Familiar authors and predictable storylines

Genres are categories of books based on common themes, settings, or literary forms. Think romances, fantasy, westerns, thrillers, detectives, sci-fi, etc.

This type of book packages exactly the kind of book that you enjoyed the last time you read that author, often with variations on theme or location and continuations of the character development and setting. Popular authors can range from some very good writers that put a clever twist on their main character and plots, to some rather formulaic writers who consistently appeal to a specific devoted demographic. But it doesn’t matter; just because a book is predictable it doesn’t necessarily mean it’s boring or badly written or unsatisfying. In fact, to paraphrase Alanis Morissette, it’s like getting a knife, when you have asked for the knife. (and who really wants 10,000 spoons anyway?)

There are a variety of these bestselling authors from more than a few different genres at all of our campus libraries. I’m not going to tell you if I think they’re very good writers with clever twists (well, maybe I might) or if I think they’re very poor writers who lucked out (I’m definitely NOT going to do that), I’m just going to suggest a few and tell you what you might expect if you pick up one of their books. That’s all …

**Mystery/Thrillers**

Patricia Cornwell’s books:
- Have a coroner, detailed forensics (often “ew, gross”), police jargon, tech talk, serial killers or sometimes single instance killers (still really bad guys).
- Some love the “brutality” of her writing while others find her nuanced.

You decide.

One of the library’s many titles by Cornwell:

Michael Connelly’s books:
- Either LA Detective Harry Bosch or Defense Attorney Mickey Haller feature.
- Gritty, realistic, traumatic, dark, weighty. Not the typical LA that everyone writes about, but a more realistic, sadder one. The city that no doubt exists.
- Crossovers (plot lines, not legs/bras) between novels abound.
- Humour rarely makes appearances; sorrow and fragility steal centre stage.

One title in our collection by Connelly:
Adventure

**Clive Cussler’s books:**
- Seas and men and history and technology and foreign locales.
- With politics, humour (the bare minimum), archeology and technical tools (mostly instruments, not just men) mixed in well.
- Often with curses, mysteries, hair raising escapades, last minute salvations, and a hail Mary or two ... or three.

The library has many novels by Cussler, one of them is:

![Clive Cussler's The Silent Sea](image)

**Tom Clancy’s books:**
- Espionage, military science, technology, drug cartels, violence, superpowers and terrorism. Take your pick!
- Men, North American and hero-centric.
- There is beautiful imagery, lyrical language and the words often paint the scene as much as if it was done with paints and a brush, but the story is straight to the point, direct and very factual.

One of the library’s books:

![Tom Clancy's The Teeth of the Tiger](image)

Science Fiction/Horror

**Stephen King’s books:**
- Has three dimensional characters (often kinda dreadful, but pretty real), unique concepts (oi vey they’re unique), skillful use of language and literary devices, interesting twists and turns (oh baby, sometimes a corkscrew!), psychological manipulations and out of this world endings.
- Some books are Horror, some are straight-up, good old Science Fiction. Almost all captivate.

Warning: Don’t read certain titles at 1 am if you’re alone in the house, are prone to paranoia or don’t want to be late for work.

One of the titles we have:

![Stephen King's End of Watch](image)
John Scalzi’s books:

- Scalzi has a light, deft touch with the worlds he creates. A minimalist’s Star Trek.
- Effortless to read, tightly written. Clever, geeky, creative and fun to read.
- Mysteries for/of humans who are on/within alien worlds (more humans, less alien lifeforms)

Some of the library’s books by him:

![John Scalzi's Book](JOHN_SCALZI_REDSHIRTS.png)

Romances/Love Stories

Nora Roberts’ books:

- Suspense, romance (sometimes more than one) multiple storylines (how many can you handle?), comforting, well-described settings and locations.
- Sentimental, happy endings, emotionally satisfying.
- Always hits the Bestseller lists. Fans of Roberts are fans to their deaths (and don’t mess with them).

One of many titles the libraries have:

![Nora Roberts' Book](NORA_ROBERTS_CAROLINA_MOON.png)

Debbie Macomber’s books:

- Christmases and summer cottages and birthday weekends. Settings and characters as charming as old memories or stories of old (not always realistic but sweet and nostalgic)
- Peopled with humans you wish you actually knew.
- Comforting, warm, familiar stories of love, friendships, family, and well told, that leave the reader content at the end. (just like your annual turkey dinner, folks)

Here’s one from our library.

![Debbie Macomber's Book](DEBBIE_MACOMBER_CHRISTMAS_IN_ALASKA.png)

Don’t underestimate the enjoyment you can have from reading a familiar author with a good premise along predictable storylines. It really is like travelling a beloved road in different seasons, eating a home cooked meal with people you love or buying the same sweet treat every once in a while. You know what you love and you know what you’re getting with each and every book.
Happy junk food consummation week!

Chips.
My favourite junk food.