

# 100 Literary Allusion Examples

## 1. **"Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley**

The title itself is borrowed from Shakespeare's "The Tempest," where Miranda says, "O brave new world, That has such people in't!"

Huxley uses this to describe a society that believes it's perfect, but the reference to Shakespeare's work hints at the irony and the imperfections beneath the surface.

## 2. **"The Sun Also Rises" by Ernest Hemingway**

The title is derived from the Biblical Book of Ecclesiastes 1:5: "The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose."

Hemingway's choice suggests a cyclical nature of life, with its inherent ups and downs, a theme prevalent in the novel.

## 3. **"Out, Out—" by Robert Frost**

The title and narrative reference Shakespeare's "Macbeth," specifically the line: "Out, out brief candle!"

Both texts touch on the fleeting nature of life and the inevitability of death.

## 4. **"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth**

The poem's imagery alludes to the Elysian Fields from ancient Greek mythology, a paradise for heroic souls.

Wordsworth's portrayal of daffodils as continuous and never-ending reflects the eternal beauty of Elysium.

5. **"Go Set a Watchman" by Harper Lee**

The title is an allusion to Isaiah 21:6 in the Bible: "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth."

The novel explores the revelations and changes in societal views, similar to a watchman observing and reporting shifts.

6. **"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot**

The line "I am Lazarus, come from the dead" alludes to the Biblical story of Lazarus, who was resurrected by Jesus.

Eliot uses this to emphasize the protagonist's feelings of alienation and his yearning for a rebirth or renewal.

7. **"The Waste Land" by T.S. Eliot**

The line "I will show you fear in a handful of dust" alludes to the Biblical "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Eliot touches upon the transience of life and the inevitable return to dust.

8. **"Moby Dick" by Herman Melville**

The white whale, Moby Dick, can be seen as an allusion to the Biblical Leviathan, a sea monster representing chaos.

The white whale stands as an insurmountable force against which Captain Ahab grapples, mirroring the chaos Leviathan symbolizes.

9. **"East of Eden" by John Steinbeck**

The novel's title and themes allude to the Biblical story of Cain and Abel, with Cain being banished to the land "east of Eden."

Steinbeck delves into the complexities of good versus evil, drawing parallels with the Biblical tale.

10. **"To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee**

Atticus Finch mentions the Biblical story of Cain, noting the line: "Let the dead bury the dead."

Lee uses this to discuss societal values, the past, and how characters grapple with historical wrongs.

11. **"The Sound and the Fury" by William Faulkner**

The title is a nod to Shakespeare's "Macbeth," referencing the line "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury." Faulkner's work echoes the transient nature of life, much like Macbeth's soliloquy.

12. **"A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini**

The title derives from the poem "Kabul" by Saib Tabrizi. Hosseini pays tribute to the enduring spirit of Kabul despite its tumultuous history.

13. **"The Road" by Cormac McCarthy**

The phrase "carrying the fire" recalls ancient myths where fire symbolizes knowledge and humanity. McCarthy emphasizes the father and son's role as keepers of hope.

14. **"The Line of Beauty" by Alan Hollinghurst**

The title alludes to John Keats's idea of the "Grecian urn" as a symbol of timeless beauty and truth.

15. **"Endgame" by Samuel Beckett**

Characters Hamm and Clov often mirror the biblical characters of Ham and Shem, Noah's sons. The game of life and its inevitable end is a recurring theme.

16. **"Wide Sargasso Sea" by Jean Rhys**

References to "Jane Eyre" are evident, as Rhys crafts a backstory for Bertha Mason, Rochester's wife in Bronte's classic.

17. **"Ulysses" by James Joyce**

Leopold Bloom's journey through Dublin mirrors that of Odysseus in Homer's "Odyssey." Joyce draws parallels between modernity and ancient epics.

18. **"The Golden Apples" by Eudora Welty**

With a title recalling the golden apples of Hesperides in Greek myth, Welty explores the elusive nature of happiness.

19. **"In Cold Blood" by Truman Capote**

The biblical story of Cain and Abel subtly resonates through the narrative, hinting at fraternal relationships and inherent evil.

20. **"Beloved" by Toni Morrison**

The ghostly child named Beloved alludes to the biblical "Song of Solomon," emphasizing themes of love and suffering.

