

100 Examples of Allusion in a Book

1. Icarus - "To Kill a Mockingbird," Harper Lee - Mr. Underwood likens Tom's death to "the senseless slaughter of songbirds." This reflects the allusion of the novel's title and the Greek myth of Icarus, who fell from the sky due to his own actions.
2. Holy Grail - "The Da Vinci Code," Dan Brown - The novel centralizes around the search for the Holy Grail, drawing from Arthurian legends and Christian mythos.
3. Prometheus - "Frankenstein," Mary Shelley - Often subtitled "The Modern Prometheus," Shelley's novel alludes to the Greek myth of Prometheus, who defied gods to bring fire to humans. Similarly, Victor Frankenstein defies nature by creating life.
4. Adam and Eve - "East of Eden," John Steinbeck - The title itself and the characters draw from the biblical story of Cain and Abel, exploring themes of good and evil, and choice.
5. Christ-like figure - "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," Ken Kesey - McMurphy is often seen as a Christ-like figure, sacrificing himself for the good of others.
6. Odyssey - "Ulysses," James Joyce - The novel's structure and characters parallel those in Homer's "Odyssey," with Leopold Bloom echoing Odysseus.
7. Cinderella - "Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister," Gregory Maguire - This retelling focuses on one of Cinderella's "ugly" stepsisters, drawing from and subverting the original fairy tale.

8. King Arthur - "The Once and Future King," T.H. White - The novel retells the Arthurian legends, drawing heavily from the original stories while adding its own twist.
9. Dante's Inferno - "The Divine Comedy," Dan Brown - The novel's structure and themes mirror Dante Alighieri's journey through hell, purgatory, and heaven.
10. Achilles - "The Song of Achilles," Madeline Miller - This retelling of the Trojan War focuses on Achilles and Patroclus, drawing directly from "The Iliad."
11. Hamlet - "The Waste Land," T.S. Eliot - Eliot frequently alludes to Shakespeare's "Hamlet," notably with the line "I remember."
12. The Bible - "Moby Dick," Herman Melville - Ahab's obsessive quest for the white whale mirrors the biblical story of Jonah.
13. Eden - "Paradise Lost," John Milton - The epic revolves around the biblical story of the Fall of Man.
14. Tristan and Iseult - "The Waste Land," T.S. Eliot - References to the tragic love story signify doomed relationships.
15. King Oedipus - "Oedipus the King," Sophocles - Oedipus' story of prophecy and self-discovery is rooted in Greek myth.
16. Robin Hood - "The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood," Howard Pyle - This collection directly retells the folkloric tales of Robin Hood.
17. Machiavelli - "The Prince," Machiavelli - Alludes to Italian politics of his day, though now it's a broader term for political manipulation.
18. Garden of Eden - "The Road," Cormac McCarthy - The destroyed world alludes to a fallen Eden, with themes of lost innocence.
19. The Four Horsemen - "Good Omens," Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman - Apocalyptic riders from Revelation are humorously reimagined.
20. Sodom and Gomorrah - "The Grapes of Wrath," John Steinbeck - The sinful cities serve as symbols for the moral decay during the Dust Bowl.

