Thrillers are comprised of several informal subsets:

Disaster
A subset in which the protagonist is forced to stop a major catastrophe, mitigate the damage, or escape the disaster zone before time runs out. A central theme is the extreme peril that threatens a particular locale or humanity in general. Often, the stories involve characters who are simply trying to survive cataclysmic events that are beyond their control. These calamities could include natural disasters, such as earthquakes, meteor strikes, or tsunamis; or man-made disasters, such as nuclear explosions, cyber-attacks, or a viral or biological weapon. Disaster thrillers may incorporate elements from **science fiction**, **horror fiction**, and the **thriller** genre.

Common Elements

Large-scale action	Characters reacting to crisis
Suspense	Human nature under pressure

Modern Literary Examples

Ashfall (2011) by Mike Mullin	*Quake* (2014) by Jack Douglas
Dry (2018) by Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman	*Salvage the Bones* (2012) by Jesmyn Ward
Life as We Knew It (2006) by Susan Beth Pfeffer	*Storm Surge* (2021) by John F. Banas
Monument 14 (2012) by Emmy Laybourne	*The Virus* (2015) by Stanley Johnson

Political Thrillers
A subset that combines **political fiction** with the **thriller** genre. Stories are set against the backdrop of a political power struggle, with the tension arising from the high stakes—if the crisis is not solved, the ramifications for the government or nation will be dire. Often, the protagonist is connected with the government, perhaps a low-level functionary at the beginning, and must settle a political power struggle, solve a crime, or otherwise handle a dilemma with national or international implications. Political thrillers can also blend with **historical fiction** when depicting political systems, events, theories, and figures in history. These stories present the power dynamics, intrigue, and drama influencing the plots and characters within the appropriate historical context. Anthony Trollope's *Phineas Redux* (1874), Dorothy B. Hughes's *The Blackbirder* (1943), and Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959) are classic examples.

Common Elements

Intricate story plotting		Conspiracies		Action	
Political corruption		Tension		Vehicle and foot chases	
Power struggles		Personal and societal danger		Terrorism	
Intrigue				Warfare	

Modern Literary Examples

After America (2010) by John Birmingham	*The Network* (2019) by L. C. Shaw
The Armageddon File (2017) by Stephen Coonts	*The Parallax View* (1970) by Loren Singer
Blink of an Eye (2011) by William S. Cohen	*Power Failure* (2018) by Ben Bova
Breakpoint (2007) by Richard A. Clarke	*Rubicon* (2008) by Lawrence Alexander
Capitol Conspiracy (2008) by William Bernhardt	*The Seeds of Treason* (1986) by Ted Allbeury
The Caretaker (2013) by A. X. Ahmad	*The Senator and the Sin Eater* (2007) by William J. Buchanan
Checkmate (2007) by Karna Small Bodman	*Summit* (1989) by Richard Bowker
The Constant Gardener (2001) by John le Carré	*We, the Survivors* (2019) by Tash Aw
Deception Point (2001) by Dan Brown	*What Strange Creatures* (2014) by Emily Arsenault
Directive 51 (2010) by John Barnes	*While Justice Sleeps* (2021) by Stacey Abrams
The Ghost (2007) by Robert Harris	*Whole Truth* (2008) by David Balducci
Iron Wolf (2015) by Dale Brown	
Millennium (2003) by J. G. Ballard	

Religious Thrillers

A subset that combines **religious fiction** (or **Christian fiction**) with **thrillers**. These stories might depict a religious artifact or secret that is discovered, and different organizations, some of them secret, vie to control the situation. These stories utilize the history and beliefs of religion, and the protagonist usually has an in-depth knowledge or experience with religious training, scholarship, and/or upbringing.

Common Elements

Conspiracies	Historical riddles
Religious artifacts	Religious scholars
Secret societies	Archaeologists
Hidden knowledge	Historians

Modern Literary Examples

The Blood Gospel (2013) by James Rollins and Rebecca Cantrell	*The Last Testament* (2009) by Sam Bourne
The Da Vinci Code (2004) by Dan Brown	*The Quest* (2013) by Nelson DeMille
The First Apostle (2008) by Jim Becker	*Sanctus* (2011) by Simon Toyne
The Last Templar (2005) by Raymond Khoury	*The Sword of Moses* (2013) by Dominic Selwood

Supernatural Thrillers

A subset in which stories combine elements of **horror fiction** or **paranormal fiction** with **thrillers**. Otherworldly elements are typically introduced as antagonistic forces, and some characters display supernatural abilities. However, the plot lines and tone are distinctly those of a thriller. Like other subsets of thrillers, the plots of the supernatural variety are character driven, usually through the actions of the antagonist.

Common Elements

Angels	Clairvoyance	Catastrophic consequences
Demons	Telekinesis	
Ghosts	Precognition	
Ghouls	Life and death situations	

Modern Literary Examples

The Angel Maker (2023) by Alex North	*House of Scorpions* (1980) by Jory Sherman
Blood Island (1981) by James Farber	*Shades of Evil* (1982) by Hugh B. Cave
A Book of Bones (2019) by John Connolly	*Sins of Omission* (1980) by Chelsea Quinn Yarbo
Broken Monsters (2014) by Lauren Beukes	*Street Magic* (2009) by Caitlin Kittredge
The Burning Girls (2021) by C. J. Tudor	*The Unwanted* (1987) by John Saul
Daughters of the Lake (2018) by Wendy Webb	*Vortex* (1979) by David Heller
The Girl With All the Gifts (2014) by M. R. Carey	

Techno-Thrillers

A hybrid subset which draws on themes and tropes from **action and adventure fiction**, **science fiction**, **spy fiction**, **thrillers**, and **war fiction**. Often, there is cutting-edge technology that either empowers or threatens the protagonist or society at large. Narratives provide substantial amounts of technical detail concerning technology, as well as the mechanics of various disciplines such as espionage, martial arts, and politics. There is often a focus on military action.

Common Elements

Advancements in science and technology	Electronic devices	Fast-paced plots
Computers and computer science	State surveillance	Militaries
	Character-driven storylines	Espionage

Modern Literary Examples

Cryptonomicon (1999) by Neal Stephenson	*The Hunt for Red October* (1984) by Tom Clancy
Daemon (2006) by Daniel Suarez	*Reamde* (2011) by Neal Stephenson
Digital Fortress (2004) by Dan Brown	*State of Fear* (2004) by Michael Crichton
Flight of the Old Dog (1987) by Dale Brown	