

THRILLERS

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CONSPIRACY THRILLERS

Thrillers, at their heart, are action-packed, compelling stories of suspense and danger specific to a profession. There is overlap with the genre of suspense, but the appeal of thrillers are specifically the deep dives into the job/profession of the main character. The resulting jargon and technical detail provides atmospheric worldbuilding that can make these substantially more detailed than suspense but no less engrossing. Conspiracy thrillers are the most popular type of thriller in our system, and it is also the most varied because the heroes can hold a range of jobs that bring them into close contact with danger and, well, conspiracy.

David Baldacci:

Baldacci's settings may have the greatest amount of sheer range among thriller writers, spanning the halls of government to corporate boardrooms to the criminal underworld. Regardless of the professional world they are set in, his thrillers are fast-paced and full of action and suspenseful twists and turns. His good guys are very good, and his bad guys are very bad, and there is a heavy focus on unraveling corruption and conspiracies.

If you like David Baldacci:

- Stuart Woods
- Stephen J. Cannell
- Jeffrey Archer
- Brad Meltzer
- Stephen W. Frey
- Kyle Mills
- James Grippando
- John Grisham
- Vince Flynn
- Michael Connelly
- Lee Child
- James Patterson
- John Sandford
- Brad Thor
- Nelson DeMille
- Daniel Silva

Stuart Woods

Woods also writes thrillers with a variety of settings, usually focused on an investigation of some sort. His books are fast paced, packed with twists and turns, and can have quite a bit of sex and violence. Revenge is a recurring element of Woods' books.

If you like Stuart Woods:

- David Baldacci
- Stephen J. Cannell
- Harlan Coben
- John Grisham
- Nelson DeMille
- Sidney Sheldon
- John Sandford
- James Patterson
- Michael Connelly
- Lee Child
- J.A. Jance
- Sue Grafton

Steve Berry

Steve Berry's books are often equally billed as both adventure and thrillers. He is best known for his fast-paced, exciting Cotton Malone series. Malone is a former federal agent-turned-bookseller who finds himself caught in the middle of conspiracies with historical connections around the globe. He often relies on his knowledge of books and his ability to solve codes and puzzles to beat his opponents.

If you like Steve Berry:

- Raymond Khoury
- Dan Brown
- James Rollins
- David Baldacci
- Daniel Silva
- Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
- Brad Thor
- Vince Flynn
- Clive Cussler
- Brad Meltzer
- Tom Clancy

Jeffrey Archer

Archer writes everything from family sagas to police stories, but his books usually maintain the hallmarks of thrillers, including fast pace, battles between good and evil characters, and twists and turns. Conspiracies and revenge are a frequent plot point as well. His series include the multigenerational family saga of the Cliftons, which covers most of 20th century British history, and the William Warwick series, the high-octane adventures of a London cop who finds himself stopping terrorist attacks, transporting the crown jewels, and more.

If you like Jeffrey Archer:

- W. E. B. Griffin
- Sidney Sheldon
- Patricia Highsmith
- David Baldacci
- Ken Follett

Linwood Barclay

Barclay's books blend suspense and thriller, but he considers himself a thriller writer foremost. Some of his novels feature the fictional town of Promise Falls and follow a reporter unraveling secrets and conspiracies. However, even in his other standalone work, an ordinary person often finds themselves unwittingly caught in the middle of a dark conspiracy, which leads to weighty ethical dilemmas.

If you like Linwood Barclay:

- Alison Gaylin
- Harlan Coben
- Karin Slaughter
- Michael Connelly
- Lisa Gardner
- Jeffery Deaver
- Lisa Unger

Gregg Hurwitz

Hurwitz's thrillers are fast-paced and can feature graphic violence from particularly sinister villains. As with Ashford, his books often feature everyday protagonists unwittingly caught up in conspiracies, though his approach tends to be more plot-focused. He has standalone thrillers, as well as the Orphan X series, about a trained assassin who uses his talents for good.

