

#140



#140



#140

STORIES OF EXACTLY

#NOT139



#140



#NOT141

CHARACTERS  
(EACH)



#140



#140 ONLY



#140

#EXACTLY 140



#140 EXACTLY

MARC LOEWENTHAL

LIONDALE PUBLICATIONS

140 Stories of  
*Exactly*  
140 Characters  
(Each)

by

Marc Loewenthal

Author of

What Words Really Mean

and

The Other Dictionary

Liondale Publications  
[www.liondale.com](http://www.liondale.com)

140 Stories of Exactly 140 Characters (Each) 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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## Introduction

In September 2012. The Guardian newspaper in the UK invited some top novelists to compose “Twitter” novels of fewer than 140 characters and submit them to Twitter with the hashtag #140novel. It also invited readers to do the same and picked out some of the best to retweet and to highlight on its website. I was one of those who submitted copious #140novels to Twitter, although sadly, mine were never selected.

I then got it into my head to write the definitive collection of #140novels in a set of ten volumes, each containing 140 novels of 140 characters. Exactly 140 characters. After a few stiff cups of coffee and the return of my sanity, I realised that this was a nigh on impossible task, but I went ahead with the first volume anyway, and this is it. I have also renamed them 140 stories, as I think the use of “novel” for my offerings would be preposterously presumptuous and inordinately inaccurate. So here they are then – 140 stories, each in exactly in 140 characters. Who knows? I may start on the second volume, and then the third...where's the coffee? Anyway, I hope you enjoy these ones.

Oh, and if you don't believe me, count all the characters in each one.

And if you like what I've written here, there's a lot more fascinating fun in my two books on words: *What Words Really Mean* and *The Other Dictionary*. Enjoy!

Marc Loewenthal  
April 2017

## Stories

1. After cutting down and uprooting Satan's favourite tree they discovered billions of 100-dollar bills, proving money is the root of all evil.
2. After she paid for the opportunity, Lizzie proceeded to examine it in detail. To her horror, she discovered that the bottom was made of tin.
3. After the abject failure of his previous assignment, James Bond realised he had been demoted when he was assigned to eliminate Bronzefinger.
4. Ahab was furious! The other captains were enjoying barnstorming parties with much larger denizens of the deep, and all he had was a dolphin.
5. A hushed silence fell over the crowds lining the street. Where was the march? Screams suddenly came from the helicopter. It had been stolen!
6. All the cheques and the credit cards in the bank moaned about how much the cash would fuss about the smallest detail, however insignificant.
7. Anthony realised he'd need to tell his 10-year-old about the facts of life after he found him researching the bats and the wasps on the net.
8. "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" "Sorry mate. Price of horses just went up. It's two kingdoms now." "Damn it! I've only got one!"
9. All the pigeons looked on as the police identified an imposter in their midst. Sure enough, his feathers were similar, but subtly different.
10. An astonished look came over the waiter's face as he checked the bill where Mr Crime had been sitting. All the money was there. He had paid.
11. Arthur and his knights gasped and recoiled in horror as they opened the box. The furniture company had delivered the wrong one; it was oval.
12. As Charlotte picked up her husband's plate after dinner, she suddenly realised that he had lied to her. There was still a hoof left uneaten.
13. As Dr Jekyll raised himself up off the floor and gazed in the mirror, the prominent breasts told him it was back to the drawing board again.

