

## Pitchwars 2020 Wishlist for Mary Ann Marlowe

**Summary: I'm looking for contemporary romance, romantic comedy, fantasy romance of all kinds. I'm also looking for historical romance but only for LGBT pairings.**

**Hola! I'm Mary Ann Marlowe aka Lorelei Parker.**

**I'm super excited to be back for my SIXTH year mentoring Pitch Wars!!**

I love this community, and I look forward to bringing someone new (maybe YOU!) into #TeamTwueWuv. We are a happy family. If you're unfamiliar with Pitch Wars, check out the [Pitch Wars website](#) for an explanation and a breakdown of the submission guidelines, dates, and other rules.

Quick introduction: I am a hybrid contemporary romance author with 4 books out with Kensington under the names [Mary Ann Marlowe](#) and [Lorelei Parker](#). I've indie-published two other books this year.

This year, my buddy Ella Stainton will be helping me read submissions, which is a special thrill for me. You can follow her on Twitter here: [@astarte73](#). Look for her delicious [Best Laid Plaids](#) out with Carina.

If you want to know way too much about me: who I am, what I write, my mentoring history, etc. [scroll down below](#).

## MY WISHLIST

### WHAT DO I WANT?

#### STEAMY KISSING BOOKS.

I'm on the look out for **Adult** books with **SEXY ROMANCE**.

I have specific genres below, but within those genres, I am open to most anything. I am not picky about tropes. I am not picky about pairings. I'm open to almost all makes and models. Gimme. I have a [few caveats](#), but I *love* love, and I want YOU to make ME fall in love. I do prefer on-the-page, open-door sex when you've got it, but it's not a deal breaker if you don't. I'll just be over here going, *wah*. I'll get over it if everything else is working.

If you're unsure if what you got is up my alley, tweet me (@maryannmarlowe) or ask on my [AMA page](#). (No pitching, but general questions about tropes, genres, etc. are fair game.)

#### GENRES WISHLIST:

## Contemporary Romance / Romantic Comedy

I write contemp, so this is my sweet spot. Basically, if you've got a sexy kissing book, I would like to read that. I'm looking for great voices, laughs, tears, and sizzling chemistry.

**NOTE: If your book doesn't end with a happily ever after (HEA) or a happy for now (HFN), it isn't a romance.** No cliffhangers, no limbo land, no tragic endings--unless you're willing to rework the ending to bring it to a satisfying romantic conclusion.

Things at the top of my list, include but not limited to:

- Comedy (ie. Alexis Hall's *Boyfriend Material*)
- Plots derived from lists (ie. Sophie Kinsella's *Can You Keep a Secret?*)
- Enemies to lovers (ie. Casey McQuiston's *Red, White, and Royal Blue*)
- Fake relationships (ie. Helen Hoang's *The Kiss Quotient*)
- Forced proximity (ie. Christina Lauren's *Josh and Hazel's Guide to Not Dating*)
- Dirty bad boys (ie. Emma Chase's *Tangled*)
- Sexy hot burning-down-the-page chemistry (ie. Suleikha Snyder's *Tikka Chance on Me*)
- Witty banter (ie. Sally Thorne's *The Hating Game*)
- Musicians (ie. Robinne Lee's *The Idea of You*)
- Gamers (ie. Alexis Hall's *Looking for Group*)

I could list out all the tropes, but I'm a sucker for romance in all its forms. I have a soft spot for queer romance and rom coms -- so if you've got a queer rom com, gimme!

And in all of the above **VOICE, VOICE, VOICE.**

## Fantasy Romance

Within fantasy, I only want romance, but if it's happening in a made-up world? Yes, please.

I'm open to alt-world, spec fic, real-world magic, and some paranormal and urban fantasy, provided it's heavy on the romance. If you've got an LGBT sexy fantasy romance .... OMGOMG please send it my way.

Caveats on fantasy:

- I'm not interested in sci-fi, unless it's space opera type stuff (heavy on story, low on tech), though I might consider if it's queer.
- I'm not a good fit for time travel fantasy, especially if it places the bulk of the novel in a real-world historical setting.
- I'm not wild about creature protagonists (ie. things with claws and scales). In other words: Vampires yay, werewolves nay.
- I'm not open to gods/demon mythology.

Examples of Fantasy Romance books I love:

Sara J Maas, *A Court of Mist and Fury*  
Rainbow Rowell, *Carry On*  
Maxym Martineau, *Kingdom of Exiles*  
Ilona Andrews, *Burn for Me*

## **LGBT Historical Romance**

### **I'm only taking historical for LGBT romance.**

Please please please be aware that my bread-and-butter is contemp romance which is why I'm not open to historical generally. However, I have a deep love of queer historical romance, so do TRY to find a mentor whose specializes in historical, but if you can't find a fourth mentor for your LGBT smoking hot historical, think of meeeeeee!

