



Recommending Adventure When You Have to Read *The Fire Cat* Every Night

Kathe Pinchuck, MLS

Characteristics of the adventure genre:

- Fast-paced; take place over a short span
- Story is set in a realistic or semi-realistic environment, often exotic locale
- Plot is usually more important than character development
- Overcome obstacles to complete a mission
- Strong, likable action oriented male main character who has
 - extraordinary abilities and stamina
 - uses ingenuity to extricate himself and others from life-threatening situations
 - follows a clear, direct, inner directed moral code
 - has no strong, lasting mutual relationships with women
- Accurate, detailed descriptions of weapons, technology
- Often a test of dealing with nature or the elements (ice, sea, desert)
- Often series of books about hero

Versus

Characteristics of a Thriller

- ❖ Fast-paced
- ❖ Set in specific world – medical, courtroom, espionage
- ❖ Threat of violence
- ❖ Build up of tension
- ❖ Unexpected plot twists
- ❖ Problem threatens to bring down entire society
- ❖ Problems can't be solved by normal recourse – calling the police, pulling the plug
- ❖ May include attractive female character and possible liaison

Stereotypical Adventure:

***Ice Station* by Matthew Reilly**

Marine Shane Schofield, known as Scarecrow, and his team, encounter French and British commandos when they respond to a distress signal from American scientists at the Wilkes Ice Station, who discovered a UFO-like object buried in ice. Scarecrow must save the scientists and his Marines, recover the UFO, fight off killer whales, and do it all before eraser bombs planted by the opposition wipe out all evidence of their invasion.

Fiction with Adventure elements:

***The Road* by Cormac McCarthy**

The man and his son are the "good ones," and they are trying to go south to the shore without encountering "the bad ones." The "bad ones" survive by capturing the "good ones" and eating them. On their journey they face difficult hardships—starvation, murder, cannibalism, fighting, sickness and death—and are almost captured; but use their physical and emotional strength and ingenuity to overcome these challenges. The brief paragraphs and travels of the pair give the book tension and a quick pace.

Some Representative authors:

Alexandre Dumas (Classic)
Jack London (Classic)
Richard Bach (Christian)
Raymond Feist (Fantasy/Quest)
Guy Gavriel Kay (Fantasy/Quest)
Bernard Cornwell (Historical Adventure)
Wilbur Smith (Historical Adventure and Treasure Hunting)
Clive Cussler (Ice Adventure)
Kim Stanley Robinson (Ice Adventure and Sci-fi Adventure)
C.S. Forester (Naval Adventure)
Nicholas Monsarrat (Naval Adventure)
Jon Krakauer (Nonfiction)
Richard Bangs (Outdoor Adventure)
James Axler (Post-apocalyptic Survival)
Jane Feather (Romance Adventure)
Jayne Ann Krentz (Romance Adventure)
Catherine Asaro (Sci-fi Adventure)
Greg Bear (Sci-fi Adventure)
Jack Higgins (Treasure Hunting)
Louis L'Amour (Western)
James Patterson (Young Adult—Maximum Ride series)

Sources for Recommendations

Saricks, Joyce G. *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2001. (ISBN 0-8389-0803-9).

Besides the usual suspects (Novelist, Webrary (www.webrary.org); Genreflecting (www.genreflecting.com); Adult Reading Round Table (<http://arrtreads.org>):

National Outdoor Book Awards – Outdoor Literature Category

<http://www.isu.edu/outdoor/books>

National Geographic Extreme Classics: The 100 Greatest Adventure Books of All Time

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/0404/adventure_books.html

Outside Magazine's List of 25 Books for the Well-Read Explorer

http://outside.away.com/outside/features/200301/200301_adventure_canon_1.html



Mysteries—Private Investigators

Claudia Link, East Brunswick Public Library

Definition: A mystery is a story about a crime, usually a murder. Mysteries may well be the most popular genre among readers. According to Joyce Saricks, in her book *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction*, "Mysteries consist of a puzzle; the author provides clues to the solution but attempts to obscure some information so that the puzzle cannot be solved too easily. There is an investigator (or a team of investigators), amateur or professional, who solves the question of 'who-dun-it.'"

Subgenres:

Private investigators: Individuals whose occupation is that of detectives for hire. These stories are often written in the first person, are dark in tone, and urban in setting. They are frequently written as a series with the same main characters.

Police detectives or police procedurals: A member or members of a police department or other government agency is the investigator. They are filled with the details of police work.

Amateur detectives: The detectives are not professionals. They become involved in cases through a variety of methods. The stories are usually less violent than others and include the "gentle" subgenre of Cozy Mysteries.

Two Key Titles:

A is for Alibi by Sue Grafton

The first in a long running series introduces us to Kinsey Millhone Private Investigator. Eight years ago Nikki Fife was sent to prison for poisoning her husband; newly released she hires Kinsey Millhone to find the real murderer.