14. As the Ark sank, Noah at last saw why his carefully laid plans had gone disastrously wrong. A third elephant had sneaked on behind his back.
15. A shot rang out, and the gunfighter fell dead. Smoke rose from under the pram awning, along with a gurgle. Billy had claimed another victim.
16. As soon as the new law was passed, a hushed silence fell in the chamber and jaws dropped as it walked in, braying loudly and eating carrots.
17. As soon as they overheard the hen and cow putting their story together, the two male animals decided to concoct their own version of events.
18. As the explorer finally reached the Back of Beyond after years of trying, he noticed to his horror that there was even more beyond the Back.
19. As the macaques swung off through the trees with all his hard-earned cash, the gorilla knew he never should have done business with monkeys.
20. As the moon rocket rose into the sky, everyone gasped in horror as it burst into flames and crashed to the ground; there was indeed a limit.
21. As rescue services picked through the wreckage and the bodies of the men caught in the blast, they saw the blond hair. She had struck again.
22. As the young puppies gathered round their dying father's bed, he whimpered and said "Don't believe everything you hear; I never had my day."
23. At the divorce hearing, Body put the breakdown down to a lack of money. The judge granted the decree when Soul did not contest the decision.
24. At the end of the weightlifting contest the Sword collapsed in shame and disbelief. He had only lifted 100kg, but the Pen had managed 120kg.
25. Bruce was extremely worried about his trial, but on entering the courtroom, he heaved a sigh of relief. The judge and jurors were wallabies.
26. Charlie finally realised why his walk through the fields had taken so long; the crow whose trajectory he was following was completely drunk.
27. "Come in," said the old man, his voice cracking with age and

weariness. "What is it?" "Bad news, Sinbad. We've discovered sea number eight."

28. Concluding this lecture, I can say that the discovery of the Higgs boson has set into motion a chain reaction leading to the end of the wor-
29. Daniela had serious issues with making progress. Unable to find her third foot anywhere, her only option was to put her better foot forward.
30. Detective Reagan stared at the two figures lying lifeless under the fallen church bell, the ropes still in their hands; they were identical.
31. Dido was livid when Helen's achievement reached her ears. She couldn't come to terms with the fact her own face had launched only 999 ships.
32. Doctor Smithers had no idea what to do. He had been trying to see his patient for a week, but every day his way was blocked by a huge apple.
33. Donald was coming near to the end of his singing career and determined to embark on his swan song, but unfortunately for him, he was a duck.
34. "Do you love me?" "Yes, of course." "Does the sun set in the east?" "Yes, of course." "Damned robot malfunctioning again!" "Yes, of course."
35. "Eureka!" cried Saddler, as the speck of red liquid under the microscope proved to be haemoglobin. His stone quarry would be worth billions!
36. Eureka! It works! I'm totally invisible. No one can see me! I can do what I want, go anywhere! Ha ha haa! Whoa! What the? Damned gold teeth!
37. Everyone stared in amazement, unable to work out how a plane could survive a journey with a wing on one side and just a prayer on the other.
38. Faced with his victim's mother, he broke down and wept, begging her for forgiveness. The tears were genuine. After all, he was an alligator.
39. Fluffy pleaded with God to grant him his other seven lives, but unfortunately for him, the fact he was James Bond's cat had sealed his fate.
40. Flying through the air and landing outside the pen, the animal behaviour researcher proved that a green rag would work as well as a

red one.

41. For once in his life, Zach was glad he was bringing up the rear. The devil had changed his mind and gone for the first in line for a change.
42. Fortunately for the management, they had succeeded in getting the failing business under control while it was still only at fours and fives.
43. Friends! Romans! Countrymen! Lend me your ears! I come to – what the hell are you all doing with those knives? AARRGH! The blood! The blood!
44. Hamlet stood in the airport car park entrance trying to remember which zone he had parked his car in. “B2, or not B2? That is the question.”
45. Hannibal was forced to come to the conclusion that the stories he had heard and believed in his youth were wrong. Not all roads led to Rome.
46. Having descended into the core of the red moon on numerous occasions, he regretted making only one single visit to the core of the blue one.
47. He awoke and looked round for his life, but it had gone; out of the window he saw it standing at the junction: his life was at a crossroads!
48. He invented a time machine, went back in time and killed his grandfather, which meant he didn't invent the time machine, nor did he go back.
49. His grandmother sat there in the coop, an evil grin on her face, and eggs sucked dry strewn over the floor. He should never have taught her!
50. Holmes scrutinised the spot where Old Father Time lay dead. There had to be a reason why that was in the airport amusement arcade, but what?
51. Holmes seriously doubted the inspector's assertion that the police had caught the murderer in the act. After all, the alien had green hands.
52. Hope suddenly noticed something was different. The mountain had been moved slightly to the left. “Faith! What the hell have you been doing?”
53. "How can I possibly hold back the water threatening to wash away what we have built if you walk out?" "Frankly my dear, I don't give a



dam!"