21. Pandora's Box - "Middlemarch," George Eliot - Dorothea's curiosity and its consequences mirror the Greek myth of Pandora.
22. Phoenix - "Fahrenheit 451," Ray Bradbury - The rebirth of society is likened to the cyclical life of the Phoenix.
23. Atlas - "Atlas Shrugged," Ayn Rand - The titan Atlas, who holds up the world, represents the weight shouldered by innovators.
24. Dorian Gray - "The Picture of Dorian Gray," Oscar Wilde - Alludes to the consequences of vanity and a life without consequences.
25. Morpheus - "The Sandman," Neil Gaiman - Morpheus, the god of dreams, draws from Greek mythology.
26. Narnia - "The Chronicles of Narnia," C.S. Lewis - Lewis alludes to Christian allegory throughout these fantastical tales.
27. The Minotaur - "The House of Asterion," Jorge Luis Borges - A retelling of the Minotaur in his labyrinth.
28. The Fisher King - "The Waste Land," T.S. Eliot - The wounded king from Arthurian legends symbolizes the wounded land.
29. Babylon - "Alas, Babylon," Pat Frank - The ancient fallen city is a metaphor for a post-apocalyptic society.
30. The Bible - "The Handmaid's Tale," Margaret Atwood - Scripture is used and twisted to justify theocratic rule.
31. Trojan Horse - "Ulysses," James Joyce - The concept of the Trojan Horse serves as a metaphor for deception and hidden intentions throughout the narrative.
32. Jekyll and Hyde - "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," Robert Louis Stevenson - The transformation of Jekyll into Hyde draws on the duality of human nature.
33. Medusa - "The Bluest Eye," Toni Morrison - References to Medusa reflect themes of ugliness, curse, and transformation.

34. Midas - "Silas Marner," George Eliot - Marner's obsession with gold parallels the Greek legend of King Midas.
35. Sisyphus - "The Myth of Sisyphus," Albert Camus - Camus explores the philosophical implications of the endless toil of Sisyphus.
36. The Bible - "Beloved," Toni Morrison - Numerous biblical allusions highlight the spiritual journey and suffering of the characters.
37. Lotus Eaters - "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," T.S. Eliot - The passive, dreamy state of the Lotus Eaters from "Odyssey" reflects Prufrock's indecision.
38. Dante's Hell - "No Exit," Jean-Paul Sartre - Sartre's existentialist play can be seen as a modern reflection of Dante's Inferno, where hell is other people.
39. Persephone - "The Lovely Bones," Alice Sebold - Susie's stay in her personal "in-between" heaven mirrors Persephone's time in the underworld.
40. Orpheus - "The Fault in Our Stars," John Green - Hazel and Gus' journey echoes Orpheus' descent into the underworld for his beloved.
41. Arthurian Legends - "The Mists of Avalon," Marion Zimmer Bradley - The novel retells Arthurian legends from the perspective of its female characters.
42. Echo and Narcissus - "Infinite Jest," David Foster Wallace - Themes of reflection, self-obsession, and desire parallel this Greek myth.
43. The Odyssey - "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" by Joel and Ethan Coen - Though a film, it draws heavily from Homer's "Odyssey" set in the American South during the 1930s.
44. The Bible - "Song of Solomon," Toni Morrison - Morrison intertwines African-American history with biblical references, especially Solomon's escape to Africa.
45. Cain and Abel - "East of Eden," John Steinbeck - Steinbeck retells the biblical story of sibling rivalry in a Californian setting.

46. Hercules - "The Labours of Hercules," Agatha Christie - Poirot's twelve challenging cases parallel the twelve labors of Hercules.
47. Iphigenia - "The Iphigenia in Tauris," Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - A reimagining of the Greek tragedy involving sacrifice and fate.
48. Salome - "Salome," Oscar Wilde - Wilde's version of the biblical story with a focus on the dance of the seven veils.
49. Achilles' heel - "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," J.K. Rowling - Voldemort's Horcruxes, his source of immortality, are also his biggest vulnerability, similar to Achilles' heel.
50. Muse - "The Muse," Jessie Burton - The idea of inspiration and creativity draws from the ancient concept of the nine Muses.
51. Cassandra - "The Cassandra," Sharma Shields - The protagonist's predictions, like the Trojan princess Cassandra, are dismissed, even though they come true.
52. Tantalus - "Gravity's Rainbow," Thomas Pynchon - The narrative's recurring theme of unreachable desires parallels Tantalus's eternal punishment of food and drink just beyond his grasp.
53. Prometheus - "Frankenstein," Mary Shelley - Dr. Frankenstein's ambition to create life echoes Prometheus's theft of fire for humanity, leading to unintended consequences.
54. The Tower of Babel - "Foucault's Pendulum," Umberto Eco - The blending of languages and the quest for a universal language in the novel allude to the biblical Tower of Babel.
55. The Wandering Jew - "Wandering Jew," Eugene Sue - This novel traces the eternal journey of the cursed wanderer, based on the medieval legend.
56. Odysseus - "The Odyssey," Homer - The narrative of Odysseus's 10-year journey home is filled with encounters with mythical creatures and divine beings.