As Kinsey investigates, she finds out that almost everyone wanted Mr. Fife dead, including his ex-wife, his many mistresses, and his law partner. But now, the killer has resurfaced and is taking lives again, will hers be next?

Double Deuce by Robert B. Parker

This is nineteenth novel in the Spenser series. PI Spenser and his sometime partner Hawk are called in to investigate the seemingly random murders of a teenaged mother and her baby in a violent housing project. Can Spenser and Hawk infiltrate the violent drug gangs who run the project, find the killers, and avenge the murders before the housing project explodes into violence?

Ten Significant Authors of Private Investigation stories (Current Era)

1. Linda Barnes "Carlotta Carlyle"
2. Lawrence Sanders "Matt Scudder"
3. James Lee Burke "Dave Robicheaux"
4. Robert Crais "Elvis Cole"
5. Sue Grafton "Kinsey Millhone"
6. Marcia Muller "Sharon McCone"
7. Sara Paretsky "V.I. Warshawski"

8. Robert B. Parker "Spenser"
9. S.J. Rozan "Lydia Chin & Bill Smith"
10. Dana Stabenow "Kate Shugak"

Awards:

Agatha Awards: <http://users.erols.com/malice>
Anthony Awards: <http://www.bouchercon.info>
Barry Awards: <http://www.deadlypleasures.com/Barry.htm>
Dagger Awards: <http://kjm.org/cwa.htm>
Dilys Award: <http://www.mysterybooksellers.com/dilys.html>
Edgar Awards: <http://www.mysterywriters.org/awards.html>
Ellis Awards: <http://www.crimewriterscanada.com>
Hammett Awards: <http://hycber.com?MYST/hammetts.html>
Macavity Awards: <http://mysteryreaders.org/macavity.html>
Kelly Awards: <http://www.thecwaa.net>
Shamus Awards: <http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv72.html>

Web Sites

<http://www.themysteryreader.com/>
<http://www.mysteryinkonline.com/>
<http://www.mysterywriters.org/>
<http://www.clueclass.com/>
<http://www.stopyoure Killingme.com/>
<http://www.sistersincrime.org/>
<http://crimewriterscanada.com/cwc/index.html>

Print resources

Herald, Diana Tixier and Wayne A. Wiegand. *Genreflecting: A Guide to Popular Reading Interests*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Niebuhr, Gary Warren. *Make Mine a Mystery: A Reader's Guide to Mystery and Detective Fiction*. Libraries Unlimited, 2003.

Niebuhr, Gary Warren. *Read 'Em Their Writes: A Handbook for Mystery and Crime Fiction Book Discussions*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Saricks, Joyce G. *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction*. American Library Association, 2001.



WHAT IS CHICK LIT?

Mary Lynn Becza, Somerset County Library System

The Genre

One of the most popular genres in publishing today, chick lit is mostly fiction written for and about young women in their 20s and 30s. Different from a traditional romance because the girl doesn't always get the guy, it's generally agreed that chick lit began in the mid-1990s around the time of Bridget Jones's Diary and Sex and the City. Featuring urban settings, stylish workplaces, hip fashion and lots of humor, the heroines find themselves struggling with careers, family, friends, and romance. The prose and tone of these books is mostly breezy and light, even when focusing on serious themes. Much-maligned and frequently blamed for everything from the death of feminism to the end of literary fiction, chick-lit continues to thrive and has produced the many sub-genres below.

Sub-genres

Teen Chick Lit – The beginning adventures of our heroine in high school. Prom dress drama, curfews, and that kissing that cute guy in chemistry! Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, The Princess Diaries, Angus, Thongs and Full-frontal Snogging.

Mystery/Suspense Chick Lit – Our heroine's blind date drops dead face first into her Cosmo! She wipes off the sticky pink drink and searches for his killer. Sex, Murder and a Double Latte, The Givenchy Code, Dating Can be Deadly, The Jinx.

Multicultural Chick Lit – Contrary to chick lit's critics, it's not all about rich white girls. Asian, African-American, Indian, and Latina heroines love their Jimmy Choos too! Goddess for Hire, Cosmopolitan Girls, In Full Bloom, Dirty Girls Social Club.

Bride Lit – Our heroine's landed her man and now she needs to fend off her crazy in-laws, find the perfect gown and plan her dream day with her wacky gay wedding planner! Diary of a Mad Bride, Otherwise Engaged, Wedding Season.

Mommy Lit – What happens after the baby? Further adventures of our fearless heroine pregnant and at the playgroup. I Don't Know How She Does It, My Life on a Plate, From Here to Maternity, Hens Dancing, Amanda Bright @ Home, Babyface.

Christian Chick Lit – Church-going Christian heroines also have dating woes -just hold the sex please! Perfecting Kate, The Yada Yada Prayer Group, Norah's Ark.

