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Meet Agent Jennifer Azantian

Interview by Heather Inch-Desuta

Jennifer Azantian is an agent at Azantian Literary. She began her agenting career first as an intern and then as an assistant and associate at the Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency. In 2014, she founded Azantian Literary, where she focuses primarily on fiction for MG, YA, and adult readers. She is committed to guiding the careers of both new and established voices, particularly those who have been historically underrepresented. Whether a heartwarming contemporary, a speculative mystery, or a grand epic fantasy, she looks for the universal truths in stories that connect us all. You can meet Azantian in person at SoCal SCBWI's Spring Writing Retreat and learn more about her beforehand on her agency's website: www.azantianlitagency.com and on Twitter: @jenazantian.

How to Query and Find An Agent

I noticed on your website that you're currently open to submissions for graphic novels and, through March 31st, middle grade fiction across all genres. Is there a time of year when you're open to all submissions?

No, there's no specific time of year that I'm open. It's best to follow me on Twitter or check the website for updates. I also regularly post #MSWL items that are sometimes quite broad, and #DVPit events, too, are great ways to reach me.

What drives your decision to open to different types of manuscripts throughout the year? Is it marketability or something else?

I tend to open to what interests me. Sometimes that's influenced by the market, but the majority of the time, I want to round out my list or haven't seen enough of a certain type of manuscript for a while. I keep a pretty small list, and I like to have some balance across age groups.

Do you personally read all queries or are they screened by an intern or an assistant first?

Yes, I do read them all myself, which is part of the reason I close to general submissions. I don't want to allow bias into my feelings towards a book solely because I am looking for something else at the time.

It's so helpful that you give clear query guidelines on your website. Supposing that the guidelines are followed, is there anything else that really sets a writer apart in a query letter/manuscript?

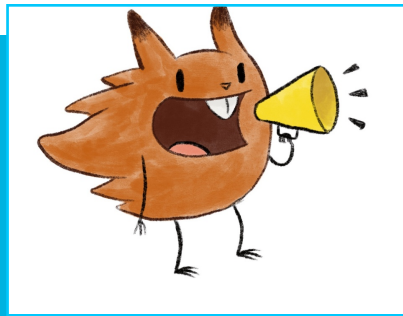
Absolutely, following guidelines is a big one. Agents say it all the time, but I do feel like that immediately jumps authors to the top 20 or 30 percent. Beyond that, a strong voice that "feels" the right age (whether MG or YA) is the first thing that I look for and will reel me in.

Any pet peeves that immediately turn you off?

One that definitely gets me is when parts of what I ask for are missing. I take in the whole package when considering a project, so not having a synopsis (for example) makes that challenging. I know it's tough to write those, but waiting until you're ready with it is the best move.

Do you respond to all query letters and manuscript requests? If so, what's your timeframe?

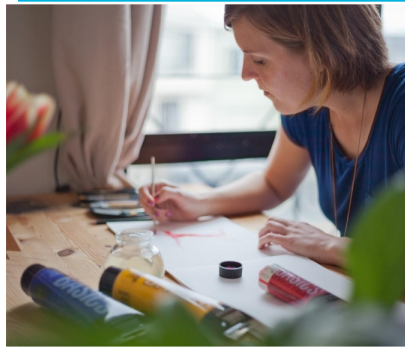
I do respond to all queries and manuscripts (with the exception being projects that are sent under false pretenses...like an adult manuscript sent through the middle grade link). I try to get back to queries in under six weeks, but it depends on client work—and it's perfectly acceptable for writers to check in if it's been longer.



SoCal Member News

By Desi St. Amant

Alane Adams was recently featured in Publishers Weekly for a literacy partnership with First Books. <https://tinyurl.com/y2qevxtr>. Adams, a SoCal SCBWI member and 2018 SCBWI Spark Award winner, recently announced a \$130k literacy grant with First Books to benefit schools in disaster areas, including fire-ravaged Lake County, CA, and hurricane-affected schools in Houston.