54. "I believe I can fly! I believe I can touch the sky!" "Icarus! Wait! Don't fly too close to the sun, or the wax on your wings will – oo-er!"
55. "I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king." "So amazing what doctors can transplant nowadays!"
56. "I love you so!" "I love you more!" "You don't. I love YOU more!" "No way! I do!" "Not so, you bastard!" "Go to hell, you bitch!" "You too!"
57. Inspector Geary knew that, despite the false trails being laid by the murder suspect, he was on right track this time: the herring was blue.
58. Into the Valley of Death rode the 600... "Oi, you! Light Brigade! Who bloody gave you permission to ride roughshod into my valley? Sod off!"
59. "It's useless," thought the king. "There's no way that one-toed ungulates are capable of reassembling a large, shattered, egg-shaped human."
60. It was terrible how much blood had been spilled. Dracula resolved to hire far better-trained waiters for the next year's vampire convention.
61. Jack had serious issues with concentration. He was fine as long as he stayed in his box, but once outside, his thought processes fell apart.
62. Jan was delighted. Being first in the queue for the sewing sale meant getting ten for the price of one, proving a stitch in time saves nine.
63. Jane looked at her broken arm with shame, and then focused enviously on the next bed where Sue, her fellow actress, had her leg in traction.
64. Jerry's heart sank, his illusions shattered; the realisation had hit him that his neighbours on cloud ten were doing far better than he was.
65. Jimmy was relieved that he had got off so lightly. After all, his friend Jonathan had had it far worse with a wasp in the haemorrhoid cream.
66. Josephine was furious. Another night alone. After all this Waterloo business was over the next day, she swore they would get away for a bit.
67. Juan listened carefully to what she was saying, but found it very difficult to follow. Then he understood; she was using the King's English!



68. Lara checked the truth meter, but it was at a very low level, and she didn't have any money to top it up again. She would have to economise.
69. "Last chance, Count. Where's all your money?" No answer. The axe came down. "OK, I'll tell!" Too late. He was hatcheted before he chickened.
70. Lennie had a problem. He desperately needed to have a meeting with the Foot, but the Foot was not in the office. He had to talk to the Hand.
71. Mollie the Sheep edged closer. The disguise was working well. None of the pack recognised her and soon the leader was within shooting range.
72. Mr Camera smiled knowingly when the results of the polygraph tests were read out, corroborating his story. As always, he had told the truth.
73. Mr Leopard looked at Mrs Leopard closely. There was something different about her, but what? At last, it hit him; she had changed her spots!
74. Mrs Goose sat by her husband's coffin, wondering what she had done that had been so wrong. After all, the haddock had not done her any harm.
75. Mrs Skeleton fumed as she slaved away, while her husband just sat around doing absolutely nothing as usual. Yet, what else could she expect?
76. "No! No! Please! Don't leave me here!" But they couldn't hear her in the airless gloom. The module took off for Earth. Moon Rover was alone.
77. "OK Butch. You ready? We go together after 3." "OK Sundance. 1-2-3, go!" Blam, blam. "Butch, where are you?" "Adios, Sundance amigo. Ha ha!"
78. Oliver sweated nervously. The \$64,000 prize depended on this answer. He had had no problems with the previous one on onions, but courgettes?
79. On observing the butcher in action, I realised my feline-flaying theory was not unique after all: there was more than one way to skin a cat.
80. Peter realised too late that he had taken the wrong turning and had arrived at the worst imaginable place in the world – Always-always Land.

