

## 10 super short stories for people with short attention spans

An old bearded man sits on a bench in a park. It's a sunny day, the wind blows through the falling leaves, he can feel the warm breeze through his toes. He stands and walks home. The same route he has been walking for 4 years now. Every day you will see him there, around about lunchtime with his frayed backpack. His face is a mask, you'd never know why he was there. He eats some food there sometimes. "I have to know why he's there! I can't take it anymore!" A young man bursts from his government owned shed and runs to meet him. "Excuse me!" He shouts. The old man doesn't turn. The man chases him. Upon his approach the old man turns to him, two tufts of white hair spring from where his eyebrows should be, like Antenna. They stand like statues staring at each other. "He looked taller from a distance" the young man thought to himself. The trees dance above them in the clear blue sky.

I'd been here for weeks and there was no sight of it. The blue tiger is what the locals called it but all I saw was the raw cash I could make flogging it to some twat in Wall Street as a rug. The strings on my bow are wound so loose from lack of use they might as well fall off. The thing I can't stand is the heat. I'm used to Russian mountains or dense alpine woodland, not this. Jungles suck, I'm sweating my nuts off and I ran out of mosquito repel at weeks ago, I look like the Luna landscape with all these bites. They don't tell you how wet it is too! Hot and wet isn't bad for a while but imagine spending 18 hours a day in a warm shower only to have to sleep in it too. I'll check the GPS again, yep, still the right place! You know I always thought that the blue tiger wasn't real. It wasn't until I saw all those posts about sightings in the area I decided to stay for a while. "Won't be long" they said! "She will show up soon" they said! Sure fucking right. I give up. Tiger! If you're watching me just eat me now. Consume my body and shit it out of your nice tight blue arse hole... come to think of it, is it's shit blue? A part of me wishes some dickhead just spray painting the tiger... poor bastard... ok this rain is driving me mad. If you're going to hit the tent and make so much fucking noise just land on my head instead. It's not like it's waterproof anyway, fucking outdoor warehouse TM

Feet dangle over a pool of sharks! 60 seconds on the bomb! Traps in an electric cage with no possible escape, Alice Stairs whistfully out of a window not a care in the world. She whistles a marching song as the beeping of the bomb ticks away at her feet. Earst Ermhart, managing director of evil corp laughs maniacally shouting "this time you shall not escape Alice! For my plans are too ingenious and you are surely trapped! Mwahahahaa... oh thanks" a hunch man serves a China tea cup to Earst as he spins on his evil swivel chair. As Earst continues to Aureate about his most diabolical scheme Alice rests in her suspended cell, bomb and her feet meters from sharks seemingly nonplussed. A smile curls across her face. He stands up and interrupts Earst mid rant. "You know what I like about your type Earst? You're predictable." Proclaims as her cafe rattles above the slowly circling sharks. "You've always got something, something has to be a certain way, maybe it's the way you line up your pencils in graphite grade order on your desk or how you have to put the left shoe on first. There's always a wierd tick, a small predictable cog in your machine" the bomb double beeps for the 30 second time! "you have been a tough one!" she chuckles to herself. Earst stands up somewhat shaken, he clutches the edge of his suit out of nerves, put off by her confidence in the face of certain death. "I don't know why you're doing this, it won't change anything. You are doomed Alice!! Doomed!!!" Alice sticks her hand through the bars with 3 fingers held up. "One! You get up at exactly 8:46am every day for your daily run. Two! Every time someone mentions the work cat (achoo) you sneeze. And three" she waggles the three fingered around in front of Earst's now snotty and confused face. "you take your tea at

exactly 11:56am every morning with two sugars and an early grey tea bag” after a small pause Earst giggles saying “and how does this save you, 15 seconds till the bomb and shark time and this is the best you got?” Alice turns away from him and in almost a whisper says, slow acting poisons are one of my favourite. Because you’ve got so much time to give the antidote, giving your victim... 5 SECONDS UNTIL DETONATION... plenty of time to reconsider” and she turns to Earst as he stands dumbfounded staring into his tea cup in horror. Earst looks up to see the gentle glimmer of a small container of clear liquid pinched inbetween Alice’s boney fingers. 3...2...1...

The snow crumbles underfoot and falls away revealing 100 meters of air and the sharp rocks below. Not chance of survival. Quintin Adromidus, famous explorer, mountaineer, athlete and gentleman was now falling to his untimely death. He disappeared through the snow like it was intentional. One second he was there and the next gone, he could give magicians a run for their money. I think it ruins it a little bit that his last words will forever be “see this ground is perfectly stabl...”. 4 days into a hike up an the untamed mount Gradbury of east Shropshire and this happens. I suppose he’d want me to tell them he got eaten by a bear or a snow leopard or froze to death in the night. But you know what?I don’t really care anymore. As my companions rushed around in panic, searching for rope or something to avoid the idea the expedition lead just died, I just stood there, smiling. The howling wind deadened any real screams. You know, I felt nothing but relief! Having so sneakily loosened the bolts on his ice picks, having cut the ties of his crampons I was certain his death would be by my hand, the repercussions hung over me like a dagger but that’s all melted away like ice in summer sun. Anyway, I’m going to carry on walking, time to plant my flag.

