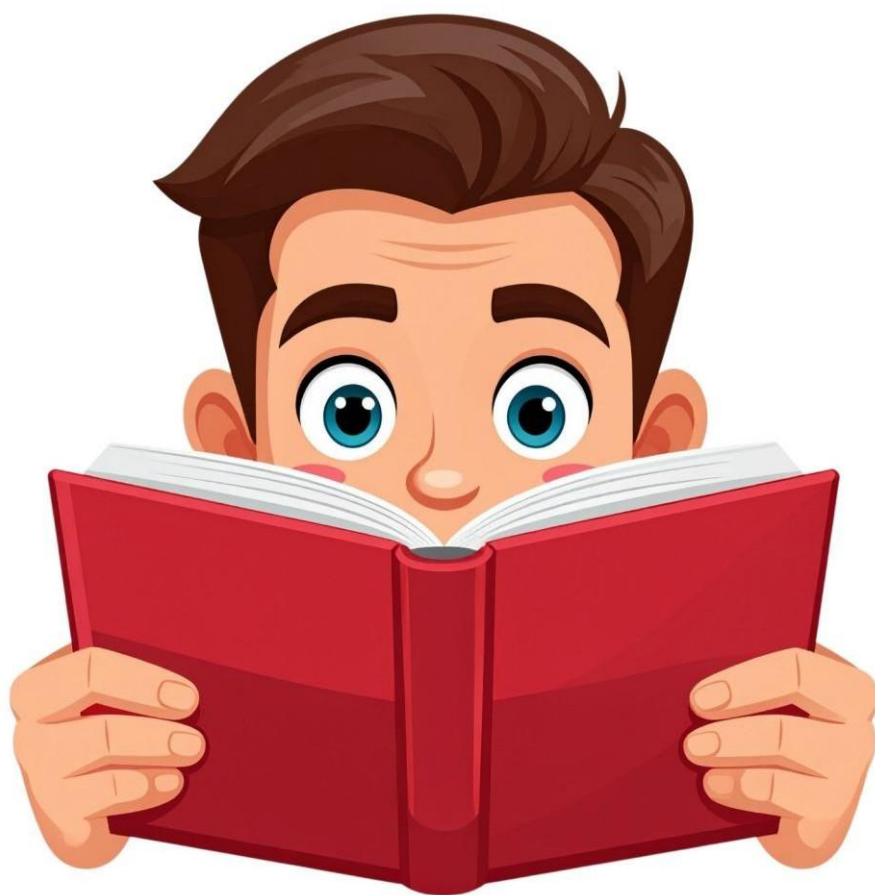


# SUSPENSE

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# **SUSPENSE**

**In suspense, anticipation for what will happen next reigns supreme. These books are exciting and usually fast paced, with unexpected twists and turns and ample tension.**

## **James Patterson:**

Patterson's popular novels encompass the suspense, thriller, and mystery genres, but he is most closely identified with suspense. His books are known for their twists and turns and their rapid pace. He routinely is the most popular author in our system every year.

If you like James Patterson, try:

- Jeffrey Deaver
- Jonathan Kellerman
- John Sandford
- Michael Connelly
- Lee Child
- Patricia Cornwell
- Greg Iles
- Anne Holt
- Ridley Pearson
- Rachel Howzell Hall

## **John Sandford:**

Best known for his Prey series, Sandford writes dark, gritty, violent suspense novels with a lightning-fast pace.

If you like John Sandford, try:

- James Patterson
- Michael Connelly
- Robert Crais
- Lee Child
- Jeffrey Deaver
- Stuart Woods

## **Harlan Coben:**

Coben writes both suspense and mystery, but their emphasis on everyday people facing extraordinary danger, fast pace, and twists and turns make them excellent choices for suspense readers.

If you like Harlan Coben, try:

- Michael Connelly
- John Sandford
- Lee Child
- Lisa Gardner
- Don Winslow
- Thomas Perry
- Gregg Hurwitz
- Kathy Reichs
- Stuart Woods

## **Lee Child**

Child's violent, fast-paced novels follow Jack Reacher, a loner vigilante who helps others find justice in his travels. These very dark novels are full of twists and turns and also overlap a bit with the genres of thriller and mystery.

