



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Q1. Sophie and Jansie were classmates and friends. What were the differences between them that show up in the story?

Ans: Sophie and Jansie are poles apart in tastes and temperament. Sophie has fantastic dreams and floats in a fairy land. She is an incurable escapist who won't come out of her dreams. Jansie is down to earth—a realist. Sophie wants to do something sophisticated. Jansie knows that these things require a lot of money which their families do not possess. Jansie also knows that they were earmarked for the biscuit factory. She even advises Sophie to be sensible and practical. Sophie considers Jansie 'nosey' and does not want to confide in her.

Q2. How would you describe the character and temperament of Sophie's father?

Ans: Sophie's father has a plumpy face looking grimy and sweaty. He doesn't seem to be a soft or sophisticated man. Sophie fears his aggressive manliness. He is a realist and does not believe in his daughter's wild stories. He loves watching football. He hopes young Casey will be as good as Tom Finney. He wishes that the young footballer keeps away from all distractions. He shouts instructions to Casey at the playground. When the Irish genius beats the hesitant goal keeper, Sophie's father screams with joy and pride. He goes to a pub to celebrate the victory.

Q3. Why did Sophie like her brother Geoff more than any other person? From her perspective, what did he symbolise?

Ans: Geoff is the only person who listens to Sophie's fantasies and long cherished dreams. Her father is too bossy and aggressive. He hates Sophie's fantastic stories. Even little Derek - makes fun of her growing rich. Her classmate Jansie is 'nosey' and can't be trusted with a secret. Only Geoff can be trusted to keep all the secrets of Sophie to himself.

From her perspective, Geoff symbolises an elder brother who has grown up and visited places unknown to her. She wished that someday her brother might take her to those places. He is sympathetic and cautions her by telling her that Casey might have strings of girls. He warns her that he would never show up again. He speaks softly so as not to break the heart of the young dreamer.

Q4. What socio-economic background did Sophie belong to? What are the indicators of her family's financial status?

Ans: Sophie belongs to a lower middle class family. She is an escapist and has wild dreams. She dreams of things she can't have in real life. Jansie tells her that boutique needs a lot of money. Sophie knows that the family doesn't have money. She says, "If ever I came into money, I'll buy a boutique." Even little Derek understands her unrealistic nature.

Geoff's occupation reflects their socio-economic background. He is an apprentice mechanic. He travels to his work each day to the far side of the city. His jacket is shapeless. Her father lacks sophistication. He is a heavy breathing man. He sits in his vest at the table. He grunts and tosses one of little Derek's shoes from his chair on to the sofa. There is stove in the same room where dirty washing is piled in a corner. Sophie's father goes to pub on his bicycle. All these indicators confirm their lower middle-class family

background.

TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT

Discuss in pairs

Q1. Sophie's dreams and disappointments are all in her mind.

Ans: Sophie is a young school-girl belonging to a lower middle-class family. She wants to rise from the situation in which she finds herself. She is an incurable dreamer and escapist. She dreams of opening a boutique. Her classmate Jansie, who had her feet firmly planted on the ground, tells Sophie that opening a boutique requires a lot of money and experience and she has neither of them. Sophie, who floats in a dreamy world of her own, dreams of becoming an actress or a fashion designer. She has dreams of a hero also. She develops fascination for Danny Casey, the wonder-boy of football. She sees him in action only once when he scores the second goal for United. She imagines him coming to her and tells her brother about the meeting. She goes on waiting for him on the next date but he does not turn up. She becomes sad and carries the burden of sadness all the times. Thus, her dreams and disappointments are the creations of her mind.

Q2. It is natural for teenagers to have unrealistic dreams. What would you say are the benefits and disadvantages of such fantasising?

Ans: Teenagers have boundless enthusiasm and ambitions. They have sweet dreams and go on fantasising. It is natural for them to do so. Every youth is a dreamer. Every great scientist or writer has a dream. Without some thing to aspire for one can't strive to achieve that goal. Dreams lead to the golden gate of success. Some teenagers float in the world of fantasy. They have unreal dreams. It is just like a child asking for the moon. Their feet are in the mud and they dream of the stars in the sky. Such fantasising results in disappointment and disillusionment. A dreamer who fails to realise his dream is labelled a failure. Those who realise their dreams become heroes and achievers in their spheres. I think it is better to have dreams even if we fail to realise them. Who would have dreams if the teenagers don't—will these grey-headed, grey-bearded persons have dreams? Let the teenagers indulge in their natural activity and dream of a golden future. They will strive to translate them into reality.

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