

# The lady of shallot- sir lancelot character analysis



In section 3 of the poem 'The Lady of Shallot' the 'Lady' sees Sir Lancelot riding on the road beside the river towards Camelot. His appearance is the first thing that has ever made the 'Lady' look directly out of the window, instead of through the mirror like she usually did. In the verse Tennyson creates a strong impression of Sir Lancelot. At the beginning of the verse, Sir Lancelot is seen to be a warm and positive character who brings hope. The impression of joy is expressed by Tennyson's use of 'sunny' adjectives. The sentence beginning 'The sun came dazzling' is one example of this. The sun coming out is seen to be a good sign that can bring hope, as Sir Lancelot does. The sun is a symbol of warmth and when something dazzles it can stun and amaze people, as Sir Lancelot seems to amaze the 'Lady'. Although Tennyson is not necessarily describing Sir Lancelot, the fact that the sun comes dazzling out as Sir Lancelot rides past implies that the sun could be a metaphor for Sir Lancelot. Later on in the verse the words 'jewell'd shone', and 'sunlight glow'd' are used by Tennyson. These again give a sparkling, warm impression of Sir Lancelot. The word 'jewell'd' can also give an attractive impression of Sir Lancelot, as sparkling and jewels describe objects which are pleasant to look at. They are associated with valuable objects, such as jewellery or diamonds. Towards the end of the verse Sir Lancelot 'flashed' into the crystal mirror. This shows the attractiveness and the fact that Sir Lancelot could be a special character. When something flashes it produces light suddenly. This could be referring to the fact that Sir Lancelot has suddenly appeared into the 'Lady's' life but has created such a strong, unforgettable impression. Tennyson also implies that Sir Lancelot is a brave, soldierly character. He is described as 'bold Sir Lancelot'. Bold is a term used for somebody who is willing to face danger with an impression of

fearlessness. This suggests that Sir Lancelot is daring and has confidence when facing danger. He is also described as 'a redcross knight'. A red cross knight is ultimately a knight who has achieved something during his time as a knight, in some quest. This means that Sir Lancelot has accomplished tasks, which could again prove his soldierly characteristics. Another method Tennyson uses to portray Sir Lancelot's bold character is through appearance. The phrases 'broad-clear brow' and 'coal black curls' give a sense of confidence and apparentness. Sir Lancelot can easily be seen and noticed, and the adjectives show the boldness. 'Coal black' is often used to describe a black which has a slight gleam, as Sir Lancelot appears to. Another impression Tennyson gives of Lancelot is a mystical, shining impression. Tennyson's use of mystical, astronomy-related words portray a magical side to Sir Lancelot. The phrase 'stars we see' is describing Sir Lancelot's horse's bridle, but can still be connected to Sir Lancelot. Stars are a point of light in the night sky, and can be seen as something you should follow if you come across. This can refer back to the 'lady', and be suggesting that Sir Lancelot could be her 'star'. In addition the phrases 'starry clusters' and 'bearded meteor', refer to the sky that Sir Lancelot is riding beneath, also show a magical side to the poem. Starry clusters are stars that appear to look near to each other, and can represent a magical night, where something special could happen. Tennyson compares Sir Lancelot's passing through the night with a bearded meteor moving through the 'still night' He makes this comparison as meteors are also known as shooting stars, which appear to have a long flowing tail and 'beard'. They can be seen as magical and lucky, and Tennyson is using the atmosphere around Sir Lancelot to create an impression of Sir Lancelot. The sounds

described in the verse also help to create the strong impression of Sir Lancelot. Tennyson uses merry and happy sounds to create a sense of celebration and joy. 'The bells rang merrily' is something that can be connected to weddings, Christmas, and other joyous occasions. 'A mighty silver bugle hung' describes a brass instrument, which was hanging from Sir Lancelot's baldric. Bugles are used for military signals, and are very simple instruments. However the fact that the bugle is 'mighty', describes it as grand and impressive. Later in the verse, Sir Lancelot sings "Tirra lirra". This is a merry tune, which is something that people could sing at a happy moment in their lives. The 'Lady' finds this tune attractive as it is the final thing that persuades her to look out of the window. In conclusion Tennyson used lots of strong adjectives and different metaphors to create the strong impression of Sir Lancelot. Although not all of the adjectives directly described Sir Lancelot they described the atmosphere and environment around him which could be one way that Tennyson created his strong impression of him. Sir Lancelot is portrayed to be a magical, bold, unforgettable, joyous, warm and special character, through many different methods.