21. **"Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck**

The title, from Robert Burns's poem "To a Mouse," hints at the best-laid plans of mice and men often going awry.

22. **"The Perks of Being a Wallflower" by Stephen Chbosky**

The book frequently references "The Great Gatsby," drawing connections between the Roaring Twenties' excesses and modern teenage experiences.

23. **"The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck**

The title, drawn from "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," evokes a sense of divine retribution and justice.

24. **"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou**

Angelou's title recalls Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "Sympathy," portraying the struggles of African Americans.

25. **"Pale Fire" by Vladimir Nabokov**

The title is taken from Shakespeare's "Timon of Athens," symbolizing fleeting beauty and ephemeral nature.

26. **"For Whom the Bell Tolls" by Ernest Hemingway**

John Donne's meditation "No man is an island" is the source, emphasizing interconnectedness and collective humanity.

27. **"Catch-22" by Joseph Heller**

The title alludes to the paradox where one needs experience to get a job but can't get a job without experience.

28. **"The Maltese Falcon" by Dashiell Hammett**

The hunt for the jeweled falcon echoes the quest for the Holy Grail, a symbol of an unattainable object.

29. **"Paradise Lost" by John Milton**

Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden from Genesis forms the core narrative, exploring themes of rebellion, loss, and redemption.

30. **"One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel García Márquez**

The biblical tale of Solomon, who was said to live for centuries, mirrors the Buendía family's long lineage.

31. **"Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley**

The title originates from Shakespeare's "The Tempest," wherein Miranda exclaims about the wondrousness of the world. Huxley's novel is a critique of a society overwhelmed by technological marvels, mirroring the shock and awe Miranda felt.

32. **"The Sun Also Rises" by Ernest Hemingway**

This title is drawn from the biblical book of Ecclesiastes, which contemplates life's cyclical nature and its inherent tragedies.

33. **"Slaughterhouse-Five" by Kurt Vonnegut**

The protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, parallels the biblical figure of Job, both facing immense suffering while questioning the nature of existence.

34. **"The Waste Land" by T.S. Eliot**

Eliot's poem incorporates allusions from Arthurian legends, like the Fisher King, to emphasize the spiritual desolation of modern life.

35. **"Moby Dick" by Herman Melville**

The white whale, Moby Dick, can be seen as the biblical Leviathan, representing an insurmountable force of nature or fate.

36. **"The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

Hester Prynne and her public shaming echo the biblical story of Adam and Eve, especially regarding the consequences of sin.

37. **"Their Eyes Were Watching God" by Zora Neale Hurston**

The story mirrors the biblical tale of Moses leading his people to the Promised Land, symbolizing Janie's quest for personal freedom.

38. **"Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe**

The title comes from W.B. Yeats' poem "The Second Coming," which speaks of a world in chaos, much like the Igbo society facing colonization.

39. **"Silas Marner" by George Eliot**

Silas's transformation from a miser to a loving guardian reflects the parable of the Prodigal Son, emphasizing redemption and reconciliation.

40. **"The Bell Jar" by Sylvia Plath**

The protagonist Esther Greenwood's experiences echo the biblical Esther, who hid her Jewish identity, underscoring themes of alienation and identity.

41. **"Go Tell it on the Mountain" by James Baldwin**

The title, a line from a spiritual song, captures the novel's deep exploration of sin, salvation, and personal discovery.

42. **"The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde**

Dorian's portrait draws parallels to the biblical story of the Golden Calf, an idol that brings ruin to its worshipers.

43. **"The Third Man" by Graham Greene**

The narrative subtly references the biblical tale of Cain and Abel, emphasizing the complexities of friendship and betrayal.

44. **"Doctor Zhivago" by Boris Pasternak**

Lara and Zhivago's relationship has shades of the tragic romance of Tristan and Isolde, a classic tale of love and destiny.

45. **"A Clockwork Orange" by Anthony Burgess**

The protagonist Alex and his experiences evoke the tale of the prodigal son, examining themes of free will and human nature.

46. **"On the Road" by Jack Kerouac**

Sal's journey mirrors that of Odysseus, a quest for meaning in the vast unknown.

47. **"Death of a Salesman" by Arthur Miller**

Willy Loman's tragic fall is reminiscent of classic Greek tragedies, where the protagonist is undone by a fatal flaw.

48. **"The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway**

The old man's struggle with the marlin reflects the tale of David and Goliath, emphasizing the human spirit's resilience against overwhelming odds.