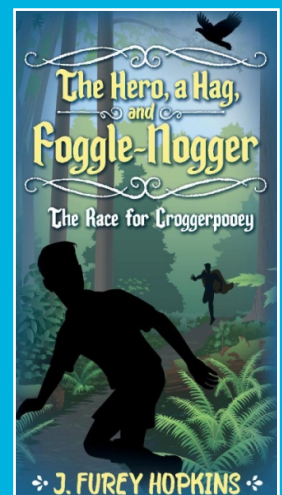
Rebecca Davis at Boyd's Mills Press has bought *Sometimes It's Bright*, a debut solo picture book by **Annie Ruygt**. In this ode to creativity, when a girl spends a day in the city with her mother, she finds brightness in everything around her—and, ultimately, within herself. Publication is set for spring 2021; Andrea Morrison at Writers House also arranged a deal for world rights. Find Annie online on Instagram and Twitter @annieruygt, and <http://annieruygtillustration.com>.

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine (adult crime fiction) has accepted one of **Tim Burke's** stories. We know it's a bit out of the SCBWI perimeter, but we can pretend the "C" in SCBWI is for "Crime."



Julie Abe, an Orange County SCBWI member, will make her literary debut in 2020 with her middle grade fantasy *Eva Evergreen, Semi-Magical Witch* from Little, Brown. Set in a Japanese-inspired world, the book follows the adventures of 12-year-old Eva, a girl with a pinch of magic who must protect her town in order to complete her adept-witch training, or risk losing her magic forever. View ad on Goodreads at <http://bitly.com/evaGR>. You can follow Julie on Twitter @julieabebooks and Instagram @julieabebooks, and sign up for her newsletter at www.julieandbooks.com.

Jeff Hopkins has published his first novel, *The Race for Croggerpooey*. When Horrible Rick steals the King's Book of Coded Spells, can Dennis—the athletically-challenged and bullied Knight Academy failure—somehow find a way to get it back? Cheer for Dennis as he befriends the fun-loving Foggie-nogger, bargains with the Wiley Old Hag, and learns not to run from his problems. Available through Amazon and other online book sellers. Or you may order the book directly from BookBaby at <https://store.bookbaby.com/book/the-hero,-a-hag,-and-foggie-nogger>. Mr. Hopkins has been an SCBWI member since 2013. An English teacher who lives in Seal Beach, his influences include JRR Tolkien, Roald Dahl, Monty Python, Neil Gaiman, and Looney Tunes.



Member News continued next page

What factors into deciding whether or not to offer representation to an author?

Oh, that's a big question! As I mentioned before, I look for a strong voice first. Then I want to see a great hook. And ultimately, it's a matter of whether the project excites me. This most often happens when authors send something I've not seen before, typically drawing from the parts of themselves that they need to share. Often, I've found out after deciding to offer that the projects I take on are the authors' "heart" stories, the ones that tap into something personal or that they've been wanting to tell for a long time, but were too afraid at first to do.

Are you able to offer any tips for non-agented writers who are seeking their "perfect" agent match?

I think it's a good idea to know going in what you're looking for. Do you prefer an editorial agent or one that's ready to go out right away? Do you need someone who is going to be more available to you or are you good with occasional check-ins? Are you looking for representation for a specific project or for future works, as well? There are no wrong answers, just better fits. Asking to speak with an agent's other clients is a good idea, too; you can learn a lot about the way they will interact with you just by listening to the stories of their other clients. And these are questions that you should absolutely ask on the offer call. Have a list made up ahead of

time of what you want to ask. Sometimes writers can get swept up in the excitement of an offer and forget that this is a partnership that should work for both parties.

Can you give us an idea what happens after you offer an author representation and they accept? Are there lots of edits? Do you immediately start shopping the writer's manuscript?

I'm an editorial agent, so usually on the offer call I discuss my big-picture ideas with the author to see if we are a good match. From there, I tend to do two-three (sometimes more) rounds of edits with the author before going out on submission. There's always room to grow and polish, and I believe that gives writers a big advantage when we do send their work out.

How many clients do you work with? Do you have a max number of authors you'll represent?

I just signed my 13th client not too long ago. My goal when starting ALA was to keep a small, highly curated list where I work a lot with the author in edits and strategic planning, and hopefully help them continue to write and sell work for years to come. I don't have a max number (if I love a project, I'll go for it), but I tend to only take on a few new writers per year.