Hen/Lady/Matron Lit – Just when you thought our heroine would settle down with the grandkids and the garden club, that handsome widower around the corner complicates her life! Julie and Romeo, The Hot Flash Club, The Red Hat Club, Jane Austen in Boca, My Favorite Midlife Crisis (Yet).

Non-fiction Chick Lit – Our heroine's truth is stranger than fiction! Cooking For Mr. Latte, The Between Boyfriends Book, The Broke Diaries, Save Karyn, Around the World in 80 Dates, Ditched by Dr. Right, I Love You, Nice to Meet You.

Some Representative Titles:

Room for Improvement by Stacey Ballis Designer Lily Allen is thrilled to be chosen to host a new reality-TV interior décor show which heats up her career but has the opposite effect on her love life. For HGTV fans!

The Other Side of the Story by Marian Keyes Ever wonder how the other woman feels after she steals your boyfriend? Chick lit star Keyes delivers yet again with this novel of love and betrayal in the Dublin and London literary & publishing worlds.

This is Chick Lit edited by Lauren Baratz-Logsted Can't make up your mind? Try this short story collection.

Some Chick lit authors you should know:

Jane Green
Sophie Kinsella
Melissa Senate
Laura Caldwell
Emily Giffin
Lynn Messina
Robyn Sisman
Clare Naylor
Jennifer Weiner
Beth Kendrick

Chick lit Internet Readers Advisory resources:

Candy Covered Books www.candycoveredbooks.com Book reviews & Links

Momlit.com www.momlit.com Stephanie Lehmann's list of mommy lit titles.

The Chick Lit Review <http://chicklitreview.org> Original short stories and reviews.

Chick Lit Writers www.chicklitwriters.com Info for authors and new releases

Faithchick.com www.faithchick.com Christian chick lit new releases, blog & more.





True Crime

Lauren Ryan, Somerset County Library System

True crime is an often overlooked genre, but as writer Stephen Michaud has said "The subject matter has evergreen appeal; there's a murder on page three of Genesis."

-Michaud, Steven. 2005. "Best True Crime Books." *Bookmarks* (March/April) 10-11

The Genre

The true crime genre is a fascinating mix of horror, terror, intrigue, and guile all wrapped up in a compelling narrative. Many readers shy away from this genre since all the terrible tales are true. However, the fascination with crime and criminals remain. The success of television shows such as "America's Most Wanted" or the "Court TV" channel prove that people are eager and willing to dive into the nitty gritty details of crime. In addition, the genre provides for intriguing character portraits and suspenseful narratives.

Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins, both crime fiction authors from the Victorian era used elements of actual events in their stories. They are credited with developing the genre. In addition, sensationalized newspaper stories of the time read like serial novels complete with conspiracy theories, unsavory characters, valiant heroines, and hapless victims. As the public clamored for information on the latest crimes, publishers realized that money could be made by producing quick paced true crime books to satisfy their readers thirst for blood. The murder of a young boy by Leopold and Loeb, or Lizzie Borden and her "forty whacks" are prime examples of highly publicized and widely read crimes. By 1948 the Mystery Writer's of America began issuing the "Best Fact Crime" Edgar award.

The appeal of the genre lies in the innate morbid curiosity of the human race. As the authors of the *Mystery Readers' Advisory: The Librarian's Clues to Murder and Mayhem* speculate readers are "fascinated by the extremes of human behavior, illustrating that the world's real murderers are more twisted and fiendish than any villain or predator dreamed up for the pages of a novel." True crime is a great nonfiction read alike to suggest to your mystery, horror, espionage or adventure readers.

Subgenres

True crime is often immediately associated with books about gory crimes. However, the genre does include crime books about financial schemes, con men, art heists, and other non-murderous wrongdoings.

Violent Crime

Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders. By Vincent Bugliosi with Curt Gentry.

The Executioner's Song. By Norman Mailor.

Organized Crime

American Mafia: A History of It's Rise to Power. By Thomas Repetto.

Under and Alone: The True Story of the Undercover Agent Who Infiltrated America's Most Violent Outlaw Motorcycle Gang. By William Queen

Theft

Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six M.I.T. Students Who Took Vegas for Millions. By Ben Mezrich

Ponzi's Scheme: The True Story of a Financial Wizard. By Mitchell Zuckoff.

