

GOING UNDERGROUND

Main Character Arcs

Character development analysis based on the 22 July 2026 screenplay draft

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1. Overview of the Character Architecture

Going Underground is an ensemble comedy-fantasy built around three sixty-year-old friends who unexpectedly meet their twenty-one-year-old selves. The time-travel premise compares memory with reality, youth with maturity and freedom with responsibility. The arcs are deliberately light, but they share one question: can people reconnect with who they once were without rejecting the lives they later built?

Character	Arc Type	Starting Position	Ending Position
Danny Allbright	Positive revitalisation / acceptance	Restless and eager to recover the freedom of youth	Rediscover joy and courage while returning willingly to his present life
Ricky Newman	Positive agency / stewardship	Calm organiser who often follows stronger personalities	Becomes the group's clearest strategist and protector
Peter Wright	Positive courage / self-acceptance	Anxious, health-conscious and risk-averse	Acts despite fear and recognises that his adult life has value
Young Danny	Preview / reflective growth	Charismatic student who associates adulthood with limitation	Sees that his older self retains vitality
Young Ricky	Preview / responsibility	Easygoing student enjoying an unstructured life	Shows early strategic judgement and preserves the map
Young Peter	Preview / reassurance	Nervous but intellectually curious	Realises he ultimately lands on his feet
Buddy	Comic empowerment / active ally	Ordinary family dog carried into the adventure	Becomes articulate, independent and indispensable
Baba Fatt	Comic downfall / ironic continuity	Self-important biker chief	Is arrested and later glimpsed as a harmless older toy seller

The older men do not discover that youth was better. They rediscover that youth contained chaos and uncertainty, while age has brought loyalty, competence and perspective.

2. Danny Allbright

Danny follows the clearest revitalisation arc. He is the member of the trio most excited by the possibility of reclaiming youth and is quickly seduced by memories of parties, music and freedom.

Danny learns that growing older has not extinguished the part of him that takes risks, laughs loudly and leads others into adventure.

- Danny is impatient with caution and tends to decide before the others have fully considered the consequences.
- He romanticises 1984 as a time of girls, parties and freedom from adult responsibility.
- Eloise's resigned familiarity establishes that his impulsiveness has survived throughout the marriage.

External want: Enjoy the impossible return to 1984 and escape through the portal before it closes.

Internal need: Recognise that vitality is not exclusive to youth and that returning home does not mean surrendering adventure.

1. He chooses the unknown path

Danny leads the group into the tunnel and through the mysterious doorway.

2. Time travel becomes opportunity

While Peter panics, Danny imagines parties, the old flat and another taste of freedom.

3. Meeting himself confirms continuity

Young Danny recognises the same enthusiasm in his older counterpart.

4. Nostalgia meets reality

The club, drugs, exhaustion and filthy flat expose the discomforts memory had softened.

5. Adventure becomes responsibility

Once the jewels and closing portal create danger, Danny helps organise the escape.

6. He accepts the need to leave

Danny returns to the present rather than attempting to rewrite his life.

7. The experience is integrated

He describes the trip as crazy and rejoins Eloise with renewed energy rather than regret.

Arc Resolution

Danny does not become cautious. The change is that he no longer needs 1984 to prove he is alive; the adventure confirms that his youthful spirit remains available in the present.

3. Ricky Newman

Ricky follows an arc of agency and stewardship. He initiates the outing but often reacts rather than leads until escalating danger reveals a cooler, more strategic side.

Ricky's maturity becomes an advantage: he protects the group through observation, timing and control rather than bravado.

- Ricky is amiable, understated and responsible for Buddy.
- He apologises when the excursion appears disappointing, showing concern for the others.
- He sits between Danny's impulsiveness and Peter's anxiety.

1. The organiser becomes observer

Ricky brings the group underground but lets Danny choose the path.

2. He seeks explanation

After the transition, he checks his phone and studies the environment before embracing the experience.

3. Adulthood is presented without shame

He describes careers, mortgages and responsibility as facts rather than failures.

4. Buddy becomes a shared responsibility

His protectiveness creates both comedy and real stakes when Buddy disappears with the panda.

5. He recognises temporal risk

Ricky insists the panda should remain in 1984 because changing the past may have consequences.

6. Calm becomes leadership

During the confrontation with Baba Fatt, he uses Buddy and the panda as leverage and guides the retreat.

7. He knows when explanation is pointless

Back in the present, Ricky stops Danny's attempt to persuade Bill Mayhew and points to the clock.