Who are some of your favorite authors?

It's probably best to point to my MSWL for this question, as it has a lot of my favorites there! <http://www.manuscriptwishlist.com/mswl-post/jennifer-azantian/>

Is there anything else you'd like our readers to know about you or Azantian Literary Agency?

Yes, that we're always open to projects from historically underrepresented communities, and those who wish to submit can use the link at the bottom of my MSWL page. ✨

“As I mentioned before, I look for a strong voice first. Then I want to see a great hook.”

Member News cont.

Tina Athaide's MG fiction book, *Orange for the Sunsets*, is set to debut on April 2, 2019. Published by Katherine Tegen/Harper Collins. Review link: <https://tinyurl.com/y3mve6f6>. You can find her on Facebook @TinaAthaide, Instagram @tinaathaide, Twitter @tathaide, and her website, tinaathaide.com (website under construction now but will be live by April 1).



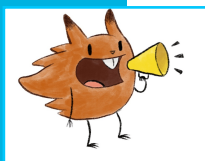
Members **Cliff Cramp**, **Wendy Grieb**, **Chuck Grieb**, **Susi Schaefer**, **Kit Seaton** (Honorable Mention), and **Rodolfo Montalvo** are featured in the SILA West 57 art show. Opens March 2nd.

In addition, **Cliff Cramp** and **Chuck Grieb** have work selected to be included in *Infected By Art* Vol 7. <https://tinyurl.com/y6y4z75o>, <https://tinyurl.com/yxw9no8y>

February 23rd (Irvine, CA): Pretend City Museum hosted a STEAM Festival. Children's book author **Laura Knight** was invited for a special Story Time performance of her book, *Kid Astronaut*, which was acted out by student volunteers from the Youth Leadership Council. The Traveling Exhibit was an unforgettable space adventure! Instagram: @friendlyplanet.club. Website: www.FriendlyPlanet.Club

Please email *Desi St. Amant* at dstamant07@gmail.com if you have any member

news you would like to share in the next issue.



Meet Author/Editor Deborah Halverson

Interview by Linda Ruddy

Deborah Halverson keeps herself quite busy working as a freelance editor, founder/writer of the popular writers' advice website *Editor.com*, and author of children's books, including the young adult novels, *Honk if You Hate Me* and *Big Mouth*, and the picture book, *Letters to Santa*. Before becoming a solo editor, she worked for 10 years as an editor at Harcourt Children's Books. In this interview, Halverson reveals her insights from working on both sides of the editorial desk. Attendees of the SoCal SCBWI Spring Writer's Retreat in April can look forward to learning more from her there.

Character and Dialogue Secrets

Tell us about yourself and your journey to becoming a published writer. What pulled you into this industry? And when did you discover your voice in writing?

I was an English major in college, working for an estate planning attorney (confirming “attorney” was not my career aspiration), when I decided what I really wanted was to work in publishing. I figured I could be a book editor. Fortunately, there was a national book publisher in San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich—later just Harcourt. I earned a copyediting certificate from UCSD and worked for a local reference materials publisher (writing video game instructions and cataloging VHS releases for an—ahem—adult movie database) before landing a position as the editorial assistant to the managing editor of Harcourt's children's books division.

On my first day at Harcourt, the art came in for a new picture book and I spent the morning admiring that artwork with the rest of the staff. I met people from the marketing and design departments, from editorial and from support divisions like legal and production. What a celebration of the art, the story, the book—and the young readers who'd eventually love that book. I'd found my people, my place, and my passion. I left Harcourt in 2006 to freelance edit when my triplets were born and I could no longer report to an office five days a week. At that time, I was also finalizing my first teen novel, fulfilling a lifelong secret dream I'd shared with few people before publication. I soon combined my experience on both sides of the editorial desk to write craft books and to found the writers' advice site *DearEditor.com*, which is a sort of *Dear Abby* for writers.

What is your ideal writing day like, and do you have any writing rituals that help you focus?

