

The Grassic Gibbon Centre

***SUNSET SONG* CLPL EVENT**

THURSDAY 16 MAY 2019

School Students' Reviews of *Sunset Song* on Amazon

1. this was a home reader when I was at school, and I couldn't hack it, I was too lazy. I recently read it is the best Scottish book...ever. So I bought it. It's true, *a wonderful read. Magical. Written in the Doric, or broad Scots*. I have now ordered the next book in A Scots Quair, Cloud Howe, so waiting for that.
2. Read this book in high school about 20 years ago and loved it as much again.
3. This book was on our reading list in senior school, and I failed to make it through. However, when I did the play, which I loved, I reread the book and fell in love with it. **The language is somewhat difficult to tune into at first**, but *persevere* and you will find yourself on a journey with young Chris as she grows up on a farm in the Mearns of Scotland. It is a coming of age story through the first world war and beyond. *You will fall in love with all her neighbors and fight along side of her as she struggles to maintain her life.*
4. Like others on here I first read *Sunset Song* for Higher English, loved it then and still love it after reading it again a few more times. *This is the only book that has made me laugh out loud, and then cry just a few pages later.* It's also the only book where *I've fell in love with one of the characters* (Long Rob of the mill). I know he's fictional but he's my perfect man haha! **The language is a bit weird at first** but once you get into it, you might find you actually start using some of the words in your own conversations. Deservedly voted Scotland's favourite book in 2006.
5. I cannot believe the horrible comments from others my age studying *sunset song* as part of higher english! Admittedly, **the language is a little difficult to understand** (and I dont understand why there is a drought as part of the story. Come on, Its SCOTLAND we're in!!) but this is a beautiful book which *shows us the simlarities between young people of the past and ourselves*, among many other things. *Its twists and turns are amazing!* (somewhat better than Eastenders!)
There are so many themes in this story- love, tragedy, conflict, personal dilemma, oppression-not to mention the strong sexual undertones. *The story is beautiful, tender, disturbing and funny all in the blink of an eye.* Its as if the author is right there in the room reading his story to you. Well worth a read!
6. I have just started reading *Sunset Song* in English and I have to say that so far, even though I've read the prelude and half of the next section, I have gained nothing. I am finding this book **very hard to read, partly because of the Scots Language**, which is hard to understand but also because **so far nothing very interesting has happened**. This novel **seems to take a very long time to get going** and is hard to "get into".

A friend of mine has already read it and assures me it does get better, I hope so because I don't know how I'm going to get through it if I keep falling asleep the way I do now.

I'm only reading it because I have to, I wouldn't recommend it as a pleasure read unless you enjoy Scots texts or have read other material by Grassie Gibbon. *It is good for Analysis purposes though.*

7. I am currently on my summer holidays from school at the moment and while on holiday my English teacher has given us *Sunset Song* to read and a fair load of questions to go with it.

I'd just like to say **how hard this book is to read for someone who doesn't do a lot of reading** and even although I am Scottish, the words this book uses are far too complex for me. The glossary at the back, which is meant to help you, doesn't! Quite frankly as it does not contain enough of the Scottish words contained within this text. **The sentences are not well structured either as they are far too long and by the time you have reached the end of the sentence, not only are you have way down the page, you have forgotten what the first part was about.**

This is **a really complex text** and should only be attempted by confident readers with plenty of patience.

8. *Sunset Song* is **an incredibly hard book to read**, I read it as part of the English Higher syllabus, even with the teacher analysing it as we slogged our way through it. In saying that, *it does tackle some rather major issues*, ranging from incest, to the first world war, and conscription of Ewan. Also the changing face of the Scottish culture during the early part of the century, with traditional methods vanishing, and the same with traditional value's.

I am sure this is an intense and meaningful book if you can actually tackle reading it, I, unfortunately, could not enjoy it due to its sometimes **incredibly slow pace**.

9. Like so many people who've reviewed this book, I was also **required to read it** as part of my English higher. It was the first year that the book was required reading. And even since then, I've not been able to enjoy this.

The story revolves around the main character growing up in a rural farming town, where **not much happens**. Events in the book such as her parents deaths and her falling in love, are connected by long strings of **nothing else much happening**. **The main character is utterly uninteresting and very bland** - her goal in life seems to evolve into little more than be a good wife.

The reflection of rural life, to be honest with you, makes me glad that I live in a city. Entire chapters are dedicated to discussing the local gossip and rumour. In fact, gossip seems to be the only consistency that holds this book together. And more often than not, it's not even pleasant gossiping - I recall one example where characters discuss the death of their new vicar from influenza (if I recall correctly), and decide through the course of their gossip that his death was a result of his different accent leading him to pronounce 'God' differently from the locals. Excuse me, but if this is

the type of rural lifestyle that the book is meant to capture, you'll forgive me if I stick to living in large cities.

By the end of the book, really nothing has been accomplished. The main character has decided that she loves her local community (she obviously has less sense than her brother, who joined the war and might have actually made a relatively interesting story) and... that's it. At the time, our teacher told us that this book was part of a trilogy. If the other two parts are as tedious as this one, I think I'll stick to Tolkien.

10. I grew up in the seventies when **this was required reading**. My overwhelming memories of this book were **the long, complex sentences** and **slow storyline**. Reading this book as a 13 year old was like wadding thigh-deep in treacle. I bought a copy recently hoping that age (I'm now in my forties) would allow me to read this with experienced eyes. Sadly I could not get much passed the fiftieth page before giving up. Why is this book still taught in schools? There are far better Scottish authors, such as Neil Gunn, who really are world class.

Main Plus Points

1. 'Magical' quality
2. Doric/Scots language
3. Responds to reader's perseverance and maturity
4. Central characterisation of Chris
5. Lively (and lovable) secondary characterisation
6. Comic/poignant/bittersweet tone
7. Continuity of (young) human issues
8. Unpredictable plot
9. Deals with lots of important themes
10. Good for Analysis (rich language use)

Main Minus Points

1. Language is strange and difficult to understand
2. Lack of dramatic action
3. Takes a long time to get going
4. Compulsory text
5. Rambling syntax
6. General complexity (level of difficulty)
7. Slow pace of plot
8. Unfamiliar rural setting of the past