If you like Gregg Hurwitz:

- Harlan Coben
- Jeffrey Ashford

Dan Brown

Brown's thrillers follow heroes who use their brains to outwit the villain rather than their brawn. In his fast-paced books, solving codes and puzzles is the key to stopping international conspiracies. His Robert Langdon series features an Ivy League symbology professor who applies his knowledge to art, history, and more to stop terrorists and shadowy sinister cabals. Though Brown is best known for the Langdon books, he also wrote a couple of well-received technothrillers in the 1990s that may appeal more to thriller fans who prefer science and cyber-oriented thrillers.

If you like Dan Brown:

- Raymond Khoury
- Steve Berry
- James Rollins
- Daniel Silva
- Katherine Neville
- David Liss
- Tom Clancy
- Michael Crichton
- John Grisham
- David Baldacci
- Robert Ludlum
- Ken Follett
- Brendan Slocumb

Blast from the Past

Frederick Forsyth wrote thrillers for over 40 years and had multiple titles adapted into films. His suspenseful, action-packed political thrillers revolve around international conspiracies among professional assassins, spies, military officers, and more. He is especially noted for the meticulous planning his books feature, their chilling realism, and his direct, precise prose.

Already like Forsyth's work?

- Tom Clancy
- Ken Follett
- Nelson DeMille
- Christopher Reich
- Alex Berenson
- John Le Carré
- Jack Higgins
- Daniel Silva

Branching out from Conspiracy Thrillers

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

- Mysteries (Michael Connelly, James Lee Burke)
- Suspense (James Patterson, John Sandford, Harlan Coben)
- Romantic suspense (Nora Roberts, Tami Hoag)
- Adventure (Jack Higgins, Alistair MacLean)
- Legal thrillers (John Grisham)
- Espionage thrillers (Brad Thor, Vince Flynn)
- Crime thrillers (Randy Wayne White)
- Police/law enforcement thrillers (Lisa Regan)
- Technothrillers (Tom Clancy, Michael Crichton)
- Supernatural thrillers (Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child)

LEGAL THRILLERS

Legal thrillers feature attorneys of all stripes as main characters. Whether they're prosecutors, defense attorneys, or something else, the heroes of these stories find suspense and danger in their cases. These books can often feature rather in-depth explorations of legal issues, which is part of the appeal for readers, and are frequently written by actual attorneys.

John Grisham

Though Arkansas native Grisham writes a wide range of genres now, including true crime and tender coming-of-age stories, his early legal thrillers are still extremely popular and *the* quintessential example of the genre for many readers. His fast-paced books feature likeable lawyer protagonists who grapple with hot-button political and legal issues in their cases. Unlike many thriller writers, Grisham has written lots of standalones, so there are many entry points for trying out his work.

If you like John Grisham:

- David Baldacci
- Brad Meltzer
- Greg Iles
- Lisa Scottoline
- Alafair Burke
- Steve Martini
- Marcia Clark
- Scott Turow
- Stuart Woods

Lisa Scottoline

Scottoline draws on her real-life experiences as an experienced attorney to write her books. Her legal thriller series and standalones usually feature vivid Philadelphia settings and have a keen sense of humor as her engaging, strong female characters unravel complicated legal issues. Her work is more character-driven than most other thrillers and usually incorporates the protagonists' personal lives as well as their professional responsibilities. Scottoline also writes humorous nonfiction memoirs.

If you like Lisa Scottoline:

- Steve Martini
- Linda Fairstein
- John Grisham
- Perri O'Shaughnessy
- William Bernhardt

Greg Iles

Iles's standalone novels can often veer more into the suspense genre, but he is best known for his fast-paced legal thriller series about Penn Cage, a former prosecutor who returns to his hometown of Natchez, Mississippi, to grieve his late wife. He then becomes ensnared in a range of cases involving murder and racism. These thought-provoking books can be quite violent and have a strongly Southern Gothic atmosphere.

If you like Greg Iles:

- James Patterson
- James Grippando
- John Grisham
- Michael Connelly
- John Sandford
- Harlan Coben
- David Baldacci
- Jonathan Kellerman
- Nelson DeMille

James Grippando

Grippando's long-running Jack Swyteck series follows a charismatic, talented Miami defense attorney as he handles a range of gripping cases. These fast-paced books follow both Jack's professional and private lives and can be quite gritty, with strong profanity and graphic violence. Like many of the authors of this genre, Grippando was an attorney before writing, and his experience informs his work. He also writes more general suspense and thriller standalones.

