

Hi, all!

I'm Gabi and welcome to my Pitch Wars 2021 wishlist!

Find a master spreadsheet of age categories and genres [here](#).

Y'all, I am SO EXCITED to be a [Pitch Wars](#) mentor this year! (Sorry in advance for all the exclamation points, I've been hyped for this for weeks). For those of you who don't know, Pitch Wars is a mentorship program where mentors (industry "insiders" i.e. agented/published authors) work with an unagented author to revise their novel and get it query-ready. It all culminates with an Agent Showcase in February where authors pitch their revised manuscripts to agents who (hopefully!) request to see more and offer representation!

A bit about me:

I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri with a love of reading books and writing stories I never thought anyone would read. My first reading love was *Pride and Prejudice* and my first writing love was YA mystery (so expect to see a LOT of both of these in my wishlist 🥹 🥹). In high school, I dipped a toe into the querying trenches only to realize it was premature. It wasn't until several years later that I realized what my main writing problem was: Pretty much all the books I read as a kid were about white people. *Only* white people. And that was reflected in my writing (also expect to see a lot of talk about representation in my wishlist!)

Fast forward a few years, I moved to the East Coast when I attended Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Basically all of my writing milestones happened here. More specifically, my senior year of college on the soccer field and woods that bordered my on-campus apartment. It's where I had my first call with my now-agent, Naomi Davis at BookEnds, where I accepted their offer of rep, and where I ran around screaming in the rain when I got an offer of publication from Bloomsbury for my debut novel, *Sing Me to Sleep*, coming out in Spring, 2023!

Since graduating from Bowdoin, I've started my first 9-5 as a paralegal, continued offering query critiques for querying authors, and, of course, spent all spare time EDITING. Which is my favorite stage of the writing process. I love watching a book come together and elevating a story from good, to (fingers crossed) great.

My Feedback Style:

I am VERY enthusiastic. Expect lots of all-caps, emojis, and exclamation points. I like to react to things as I read and ask questions as they come up. I think it's important to be aware of the emotional beats of your novel, specifically, if they're landing or not. If we work together, we'll do at least two developmental passes of your book. The first edit letter will also include your annotated manuscript with all of my reactions (they're mostly positive/excited, but if this is something that will cause anxiety, please let me know!). If you like to see how readers fangirl over your story while reading, see if they laugh at your jokes, their theories of the ending etc. you might enjoy my commentary. Or tell me I talk too much. Either is acceptable.

After edits, we'll get to work on a polished query package in preparation for the showcase! I LOVE helping querying authors with queries so I really hope my future mentee has as much fun as I do editing and writing a query/synopsis/pitch. I'm super collaborative, so at all stages in the mentorship process, I want to maintain a healthy back and forth. Whether this means Twitter DMs, emails, hopping on zoom for a brainstorming session or two (or twenty), I'm flexible.

My ideal mentee is just someone who's excited to get to work and make their story even more amazing than it already is and is comfortable telling me if they disagree with a suggestion I've made or want to go in a different direction. Secretly, I'm hoping for a mentee who wants to stay friends after Pitch Wars, but this isn't a requirement! Still, I'd love to hype you up for the rest of your writing career if you're up for it.

With that out of the way, I think I've rambled for long enough. And we all know what you *really* want to see, so, without further ado...

My Wishlist

This year, I'm looking for YA (including NA) in the following genres: Mystery/Thriller, Fantasy, and Contemporary.

Note: This wishlist is, at times, very specific, but it is in no way exhaustive.

In all things: DIVERSITY. Friends, we live in a diverse world. I'm really hoping to find an amazing story that celebrates that.

Mystery/Thriller

My first writing love was mystery and I am SO here for cool mysteries and thrillers. I love mysteries/thrillers that explore interesting story-telling techniques. Dual/multi-POV? Yes, please. Alternate timelines? Absolutely. Unreliable narrators? Right up my alley.

What I'm Looking for:

- Give me weirdly specific settings. Like, *really* weirdly specific (ever heard of Whittier, Alaska? Something along those lines.)
- I LOVE a good whodunnit and, for me, the best whodunnits are when the characters take my soul prisoner and make me fall in love with them
- In that same vein, ensemble casts will steal my heart (*One of Us is Lying* is one of my all-time favorites)
- Can you comp Karen McManus? Please send my way!
- Agatha Christie is forever my goddess of mystery. If you have a YA mystery that comps any of her books, I would love to see it
- Anyone got a circus? Maybe an amusement park (preferably abandoned)? That sounds amazing and like something I would love to see
- One word: heists
- I'm a BIG fan of con-artists. Preferably if they're just a little bit (or a lot) evil
- I would love, love, love a twist ending a la *Cruel Summer*

What I'm Not Looking for:

- I'm probably not a good fit for a mystery centering around a hate crime. Not because those issues aren't important and deserving of being explored, but because that will be triggering for me.

