

Thriller

Thrillers are usually defined by the mood they elicit (hence the name). “Sensational and suspenseful” stories and stories creating “fearful excitement” are two definitions I found. Because of this, thrillers are crossed with almost every other genre. I’ve tried to only include mash-ups when their combination falls under my definition of “interesting.”

Action Thriller

Take any other thriller subgenre, give it’s defining elements a back seat, and focus on the action, and you have an action-thriller. This is more common in movies than novels because of the visual appeal of explosions and violence.

Conspiracy Thriller

In this subgenre the protagonist must confront a large, powerful organization whose threat only he sees. Usually he must do so alone.

Crime Thriller

This subgenre focuses on crime, and is usually from the criminal’s point of view. Physical action and eluding the police take the place of gathering evidence and trying to discover the criminal.

Disaster Thriller

In this subgenre a (usually) natural disaster is taking place, and the antagonist is either trying to stop the disaster, the extent of the disaster, or just save themselves before time runs out and the disaster has run its course.

Eco-Thriller

In this subgenre the protagonist must stop a threat to the environment (man-made or natural) that will have consequences for society if left unchecked. The damage could be local, but nation or even world-wide stakes are more dramatic.

Forensic Thriller

In this subgenre the protagonist(s) are forensic scientists whose involvement in an unsolved crime threatens their lives.

Legal Thriller

This subgenre takes place in and around the courtroom. Usually the protagonist is a lawyer who has found their case threatening death for either them or their client.

Medical Thriller

This subgenre involves something usually used for medical purposes becoming a deadly weapon. Often it is a virus that is leaking out to the public. The protagonist or antagonist or both are doctors.

Mystery Thriller

This is a subgenre of both mysteries and thrillers. It differs from a regular mystery by being much more fast-paced, with the protagonist on the run and the threat of another crime serving as the “ticking clock.”

Political Thriller

In this subgenre political relations or the whole government is at stake, and the protagonist is employed by the government to stop the decline. The protagonist may have been low-level before having attracted attention.

Psychological Thriller

A personal favorite. In this subgenre a lot of the conflict is mental, rather than physical. The protagonist has become involved in a dangerous situation which literally threatens their sanity. They must use mental prowess to overcome their opponent, whether the battle is inside their own head or it a battle of wits.

Religious Thriller

This subgenre uses the history and myths of religion. Usually a religious artifact or historical secret is discovered, and different people and groups vie for control.

Romantic Thriller

This is a subgenre of both thrillers and romantic novels. The plot line follows a typical thriller’s tension, suspense, and excitement, but a main element is the growing relationship between two characters.

Spy Thriller

It’s hard to call this a genre mash-up when spy novels almost have to be thrillers. At any rate, this subgenre focuses on the high adventures of field agents. It is usually set against the backdrop of some war.

Supernatural Thriller

In this subgenre otherworldly elements are introduced, usually as an antagonistic force, but just as in the romantic thriller, the plot line and feel or distinctly that of thrillers. Some characters may have psychic abilities and other supernatural novel elements may be present.

Techno-Thriller

This genres is a cross between near-future science fiction and thrillers. Cutting-edge technology plays an important role, either as something to obtain, or working for or against the protagonist.