If you like James Grippando:

- David Baldacci
- Brad Meltzer
- Joseph Finder
- Greg Iles
- Kyle Mills
- Michael Connelly
- Philip Margolin
- John Sandford
- Lisa Scottoline
- John Lescroart
- Steve Martini
- John Grisham
- Harlan Coben

Scott Turow

Turow writes legal thrillers with a more measured pace and elegant prose than most of his peers. His books delve into thoughtful explorations of realistic legal issues and feature a cast of repeating characters in a fictional Midwestern county clearly modeled on his hometown of Chicago and its suburbs. His complex, character-driven work is engrossing and informed by his own career as a federal prosecutor.

If you like Scott Turow:

- John Lescroart
- Perri O'Shaughnessy
- John Grisham
- Richard North Patterson
- Philip Margolin
- Robert Rotenberg
- William Lashner

Blast from the Past

John Lescroart writes gritty San Francisco-set legal thrillers that also have a strong police procedural vibe thanks to protagonist Dismas Hardy, a cop-turned-attorney, often joining forces with his old friend Detective Abe Glitsky on his cases. Lescroart once worked in a law firm, though was not an attorney, and his books feature interesting, complex legal cases, colorful characters, humor, and a balance of ample investigative and courtroom action.

Already like Lescroart's work?

- Scott Turow
- Linda Fairstein
- Robert Tanenbaum
- William Bernhardt
- Robert Rotenberg
- Steve Martini
- Philip Margolin
- Lisa Scottoline
- John Grisham
- David Rosenfelt
- Michael Connelly
- John Sandford
- David Baldacci

Branching out from Legal Thrillers

Like legal thrillers but interested in trying other genres?

- Mysteries (Margaret Coel, Michael Connelly's Lincoln Lawyer series, Erle Stanley Gardner)
- Suspense (James Patterson, John Sandford, Harlan Coben)
- True crime (Ann Rule, Vincent Bugliosi)
- Conspiracy thrillers (David Baldacci, Stuart Woods)
- Crime thrillers (Elmore Leonard, Eli Cranor)
- Police/law enforcement thrillers (Lisa Regan, Karin Slaughter)
- Forensic thrillers (Patricia Cornwell, Tess Gerritsen, Kathy Reichs)

CRIME THRILLERS

Crime thrillers take place in the criminal underworld, starring criminals as the leads. On the lighter end of the scale, they are crime capers, jaunty adventures where entertaining characters try to pull off a big score. Darker crime thrillers instead can be bleak and brooding examinations of the cost and consequences of crime.

Carl Hiaasen

Hiaasen writes hilarious, satirical madcap capers and crime thrillers vividly set in his native Florida. His books feature eccentric, larger-than-life characters who rarely make good decisions, though the ensuing chaos is very entertaining for readers. The books can feature lots of profanity and sexual content, as well as unhinged, sadistic villains but tend to have little graphic violence. Hiaasen's books often reflect his own strong interest in the environment.

If you like Carl Hiaasen:

- Tom Robbins
- Kurt Vonnegut
- Tim Dorsey
- Johnny Shaw
- Randy Wayne White
- Elmore Leonard
- Janet Evanovich
- Dave Barry
- Edward Abbey

Randy Wayne White

White pens the gritty Doc Ford series, starring a former government agent-turned-marine biologist who finds himself in the middle of all manner of zany adventures while doing favors for his offbeat friends. The books feature lots of humor, action, sex, and violence, as well as atmospheric Florida settings.

If you like Randy Wayne White:

- Carl Hiaasen
- Lisa Jackson
- Clive Cussler
- Stuart Woods
- Robert Crais

Eli Cranor

Cranor, an Arkansas native, writes fast-paced, gritty, noir crime thrillers set in rural Arkansas. His books feature complex, highly flawed, desperate characters who get in way over their heads and touch off unforeseen consequences that rapidly spiral out of their control. These character-driven books can be quite bleak and emotional and feature a strong sense of place.