Historical Crime

Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America. By Erik Larson

Boss Tweed: The Rise and Fall of the Corrupt Pol Who Conceived the Soul of Modern New York. By Kenneth Ackerman

Unsolved Mysteries

The Boston Stranglers. By Susan Kelly

Perfect Murder, Perfect Town: JonBenet and the City of Boulder. By Lawrence Schiller

Police Procedurals/Courtroom Dramas

Homicide Special: A Year with the LAPD's Elite Detective Unit. By Miles Corwin

"Ready for My People" My Most Chilling Cases as Prosecutor. By Marissa N. Batt

Celebrity Crime

Murder in Brentwood. By Mark Fuhrman

Stranger in Two Worlds. By Jean Harris

Two Representative Titles

***In Cold Blood: a true account of multiple murder and its consequences.* By Truman Capote.**

This is perhaps the seminal work of the field, and a story that still resonates today. In 1959 a Kansas farm family was brutally murdered by two ex-cons, Dick Hickock and Perry Smith. Through painstaking research and interviews with the killers Capote was able to get into the minds of the two men and write a nonfiction story that reads like fiction. The reader is left feeling almost sorry for the hopeless lives of Hickock and Smith while simultaneously cringing at their pointless brutality against the Clutter family.

***Stranger Beside Me.* By Ann Rule.**

Ann Rule and Ted Bundy both worked at same Seattle crisis clinic in 1971. Their friendship went on to span the next several decades as Ted Bundy killed his victims and was incarcerated for their murders. Rule focuses primarily on Bundy's personality and motivations. She shares her insight on how Bundy was able to maintain an outwardly normal life while committing his brutal crimes.

Resources

- *The Crime Encyclopedia: The World's Most Notorious Outlaws, Mobsters, and Crooks.* By Marie J. Macnee
- Edgar Award for "Best Fact Crime"
- Crimemagazine.com: A website devoted to true crime, books, movies, etc.
- CLEWS The Historic True Crime Blog: <http://laurajames.typepad.com>
- Court TV's Crime Library: www.crimelibrary.com



Historical Fiction--Imaging History Martha Burns, author *Reading Group Journal: Notes in the Margins*

What is history but a fable agreed upon? –Napoleon Bonaparte

Definition

Before an attempt is made to define the Historical Fiction genre it is important to remember that “historical” is the modifier. Sarah L. Johnson, author of *Historical Fiction: A Guide to the Genre* has noted that Historical Fiction is a difficult genre to define. According to Johnson Historical Fiction is often defined as “fiction set in the past.” She writes that this definition brings up questions such as “how far in the past must the text be set?” and “whose past are we talking about--the reader’s or the author’s?”

Johnson resolves these issues for purposes of her book by defining Historical Fiction as “fictional work (mainly novels) set before the middle of the last century, and ones in which the author is writing from research rather than personal experience. This usually means that the novels will take place before the author’s life and times.” I have used this definition for my selection of representative works.

Genre-Blending: The Historical Fiction genre easily combines with many other genres such as mystery, romance, thrillers, Christian fiction and even Westerns.

Two Key Titles:

Angle of Repose

By Wallace Stegner. 569 pp. Doubleday, 1971
Winner of Pulitzer Prize

Lyman Ward, a wheelchair-bound historian whose marriage has failed, decides to write a fictional biography about his pioneer grandparents to discover why they grew apart over the years. Stegner was the founder of the creative writing program at Stanford University and wrote, “Any good fiction is collected out of reality, and its parts ought to be vivid and true to observation. The parts are reassembled in such a way that the architecture, the shape of the action, is meaningful. And if the fiction is good enough, the meaning will stretch . . . the particular will become representative.” Because Stegner based this work on the real life of Mary Hallock Foote issues of artistic license have been raised.

The Last Report of the Miracles at Little No-Horse

By Louise Erdrich. 361 pp. HarperCollins, 2001

Father Damien Modeste, beloved priest of the Ojibwe people on the Little No Horse reservation in rural North Dakota, has kept a secret from his flock for over fifty years: He is, in fact, a woman. Revealed early on, this isn’t the greatest mystery of the book. When Father Jude Miller visits to investigate whether the late Sister Leopolda should be made a saint, Father Damien is forced to revisit the past and decide whether he should reveal why her piety may have been false. Erdrich’s beautiful prose takes us through decades of reservation history, including that of many families already familiar to readers through her contemporary novels.

Readers’ Advisory Roundtable--Recommending Jan Karon When You Only Read Stephen King
NJLA Conference, April 24, 2007

Ten Significant Authors:

Edward P. Jones
Pearl Buck
James Michener
Charles Frazier
John Jakes
Mary Renault
Edward Rutherford
Isabel Allende
Larry McMurtry
Philippa Gregory
Alan Furst

Web Sites The Historical Novel Society: www.historicalnovelsociety.org
www.histfiction.net
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_novels#United_States

Awards

No major award for historical fiction exists for adult historical fiction, however historical fiction often appears on the **ALA Notable Books** list:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotocols/rusanotable/thelists/notablebooks.htm>

The Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction is given annually to worthy children's or young adult novels in the genre. (www.scottodell.com)

Print Resources

Burt, Daniel. S. *What Historical Novel Do I Read Next?* 3 vols. Gale Research. 1997-2003.
Herald, Diana Tixier. *Genreflecting: A Guide to Popular Reading Interests*. 6th ed.
Johnson, Sarah L. *Historical Fiction: A Guide to the Genre*. Libraries Unlimited. 2005.