57. The Last Supper - "The Da Vinci Code," Dan Brown - The painting and its supposed secrets play a central role in the book's plot, alluding to biblical events.
58. The Golden Calf - "The Great Gatsby," F. Scott Fitzgerald - The wild parties and hedonism of Gatsby's world mirror the worship of the golden calf in Exodus.
59. Icarus - "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," James Joyce - Stephen's ambition and struggle against the constraints of his culture liken to Icarus's flight towards the sun.
60. Pandora - "Brave New World," Aldous Huxley - The unleashing of societal control and the loss of individuality draw parallels to Pandora releasing all the world's evils.
61. Proserpina (Persephone) - "To the Lighthouse," Virginia Woolf - The themes of death, rebirth, and cyclical nature of life relate to the story of Proserpina's annual return from the underworld.
62. Narcissus - "Dorian Gray," Oscar Wilde - Dorian's obsession with his own image and the portrait that ages for him recalls the myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection.
63. Mephistopheles - "Doctor Faustus," Christopher Marlowe - The devil figure who tempts Faustus into selling his soul for knowledge and power.
64. Dante's Inferno - "The Divine Comedy," Dante Alighieri - Dante's journey through the nine circles of Hell is filled with allegories and mythological as well as historical figures.
65. The Augean Stables - "Catch-22," Joseph Heller - The insurmountable bureaucratic mess the characters face can be likened to Hercules's near-impossible task of cleaning the Augean stables.
66. The Grail Quest - "The Once and Future King," T.H. White - The Arthurian tale features the quest for the Holy Grail as a significant subplot.

67. Sirens - "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," T.S. Eliot - The lure and danger of the Sirens from "Odyssey" represent temptation and fear in the poem.
68. Isolde - "Remembrance of Things Past," Marcel Proust - The tragic love story of Tristan and Isolde is alluded to in character relationships.
69. Moses - "Go Down, Moses," William Faulkner - Themes of freedom and the promised land draw from the biblical story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt.
70. The Sphinx - "Oedipus Rex," Sophocles - Oedipus's encounter with the Sphinx and his solving of its riddle is a crucial event leading to his eventual tragedy.
71. Goliath - "To Kill a Mockingbird," Harper Lee - Atticus Finch's battle against societal prejudice is akin to David's fight against the giant Goliath.
72. Adam and Eve - "Paradise Lost," John Milton - An epic retelling of the biblical story of Adam and Eve, their temptation, and their eventual exile from Paradise.
73. The Fates - "The Fates Will Find Their Way," Hannah Pittard - The inevitability and unpredictability of life's events in the novel mirror the role of the three Fates in Greek mythology.
74. Delilah - "Samson Agonistes," John Milton - The tragic story of Samson and Delilah, exploring themes of betrayal, love, and divine purpose.
75. Apollo and Daphne - "The Sun Also Rises," Ernest Hemingway - Themes of unattainable love and masculinity can be paralleled with Apollo's pursuit of Daphne.
76. Lot's Wife - "Sodom and Gomorrah," Marcel Proust - The narrative delves into themes of longing and looking back, akin to the biblical story where Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt for looking back at the city.

