

Anne Raven and Janet Walden-West, Adult Mentors

Genre #1: Romance: Subgenres: Contemporary, Suspense, Paranormal including UF/Contemporary Fantasy/Fantasy.

Genre #2: Fantasy: Contemporary Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal Fantasy

Hello!

Anne Raven and Janet Walden-West are obnoxiously excited—AGAIN—to be co-mentoring Adult and New Adult as #TeamSubversive! We're so happy we get to team up for our second year* as Pitch Wars mentors.

*Our 2019 mentee is even still speaking to us!

What is Pitch Wars?

Pitch Wars is a mentoring program where published/agented authors, editors, or industry interns choose one writer each, read their entire manuscript, and offer suggestions on how to make the manuscript shine for an agent showcase. The mentor also helps edit their mentee's pitch for the contest and their query letter for submitting to agents.

You can find out more [HERE](#)

Janet and Anne met in 2017, right before we both got into Pitch Wars (Janet's second time as a mentee—first in 2014) and clicked right away. We've been critique partners ever since, and Anne always says our partnership was *forged by the fires of Pitch Wars*. We basically share a brain, which means we agree on everything, so you'd be getting two mentors for the "price" of one.

Pitch Wars 2019 was our first year as mentors and we had a fantastic experience with our AMAZING mentee, Cath Lauria! You can stalk find her on Twitter [here](#). We can't say enough about how much we loved her Contemporary Fantasy MAGICAL HAZMAT, and how hard she worked to get her manuscript ready for the showcase. This year, we've celebrated some major wins with her—including a publishing deal with Entangled and more Secret Things we cannot mention yet.

Note: We can't accept as a mentee ANYONE we've Beta'd/Critiqued for in the past, excluding Pitch Wars 2019. Please don't put us in that situation.

So, what does #TeamSubversive really mean?

For us, it means anything that doesn't fit into the neat little box society and

general authority deem acceptable. We're not here for the arbitrary carved-in-stone rules. We question everything and tend to play outside societal norms. We love when books subvert the usual tropes or flip them on their heads.

Genres we're accepting, with examples:

Romance – Contemporary

Adrianna Herrera's American Sweethearts
Rebekah Weatherspoon's A Cowboy to Remember
Katie Golding's Fearless
Julie James' A Lot Like Love

Romance – Fantasy (Yeah, it's a fine line between fantasy and PNR, and we're here for stories that cross those lines)

Ann Aguirre's Ars Numina series
G.A. Aiken's Blacksmith Queen
Sydney Croft's ACRO series

Romance – Paranormal

Ilona Andrews' The Iron Covenant
KMM's Fever series
Jeaniene Frost's Night Huntress series

Romance – Romantic Suspense

Jackie Ashenden's Make it Hurt
Laura Griffin's Tracers series
Christine Feehan's Judgement Road

SF/F-Fantasy/Urban/Contemporary Fantasy

Hailey Edward's Beginner's Guide to Necromancy series/Potentate of Atlanta
Leigh Bardugo's Ninth House
Rebecca Roanhorse's The Sixth World series
Chloe Neill's Chicagoland Vampires series

SF/F-Fantasy Paranormal/PostApoc

Silvia Moreno-Garcia's Certain Dark Things
LL McKinney's A Blade So Black
Kit Rocha's Mercenary Librarians

Notice a theme? We love romance, in various subgenres, and we adore magic and the supernatural. **A romantic subplot ISN'T a requirement for Fantasy/UF/CF/Paranormal submissions.**

We're not looking for Epic Fantasy, however, since it's not in our wheelhouse. We prefer inclusivity and are happy to boost marginalized voices!

New Adult writers, please note: We are accepting NA manuscripts, however,

we will most likely ask you to age up your characters to make it an Adult MS so that it fits the current market.

Our catnip (aka what we want):

- Heroines*: strong, badass (i.e. heroine with agency, which isn't necessarily the same as ninja assassins/fighters) who are anything but damsels in distress, unlikable, anti-heroines, hot messes and heroines getting shit done. Alpha heroines (we love equality between heroine/hero, heroine/heroine, heroine/other partner pairings—in other words; equally badass and alpha). Heroines in traditionally male roles and vice versa. *Heroines meaning female and female-identifying.
- Hero*: Non-traditional, cinnamon roll boys, anti-heroes. Beta boys who own it. If your hero has a crunchy anti-hero outer shell and a sweet cinnamon roll filling, we are here for you. *Heroes meaning male and male identifying characters.
- OK, basically this goes for any character—If your MC has a crunchy anti-hero outer shell and a sweet cinnamon roll filling, we are here for you.
- Gender-flipped narratives. So much this.
- Wounded / “damaged” characters (who haven’t had the typical “white picket fence” life experience).
- Complicated MCs, especially intersectional ones—culture, identity, economic, gender, etc. (especially here for characters that are navigating having a foot in two different worlds).
- Subverted tropes, especially in Fantasy/UF/CF (Your MC isn’t The Chosen One, but a benched B-teamer who gets stuck averting the apocalypse? Your MC has a spouse/offspring/a dragon that still isn’t housebroken and an IRS audit looming and now some joker expects them to save the kingdom? Yes, please).
- #OwnVoices
- Marginalized Voices
- Inclusive stories
- Tropey Goodness in romance: Slow burn / Enemies to lovers / Friends to lovers / Second chance / Opposites Attract.
- Consent. Consent. Consent.
- All heat levels except erotica.
- Emotional intimacy in relationships, for romance. This is another biggie for us.
- Healthy female friendships.
- Multicultural.

