

## WELCOME TO PITCH WARS 2019!!

What is Pitch Wars, you ask? Pitch Wars is a mentoring program. Teams of published/agented authors, editors, or industry interns choose one writer each and spend three months revising their manuscript. It ends in February with an Agent Showcase, during which agents read a pitch/first page and can request to read more.

We (Kim Long and Jennifer L. Brown) are returning as MIDDLE GRADE mentors this year! Last year was our first year working together as #TeamKrakenBee, and we loved it so much that we're back for more!

We've split our wish list into two posts. Below you'll find a bit more about us, the genres we're looking for, what manuscripts are better suited for our fellow MG mentors, and what you can expect if we choose you as our mentee. Over at Jennifer's website, you'll find some hints about concepts/themes we love no matter the genre, a glimpse behind the scenes into our process as mentors, and a testimonial from our faboo mentee from 2018: Summer Short!

### WHO WE ARE

Kim Long



This is my fifth year mentoring middle grade. I've been writing kidlit for about six years now, and my debut, Lexi Magill and the Teleportation Trek Tournament, will be published in less than a month on October 1, 2019! I've had quite the publishing journey (Lexi was the third book I wrote and it went on sub with two agents before selling). To me, Pitch Wars is about sharing what I've learned in my journey and helping writers improve so this or the next manuscript will be the one to get you an agent and/or published!

Jennifer L. Brown (i.e. Jenny B)



I am a proud member of the Pitch Wars mentee class of 2017. As a mentee, I learned boatloads from my awesomesauce mentors and now life companions, Tara and Jenna. After Pitch Wars, I dove, belly flopped, and swam about in the querying trenches with my shiny manuscript and a few months later, I found an awesome agent. Last year was my first year mentoring, and I loved it so much that I'm back with Kim for more!

Together, we are #TeamKrakenBee! The kraken-bee ready to help you wrangle your manuscript into shape!



## What We're Interested In/Genres We Love!



We both write in several different genres and read just as widely, so genre-wise, we're open to a variety, including:

Adventure  
Contemporary  
High Fantasy  
Historical Fantasy  
Light Fantasy  
Science Fiction  
Horror  
Magical Realism  
Puzzle  
Retellings  
Sports  
Steampunk  
STEM  
Superhero  
Upper MG  
Time Travel

To be a little more specific, there are some things we find ourselves falling for Every. Time.

1. Contemporary with a dash of magic in the entire *world*. *My Diary from the Edge of the World* is a book that does this so well. *The Firefly Code* is another one where the "world" is dealing with the same magical/speculative element.
2. Contemporary with a hint of magic that is centered on an individual/family/group of people. *Savvy*, *A Snicker of Magic*, *The Miraculous*, *When You Reach Me*, *Midsummer's Mayhem*, and *Love Sugar Magic* are all examples of stories we love with magic ingrained in the heart of the MC's journey in an otherwise contemporary setting.
3. STEM-y, science-y elements, no matter the genre! Like *Mutant Mushrooms* (our mentee from 2018, Summer Short, combined magic with science to produce this effect). Or squids in space!



4. Other-world fantasy and SciFi. Like *Furthermore*, *Goldelina*, *An Adventurer's Guide to Successful Escapes*, *The False Prince* and the list goes on and on! We love unique worlds and strange, new spins on old classics. If your world is wonderful and weird, we're in!

BUT, and this is a big BUT, this year we are taking a break from fairies, gnomes, trolls, vampires, werewolves, and all well-known magical creatures other than DRAGONS! We talked about it, and we still would love to see dragons in our MG. Friendly dragons, fierce dragons, and lady dragons toppling the patriarchy. Dragons are one of the few traditional magical creatures that we adore every time. You'd think we'd be bored, but no. Send dragons.

5. Horror elements that shape the main character's adventure, like *The Doll Bones*, *The Jumbies*, and *Splendor and Gloom*!

**Suffice it to say that if your manuscript meets one of the above, we are Super Grabby Hands!**



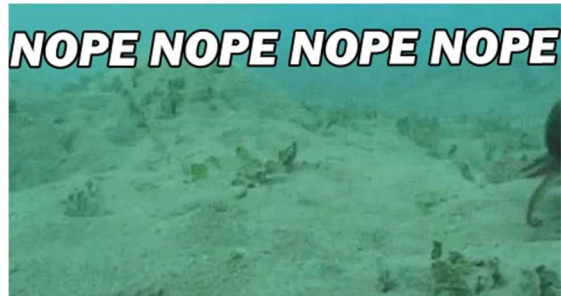
**INCLUSIVITY!**

We're giving this its own heading because it's something we expect to see no matter the genre. We both love diverse stories, particularly from the viewpoint of underrepresented characters. If you are from a marginalized community, we'd love to read your words! And really importantly, if you are from a marginalized community, do not feel like your book must be about that marginalization! Uh, no, not at all. Give us a unique world, great story, and we're all in!

