

Book Buzz

With Carolyn Larson

Head Librarian at Lihue Public Library

Bringing you the buzz on new, popular and good books available at your neighborhood library.

Book annotations are largely culled from online publisher descriptions and published reviews.

ONE WORD WONDERS

Distilling a book title to one word is a literary art and a marketing craft that has been practiced through the ages. History has given us some classic one-word titles such as **Ulysses, Hamlet, Walden, Frankenstein, Kidnapped** or **Lolita**.

Today the one-word title is a favorite for thrillers. It seems to promise excitement and a crisp pace; and it demonstrates a certain shock value.

Collision

By Jeff Abbott

Fiction A

Missing

By Karin Alvtegen

Fiction A

Illegal

By Paul Levine

Fiction L

The mysterious elements of a one-word title work well for...well, mysteries. We want to know what is left unsaid.

Findings

By Mary Anna Evans

Fiction E

Dissolution

By C.J. Sansom

Fiction S

But westerns and romances also use attention-grabbing mono-titles.

Abandon

By Carla Neggers

Fiction N

Missy

By Chris Hannan

Fiction H

Resolution

By Robert Parker

Fiction P

Was it Peter Benchly's **Jaws**, or perhaps Alex Haley's **Roots** that set off the modern hunt for one-word titles? The seduction of single-word titles extends to movies, musicals, comic books and TV shows. Consider the following: **Casablanca**, **Bambi**, or **Madagascar**. **Oklahoma**, **Evita**, **Chicago**. **Batman** and **Peanuts**. **Lost** or **Monk**.

Today a punchy one-word-title followed by a descriptive sub-title is a favorite format for non-fiction titles.

Nemesis

The Last Days of the American Republic

By Chalmers Johnson

973.931 Jo

Send

Why People Email So Badly and How to Do It Better

By David Shipley and Will Schwalbe

658.05469 Sh

Some non-fiction authors use single word titles to introduce new ideas:

Crowdsourcing

Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business

658.4063 Ho

Nudge

Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness

By Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein

330.019 Th

Outliers

By Malcolm Gladwell

811.09 M

Other non-fiction writers want the drama of a single title, but can't resist telling you more.

Hospital

Man, Woman, Birth, Death, Infinity, Plus Red Tape, Bad Behavior, Money, God and Diversity on Steroids

By Julie Salamon

362.11097 Sa

Single word titles haven't always been the rage. Some 18th century authors subscribed to the if-some-is-good-more-is-better philosophy. Take for example: **A Voyage to the South Sea, Undertaken by Command of His Majesty, For the Purpose of Conveying the Bread-Fruit Tree to the West Indies, In His Majesty's Ship The Bounty, Commanded by Lieutenant William Bligh** (1792, RH 910.4 Bl). But look what happened to him.

Like Bligh certain people are universally known by a single word name making short work of biography title selection:

Gandhi

The Man, His People, and the Empire

By Rajmohan Gandhi
954.03509 Ga

Or in this case both the biographer and the biographee warranted single word names:

Scorsese

By Ebert
791.43023 Eb

Fiction writers sometimes use the one word name as a way to evoke the same singularity for their characters.

Scarpetta

By Patricia Cornwell
Fiction C

Drood

By Daniel Suarez
Fiction S

And autobiographical works are not immune to one-word titles:

Audition

By Barbara Walters
070.92 Wa

Infidel

By Ayaan Hirsi Ali
949.2073 Hi

All the books and movies mentioned in this column are available at Lihue Library or through any of the neighborhood libraries on Kauai. Contemplate the power of a title and give the one-word wonders a try.

Happy reading.