

SONIA & ANNETTE'S PITCH WARS WISHLIST 2020

WE ARE ADULT MENTORS

[Pitch Wars](#) is a mentoring program where published/agented authors, editors, or industry interns choose one writer each to spend three months 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.

Greetings & Salutations, Potential Future Mentees!

Welcome to our Wishlist. We're so glad you're here. Love that shirt on you, by the way. It really makes your eyes sparkle.

This is our fourth year as Pitch Wars co-mentors (although Sonia has been a mentor for six years total and is currently the program's Managing Director).

Mentoring has given us the opportunity to work on some truly incredible books (check them out on GR: [THROWAWAY GIRLS by Andrea Contos](#), [I THINK I LOVE YOU by Auriane Desombre](#)) and with people we simply adore. We're all about finding our coven in this industry. There are a lot of highs and lows in publishing and having people you trust to celebrate and commiserate with makes the journey a lot more bearable--and a lot more fun.

We're excited to be mentoring Adult this year and can't wait to see what gorgeous gems RSVP to the party in our inbox.

Who We Are

SONIA

I was a Pitch Wars mentee in 2013, and I'm forever grateful for the experience. I learned so much about pacing, plotting, dialogue, balancing showing and telling, and inserting emotion into prose. I've been lucky enough to be able to pay that forward, having been a mentor since 2015. The last three years I co-mentored with Annette, who was one of my 2016 mentees and one of my favorite people on the planet, and it's been so much fun we decided to do it again this year.

My debut YA contemporary, HAVE A LITTLE FAITH IN ME (Page Street), is out now, my sophomore YA novel NOT YOUR #LOVESTORY (Page Street) will be out on September 1, a third YA, THE LOST GIRLS (Page Street), will be out next year, and my debut adult romcom, HEARTBREAK FOR HIRE (Gallery), will be out next summer. I'm rep'd by Rebecca Podos of Rees Literary Agency, and I've published short stories in a variety of journals. My favorite things are 2000 piece Buffalo brand puzzles,

my kids' wet footprints on the bath mat, the opening beats of Fleetwood Mac's Rhiannon, the smell of rain in the desert, and the slasher spoof episode of Boy Meets World.

ANNETTE

As Sonia mentioned, in 2016, she selected me to be one of her Pitch Wars mentees. My participation in Pitch Wars taught me so much about how to outline an idea and execute plot points, how voice can make me stand out in a slush pile, how to work with an editor, and that I really am capable of hitting deadlines with time to spare. Equally as important, Pitch Wars gave me my writing community and some of my dearest friends. Including Sonia ;)

My Adult debut, a Women's Fiction novel called THE REHEARSALS will be published in Summer 2021 through Little, Brown (you can add it on GR [here](#)). My YA debut, LOVE LESSONS, will be released Fall 2020 through Audible Originals (I also narrated it!).

I have a theatre degree, which means I have a background in acting and working odd jobs. I've published articles with The Guardian and HelloGiggles, and work quite a bit with the fabulous Alloy Entertainment. I'm repped by Jess Dallow, whom I love, of Brower Literary Management. I currently live near the Rocky Mountains with my husband and two kids. My kids can already beat me at Mario Kart and are dangerously close to beating me at chess.

What We Do

If selected as our mentee, you'll get an initial edit letter from us. This may include sweeping changes or small tweaks (or both). We're here to talk through any questions you may have as you revise. Once you're finished with this draft, we'll do at least one more read-through with you to do line-edits (and gush about your story). We'd also like to have a video chat with you as we prepare your pitch and partial for the Agent Showcase, though this is not required if you feel more comfortable communicating in type.

In addition to our overlapping craft and editing strengths, we come with our own Super Mentor Powers.

SONIA: Setting, banter, and humor are my favorite things. I love the kind of setting that feels like another character, where the entire atmosphere can be used to convey the mood of the story, and I especially enjoy settings that work against the main character in humorous ways.

ANNETTE: I specialize in voice and dialogue. My background in acting has given me a leg up here. I've also cracked that pacing nut and can help you turn your manuscript into a page-turner. Knowing where to cut and where to flesh out can be difficult. I'm here to help.