77. Dante's Beatrice - "The Ground Beneath Her Feet," Salman Rushdie - The muse-like character in Rushdie's novel bears a resemblance to Beatrice, Dante's inspiration in "The Divine Comedy."
78. Helen of Troy - "Dr. Faustus," Christopher Marlowe - Helen is summoned as the epitome of beauty, her presence evoking the line "Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?"
79. Achilles' Heel - "One Hundred Years of Solitude," Gabriel Garcia Marquez - The vulnerability of certain characters is likened to the mythological vulnerability of Achilles' heel.
80. Midsummer Night's Dream - "Wise Children," Angela Carter - The narrative intertwines with Shakespeare's play, drawing parallels in themes of illusion, love, and theatricality.
81. Arachne - "The Penelopiad," Margaret Atwood - The theme of weaving stories and fates echoes the myth of Arachne, the master weaver turned into a spider.
82. Herod - "The Death of Artemio Cruz," Carlos Fuentes - Political power plays in the novel reflect the biblical story of King Herod's tyranny.
83. Labyrinth and Minotaur - "House of Leaves," Mark Z. Danielewski - The mysterious, ever-changing house in the novel mirrors the Labyrinth, and its lurking dangers can be likened to the Minotaur.
84. King Midas - "Silas Marner," George Eliot - Silas's initial obsession with gold and its isolating effects parallel the tale of King Midas, who turns everything he touches to gold.
85. The Trojan Horse - "The Secret Agent," Joseph Conrad - The covert operations and hidden threats in the plot can be likened to the deceptive strategy of the Trojan Horse.

86. Eve's Temptation - "Wide Sargasso Sea," Jean Rhys - Antoinette's descent into madness and the themes of seduction and betrayal mirror Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden.
87. Echo and Narcissus - "Invisible Man," Ralph Ellison - The protagonist's struggle with identity and society's perceptions draw from the tale of Echo's unrequited love and Narcissus's self-obsession.
88. Daedalus and Icarus - "Song of Solomon," Toni Morrison - Themes of escape and the dangers of over-ambition can be paralleled with Daedalus's ingenious flight plan and Icarus's tragic downfall.
89. The Nemean Lion - "The Old Man and The Sea," Ernest Hemingway - Santiago's epic battle with the marlin reflects Hercules's struggle with the Nemean Lion.
90. Phoenix - "Fahrenheit 451," Ray Bradbury - The idea of rebirth and renewal after destruction, embodied by the mythical Phoenix, is a recurring motif in the narrative.
91. Orpheus and Eurydice - "The Amber Spyglass," Philip Pullman - Lyra and Will's journey to the underworld draws on the tragic love story of Orpheus's attempt to rescue Eurydice.
92. The River Styx - "Looking for Alaska," John Green - The boundary between life and death, symbolized by the River Styx in mythology, is explored throughout the novel.
93. Sisyphean Task - "The Myth of Sisyphus," Albert Camus - The existentialist essay delves deep into the idea of life's repetitive and often futile nature, as depicted in Sisyphus's eternal punishment.
94. The Harpies - "One Hundred Years of Solitude," Gabriel Garcia Marquez - The predatory and tormenting nature of certain characters can be likened to the mythological Harpies.

95. Judgment of Paris - "The Iliad and The Odyssey," Homer - The event that led to the Trojan War, where Paris's choice set a series of tragic events in motion.
96. Medusa - "The Bluest Eye," Toni Morrison - Themes of sight, perception, and the destructive power of beauty can be paralleled with the tale of Medusa, whose gaze turned onlookers to stone.
97. Ariadne's Thread - "If on a Winter's Night a Traveler," Italo Calvino - The complex, intertwining narratives can be seen as a maze, with Ariadne's thread guiding the way out.
98. The Furies - "The Eumenides," Aeschylus - Themes of vengeance and justice are embodied in the Furies, ancient deities of revenge.
99. Salome's Dance - "The Waste Land," T.S. Eliot - Allusions to Salome's seductive and deadly dance are sprinkled throughout the poem, symbolizing temptation and destruction.
100. River Lethe - "Neverwhere," Neil Gaiman - The idea of forgetting and the river's amnesiac properties are echoed in the novel's hidden, forgotten underworld.