ADRENALINE GENRES:
Adventure, Suspense, Thrillers, Romantic Suspense

Appeal Characteristics:
- Page-turning pace
- Action-filled and cinematic story lines
- Gritty, menacing tone
- Sympathetic protagonists placed in danger
- Resolved ending, with the protagonist safe

ADVENTURE NOVELS:
- Star a hero on a mission
  - Overcoming great peril
  - Defeating insurmountable obstacles
  - Saving the world!!!
- Are often ongoing series
- Feature fast-pacing, nonstop action
- Employ gum and paperclips to save the world
- Background includes exotic or military settings
- Take place in a mostly male world.

Adventure Classics:
- The Odyssey—Homer
- Treasure Island—Stevenson
- King Solomon’s Mines—Haggard
- The Scarlet Pimpernel—Orczy
- Valhalla Rising—Cussler
- The Da Vinci Code—Brown
- Master and Commander—O’Brien

Authors to Know:
Steve Berry
- Page turning action
- Elaborate frames with historical details
- Exotic locales
- Sympathetic hero
- Dastardly villains
- Multiple plot twists
- Crossover with Mystery, Thriller, Suspense
- Annual titles

Bernard Cornwell
- Multiple series
- Historical Details
- Vivid characterizations
- Dark tone
Polished prose  
Crossover with Historical Fiction

**Stephen Hunter**  
Action-packed military adventure  
Series and standalones  
Bigger-than-life heroes  
Violent, complex, action-filled plots  
Descriptive landscapes  
Richly detailed background frames  
Crossover with Thrillers and Suspense

**Arturo Pérez-Reverte**  
Swashbuckling historical adventure series  
 Literary treasure hunts in present day  
Missions in both  
Witty, provocative tales  
Compelling characters  
Richly detailed backgrounds  
Crossover with Historical Fiction, Literary Fiction, Thrillers

**James Rollins**  
Noble heroes battle nefarious villains  
Nonstop action  
Exotic locales  
Secret societies  
Threats to world order  
Maps and illustrations  
Series and standalones  
Crossover with Thrillers

**Michael Chabon**’s *Gentlemen of the Road*  
Madcap swashbuckling adventure  
Flawed heroes  
Quest, of a sort  
Crossover with Historical Fiction

**Crossover**  
Fantasy—quest tales (Robert Jordan’s *The Eye of the World*), Naomi Novik’s *Her Majesty’s Dragon*  
Science Fiction—Star Wars and Space Opera  
Historical Fiction—military adventure (William Dietrich’s *Napoleon’s Pyramids*)  
Romance—romantic adventure in exotic locales sometimes framed by fabled jewels and artifacts (Elizabeth Lowell’s *Beautiful Sacrifice*)  
Westerns—tales of survival and dangerous missions (Louis L’Amour’s *High Lonesome*)  
Suspense and Thrillers—men on missions and fast paced action (Ridley Pearson’s *The Risk Agent*, Lee Child’s *The Killing Floor*, James
Bond—newest title: William Boyd’s Solo),
Graphic Novels—superheroes and Alan Moore’s League of Extraordinary Gentlemen
Nonfiction—true life historical and contemporary tales (David Grann’s The Lost City of Z, Mark Owen’s No Easy Day, Sebastian Junger’s The Perfect Storm, Jon Krakauer’s Into Thin Air, Robert Kurson’s Shadow Divers, Stephen E. Ambrose’s Band of Brothers, Apsley Cherry-Garrard’s The Worst Journey in the World)

SUSPENSE

Andrew Klavan on Suspense: “Suspense is not about the things that are happening; it’s about the things that might happen, that threaten to happen.”

SUSPENSE NOVELS:
- often start with a prologue and set up a menacing atmosphere that pervades the story
- offer points of view of protagonist and villain—we know what’s going to happen
- feature a telescoped time frame that speeds the action
- end with confrontation between good and evil
- are told in gritty language with graphic and violent details

Suspense Classics:
- The Day of the Jackal by Frederick Forsyth
- The Silence of the Lambs by Thomas Harris
- I Heard that Song Before by Mary Higgins Clark

Authors to Know:
Lee Child
- Moral, loner hero, Jack Reacher
- Complex, twisted plots
- Building suspense and intensity
- Dangerous situations and villains
- Dark atmosphere
- Crossover with Mysteries, Crime Thrillers

Harlan Coben
- Started with mystery series starring Myron Bolitar
- Standalone suspense
- Deadly danger in the everyday
- Ripped from the headlines plots
- Noble heroes and terrifying villains
- Crossover with Mysteries

Jeffery Deaver
- Series: Lincoln Rhyme, Kathryn Dance
- Also Standalone suspense
- Sympathetic protagonists and terrifying villains

This workshop is presented and funded by the Massachusetts Library System (MLS).
Page turning pace
Cat-and-mouse chases
Danger in the everyday
Crossover with Mysteries and Crime Thrillers

