

Laurie Dennison's 2021 Pitch Wars Wishlist

Hi, I'm Laurie (she/her)! This is my fifth year as a YA Pitch Wars mentor, and I could not be more excited to be back in 2021. Pitch Wars is a mentoring program where published/agented authors, editors, or industry interns choose one writer each to spend three months with revising their manuscript. It ends in February with an Agent Showcase, where agents can read a pitch/first page and can request to read more. [Click here to learn more about Pitch Wars.](#)

*** This year for the first time I AM accepting New Adult manuscripts!

About Me

I've been a freelance writer, editor, and consultant for over ten years, and I've worked in web design and desktop publishing for over five years. I have a bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in professional writing and a master's in English education from the University of Florida. I've also critiqued fiction independently and as a group leader since 2013.

I write YA of many genres, most recently focusing on contemporary stories with complex relationships. Chloe Seager at Madeleine Milburn represents my work.

On the more personal side, I've lived in north Florida, central California, and a few places in between. I love writing, reading, pop culture, alternative music, and my family and our many pets. I haven't been active lately, but feel free to check out my social media to get to know me more. Twitter: [@lauriedennison](#), Instagram: [@laurie.a.dennison](#)

I joined the Pitch Wars community when I was a mentee with my first YA fantasy, and I feel so fortunate to share the mentorship experience with others. If you choose to send me your work, please know that Pitch Wars is more about a long-term support system than a single manuscript or milestone for me.

My Mentorship Style

When choosing a mentee, I look for manuscripts I love and know I can help with my editing and revision strengths, which include plot tightening and character arcs. My goal is to help you achieve your vision for the best version of your manuscript, and I see my revision notes as the start of a conversation. I will tell you all the things I love about your manuscript, but I also believe in honest feedback in the areas where I think your work can grow and improve. You should expect an intense few months with a lot of work, but I will help you through it. I'm available for questions through email, DM, etc., and I'm up for calls or video conferences if you are!

I start with an edit letter, addressing any aspects of the manuscript that might need work. We'll work together to develop a plan for revision, and we'll set a timeline for sending back the next completed draft. For the second round of revision, I'll address any lingering concerns with a second edit letter. We'll also work through the pitch and query letter so you'll be ready to submit to agents. I'm open to sharing my industry experience to help you move forward on your writing path. To get a quick glimpse of my editing style, check out my query/first page critique on the Pitch Wars blog here: [Query and First Page Critique](#).

Here is what my 2020 mentee Emily Marano (Twitter: <https://twitter.com/emilyjama>, Insta: <https://www.instagram.com/emilywhowrites/>) had to say about working with me:

"Working with Laurie during Pitch Wars 2020 was an overwhelmingly positive experience. Laurie has deep knowledge about the mechanics of writing, the Pitch Wars process, and the industry as a whole, and she was open to sharing it all with me. She approached the mentorship with respect, honesty, and more than anything, with kindness. Throughout the process, she was clear that the editing decisions were mine, and that her role was to support me with telling the story that I wanted to tell. This not only helped me make my book stronger, but has helped me grow as a writer in the months beyond Pitch Wars—and Laurie has continued to be there every step of the way."

And you can read the Pitch Wars Success Stories of my 2019 mentees Briana Johnson and Megan Scott here: [Briana's Success Story](#) / [Megan's Success Story](#)

The genres of my previous mentee manuscripts have included everything from fantasy, contemporary, sci-fi, suspense, and adventure.

And now, the reason you're here:

My 2021 Wishlist

Romance

I am all about love this year! Bring me all your contemporary, sci-fi, fantasy, paranormal, and suspense with a romantic focus and a positive ending. I adore Cassandra Clare's masterful slow-burns, Holly Black's twisted relationships, and Sonia Hartl's dreamy love interests.

Contemporary

My tastes in contemporary are broad! On the upbeat side, I would love to find something funny and positive with *Ted Lasso* or *Schitt's Creek* vibes. I am also up for some fun and adventure, along the lines of *Book Smart* or even *Baby Driver*. On the more serious side, I love mysteries, thrillers, and suspense. If you could comp the complexity of your main character to *Mare of Easttown*, please send it to me! In contemporary YA I'm a fan of Angie Thomas, Margie Fuston, Sonia Hartl, Diana Urban, and Dana Mele to name a few--note some fellow mentors on that list!

Fantasy and Science Fiction

In fantasy, I'm open to portals, urban/contemporary fantasy, magical realism, paranormal, gothic, and alternate history. As mentioned above, I love Holly Black and Cassandra Clare, as well as Laura Ruby, and I find shows like *The Magicians*, *Lucifer*, and *Legacies* great escapes. My sci-fi interests are a bit more narrow, leaning more toward soft or light sci-fi and near-future, along the lines of *Black Mirror*. I'm a big fan of Marie Lu's *Warcross*.

Other Areas of Interest

We live in a diverse world, and I love to see diversity of all types represented in all genres.

In all of the genres above I'm open to literary or upmarket writing, though a more commercial style works too.

I love complex relationships, including complicated families and friendships.

I would love to find a manuscript that captures the unique, atmospheric style of a Wes Anderson film.

Not the Best Fit for Me

For various reasons, there are some items that just aren't the best fit for me. This year those include:

Military themes

Horror with excessive gore

Sports as central plot elements

Stories centered around sexual violence

Stories centered around suicide

Thank you so much for reading! If you have questions, feel free to reach out on Twitter @lauriedennison. My Pitch Wars Instagram takeover is on Monday, September 20, I'll be on Pitch Wars Live Tuesday, September 21 at 8:00 PM EST, and I'm going to try to hop on the YA Twitter #askmentor on September 19 at 8:00 PM EST.