49. **"Waiting for Godot" by Samuel Beckett**

The title and theme resemble the biblical story of Abraham waiting for God's promise, showcasing the endless human wait for meaning.

50. **"The Master and Margarita" by Mikhail Bulgakov**

The novel contains elements reminiscent of the Faustian bargain, exploring the costs of trading one's soul for worldly pleasures.

51. **"To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee**

Atticus Finch embodies the qualities of the archetypal hero, reminiscent of characters like Hercules, facing societal prejudices much like battling mythical monsters.

52. **"Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad**

Marlow's journey into the Congo is a descent into the underworld, echoing Dante's "Inferno" and Orpheus's venture into Hades.

53. **"The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger**

Holden Caulfield's attempt to shield children from adulthood's corruption can be likened to Charon, who ferries souls, symbolizing the transition from innocence to experience.

54. **"The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

Jay Gatsby's tragic pursuit of the American Dream mirrors the myth of Icarus, who flew too close to the sun, highlighting the dangers of overreaching ambition.

55. **"Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen**

Mr. Darcy's transformation from a prideful figure to a humbled lover mirrors tales of proud gods like Apollo, humbled by human interactions.

56. **"Lord of the Flies" by William Golding**

The descent of the boys into savagery parallels the fall of Lucifer, showcasing the inherent evil present in humanity.

57. **"Wuthering Heights" by Emily Brontë**

Heathcliff's and Catherine's tumultuous love echoes the ill-fated relationships of legendary lovers like Tristan and Isolde.

58. **"Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Brontë**

Jane's perseverance through hardship is evocative of mythical heroines like Atalanta, who faced multiple trials on their journeys.

59. **"The Odyssey" by Homer**

While inherently a mythological tale, its story structure has influenced countless literary works, with Odysseus's long journey home serving as a model for epic quests.

60. **"The Sound and the Fury" by William Faulkner**

The title derives from Shakespeare's "Macbeth," encapsulating the notion of life as a brief and tumultuous tale told by an idiot.



61. **"Beloved" by Toni Morrison**

Sethe's tragic past and her haunting bears parallels to the story of the Greek Furies, who exacted vengeance for wrongs.

62. **"1984" by George Orwell**

The omnipresent Big Brother has shades of omnipotent deities, observing and controlling every aspect of human life.

63. **"One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel García Márquez**

The Buendía family's cyclical fate is reminiscent of the cursed House of Atreus in Greek mythology.

64. **"Les Misérables" by Victor Hugo**

Jean Valjean's journey from a hardened criminal to a man of grace and redemption parallels tales of sinners turned saints.

65. **"Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley**

Victor Frankenstein's ambition of creating life mirrors the hubris of Prometheus, who defied the gods to bring fire to humanity.

66. **"Crime and Punishment" by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

Raskolnikov's internal moral battle echoes the conflict between Cain and Abel, spotlighting the psychological consequences of transgression.

67. **"The Divine Comedy" by Dante Alighieri**

Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven is filled with references to classical literature and mythological figures, blending various cultural allusions.

68. **"Anna Karenina" by Leo Tolstoy**

Anna's tragic end mirrors the fate of tragic heroines like Dido and Phaedra, who were consumed by forbidden love.

69. **"In Search of Lost Time" by Marcel Proust**

Proust's exploration of memory and desire has echoes of Orpheus's yearning for Eurydice, a quest for the elusive past.

70. **"The Brothers Karamazov" by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

The struggles of the Karamazov brothers are reminiscent of the Biblical Cain and Abel, dissecting the duality of human nature.

71. **"Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley**

The World State's control over its citizens echoes the labyrinth designed by Daedalus, trapping individuals in a maze of pleasure and ignorance.

72. **"Moby Dick" by Herman Melville**

Captain Ahab's obsessive pursuit of the white whale mirrors the hunt of mythical hunters like Actaeon, showing the dangers of unchecked ambition.

73. **"The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

Hester Prynne's public shaming is evocative of Biblical figures like Mary Magdalene, emphasizing society's judgment and need for redemption.

74. **"A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens**

The French Revolution's chaos is likened to the downfall of mythological empires, such as Troy, showcasing the cyclical nature of history.

75. **"Finnegans Wake" by James Joyce**

Joyce's intricate narrative is filled with references to mythological figures like Tristan and Isolde, presenting a tapestry of human experience.

