

PART 1: TEAM TITAN WISHLIST

Hello!

Another season of Pitch Wars is about to commence, and we're so excited to be co-mentors to the program this year! Our names are Maiya Ibrahim and Ayana Gray (a.k.a. Team Titan!), and we're a duo of debut young adult fantasy authors both represented by Pete Knapp of Park & Fine Literary and Media with debuts forthcoming. Maiya's Arabian-inspired fantasy SPICE ROAD is out in 2021 from Delacorte Press/Penguin Random House, Ayana's Pan-African-inspired fantasy BEASTS OF PREY is out in 2022 from Putnam Books for Young Readers/Penguin Random House!

Between the two of us, we boast more than a decade of formal and informal editorial expertise, and our experiences as debut authors in the young adult space mean we have a nuanced and extremely current understanding of what it takes to break into this industry (especially as BIPOC!).

What is Pitch Wars?

We're glad you asked! Pitch Wars is an annual mentoring program that connects published/agented authors, editors, or industry interns with one writer to mentor for three months. The program ends in February 2021 with an Agent Showcase, where each mentee presents a snippet of their manuscript for literary agents who can request to see more and possibly offer representation. Click [here](#) for more general information about the program!

What is Team Titan looking for in a mentee this year?

We are considering completed manuscripts in the Young Adult (YA) and New Adult (NA) age category. The ideal mentee for us is someone who's nearly ready to submit their manuscript to a literary agent, but needs a final set of eyes on their work to make a good story a great one! Our ideal mentee is driven, self-disciplined, adaptive, and willing to take constructive feedback in stride. Someone who takes the initiative with their story is a must!

THE TEAM TITAN OFFICIAL WISHLIST

*Note: Your manuscript doesn't have to tick every (or any) of these boxes to be considered, these are just some of our faves!

Genres: Fantasy, Science Fiction, Thriller, Suspense, Romance, Retellings

- MAGIC! Give us all the magic! Soft and mystical, hard and defined, or somewhere in between--the only requisite is that it must be unique!
- Protagonists and Characters from Marginalized Backgrounds: Whether that marginalization relates to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, body type, neurodiversity or any other marginalization across the spectra.
- Enemies-To-Lovers/Opposites-To-Allies or Allies-To-Enemies: We love this trope!
- Immersive Worldbuilding: Wherever your story happens—a fictional land, an urban city, outer space—we love stories with a really strong sense of place and atmosphere, especially when the setting is woven into the plot or themes.
- Rogues: We love roguish characters—assassins, bounty hunters, rebels against a dystopian government, wayward spaceship pilots, scrappers and scavengers, clever thieves with ambitious plans, royals-in-disguise out for revenge, secretly-magical characters. The more rebellious or unsavory the better!
- Surprises! Rewarding, earned plot twists that make you shout “NOOO!”, or “I knew it!”
- Unreliable Narrators: This ties in with the above. Give us your narrators who are so convincing we immediately trust them—until the cracks start to show...
- Families: Including complicated family dynamics, sibling relationships, absent parents and found families, to name a few.
- Compelling Voices: Send us stories with strong, unique character voices that feel so authentic and fully-realized they're jumping off the page. (Basically, we want to stan your characters and start a fan club because we love them so much.)
- Slow Burn Romance: Must include angst, pining and ‘KISS ALREADY!’ moments.

We're Not The Best Mentors For (The ANTI-Wishlist)

*If your manuscript features these things, we would not be the best mentors for you!

- Identity-based violence: Stories featuring violence towards a person strictly because of their identity are difficult for us to read as women of color who come from communities where racial prejudices and violence is rampant. This does not mean your story can't feature violence at all, here is an example:

Ex. A Black boy is beaten up by the school bully for being scrawny and shy. - Yes.

Ex. A Black boy is beaten up by the (racist) school bully for being Black. - No.

- Stories about a bigoted, intolerant protagonist learning that being sexist/racist/anti-gay/anti-trans/etc. is wrong.
- Hard Science Fiction: We would be happy to see soft sci-fi and worlds influenced by technology/science, but we would not be the best mentors for hard sci-fi stories where the science is very central to the plot or too complex.
- Military Science Fiction

If you want to know a little more about what being our mentee will be like, check out Ayana's blog post about the Team Titan way [here](#)! Please read it before you sub to us to make sure you'd be a good fit!

If you still have questions about what we're looking for, you can reach out to either of us! No matter who you reach out to, we will both see your question. An answer from one of us is an answer from both of us!

To reach Maiya, visit <https://maiyaibrahim.com/>, or connect with her on [Twitter](#) and Instagram!

To reach Ayana, visit <https://www.ayanagray.com/>, or connect with her on [Twitter](#) and Instagram!

Good luck out there! We can't wait to read your stories!

—Ayana and Maiya