Fantasy

I'm open to high fantasy, contemporary/urban fantasy, and (very, *very* narrow) historical fantasy

What I'm Looking for:

- For contemporary fantasy, I would prefer the setting be really specific and interesting. The more specific the better.
- When I say historical fantasy, I mean *exclusively* regency era or regency-inspired fantasy. Think *Pride and Prejudice*. I mean it. If you've got a fantasy P&P retelling, ME PLEASE! Aside from that, historical fantasy probably isn't a good fit
- I like morally grey characters. Or just... villains? If they're compelling and evil, I'm into it
- Something with the vibes of *The Cruel Prince*.
 - As a brief aside, if there's ANYONE in your book like Cardan, I want them, I don't care how minor their role is in the story
- A book with the vibes of the opening line of *The Shadows Between Us*. The whole book too, but that opening line lives rent-free in my mind
- SEXUAL TENSION IN A FIGHT SCENE ALLLLLLL DAY
- I'd love anything comped to Kristin Cashore, but *Fire* as a comp is *chef's kiss*
- Hi, does your fantasy celebrate the diaspora??? Then, send it to me pretty, pretty please
- DARK FANTASY. Really, really, really dark.
- I love fantasy retellings/reimaginings, but I'm mostly a fit for retellings a la *Cinderella is Dead*. AKA retellings that explore a marginalized voice in the role of a classic fairytale (bonus points if it's creepy in a fun/disturbing way!). This means any and all marginalized identities. I'm talking: Black Rapunzel, queer Sleeping Beauty who straight-up *murders* the creepy Prince who kisses her in her sleep, neurodivergent Princess and the Frog, etc.
 - Important note for this: I used female-identifying princess fairytale examples, but please know I'd love to read a retelling from any marginalized gender identity!
 - Second important note: this includes non-European fairytales!

What I'm Not Looking for:

- Anything with magic school isn't my cup of tea at the moment
- I'm not a good fit for unicorns, zombies, elves, mermaids, vampires, werewolves, or dragons
- Epic fantasy (something in the vein of LoTR) isn't a good fit
- Anything involving time travel
- Superheroes. I love Marvel as much as anyone, but I'm not a fit for superhero fantasy stories
- Stories centered around a magic artifact probably aren't a good fit for me
- I love a good creepy story, but I'm not a good fit for horror

Contemporary

My tastes in Contemporary are extremely specific. Basically just contemporary *Pride and Prejudice* retellings, mystery lite, and books that comp Taylor Swift songs

What I'm looking for:

- My tastes in Contemporary are extremely specific
- *Pride and Prejudice* retellings/comps ALLLLL day
- Anything that deals with how emotionally strenuous college apps are for high schoolers
- If there's a mystery in your contemporary that's significant and involves some investigation, but it's not prominent enough to be classified in the mystery genre, that sounds amazing!
- Basically anything that comps a Taylor Swift song (but especially Evermore or All Too Well)
- This one is kind of a shot in the dark, but if your book is like the K-Drama *City Hunter*, OMG THAT'S AMAZING AND I WOULD LOVE TO READ IT

What I'm not looking for:

- I'm not a good fit for books that call me to sympathize with an oppressor
- Books in which a character's sexual orientation/gender identity is forcibly outed
- If a book deals with a POV character experiencing racism, I would prefer the author identify with that race for us to be a fit. I'm not policing identities, so please use personal discretion

In all genres

What I'm looking for:

- E-P-I-C women (I mean, epic characters in general, but *especially* women and other marginalized gender identities)
- I want NA to be a thing. I'm not alone in this. But please know if you sub NA to me, we will most likely be aging it down to fit YA. So, if you're willing to do that, please send me NA in the above genres!
- Voice, voice, voice. Can't stress it enough.
- Anything with family. Blood and found. Maybe mixed up a bit
- REVENGE
- I'm a big crier. Seriously. If your story is a tear-jerker, it gets lots of points
- Golddiggers. I'm not joking. If your story features one or several golddiggers or a power-hungry woman, I love her already
- In general, if you can take any of the concepts from my list and add a "but make it ____" to the end, I want it. For example: Whodunnit at an abandoned amusement park—but make it gay (if this is your exact pitch, drop everything and sub to me NOW, pretty pretty please with rainbow sprinkles on top). Essentially, if you're telling a "classic" story from a marginalized perspective, that sounds absolutely amazing

Probably not a good fit for:

