

Going Places - A.R. Barton

Flamingo - Prose - Chapter 8

Author Note

A.R. Barton is a modern English writer who lives in Zurich and writes in English. In this story he explores the ~~habit~~ theme of adolescent fantasising and hero-worship.

Central Theme

Sophie, an English working-class teenager, lives in her daydreams. She invents a meeting with Irish footballer Danny Casey at an arcade and plans a second canal date. The story studies the gap between fantasy and working-class adult reality.

Hero-worship + Fantasising

<- the chapter's
<- headline theme

Setting: 1970s English working-class town.

Characters - Part 1

Sophie

School-leaver, aged 15-16, lives above a working-class neighbourhood.

Imaginative, ambitious, ~~rich~~ articulate, secretive, hero-worshipping.

Daydreams: boutique, manageress, actress, fashion designer.

Compares herself to Mary Quant.

Keeps Casey story for Geoff alone.

Jansie

Sophie's classmate and best friend.

Realistic, sensible, accepting of the biscuit factory destination.

Nosey - a known gossip in the neighbourhood, via her brother Frank.

"They don't pay well for shop work"

<- Jansie's
<- realism

Jansie = chapter's realist counterweight.

Characters - Part 2

Geoff

Sophie's elder brother. Apprentice mechanic, travels to far side of city.

Silent, self-contained, tender, loyal.

Words had to be ~~forced~~ prized out of him.

Sophie idolises him. Symbolises:

- world outside the family
- interior life worth envying
- the escape route (motorcycle)

Sophie's Father

Heavy-bodied working-class labourer.

Grimy, sweat-marked at end of shift.*

Thick neck, vest, shepherd's pie.

Short-fused, sceptical of fantasies.

Football devotee - Saturday United + pub. Nostalgic about Tom Finney.

"This another of your wild stories?"

<- father's
<- verdict

Characters - Part 3

Sophie's Mother

Silent, stooped over the sink.

Apron with a delicate-seeming bow.

Sighs but does not speak. No second income. Image of working-class

female domesticity.

Little Derek

Youngest child. Hangs on back of father's chair. Mischievous but observant. Says: she thinks money grows on trees + Ireland'll win cup.

Danny Casey

Young Irish footballer. Plays for United (English club). Green gentle eyes, freckled upturned nose, teeth with gaps. The young ~~English~~ Irish prodigy.

Country = Ireland	Club = United
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Plot - Scenes 1 to 3

Scene 1 : Walk home from school

Sophie + Jansie walk home in the rain.

Sophie escalates: boutique - manageress
- actress - fashion designer.

Jansie warns: be sensible, shop wages.

Sophie turns in, leaves Jansie in rain.

Scene 2 : Family kitchen

Small steamy kitchen, mother at sink,
father in vest eating shepherd's pie,
dirty washing piled in the corner.

Derek: she thinks money grows on trees.

Sophie feels a tightening in her throat,
leaves to look for Geoff.

Scene 3 : Bedroom with Geoff

Geoff on the floor with bike + paper.

Sophie watches with envy. Imagines:

pillion behind him in black leathers +
yellow caped dress, to applause.

She tells him: I met Danny Casey.

Plot - Scenes 4 + 5

Scene 4 : Father's table

Geoff announces: Sophie met Danny Casey.

Sophie wriggles. Father turns his head on his thick neck - disdain.

Father deflects to Tom Finney memory.

Grimaces at the shop detail. Snaps: this another of your wild stories?

Warning: you'll talk yourself into a load of trouble. *

Geoff in bedroom: he don't believe you, though he'd like to.

Scene 5 : Saturday United match

Weekly pilgrimage to the stadium. *

Sophie + father + Derek near the goal.

Geoff sits higher up with his mates.

United win 2-0. Casey scores the 2nd:

rounds two defenders, beats keeper from a dozen yards.

Sophie glowed with ~~envy~~ pride.

Casey scores - the ONLY real sighting

Plot - Scenes 6 + 7

Scene 6 : Jansie's interrogation

Jansie: your Geoff told our Frank you met Danny Casey. Sophie is startled.

Downgrades story to a little thing.

Makes Jansie promise to keep secret.

Relieved Geoff did not tell about the planned canal date. Some things might be sacred.

Scene 7 : Canal under solitary elm

After dark, Sophie walks to the canal.

Wooden bench under solitary elm where lovers come. She sits down to wait.

Imagines Casey appearing. Then pangs of doubt arrive. Thinks her way slowly into resignation. Climbs back to street.

Passes father's bicycle - glad he's out.

Replays the arcade meeting in 2nd person (daydream tense). Closes by replaying

Saturday goal: saw him ghost past the lumbering defenders.

Themes in Depth

1. Hero-worship + Fantasising

NCERT's stated central theme. Sophie's worship of Casey + her daydream careers.

2. Fantasy vs Reality

Every fantasy meets a hard external fact:

• boutique vs biscuit factory

Mary Quant vs shop wages

motorcycle ride vs cluttered kitchen

arcade meeting vs Geoff's quiet.

'it's never true'

canal date vs empty bench under elm

3. Working-class aspiration

Family signals: biscuit factory + vest at table + shepherd pie + apron at sink + bus to football + Royce window-shopping.

4. Family + friendship anchors

Geoff = tender; father = sceptical;

Key Quotes

Sophie

"When I leave, I'm going to have a boutique." - opens the story

"I'll be a natural." - actress idea

"I met Danny Casey." - the fantasy

"Promise, Geoff, Dad'd murder me."

"Here I sit, wishing Danny would come."
- canal interior monologue

Family + Jansie

"This another of your wild stories?"
- father, the verdict

"He don't believe you, though he'd like to." - Geoff about father

"It's never true." - Geoff's private verdict on the Casey claim

"Soaf, you really should be sensible."
- Jansie's realism

Narrator

"Saw him ghost past the lumbering def..."

Vocabulary + Exam Tips

Colloquial words (NCERT)

chuffed = delighted, very pleased

nosey = inquisitive, prying

gawky = awkward, ungainly

Ten more for the exam

posh = smart, upper-class

knackered = extremely tired

cheesed off = annoyed

skint = out of money

brainy = intelligent

snazzy = stylish

naff = in poor taste

dodgy = suspicious

pricey = expensive

telly = television

Most-asked questions

Q. Differences between Sophie and Jansie?

Q. Character of Sophie's father?

Q. Did Sophie really meet Danny Casey?