If you like Eli Cranor:

- S.A. Crosby
- Amy Engel
- Tawni O'Dell
- James Lee Burke

Elmore Leonard

Leonard writes in a range of genres but is best known for his gritty, fast-paced crime thrillers. The setting can range from Miami to Detroit to Los Angeles, but regardless of where the action is taking place, his sleazy, amoral, but relentlessly entertaining characters are always up to something, and violence is sure to ensue from their schemes. His work is also especially well known for its heavy use of authentic, natural-sounding dialogue and wry dark humor.

If you like Elmore Leonard:

- Carl Hiaasen
- Loren D. Estleman
- Johnny Shaw
- Robert Ferrigno
- Chris Knopf
- Robert B. Parker
- Robert Crais
- Raymond Chandler

Blast from the Past

Donald Westlake wrote his John Dortmunder caper novels for nearly 40 years. A determined and experienced thief, Dortmunder always plans heists with his crew meticulously, but as they say, what can go wrong will go wrong and things always go very (and hilariously) wrong for Dortmunder. These books feature characters and scenarios that are as outrageous as they are funny and are a perfect example of the lighter side of crime thrillers.

Already like Westlake's work?

- Rafael Frumkin
- Lawrence Sanders' Bernie Rhodenbarr series
- Carl Hiaasen
- Elmore Leonard
- Dave Barry

Branching out from Crime Thrillers

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

- Mysteries (James Lee Burke, Michael Connelly)
- Suspense (James Patterson, John Sandford, Harlan Coben)
- Lighter romantic suspense if you like capers (Jana DeLeon, Jayne Ann Krentz)
- True crime (Ann Rule, Vincent Bugliosi)
- Legal thrillers (Lisa Scottoline, John Lescroart)
- Police/law enforcement thrillers (Linda Castillo, Lisa Regan, Karin Slaughter)

POLICE/LAW ENFORCEMENT THRILLERS

Police thrillers focus on the world of professional cops and other law enforcement officers, but they're not mysteries in the conventional sense. Rather than focusing on investigating and solving crimes, the emphasis is more on the suspense and personal danger the main characters find themselves in during the course of their work.

Lisa Regan

Regan writes fast-paced, dark police thrillers starring Josie Quinn, a detective in a small Pennsylvania town. Quinn is a strong, complex character who often finds herself caught up in disturbing crimes. Her books blend her professional life with her personal one as she grapples with the psychological fallout of her past and her work.

If you like Lisa Regan:

- Robert Dugoni
- Melinda Leigh
- Allison Brennan
- M.M. Chouinard
- Linda Castillo

Linda Castillo

Castillo writes the gritty, fast-paced Kate Burkholder police thriller series. Kate is the chief of police for a small town in Ohio Amish Country, and she herself was raised Amish before breaking away. She now frequently finds herself conducting investigations within the community. These books can feature rather disturbing violence and also has a steamy recurring romantic subplot following Kate's personal life.

If you like Linda Castillo:

- Beverly Barton
- Chelsea Cain
- Lisa Scottoline
- Lisa Gardner
- Lisa Regan
- Karin Slaughter
- Tess Gerritsen

Karin Slaughter

Slaughter writes multiple popular police thriller series, which sometimes intersect with each other, as well as standalones. Regardless of the specific book or series in question, her dark, bleak, gritty, character-driven work focuses on complex characters and follows them beyond their professional lives, though there are plenty of brutal, violent crimes as well. Her series include one starring Georgia Bureau of Investigation officer Will Trent and another featuring coroner Sara Linton. The Linton books will also appeal to fans of forensic thrillers.

If you like Karin Slaughter:

- Mo Hayder
- Chelsea Cain
- Megan E. Abbott
- Candice Fox
- Tana French
- Tess Gerritsen
- Lisa Gardner
- Michael Connelly
- Harlan Coben
- Kathy Reichs
- Jeffery Deaver

Blast from the Past

Stephen J. Cannell created hits as both an author and a TV producer. His TV work includes *The Rockford Files* and *The A-Team*, but he also wrote the gritty, fast-paced Shane Scully crime thriller series. The books follow an LAPD detective who fights against police corruption and finds himself in danger in the course of his work. The books are action-packed but also character-driven and full of atmospheric details about the dark side of Los Angeles.