**Chelsea Cain**
- Novels of obsession and violence
- Star Portland, OR detective and psychopath
- Strong sense of place
- Dangerous, moody tone
- Twisting plots
- Gruesome descriptions
- Fast-pace
- Crossover with Mysteries and Crime Thrillers

**James Patterson**
- Multiple series with many co-authors
- 4 page chapters
- Building suspense
- Plot twists
- Violence
- Compulsively readable
- Occasional non-suspense title
- Also writes for teens
- Crossover with Mysteries and Thrillers

**Crossover**
- Adventure (Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child’s *Two Graves*)
- Mystery (Tess Gerritsen’s *The Silent Girl*)
- Psychological Suspense (Dennis Lehane’s *Shutter Island*)
- Thriller (David Baldacci’s *The Camel Club*)

**THRILLERS**

**Thriller Types**
- Legal (John Grisham)
- Espionage (Daniel Silva)
- Medical Scientific (Michael Palmer)
- Corporate/Financial (Christopher Reich)
- Crime/Caper (Carl Hiaasen)

**Thrillers**
- move at a breakneck pace
- include extensive backgrounds and jargon
- tell cinematic, action-packed, twisted stories set in worlds of betrayal and conspiracy
- project a gritty, menacing tone

**Classic thrillers**
- *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling
The 39 Steps by John Buchan
Casino Royale by Ian Fleming (James Bond series)
The Spy Who Came In From the Cold by John Le Carre
Jurassic Park by Michael Crichton

Authors to Know:

David Baldacci
Conspiracy, political intrigue, corruption
Series (Camel Club, Sean King and Michelle Maxwell) and standalones
Dramatic, ripped from the headlines plots
Page-turning action
Moral heroes and despicable villains
Crossover with Adventure and Suspense

Linda Fairstein
Legal series starring Asst. DA Alexandra Cooper
New York city setting and historical details as frame
Disturbing crimes and criminals
Multiple cases and gritty forensics details
Dark and dangerous
Crossover with Suspense and Mystery

Alan Furst
Historical espionage novels, WWII setting
Bleak and atmospheric tone
Rich in authentic details and more leisurely paced
Compelling tales
Flawed and reluctant heroes
Crossover with Historical Fiction, Adventure, Suspense

Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
Scientific and supernatural thrillers
Sympathetic protagonists against human and inhuman evils
Atmospheric and imaginative
Interesting frames
Pendergast series together and others alone
Crossover with Horror, Adventure, Mystery, Suspense

Daniel Silva
Political/terrorists
Art restoration and history frame
Exotic locales
Sympathetic characters
Stars Gabriel Allon, sleeper Mossad agent
Action and planning
Authentic details
Crossover with Suspense, Adventure, and Mystery

Crossover:
Suspense, mystery (Randy Wayne White’s Doc Ford series)
Science Fiction (Orson Scott Card’s *Ender’s Game* titles)
Historical Fiction, Mystery, Suspense (Max Allan Collins’s Nathan Heller series)
Adventure and sometimes Historical Fiction (Dale Brown’s *Fatal Terrain*)
Nonfiction (true tales of conspiracy, espionage, and science): Mark Bowden’s *Worm: The Story of the First Digital World War*; Scott Carney’s *The Red Market: On the Trail of the World’s First Organ Brokers, Bone Thieves, Blood farmers, and Child Traffickers*; Peter L. Bergen’s *Manhunt: The 10 year Search for Bin Laden— from 9/11 to Abbottabad*; Joby Warrick’s *The Triple Agent: The al-Qaeda Mole who Infiltrated the CIA*; Richard Preston’s *The Hot Zone*

**ROMANTIC SUSPENSE/ROMANTIC ADVENTURE**

**Romantic Suspense Game Changers in 1980s**
- Nora Roberts
- Sandra Brown

**Romantic Suspense/Romantic Adventure**
- Told from the threatened heroine’s point of view
- Romance and Suspense play equal roles
- Page-turning pace
- Contemporary and historical settings; paranormal elements in both time periods
- Feeling of uneasiness from the first pages
- Lush language of romance but also violence, sex, and profanity
- Read by men and women

**Classic Romantic Suspense Authors**
- Phyllis A. Whitney’s *Amethyst Dreams*
- Victoria Holt’s *On the Night of the Seventh Moon*
- Barbara Michaels’s *Shattered Silk*
- Ellis Peters’s *The Horn of Roland*
- Elizabeth Peters’s *Legend in Green Velvet*

**Romantic Suspense Authors to Know**

**Christine Feehan**
- Paranormal series
- Contemporary and historical
- Explicit and dangerous, steamy and atmospheric
- Fantasy crossover, detailed mythic worlds

**Jayne Anne Krentz, Amanda Quick, Jayne Castle**
- Contemporary, historical, futuristic
- Paranormal elements
- Multiple, linked series
- Satisfying blend of edgy atmosphere, deadly danger, building
suspense, and romance
Humor, witty dialog
Crossover with Adventure, Thriller, Mystery, Historical Romance, Science Fiction