My ideal writing day would feature large blocks of protected writing time. But like so many writers, that's not my reality. I've found that a regular writing date (with MG author Barrie Summy, every Friday at a favorite coffee shop) gives me one protected block per week. The rest of my writing time is more catch-as-catch-can than I'd prefer. It helps for me to leave my house and write elsewhere, flipping the “you're going to work now” switch in my brain. Soothing background music also helps—I suspect it occupies that bit of the subconscious that likes to run through To-Do lists and nag.

Do you have any pet peeves you'd like to vent about the industry, the writing process, conferences?

Getting more attention for so-called “quiet” books is a perennial frustration. For my small part, I endeavor to help writers make non-flashy books as



Art by Steve Bjorkman



Everything You Need to Know About Picture Books Workshop

April 7th, Noon at Makara Center for the Arts

by Amy Terranova

Picture books are the purest form of love and wisdom we pass on to our children. When I was young, my books were my best friends. When I grew up, I chose to spend my days reading to young children books that taught the ways of the world, books that taught the ways of the heart. I spent weekends with my son curled up on the floor of Barnes & Noble, reading the latest picture books to find their way into print. I am excited to have this space to share my love of picture books and my journey of learning to write and publish art from the heart. I hope you will join us for our Picture Book Workshop on April 7th at noon at the monthly SoCal SCBWI Meetup, held in the Makara Center for the Arts. We will discuss a bit about the history, variety, art and craft of picture book writing, resources for the picture book writer, and current trends in picture book publishing!

strong as they can be for submission to publishers. We can all help by posting round-up lists of books on our social media so that fabulous books without bestseller or award buzz can get topic-related buzz.

What are some of your literary likes and dislikes? How have they influenced your writing style?

I love quirky humor, in particular. There's playfulness in my own writing, but when I'm editing, I abandon personal style and execute a sort of shape-shifting that has me slipping into the voice and sensibility of each manuscript I work on. I love doing that! I believe it's key to helping authors reach the richest incarnation of their vision. Truly, I feel as creatively satisfied after an editing session as I do after a writing session. Perhaps I sensed that on some level back when I was first plotting a publishing career.

Aspiring writers would like to know: What are three things a writer should remember in order to write a compelling story?

These are items I commonly point out to writers when I'm editing:

1. Your protagonist should have a distinct internal arc and goal that is separate from—but supported by—the external plot arc and goal. Clear and well-paced internal growth helps readers feel emotionally satisfied at the end of the book.
2. Reveal characters' personalities, fears, and passions through dialogue, physical action, and character interactions. Resist describing them.
3. Dialogue beats are prime opportunities to reveal your characters' personalities and emotions. Too often, those pauses in conversations are filled with generic actions, like looking, staring, glancing, gazing, turning to, smiling, frowning, laughing, nodding. Those actions don't reveal much about the characters doing them, and often manuscripts are filled with them. Do a word count for each of those words to see if you're overusing them. Instead, fill those beats with dynamic actions, like blocking a doorway to reveal anger or frustration, or rewashing the same cup over and over to reveal distraction, angst, or reluctance. Dynamic action enriches characters and keeps readers engaged and eager to read onward.

If you don't achieve these on first draft, don't worry. The primary goal of a first draft is to pin down your cast and plot. Just make a note to attend to these during revision.

You have written two craft books for writers: *Writing Young Adult Fiction for Dummies* and *Writing New Adult Fiction*. Can you give us an excerpt on giving authentic voice to your characters?

“Your protagonist should have a distinct internal arc and goal that is separate from—but supported by—the external plot arc and goal.”



Art by Steve Bjorkman

Both books were great fun to write. They combine my experience on both sides of the editorial desk, with a dash of my love for teaching. *Writing Young Adult Fiction For Dummies* covers both MG and YA, helping writers give voice to characters in their tweens as well as their teens. Since you asked about voices for characters rather than the entire narrative, I'll excerpt two tips for crafting dialogue that reveals different characters' confidence levels:

1. Adjust the [dialogue] delivery to reflect a character's confidence. Want to show a teen who lacks self-confidence or is too dependent upon others? Have her talk in questions: "I do it like this, right?" By contrast, a character who makes statements may be self-confident and independent: "I do it this way." And a character who commands when he speaks simply oozes confidence: "Here. This way." Of course, any one of these deliveries could be a ruse, with the character feeling just the opposite. Teens have been

known to put on a tough-guy act. You get to decide whether to play it straight.