Why You Want to Submit to Us

Between the two of us, we write and have sold projects across two age categories and four genres. Since we've both been mentees before, we know what it feels like and what to expect. We will work hard to help you whip your manuscript into shape while still respecting the vision you have for your story. We promise to support and nourish your manuscript as well as you as a writer (and a human). We understand there will be moments during the process of revising your manuscript when you will want to laugh and cry and cry while laughing and laugh while crying, etc. Revising a manuscript can be painful. We're here for that. We'll keep our wits about us if you lose yours. We will mentor you in a way that is collaborative and encouraging, and you will leave our loving arms a better writer. Except don't go too far, because we want to support you well after Pitch Wars is over.

What We Want in Our Inbox

We're looking for Romance, Women's Fiction, Mystery, Thriller, Suspense, select Historical Fiction (from 1920's and up), and anything gothic. We will be accepting NA this year if you are open to making it adult during the revision period.

We adore every trope under the sun. If your characters are childhood friends who hate each other but might get a second chance if they fake date because of close proximity where, oh, no, there is only one bed, we want to see it! And if you've subverted a beloved trope and done something completely different/new/unique with it, we especially want to see it. And we absolutely love stories about messy people trying their best. If your main character has ever been called unlikable, there is a solid chance we're going to love them.

We'd love to see high concept Romance and Women's Fiction. Elements of magical realism/fabulism? We're into it. We love to swoon. We love issues explored irreverently but with heart. Are we here for rom-coms? WE ARE HERE FOR ROM-COMS. Make us laugh, make us fall in love, and we'll adore you forever.

If you can give us goosebumps with eerie settings and unreliable narrators, we want those too. We'll fall for anything that can keep us guessing until the end. We especially love mysteries that subvert familiar tropes and classic settings with a modern voice.

We'd also love to get our hands on a mystery with a gothic atmosphere. Give us suspense...that slow building sense of danger with a setting so rich it's another character in your story. We'd love a suspense

that borders on horror, not gory, but that creeping sense of dread. For thriller, anything with a fast pace that keeps our hearts racing would be excellent.

We like to feel all the feelings. We love wit, we love to laugh until our sides hurt, and we love the strange and the quirky. We want to care about your characters so much we have a book hangover from reading your words.

We're also highly interested in seeing epistolary and verse novels and any other unique formats that play with narrative structure.

Things We Would Be Willing to Sell Our Internal Organs For

- Main character is a woman who comes back to her small town after being away for years, who has to fight old misconceptions, while finding love with someone she burned in the past (could comp SEP's *Ain't She Sweet*)
- F/F romcom with lots of steam
- Badass lady/softie guy dynamics (could comp *Grease 2*)
- Workplace romance, especially if there is competition involved
- Main character with a unique passion
- Anything that will remind us of the messy, dark, heartbreaking honesty of *Fleabag* (with or without the hot clergy member)
- A mystery with plenty of humor (could comp Kellye Garrett's *Detective by Day* books)
- Beards
- Sexy arm hair
- A hard-earned HEA (could comp Katherine Allred's *The Sweet Gum Tree*)
- Magical Realism/Fabulism that could comp Roselle Lim's books/*LA Story*/*Amélie*/*Jane the Virgin*/*Chocolat*/*Time Traveler's Wife*/*Ruby Sparks*, etc.
- A mystery/thriller that could comp Tana French
- Found families
- You know those episodes of *Superstore* where they're trapped in the store because of a tornado or a blizzard or because they're locked in? Secrets come out, feelings are revealed, hilarity and drama ensue... *That*, but in book form. Even if it's just a chapter or two in your book.
- Kickass bisexual icons like Gillian Anderson in *The Fall* (or Gillian Anderson in anything)

What We're Not the Best Mentors For

Fantasy (we would be open for a contemporary fantasy involving witches, though we'd want it grounded in the real world, no historical or secondary worlds for these)

Sci-fi/Dystopian/Post-apocalyptic (Annette really enjoys science fiction but nearly flunked out of high school Biology & Physics...)

On page sexual assault/rape, also not a good fit for stories where this is the main plot (though it is fine if it is both off page and something that is part of the story but not the main plot)

What Will Happen If We Request Your Submission

We will probably ask you some questions to get a feel for what's important to you about your story, but don't stress your answers! There is no right or wrong here. We do this to make sure we are respecting your vision as we think about possible edits while reading.

If you have any questions about specifics, feel free to @ us on Twitter: [@SoniaHartl1](#), [@MsAnnetteMC](#) or visit us on the [Pitch Wars Message Boards](#)

Feel free to check out [Annette's website](#) too!