81. Prairie-dog Bill surveyed the featureless plains with profound regret. How could he have ever allowed Buffalo Brian to get there before him?
82. Prof Bodkins was stunned when he read the Latin inscription on the ancient stone. The evidence was conclusive: Rome had been built in a day.
83. Prof Jenkins leapt up shouting "Eureka!" Finally, he knew what the problem was. He simply had to reverse the order! Horses can't push carts.
84. Prof Jones realised to his horror his theory of gold-bearing airborne water vapour was fundamentally wrong; every cloud had a silver lining.
85. Prof Turner was stunned by what was under the microscope; it looked and tasted like cheese, but had a chemical structure identical to chalk.
86. Reading the contract, Faust's lawyer smiled. The crucial word was patently misspelt. All the devil would get was the bottom of Faust's shoe.
87. "Red wire or green wire? Which one? Red or green? Choose! OK, red it is. Here goes! That's it. It's cut" "No, you fool! It's the blue w-..."
88. Robin Hood had serious problems focusing, and kept missing the target. He would just have to wait until his roving eye returned with Marion.
89. Sammy Sparrow was baffled. He was early as usual, but there was nothing to catch. There was little doubt about it – the worms were evolving.
90. So let me welcome you to the first sitting of the World Dinosaur Council, the first of many. Hang on, what's that big fiery ball in the sky?
91. Suddenly, Pilgrim saw the red glow down the road in the distance, and the realisation hit him. Someone had switched signs at the crossroads!
92. Suddenly Richard felt an intense itch in his chest which wouldn't go away. He couldn't work it out; it was only six years since his wedding.
93. "Take your stinkin' paws off me you damn dirty ape!" "I beg your pardon! How dare you!" "I'm terribly sorry! I thought you were my husband!"
94. That's it! It's the last time I use the butterfly effect to reshape the past.

That's it! It's the last time I use the butterfly effect to...

95. "That's it! I've had enough! You just sit there and say nothing all day, while I slave away. I'm leaving! What have you got to say?" "Woof!"
96. "That's the correct answer! Well done! So Pandora, you can choose. Will you take the £5000 cash prize or open the box?" "I'll open the box!"
97. The agonising sound of mewling and whining and the mutilated bodies lying on the ground showed one thing: it had been raining cats and dogs.
98. The blue and white globe looked perfect for colonisation. The Zargon captain set course for it, grinning evilly. He didn't see the asteroid.
99. The boss of the Great Whites looked worried. Clearly the Swordfish Firm's new money lending racket threatened to muscle in on his territory.
100. The car wouldn't start. The only other option was the handcart, or they'd miss the plane. But, unknown to them, it had only one destination.
101. The cucumber woke up and realised to his horror that lying for three whole hours in the blazing sun had completely destroyed his reputation.
102. The doctor spoke very gravely. "Achilles, you're dying." "Why? I only stubbed my toe." "You didn't know? It wasn't your heel your mum held."
103. The family sat down to dinner, each one avoiding the question burning in their minds. Seth walked in. "What's that rhino doing in the room?"
104. The Finger people thronged the streets in jubilation celebrating the end of years of tyrannical rule; the Thumb had been overthrown at last.
105. The foreman soon realised his error. While the Greeks toiled away from dawn to dusk, the Trojans just sat around, chatting and drinking tea.
106. The horrific realisation dawned on Macbeth that he had got his predictions wrong; the giant meteor was due to strike the day after tomorrow.
107. The Love Monster's voracious appetite eventually led it to consume every orchestra and ensemble in the world. No wonder; music was its food.