If you like Lee Child, try:

- Michael Connelly
- Robert Crais
- F. Paul Wilson
- James Lee Burke
- Barry Eisler
- Reginald Hill
- Vince Flynn
- Roger Hobbs
- Peter Deutermann

## **Lisa Gardner:**

Gardner writes suspense that has a heavier emphasis on romance than other examples in the genre but without quite being romantic suspense. So, if you want more romance than regular suspense offers but not quite romantic suspense, she's a fine choice.

If you like Lisa Gardner, try:

- Tami Hoag
- Karin Slaughter
- Lisa Jackson
- Iris Johansen
- Tess Gerritsen
- Harlan Coben
- John Sandford
- Catherine Coulter
- J.D. Robb
- Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
- Chevy Stevens
- Megan Abbott
- Chelsea Cain
- Alex Kava

## **Jeffrey Deaver:**

Best known for his Lincoln Rhymes series, Deaver's violent page-turner books feature strong, ordinary characters investigating shrewd evil villains. The focus is more on the suspense than the mystery, and these twisty books provide plenty of action.

If you like Jeffrey Deaver:

- Michael Connelly
- Patricia Cornwell
- Thomas Harris
- James Patterson
- Jonathan Kellerman
- Tess Gerritsen
- Ridley Pearson
- Thomas Perry

## **Blast from the Past**

Like suspense but don't enjoy how disturbingly dark many books in the genre are? Check out Mary Higgins Clark, who still remains the queen of softer-edged suspense. Her novels feature strong women protagonists and all the twists and turns readers expect from this genre but without the strong violence, sexual content, and profanity that contemporary suspense often features.

Already like Clark's work?

- Carol Higgins Clark
- Mary Jane Behrends Clark
- April Henry (adult and YA novels)
- Judith Kelman

## **Branching Out from Suspense**

Enjoy suspense but looking for another genre to try?

If you like harder-edged suspense (James Patterson, John Sandford, etc.):

- True crime nonfiction (Ann Rule)
- Gritty crime thrillers (Elmore Leonard)
- PI/police procedural detective novels (T. Jefferson Parker)

If you like softer-edged suspense (Mary Higgins Clark):

- Amateur sleuth detectives (Nevada Barr, Dana Stabenow)
- Romantic suspense (Diane Chamberlain)
- Adventure (Alistair MacLean, Jack Higgins)
- Thrillers (Robin Cook, John Grisham)

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SUSPENSE**

**As the name states, psychological suspense novels are especially concerned with the psychological undertones of the crime. In some books of this genre, the focus is on the mind of disturbing villains, while in others, the setting is more domestic, and the emphasis is on the psychological dynamics at play between the characters. These books are usually highly atmospheric and often have a slower pace and more elegant writing styles than other suspense novels.**

### **Frieda McFadden:**

McFadden has skyrocketed in popularity the last year in our system and in the United States in general. Her dark, twisty books often feature ordinary women facing dangerous, unpredictable situations.

If you like Freida McFadden:

- Colleen Hoover
- Lisa Jewell
- Alice Feeney
- Riley Sager
- Rachel Howzell Hall
- Mary Kubica
- Jeneva Rose
- Paula Hawkins
- Shari Lapena
- Gillian Flynn

### **Colleen Hoover**

Hoover writes both psychological suspense and dark romances. Her suspense novels can be steamy like romantic suspense, but their unreliable narrators, dark secrets, and focus on the disturbing intricate psychology of the characters makes these books compelling psychological suspense.

If you like Colleen Hoover:

- Freida McFadden
- Alice Feeney
- Gillian Flynn
- Jayne Ann Krentz

## **Lisa Jewell**

Jewell's novels feature suburban British settings and frequently focus on crime victims and perpetrators. She is particularly noted for her complex, interesting characters, who are flawed ordinary people facing intense situations, and her books probe them and their relationships just as much as they do the suspenseful situations these characters find themselves in.

If you like Lisa Jewell:

- Sophie Hannah
- Liane Moriarty
- Laura Dave
- Sarah Pekkanen
- Joy Fielding
- Ruth Ware
- Alice Feeney
- Shari Lapena
- Megan Miranda

## **Ruth Ware**

Ware's compelling, intricate psychological suspense novels focus on women caught up in dangerous circumstances, usually in British settings. Her books are highly atmospheric and packed full of tension.

