth girl. She had no false dreams. She knew her limitations and those of Sophie also. But Sophie was an ambitious girl. She lived in a world of dreams. She had plans that could never come true.

Answer the following questions in 100 words.

1. Sophie has her own dreams and disappointments, but they are all her creations- the creations of her own mind. Justify the statement.

Ans. Sophie is a school going girl. She belongs to a poor family. But she is highly ambitious. She always lives in the dream world. She talks with Jansie about her dream world who forbids her against such false dreams. She has created a world of her own which has no relation with the harsh realities of life. She dreams to have the finest boutique in the city. She thinks of becoming an actress and run the boutique as a side business. She wishes to become a manager. She even thinks to become a fashion designer. Although she has no source of money yet she dreams of big and beautiful things.

Sophie develops a romantic fascination for Danny Casey, a young Irish football player and the hero of her dreams. Her father calls it another of her "wild stories". Even Geoff does not believe her. She is an incurable dreamer. She always thinks about Danny. She sits alone and waits for his arrival. She becomes sad when he does not come. Her dreams shatters. These dreams and disappointments are all the creations of her mind.

2. Compare and contrast Sophie and Jansie highlighting their temperament and aspirations.

Ans. Sophie and Jansie are class-fellows and friends. They belong to lower middle class families. But they are poles apart in their character and temperament. Jansie knows and believes in the harsh realities of life. She is sensible and worldly wise. She lives and wants to live and work as per her standard and status. She is satisfied and happy with what she has. But on the other hand Sophie is totally blind to the harsh realities of life. She is a day and night dreamer. She desires what is beyond her reach.

She dreams of big and beautiful things. She wants to become a manager, fashion designer and an actress. She wants to have a boutique. She wants to marry Irish football player Danny Casey. She is a hero-worshipper. She develops a fascination for him. She is an incurable dreamer and escapist. She shares her secret only with her elder brother. At last she becomes sad and helpless but she doesn't become wiser. She remains a romantic dreamer. Jansie is practical and realist. She has no such unrealistic dreams.

3. Who was Danny Casey? How was he adored by the family of Sophie, and especially by Sophie and her father?

Ans. Danny Casey was an Irish Prodigy. He was a wonder boy of football. He had won the hearts of his countless fans. He played for United. Sophie's family was obsessed with the Irish genius. Sophie's father compared young Danny Casey to another great football player Tom Finney. He wished that Casey might be that good someday. Geoff considered him the best and hoped that Casey would prove even a better player than Tom Finney. His father thought that he was too young for the First Team.

Sophie adored Danny Casey. She had a romantic fascination for the Irish Prodigy. Her young heart throbbed for her hero. She imagined Casey coming to her. She would sit under an elm tree, waiting for Casey and dreaming of him. She realized that he would not come. This made her sad and dejected. Sophie became a victim of her own dreams and disappointments.

4. "It's natural for teenagers to have unrealistic dreams." On the basis of your reading comment on the advantages and disadvantages of such fantasizing.

Ans. Our dreams are an integral part of our lives. Devoid of dreams, life will become dull, drab morbid. It's our dreams which remain our motivating force and make us strive for a better life. Teenage is that phase in one's life when one is preparing oneself to face the challenges of life. Teenagers are still not acquainted with harsh realities of life and get enchanted and allured with what life has to offer. Much of their dream world is influenced by movies and media where the Cinderella Syndrome forms the basis of their creation. The teenagers see the ordinary simple people like them, making it big as rock stars in just a span of three hours. Their dreams draw them into this glamorous world. They idolize their heroes and think that achieving high in life is not a distant dream. They start nurturing unrealistic dreams like Sophie in the story. No doubt it is important for us to dream high. If one doesn't one can never be successful in life. However, dreaming the unachievable can be damaging to the personality. We hear many cases of youngsters getting into depressions, developing suicidal tendencies. Sometimes they even commit suicide, which is the outcome of unrealistic goals and unrealized dreams. Dreams are certainly a part of life but if not dealt with adequately, they may prove to be extremely harmful.

5. Justify the title of the story, 'Going Places.'

Ans. This is an exotic journey into the dream world and thus is aptly titled. It's only in dreams that we can travel to the remotest parts in the world, dine with a celebrity or be on the top of the world. Most of us can go to places only in the world of our dreams. The reality however is contrary to this and confines us to the four walls of a room. Sophie who lives in the world of her dreams, finds her reality quite suffocating. She belongs to a lower middleclass family but imagines herself to be the owner of the best boutique in town. She sometimes sees herself as the manager of some store, an actor or a fashion designer. It's in her dreams that she visits the Royce and meets Danny Casey, the sensational sports star. She even fixes up a date with him in her imagination and actually travels to the place and waits for him to show up. Sophie is seen to be moving from one dream to another in her mind. When the harsh reality stares at her face, she refuses to let it defeat her. She continues to dream. The title 'Going Places' thus suits the character and the story.