Jubilant is an old women, well into her 80’s. Her white hair falling out in patches and teeth like a broken piano, she wasn’t the dame she was in her youth ooh no. She doesn’t move from her wheelchair, she sits there patiently, listening to the soft crash of waves. Twilight sets across the ocean illuminating jubilant in brilliant orange. The deep creases on her face seem to melt away, her hair now a shock of ginger in the sun. The metal chair gleams as the water washes around its black rubber wheels. And old ska beer comes to her and she begins to tap away with her two fingers on the joystick, she softly hums the song lion man of Jamaica Her clouded eyes, not reacting to the light, close and her face fills with memories of a world ago. She smiles as the last drop of sun crosses the horizon.

A young women sits in the shower, the rooms has fogged up so all shapes are hazy and blurred. She sits in the corner, with her legs tucked up against her chest. She’s been there for 20 minutes, thinking about how nothing makes her happy anymore. A cool jet of hair whips into the room and disturbs the floating fog clouds, the room spins in a strange light grey spiral. She’s thinking about a quote from the film blade runner, something about “tears in rain” she can’t remember, her hair lies heavy against her back, weighing her down. All traces of shampoo are now washed down the drain. The sky is a brilliant blue, the grass is blindingly green, you can hear children playing in the distance and the insistent warbling of a local a local songbird. This moment hands like the silence between a ticking clock. Time slows as the moment drags on. She stairs straight down into the drain, a whirlpool has formed and all the water gluggs down, bubbling and spitting. Her face sinks, as fresh clumps of hair slide across the shower floor and clog the drain. Bubbling, gurgling. sshhhhhhhhhhh click.

A field. Nothing more, nothing less. Trees to the south, ancient and gracefully swaying in the wind. This field was once a meadow but has now been down with grass. Green

stretches across the ground, the gentle curve of the ground rolls as to be north is uphill. The horizon sits against this arc, clouds peak over the hill. The blades of grass tickling the shreds of vapour. The earth below is unchanging, the first foot is loose, having been recently Plowed, rocks lie about the field like pores in a giants face. But... underneath the loose ground is earth. Still, unchanging, cold and permanent. The deeper you go the older it gets. The greatest chronicle of this world, the story of time itself, and we walk upon it. Thunder booms in a far off land but the sky is clear, the early morning is still cold, the wind is biting and slow catching some dead leaves and hurling them through the air. They cascade and soar and fall. The leaves fly through the air ranging far into the sky. A network of fields covers this once forested land, one square after the next, endless and uniform. A metal bird roars past leaving sky trails in its wake. The land rises and falls, it breathes. "Oh terry no don't do that" a dog shits in a nearby car part and Garry has to pick it up in a plastic bag while terry tried to eat it.

John sits at his desk. He sits there every day of the working week. It's the same old wheelie chair he had when he started 10 years ago. A new printer has been installed but it's the same door and carpet. The same panelled ceiling, dust falls whenever someone walks above him. He sits in his chair and types away. Words on a page, numbers on a spread sheet, day in and day out. White shirt with a black tie, black trousers and black shoes. His hair is cut short to be inoffensive and clean, he wouldn't want to upset anyone. He had lunch in the company green area where he eats a sandwich he made at home. He looks at the birds who populate this courtyard. He drives home in the car he got for his 18th birthday. He unlocks the door to his house, climbs the stairs and lies down on his bed. He asks why, why is it like this? Does he like it? Should he like it? There are many who have less, but are they happier for it? He misses uni, he misses his old friends. Dinner is never the same, not when you microwave it. He takes off his glasses and lies down in bed. He imagines being anyone else. And he goes to bed.

"Ok goodnight everyone! Goodnight!Goodnight!" Everyone leans forward and the call ends. Erico, James and Matilde and sir for a moment. All looking at their now inactive screens. Erico, with a burst of energy stands up and skips off to the toilet. The door slams and you hear his wife call out to him, it's muffled by a closed door. James leans forward and begins to type, he's straight over to Facebook to check the group chat that's been buzzing in his pocket for the last hour! Although he doesn't know it the fear of missing out even in a group chat has become quite important to him these days. He spends all day inside so what else has he to interact with. His eyes have heavy bags under. He looks tired, his posture is poor and he leans too close to the screen. The full LED's picking up the pores in his static, dead face. Erico finishes his piss and runs downstairs. "Just finished the call" he shouts, his feet thud on the stairs. When downstairs his voice echos up to the room "God those guys are a drag, but I gotta be there for them!" Matilde hasn't moved either. She sits with her finger still on the mouse. She never left the call, she lingers in the space where her friends once were. Looking at only herself now. She is alone, their last words bounce off the walls of the room. Repeating in her head, she stares blankly, looking through the screen. After a few minutes she zones back in. Realising how weird she would look if anyone was watching, not that they were, she leaves the call. Takes off her headphones and stretches. Tasha the cat hops up onto her lap out of nowhere, she purrs loudly and starts to softly claw Matilde's jeans. "Cats are great" she thought as she strokes Tasha's head, fur now covering her hand and trousers.