- Found families.
- Humor.
- Foodie / Fashion / Music / Painting (visual arts) / Dance / Jewelry / Animal (especially those who are characters in their own rights).
- Vivid settings—we love setting as another character in a story.
- Alpha heroes (**this one comes with a major caveat, folks. We love Alphas, not alphaholes.**) We're not the right mentors for arrogant dick alphas who treat the heroine/hero/other partner like dirt but they keeps coming back for more. *IF* he is a dick, we want to see his POV/ and silently **HE'S SOOO ANGSTY IN LUV, and/or** the heroine/partner is an equally in-your-face obnoxious alpha. We have a secret love of furniture-destroying mutual angry sex.

NOT our jam (aka what we aren't the best fit for):

- Alphaholes/toxic masculinity (see above note).
- Mean Girl antagonists (not to be confused with a strong/unlikeable female antagonist).
- “Mary Sue/Stu” characters (aka perfect heroines or heroes who can miraculously do everything).
- The “she’s not like all the other girls” heroines.
- Racism, misogyny, intolerance, victim-blaming/shaming.
- Depictions of rape/sexual abuse/child abuse or any of the three as the MCs catalyst.
- Kidnapping/controlling / Dubious consent / Non-consent.
- Animal abuse.
- Secret baby/pregnancy / Insta-love (insta-lust is okay, but not top of our list).
- Historicals.
- Inspirational.
- Rom-Com. We love reading humor and romance, but again this isn't our wheelhouse as far as mentoring.
- Women's Fiction. We also enjoy women's stories, but also not our wheelhouse.

Our mentoring style and why you want to work with us:

We will tell you what we love about a MS as well as what we think doesn't work—because both are equally important.

We believe in the compliment sandwich. We'll absolutely highlight your strong points and swoon at the awesome parts, be it romance, gorgeous fantasy world building, breath-taking writing, a tight action scene, or anything really eye-catching. We are obnoxiously enthusiastic cheerleaders. Our gif game is on

point and we will flood you with both relevant gif-age and *OMG!* *LOVE!* comments in your manuscript's track changes. A. Lot.

On the flipside, we're not afraid to be direct and dig into the hard parts to address the areas that aren't working. This may mean killing some darlings, altering POVS, or restructuring and rewriting to raise stakes. We'd hope to work as a team with our mentee to find solutions to the problem areas. We're not here to steamroll you, but to offer guidance and suggestions. Of course, that means we'd expect our mentee to put in the work to better their manuscript.

Basically, we are a coach/cheerleader hybrid!

We prefer to stay in close contact during the revision process and agent round. We're good with a Twitter group chat and email. FB messaging can also work, although we don't hang out on FB as often. Ditto Instagram. Janet is available for Skype/FaceTime/etc calls.

There may (will) be homework.

Pitch Wars is, above all, a mentoring program.

Between us, we're 3x mentees, so we understand how much work and dedication goes into the revision period. We'll be there with you for the entire journey, ready to hold your hand and offer unending support, provided you're just as ready to put in the work. **We want you to come out of this not only with a stronger story, but with tools you can apply to your next story. And hopefully, two more members to add to your writing community-support network.**

Our strengths (aka why we make such an awesome combo):

Together, we're equipped to tackle big picture issues and small details.

We'll dig into structure/beats and pacing, as well as overall world building. We're great at characters and their motivations/arcs, authentic, snappy dialogue and high-action/fight sequences, steamy scenes and continuity. Because we collaborate often, we are practiced at brainstorming sessions, both big picture and subtle nuances. So much creativity can come about just lobbing ideas at each other. And we're all about those hooky openings! Capture the reader's attention right from page one and you're golden.

We are also those inexplicable outliers that enjoy playing with and refining pitches and query letters.

Also-also, thanks to living on different continents, at least one of us is always available.

Want to know more about us?

Janet Walden-West lives in the southeast with a couple of kids and a husband who didn't read the fine print. A Weird Dog Show Chick in her downtime, she's also a founding member of The Million Words craft blog, a 2X PitchWars alum, and a Golden Heart® finalist. She writes intersectional sexy-times romance and boss-girl fantasy heroines.

Her debut multicultural contemporary romance, *SALT+STILETTOS*, is out now from City Owl Press, and her urban fantasy short stories are available in multiple anthologies.

She is represented by Eva Scalzo of Speilburg Literary Agency.

Anne Raven was born and raised along the windy coast of South Africa and can assure everyone there are no lions roaming the streets—unless you count the feral cat next door. When not reading or writing, you can find her spending time with Luna, her giant Boerboel aka South African Mastiff puppy, taking freshly baked goods from the oven, or drinking too much coffee.

Anne loves writing in multiple genres, but her stories always tend toward darker themes with gritty edges. Her books often feature found families, resilient heroines, non-toxic alpha heroes, and vivid settings. Her romantic suspense *IN THE NAME OF THE MOTHER* was showcased in Pitch Wars 2017.

Anne is represented by Amanda Jain at BookEnds Literary Agency.

Our full “how we got our agents” stories? Spoiler, we had very different journeys, especially post-Pitch Wars, so we UNDERSTAND!

[Anne's Agent Story](#)

[Janet's Agent Story](#)

Hit us up on Twitter or in the PW forums (we have an AMA) if you have any questions or if you're looking for clarification on anything listed here. We're super excited to read your submissions.

Go #TeamSubversive!

~Janet and Anne