Already like Cannell's work?

- Lisa Unger
- David Baldacci
- Stuart Woods
- Andrew H. Vachss
- Michael Connelly
- John Sandford
- Jonathan Kellerman
- Robert B. Parker
- T. Jefferson Parker
- Lisa Gardner
- Robert Crais
- Faye Kellerman
- Ridley Pearson
- J.A. Jance
- David L. Lindsey

Branching out from Police/Law Enforcement Thrillers

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

- Gritty police/private investigator mysteries (Sue Grafton, James Lee Burke, T. Jefferson Parker, Michael Connelly)
- Suspense (James Patterson, Harlan Coben, John Sandford, Jeffery Deaver)
- Romantic suspense (Sandra Brown, Lisa Jackson, Iris Johansen, Tami Hoag, Heather Graham)
- Crime thrillers (Eli Cranor)
- Legal thrillers (Lisa Scottoline, Greg Iles, James Grippando, John Lescroart, Linda Fairstein)
- Forensic thrillers (Patricia Cornwell, Kathy Reichs)
- Gritty, noirish urban fantasy (Jim Butcher)

MEDICAL/FORENSIC THRILLERS

Thrillers with medical and/or forensic focuses generally feature main characters who are doctors. Whether they practice as physicians or coroners, like all thriller protagonists, these characters encounter dangerous situations. Medical thrillers often delve into complex issues surrounding medical research and/or ethics and involve hospital settings. Forensic-themed thrillers, meanwhile, are usually set in morgues or forensic labs and feature coroners and pathologists. Forensic thrillers are known for being especially gory and not for the faint of heart.

Patricia Cornwell

Patricia Cornwell pioneered the genre of forensic thrillers with her Kay Scarpetta series. By featuring a Virginia medical examiner rather than a lawyer or detective main character, Cornwell, who worked for a few years in a morgue, created an entirely new fictional way of looking at crime. Cornwell's complex, intricate books are disturbing and atmospheric and feature a strong lead character who combines scientific knowledge with an active role in investigations. Her work is noted for the depth of scientific information in them and for how clearly Cornwell conveys the concepts to readers.

If you like Patricia Cornwell:

- Lynda La Plante
- Elly Griffiths
- Kathy Reichs
- Tess Gerritsen
- Jefferson Bass
- Linda Fairstein
- Sue Grafton
- Jeffery Deaver
- Karin Slaughter
- John Banville
- Alaina Urquhart

Tess Gerritsen

Gerritsen's writing career has spanned several genres. She initially wrote romantic suspense on the side while working as a physician before transitioning to medical thrillers (a natural fit for a doctor) and then transitioning again to crime thrillers. She is best known for her Rizzoli and Isles series, which features a female detective and a female medical examiner joining forces to solve crimes. These gritty books blend the genres of police procedural thriller and forensic thriller and feature graphic descriptions of the forensics and violence. The series is also known for its strong, intelligent women protagonists and the dangerous situations they find themselves in during their investigations. Her medical thrillers are equally suspenseful and often delve into issues of medical ethics.

If you like Tess Gerritsen:

- Kathy Reichs
- Michael Palmer
- Robin Cook
- Jonathan Kellerman
- Michael Crichton
- Thomas Harris
- Tami Hoag
- Iris Johansen
- Karin Slaughter
- Patricia Cornwell
- Eileen Dreyer

Robin Cook

Like Gerritsen, Cook is also a doctor who pens medical thrillers. His books are set in hospitals or similar settings and delve heavily into cutting-edge medical ethical or research issues and present them accurately. His fast-paced work features graphic descriptions of medical procedures and usually feature an ordinary person uncovering unsavory conspirators they must outwit.

If you like Robin Cook:

- Tess Gerritsen
- Michael Palmer
- Michael Crichton

Kathy Reichs

Reich is best-known for her fast-paced Temperance Brennan series, which follows a forensic anthropologist. The books feature graphic descriptions of the forensic elements of the cases and the crime scenes, though they also have a sense of humor that can lighten the tone. Brennan's work frequently leads her to disputes with law enforcement and personal danger. The books have a strong cast of supporting characters, in addition to a complex, intriguing protagonist.

