

## Caboolture Writers' Link

### March Discussion Subject

#### How Important is Your Book Cover and Title.

A title is a story's first impression. People make a first impression of you personally by your appearance; facial expression, how you are dressed as well as general body language. Dress sloppy and look generally untidy and slouch, who wants to know you?

**Books do it with a title and cover.** Your book title and cover are the same as your personal appearance. A title creates anticipation and expectation or, perhaps, disinterest. Paste that title onto an intriguing cover and a good presentation is your first 'hook'. Often the title and cover are what will determine whether or not someone reads a story. Which of these three stories are you most eager to read?

*The World's Room*

*They Who Get Shot*

*A Farewell to Arms*

Ernest Hemingway considered the first two titles before he settled on the final one. Hemingway asserted that a title must have magic, and I'd say *A Farewell to Arms* does indeed have a little magic.

The cover and the title of your manuscript is usually the first introduction readers have to your published work. Therefore, you must select a title that grabs attention, accurately describes the contents of your manuscript, and makes people want to read further.

#### An effective title should:

- Convey the **main topics** of the story.
- Be **concise**.
- Be **attractive** to potential readers.

Giving your work a good title and designing a good cover for your manuscript can be challenging. First, list the topics covered by the manuscript. Try to put all of the topics together in the title using as few words as possible. A title that is too long will seem clumsy, annoy readers and easily forgotten.

If the cover is poorly designed and does not convey a picture description of the story, even though the title may be good, the whole opportunity of the hook is half lost.

Since the introduction of Paperback books in 1935, covers became an integral part of the book rather than a hard bound book with a bust cover.

As an exercise, within a time frame of five minutes, go into the Library and choose a book from your favourite genre and choose strictly by cover and title. Don't look or read the synopsis or prologue. Then bring the book back and see if it stacks up to your judgment of cover/title.

Below are seven book covers and titles:

The three on the first row are classics, written in the late 1800's.

The three in the next row are modern Australian crime fiction paper backs.

The seventh is a cover I designed myself.

Before each cover and title is studied in a little more detail, follow the discussion points first.

## Discussion Points

There are seven titles, which title would give you more inspiration to read:

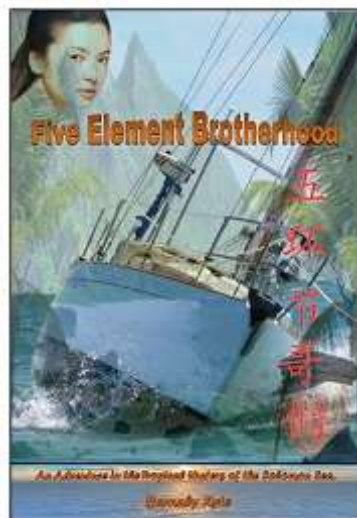
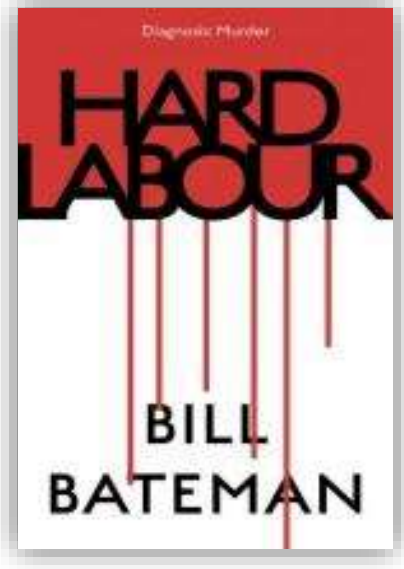
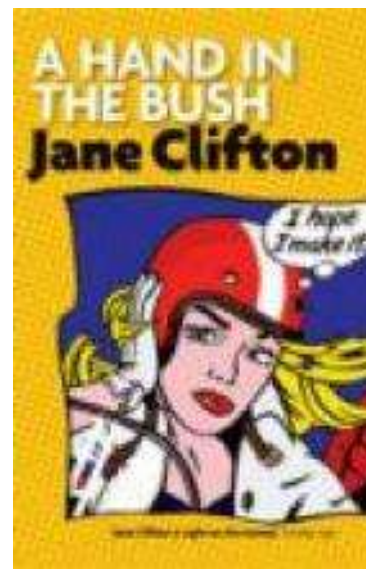
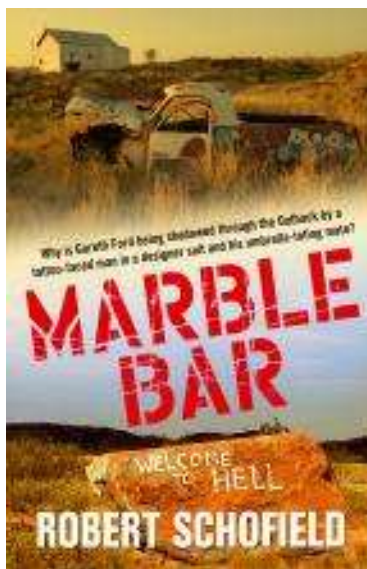
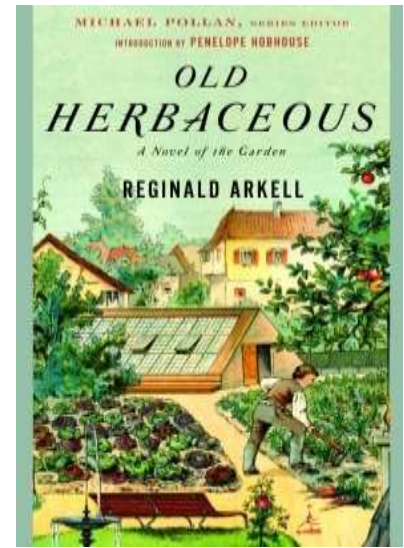
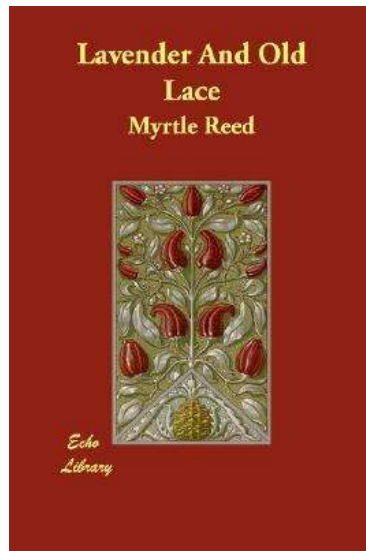
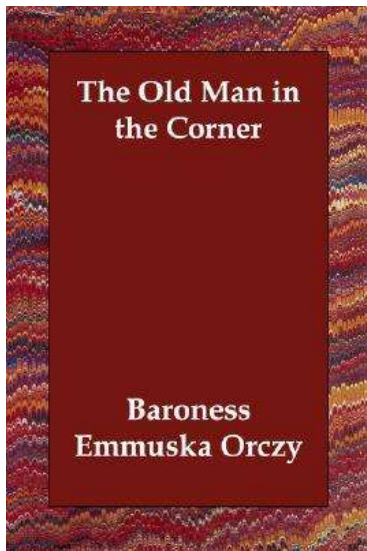
- The Old Man in the Corner.
- Lavender and Old Lace
- The Herbaceous (A Novel of the Garden)
- Marble Bar
- A Hand in the Bush
- Hard Labour.
- Five Elements Brotherhood