Examples of LGBT Historical Romances I love:

KJ Charles, *A Seditious Affair*  
Ella Stainton, *Best Laid Plaids*  
Cat Sebastian, *The Lawrence Browne Affair*  
Blake Ferre, *The Revolutionary and the Rogue*

### **What I don't want in any genre**

Please don't send me books where sexual violence is a central plot point especially if it involves the main couple. Also, cheating once the game is afoot is a huge no-no in romance.

I'm also not a good match for polyamory, inspirational, religious, or so-called "clean romance."

I **do not want** anything based in a recent **true life** tragedy, such as a terrorist event or school shooting, unless it happened so long ago anyone affected by it is no longer around to read it (in which case it would be historical . . . and also not right for me). For similar reasons, I'm not interested in pandemic-based romance.

### **General comments:**

Above all, I want great writing. I look for voice and compelling characters and general competence when it comes to putting words together in a pleasing manner. Make me feel like I can settle in for a page-turning ride. Make me laugh or make me cry. Just so long as you make me really care about your characters and root for their happy ever after.

I want books that are sex positive, diversity of sexual orientation positive, diversity of gender positive, diversity of race positive, diversity of religion positive, diversity of nationality positive, and diversity of abilities positive. Black lives matter. Trans lives matter. Trans women are women. Trans men are men. I'm happy to work with authors who fit any demographic and on books that fit any demographic. Just send me a respectful, compelling read.

If you're writing outside your experience, I'll expect you to do the requisite research or hire additional readers to make sure you're as accurate as possible. And I might ask: Why are you the person who should be writing this?

If I get to the end of your chapter and start shaking my laptop to see if it knocks out more pages, I'll probably request.

## **My editing style**

I like to help with structure, plotting, and general craft. If you keep running into issues of pacing or emotional payoff or saggy middles, those are the areas where I hope I can guide someone. What I'm looking to do in the end is both make your work more commercial (agent ready) but also help you get your MS closer to what you've always envisioned it could be. I want you to love it more after the process than you did going in.

I like to read through a first time to help identify the overarching issues with plot, tension, character arc, chemistry, and your opening and closing. I'll be sending an edit letter with my opinions on how you can tighten or re-arrange or slash and burn. I'll also mark up your MS with in-line notes (and smiley faces) so you can zero in on trouble spots (and know where things are working because that's also important).

Be prepared to do some extra-novel work, too. I'm likely to make you write a scene map or an outline. I'll have you read articles on craft, beat sheets, and character journeys. We'll compare these to what you've written and look at ways these tools can bring out the most in your novel.

I'll read at least once more to vet the revision and also to give you line edits. In addition, I'll be helping you hone your pitch and query to get you completely ready to hook an agent.

I hope this will be a partnership, but if I pick you, it means I loved your book, but I think there's work to be done. That means you can expect critical feedback that might hurt like a mofo. Please don't submit to me if you're not open to criticism or if you don't want to do the work. Things I've asked mentees to do include: add/cut a POV, change the title, change the MC's name, delete entire chapters, rewrite the ending, rewrite the opening, rewrite the middle... Expect to work. Be open to big change.

## **My communication style**

I'm big on writing emails for the heavy stuff, but I like messenger or Twitter DMs for quick communication. I'm not likely to phone or skype (though I'm flexible on this), but I respond psychotically fast via email and at normal speeds via Twitter. We'll probably be in communication in waves, since you'll be heads down revising for a chunk of time. But you can always drop me a line and get insta feedback, hugs, or just blow off steam.

## **WHO AM I?**

- First and foremost, I'm an author, just like you. See my books up above.

- I've entered many a contest starting in 2014, but I found an agent the old-fashioned way-- through querying.
- I was a Pitch Wars mentee in 2014, so I know what it's like to be on the other side of this contest, checking out blogs, hoping to find a love connection, waiting nauseously for my edit letter, revising like a mad woman.
- I've been a Pitch Wars mentor every year since 2015. I was also a slush reader for Pitch Slam, a judge for Query Kombat in 2015, and a mentor for Pitch Madness in 2017. I have a ton of posts you can read about those experiences if you dig around my blog.
- In 4 years of Pitch Wars, I've worked with nine mentees (hell yeah, wild cards!) all of whom are wicked talented. All their MS were romances. 5 were LGBT. 6 were contemporary. 2 were Romantic Suspense. 1 was alternate earth speculative fiction. All were brilliant.
- You can spy on all of our agent showcase entries if you want an idea of those. Mine: [Calamity](#), Laura's: [Catch a Falling Star](#), Kate's: [The Month of Fireflies](#), Jamie's: [Out of the Ashes](#), Gwynne's: [All Songs Are Love Songs](#), Amy's: [How to Reset a Broken Heart](#), Aty's: [Coup de Grace](#), Eliza's: [Fanboy](#), Andy's: [Miss Martin's National Pastry Competition](#), Jordan's: [The Honest Lie](#)
- I currently work as a computer programmer, but once upon a time, I was an academic and am ABD (PhD all but disseration) in French Literature which means I spent a decade of my life analyzing literature. I've worked as a copy editor for literary journals. I've been writing in some capacity as long as I can remember, and I read and read and read. I can turn an MS around quickly and give you both high praise and necessary hard truths, both big picture feedback and nitpicky line edits. I like to do this in rounds so as not to overwhelm.
- And if I pick you, I'll be ready to throw down for you.