2. Let characters blabber or be abrupt. When you want to show outgoing, open personalities or a sense of willingness in a character, assign him long chunks of dialogue, maybe without even letting the other person get a word in edgewise: "Oh, sure, come with me into the back, love. I've got what you need. Size six, right? People are always asking for size eight, so we're out of that, but I can tell the six will do you fine. Here, can you hold this box? Not as heavy as it looks. That's right, that end up. Now where did I put . . . ?" In contrast, short bits of dialogue are for shy, secretive, or reluctant characters: "Yeah, we got some. Somewhere." Sigh. "I'll check. Wait here."

Events like the SCBWI Spring Retreat can be overwhelming with information and people. Can you offer any tips for making the most of workshops and conferences: how to approach speakers, follow-up, etc.? Is there anything participants should *not* do?

I've developed a system for my dedicated Conference Notebook that helps me organize the info and focus on main points instead of getting overwhelmed by hours of information coming at me. Maybe it could help some of the Spring Retreat attendees. My system is by hand, but typing into a laptop during a breakout might suit other people. The key is to use multiple colors to organize information in the moment and for easy scanning later. With one multi-colored pen in hand, I use black ink for general notes, green ink for direct quotes, blue ink for ideas I get about my own stories, and red ink for Action Notes that I always put in the margins. Action Notes include "look up X article," "send follow-up notes," "add X to my Contacts app," etc. Keeping everything in that one notebook, even on the same page, means I'm able to easily capture the great ideas that pop into my head while dismissing the distracting (but useful!) housekeeping thoughts, and then later I can easily pick out the green quotes for social media posting or scan the general notes to remember the speaker's points. I use the same notebook for all writing events until it's full. I even tape business cards into the pages, jotting notes next to the card so I remember where and when I met that person. (Bring Scotch tape!) I've had occasion to refer back to those business cards years later. My Conference Notebook is my conference epicenter, making me feel organized, efficient, and empowered—all of which are important to me for creative calm and productivity. *Writing Young Adult Fiction For Dummies* has a full chapter of tips for having a positive and productive conference.

Do you have a current project you are working on that you would like to share with readers?

Apparently, I like spreading myself across age groups, because now I'm giving a chapter book series idea a go. ✨



Art by Steve Bjorkman



Meet Editor Erika Turner

Interview by Heather Inch-Desuta

Erika Turner knew she wanted to be a children's book editor five years ago. Today, she's the Editorial Project Manager for Versify, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's (HMH) new imprint led by Kwame Alexander. She also offers services as a sensitivity reader at her own website, [Magic & Multiverses](#). She loves small dogs, can talk for hours about interior design, and speaks Japanese at an intermediate level (though she modestly claims that her proficiency has gone embarrassingly low). And guess what else? Erika is going to be a guest speaker at SoCal's SCBWI workshop in Tahquitz on April 12-14. Here's a sneak peek at her exciting life.

The Life of an Editorial Project Manager

You must be crazy busy on a daily basis at Versify. Can you tell us a little bit about what a typical day looks like for you?

Where to start! My title is pretty unusual for the industry, and that's in part because my role requires me to juggle a lot of different projects, but I do a lot of what other editors do. No two

days really look the same, but I suppose in general I spend the first few hours of every morning fielding emails from authors, agents, and people throughout the Trade department. Then I'll move on to administrative work—filling out acquisition forms, financial forms, inputting data, doing research on the books we have or hope to acquire. If the day's not done by then, I'll move on to editorial work, which can mean any number of things, but ideally that means reading new submissions; reading, commenting, and/or editing manuscripts we've acquired; and then re-reading, re-commenting, and doing more revisions on those manuscripts. If it's a big editing job, I'll usually free my schedule up if I can to take the day and focus. A lot of times, that means taking work home at night and on the weekends!

