

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

HIGHER ENGLISH

***Sunset Song* : Knowledge of Text : Possible Answers**

Write down key references made in *Sunset Song* to the following topics, and comment on their literary function within the novel :

Topic	Key References	Literary Impact
Music & song	Trad. songs & dances as natural part of crofters' culture & society (eg wedding); Individual anthems : Long Rob 'Ladies of Spain'/ Chris 'Flowers of the Forest'	Heightens realism sharpens characterisation/ sharpens poignancy of Ewan's death
Ghosts & visions	Chris sees ancient man on flitting to Mearns; Chae sees ancient Pict; Chris sees Ewan's ghost	Adds epic flavour Ibid Highly emotive/ introduces sense of redemption & forgiveness
Bad weather	Drought in ploughing; Snow at New Year; Rain at JG's funeral; Electrical storm	Farmers' occupational vulnerability; Heightens pathos of Jean G's loss; Deepens mood of gloom & despair; Melodrama/ moves Chris's & Ewan's relationship on; Pathetic fallacy
Good weather	Good harvest 'harvest madness' (Andy the daftie/ JG)	Rewards of farming/ positive influence of nature on spirits; Human bond with nature

Farming methods	Prelude/ Epilude; JG v Will	records changes, in new 'time of the fell big farm'; inevitability of modernisation & mechanisation
Books & reading	Prelude: house with green shutters etc; Tony the daftie; Chris's reading at school	Sets literary context of <i>S/Song</i> - realistic Ironic warning about dangers of reading Questions relevance of reading to real life
Scottish history	Prelude : whistle-stop tour of Scottish history; Visit to Dunnottar; Visit to Edzell Castle	against traditional aristocratic history Chris sympathises with victims/ ordinary people Ibid.
The Bible	Rev. Gibbon sermon ref. to Song of Solomon; Quote for Robert's sermon	Hypocrisy of devout church-goers Creates bittersweet mood
Ministers	Rev Gibbon as figure of ridicule; Ministers' preaching for Kinraddie kirk; Robert Colquhoun's arrival	Questions merits of religion Promotes enlightened approach to religion Positive alternative of campaigning minister
Politicians	Local by-election, with fight with locals	Redundancy of formal politics
Prehistory	Standing stones; Sermon by old Colquhoun	Chris's retreat – throwback to more natural past Symbolise major change in human history (for worse) Establishes 'correct' historical viewpoint
Social events	JG funeral; Chris's wedding; Hogmanay;	Kinraddie community seen at its generous best

	Harvest Home	
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