

Two narrative poems  
'the lady of shalott' by  
tennyson and 'the  
inchcape rock' by ...



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The poem is about a lady who is in a tower on the island of Shalott. The tower looks down to Camelot. The lady, who is based on Elaine, is cursed. This is made clear in part two of the poem, which describes her.

' There she weaves by night and day

A magic web with colours gay.

She has heard a whisper say,

A curse on her if she stay

To look down on Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,

So she weaves steadily,

And little other care hath she

The lady of Shalott'

This verse describes the Lady of Shalott's actions in the tower. The Lady of Shalott can not look directly down to Camelot otherwise she will break the curse so she looks down to Camelot via the mirror in her room. She seems contented in the tower looking down at the people below who seem oblivious of her up in the tower.

The first time in the poem when the lady of Shalott speaks she says, ' I'm half sick of shadows', this is also the first part in the poem where the lady of Shalott appears to be unhappy with her lifestyle.

In part three of the poem, Lancelot is introduced. It is very descriptive and a clear impression of Lancelot can be gained. It is found that Lancelot is attractive, handsome, rich, bold and has coal black hair. He could also be described as tall, dark and handsome. Although Lancelot and the Lady of Shalott do not actually meet or communicate, Lancelot is the one who tempted her to look directly down to Camelot and break the curse. When the Lady of Shalott sees Lancelot riding past in his shiny, well polished armour in the mirror she can't resist seeing him properly so she looks down to Camelot and as she does she realises immediately that she has broken the curse.

'The curse has come upon me' cried

The lady of Shalott'

Part four describes the lady of shalott dying. She first runs out and finds a boat and sails along and sings her final song, then dies.

'With glassy countenance

Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day

She loosed the chain, and down she lay'

In the last verse, Lancelot sees her and says

She has a lovely face;

God in his mercy lend her grace,

The lady of Shalott'.

In the Inchcape rock by Southey, It's telling the story, which is more moralistic. The first verse is very descriptive and describes how everything is calm.

The second verse says that however strong the wave were, they could not move the Inchcape bell. This is the first time the Inchcape bell and the Inchcape rock are mentioned.

The abbot of Aberbrothock had placed the bell on the float to warn people of the perilous rock. Sir Ralph the rover was introduced into the poem in part two. He sees the bell and cuts it from its float so that the abbot from Aberbrothock will no longer be blessed. This shows that he is a wicked man.

In part three, Ralph the rover has grown rich with stolen money. This is because he sailed the seas as a pirate and stole money. They then aim to return to Scotland.

'...And now grown rich with plundered store,

He steers his course for Scotland's shore...'

In the last part of the poem the consequences are seen. As it is too dark to see the Inchcape rock the crew begin that they could hear the bell.

' Now where we are I cannot tell

But I wish I could hear the inch cape bell'

The poem ends with Ralph the rover's boat hitting the rock. The ship sinks and presumably they all die.

' But even in his dying fear

One dreadful sound could the rover hear,

A sound as if with the inch cape bell

The Devil ringing his knell'

A point of interests in the lady of Shalott is that there is no direct communication between the lady of Shalott and Lancelot, although Lancelot could be blamed for her death, as he was the one who tempted her to look directly down to Camelot.

The poem is mysterious because you never find out how or why the lady of Shalott was cursed. You also never find out who cursed her.

The thing that surprised me the most about this poem was the ending. I expected the ending to be happy, I thought that she would be freed of the curse, fall in love and marry Lancelot and live happily ever after. Instead, she breaks the curse and dies.

A point of interest in the Inchcape rock is when Sir Ralph the rover cut the Inchcape bell from the rock. He was driven to do this through jealousy because he did not want people to bless the abbot of Aberbrothock.

Not much is known about the abbot of Aberbrothock. All is known about the abbot is that he placed the bell on the inch cape rock to warn sailors of the

dangerous rock. He is blessed by all of the passing sailors to show their gratitude.

A sense of mystery in the inchcape rock is that you do not find out how long the bell has been there and also the lack of knowledge on the abbot of Aberbrothock.

The thing that surprised me the most is that Sir Ralph the rover ended up dying. I thought that he was going to claim the rock to be of his own doing and take the praise for himself.

The style of the poem ' the lady of Shalott' by Tennyson, starts of cheerful. In the first few verses it is very descriptive and Tennyson sets the scene by using many adjectives alliteration

' Willows whiten, aspens quiver,

Little breezes dusk and shiver

Thro' the wave that runs forever

By the island in the river

Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers,

Overlook a space of flowers,

And the silent isle embowers

The Lady of Shalott.'

The rhyming pattern was regular. | The pattern in a few verses was

a a a a b c c c b.

The structure of the poem followed a pattern. In many verses the pattern was 8, 8, 8, 8, 7, 9, 8, 8 (syllables). The amount of syllables did vary slightly though.

The language in this poem was old fashioned words, for example, imbowers, unhail'd casement and wold this was probably due to when the language at the time the play was written..

The style of the Inchcape rock is more relaxed and in a sense this poem holds more humour. It is written more 'lightly'.

The general rhyming pattern for this poem is 'a a b b'. I think this makes the poem affective. It makes it sound relaxed as 'a a b b' is the rhyming pattern that most children's poems use.

The structural rhyme of the poem was similar throughout. Verse one -10, 8, 10, 9 (syllables); verse two - 10, 9, 10, 8. The other verses all have similar rhyming patterns throughout the poem.

The language in this poem is also quite old fashioned and this is also probably due to the language at the time when the play was written.

Tennyson also used many adjectives.

'Lying, robed in snowy white

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That loosely flew to left and right

The leaves upon her falling light

Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot:

And as the boat-head wound along

The willowy hills and fields among

They heard her singing her last song,

The Lady of Shalott.'

Out of the two poems, I personally prefer the Inchcape rock. I think this is true because of the more relaxed style. I also preferred it because it was simple, the vocabulary was a little easier to understand. I also think that its more detectable rhyming pattern was good.

Another reason why I thought the Inchcape rock was better was because it was more moralistic. (Sir Ralph was responsible for his own death due to his irresponsible actions. Think before acting).