If you like Kathy Reichs:

- Patricia Cornwell
- Linda Fairstein
- J.A. Jance
- Harlan Coben
- Stephen Booth
- Tess Gerritsen
- Jefferson Bass
- Stephen White
- Aaron Elkins
- Iris Johansen
- Jeffery Deaver
- Karin Slaughter
- Jonathan Kellerman
- Sue Grafton

Blast from the Past

Michael Palmer wrote bestselling medical thrillers during a career that spanned over 30 years. Like many of the other writers on this list, Palmer was himself a doctor, and he personally was inspired to try his hand at writing after Robin Cook's success. Palmer's fast-paced books focus on contemporary medical issues and are noted for their realism and accessibility to nonmedical professionals. In his work, characters find themselves fighting against corruption, conspiracies, and other bad deeds in the medical world.

Already like Palmer's work?

- Tess Gerritsen
- Robin Cook
- Jonathan Kellerman
- Stephen White
- Joshua Spanogle

Branching out from Medical/Forensic Thrillers

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

- Suspense (Jeffery Deaver, Iris Johansen, Tami Hoag)
- Mysteries (Sue Grafton, Jonathan Kellerman)
- Police thrillers (Karin Slaughter)
- Legal thrillers (Lisa Scottoline, Scott Turow)
- Technothrillers (Michael Crichton)
- True crime (John Carreyrou)
- Science nonfiction (Rebecca Skloot, Mary Roach)
- Science fiction (Greg Bear, Neal Stephanson)
- Horror (John Saul)

TECHNOTHRILLERS

Technothrillers are thrillers with a scientific bent and a special focus on technology. Even if the technology they feature is no longer cutting edge, these books remain compelling and engrossing reads. Some technothrillers have a heavy military focus, with a special emphasis on weapons, aircraft, submarines, etc. Others instead focus on civilians, though with a similar fascination with technology and science.

Clive Cussler

Cussler is often classified as an adventure writer—and justifiably so. His fast-paced, action-packed work is the epitome of adventure. However, the books' heavy focus on marine technology also makes them perfect technothrillers. His Dirk Pitt series especially falls into this realm. The National Underwater and Marine Agency head is always gallivanting off to solve historical mysteries as he dives under the sea, searches for treasure, and battles villains. Cussler had a keen interest in nautical technology and vividly describes it in these books that blend history, technology, and excitement.

If you like Clive Cussler:

- Peter Benchley
- Ian Fleming
- Jack Du Brul
- James Rollins
- Tom Clancy
- Douglas J. Preston and Lincoln Child
- Ted Bell
- Matthew Reilly
- Dale Brown
- Mike Maden
- Robert Ludlum
- David Baldacci
- Steve Berry
- Vince Flynn
- Will Adams
- David Gibbins

Tom Clancy

Clancy pioneered and popularized this genre in the 1980s and remains one of the best examples of military technothrillers. His protagonists tend to be military men or those with military backgrounds who must save the world. Clancy's work features detailed and realistic information on weapons and other aspects of related technology, but these fast-paced, action-packed books are anything but dry.

If you like Tom Clancy:

- Vince Flynn
- Patrick Robinson
- Dale Brown
- Frederick Forsyth
- Stephen Coonts
- W. E. B. Griffin
- Robert Ludlum
- Clive Cussler
- Michael Crichton
- Brad Thor
- Jack Carr
- Mark Greaney
- David Poyer
- Larry Bond
- Jeff Rovin
- R. J. Pineiro

Blast from the Past

At the height of his career, Michael Crichton wrote numerous bestsellers and also had his work turned into blockbuster movies. He wrote in a range of genres but a keen interest in science and technology is consistent across his work, which includes technothrillers, medical thrillers, and science fiction. His fast-paced, action-packed, thought-provoking books feature realistic technical and scientific details but presented in an accessible way for readers. His work is also known for presenting characters with moral dilemmas tied to the featured technology/science.

Already like Crichton's work?