If you like Ruth Ware:

- Lisa Jewell
- Shari Lapena
- Riley Sager
- Alice Feeney
- Lucy Foley
- Megan Miranda
- Paula Hawkins
- Sophie Hannah
- Gillian McAllister
- J.P. Delaney
- Chris Bohjalian
- B.A. Paris

## Joy Fielding

Fielding's likeable, sympathetic characters think they're safe. However, they are anything but. These plucky female protagonists face off against evil amidst seemingly normal everyday settings as the tension and danger in the novel builds.

If you like Joy Fielding:

- Mary Higgins Clark
- Lisa Gardner
- Tami Hoag
- Erica Spindler
- Sarah Pekkanen
- Gillian Flynn
- Lisa Jewell

## Alice Feeney

Feeney's clever, eerie psychological suspense novels often feature multiple narrators who may or may not be reliable. Her interesting characters deal with danger and deceit, often in vivid English or Scottish settings.

If you like Alice Feeney:

- Lisa Jewell
- Ruth Ware
- Riley Sager
- B.A. Paris
- Shari Lapena
- Mary Kubica
- Paula Hawkins
- Lucy Foley
- Gillian Flynn

## Jeneva Rose

Rose writes romances as well as psychological suspense, so it is no surprise that the relationships in her suspense novels are a special focus and are also well-developed. Her settings range from Small Town USA to large American cities, but in all her psychological suspense books, characters deal with situations that are far more dangerous than they appear.

If you like Jeneva Rose:

- Freida McFadden
- Lucinda Berry
- Colleen Hoover
- Alice Feeney
- Lisa Jewell
- Mary Kubica



## **Riley Sager**

Sager's eerie, frightening novels blend horror and suspense. They focus on women, who are frequently unreliable narrators, caught up in dangerous, creepy circumstances. The books are packed with unexpected thrills, twists, and turns.

If you like Riley Sager:

- Ruth Ware
- Lisa Jewell
- Alice Feeney
- Lucy Foley
- Shari Lapena
- Grady Hendrix

## **Blast from the Past**

Enjoy this genre but looking for a change of pace with it? Patricia Highsmith helped pioneer the genre, and her books still hold up well, decades after they were written. She writes about charming but evil characters in morally murky situations who find themselves in circumstances far outside of their control.

Already like Highsmith's work?

- Ruth Rendell/Barbara Vine
- Gillian Flynn
- Rachel Howzell Hall
- Petra Hammesfahr
- Peter Abrahams
- Minette Walters
- Robert Goddard
- Stephen Dobyns

## **Branching out from Psychological Suspense**

Enjoy this genre but looking to try another one with similarities to it?

- Mysteries with an emphasis on the psychological (Caleb Carr, Elizabeth George, P.D. James)
- Thrillers with an emphasis on the psychological (John Le Carre, Graham Greene, Thomas Harris)
- Darker literary fiction with an emphasis on the psychological (Joyce Carol Oates, Haruki Murakami)
- Horror with an emphasis on the psychological (Anne Rice, Stephen King)
- True crime (Ann Rule)

## **ROMANTIC SUSPENSE**

**Romantic suspense blends romance and suspense, not too surprisingly. What sets it apart from other suspense subgenres, though, is the emphasis on the romance. It takes center stage and is given as equal attention as the suspenseful situations these characters find themselves in as they fall in love in these fast-paced novels.**

### **Nora Roberts/J.D. Robb**

Roberts often blends romance and suspense in her novels, and her pen name J.D. Robb's In Death series blends romantic suspense with mystery and science fiction. Her fast-paced writing focuses on appealing characters and features compelling plots.

If you like Nora Roberts:

- Suzanne Brockmann
- Eileen Goudge
- Anne Stuart
- Elizabeth Adler
- Jayne Ann Krentz
- Linda Howard
- Jayne Ann Krentz
- Julie Garwood

If you like J.D. Robb:

- Suzanne Brockmann
- Julie Garwood
- Linda Howard
- Lisa Gardner

## **Sandra Brown**

Brown's fast-paced romantic suspense novels are dark and steamy. As is true of many authors in this genre, Brown pivoted to romantic suspense after starting as a romance writer, and these action-packed stories are equal parts chilling suspense and appealing romance.

