

STUDY OF A NOVEL

THE SWORD AND THE FLAME

BY CATHERINE CHRISTIAN

1. Bedivere is the narrator of the story. Describe Bedivere's character. In what ways are Bedivere and Lancelot alike ?
2. Not all the stories in the Arthurian legend are told in full in 'The Sword and the Flame'. To what stories do these refer ? -

a) Who's funeral rites ?

The Princess Elaine's. She died, poor lassie, of a broken heart, they're saying, though Palomides gives it some longer name (page 304)

b) The games were over when I got back and so, I discovered, was the marriage of Gareth, Margause's youngest son, to a pretty, pert little piece on whose account he'd recently earned knighthood by rescuing her from a kidnapping attempt. (page 337)

c) That year a man I'd appointed to hold Tintagel for me ... murdered his young wife and her lover and fled the country. It is a tale all know and it has been made into a harp song, for the lover was himself a harper. (page 411)

CHOOSE ONE OF THESE STORIES AND WRITE THE STORY AS IT IS TOLD IN THE LEGENDS.

3. The character Palomides also represents the historical St. Patrick...
Look up St. Patrick in Encarta or some other Encyclopedia and explain how Palomides resembles St. Patrick.
4. 'The Sword and the Flame' gives us an insight into how history is recorded.
 - a) Why did Paulinus want 'just the facts and dates' ?
 - b) Why was Paulinus so interested in the picture of the Virgin which Arthur wore at the Battle of Badon ?
 - c) Would you prefer to read 'just the facts and dates' of history - or - would you rather get the feeling of the times and hear all the details ? Why ?

INTERVIEW AN ELDERLY PERSON AND FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR TIMES'.

5. 'The Sword and the Flame' is set in the time when Christianity was just coming to Britain.

Match these characters to the religions they followed. (Some will have more than one)

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|--------------------|-------------------|
| Guinevere | Christian |
| Celidon the Merlin | Moon Cult |
| Iltud | Druidic Old Faith |
| Peredur | Mithras |
| Arthur | Roman religion |
| Lancelot | None |
| Palomides | |
| Bedivere | |

6. Do you feel any sympathy for Medraut ? Do you think his role in Arthur's fate could have been avoided ?
7. 'The Sword and the Flame' is set in the most probable time for the historical King Arthur. Sir Thomas Mallory's 'Morte d'Arthur' was set in Mallory's own time, the Middle Ages.

WRITE A STORY ABOUT KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS SET IN THE PRESENT OR FUTURE.