- Robin Cook
- James Rollins
- Blake Crouch
- Hugh Howey
- Daniel Suarez
- Tess Gerritsen
- Tom Clancy
- Clive Cussler
- Ramez Naam
- David Koepp
- Neal Stephenson
- Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
- Robert Ludlum
- Stephen King

Branching out from Technothrillers

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

- Conspiracy thrillers (David Baldacci, Frederick Forsyth)
- Medical thrillers (Robin Cook, Tess Gerritsen, Michael Palmer)
- Espionage thrillers (Brad Thor, Vince Flynn, Robert Ludlum)
- Suspense (Lee Child)
- Military fiction (Bernard Cornwell, Patrick O'Brian)
- Science fiction (Neal Stephenson, Greg Bear, John Scalzi)
- Adventure (Jack Higgins, Alistair MacLean)

ESPIONAGE THRILLERS

Espionage thrillers take place in the cloak-and-dagger world of spies. Some share the high-octane, action-packed pace of many other thrillers, while others are more leisurely paced and highlight how morally murky and bleak this world can be.

Daniel Silva

Silva writes complex, thought-provoking books about Gabriel Allon, a top art restorer who also works as a Mossad spy. His dark, atmospheric, action-packed books can be quite violent, but they're also well-researched as they take readers on international adventures and delve into controversial current events. Silva's books feature realistic, layered villains and often incorporate elements of art history due to Allon's day job.

If you like Daniel Silva:

- Nelson DeMille
- Alan Furst
- Martin Cruz Smith
- Graham Greene
- Charles McCarry
- John Le Carré
- T. Jefferson Parker
- Robert Littell
- Barry Eisler
- Brad Thor
- David Ignatius
- Alex Berenson

Brad Thor

Thor writes fast-paced, action-packed novels about Scot Horvath, a former Navy SEAL-turned-federal agent. In these violent, intrigue-filled, contemporary-set novels, Horvath and his team battle terrorists to save the United States.

If you like Brad Thor:

- Vince Flynn
- Ben Coes
- Daniel Silva
- Alex Berenson
- David Baldacci
- Tom Clancy
- Kyle Mills
- Steve Berry

Vince Flynn

Flynn's Mitch Rapp series follows a tough, capable CIA agent whose adventures take him around the globe as he thwarts conspiracies and saves the day. These books are fast-paced, plot-focused, and high-stakes because the fate of the world rests in Rapp's hands. Though not as detailed as technothrillers, Flynn's work also highlight technical details to supplement the other espionage action.

If you like Vince Flynn:

- Tom Clancy
- Robert Ludlum
- Gayle Lynds
- Olen Steinhauer
- Mark Greaney
- Jack Higgins
- Lee Child
- Brad Thor
- Ben Coes
- David Baldacci
- Brad Taylor
- Daniel Silva
- Alex Berenson

Robert Ludlum

Best known for his Jason Bourne books, though he also wrote other series and standalones, Ludlum specialized in fast-paced, compelling espionage thrillers. His work often features heroes taking down conspiracies and corruption, follows the characters to exotic locations, and provides intricate details of spy tradecraft.

If you like Robert Ludlum:

- Vince Flynn
- Jack Higgins
- Christopher Reich
- Jon Land
- Dale Brown
- Stephen Coonts
- Clive Cussler
- Tom Clancy
- Gayle Lynds

John Le Carré

Le Carré is considered a pioneering writer in this genre. A former MI5 and MI6 officer, he wrote what he knew, and the resulting realism is a big part of the appeal of his leisurely paced, complex, thought-provoking work. He depicts tradecraft and espionage procedures and institutions in vivid detail. He is best known for his bleak, engrossing George Smiley books, which follow a quiet, complex British spy during the Cold War. There are no clear-cut heroes and villains in his work, and he often delves into the psychological toll espionage takes on its practitioners.

If you like John Le Carré:

- Graham Greene
- Henning Mankell
- Charles McCarry
- Daniel Silva
- Alan Furst
- Martin Cruz Smith
- Frederick Forsyth
- Mick Herron
- Philip Kerr
- P.D. James
- Len Deighton
- Charles Cumming

Blast from the Past

Unlike the other spy thriller writers here, who specialize in writing books set in their own contemporary times, Alan Furst writes what he calls historical espionage fiction, both in a series and as standalones. His well-researched, atmospheric, complex, action-packed work is set in Europe the 1930s and 1940s and has a strong sense of place. His characters are often everyday people who are trying to fight fascism the best way they know how and find themselves making difficult choices in the process. These tense, bleak, violent books don't always have tidy endings.

