

## Danny Chaucer's Flying Saucer – Draft 1 notes

### Chapter outline

1: At night, Danny sees / hears something in his back garden.

2: Dr Lee visits to ask whether Danny's mum has seen/heard anything strange. Says something's gone missing. Danny goes to school, meets Nat. On way home, runs away from Sandy and Chad. Sees man talking to trees on common.

3: Danny meets Captain Frost, who asks if he's seen/heard anything strange. Nat rescues him. At home, Danny goes into the garden and thinks he can see/hear something in the clearing. Then he returns to the house and sees Captain Frost is there.

4: Captain Frost asks Mum if she's seen/heard anything strange. Wants to go into garden, but Dad comes home and he leaves. Next day, Danny and Nat encounter Sandy and Chad, and Nat throws water over them. Then Danny tells Nat everything. They go to the clearing and say *Visible Bob* but nothing happens. That night, Danny overhears his parents talking, saying Clara would visit again the next day, and he has an idea.

5: Dr Lee visits again, this time scared and warning of Captain Frost. Danny records her saying Visible Bob on his dad's phone. He and Nat then play it back in the clearing, they hear a voice and then a flying saucer appears.

6: Danny and Nat go into the flying saucer. A hologram of Captain Frost orders them to contact the Ganymede Institute, but they deactivate it. Then they call for Bob, and a face appears on the screen.

7: Danny and Nat talk with Bob. Bob then detects someone in the garden nearby – Uncle Steve, who's looking for Danny. They leave the saucer to see him. Then Danny hears a siren noise from the road. He goes to investigate and finds that Captain Frost has a device that can detect the saucer. As he tries to return to the house, CF spots him.

8: Danny escapes CF and runs back to the house. He persuades Uncle Steve to leave and go to watch the football. Then he and Nat return to the saucer and tell Bob about the detector, then take off.

9: Danny and Nat pass out, then wake up. Bob explains they're in the thermosphere, and how far up they are; then how far away the nearest star is. Then he says they can use the VRIT to go further.

10: Danny and Nat are apparently suspended in outer space, the saucer invisible. They travel to the Pillars of Creation. Then Danny's phone rings – it's his mum.

11: DISC returns to earth. They pass the International Space Station. Over Brampton, Nat spots Sandy and Chad.

12: They give Sandy and Chad a scare by calling down from the invisible saucer. Then they land back in Danny's garden. The promise not to tell anyone else about DISC. Bob says he's going to go away for a little while.

13: Danny hears DISC take off that night. A few days later Clara visits again, revealing that Captain Frost has been transferred somewhere else. Another night, Danny thinks he hears DISC return.

### Characters

*(Question marks show traits that could be introduced / developed?)*

Danny Chaucer:

- Age 10
- Like space, stars, sci-fi.
- Looks up a lot?
- Likes routine, habit
- Cautious but also bored, lonely; looking for excitement

- Can be sarcastic, cold, remote.
- Afraid of bullies, wary of befriending Nat – but guilty
- Best friend, Sam Jones, moved away a few weeks earlier.
- Nat could say, 'You're a funny one you are. One minute you won't say boo to a goose, the next you want to shoot off into outer space. Are you a wimp or superman?' Danny grinned. 'Both, I guess.'

Nat (Natalie) Ford:

- Age 10
- New girl in village. Bullied by Sandy Wright.
- Small, dark and sullen-looking. Insecure, occasionally angry or spiteful.
- Bullied by Sandy Wright
- Impulsive, courageous, loyal
- Sense of humour – teases Danny

Bob:

- Kind but can be tetchy / impatient, sometimes arrogant. But has sense of humour.
- 'Incomplete' – missing a vital component (SID) that only his creator can give him.
- Super-intelligent but somewhat bewildered by human beings. Afraid of unspecified threat.
- Entranced by outer space, stars etc – but can't go there because of missing SID.
- Lonely – needs creator for more than the creator can give him. Searching.
- Odd voice and mannerisms – Essex / cockney / posh.

Captain Frost:

- *Turn into a woman?*
- Sinister, single-minded – but also faint air of absurdity
- Good-looking
- Not good at dealing with civilians.

Doctor (Clara) Lee:

- *Turn into a man? Make Danny's uncle / Mum's brother? Re-name?*
- Middle-aged
- Charismatic, superficial – can switch on the charm
- Feigns interest in people but not very good at it. People usually bore her.
- Tries to hide her cleverness with 'little girl lost' act
- Can be ruthless, loud, aggressive
- Out of her depth; scared of Captain Frost, worried about the missing DISC
- Danny disappointed to see her – expecting someone to look much more impressive but she's actually small-ish, a bit ordinary looking. But eyes flash suddenly ...?