If you like Sandra Brown:

- Catherine Coulter
- Linda Howard
- Julie Garwood
- Jayne Ann Krentz
- Karen Robards
- Heather Graham

## **Lisa Jackson**

These violent twisting tales feature settings across the United States but particularly in the South and the West. Her likeable protagonists find romance and danger in these dark, steamy novels.

If you like Lisa Jackson:

- Lisa Gardner
- Iris Johansen
- Tami Hoag
- Allison Brennan
- Catherine Coulter
- Heather Graham
- Randy Wayne White
- Erica Spindler
- Mary Burton
- Beverly Barton
- Karen Robards
- Laura Griffin
- Tami Hoag

## **Jana DeLeon**

DeLeon's romantic suspense has a lighter touch than many of the other examples listed here. They have romance and suspense, of course, but also ample humor as well. She also writes more general romances and mysteries.

If you like Jana DeLeon:

- Janet Evanovich

## **Iris Johansen**

Johansen is noted for her likeable characters that readers root for, and she often brings them back in her books. Her books are fast-paced and steamy and can also feature strong violent content.

If you like Iris Johansen:

- Catherine Coulter
- Nora Roberts
- Lisa Jackson
- Lisa Gardner
- Elizabeth Lowell
- Julie Garwood
- Cindy Gerard
- Carla Neggers
- Tami Hoag
- Kay Hooper
- Karen Robards

## **Tami Hoag**

Hoag's novels are primarily plot-driven, though they also still have appealing characters. The emphasis, though, is on the twists and turns in these dark, violent, steamy books that can be quite frightening.

If you like Tami Hoag:

- Stella Cameron
- Iris Johansen
- Lisa Gardner
- Kay Hooper
- Patricia Cornwell
- Catherine Coulter
- Linda Howard
- Tess Gerritsen
- James Patterson
- Alex Kava
- Lisa Jackson

## **Catherine Coulter**

Coulter writes both romantic suspense and historical romance. Her romantic suspense is what is particularly popular in our system. They have modern-day settings and often characters with an FBI connection. They feature strong women characters, lots of action and suspense, and plenty of romance.

If you like Catherine Coulter:

- Iris Johansen
- Julie Garwood
- Elizabeth Lowell
- Karen Robards
- Judith McNaught
- Kat Martin

## **Heather Graham**

Graham writes in a range of romance subgenres. Her romantic suspense, like her more general romance titles, features engaging characters and vivid settings. Her romantic suspense novels can feature strong violence and explicit sex scenes.

If you like Heather Graham:

- Sandra Brown
- Kay Hooper
- Nora Roberts
- Catherine Coulter
- Jayne Ann Krentz
- Karen Robards
- Beverly Barton

## **Jayne Ann Krentz**

Krentz's romantic suspense—she writes in several romance genres—has an engaging sense of humor and doesn't have as dark of a tone as some of the other authors featured here. They do have plenty of steamy romance and blend a fast pace with a character-driven focus.

If you like Jayne Ann Krentz:

- Nora Roberts
- Linda Howard
- Julie Garwood
- Elizabeth Lowell
- Jaci Burton
- Sandra Brown
- Selena Montgomery

## **Blast from the Past**

Like romantic suspense but looking for something different? Not a fan of the strong violence and sexual content frequently found in newer books in this genre? Try Daphne du Maurier, who was writing romantic suspense before it was advertised as romantic suspense. Her moody, atmospheric gothic novels feature romantic elements but also a strong eerie element of menace and are frequently set in Cornwall, England.

Already like du Maurier's work?

- Anya Seton
- Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- Isabel Cañas
- Kate Morton
- Charlotte Bronte
- Emily Bronte
- Susan Hill
- Gillian Flynn

## **Branching out from Romantic Suspense**

Like romantic suspense but interested in trying other genres?