Arc Resolution

Ricky finishes as the stabilising centre of the trio. His patience, care for Buddy and ability to read a situation become the qualities that keep the others moving.

4. Peter Wright

Peter carries the strongest internal obstacle. His anxiety, allergies, panic attacks and need for order make the underground trip almost perfectly designed to unsettle him.

Peter's courage is not the absence of fear; it is his repeated decision to continue while expecting the next thing to go wrong.

- Peter anticipates physical discomfort before entering the tunnels.
- Angel's preparation suggests that his anxiety is longstanding and familiar.
- He questions uncertain doors, smoke, drugs, dirt and almost every plan.
- His middle-class habits contrast sharply with the chaos of the student flat.

External want: Return safely to the present without damaging his health or the timeline.

Internal need: Trust that fear can be managed and recognise that caution does not make him weak.

1. Reluctant commitment

Peter repeatedly considers turning back but follows because the friendship matters more than comfort.

2. His younger self reflects the same pattern

Young Peter is already treated as the sensible one.

3. Loss of control

The drugged wine intensifies every fear through hallucination and claustrophobia.

4. Self-directed encouragement

Peter returns to the dancefloor telling himself to be brave.

5. The future becomes reassuring

Young Peter recognises that the older version appears to have landed on his feet.

6. Practical knowledge matters

Peter monitors time and remembers that a password is required.

7. He completes the return

He remains frightened but functional and helps the group reach the portal.

Arc Resolution

Peter remains cautious and easily flustered. The arc converts those qualities from comic weakness into perseverance: he survives because he notices what the more confident men overlook.

5. The Younger Selves

Young Danny, Young Ricky and Young Peter are more than comic doubles. They show that personality is continuous while perspective changes.

The younger men see ageing as an approaching loss; the older men reveal a future containing friendship, relationships, competence and survival.

Young Danny

- He is impulsive, hospitable and eager to turn every development into a party.
- Watching older Danny dance reassures him that adulthood need not erase playfulness.
- By the climax, he helps protect the older men and return the jewels.

Young Ricky

- He is laid-back and more practically organised than the others.
- His calm acceptance of the time travellers foreshadows the older Ricky's adaptability.
- His decision to retain the map suggests curiosity and preserves the possibility of a loop.

Young Peter

- He is already cautious, intelligent and treated as the sensible flatmate.
- He worries about the Butterfly Effect and the implications of meeting the future.
- The sight of older Peter's security provides reassurance.
- He lies to the police to protect the older men, demonstrating loyalty despite nerves.

6. Buddy

Buddy follows a comic empowerment arc. Time displacement gives him speech, but the plot gradually proves he is more than a talking-animal gag.

Buddy becomes the smallest member of the group and one of its most decisive problem-solvers.

1. Voice reveals personality

Buddy is dry, opinionated and musically knowledgeable.

2. Independent exploration

He befriends the DJ and pursues his own interests.

3. The panda creates the complication

His attachment unknowingly places the stolen jewels with the group.

4. He resists being controlled

Buddy refuses Ricky's demand to abandon the panda.

5. Physical courage

He attacks Baba Fatt and gives Ricky leverage.

6. Essential memory

Buddy supplies the forgotten password at the portal.

7. Ironic reward

Back in the present, Old Baba Fatt gives him a panda and Buddy smiles.

Arc Resolution

Buddy returns to ordinary canine life, but the final moment preserves the possibility that he remembers. The men repeatedly underestimate the creature who ultimately remembers what they need.

7. Eloise, Beth and Angel

The wives carry lighter steadfast arcs. They frame the older men's present lives and show that adulthood produced enduring relationships rather than merely responsibility.

Eloise Harper

- She understands Danny's impulsiveness and manages it through dry resignation.
- Her younger self already asks whether he will ever grow up.
- The adult partnership suggests that she made room for his spontaneity rather than eliminating it.
- Her younger counterpart helps rescue the group.

Beth Fleetwood

- Beth's bond with Ricky is affectionate and practical.
- Her younger self's blunt comments create comic honesty without threatening the relationship.
- She is consistently concerned about Buddy, linking her to Ricky's caretaking role.

Angel Denning

- Angel is protective but slightly over-managing regarding Peter's health.
- Her younger self is intellectually curious about the danger of time travel.
- The paintball rescue allows the women to become active participants rather than romantic endpoints.

8. Baba Fatt

Baba Fatt follows a comic downfall arc. He sees himself as a fearsome criminal leader, while every scene exposes vanity, incompetence and domestic humiliation.