## More random stuff

Other random things about me, not totally germane to my wishlist, but maybe it will help you decide if your MS is right for my particular .... idiom:

- Next to writing, maybe ahead of writing, I'm a music freak. Like, embarrassingly so.
- I currently work as a computer programmer and have my geek card.
- I have a Zelda addiction.
- I love Monty Python, Doctor Who, IT Crowd, Community, Parks and Rec, Gilmore Girls, Schitt's Creek, Umbrella Academy, Hamilton, Douglas Adams, and lots of other nerdy comedy. I also love all things Pixar.
- I read a ton of fantasy and wish I could write it, but alas, I keep trying to make everyone kiss.
- I've lived in a dozen states and several countries. I love to travel.

- I love foreign languages and books/movies that transport me. I speak French and German and listen to almost nothing but Latin pop in the hopes that by osmosis, I'll finally speak Spanish.
- I'm historically sporty. Nowadays, I read my Kindle while walking on the treadmill. However, back in the day, I was among the first women to join the boys' cross country team. Also, I have a second degree black belt from a questionable dojo. I only mention these things in case you have a sporty romance. Which is why I hasten to add, I grew up believing football is a religion.

And again, you can always hit me up on Twitter or the [PW forum](#) if you want to ask me anything. (Just remember - do not pre-pitch your book. General questions are fine.)

### **How I work through my submissions:**

If you made it this far, maybe you're considering submitting to me (Yay!) So I wanted to give a peek into my process because I know this is a fraught time and you'll be reading the tea leaves. Don't read the tea leaves!! Seriously - go start working on a new project and try not to stare at your inbox. (I started the book that got me an agent during the Pitch Wars submission window. It's a good distraction.)

NOTE: Every mentor works differently. This is just how I tend to do things.

First, I read every single query and all the sample pages. I keep a nice, neat list of all the entries as I go, and might highlight the ones I'm most keen on right out the gate. A lot of times, this comes down to the concept more than the writing, but I will def have a few that I desperately hope to connect with.

Second, I will start requesting partials. Please note, I make multiple trips through the list, so don't lose hope if you don't get a request early on. It takes a lot of time to dig through the avalanche, and I'm usually still requesting stuff up to the last minute. Keep the faith! If you get a request from anyone, please send materials to mentors as soon as you can. You might not believe it, but we get stupid excited about the subs we want to read and flail around in anguish waiting for them to arrive. If for whatever reason you can't send right away (traveling, temporarily off-planet), try to let us know when we might expect it.

Third, if I want to read more, I'll request a full and will send a long list of questions, things like where are you struggling with the MS, what do you hope to gain from a mentor, etc. No wrong answers, just getting to know you ...

Last, I'll repeat steps one, two, and three in waves. People always ask for stats, and I can't predict how many requests I'll make, but it's usually in the 20% range. I seriously consider maybe 5%. Please be kind to yourself. Mentors can't request 100% of their inbox, but we *\*do\** read 100% of the submissions we get. I know what I'm likely to work on, so if I don't ask you for a request, please don't take it to heart. **I've failed to request books that have gone on to become hugely successful published books I adore.**

Also, I'll be stalking you on Twitter. Be kind. Be respectful of the other applicants, other mentors, traditional publishing in general, agents, people you don't know from squat, etc. It's a small community.

Please note: As a general rule, I \*try\* to follow anyone back who talks to me on Twitter. So say hi or wave at me, and I'll try to follow you! (And if you don't know what to say, shoot me a hot pic of your MC -- or you know, any hot pic.) Please don't read anything into it if I DO or DON'T follow you. It's never a secret code that I'm reading your sub or planning to request or pick you or ask you out. It's just a follow.

Also, I'm not big on doing teasers during the sub window because I overthink them and always worry I might add anxiety to an already nerve-wracking time, so my teasers end up like "I've just read an entry! Huzzah!" and that's beyond useless. But you know, never say never.

### **Some extra Pitch Wars resources:**

[Why should you enter Pitch Wars?](#)

[How Does #PitchWars Work Exactly?](#)

[How to Prepare for #PitchWars](#)

[Query Advice](#)

[First Page Advice](#)

I wish you the best of luck! I hope to see you in my inbox!

[Click here to view all Pitch Wars 2020 Mentors' Wish Lists](#)