

## Physical Appearance Excerpts

Excerpt from *The Zookeeper's Wife* (Ackerman, 2007):

Balding, with a crown of dark brown hair, Jan needed a hat to fight burn in summer and chill in winter, which is why in outdoor photographs he's usually wearing a fedora, giving him an air of sober purpose. Some indoor photographs capture him at his desk or in a radio studio, jaw tight in concentration, looking like a man easily piqued. Even when he was clean-shaven, a five o'clock shadow stipples his face, especially on the philtrum between nose and mouth. A full, neatly edged upper lip displayed the perfect peaks women create with lip liner, a "Cupid's bow" mouth; it was his only feminine feature. (p. 18)

Excerpts from *Matilda* (Dahl, 1988):

Miss Trunchbull possessed none of these qualities and how she ever got her present job was a mystery. She was above all a most formidable female. She had once been a famous athlete and even now the muscles were still clearly in evidence. You could see them in the bull-neck, in the big shoulders, in the thick arms, in the sinewy wrists and in the powerful legs. Looking at her, you got the feeling that this was someone who could bend iron bars and tear telephone directories in half. Her face, I'm afraid, was neither a thing of beauty nor a joy for ever. She had an obstinate chin, a cruel mouth and small arrogant eyes. (pp. 82-83)

<< • >>

As for her clothes . . . they were, to say the least, extremely odd. She always had on a brown cotton smock which was pinched in around the waist with a wide leather belt. The belt was fastened in front with an enormous silver buckle. The massive thighs which emerged from out of the smock were encased in a pair of extraordinary breeches, bottle-green in colour and made of coarse twill. These breeches reached to just below the knees and from there on down she sported green stockings with turn-up tops, which displayed her calf muscles to perfection. On her feet she wore flat-heeled brown brogues with leather flaps. She looked, in short, more like a rather eccentric and bloodthirsty follower of the stag-hounds than the headmistress of a nice school for children. (p. 83)

Excerpt from *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady* (Hastings, 1987):

She was the ugliest living thing he had ever set eyes on, a freak, a monster, a truly loathly lady. Her nose was like a pig's snout; from a misshapen mouth stuck out two yellowing rows of horse's teeth; her cheeks were covered in sores; she had only one eye, rheumy and red-rimmed, and from a naked scalp hung a few lank strands of hair. Her whole body was swollen and bent out of shape, and her fingers, on which were several fine rings, were as gnarled and twisted as the roots of an old oak. (p. 12)

Excerpt from *All the Light We Cannot See* (Doerr, 2014):

The warrant officer in charge of field exercises is the commandant, an overzealous schoolmaster named Bastian with an expansive walk and a round belly and a coat quivering with war medals. His face is scarred from smallpox, and his shoulders look as though they've been hewn from soft clay. He wears hobnailed jackboots every second of every day, and the cadets joke that he kicked his way out of the womb with them. (p. 168)

Excerpt from *A Fine Balance* (Mistry, 1995):

A picture begins to form, and Dina let it develop for two days, adding depth and detail, colour and texture. Om's wife, standing in the front door. Her head demurely lowered. Her eyes sparkling when she looks up, her mouth smiling shyly, lips covered with her fingers. The days pass. Sometimes the young woman sits alone at the window, and remembers forsaken places. Dina sits beside her and encourages her to talk, to tell her things about the life left behind. And Om's wife begins at last to speak. More pictures, more stories. (p. 463)

Excerpt from *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000):

Esperanza's grandmother, whom everyone called Abuelita, lived with them and was a smaller, older, more wrinkled version of Mama. She looked very distinguished, wearing a respectable black dress, the same gold loops she wore in her ears every day, and her white hair pulled back into a bun at the nape of her neck. . . . Although some things were always the same with Abuelita—a lace-edged handkerchief peeking out from beneath the sleeve of her dress—others were surprising: a flower in her hair, a beautiful stone in her pocket, or a philosophical saying salted into her conversation. (p. 13)