108. The mob boss received an unpleasant surprise when he cut open the apple pie. Unlike all the other pies, he didn't have a finger in this one.
109. The naturalist pondered the mystery which confronted her: why was the aardvark next to the zygote, and where was everything else in between?
110. The Prince and Princess recoiled in horror when their new-born son opened his mouth and took his first breath. The spoon was made of bronze!
111. The researchers looked on rapt as the 14-year old spaniel picked up the three balls and started juggling. Finally, the theory was disproved!
112. "There's something I have to do, Ariadne but I just can't remember what." "Oh come back to bed, Theseus. I'm sure it can wait till morning."
113. The Road sat disconsolately at the bar, his glass long empty. A stranger walked in. "Give me a double whisky. And one for this guy as well."
114. The state visit to Gooseland was in danger of being cancelled when the President of Duckland seriously injured his leg in a diving accident.
115. The stone flew out of the crowd and struck the adulteress squarely on the forehead. Everyone turned their gaze onto the smugly-smiling baby.
116. The tax inspector smiled grimly. He knew he had the restaurant bang to rights. The evidence was sitting on the stove – wads of boiled paper.
117. The trackers followed the clear trail of footprints in the snow, until they came across a body. It was Silicon! There was no sign of Carbon.
118. The train pulled into the station. Off stepped Invention, and there in the gloom she saw Necessity. Running to her, she called out: "Mummy!"
119. The tyrannosaur commented to the velociraptors on how beautiful the stars were that night, especially the big one that was fast approaching.
120. The wind howled and torrential rain fell. Mr and Mrs Bacterium huddled together, regretting the decision to spend their holiday in a teacup.
121. The writer frantically felt his pockets and looked about him on the floor, but to no avail. It was nowhere to be seen; he had lost the plot.
122. Timmy woke up. Too late. The room was in chaos, with all his Ps and

Qs running everywhere. His mum would never allow him to mind them again.

123. Timothy started to panic. He was desperate to start revising for his final exam the following morning, but all he could find was midday oil.
124. Todd imagined that he could see a UFO in the sky coming to take him away to another planet, but in reality it was just a baked apple pastry.
125. Tom found the cooking blind date rather harrowing. He easily managed to cut the tomato ketchup with her, but the mustard was another matter.
126. Unfortunately for Prof Brooks, none of the matter required for the experiment was left, so he only had one choice; to use the crying matter.
127. "What that, Ug?" "This internal combustion engine, Ig." "That dumb. You not invent wheel yet. That not work." "Damn! Back to drawing board."
128. "What that, Ug?" "This Large Hadron Collider, Ig. Ug invent!" "You eat?" "No, not eat." "Then, what point? Go invent fire." "What fire, Ig?"
129. "What that, Ug?" "This TV, Ig." "What TV, Ug?" "TV big box. Have pictures. Watch football." "That dumb! No one invent football. TV useless!"
130. "What that, Ug?" "This wheel, Ig." "What wheel for?" "Wheel steer car." "What car, Ug?" "Ug not know. Not invent car yet." "Ug mega stupid!"
131. "What was that name again?" "Mithras, Lord Constantine. The bull god." "Oh him. I went for the other guy. Oh well. Too late to change now."
132. When Dorothy finally staggered, exhausted and starving, round the edge of the rainbow, to her horror she discovered the sky was a dull grey.
133. When Joyce got home, she put the box on the table and listened carefully. There was a low hum! She had been tricked! The silence was silver!
134. When the white man identified himself as Wee Jimmy, David's younger brother, the awful truth dawned on Stanley that he had presumed wrongly.

135. When they heard news of the improved pay offer to the Thunder Union, the Lightning Union voted to withdraw their labour for the second time.
136. "Which school is your nephew attending, Holmes?" Holmes thought for a few moments. "Primary, my dear Watson." Somehow, it didn't ring true.
137. "Will you marry me?" "Yes, I will! I'm so in love with you." "I love you too. Let's find a witness for our wedding, Eve!" "Good idea, Adam."
138. "You're such a big disappointment to me, son. Give one good reason why I should leave you all my money." "The gun I'm holding to your head?"
139. Zeus couldn't understand why Apollo's lightning bolts were faster than his. A quick examination revealed how he cheated: he had used grease!
140. Zeus furiously searched high and low, yet it was to no avail. The lightning was there in the usual place but someone had stolen his thunder.