Imagine, the perfect glade. Like nothing of this earth. Leaves fall in slow motion. The air is cool and pleasant, the grass is soft like a bed you could sleep on and never wake up.

A ring of trees circle this glade, their leaves curve over you and make dapples light spot the area. The diligent falls through the canopy in beams, brilliant golden light. The sky is painfully blue and not a cloud sits in sight. Flowers are scatter amounts the brushes and grass. From a distance you could mistake them for forgotten gems and crystals. Electric blue flower heads push up through the ground followed by blood red and sand yellow. A swirl of colour adorns this glade and ensorcel you. Whatever you were doing before this, is lost to the addles of memory. "It can't have been that important." Birds sing harmoniously in the branches and a rabbit hops from a hole in the ground to find fresh food. It's pure white fur is blinding. Bees hum in a near by bush and twigs snap as a deer comes to inspect this most magical of places. This is the heart of the forrest, life pores from this place like a waterfall... as you sit her, you recite the words taught to you, you kneel and your toes feel the smooth grass curling around them. The smell of sap, bark, earth and the scent of flowers fills your nose, the ambient woodland overwhelms your ears. The colour grows brighter. You continue with the words "boz Kamat Edo Shen, Morril Gat Well Piti" with the final word you feel a vibration through the earth, as if everything just shifted 5cm to the left. Something has changed, ...you are being watched now... you can feel it. The humming of a thousand wings fills the air.

"Going up" 3 people in a lift is too many. I know you can have more but any more than three is just awkward. Two suits and me. The walls are glass too. Imagine if you were afraid of heights, you couldn't work on any floor above four. The gentle whirring of the lift thrums in the background as the acceleration of the lift steadies. Your perspective slowly shifts as you look upon the urban sprawl of some borough in London. Houses, trees, houses and trees, maybe the river? You look over all of them and thing how good eagles must feel doing this. The lift stops with a jolt and a hissss... "floor 36, lift going up" the two suits get out and the doors slide closed with a gentle click. You begin to ascend again and you see a break in the clouds now. Sun pours into the lift snd bounces around the glass interior. You shield your eyes, hopefully it's not divine punishment but you can't say for sure. The light hides again and your mind wanders to your next meeting as you watch a few pigeons Bob by your window. Your mind flicks between spread sheets and pie charts and...your a little jealous of the pigeons. What it must be like to have a simple existence. Eat, shit, sleep then die. Your mind zooms to your teenage son and wonder, does that make him a pigeon? Ding! Ding ding! "Lev...level...le...level 50...turning around you see the doors are jammed and your half way in between a level. You were so lost in your mind you hadn't noticed your stuck! You ring the alarm bell and a nice lady over the tannoy says 'emergency engineer is coming'. Having set down on the floor, it crosses your mind you are about 100m up suspended in a metal box. You sit closer to the door, away from the window. The sky is somehow less inviting now that you could fall from it. "Icarus flew to close to the sun" you recall as you distract yourself from the terror of suspension in a box so high up. "I wonder if Icarus has pigeon wings or eagle wings?"

Dinner for one. An idea we all seem to avoid or thing is a bad thing. There's something about either treating yourself or eating alone people seem to think is a bad thing. However, I quite like it. It's 8pm. I've got a pie I warmed up at home. I wrapped it in a tea towel to keep it warm and brought a drink with me too, cider. I get to the beach. The inky black sky seeps into the water and only the gentlest hint of blue can be seen in the noir night ahead of me. A west wind blows across the beach and the smell of salt fills my nose. I sit down on a bit of concrete and tuck into my pie. It's moments like these that remind me why I love living. Because life is wonderful. Alone on a beach. Cold and warm. I can feel my feet, my fingers and my body shiver with the wind. And relax. The sand I stand on is ancient. Dug up from the ground from maybe millions of years ago. It's hard to know, I stand in awe of the world around me, warm food and a cold night. The clouds hang low and reflect the light of the

towns around, subtle beacons projecting light into the sky to be seen from miles around. The seagulls are not here. They have gone to wherever they go at night, no bird calls, just the whistle of the wind and the wash of the waves. Sometimes we live our lives in such an insular way. We forget how much is out there. We set goals and strive for things that we think are important. When I stand on the beach, eternity and time looks back and me, it reminds me of how young I am. And how old everything else is. How little I know and how much there is to know, how the world will be the world without me, but what am I without the world. Perspective is important. I finish my pie and head home. But as I walk away I steal one last glance into the eternal sea, the ever waves always washing. Ever washing and splashing. Never stopping, I don't understand stand still, and I feel those waves within me too.