



Welcome to the inaugural **Evesham Festival of Words Book Blurb Competition**.

Inspired by an excellent talk, 'Confessions of a Book Blurb Writer' from Louise Willder during our 2023 Festival, we invite you to guess the names of the following books (and give the name of the author) from the blurbs provided.

1. After a whirlwind romance in Monte Carlo, a young woman accompanies her new husband, recently widowed, to his house in Cornwall. The bride soon realises she is not welcome there. Mrs Danvers, the housekeeper, is in thrall to her employer's late wife and treats her new mistress with disdain, using every means of undermining her. Worse still, the young bride's husband becomes cold, distant and difficult to please, leaving her more and more isolated.

What is the shadow that hangs over his life and this house?

2. A young Italian officer is posted to the Greek island of Cephalonia as part of the occupying forces. At first he is ostracised by the locals but over time he proves himself to be civilised, humorous – and a consummate musician. Can this fragile world survive as war gets closer and the lines are drawn between invader and defender?
3. After the tragic sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild, blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen-year-old boy, a hyena, a zebra (with a broken leg), a female orang-utan - and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger.
4. Just days after ... learned that ..., her husband of thirty-two years, was terminally ill, they lost their home and their livelihood. With nothing left and little time, they impulsively decided to walk the 630-mile South West Coast Path.... Living wild and free, at the mercy of sea and sky, they discovered a new, liberating existence - but what would they find at the journey's end?
5. The epic story of the planet Arrakis, its Atreides rulers and their mortal enemies the Harkonnens is the finest, most widely acclaimed and enduring science fiction novel of the century.

Huge in scope, towering in concept, it is a work that will live on in the reader's imagination.

6. 1939. Europe teeters on the brink of war. Ten strangers are invited to Soldier Island, an isolated rock near the Devon coast. Cut off from the mainland, with their generous hosts Mr and Mrs U.N. Owen mysteriously absent, they are each accused of a terrible crime. When one of the party dies suddenly, they realise they may be harbouring a murderer among their number.

7. 'When the Second World War breaks out, young Wille Beech is evacuated to the countryside. A sad, deprived child, he slowly begins to flourish under the care of kind old Tom Oakley. But then his cruel mother summons him back to war-torn London.....'
8. Pulitzer Prize winning novel told through the eyes of Scout, tomboy and younger sister of Jem, and daughter of the town's lawyer, a widower of advancing years. This is the story of life growing up in Maycomb in the American deep south during the depression and times of racial tension.

The children's life changes dramatically when their father is asked to defend a young, black man accused of raping a white, teenage girl. Tensions run high in the town and the children learn that situations aren't always what they seem to be.

9. 'Two years after my mother died, my father fell in love with a glamorous blonde Ukrainian divorcee. He was eighty-four and she was thirty-six. She exploded into our lives like a fluffy pink grenade, churning up the murky waters, bringing to the surface a sludge of sloughed-off memories, giving the family ghosts a kick up the backside.'

Sisters Vera and Nadezhda must put aside a lifetime of feuding to save their émigré father from voluptuous gold-digger Valentina. With her proclivity for green satin underwear and boil-in-the-bag cuisine, she will stop at nothing in her pursuit of Western wealth.

But the sisters' campaign to oust Valentina unearths family secrets, uncovers fifty years of Europe's darkest history and sends them back to roots they'd much rather forget.....

10. Drifters in search of work, George and his simple minded friend Lennie have nothing in the world except each other and a dream, a dream that one day they will have some land of their own. Eventually they find work on a ranch in California's Salinas Valley, but their hopes are doomed as Lennie, struggling against extreme cruelty, misunderstanding and feelings of jealousy, becomes a victim of his own strength.
11. The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one option: to breed. If she deviates, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire – neither Offred's nor that of the two men on whom her future hangs.
12. Set in the marshes of North Carolina, Kya has been left by everyone she knows. Her mother put on her best heels and walked off down the lane with a suitcase. Her brothers and sisters, promising to come back and make things better, have not returned. Her often violent, drunken, father disappears. Kya survives on her own, isolated from the local community and unable to read but well-versed in the ways of living off the swamp.

The only person to show her kindness is Tate, an old friend of one of her brother Jodie, but then Tate disappears. Enter school football star and local Romeo, Chase Andrews. Could he be telling the truth, and can she trust him, when he says he will take care of her and marry her?

13. 'Why did you do all this for me?' he asked. 'I don't deserve it. I've never done anything for you.'

'You have been my friend,' replied Charlotte. 'That in itself is a tremendous thing.'

**14.** Forty years ago, Harriet Vanger disappeared from a family gathering. Her body was never found, yet her uncle is convinced it was murder - and that the killer is a member of his own dysfunctional family. Soon a disgraced journalist and a young hacker begin to unravel a dark and appalling history.

**15.** One Thursday lunchtime the Earth gets unexpectedly demolished to make way for a new hyperspace bypass. For Arthur Dent, who has only just had his house demolished that morning, this seems already to be more than he can cope with. Sadly, however, the weekend has only just begun, and the galaxy is a very strange and startling place.

(With special thanks to Louise Willder, blurb writer and author of *'Blurb Your Enthusiasm: An A-Z of Literary Persuasion.'* who gave us blurbs no. 2, no. 3 and no. 14]