Thrill Me!

Yvonne Selander, Somerset County Library System

We ignore thriller writers at our peril. Their genre is the political condition. They massage our dreams and magnify our nightmares. If it is true that we always need enemies, then we will always need writers of fiction to encode our fears and fantasies.

--Daniel Easterman, Irish author, Million Magazine (London, Sept. – Oct. 1991). From The Columbia World of Quotations. 1996.

The Genre

Joyce Saricks constructed a great definition of a thriller in her The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction. "It is a gripping, plot-centered story, set in the detailed framework of a particular profession that places heroes or heroines in dangerous situations from which they must extricate themselves."

Using this definition, let's break it down into thriller characteristics:

- A gripping, plot-centered story: The action drives the story. Protagonists are usually under some sort of time constraint, if they don't fulfill their mission the world could end! Chapters are typically rather short and end with cliff-hangers.
- Detailed framework: Thrillers can be very technical, exploring the intricacies of military hardware in depth. While some thrillers don't delve as deeply into technology or science as others, gadgets and/or puzzles will figure prominently into the plot.
- The particular profession of the main character is key: A doctor with a country practice will not be the main character in a thriller. On the other hand, a retired naval doctor that solved a rare bacterial outbreak threatening the safety of a classified nuclear submarine's mission is definite thriller material.
- Hero/Heroine: There is a likeable main character perfectly suited to take on the mission of the novel. They operate under a strong code, moral or personal. There are often secondary characters helping the hero/heroine achieve their goals.
- Dangerous situations: The hero/heroine often fears for their life, or the lives of others. The tribulations can be physical or emotional, but violence is a part of these novels.

Subgenres

The different subgenres are typically based on the profession of the protagonist. If the main character is a spy, then you have an espionage thriller; a doctor would star in a medical thriller. There are exceptions, as there are with every rule, but it's a good rule of thumb to follow. Again, borrowing from the work of Joyce Saricks, here are four of the basic subgenres of thrillers.

Legal thrillers

John Grisham – The Firm, The Pelican Brief

Richard North Patterson – Conviction, Protect and Defend

Scott Turow – Presumed Innocent, Reversible Errors

Medical/Scientific Thrillers

Robin Cook – Coma, Toxin, Crisis
Lincoln Child – Deep Storm, Mount Dragon (with Douglas Preston)
Michael Crichton – Next, Prey, The Andromeda Strain
James Rollins – Amazonia, Sandstorm, Black Order

Political/Corporate/Financial Thriller

David Baldacci – Total Control, The Winner, The Collectors
Steve Berry – The Romanov Prophecy, The Alexandria Link
Tom Clancy – The Hunt for Red October, The Teeth of the Tiger
Steven Frey – Silent Partner, The Chairman, The Protégé,

Espionage Thrillers

John le Carre – The Spy Who Came In from the Cold, Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy
Robert Ludlum – The Bourne Identity, The Hades Factor
Daniel Silva – The Kill Artist, The Messenger

Two Recently Popular Thrillers

The Alexandria Link by Steve Berry

On 2/18 it debuted at #3 on the New York Times Bestseller List of Hardcover Fiction

Cotton Malone, retired U.S. State Department operative, currently the owner of a rare bookshop in Copenhagen, returns in this sequel to The Templar Legacy. He is awakened one morning by his ex-wife pounding on his front door screaming that their son has been kidnapped. Cotton may be retired, but he can never totally leave his former job behind. To save the live of his son, and the fragile political balance in Palestine, he must search for the Library of Alexandria, before time runs out...

Deep Storm by Lincoln Child

On 2/18 it debuted at #7 on the New York Times Bestseller List of Hardcover Fiction

An oil platform off the coast of Greenland receives odd signals, seemingly originating from beneath the earth's crust. The military moves in and twenty months later, on a secret, and highly advanced research facility two miles below the ocean surface, people are falling ill. Peter Crane, former naval doctor, is called in to treat the ailing. Will Crane witness the uncovering of the legendary Atlantis? Or is something else awaiting discovery?

Important Web Resource & Major Awards

The International Thriller Writers, Inc. (ITW) was formed in 2004 and now holds an annual conference called Thrillfest for writers, aspiring writers and fans of the genre. This year's conference will be held July 12 - 15 in New York City. The organization hosts an interactive website with blogs, newsletters, and book news: <http://www.thrillerwriters.org>. The ITW also holds award ceremonies. The nominees for the 2007 Thriller Awards in these categories: Best Novel, Best First Novel, Best Paperback, and Best Screenplay, can be found on the website. In addition, the ThrillMaster Award, honoring a distinguished body of work spanning two decades or more, will be awarded to James Patterson this year. Last year's ThrillMaster was Clive Cussler.