76. **"The Iliad" by Homer**

While fundamentally a mythological story, it has influenced other literary works, particularly with the portrayal of heroes like Achilles and their tragic flaws.

77. **"Ulysses" by James Joyce**

Leopold Bloom's journey through Dublin mirrors Odysseus's return to Ithaca, showcasing the universality of human experience across time.

78. **"The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde**

Dorian's ageless beauty and his hidden portrait resemble the story of Narcissus, exploring the consequences of vanity and self-obsession.

79. **"Don Quixote" by Miguel de Cervantes**

The deluded knight's adventures parallel tales of heroes like Perseus, challenging our perceptions of reality and fantasy.

80. **"Dracula" by Bram Stoker**

Count Dracula's character can be seen as a darker version of the Greek god Dionysus, representing unrestrained desire and chaos.

81. **"Slaughterhouse-Five" by Kurt Vonnegut**

Billy Pilgrim's experiences of time are reminiscent of Chronos, the Greek god of time, emphasizing the fluidity of human perception.

82. **"The Waste Land" by T.S. Eliot**

This poetic masterpiece is dense with references to myths such as the Fisher King and the Grail legend, illustrating the desolation of the modern world.

83. **"The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck**

The Joad family's journey to California mirrors the Israelites' exodus, portraying the enduring human spirit in the face of adversity.

84. **"A Midsummer Night's Dream" by William Shakespeare**

The mischievous Puck and the tangled love stories echo tales from Greek and Roman mythology, blurring the lines between dream and reality.

85. **"Gulliver's Travels" by Jonathan Swift**

Gulliver's encounters with the Lilliputians and the Brobdingnagians draw from myths of giants and tiny creatures, satirizing human nature and societal structures.

86. **"Paradise Lost" by John Milton**

Milton's retelling of the fall of man incorporates both Biblical and mythological elements, presenting a grand cosmic drama.

87. **"The Lord of the Rings" by J.R.R. Tolkien**

Middle-Earth is imbued with elements from Norse and other mythologies,

showcasing the universal appeal of epic quests and battles between good and evil.

88. **"War and Peace" by Leo Tolstoy**

Tolstoy's portrayal of the Russian aristocracy during the Napoleonic era resonates with myths of noble heroes and their tragic destinies.

89. **"Bleak House" by Charles Dickens**

The dense fog of London is a modern version of the River Styx, separating the world of the living from the underworld, hinting at the obscured truth and moral decay.

90. **"The Trial" by Franz Kafka**

Joseph K's inexplicable prosecution parallels the trials faced by heroes in myth, questioning the nature of justice and fate.

91. **"The Odyssey" by Homer**

Odysseus's journey home, facing challenges from mythical creatures like the Cyclops and the Sirens, has influenced countless literary narratives about the hero's journey and the trials of returning home.

92. **"Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley**

Victor Frankenstein's creation of life mirrors the act of Prometheus, who defied gods to bring fire to humanity, reflecting on the consequences of playing god.

93. **"The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway**

The old man's battle with the marlin echoes the labors of Hercules, exploring themes of man versus nature and the price of ambition.

94. **"Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad**

Marlow's journey into the African interior is reminiscent of a descent into Hades, confronting the darkest aspects of humanity.

95. **"Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte**

Jane's resilient spirit in the face of adversity can be likened to the endurance of

heroes like Odysseus, with the sprawling English moors representing both physical and emotional landscapes of challenge.

96. **"The Divine Comedy" by Dante Alighieri**

Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven draws heavily from both Christian theology and mythological tales, offering a comprehensive view of the afterlife's imagined realms.

97. **"Crime and Punishment" by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

Raskolnikov's internal torment after committing murder is evocative of the punishment of Tantalus, illustrating the psychological toll of guilt.

98. **"To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee**

Atticus Finch's defense of Tom Robinson can be seen as a modern-day interpretation of Hercules's defense of the oppressed, highlighting the values of justice and integrity.

99. **"One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

The Buendía family's cyclical fate mirrors the repeated tales of families in myths like the House of Atreus, addressing themes of fate and history's repetition.

100. **"Beloved" by Toni Morrison**

Sethe's haunting by her deceased daughter, Beloved, evokes the restless spirits of Greek tragedies, illuminating the unending pain and the haunting memories of the past.