

*"It's what you read when you don't have to that determines what you'll be when you can't help it."*

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BOOK STUFF

## A story in 100 words?

That's the challenge: 100 words exactly. Here are a couple of examples. Have a read and then have a go.

### Type B by Daniel Aceituna

A guy crashed into me and dropped his phone. "Hey, buddy?" I said, but he jumped into a car that concealed its tires as it hovered into a vertical position. It then fired its tail-light rockets and careened into space. I thought it looked cool.

Then his phone rang.

"Hello?"

"So do we destroy their planet?"

"Huh?"

"C'mon, we need to know right now. Yes or no?"

"No, I guess."

"Okay, but the head council won't be too happy."

"Yapping on the phone, again!" My wife said, coming from behind me. "Mother was right, you'll never amount to anything."

### We're not Speaking by Francis J Trautman

When I attempted to sneak back home near dawn, she was there on the porch in her orange wig, red nose, and white pancake makeup. She pointed at an invisible watch on her wrist and then drew the finger across her throat. I got the pantomime.

"But—!" I start but am shushed with the same silent finger. She flaps down the steps in her oversized shoes.

"But—!" I start again, but she smiles and points to the doghouse.

What I wouldn't give for a shot of seltzer or pie in the face. It's the mime treatment I hate.

## Legend of Robert the Bruce

Robert the Bruce was a Scottish noble who won independence for Scotland from England at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. But victory came only after a series of earlier defeats. Legend has it that while Bruce was in hiding and despondent, he watched a spider swing from the rafters, time after time, in an attempt to anchor its web. It finally succeeded and this – so the story goes – gave Bruce the resolve he needed to fight one more battle.

The Scottish poet Hugh McMillan offers a modern take on the story. If you're not a Scot, it may look a bit forbidding but when you read it slowly – ideally aloud – it makes sense and might make you laugh. (A bit like *Trainspotting* maybe?)

### The Spider's Legend of Robert the Bruce (2009)

Ah got scunnert tryin' tae spin  
a web for denner,  
the stane wis a' slaisterie,  
ah couldnae get a grip,  
ah wis hauf stairved by the end,  
no even a midge tae claucht,  
then a big lug o' a mon cam in,  
raggety, right dosser,  
mair hungert looking than me,  
stairted eyeing me up,  
ah thought, am off,  
swung like tarzan  
oot the cave on a thread  
thick as a wean's wrist.  
Seemed tae cheer him up.



## Puzzlers from Joyce's Quiz: Volume 2

(thank you Joyce!)

### **What connects each of these trios of words?**

e.g. iceberg, romaine, cos = types of lettuce

1. Chelsea, bath, currant
2. Shetland, shire, appaloosa
3. patella, tibia, fibula
4. bow, circular, chain
5. kiss, screw, baulk

### **Each question below contains a number followed by some initials which will lead you to the correct answer.**

e.g. 4 S to a S = sides to a square; 1815 B of W = Battle of Waterloo

6. 2001 A S O
7. 6 S to a C
8. 12 S of the Z
9. 3 PC
10. 23 P of C

### **For Line of Duty nerds only**

Have you been paying attention? We all know about AC-12 but what about these acronyms:

11. CHIS
12. ARU and ARV
13. CIS
14. DIR
15. TFC

## **A Moral dilemma**

### **The Torture Option**

Hadi's captives looked resolute, but he was sure he could break them, as long as he followed through on his threat. The father, Brad, was the real villain. It was he who had planted the huge bomb that he promised would kill hundreds, perhaps thousands, of innocent civilians. Only he knew where the bomb was, and he wasn't telling.

His son Wesley had nothing to do with it. But Hadi's intelligence told him that though Brad would not break under torture, he almost certainly would if he were to see his son tortured in front of him. Not immediately, but soon enough.

Hadi was torn. He had always opposed torture and would probably have to leave the room while it was carried out. Wesley's innocence was not the only reason for his qualms, but it certainly exacerbated them. But he also knew this was the only way to save hundreds of people from death and mutilation. If he didn't order the torture, would he be condemning people to death, just because of his own squeamishness and lack of moral courage?

From Julian Baggini, *The Pig that Wants to be Eaten and 99 Other Thought Experiments*



### **ANSWERS**

1. buns
2. horses
3. bones of the human leg
4. saws
5. snooker terms
6. A Space Odyssey
7. Sides of a Cube
8. Signs of the Zodiac
9. Primary Colours
10. Pairs of Chromosomes
11. Covert Human Intelligence Source
12. Armed Response Unit
13. Crime Information System
14. Digital Interview Recorder
15. Tactical Firearms Commander