

Reading Sheet for Workshop 6



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 (in a little round tower that formed one side of the house), and quickly disappear.

The low arched door then opened, and the face came out. It was quite as cadaverous as it had appeared 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.

(from *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens)

I'm OK looking; in fact, if you put, say, Mel Gibson on one end of the looks spectrum and say, Berky Edmonds from school, whose grotesque ugliness was legendary, on the other, then I reckon I'd be on Mel's side, just. A girlfriend once told me that I looked like Peter Gabriel, and he's not too bad, is he? I'm average height, not slim, not fat, no unsightly facial hair, I keep myself clean, wear jeans and T-shirts and a leather jacket more or less all the time apart from in the summer, when I leave the leather jacket at home. I vote Labour. I have a pile of classic comedy videos – Python, Fawlty Towers, Cheers and so on. I can see what feminists are on about, most of the time, but not the radical ones.

(from *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby)

I'll never forget Briggsy. He was the most special friend a girl could have. At first I ignored him. I thought he was a bit thick. But he wasn't. He knew all sorts I didn't know. He told me about the stars and the planets, how to find the Great Bear and Mars and Venus. He taught me how to make a pancake. He really did! He showed me how to play poker. How to dance. I never danced much, till I met Briggsy. He told me just to let go and do it. Hear the music. Let it inside you. Be the music.

He wore bright colours. His T-shirts were red or green or orange. He hardly ever just walked anywhere, he'd do little dances, or skip ahead then walk backwards looking at me. He'd catch my eye and sing bits of songs he'd heard on the radio. He could do that, snapping his fingers and swaying with the music in his head, or pretending to play guitar. If I tried it, I looked silly, clumsy. He told me jokes that made me laugh. But mostly it's colours I think of when I remember him. Bright red trainers with no socks. Black jeans and those vivid T-shirts.

Stepping out with Briggsy was like stepping out with rainbows.

(from *Briggsy* by Isla Dewar)