If you like the more action-packed, violent, steamy variety of romantic suspense:

- Paranormal romance (Christine Feehan, Laurell K. Hamilton)
- Harder-edged suspense (Lisa Gardner)
- Steamy historical romance (Amanda Quick)
- Steamy contemporary romance (Christina Lauren, Lucy Score)

If you prefer less explicit violence and sexual content:

- Classic romantic suspense (Victoria Holt, Phyllis A. Whitney)
- Christian romantic suspense (Irene Hannon)
- Somewhat cozy mysteries that emphasize adventure more than puzzles (Elizabeth Peters)
- Historical romance (Georgette Heyer)
- Softer-edged suspense (Mary Higgins Clark)
- Women's fiction (Katherine Center)

## **CHRISTIAN ROMANTIC SUSPENSE**

**Christian romantic suspense novels blend the romance and suspense readers expect from these genres but without the explicit and/or steamy sexual content often depicted by other authors in the same genre. It is also combined with a Christian message, though some books are more overt and others are more subtle in how theology is incorporated.**

### **Colleen Coble**

Coble writes compelling Christian romantic suspense with elements of mystery that have an emphasis on justice prevailing at the end. Her books aren't as dark as many contemporary romantic suspense novels are and are also free of graphic violence, as well as sex scenes and profanity.

If you like Colleen Coble:

- Terri Blackstock
- Lynette Eason
- Irene Hannon
- Dee Henderson
- Dani Pettrey

### **Irene Hannon**

Hannon writes romantic suspense with a subtle Christian message. The sweet romances within her work are secondary to the fast-paced adventure and suspense, and her engaging characters often frequently work in law enforcement.

If you like Irene Hannon:

- Lynette Eason
- Dee Henderson
- Colleen Coble
- Dani Pettrey
- Terri Blackstock
- DiAnn Mills



## **Lynette Eason**

Like Hannon, Eason writes fast-paced Christian romantic suspense that emphasizes the action and twists and turns but also features chaste romances, usually involving characters with law enforcement backgrounds. Eason's work is a bit darker and grittier but always ends on a hopeful note.

If you like Lynette Eason:

- Irene Hannon
- Dee Henderson
- Dani Pettrey
- Colleen Coble
- Janice Cantore
- DiAnn Mills

## **Dee Henderson**

Henderson deftly incorporates Christianity with fast-paced, action-packed romantic suspense. Her characters are especially well-drawn as she brings them together and through the danger.

If you like Dee Henderson:

- Terri Blackstock
- Irene Hannon
- Lynette Eason
- Colleen Coble
- DiAnn Mills
- Karen Kingsbury
- Lori Wick
- Tracie Peterson

## **Nancy Mehl**

Mehl writes both Christian romantic suspense and cozy mysteries. Her books, including her suspense novels, often involve Midwest settings and Mennonite characters and communities. Her books are character-driven and emphasize the likeable protagonists over the action.

If you like Nancy Mehl:

- Lynette Eason
- DiAnn Mills
- Janice Cantore
- Irene Hannon
- Colleen Coble
- Terri Blackstock

## **Terri Blackstock**

Blackstock's novels focus on small-town everyday people facing difficult situations while sustained by their faith. Her characters are flawed but sincere and frequently recur in her books. She blends suspense and romance seamlessly and often delves into grittier issues than other Christian romantic suspense authors.

If you like Terri Blackstock:

- Dee Henderson
- Colleen Coble
- Irene Hannon
- Kristen Heitzmann
- Karen Kingsbury
- Lori Wick

## **Blast from the Past**

Though he doesn't write romantic suspense, Ted Dekker has authored several popular Christian suspense novels. He writes in a range of genres, and he tends to incorporate Christianity subtly in his work. He is especially known for his complex characters and vividly realized settings.

Already like Dekker's work?

- Frank E. Peretti
- Tosca Moon Lee
- Samuel Parker
- James L. Rubart
- Tim LaHaye
- Robert Whitlow
- Francine Rivers
- Bodie Thoene
- Joel C. Rosenburg
- Karen Kingsbury
- Mark Andrew Olsen

## **Branching out from Christian Suspense**

Enjoy this genre but looking to try another one with similarities to it?

- Christian fiction (Karen Kingsbury, Francine Rivers)
- Christian romance (Lori Wick, Beverly Lewis)
- Cozy mysteries (Alexander McCall Smith)
- Softer-edge suspense (Mary Higgins Clark)

## Looking for more suggestions on what to read?

- Fill out our online Berryville Library's What Should I Read Next? form.  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf7VfQV7xaYIoTACTX7kX\\_TdTPHwQ1i9UnqBwVDs3gGrYcpcg/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=116325047873771509704](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf7VfQV7xaYIoTACTX7kX_TdTPHwQ1i9UnqBwVDs3gGrYcpcg/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=116325047873771509704)
- Request a reader's advisory consultation at the library. You can call, email, or stop by the library to learn more.



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