Baba Fatt's criminal identity is a costume sustained by followers who repeat his words and by his need to turn trivial problems into epic campaigns.

1. Professionalism collapses

He lectures the gang about stealth moments before they smash the jewellery-shop window.

2. Toughness is punctured

His Pink Lady, fear of Mrs Tillyworth and desire for Lenny's autograph undercut the outlaw image.

3. The panda becomes obsession

The toy becomes the focus of his criminal authority.

4. Leadership becomes parody

He gives grand speeches while Baba Grunt echoes him.

5. Ricky and Buddy reverse the hierarchy

Baba Fatt is dragged by a dog while Ricky controls the stand-off.

6. Arrest and irony

The undercover Baba Noob helps arrest the gang, while Old Baba Fatt later sells soft toys under the Sweetspot name.

Arc Resolution

Baba Fatt is not morally transformed; time domesticates his rebellious identity more thoroughly than arrest.

9. Supporting Character Arcs and Functions

Dame Conceitayda Lott

Begins as an officious landlady and is revealed as another pursuer of the jewels. Her menace culminates in humiliation when the women defeat her with paintballs.

Baba Noob / Clutterbuck

Appears to be the gang's least capable member but is revealed as an undercover officer, reversing everyone's judgement.

Bill Mayhew

Functions as the enigmatic gatekeeper. His refusal to understand the men's literal account preserves the magical ambiguity.

Mrs Tillyworth and Sean Connelly

Appear threatening but repeatedly puncture authority through absurdity.

The girls as a group

Move from amused observers to active rescuers, correcting the men's assumption that they alone must complete the adventure.

Baba Grunt and the gang

Operate as extensions of Baba Fatt's ego, turning criminal hierarchy into a comic chorus.

10. Interlocking Relationship Arcs

Relationship	Beginning	Ending
Danny / Ricky / Peter	Old friends whose different temperaments create teasing and minor irritation.	A tested team whose impulsiveness, calm and caution become complementary strengths.
Older men / younger selves	Comic disbelief about what they become.	Mutual reassurance: youth sees that ageing is survivable, while age reconnects with vitality.
Ricky / Buddy	Owner and dependent pet.	Partners whose reciprocal loyalty saves the group.

Danny / Eloise	Long marriage shaped by her tolerance of his restless temperament.	The adventure confirms that spontaneity survived within the relationship.
Peter / Angel	Protective marriage in which she prepares for his anxieties.	Peter returns having acted courageously without losing the cautious personality she knows.
Baba Fatt / gang	Leader and followers sustaining a fantasy of criminal importance.	Collapsed hierarchy ending in arrest and humiliation.

11. Overall Evaluation

The arcs are intentionally gentler than those in a drama or thriller. The emotional reward lies in recognition: the men have changed over forty years without becoming strangers to themselves.

- Danny discovers that youthfulness is a behaviour, not an age.
- Ricky's settled temperament becomes the group's strongest form of leadership.
- Peter proves that anxiety and courage can coexist.
- The younger selves receive reassurance that adulthood contains friendship, love and competence.
- Buddy moves from mascot to indispensable ally.
- The wives are part of the men's successful futures rather than obstacles to freedom.
- Baba Fatt embodies the comic gap between self-image and reality.
- The unchanged clock lets the adventure enrich the present without disrupting it.

Arc Classification Summary

Character	Arc Classification	Essential Movement
Danny Allbright	Positive revitalisation	Ageing thrill-seeker -> man who rediscovers vitality within his present identity
Ricky Newman	Positive agency / stewardship	Passive organiser -> calm strategist and protector
Peter Wright	Positive courage / self-acceptance	Anxious observer -> frightened but effective participant
Young Danny	Reflective preview	Reckless student -> reassured that adulthood need not erase spontaneity
Young Ricky	Reflective responsibility	Easygoing student -> emerging planner who preserves the mystery
Young Peter	Reflective reassurance	Nervous sensible one -> encouraged by his successful future
Buddy	Comic empowerment	Dependent pet -> articulate ally whose courage and memory save the group
Baba Fatt	Comic downfall	Self-styled outlaw chief -> defeated criminal and harmless historical echo

The final return to the Royal Mile completes the central argument. Only one hour has passed and ordinary life continues, yet the friends have recovered a private connection to who they were. Buddy's final smile suggests the impossible journey has left a genuine trace.

Source: Analysis based on GOING UNDERGROUND, screenplay draft dated 22 July 2026.