SAILMAKER – SET TEXT PRACTICE ALEC AND DAVIE BURN THEIR POSSESSIONS

ALEC What is it that gets intae ye? Wi the bettin ah mean? 1

DAVIE Ah don’t know. Just wan a these things.

Ah suppose it’s the feelin you’ve at least got a chance.

Is there any wood in there? The paper just flares up then dies.

(ALEC empties out contents of box, hands box to DAVIE) 5

DAVIE Great. (Starts breaking up box, ALEC goes out, comes back with canvas tool-bag, cane bow. Fires imaginary arrow) Bring me back my bow of burning gold, eh?

(ALEC breaks bow for fire)

That’s more like it. (Warms himself)

That’s the stuff. 10

ALEC (Taking tools from canvas bag) Look at this.

DAVIE God. Ma auld sailmakin tools. )Takes wooden marlinspike) Ah was an apprentice when ah was your age. Hard work it was tae.

Ah worked on the Queen Mary ye know.

ALEC Aye. 15

DAVIE Worked on destroyers durin the War. Made gun-covers, awnings, tarpaulins.

Made this wee bag!

ALEC Did ye?

DAVIE Oh aye. Used tae make leather wallets an things.

Made a shopping bag for yer mother. Made you a swing! Wi a big sorta bucket seat. Used tae hang it in the doorway there. 21

ALEC Ah remember!

You could still be makin these things. Sellin them.

(DAVIE nods, shrugs)

Could ye no go back to yer trade? 25

DAVIE Nae demand. Was different durin the War. They needed us then awright. Reserved occupation it was. Meant ah couldnae sign up. Been downhill since then but. Yards shuttin doon. Look at Harland’s. Or where it was. Just a big empty space covered wi weeds.

Yer Uncle Billy had the right idea. Took his redundancy money an moved tae Aberdeen. Doin all right. 30

ALEC Ian’s an Aberdeen support now.

DAVIE Billy’ll disown him for that!

ALEC Did ye ever think about movin?

DAVIE Thought about it. (Shrugs) Thing is Billy being a painter had more chance ae a job. Ah backed a loser right fae the start. Then it got worse. They started bringin in aw the manmade fibres, usin machines. Got lassies daein hauf the work. Dead loss. 36

Do for God’s sake you dae something wi your life!

At least we’ll be gettin out ae this place when they pull it down. Get rehoused. Fresh start.

ALEC Ah’ve been thinkin da. When ah go tae the University ah might get a wee place ae ma own. Wee bedsit or something. Over near the Uni. 40

DAVIE Oh aye. Will that no be dear?

ALEC Shouldnae be too bad.

DAVIE Whatever ye think.

ALEC Ah’ll see what happens.

DAVIE Aye. 45

(Silence between them. DAVIE takes up tools)

QUESTIONS

1. Re-read lines 12-30. There is a change in Davie’s mood during this conversation.
2. What causes this change? (1) What technique does the writer use to emphasise this to the audience? (1)
3. How does Spence convey Davie’s mood when discussing his job as an apprentice? (2)
4. How does Spence convey Davie’s mood when he discusses going back to his trade? (2)
5. In lines 34-36, what reasons does Davie give for not moving away like Billy? (3)
6. Re-read lines 39-46. How does the writer’s techniques make clear the atmosphere in these lines? (3)
7. Choose one of the following final questions. If you wish to do more than one, do so.

Football and sectarianism is a recurring theme in the play. By referring to both this extract and the rest of the play, explain how Spence explores this theme. (8)

Education is an important theme in the play. By referring to this extract and elsewhere in the play, explain how this theme is explored. (8)

The theme of social class is explored throughout the play. By referring to the extract and elsewhere in the play, show how Spence explores this theme. (8)

There are many important symbols used in the play. With reference to this extract and elsewhere in the play, explain how Davie’s tools are a significant symbol. (8)