

WELCOME TO PITCH WARS 2021!!

For a PDF of a plain text version of this wish list with dark print on white background:

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 about three months working with the writer on 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 third 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 tropes/concepts we love, a glimpse behind the scenes into our process as mentors and testimonials from our faboo mentees from 2018, 2019, and 2020!

WHO WE ARE

KIM LONG

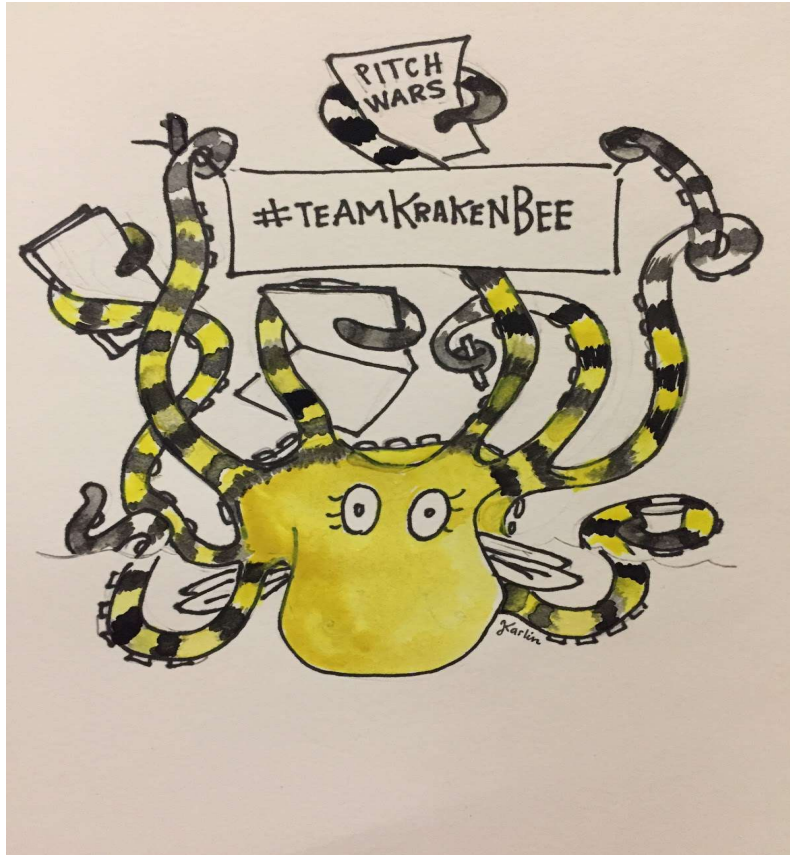
This is my sixth year mentoring middle grade. I've been writing kidlit for about nine years now, and my debut, Lexi Magill and the Teleportation Trek Tournament, was published on October 1, 2019! I've had quite the publishing journey (Lexi was the

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 in the querying trenches with my shiny manuscript and a few months later, I found an awesome agent. Last year was my third year mentoring, and I cannot wait for year four!

TOGETHER WE ARE TEAM KRAKENBEE



The krakenbee is ready to help you wrangle your manuscript into shape!

What We're Interested In:

This year it all comes down to one thing: a story with a speculative element. It can be horror, fantasy, sci-fi, or fabulism/magical realism—we love it all! It's just important that your story contains some sort of speculative element that takes it out of our everyday, non-magical world.

Some of our favorite stories with speculative or fantastical elements take place in *other worlds*, like *Nevermoor*, *Furthermore*, *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*, *Goldeline*, *The Adventurer's Guide to Successful Escapes*, *The Hatmakers*, and *A Wish in the Dark*.

We also love stories with a speculative element that take place in *our world*, like *The Gauntlet*, *Quintessence*, *Savvy*, *A Snicker of Magic*, *Fablehaven*, *Midsummer's Mayhem*, *York*, *Aru Shah*, *Ghost Squad*, *Cattywampus*, *Malamander*, and of course our former mentee's book *The Mutant Mushroom Takeover*.

Some favorite **Horror** stories with a speculative element include *Small Spaces*, *The Jumbies*, *Doll Bones*, *Splendor and Glooms*, and *May Bird*.

And we also love **Sci-fi** stories with a speculative element, like *Jinxed*, *Seventh Grade vs. the Galaxy*, and *The True Meaning of Smekday*.

This is not an exhaustive list! At all! Steampunk is great! Weird is awesome— *Un Lun Dun* or *The Iremonger Trilogy* or

something that mashes genres, is wildly creative, and filled with heart is more than welcome! We would be thrilled to read your brilliance as long as there is some twinge of the fantastical.

A few caveats:

We're doing upper middle grade, which is geared toward readers at the upper range of the 8-13 age level. That tends to mean stories around the 40,000-65,000 word count range. Since we love upper middle grade, we tend to shy away from stories where fairies, unicorns, pixies, etc. have a featured role. Simply because those stories tend to skew younger, and we have a hard time connecting with those adventures. If your story features one of these characters, you may have better luck submitting to a different mentor team.

We also have a hard time connecting with portal stories that involve the main character being transported from our world to a magical land where they need to complete some sort of quest. If your story is a portal, you might find better luck with another mentor team.

Now, for a word on . . . INCLUSIVITY!

We both love diverse stories, particularly those written by marginalized authors. 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! Now more than ever, the world needs to hear from marginalized voices.

We've mentioned a few of our recent favorites elsewhere on this wish list, but we love stories that include an authentic cultural perspective with a fantastical backdrop like *Aru Shah*, *Love Sugar Magic*, *Ghost Squad*, *The Jumbies*, and *A Wish in the Dark*.

We would love all the authors who submit to us to write inclusively. Your cast should reflect the world in which we live, and that means people from all walks of life with all sorts of backgrounds. However, we caution cis-White authors about featuring a marginalized main character if you do not belong to that group. We strongly believe that, until publishing offers equal opportunities to marginalized groups, books featuring marginalized main characters written by cis-White authors are taking opportunities away from marginalized authors.

Please read [_](#) for a breakdown on the lack of BIPOC authors in publishing for more information.

RECAP!

Overall, we want to fall in love with a story. Voice, yes. Humor, 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 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 consider 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, whether its internal plot inconsistencies or character/emotional arc authenticity. We are so happy to brainstorm revision ideas with you about how to fix it, 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. Tropes and Concepts We Love

2. A Peek Behind the Curtain into our submission process, and what to expect if you become our mentee
3. Notes from our 2018, 2019, and 2020 mentees: Summer Short, L.K. Frank, and Malcolm Schmitz.
4. Even more gifs

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