

Going Places

-A.R. Barton



The story at hand- 'Going Places' by A.R. Barton, recounts the pangs of a growing adolescent girl Sophie, vividly portraying her new emotions of fantasising and hero-worship of the famous Irish footballer Danny Casey. Some of the theme explored in the story are sibling relationship in adolescence, emotional see-saw and hero-worship.

The story begins with a simple conversation between the two friends, Sophie and Jansie, on their way home from school, as Sophie reveals her post schooling plans. She dreams of opening a boutique, similar to the one owned by Mary Quant, the famous fashion designer.

'I'll have the most amazing shop this city's ever seen'.

Jansie reminds Sophie that she would need money for something like that and saving it would take good long time, besides her father would never allow it. However Sophie continues to weave her dreams-

Or an actress. Now there's real money in that. Yes, and I could maybe have a boutique on the side. Actresses don't work full time, do they? Anyway, that or a fashion designer, you know-something sophisticated.

She reaches home, still lost in her thoughts, and announces that if she gets money, she'll buy a boutique to which her father scornfully remarks that he would rather buy a decent house with that money. Sophie's little brother Derek quips at her fantasies while her mother, busy with her household chores, merely sighs. Sophie feels 'a tightening in her throat' or dejected and goes looking for her brother Geoff.

Geoff was kneeling on the floor in the next room mending his motorcycle, sitting over some newspaper spread on the carpet. He had left school three years ago and was presently an apprentice in a mechanic shop and travelled to the other side of the town daily for work. He had reserved nature and spoke rarely.

When he wasn't speaking it was though he was away somewhere, out there in the world in those places she had never been.

He was usually quiet and didn't make friends easily. Sophie wished to be a part of her brother's fantasies. She was also keen to explore the outside world which she thought was awaiting her arrival.

She saw herself riding behind Geoff. He wore new, shining black leathers and she a yellow dress with a kind of cape that flew out behind. There was a sound of applause as the world rose to greet them.

Sophie told her brother that she had met Danny Casey, the famous Irish Footballer in the arcade. According to her, she had been looking at the clothes in the Royce's window when he stood behind her. Geoff does not believe her and asked her to describe his looks. Just then their father entered the room and listening to the story looked at Sophie scornfully, in. he warned Sophie against such wild fantasies and stories.



One of these days you're going to talk yourself into a load of trouble.

Later, Sophie makes Geoff promise to keep her meeting with Casey a secret. On the other hand, Geoff cautions Sophie against fantasising about her relationship with Casey, as he being a star may have 'strings of girls around him'. However, Sophie defends Casey, by saying that the footballer was in fact a quiet and lonely person and that she had recognized him by his accent which she had heard on the television. She had asked for an autograph for Derek but neither of them had a pen, so they just spent some time talking.

And then just as he was going, he said if I could care to meet him next week he would give me an autograph then. Of course, I said I would.

Geoff did not believe her, feeling that 'it was the unlikeliest thing ever heard'.

On Saturday, Sophie and her family 'made their weekly pilgrimage' to watch the United. Their home team won the match as Casey scored the second goal beating the indecisive goalkeeper.

It was for the first time that Sophie had actually seen Danny Casey.

Everyone is delighted at the victory. Her father went to the pub to celebrate, while she along with Geoff brought Derek back home.

To Sophie's surprise, Jansie asked her about her meeting with Casey. Sophie was shocked that Geoff had shared her secret and tried to downplay the incident.

It was just a little thing really. I asked him for an autograph, but we hadn't any paper or pen so it was no good.

However, during the course of their conversation, Sophie soon realizes that Geoff hadn't completely violated her trust and that Jansie didn't know about her next date with Casey. On the other hand, Jansie wished that if only she had been there and assured her that she will not divulge her secret to anybody.

'You can trust me. Soaf, you know that.'

As the night approaches, Sophie walks by the canal to reach a spot where she had often played as a child. There, she sat on the bench beneath the elm tree waiting for Danny Casey to come. She imagines him coming towards her but, in reality there is no sign of him. She begins to doubt that he might not come and finally she would fail to prove that she had met him. Feeling sad and dejected, she doesn't cease to dream. Sophie imagines herself back at the arcade and telling Casey about her family's admiration for him and their coming to see his game every week. She asked for an autograph but again none of them had a pen. She is mad about Casey and hero-worships him.

And afterwards you wait there alone in the arcade for a long while, standing where he stood, remembering the soft melodious voice, the shimmer of green eyes. No teller than you. No bolder than you. The prodigy. The innocent genius. The great Danny Casey.

Lost in her fantasies, she sees it all again-the match on Saturday, the moment when Casey scored the goal and the audience erupted in applause.



The title "Going Places" refers to the expedition of mind and soul on the winds of imagination. Sophie, an adolescent girl, like many others of her age, is full of unrealistic dreams and in heart of hearts she knows that she will never be able to translate those dreams into reality. She starts fantasizing her glorious success of being a boutique owner or a great fashion icon like Mary Quant, dreaming of celeb like life-sophisticated and special. Lower middle class status suffocates her and she wishes to break the chains of this poor, homely, and simple life to find a refuge in her fantasy. She invents her relationship with the Irish prodigy Danny Casey to taste more of glory and intoxicating fame. She lives in a world of her own and occasionally in her mind, the divide between reality and dreams blur and mix into each other.

Sophie is emotionally attached to her brother Geoff and confides in him. She is extremely fond of him and they have an endearing sibling relationship. Jealous of his silence, she wishes to be a part of and share her brother's fantastical world that existed underneath his quietness. The character of Jansie is in complete contrast to her friend Sophie. Her perception in life is completely different. She is sensible, well aware of the reality and does not dream too big. While Sophie fantasises and seeks solitude, Jansie likes to gossip and looks for company.