Now combine the Title with the cover. Of the seven book covers which book would you take from the shelf first?

Without considering the title, which cover would convey the gist of the story the most?

Which cover is the most appealing?

## Notes



## Synopsis of Each Book

**A Hand in the Bush:** In the heady days of the seventies, and at the tender age of nineteen, Decca Brand experimented with what was on offer - sex, drugs and intrigue. Far too much intrigue, it turns out, and of a sort that spells murder. Fast forward nearly thirty years and Decca is confronted by dangerous figures from her past. Not only has that, the stunning psychologist and divorcee had a blind date lined up with a married man. And then things start to get complicated.

*A Hand in the Bush* is about skeletons in the closet, and simply being in the closet. It is also the marvellous new comic thriller, brimful with wit and menace.

**Marble Bar:** Gareth Ford, with a cloud still hanging over him because of his involvement in the Gwardar Gold Heist, has decided to make a new beginning in the iron mines of Newman. But when he returns home from the night shift and finds his flatmate has been murdered, suspicion quickly falls upon him. He, however, fears he himself was the real target and soon discovers he is being tailed. He summons his old ally from the Gold Squad, DC Rose Kavanagh, and soon they find themselves in Marble Bar, searching for the Gwardar Gold and being pursued by a variety of desperadoes, each with their own agendas.

**Old Herbaceous:** A classic British novel of the garden, with a title character as outsized and unforgettable as P. G. Wodehouse's immortal butler, Jeeves. Born at the dusk of the Victorian era, Bert Pinnegar, an awkward orphan child with one leg a tad longer than the other, rises from inauspicious schoolboy days spent picking wildflowers and dodging angry farmers to become the legendary head gardener "Old Herbaceous," the most esteemed flower-show judge in the county and a famed horticultural wizard capable of producing dazzling April strawberries from the greenhouse and the exact morning glories his Lady spies on the French Riviera, "so blue, so blue it positively hurts." Sprinkled with nuggets of gardening wisdom, *Old Herbaceous* is a witty comic portrait of the most archetypal—and crotchety—head gardener ever to plant a row of bulbs at a British country house.

**Old Man in the Corner:** A nameless, eccentric old man, sitting in the corner of a cozy London tea shop, uses pure deduction to solve a series of baffling crimes -- from gruesome murders and cases of deadly blackmail, to daring thefts and brilliant deceptions. For devotees of Sherlock Holmes: ingenious, well-crafted stories by the author of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

**Lavender and Old Lace:** A rickety carriage was slowly ascending the hill, and from the place of honour on the back seat, the single passenger surveyed the country with interest and admiration. The driver of that ancient chariot was an awkward young fellow, possibly twenty-five years of age, with sharp knees, large, red hands, high cheekbones, and abundant hair of a shade verging upon orange. He was not unpleasant to look upon, however, for he had a certain evident honesty, and he was disposed to be friendly to everyone.

**Hard Labour:** After a medical mishap, Dr Vince Hanrahan crashes professionally and personally, is all but struck off, and the Medical Board kicks him all the way down the Princes Highway to be a rural GP. Supervised. On notice. He rents a dump, lives off takeaway, and plans to see out his time before regaining his rightful position on the specialist pedestal.

Vince's old terrors resurface when he sees his young patient dead on the labour ward floor. The investigation declares the cause of death suspicious. Unless he can find out who did it, and why, the Board will come after him. And he's on his last chance.

After another suspicious death, Vince realises that only he can clean up this mess; it's time to pull his finger out. With the help of the IT-savvy Senior Constable Elena Genovesi and Emu Quick, a dying junkie and drug dealer, he sets up an elaborate, high-risk sting.

But even if he can get through this, has Vince lost his old life forever?