Readers' Advisory Roundtable--Recommending Jan Karon When You Only Read Stephen King
NJLA Conference, April 24, 2007



Travel Writing Ilene Lefkowitz, Denville Public Library

Defining the genre:

Defined at its simplest, Travel Writing is Nonfiction featuring a strong sense of place, extreme adventures, cultural histories, archaeological adventures, and/or travel tales.

The beginnings of this exciting genre were travelogues. Throughout the nineteenth century as the world was entranced by strange and new places, explorers dutifully recounted their journeys noting the flora and fauna, the geography and the raw adventure of these strange new lands. As our world has shrunk in the twentieth and twenty first century, travel writing has taken us in a different direction. Rather than reading a catalog of flora and fauna, readers want to feel as though they are right there with the writer experiencing the tastes, the smells and the feel of strange new lands. They want to be a part of the culture and the nightlife. These are not your grandmother's travel guidebooks.

Appeal factors – Who doesn't like to travel and see new places? Travel writing encompasses so many topics other than just travel. Glimpses of just about any topic of interest can be found among the travel books giving them a broad sense of appeal.

Subgenres:

With any genre, there are subgenres to be had as well as crossovers into other genres. However, the main subgenres are:

Armchair Travel

This area of travel writing has its focus not surprisingly on the particular setting. While there might be some background on the traveler themselves, the main focus is the setting.

Foreign Places and Exotic Locales

Adventures - Emphasizing storytelling and edge of your seat adventure, these do not focus on the setting so much as the adventure itself.

Journey Narratives - This type of travel writing includes and often focuses on the hows and whys of the trip, sometimes almost exclusively.

The Expatriate Life – More than just a description of living in a foreign locale, but part memoir, and part cultural narrative.

Travel Humor – Just plain fun with the added benefit of being set in a different place.

Usually the source of the humor is the journey itself but it can also be the confusion and social awkwardness of being a stranger in a strange land.

Literary Travel – This area of travel writing is the most heady as the name of the subgenre suggests. These are more reflective and intrapersonal than any of the other subgenres. They stretch the boundaries of what travel writing is about. Many of these titles are written by authors who have already made their mark in another genre.

Some representative—and popular--authors

Bill Bryson, *In a Sunburned Country*

Tim Cahill, *Jaguars Ripped my Flesh*

Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines*

Jason Elliot, *Mirrors of the Unseen: Journeys in Iran*

Gretel Ehrlich, *This Cold Heaven: Seven Seasons in Greenland*

Ian Frazier, *Gone to New York: Adventures in the City*

Eric Hansen, *The Bird Man and the Lap Dancer: Close Encounters with Strangers*

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Tony Horwitz, *Blue Latitudes: Boldly Going Where Captain Cook has Gone Before*
Pico Iyer, *Falling off the Map: Some Lonely Places of the World*
Frances Mayes, *In Tuscany*
Peter Mayle, *A Year in Provence*
Eric Newby, *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*
Redmond O'Hanlon, *Into the Heart of Borneo*
Susan Orlean, *The Bullfighter Checks her Makeup*
Jonathan Raban, *Bad Land: An American Romance*
Paul Theroux, *Dark Star Safari: Overland from Cairo to Capetown*
Colin Thubron, *Shadow of the Silk Road*

Websites –

Travel Literature: <http://www.travelliterature.org/>

From the website: "Welcome to Travel Literature - the place to read (and write) about travel writing. From classics of the genre to less well-known works; from guidebooks to journeys of self-discovery, Travel Literature aims to cover them all. And look out for our upcoming series of articles on some of the great travel writers of our time."

Awards

The Thomas Cook Travel Book Award.

<http://www.thomascookpublishing.com/travelbookawards.htm>

The Travel Book Award originated as an initiative of The Thomas Cook Group in 1980, with the aim of encouraging and rewarding the art of literary travel writing.

The National Outdoor Book Awards (NOBA): <http://www.isu.edu/outdoor/books/>

This is the outdoor world's largest and most prestigious book award program. The purpose of the Awards is to recognize and encourage outstanding writing and publishing. Not specifically a travel writing award but worth paying attention to especially for the Nature, Adventure Guidebook, and Nature Guidebook categories.



Fantasy

Brenda Muhlbaier, Gloucester County Library System

Definition:

Fantasy is defined as speculative fiction based on magic or myth. The plots usually emphasize journeys, whether psychological or physical, and stress the importance of human virtues through individual acts of courage, sacrifice, and kindness. (ARRT)

Subgenres:

Alternate and Parallel Worlds, Epic Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Humorous, Magic and Mages, Urban Fantasy

Key Titles:

A Spell for Chameleon by Piers Anthony

Xanth was the enchanted land where magic ruled--where every citizen had a special spell only he could cast. That is, except for Bink of North Village. He was sure he possessed no magic, and knew that if he didn't find some soon, he would be exiled. According to the Good Magician Humpfrey, the charts said that Bink was as powerful as the King or even the Evil Magician Trent. Unfortunately, no one could determine its form. Meanwhile, Bink was in despair. If he didn't find his magic soon, he would be forced to leave....

