

R&R Genre Cheat Sheet: Cover • Trope • Mood

Use these 3 clues to pick a shelf fast.

Genre	COVER — what you see	TROPE — common patterns	MOOD — how it feels	Shelf to try
 Horror	Dark palette; fog/silhouettes; Scary things/people	Haunted place/curse; unreliable narrator; monster-as-metaphor	Eerie → tense → chilled release	 Horror
 Suspense/Thriller	Person standing in fog, blurred city; broken glass/red accents, bold titles.	Ticking clock; red herrings; ordinary person vs. conspiracy	Urgent, breathless, high-stakes	 Suspense / Thriller
 Romance	Illustrated couples; warm colors; playful titles	Meet-cute; enemies-to-lovers; fake dating/second chance	Hopeful, cozy, swoony	Romance
 Urban Fiction	City imagery; bold type; photo-centered	Community/loyalty; moral crossroads; hustle choices & consequences	Gritty, intense, authentic	Urban
 Teen Fiction (YA)	Bright colors; teen characters; hand-lettering	Identity & friendship; firsts; found family	Relatable, reflective → hopeful	Teen
 General Fiction	Minimalist art/photo; literary fonts	Family secrets; life transitions; character study	Thoughtful, layered, bittersweet	General
 Sci-Fi & Fantasy	Planets/tech motifs or sigils/maps, Dragons, swords	Chosen one/crew on a quest; portal/world rules; tech gone wrong/prophecy	Wonder, awe, epic stakes	SciFi Fantasy
 Graphic Novel	Bold lines; strong series branding, recognizable characters	Hero origin/team-up; diary/slice-of-life; visual gags/action beats	Cinematic, immediate, dynamic	Graphic Novels (pair with content genre)
 Manga	Expressive character art; volume numbers, tankoban	Training/tournament arcs; magical girl/isekai; school club hijinks	Heightened emotion; dramatic ↔ funny	Manga (pair with content genre)
 Historical Fiction	Period clothing/objects; sepia or muted tones	Ordinary people in extraordinary eras; letters/diaries connect timelines; survival/resistance	Reflective, empathetic, resilient	Historical
 Memoir	Author photo or symbolic object; clean design	Coming-of-age; recovery/resilience; identity journey	Candid, honest, inspiring	Memoir / Nonfiction

How to use (TCM Test):

 ****Trope:**** Name one familiar pattern (e.g., haunted place, ticking clock, rivals-to-lovers).  ****Cover:**** Match the visual signals above (art, fonts, colors, taglines).  ****Mood:**** Say the feeling you want today (creepy, twisty, hopeful...). ➡ If ****2 of 3**** point to a genre, go to that ****shelf****. Ask for crossovers (e.g., YA Horror, Urban Romance).

Tip: Graphic Novel/Manga are formats—pair them with a content genre (e.g.,  +  = Horror Graphic Novel).