Excerpt from *Hoot* (Hiaasen, 2002):

The boy was straw-blond and wiry, and his skin was nut-brown from the sun. The expression on his face was intent and serious. He wore a faded Miami Heat basketball jersey and dirty khaki shorts, and here was the odd part: no shoes. The soles of his bare feet looked as black as barbecue coals. (p. 1)

Excerpt from *Poppy* (Avi, 1995):

He was a large, bony orange cat, with the pinched body of advanced age. One ear was bent. He walked slowly, limping slightly, glancing up at the sun as if to measure its warmth. But by keeping his tail high, he maintained a stately dignity. (p. 128)

Excerpts from *Danny, the Champion of the World* (Dahl, 1975):

The place was absolutely alive with them. There must have been at least two hundred huge birds strutting around among the tree stumps. . . . It was a fantastic sight, a sort of poacher's dream come true. And how close they were! Some of them were not ten paces from where we knelt. The hens were plump and creamy-brown. They were so fat their breast feathers almost brushed the ground as they walked. The cocks were slim and elegant, with long tails and brilliant red patches around the eyes, like scarlet spectacles. (pp. 132-133)

<< • >>

My father once told me that Doc Spencer had been looking after the people of our district for nearly forty-five years. He was over seventy now and could have retired long ago. . . . He was a tiny man with tiny hands and feet and a tiny round face. The face was as brown and wrinkled as a shriveled apple. He was some sort of an elf, I used to think to myself each time I saw him, a very ancient sort of an elf with wispy white hair and steel-rimmed spectacles; a quick, clever little elf with a swift eye and a flashing smile and a fast way of talking. Nobody feared him. Many people loved him, and he was especially gentle with children. (p. 76)

Excerpt from *Kaffir Boy* (Mathabane, 1986):

It was again late afternoon when we were ushered into the same office of a month ago by the same black policeman with the gun. As my mother and I nervously entered the small room, I looked up and had the most terrifying experience of my seven-year-old life. Seated on a reclining easy chair by a small open window and wearing a khaki safari suit, a holstered gun slung loosely about his fat waist; stockinged feet clad in shiny brown boots and placed leisurely and obliquely on a long mahogany table; his big, red, soft and hairy hands twirling a golden pen; his red neck hairy and thick; his spectacles resting lazily upon the ridge of a bulbous freckled nose with flaring, hairy nostrils; his face broad and red and freckled and topped by a bang of carrot hair; and his thick red lips curled around a thick brown and burning cigar, was the white man. (p. 114)

Excerpt from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Rowling, 1997):

Perhaps it had something to do with living in a dark cupboard, but Harry had always been small and skinny for his age. He looked even smaller and skinnier than he really was because all he had to wear were old clothes of Dudley's, and Dudley was about four times bigger than he was. Harry had a thin face, knobby knees, black hair, and bright green eyes. He wore round glasses held together with a lot of Scotch tape because of all the times Dudley had punched him on the nose. The only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead that was shaped like a bolt of lightning. (p. 20)

Excerpt from *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (Goodwin, 2005):

Lincoln's shock of black hair, brown furrowed face, and deep-set eyes made him look older than his fifty-one years. He was a familiar figure to almost everyone in Springfield, as was his singular way of walking, which gave the impression that his long, gaunt frame needed oiling. He plodded forward in an awkward manner, hands hanging at his sides or folded behind his back. . . . His features, even supporters conceded, were not such "as belong to a handsome man." In repose, his face was "so overspread with sadness," the reporter Horace White noted. . . . Yet when Lincoln began to speak, White observed, "this expression of sorrow dropped from him instantly. His face lighted up with a winning smile, and where I had a moment before seen only leaden sorrow I now beheld keen intelligence, genuine kindness of heart, and the promise of true friendship." (p. 6)

Excerpt from *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960):

He had been leaning against the wall when I came into the room, his arms folded across his chest. As I pointed he brought his arms down and pressed the palms of his hands against the wall. They were white hands, sickly white hands that had never seen the sun, so white they stood out garishly against the dull cream wall in the dim light of Jem's room.