The Eye of the World by Robert Jordan

A young shepherd, an apprentice blacksmith, and the local prankster flee when mythical monsters attack their village. But they are pursued relentlessly by the forces of the evil Dark One. The young men must come to grips with agents of the Dark Ones, but at the same time, they also must struggle with their perceptions of who they are, and what their lives mean. This richly detailed fantasy presents a fully realized, complex adventure which will appeal to fans of classic quests.

Significant Authors:

Anthony, Piers
Bradley, Marion Zimmer
Brooks, Terry
deLint, Charles
Eddings, David
Feist, Raymond
Jordan, Robert
Lewis, C. S.
Tolkien, J. R. R.
Weis, Margaret

Awards:

Locus Awards: <http://www.locusmag.com/SFAwards/Db/Locus.html>

Nebula Awards: <http://www.sfwawards.org/awards/>

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James Tiptree Jr.: <http://www.tiptree.org/>

Mythopoeic Awards: <http://mythsoc.org/awardwinners.html>

World Fantasy: <http://www.worldfantasy.org/awards/awardslist.html>

Resources:

Fluent in Fantasy: a guide to reading interests by Diana Tixier Herald, Libraries Unlimited, 1999

Fantasy Finder - <http://www.hoh.se/fantasyfinder/>

Genrefluent - <http://www.genrefluent.com/fantasy.htm>

Recommended Fantasy Author List - <http://www.sff.net/people/Amy.Sheldon/listcont.htm>

SF Site - <http://www.sfsite.com/>



Speculative Fiction: Horror

Rita Oakes, Ocean County Library

Definition of Speculative Fiction: An umbrella term encompassing fantasy, science-fiction, and horror.

Definition of Horror Fiction: A way of looking at the darkness in the world, and occasionally in oneself. It may include supernatural elements, but not always. Douglas Winter said it best: "Horror is not a genre, like the mystery or science-fiction or the western. It is not a kind of fiction meant to be confined to the ghetto of a special shelf in libraries or bookstores. Horror is an emotion." Sometimes also known as "dark fantasy" or "dark fiction."

Subgenres:

Supernatural Horror: Probably the most familiar. Includes ghost stories, vampire & werewolf tales, zombies, etc.

Comic Horror: A melding of humor and the horrific. Carrie Vaughn's *Kitty* series: *Kitty and the Midnight Hour*, *Kitty Goes to Washington*, *Kitty Takes a Holiday* feature a werewolf radio talk show host named—you guessed it—"Kitty."

Cosmic Horror: Focuses on the insignificance of human beings in a hostile or indifferent universe, such as in the work of H.P. Lovecraft.

Psychological Horror: Non-supernatural elements form the basis of the tale. Madness, or the fear of madness. Can be "quiet" and unsettling, as in *The Haunting of Hill House*, or gruesome tales of serial killers, as in *Red Dragon*.

Splatterpunk, "Extreme," or "Bizarro" Horror: Extreme violence and sex. Frequently shocking for its own sake. Not for everyone. *American Psycho*, by Bret Easton Ellis is one example.

Paranormal Romance: Uses all the standard tropes of the romance genre, but fuses it with supernatural characters. Laurell K. Hamilton's *Anita Blake* series.

Historical Horror: Horror of any particular type set in the past, or an alternate view of the past. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Saint Germain* series uses history as a prime focus.

Key Titles:

Speaks the Nightbird by Robert McCammon. Magistrate Isaac Woodward and his assistant, Matthew Corbett, journey through the Colonial Carolinas to investigate the case of a young woman accused of witchcraft. This title is being re-released as a trade paperback in July, and the follow-up novel, *Queen of Bedlam* is due out in October.

The Historian by Elizabeth Kostova. A young woman unearths a dangerous secret as she tries to find her missing father and determine the truth about Dracula. Told in interwoven flashbacks and featuring exotic settings, the story crosses the decades from the 1930s through the 1970s.

Significant Authors:

Robert McCammon
Chelsea Quinn Yarbro
Anne Rice
Barbara Hambly
Kim Newman
Peter Straub
Ambrose Bierce
Ramsey Campbell
Tananarive Due
Shirley Jackson

Print Resources:

Danse Macabre. Stephen King. Berkeley (re-issue of earlier edition) 2001.