Already like Furst's work?

- Joseph Kanon
- John Le Carré
- Daniel Silva
- Philip Kerr
- Charles McCarry
- Martin Cruz Smith
- Olen Steinhauer
- John Lawton
- Sebastian Faulks
- Graham Greene

Branching out from Espionage Thrillers

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

- Conspiracy thrillers (David Baldacci, Steve Berry, Frederick Forsyth)
- Technothrillers (Tom Clancy, Clive Cussler)
- Mysteries (T. Jefferson Parker, Philip Kerr, Martin Cruz Smith)
- Suspense (Lee Child)
- Adventure (Jack Higgins, Alistair MacLean)

SUPERNATURAL THRILLERS

Supernatural thrillers often strongly resemble crime or police/law enforcement thrillers. The twist is that the investigators may also delve into the supernatural rather than interacting with cases and situations that are strictly realistic. The main difference between different types of supernatural thrillers is how big of a role the fantastical plays. Some only use it occasionally alongside more scientific pursuits (but enough to distinguish it from more conventional thrillers), while others lean very heavily into it.

Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child

Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child write together and separately but are best known for their joint series about FBI Agent Aloysius Pendergast. This unique series blends multiple genres, including thriller, mystery, and horror, as the highly intelligent Pendergast solves crimes that delve into various scientific fields and takes on adversaries that range from serial killers to supernatural beasts. These fast-paced, gripping books do not always have a supernatural element, but they sometimes do.

If you like Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child:

- Jack Du Brul
- F. Paul Wilson
- Clive Cussler
- James Rollins
- John Sandford
- Steve Berry
- David Baldacci
- Lee Child
- Jeffery Deaver
- Matthew Reilly
- Justin Cronin
- Chris Kuzneski
- Scott Sigler

John Connolly

Connolly's dark Charlie "Bird" Parker series blends gritty noir fiction with supernatural elements. Parker is a troubled private investigator whose cases, as the series progresses, become increasingly connected to supernatural phenomena and overlap with the horror genre. These atmospheric books feature disturbing violence but also have eloquent prose and rich characterization.

If you like John Connolly:

- Thomas Harris
- Michael Koryta
- Clive Barker
- Peter Straub
- Stuart MacBride
- John Lutz
- Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
- Michael Connelly
- John Sandford
- Jeffery Deaver
- Jonathan Kellerman

James Rollins

Rollins' fast-paced Sigma Force novels blend adventure, thriller, science, history, and the supernatural. The Sigma Force team is a government organization that investigates paranormal occurrences. Their work takes them around the world and often involves unraveling plots and conspiracies. Tonally, these books are not as grim as many of the other authors in this genre, and the paranormal elements exist alongside realistic scientific details.

If you like James Rollins:

- Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
- Clive Cussler
- Jonathan Maberry
- Jack DuBrul
- Michael Crichton
- Steve Berry
- Brad Thor
- Raymond Khoury
- Vince Flynn
- H. Rider Haggard
- Andy McDermott

Blast from the Past

F. Paul Wilson blends realistic thrillers with supernatural horror in his long-running Repairman Jack series. These character-driven books are dark and gritty and can contain strong violence and profanity but feature a likable protagonist. Repairman Jack works as a fixer who often comes into contact with the supernatural world, and the novels depict complex villains with more depth than is commonly seen in thrillers.

Already like Wilson's work?

- Dean Koontz
- Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
- Lee Child
- Jim Butcher
- Jonathan Maberry
- Robert R. McCammon
- Stephen King
- Simon R. Green

Branching out from Supernatural Thrillers

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

- Conspiracy thrillers (Steve Berry)
- Technothrillers (Michael Crichton)
- Suspense (Lee Child)
- Horror (Dean Koontz)
- Urban fantasy (Jim Butcher)

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
- 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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