

My name is Lyndsay Ely (that's eel-ee, like an eel). Who, you might ask, am I? Well, in addition to being a Pitch Wars YA mentor this year, I am an author, a book enthusiast, a geek, a Gemini, and a level 40 Pokemon GO! trainer. My debut novel, GUNSLINGER GIRL, a YA Western SFF dystopian genre burrito, came out in January 2018 from Jimmy Patterson/Little, Brown. Prior to my most recent gig as an art director at a non-profit, I worked for ten years in marketing design at a Boston-area publisher.

Waaaaaaay back in 2015, I entered GG (under a different title) into Pitch Wars, and was lucky enough to be mentored by the incomparable Elizabeth Briggs. I am now represented by Laura Zats, founding agent of Headwater Literary Management and co-host of the Print Run podcast.

When I'm not working, I'm digging through thrift stores and antique shops (still haven't found that magic tchotchke), finding a great new craft cocktail bar or brewery (I'm a sucker for a speakeasy), geeking out at cons (Excelsior!), and engaging in general shenanigans. I'm less concerned as to why my Hogwarts letter never showed up than why the Powers never sent me a manual or on Ordeal.

[Catra gif]

Okay, so why should I submit to you?

Because I'm no good at doing things half-way, as anyone who has ever seen me assemble a cheese board can attest. This is my third year as a mentor, and I take that commitment seriously. Pitch Wars was an amazing experience for me as a mentee, and I'm looking to continue paying that forward for as long as I can. Both my 2017 and 2018 mentees are amazingly talented individuals who were a pleasure to work with. One has since signed with an agent, and I know it's only a matter of time before you see both their names on the shelves. As a mentor, I will get you the materials you need to revise in a timely manner. This will include an edit letter, feedback on revisions, help on your query, synopsis, and pitch, as well as assistance in finding sensitivity readers, if applicable. I will also be available at all times (well, most times) for questions, advice, or if you just need to talk through a plot problem. And if you're still not sure about my ability to commitment, please refer to the mention of Level 40 Pokemon GO! trainer above.

[Pokemon GO gif]

Cool cool cool. What kinds of manuscripts are you looking for?

No one genre can satisfy me! I want your fantasy, sci-fi, horror, historical fiction (especially if its speculative), and genre-bent fiction that defies easy categorization. I crave complex, morally complicated characters, worlds saturated with baroque levels of

detail, and twisty plots that keep me on the edge of my seat with excitement and then stab me in the kidney while I'm not looking.

Got a YA fantasy reminiscent of Marjorie Liu's MONSTERS or a sci-fi along the lines of Brian K. Vaughan's SAGA? I want to see it.

A unique, razor-edged take on classic fantasy elements like THE CRUEL PRINCE? Yes, please!

A historical with a speculative twist like Addie Thorley's AN AFFAIR OF POISONS or a deathly dash of dark magic like GRAVE MERCY? I'm your Huckleberry!

[I'm your huckleberry gif]

More about what I'm looking for:

- Diverse casts, relationships, and settings of all kinds (including, but not limited to, LGBTIQ+, neurodiversity, and #ownvoices)
- Feminism, badass ladies
- FANTASY—high fantasy, low fantasy, historical fantasy, diet fantasy, extra spicy fantasy, on tap nitro cold brew fantasy—all of them!
- SCIFI—hard, ultra-sciency science fiction isn't my thing (frankly, I'm not smart enough for it), but an adventure story that utilizes science (a la A WRINKLE IN TIME, for example) might catch my eye
- HISTORICAL—Got something like a young adult HARLOTS, GODS OF GOTHAM, or SNOW FLOWER AND THE SECRET FAN? I have a weakness for period pieces, speculative or not
- GENRE—BENDERS—Give me your oddest of ducks! Your cronut of concepts! Your idea that would make the new weird fair food of the year side-eye it and go "eh, that might be much..."
- Unlikeable or anti-heroes, vigilantes, and redeemable villains
- Unusual magic systems (though this doesn't mean I don't like the usual ones too)
- Adventures! Heists! Treasure hunts!
- Dark! Gritty! Grim dark!
- Positive fat representation
- Departure from traditional gender roles (for all genders)
- Twisted stuff (I can haz a YA version of PREACHER or PENNY DREADFUL?)
- Dear gods, does anyone have a YA City of Brass-esque manuscript? PLEASE SUBMIT IT TO ME
- Retellings aren't my favorite, but if you have an unfamiliar or rarely traveled one, especially with lavish prose like in UPROOTED, I'd definitely be interested
- Graphic novels? YES, PLEASE. I cut my storytelling teeth on comic books (and happen to be running a graphic novel reading group currently), so I am here for GNs.

