

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 8: GOING PLACES



GOING PLACES

~Summary~

-by AR Barton

Daydreamer Sophie

Sophie is returning home from school accompanied by her friend Jansie. She tells Jansie that she dreams of owning a boutique after leaving school. Jansie, who is not a dreamer like her, tries to reason that such a thing requires a lot of money.

Sophie replies that she would become a manager till then and save the money needed for the boutique. Jansie again contradicts her childish dreams by saying that she will not be made a manager straight off. Sophie keeps on dreaming about her boutique and says that it will be the best in the city.

Jansie knows that they both are destined to work in the biscuit factory. She is quite practical and is aware of the realities of life. She wishes that Sophie too comes down to reality. But this doesn't bother Sophie, who quite suddenly says that she would then become an actress.

As actresses do not work full time, she would be able to manage her boutique as well. In spite of Jansie's advice that she should not indulge in fantasy, Sophie keeps on babbling about being an actress or a fashion designer.

Sophie's Family also Rubbishes her Dreams

Sophie enters her house talking about money. She belongs to a lower middle class family. Her father retorts by saying that if she ever manages to get some money, she should buy a decent house first. Her little brother Derek mocks her by saying that she thinks money grows on trees. Sophie's mother sighs at her daughter's fantasies.

Sophie notices her mother bending over the sink. Her back has become somewhat bowed with the burden of household work. Their small house is steamy from the stove and dirty dishes are piled up in the corner. Sophie feels a tightening in her throat and goes to look for her brother Geoff.

Sophie is Jealous of Geoff's Silence

Geoff is tinkering with a part of his motorcycle in the next room. He has been out of school for almost three years, and now works as an apprentice mechanic. Sophie ponders over the areas of his life about which he has never spoken.

Geoff is almost a grown-up now and he has developed a habit of speaking less. Sophie is jealous of his silence. Geoff's world remains a fascination for her simply because it is unknown to her. She longs to know him.

She wishes to be admitted more closely into her brother's affections, hoping that some day he might take her along with him to the unknown places in his mind that have so far remained out of her reach. Her father forbids it and she also thinks that Geoff considers her too young. She is impatient to enter the vast unknown world. She dreams of riding behind Geoff on his motorcycle.

Sophie Tells Geoff About her Meeting with Danny Casey

Sophie tells her brother Geoff about her meeting with Danny Casey, an Irish sports star, in the arcade. Geoff is a sports enthusiast and Sophie simply wants to get his attention.

Geoff knows that she is a hopeless dreamer and he doesn't believe her. She says that she met him while window shopping at the Royce. Sophie describes her meeting with Casey. She makes Geoff promise not to tell anybody about the meeting.

Her meeting with Casey was a chance encounter. She wanted his autograph for her younger brother Derek, but neither of them had a paper or pen. Casey and Sophie started talking about the clothes at the Royce's. They decided to meet next week and Casey promised to give her an autograph then.

Geoff doesn't seem to believe her. She gives him details about his physical appearance to make her meeting sound realistic.

Geoff Shares the Story with their Father

Geoff is finally convinced into believing her story and he shares it with their father. Her father's disbelief annoys her, and she adds even more embellishments to her story to make it sound credible. The father and Geoff start discussing about the abilities of Danny Casey. Her father rubbishes Sophie's claims and warns her that one day she will land herself in trouble because of her wild stories.

The Family Goes to Watch the Match

Sophie, Derek and their father sit down near the goal while Geoff, as usual, sits up higher with his friends. United win the match, thanks to the Irish genius, Casey.

Sophie meets Jansie and gets surprised by the fact that Jansie knows about the meeting with Casey.

She gets angry with Geoff for blurring out her secret. Sophie is worried that if her father gets to know about this, then she will be in trouble. She is relieved to know that Jansie has no idea about the date.

Sophie explains to Jansie that the meeting was incidental and she doesn't want anybody to know about it. Jansie assures Sophie that she can be trusted.

Sophie's Dream is Shattered

Sophie waits for Danny Casey at her favourite spot along the canal. She has always imagined such a perfect date. While waiting, she imagines Casey coming along the river. She tries to strike a balance between her dream world and reality.

The thought of his not coming starts making her sad. Sophie gets miserable at the thought of explaining all this to her family.

Geoff would be disappointed and others would doubt her. She doesn't want to live with the burden of truth. Still she doesn't want to give up her dream.

Sophie Lives her Dream

Sophie once again dreams of meeting Casey at Royce. She asks for an autograph. But they don't have a pen. She imagines his physical appearance. She fails to differentiate her dream from reality. She keeps waiting in the arcade for a long time, remembering Casey's soft melodious voice and the shimmer of his eyes.

As Casey was quite young, Sophie idolised him as her hero. She saw him in a match and, in fact, this was the only time she had seen him.

Conclusion of Going Places

To sum up, Going Places summary, we learn about the naïve fantasies of teenagers and how reality may hit us harder as the world is full of compromises and costs a lot of dreams.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 85)

(Understanding The Text)

Question 1. Sophie and Jansie were class-mates and friends. What were the differences between them that show up in the story?

Answer: Sophie and Jansie were classmates and friends, but they couldn't have been more different. Sophie was a daydreamer who was ambitious, had a lot of fantasies, and was not realistic. Sophie aspired to make a lot of money and become famous. Jansie, on the other hand, was realistic, grounded, and aware of her fate.

Question 2. How would you describe the character and temperament of Sophie's father?

Answer: Sophie's father is a very practical person who becomes enraged when she tells him about her fantasy dreams. He was characterized as a plum-faced, sweaty man with no refined behavior or appropriate food patterns. He was a football fan who went to a pub to celebrate his team's victory.

Question 3. Why did Sophie like her brother Geoff more than any other person? From her perspective, what did he symbolise?

Answer: Sophie liked her brother, Geoff, more than anyone else because he didn't talk much and was often lost in his thoughts. She envied his silence and imagined that he had access to a mysterious world. She wished to be a part of that world, and she imagined herself dressed up and welcomed by everyone. For Sophie, Geoff symbolized liberty from the monotonous life they had been living. Geoff represented freedom from the monotonous life they had been living for Sophie.

Question 4. What socio-economic background did Sophie belong to? What are the indicators of her family's financial status?

Answer: Sophie came from a lower-middle-class family. While describing the setup of the house, which was small with a cluttered sink and a pile of dirty dishes, and while Jansie considers working in the biscuit factory after school, their financial situation is revealed. Furthermore, Geoff's occupation as a mechanic and Sophie's dream, the desire to become famous and earn good money; another scene in the story in which her father rides his bicycle to the pub indicates their financial background.

Questions (Page No. 86) (Working With The Words)

Question 1. Notice the following expressions. The highlighted words are not used in a literal sense. Explain what they mean.

- Words had to be prized out of him like stones out of a ground.
- Sophie felt a tightening in her throat.

If he keeps his head on his shoulders.

- On Saturday they made their weekly pilgrimage to the United.
- She saw... him ghost past the lumbering defenders.

Answer:

- “Words had to be prized out of him” means to talk very less and when he talks the words are worthy.
- “Tightening in her throat” means to feel suffocated or to choke and to feel sad.
- If he keeps his head on his shoulders mean to make the right decisions.
- “They made their weekly pilgrimage” means visiting their favourite place every week which they consider to be holy.
- “Ghost past” means to walk silently behind someone.