Versify's website indicates that you're looking for "books that edify, electrify, and exemplify the wonders and woes of childhood." Part of your mission is also to "publish writers whose voices haven't been heard before." That offers such a broad, exciting spectrum of opportunity for new writers (and readers). Can you tell us a little bit more? Are there any types of books or topics that you or Versify would be especially pleased to find in your inbox?

That can change so often with whatever we currently have upcoming on our list – for example, we're open to books of any format right now, but since we have so many picture books at the moment, we're focusing more on young adult and middle grade these days. Generally, I think we'd always love to see some great voice-driven narratives; and right now, something funny and/or action-y with middle grade; something romantic and engaging with young adult. I'd LOVE to see more narratives about marginalized people that aren't steeped in trauma, and of course, the more verse submissions, the better (although we're open to prose, of course).

Are you able to offer tips for anyone who might be interested in submitting their work?

Information about our Fall and Spring 2019 books is available now, so it's good to check those out to get a feel for what we're about. In general, if you're submitting to us without an agent, please follow the submission guidelines on the website really closely. And, please only send one manuscript (especially with picture books) at a time.

One of the many cool things about Versify is that you're the only HMH imprint that accepts unsolicited and unagented manuscripts. How many submissions do you receive a month and what does the review process look like?

Oof, I'm not even sure. I'll say at least 100, if not more. If I like a manuscript,

"I think the biggest thing to take away about Versify is that we want books that will make kids want to keep reading."



Art by Steve Biorkman

Art by Steve Bjorkman



I'll share with my team, and if we agree it's something we want to pursue, we'll reach out to the author with an offer or at least to start a conversation.

How many books does Versify plan to publish annually? Do you have a target number for each age group?

We publish four to seven books a year over the course of two seasons. No target number necessarily, but we try to have a mix of age ranges every season.

2019 is the first year for Versify to have a book list. Would you give us a sneak peek at what's on the list and why those manuscripts were chosen for submission?

Sure thing! So we have *The Undeclared*, written by Kwame and illustrated by Kadir Nelson. This really sets the tone for what the imprint is about—celebration and hope, even if and when there's darkness. *The Last Last-Day-of-Summer* by Lamar Giles is a gem for us to have, because it's another great example of what we're looking for, especially in middle grade: exciting, dynamic books about friendship and family, with a lot of hilarity and hijinks, that center characters that, because of their marginalized identities, might usually be relegated to the sidelines.

White Rose by Kip Wilson is a gorgeous and heartbreaking novel in verse that brings to life important young people in history who risked their lives as allies to people who were being persecuted—that's not usually something that one would find in children's books, so that really stood out to us. *Vamos! Let's Go to the Market* by Raúl the Third, with his incredibly detailed and unique artwork, is just so full of life and celebration. Because it's about a specific cultural experience, it can also be considered educational for those from outside that community, but it's a joy for anyone to read.

For our Fall books, we have *Anya and the Dragon*, which I acquired, and *Emmy in the Key of Code*. *Anya* by Sofiya Pasternack is just everything I love—dragons, and magic, and spunky girls, and sweet boys, and a narrative that really turns perceptions of “good and evil” on its head. *Emmy* we like to think is very similar to Kwame's *The Crossover*, in that it brings together things people usually think are disparate or at odds: in this case, the humanities and STEM. Instead, we have a story about a girl who finds beauty and magic in computers despite coming from a musical family, and the story is told in verse. So you have a story that brings together poetry, music, and coding. That's a special combination.

Is there anything else you'd like our readers to know about Versify?

I think the biggest thing to take away about Versify is that we want books that will make kids want to keep reading—keep learning about and experiencing the world around them. To imagine the many possibilities of life, not just for themselves, but for everyone.

You also have a website—Magic & Multiverses—where you offer your services as a sensitivity reader. Would you tell us a little bit about what a sensitivity reader does?

As a sensitivity reader (sometimes referred to as an authenticity reader), my role is about making sure your characters, and their storylines, feel three-dimensional. I love invoking *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott when I talk about sensitivity reading—in her book, she talks about how she hates gardening, but she has a character that gardens, and when people read that character, they assume she must love gardening, because the portrayal is so vivid and real. She's not just relaying facts about what a gardener does (or worse, the history of gardening), but about what a gardener feels and experiences when they garden, etc. I could go on, but the point is, that's what readers expect when you write about a character authoritatively—that feeling of authenticity—and my role as a sensitivity/authenticity reader is to help a writer get to that point.