Danny's mum (Helen Chaucer):

- Tired, harassed
- Not always assertive
- Bit lonely

Danny's dad (John Chaucer):

- Works long hours
- Sarcastic, doesn't suffer fools gladly
- Sense of humour
- Change name to Jeff?

Uncle Steve:

- *Lose – don't need? Replace in chs 7-8 with Dr Lee?*
- Bit of a slob, obsessed with football, but dutiful. Physically unimpressive.

Sandy Wright:

- School bully
- Starting to feel a bit guilty of being a bully, esp. after scared by saucer?

Chad Wilson:

- School bully
- More of the ringleader. Can be just plain nasty.

### General thoughts:

- *Lose Uncle Steve / merge with Dr Lee?*
- Plot / structure / pace – needs to be exciting and plausible
- Show not tell – avoid clichés
- Characterisation – esp Danny, Nat and Bob – inc favourite sayings
- Series arc – foreshadowing
- Themes? – not too subtle or overt
- Magnodrive = SID (Super Interstellar Drive)
- Change Proxima Centauri distance analogy – Everest to Sun?
- Professor Lee – at end, hints she knows Danny's secret (i.e. where saucer is)? (and Captain Frost could return?)
- Why did Bob go to Brampton?
- Re-name Brampton? (place names in Dr Who?)
- DISC – '... there was no roar of fire and smoke like a rocket – it just took off smoothly and quietly with a whisper of hum and whistle ...' (Find another way to describe?)
- Too many overhead conversations? – change one of them?
- Balance chapter lengths? – should be c.2,000, 2,500 max, apart from first and last?
- Captain Frost joins them in the saucer? But a hologram, not real? – a test? (later than chapter 6?)

Chapter 1: 772 words

- Snappier opening – starting with first sight/sound of saucer?
- Some language too complex. Use shorter paragraphs

Chapter 2: 2,128 words

- Incorporate first part into chapter 1?
- 'Awkward bird' joke – change?
- Sharper description of Dr Lee
- How did last night start to feel like a dream?
- Maths – numbers sweaty?
- Describe Brampton – how ordinary, boring. Emphasise Danny's boredom and loneliness. (Where Sam's gone the stars are brighter??)
- Small school / class – everyone else has a friend (Sam was a bit of a tearaway – wound up some others, but could deal with Chad and Sandy) (Describe more in ch 3?)
- Generally tidy up language / descriptions, and watch for cliché

Chapter 3: 2,197 words

- Some repetition, cliché, over-complexity

- Sharpen description of Captain Frost – sinister
- Conversation between Danny and Nat – suggest Danny’s conflict, guilt. More about Sam? – stuck up for Danny, brave; Nat a bit upset by the comparison

Chapter 4: 4,035 words

- Change one of the overheard conversations?
- Watch similes, descriptions – ensure up-to-date, understood by children, not clichés.
- Too long? Start chapter in different place?

Chapter 5: 1,968 words

- Watch dialogue, description.

Chapter 6: 2,833 words

- Watch dialogue, description.
- Smell of interior?
- Captain Frost hologram – a test?
- Bob is ‘incomplete’? Has to be mentioned / explained later. Or ‘you have passed the test’? – referring to CF hologram – Bob has to know who to trust.

Chapter 7: 2,657 words

- Make Bob more quirky – London / cockney / Essex accent? Hard of hearing? Or mix of ‘posh’ and Essex?
- Sounds like an elderly Joey Essex. (or more international example?) Russell Brand? Ricky Gervais?
- Innit. Joke: ‘no, I mean you’re *in it*. Inside DISC. Innit?’
- But you were posh outside? Yeah – well people expect computers to talk posh, so I’ve got to keep up my image, innit?
- When Danny goes outside, remember he’s still afraid he might run into Sandy and Chad.

Chapter 8: 1,363 words

- Merge with ch 7? (both quite short)
- ‘Geronimo! – innit?’

Chapter 9: 2,758 words

- Not enough happens? Should be more sense of danger, e.g. Captain Frost?
- Re-write ‘star distance’ passage – e.g. compared to sun?
- Characterisation (esp. Bob’s) and dialogue crucial.

Chapter 10: 2,059 words

- More about Pillars of Creation?
- Danny feels vertigo, like he’s falling. Nat grabs his hand?

Chapter 11: 1,886 words

- Danny saves Nat this time (returning favour from ch. 10)
- End chapter at different place, i.e. when floor disappears?

Chapter 12: 2,269 words

- Make more of Sandy/Chad scene – funnier? But also more touching. Danny starts to feel sorry for them?
- Make sure not too preachy or sentimental. Needs humour.

Chapter 13: 377 words

- Longer – a scene with dialogue? E.g. Danny encounters Dr Lee as she leaves house – and she makes clear she suspects something?