If you are NOT a person of color, a book with a POC as the sole main character will be a tough sell for us. Please read this for a breakdown on the lack of POC authors in publishing.

This is not to say that, as a cis-white author you shouldn't write inclusively! You should! Your cast should reflect the world in which we live, and that means people from all walks of life with all sorts of backgrounds.

Now, along with what we love, there are some specific things in certain genres that we are not looking for this year. We mention them below because we do not want you to waste one of your four picks on us when there may be a very fine mentor/mentor team who is more likely to enjoy your words!



### *Portal Fantasy*

Portal fantasy will be an uphill battle for us. What is a portal fantasy, you ask? The best definition we can give is that a portal fantasy starts in our world and then the characters get transported to a fantastical world somehow, some way. A cupboard, a library, a book, a locker, a tree. Basically, there's a "doorway" that transports the kids Here to There.

We're not saying great portal fantasies can't be done. *Narnia* is the quintessential portal. *The Gauntlet* is an awesome portal. We loved our fellow mentor Sean Easley's *The Hotel Between*, which is, to some extent, a portal story. HOWEVER, we're probably not the right mentors for this sort of story. They tend not to be our cup of tea. We're earl grey drinkers, for future reference.

*Sick/dying/diseased kids, parents.*

Not for us. Jen needs to stop crying on the subway. It's becoming a problem.

*Animal main characters.* UNLESS it's a sidekick to a human.\*

(\*This is the Phib exception, named after Diana DeBolt's frog, Phib, in her Cinderella retelling. Diana was Kim's mentee in 2017. If you have an animal sidekick and wish to sub to us, make sure to thank @DianaDebolt and the snarky Phib.)



**(This mustachioso bee has musical, multi-talented sidekick written all over him!)**

*Graphic novels.* We love these, but we don't know what to do with them! There are other awesome mentors actively looking.

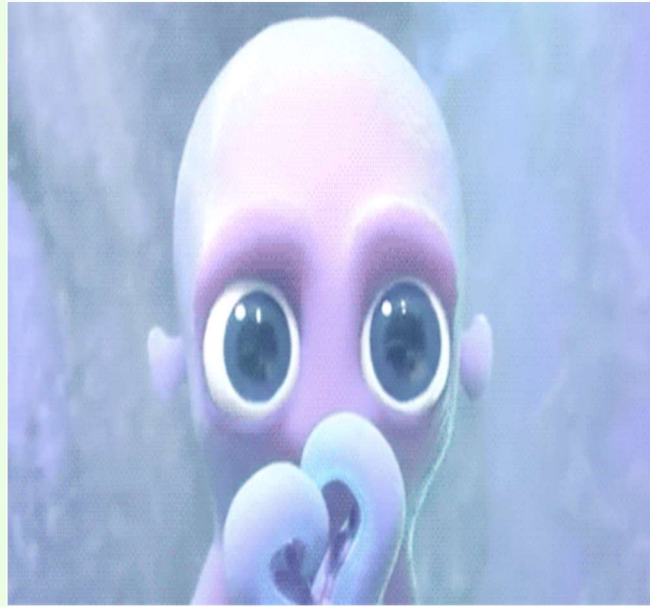
NOW, back to the most important thing -- WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR IN A MENTEE!



Overall, we want to fall in love with a story. Voice, yes. Concept, yes, and then . . . a mentee who has a polished manuscript, but is open to revising and even gutting characters or sub-plots if it makes the manuscript better. Declining a suggestion/revision because it's too much work is not acceptable to us. Please do not sub to us if you really are not open to considering massive revisions or changes.

Pitch Wars is for writers who are seeking developmental help with their manuscript, whether pacing, plot, character arc, or overall structure. We want a mentee who will listen to our suggestions and then run with them. We'll shine a light on things that need revising, whether that's adding an inner journey, an outer journey, a plot element, solidifying the emotional aspects, or whatever the fix is. We're not going to tell you what to write. We're going to tell you why something isn't working. We are so happy to brainstorm revision ideas with you, but the story is yours. We'll never say: you must revise this way.

We love helping writers. Outside of Pitch Wars, we are critique partners. We bounce revision ideas off one another. As our mentee, we want you to join our team.



For more info on whether you might be a fit for us, continue [HERE](#) to Jenny B's blog for Team KrakenBee's Wish List of Dreams, part 2. There you'll find:

1. Other tropes/concepts we'd love to see in our inbox
2. A Peek Behind the Curtain into our submission process, and what to expect if you become our mentee
3. A note from our 2018 mentee, Summer Short
4. Even more gifs

Thanks for reading, and remember: #TeamKrakenBee wants YOU!