Graphic Novel Discussion Panels, Gutters, and Word Balloons

—What's It All About?

Sunday, May 5th, 12:00-1:30 PM

Makara Center for the Arts

by Chuck Grieb

Please join us at the May OC SCBWI Meetup as we host graphic novelists Kit Seaton (*Norroway* and *Afar*), Kim Dwinell (*SurfSide Girls*), and Jonathan St. Amant (*Chubicorn*) for a panel discussion. Our guests will discuss their experiences creating graphic novels, providing insight into this popular and unique corner of children's book publishing.

by Steve Bjorkman



Ask the Librarian YA Contemporary Greek Mythology

By Kelly Powers

Dear Librarian: Do you have any suggestions for YA takes on mythology in general and/or Greek mythology in specific? My original comps were *Percy Jackson* meets *That's So Raven*, but *Percy Jackson* is too big, too old, and too Middle Grade. I've also used *The Epic Crush of Genie Lo*, which also features mythology (Chinese, not Greek) and an overachieving teen dealing with supernatural powers, as well as *Arrowheart*, but I was wondering if you might have others? Thanks, Greek Out

Dear Greek Out: There are a few, fresh comp titles I can suggest for your needs. Yes, Mr. Riordan dominates the field of mythology action-adventure romps, but several other YA authors have found success with it too. Here are my suggestions:

Who Let the Gods Out? by Maz Evans. Mortal human boy Elliot Hooper wishes for a regular life, but a Zodiac Constellation crashes into a mound of cow dung in front of him. Then he meets Virgo, a 1,964-year-old girl on a mission to Earth, who is forbidden from interacting with mortals. Shirking the rules, Virgo takes Elliot with her to track down Zeus and the rest of the retired Olympian deities in order to stop the Daemon Tnaatos from wrecking the Earth.

Oh, My, Gods by Tera Lynn Childs. When her mother suddenly decides to marry a near-stranger, Phoebe, whose passion is running, soon finds herself living on a remote Greek island, completing her senior year at an ancient high school where the students and teachers are all descended from gods or goddesses.

Zodiac Legacy by Stan Lee. On a class field trip to the New China Heritage Museum, Chinese-American teen Steven Lee breaks away from the group to investigate a strange noise. Nothing extraordinary has ever happened to Steven before, but all that changes when he discovers, in the museum's sub-basement, a new technology that combines with ancient artifacts of the Chinese Zodiac to create terrifying powers. Steven accidentally gains the power of the Tiger and finds he must use it to stop a mercenary general from taking over the world. Hope these help!

Dear Reader: If you need help with a book recommendation, ideas for comp titles, or suggestions for you, your family, or your friends, email me at kelpowers2000@yahoo.com.

Your site indicates that your focus is on representations of black and/or LGBTQ+ characters. Are you still providing those services and are you open to reading representations of other diverse groups?

Yes, I still provide those services. The caveat I always give to authors and editors is that I am a black queer woman and I can provide sensitivity/authenticity feedback about black and/or queer women. If you want me to read about a black man, or a trans character, or an Asian character, etc., I am confident enough, based on what I know and who I have in my personal and professional community, to be able to speak to certain issues generally. But it's still probably best to get a reader who comes from those backgrounds if you're worried about specific questions of authenticity. (As is true with anything. If you're looking for what it's specifically like to be a black queer woman in Hawaii in the 1890s, I don't really know if I could help you there or that you could rely on my services alone.) ✨

10 WAYS TO SUPPORT an indie AUTHOR

1. Buy the Book
2. TELL 10 people
3. GIVE THE BOOK AS A GIFT!
4. WRITE A REVIEW.
5. post pics...
6. Recommend book to teachers & school administrators
7. REQUEST AT YOUR LIBRARY
8. PROMOTE ON SOCIAL MEDIA
9. "Follow" and LIKE
10. Send a Fan Letter

@FriendlyPlanet.Club

Art by Laura Knight