

## **Going Places by A. R. Barton**

**Theme-** The lesson explores the theme of adolescent fantasies and hero worship. Sophie and Jansie are both in the last year of high school and both knew that they were destined to work in the biscuit factory as they belong to a working class family.

### **Gist of the Lesson-**

The story revolves around the life of Sophie, a teenager, who, like others of her age, is filled with fantasies and desires. She comes from a poor financial background, but dreams of owning a boutique one day or being an actress or fashion designer. Her ambitions are not rooted in reality. In contrast is Jansie, Sophie's friend, a realistic and practical girl.

Sophie lives in a small house with her parents and brothers, Geoff and little Derek. Sophie lives in a male dominated family where her mother is only a shadow. The men are football fans. Though she voices her feelings and desires, her parents do not pay much attention to her, because they, unlike her, are more practical and know the harsh realities of life. They fear for Sophie that her fantasies would disappoint her.

Sophie finds a sort of fascination for her elder brother Geoff, who, in her opinion, is tall, strong and handsome but reserved. She envies his silence and often wonders

about his thoughts and areas of his life that she doesn't know about.

The centre of this story is that Sophie fantasises about Danny Casey, an Irish football player, whom she had seen playing in innumerable matches. She makes up a story about how she met him in the streets and tells this to Geoff to impress him. She tells him that Danny has promised to meet her somewhere again.

Sophie gets so pulled into the story she weaves that she herself begins to believe that it's true. She waits for the Irish player, but obviously, he never arrives. Then, she makes her way home, wondering how her brother would be disappointed on knowing that Danny Casey never showed up. However, Sophie still fantasises about her hero, unperturbed.

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 involved in them and actually act on them. This is when disappointment makes its entrance into life.

## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q.1. What does Sophie dream of doing after she passes out of school? Why do you call it a dream, and not a plan?

A.1 Sophie dreams of big and beautiful things, glamour and glory. She dreams of owning a boutique one day or being an actress or a fashion designer. She is not practical in her thinking and has no concrete plans to make her dreams real.

Q.2. Compare and contrast the characters of Sophie and Jansie.

A.2. Sophie was a dreamer. She was not ready to accept the fact that she would be working in a biscuit factory after her high school. But the tragedy was that she carried her fantasies too far when she started living in them, whereas her friend Jansie was practical and down to earth. She firmly anchored her friend Sophie to reality whenever she spoke of her dreams.

Q.3. Sophie is a typical adolescent hero worshipper who carries her fantasizing too far. Comment.

A.3. Yes, Sophie is a typical adolescent who worships Danny Casey, the football star. She fantasizes about meeting him and taking his autograph which is quite normal for an adolescent. But she takes her fantasy a little too far when she tells her family about her chanced meeting with Danny Casey. To draw her brother's attention, she adds the story of her date with the Irish

football prodigy. Then she actually goes to the place and literally waits for him to appear which is abnormal.

## **QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. “Sophie’s dreams and disappointments are all in her mind “.justify this statement.
2. Describe Sophie’s meeting with Danny Casey.
3. What was Sophie’s father’s reaction when Geoff told him about Sophie meeting Casey?
4. When did Sophie actually see Danny Casey?
5. Why was Sophie jealous of Geoff’s silence?

### **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. Why did Sophie like her brother Geoff more than any other person? From her perspective, what did he symbolize?
2. Give a brief character sketch of Sophie’s father. What kind of a relationship did they share?
3. The story “Going Places” draws a beautiful contrast between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’. Comment.