Iris Johansen
Strong heroines placed in dangerous situations
Threats that escalate into violence
Satisfying romance and heart-stopping suspense
Elements of paranormal
Detailed frames, often medical, psychological, forensic
Crossover with Adventure, Thriller, Mysteries

Nora Roberts/J. D. Robb
Strong women in difficult situations
Escalating suspense
Explicit violence
Strong sexual themes
Heartwarming relationships with friends and family
Contemporary and futuristic
Crossover with Mysteries and Thrillers

Lauren Willig
Timelines past and present
Swashbuckling adventure, spies, intrigue
Romantic Romps
Humor and witty dialog
Builds on Scarlet Pimpernel adventures
Crossover with Historical Fiction, Adventure, Thrillers

Crossover:
Thrillers—Gayle Lynd’s The Book of Spies
Adventure—Kresley Cole’s If You Dare
Science Fiction—Lois McMaster Bujold’s Diplomatic Immunity
Historical Mysteries—Kerry Greenwood’s Dead Man’s Chest

ADRENALINE TRENDS
More heroines, even in Adventure with Dan Brown-style literary quests
(Taylor Stevens’s series The Informationist—thriller, Lisa Gardner’s Fear Nothing—suspense, Kate Mosse’s The Laybrinth—Adventure)
Serial murderers remain popular in Suspense and Romantic Suspense, while tales of terrorists and conspiracies abound in Thrillers
More technology in the hands of good guys and bad ups the stakes
Increasing evidence of paranormal elements (Darynda Jones Grave series, Dean Koontz Odd Thomas series, Iris Johansen Eve Duncan series and others, Daniel O’Malley’s The Rook, Jayne Ann Krentz Arcane series, Karen Robards’s Dr. Charlotte Stone

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More Genre-blending and changing

**Genre Blending Examples**

**Ready Player One** by Ernest Cline
- SF dystopian near future
- Mysterious puzzle with clues
- Adventure quest
- Literary style and language

**The Passage Trilogy** by Justin Cronin
- Apocalyptic setting
- Vampire plague
- Horror?
- Scientific thriller?

**More Trends**
- Global settings
- Series continue to dominate
- History Rules

**World War II Nonfiction**
- *In the Garden of Beasts* by Erik Larson
- *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand
- *Lost in Shangri-la* by Mitchell Zuckoff

**World War II Fiction Titles**
- *Blackout and All Clear* by Connie Willis
- *The Girl in the Blue Beret* by Bobbie Ann Mason
- *Billy Boyle* by James R. Benn
- *The Sleepwalkers* by Paul Grossman
- *The Foreign Correspondent* by Alan Furst

**More Trends, continued**
- Graphic Novels are In (NaRae Lee’s Manga series of James Patterson’s *Maximum Ride*, Richard Castle’s *Deadly Storm*, Jacque Tardi’s *Extraordinary Adventures of Adele Blanc-Sec*), Fictional Worlds are not kinder, gentler places

**ADRENALINE AUTHORS TO WATCH**
- Joanna Bourne—Romantic Adventure (*The Spymaster’s Lady*)
- Becky Masterman—Suspense (*Rage against the Dying*)
- Roger Hobbs—Suspense (*Ghost Man*)
- Simon Toyne—Thriller (*Sanctus*)

**ADRENALINE GENRES ON THE WEB**
- International Thriller Writers ([http://thrillerwriters.org](http://thrillerwriters.org))
  - Information on authors and annual award
- The Big Thrill ([http://www.thebigthrill.org](http://www.thebigthrill.org))
  - Fan site includes latest titles and interviews
- Mystery Reader ([http://www.themysteryreader.com/](http://www.themysteryreader.com/)) includes Suspense,
Romantic Suspense, and Thrillers. Rated reviews
Romance Writers of America (Romantic Suspense) http://www.rwa.org
Romance Novelists Association (British) http://www.rna-uk.org/
RT Book Reviews http://www.romantictimes.com/–reviews, author websites, awards for Adrenaline genres

AWARDS:
International Thriller Writers (http://thillerwriters.org)
Rusa’s Reading List, Best Adrenaline Novel
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/awards/readinglist/index.cfm
Mary Higgins Clark Award:
http://www.cozy-mystery.com/Edgar-Award-Mary-Higgins-Clark-Award.html
* A very nice young woman, 27-38 or so, whose life is suddenly invaded. She is not looking for trouble -- she is doing exactly what she should be doing and something cuts across her bow (as in ship)
* She solves her problem by her own courage and intelligence.
* She’s in an interesting job.
* She’s self-made -- independent -- has primarily good family relationships.
* No on-scene violence.
* No four-letter words or explicit sex scenes.
* Think Rhett Butler, "You'll not shut me out of your bedroom tonight, my dear."
Rita Award for Best Romantic Suspense:  http://www.rwa.org
Romantic Times Reviewer’s Choice Award Archive: (includes Adrenaline)

CROSS-GENRE WEB SITES
Allreaders.com www.allreaders.com
Book descriptions and descriptors of sex and violence levels.
Fantastic Fiction:  www.fantasticfiction.co.uk
Wide coverage and check out the author’s own recommendations on their pages

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