- I'm not a good fit for mermaids/sirens. Y'all, I am knee-deep in edits for my siren debut. I'm good for now
- Something without some kind of romance. Doesn't have to be a major focal point, but if there's not some kind of romantic tension, I'm probably not a good fit
- Graphic depictions of child abuse or sexual assault
- If you're vehemently opposed to trigger warnings as a concept

Important Note on Diversity:

- Representation is really, really important. Which means bad representation can be really, really harmful
- If you are telling a story from a marginalized perspective, please be mindful of whose story you're telling and if *you* are the right person to tell said story. I'm not policing identities. At no point will I ask someone to disclose something they don't feel comfortable or safe sharing, so please, please, please be intentional about assessing if you're telling a story that's yours to tell, or if you're taking an opportunity away from a marginalized writer.
- Characters in a story do *not* need to "prove" themselves. For example, I'm a Black woman. If I write a Black character, they're Black. There are no additional hoops they need to jump through to "prove" it
- Intersectionality is totally valid. I saw a tweet recently ridiculing an author for writing "diversity soup." It was clearly meant to be an insult, but y'all, if you self-identify your book as "diversity soup," that sounds delicious and you can sign me up
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Pitch Wars 2021 Young Adult Mentors' Wish Lists

1. [Mary E. Roach \(Accepts NA\)](#)
2. [Amelia Diane Coombs \(Accepts NA\)](#)
3. [Diana Urban](#)
4. [Susan Bishop Crispell \(Accepts NA\)](#)
5. [TJ Ohler \(Accepts NA\)](#)
6. [Laurie Dennison \(Accepts NA\)](#)
7. [Justine Pucella Winans \(Accepts NA\)](#)
8. [Zoulfa Katouh and Molly X Chang \(Accepts NA\)](#)
9. [Sonora Reyes \(Accepts NA\)](#)
10. [Abigail Johnson](#)
11. [Rosiee Thor and Emily Grey](#)
12. [Carlyn Greenwald \(Accepts NA\)](#)
13. [M.T. Khan \(Accepts NA\)](#)

14. [Sarvenaz Taghavian](#)
15. [Emery Lee](#)
16. [Margie Fuston \(Accepts NA\)](#)
17. [Aashna Avachat \(Accepts NA\)](#)
18. [Allison Saft \(Accepts NA\)](#)
19. [Fiona McLaren](#)
20. [Jessica Lewis](#)
21. [Brianna Bourne \(Accepts NA\)](#)
22. [Jamie McHenry](#)
23. [Meg Long and Rochelle Hassan \(Accepts NA\)](#)
24. [Laura Weymouth \(Accepts NA\)](#)
25. [Natalie Crown and Angelica Monai \(Accepts NA\)](#)
26. [Skyla Arndt and Alex Brown \(Accepts NA\)](#)
27. [Charity Alyse and Cimone Watson \(Accepts NA\)](#)
28. [Emily Thiede and Lauren Blackwood \(Accepts NA\)](#)
29. [Anna Sortino and Annika J. Cosgrove \(Accepts NA\)](#)
30. [Jenny Perinovic and Kyrie McCauley \(Accepts NA\)](#)
31. [Carrie S. Allen and Sabrina Lotfi](#)
32. [Jamie Howard and Meredith Tate \(Accepts NA\)](#)
33. [KL Burd \(Accepts NA\)](#)
34. [Jennifer Yu \(Accepts NA\)](#)
35. [Hoda Agharazi and Lyssa Mia Smith \(Accepts NA\)](#)
36. [Em X. Liu and Grace D. Li \(Accepts NA\)](#)
37. [Carly Heath \(Accepts NA\)](#)
38. [Kiana Krystle \(Accepts NA\)](#)
39. [Sarah Underwood and Kat Dunn \(Accepts NA\)](#)
40. [Joel Brigham \(Accepts NA\)](#)
41. [Dante Medema and Liz Lawson \(Accepts NA\)](#)
42. [Aty S. Behsam and Maedeh B. Saaina \(Accepts NA\)](#)
43. [Kylie Schachte \(Accepts NA\)](#)
44. [Gabi Burton \(Accepts NA\)](#)

45. [Aaron Cole and Tamara Cole \(Accepts NA\)](#)
46. [Hannah V. Sawyerr and Olivia Liu \(Accepts NA\)](#)
47. [Bethany Mangle \(Accepts NA\)](#)
48. [Lane Clarke \(Accepts NA\)](#)
49. [Sunya Mara \(Accepts NA\)](#)
50. [Karen Bao \(Accepts NA\)](#)

[Click here to view all Pitch Wars 2021 Mentors' Wish Lists.](#) To view the wish lists by genre, [visit this link.](#)