I looked from his hands to his sand-stained khaki pants; my eyes traveled up his thin frame to his torn denim shirt. His face was as white as his hands, but for a shadow on his jutting chin. His cheeks were thin to hollowness; his mouth was wide; there were shallow, almost delicate indentations at his temples, and his gray eyes were so colorless I thought he was blind. His hair was dead and thin, almost feathery on top of his head. (p. 362)

Excerpt from *David Copperfield* (Dickens, 2016):

When the pony-chaise stopped at the door, and my eyes were intent upon the house, I saw a cadaverous face appear at a small window on the ground floor . . . and quickly disappear. The low arched door then opened, and the face came out. It was quite as cadaverous as it had looked in the window, though in the grain of it there was that tinge of red which is sometimes to be observed in the skins of red-haired people. It belonged to a red-haired person—a youth of fifteen, as I take it now, but looking much older—whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble; who had hardly any eyebrows, and no eyelashes, and eyes of a red-brown; so unsheltered and unshaded, that I remember wondering how he went to sleep. He was high-shouldered and bony; dressed in decent black, with a white wisp of a neckcloth; buttoned up to the throat; and had a long, lank, skeleton hand, which particularly attracted my attention, as he stood at the pony's head, rubbing his chin with it, and looking up at us in the chaise. (pp. 325–326)

Excerpt from “The Treasure of Lemon Brown” (Myers, 1997):

The person who called himself Lemon Brown peered forward, and Greg could see him clearly. He was an old man. His black, heavily wrinkled face was surrounded by a halo of crinkly white hair and whiskers that seemed to separate his head from the layers of dirty coats piled on his smallish frame. His pants were bagged to the knee, where they were met with rags that went down to the old shoes. The rags were held on with strings, and there was a rope around his middle. Greg relaxed. He had seen the man before, picking through the trash on the corner and pulling clothes out of a Salvation Army box. (p. T97)

Excerpt from “A Christmas Memory” (Capote, 1967):

A woman with shorn white hair is standing at the kitchen window. She is wearing tennis shoes and a shapeless gray sweater over a summery calico dress. She is small and sprightly, like a bantam hen; but, due to a long youthful illness, her shoulders are pitifully hunched. Her face is remarkable—not unlike Lincoln's, craggy like that, and tinted by sun and wind; but it is delicate too, finely boned, and her eyes are sherry-colored and timid. (p. 130)

Source:

Ackerman, D. (2007). *The zookeeper's wife*. New York: Norton.

Avi. (1995). *Poppy*. New York: HarperCollins.

Dahl, R. (1975). *Danny, the champion of the world*. New York: Puffin Books.

Dahl, R. (1988). *Matilda*. New York: Puffin Books.

Dickens, C. (2016). *David Copperfield*. London: Macmillan Collector's Library.

Doerr, A. (2014). *All the light we cannot see: A novel*. New York: Scribner.

Goodwin, D. K. (2005). *Team of rivals: The political genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hastings, S. (1987). *Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady*. New York: HarperCollins.

Hiaasen, C. (2002). *Hoot*. New York: Random House.

Lee, H. (1960). *To kill a mockingbird*. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Mathabane, M. (1986). *Kaffir boy: The true story of a black youth's coming of age in apartheid South Africa*. New York: Touchstone.

Mistry, R. (1995). *A fine balance*. New York: Random House.

Myers, W. D. (1997). *The treasure of lemon brown*. In *Elements of literature: Second course (Annotated teacher's edition; pp. T93–T101)*.

Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Rowling, J. K. (1997). *Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone*. New York: Scholastic.

Ryan, P. M. (2000). *Esperanza rising*. New York: Scholastic.