

### **Pitch Wars Wishlist**

Hello fellow writers. My name is Joe and I am a Pitch Wars mentor for Adult Mystery/Thriller/Crime and Fantasy, particularly contemporary fantasy. I also love mash-ups of those genres!

I am open to New Adult. There may be space for stories about the tremendous stress of entering adult life, such as those dealing with quarter-life crises and the cost of higher education (allegorical or not). These stories should still be under the mystery/thriller or fantasy umbrella, because that is the genre where I feel I can best help you.

### **What is Pitchwars?**

Pitch Wars is a mentorship program where authors, editors, and other sundry publishing folks choose an unagented author to mentor through a revision of their finished manuscript and offer guidance about pursuing a path in traditional publishing.

Many Pitch Wars mentees have gone on to find agents and publishers. I was a mentee in 2018. The experience as a mentee provided the last piece in my querying puzzle. Shortly after the showcase, I found my agent through querying. My Pitch Wars book was published in July 2021, with a sequel on the way.

### **Pitchwars: No Cost, but Takes a Toll.**

Pitch Wars is a free, volunteer program. There is no monetary cost. However, the experience is intense, both mentally and emotionally, as many writers will face firm revision deadlines for the first time. In addition, Pitch Wars is visible on social media, which can lead to stress for some mentees, as they may feel there is a spotlight on them.

While I highly recommend Pitch Wars, it may not be the right path for some authors. As a person who often places high expectations on themselves, it was important to have support through the Pitch Wars process. As a mentor, I feel it is important to offer that support, inside the boundaries of my future mentees comfort zone.

If we end up working together, I will be there for you, within the limits you define.

### **What types of books am I mentoring?**

While I love reading a wide variety of age categories and genres, my Wishlist (hard)boils down to the types of books that fit my skillset and publishing experience, which is Adult Crime Fiction and the Fantasy genres, particularly the area where that Venn diagram overlaps.

## **Genre and Sub Genre**

For pure crime, Mystery and Heist are my strong suits. In a Thriller, there should still be mystery elements (the work of Lee Child is a great example). While I love Suspense, I am not confident I possess the skill set to improve your suspense story. Political Thrillers and Procedurals need to have a unique spin to engage me. For example, as a reader, I'm aching for a fresh take on Eric Van Lustbader's political, mystical, martial arts mash-ups.

For Fantasy, I prefer face-paced, lean prose and character level stakes. A character with an authentic voice in fantastic circumstances revs my engine. I love fresh takes on fantasy. I am a decades-long D&D, comic book, and video game fan. At this point, I feel like I've seen it all. New settings and perspectives essential in this genre! Multi-POV stories generally don't appeal to me. On the fantasy scale, I more Stardust than I am Game of Thrones.

I'm all for contemporary/urban fantasy, Neil Gaiman being my personal gold standard. Yes, very original, I know, but I read Sandman as a monthly and bought American Gods the day it came out!

I love stories where Crime and Fantasy intersect. Yes Please to fantasy detective yarns and heists. Terry Pratchett's Grimes novels are a great examples, along with the early Anita Blake and Harry Dresden installments. I also love cozy and humorous elements. A fantasy Agatha Christie style story, such as a murder mystery set in the Shire, is right up my alley.

Also yes to Historical Mystery and Crime. I enjoy exploring a subculture, particularly when a story is written by a member of that subculture. Take me to a place I've never been, show me an insider's perspective, and I'll follow you anywhere. For example, a heist story set in 1942, centered around the Baghdadi Jews of Kolkata would be an instant purchase.

Also, I have deep superhero and mythology knowledge. We're talking Jeopardy level. Those stories are for me. A murder mystery where Loki has to discover who framed him for Balder's murder, set in Fargo, Minnesota, is the type of story I throw my wallet at.

## **Character and Voice**

Character is key, especially in a Mystery or Thriller series. I love discovering a book with a perspective outside my own, such as the IQ series by Joe Ide.

## **Code**

I'm drawn to stories where the character has a strongly defined code. Crime fiction that explores morality inside an immoral world gets me every time. The Last Policeman Trilogy by Ben Winters is a wonderful example of this.

### **Action**

I love action! Give me your cool fight scenes and set pieces. But every action scene should also forward character, theme, or story. If you are action challenged, that is something I can help you with. Also, I'm a sucker for a sword fight.

### **Insight & Humor**

Along with action, my debut was praised for its humor. I love funny, insightful prose.

### **Hard Pass List**

Anti-heroes

Sexual Assault

Time Travel

Torture

Cheap Heat\*

### **Joe, What is Cheap Heat?**

Lazy clichés or tropes. Sexual Assault to provide motivation (particularly when it's not the main character, but instead a loved one). Torture to obtain information in desperate circumstances.

Dream sequences to allow a shock moment but avoid the consequences. Killers who do weird stuff for the sake of being weird. Character decisions that exist purely to make the story happen.

### **Some Favorite Authors (Adult Only):**

Raymond Chandler, Lee Child, Neil Gaiman, Dashiell Hammet, Eric Van Lustbader, Robert B. Parker, Terry Pratchett, Mary Renault, Richard Stark

### **Books I Can't Wait For (Adult Only):**

Her Name is Knight (Yasmin Angoe)

Like A Sister (Kellye Garret)

The Misfit Solider (Michael Mammay)

Under Lock and Skeleton Key (Gigi Pandian)

Kaikeyi (Vashnavi Patel)

Secret Identity (Alex Segura)

When the Lights Go Out (John Vercher)