Hooked on Horror: A Guide to Reading Interests in Horror Fiction. 2nd ed. Anthony J. Fonseca and June Michele Pulliam. Libraries Unlimited, 2002

Horror: 100 Best Books. Edited by Stephen Jones & Kim Newman. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1988

Horror: Another 100 Best Books. Edited by Stephen Jones & Kim Newman. Carroll & Graf, 2005

Web Resources:

www.monsterlibrarian.com

www.horrorworld.org

www.horrorreader.com

www.horror.org The website of the Horror Writers Association

www.ihlonline.org The website of the International Horror Guild

Awards:

The Bram Stoker Award. Presented annually by the Horror Writers Association for "superior achievement in horror writing," with categories for novel, first novel, long fiction (novella) short story, anthology, collection (single author), poetry, and nonfiction. Awards for items published in 2006 were presented at the World Horror Convention in Toronto on March 31st.

The International Horror Guild Award is presented by the IHG to "recognize the achievements of those who create in the field of Horror and Dark Fantasy." Winners will be announced at the World Fantasy Convention in Saratoga Springs in November. Categories are: novel, short fiction, mid-length fiction, long fiction, collection (single author), periodical, illustrated narrative, nonfiction, and art.

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LITERARY FICTION APRIL JUDGE, West Caldwell Public Library

DEFINITION

Literary fiction is “well-written”, highly acclaimed, often award winning and written in an elegant, poetic style. The works are engrossing and compelling. They explore serious, provocative topics. The characters are multi-dimensional and their interactions with each other are often more important than the plot. The use of words and how they are interwoven together is very important. These are the books that are critically reviewed.

FOUR OF MY FAVORITES

Atwood, Margaret. ***The Blind Assassin***. Winner of the Booker Award, the novel begins with the sentence, “Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge.” Iris continues to tell the story of her sister’s death that took place in 1945 and the inquest report that followed and proclaimed that the death was accidental. The novel then shifts as two unnamed lovers meet in dingy back street rooms. The novel within a novel returns to Iris through a 1947 newspaper article announcing the discovery of a small sailboat carrying the dead body of her husband. A hauntingly powerful novel that is crisp, witty and luminous.

Oates, Joyce Carol. ***Blonde***. Told in her own voice, the tragic life of Norma Jeane Baker, the child, the woman and her creation to become the famous blonde star that everyone knew as Marilyn Monroe comes vividly alive in this dramatic, powerful and compelling fictional account which explores the darkness, the emptiness and deep rooted conflicts that she encountered everyday. A riveting read.

Perlman, Elliot. ***Seven Types of Ambiguity***. Simon, an out-of-work teacher is obsessed with his former girlfriend, Anna, who left him 10 years ago. In an attempt to win her back, he kidnaps her 6-year-old son. This act creates havoc in the lives of many people including Simon’s psychiatrist, Alex; Anna and her workaholic stockbroker husband, Joe; a stock analyst, Dennis; and Angelique who is Simon’s prostitute friend. Told from the perspective of seven people each narrating one chapter, this complicated, well-crafted novel explores the ambiguity of human relationships and human entanglements.

Vincenzi, Penny. ***Almost A Crime***. Everyone thinks that Tom and Octavia Fleming have the perfect, power marriage. They are a handsome couple, have three wonderful children and are wealthy. But when Octavia discovers Tom’s infidelity, the world they once knew falls apart. This engrossing and heartfelt page-turner is layered with numerous, intriguing subplots and a wide array of interesting characters whose lives intersect in many unexpected ways. A great read!

SIGNIFICANT AUTHORS (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

Joyce Carol Oates
Alice Adams
Alice Hoffman
Margaret Drabble
Penny Vincenzi
Larry Watson
John Updike
Toni Morrison

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Anita Shreve
Saul Bellow
Isabel Allende
Margaret Atwood
Gore Vidal
Philip Roth
John Barth
Earl Perlman
John LeCarre
David Guterson
Gloria Naylor
Anne Tyler
Jane Hamilton
Jane Smiley
Barbara Kingslover
Amy Tan
John Irving
Gabriel Garcia Marquez
Graham Green
Donna Tratt
Marge Piercy
Ian McEwan
Robertson Davies
Kate Gibbons
Anita Brookner
Mary McGarry Morris
Tim O'Brien
Ellen Gilchrist

Major Awards

Nobel Prize for Literature
National Book Award
Man-Booker Award
Pulitzer Prize for Literature
Whitbread Award

Print Resources

Frolund, Tina. *Genreified Classics: A Guide to Reading Interests in Classic Literature*. Libraries Unlimited. 2006.
Pearl, Nancy. *Now Read This: A Guide to Mainstream Fiction, 1978-1998*. Libraries Unlimited. 1999.
Pearl, Nancy. *Now Read This II: A Guide to Mainstream Fiction, 1990-2001*. Libraries Unlimited, 2002.

Online Resources

ALA Notable Books:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotocols/rusanotable/thelists/notablebooks.htm>