Okay, what do you NOT want?

This is always tricky to answer, because just when you think there's

something you couldn't possibly enjoy—like a space book about singing—an author comes along and upends that. (*glances at SPACE OPERA by Cat Valente*)

[Tulip O'Hare and Cassidy from Preacher gif]

But, in general, I'm not looking for:

- Mermaids, werewolves, or angels vs. demons (Note: If these exist as elements in your story or world, that's 100% fine; If they are the main focus of your story, it's less likely to entice me. That being said, I'm here for really unique takes on anything.)
- Love interests whose biggest selling point is smouldering hottiness, or Insta-love™
- Contemporary stories (unless you have a reallllly dark Gillian Flynn-esque practically-a-murder-ballad YA contemporary)
- Epistolary novels, novels told in text message, verse etc. (Just not my thing.)
- Narratives about discrimination that center the experiences of the privileged class
- I'll also note here that no trigger warnings are necessary in my case, but please be aware of any noted on other mentors' wish lists.

[Detective Pikachu gif]

I'm still not entirely sure what you like. Do you have a list of favorites that can better help me understand?

You bet your backside I do!

Favorite books/comics: The Count of Monte Cristo, the Young Wizards series, Six of Crows/Crooked Kingdom, The Cruel Prince, Gods of Gotham, A Darker Shade of Magic series, The End of Mr. Y, The Stand, Strangers in Paradise, Monstress, Saga, Transmetropolitan, Preacher, Fables.

Favorite authors: Leigh Bardugo, V.E. Schwab, Diane Duane, Arturo Pérez-Reverte, Scarlett Thomas, R.L. LaFevers, Lyndsay Faye, Warren Ellis, Terry Moore

Favorite TV/movies: Battlestar Galactica, Avatar: The Last Airbender, Archer, Rick and Morty, Steven Universe, Venture Bros, Harlots, Dangerous Liaisons, Titus, Deadpool, Heathers, Muppet Treasure Island, Star Wars: The Last Jedi

Favorite characters: Holland (from A Darker Shade of Magic series), Starbuck (from BATTLESTAR GALACTICA), Maeve (from WESTWORLD), Leia (from STAR WARS), Katchoo (from STRANGERS IN PARADISE), Cersei Lannister and Arya Stark (from GAME OF THRONES), Tulip O'Hare (PREACHER), literally every character in AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER

Favorite Pokémon: Sandshrew

[Sandshrew gif]

What are you looking for in a mentee?

Someone passionate about their writing and the amazing opportunity that is Pitch Wars. Someone who can take criticism, and search for the kernel of truth within it even when it doesn't entirely make sense to them. Someone who won't just kill their darlings, but turn their back on them as they are dragged kicking and screaming into the underworld. But most importantly, someone who will do the hard work and hit the deadlines, no excuses. (Barring unforeseeable events, of course.) I am a very deadline-oriented person, and I'd like a mentee that is too. The revisions in Pitch Wars can be intense, but if you're willing to to put in the effort, so am I!

Finally, some words of wisdom, from one of the wisest mentors out there: "There's no different angle, no clever solution, no trickity-trick that's going to move that rock. You've got to face it head on."

The rock is your manuscript. And we're gonna face it head on.

[Toph gif]

So...are you ready to do this??