

## The 2019 #PBChat Mentorship

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**Jorge Lacera** was born in Colombia, and grew up in Miami, Florida, drawing in sketchbooks, on napkins, on walls, and anywhere his parents would let him. After graduating with honors from Ringling College of Art and Design, Jorge worked as visual development and concept artist at American Greetings, Irrational Games and Ghost Story Games. As a big fan of pop culture, comics, and zombie movies, Jorge rarely saw Latino kids as the heroes or leads. He is committed to changing that, especially now that he has a son.

**Megan Lacera** grew up in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio, with a book always in her hands. She became a writer and creator of characters and worlds for entertainment companies like American Greetings, Hasbro and GoldieBlox, and later formed her own creative company, Studio Lacera, with husband Jorge Lacera. After reading many stories to their son, Megan realized that very few books reflected a family like theirs—multicultural, bilingual, funny, and imperfect. She decided to change that by writing her own stories.



Megan and Jorge live in Cypress, Texas with their son, Kai.

**Megan and Jorge will be accepting applications for: Authors and Author/Illustrators of fiction (all topics. Diverse voices wanted!**

1. **If you had to wear the same t-shirt with one word on it for a year, what word would you choose?**

**Megan:** Clean

**Jorge:** Lucky

2. **If you had your own talk show, who would your first three guests be? Bonus points for sharing the name of your show and what it would be about.**

**Megan:** A-Game. The show would bring together writers, filmmakers, athletes and people who consistently produce excellence and how they do it. Guests: Judy Blume, LeBron James, Steven Spielberg.

**Jorge:** The show would be called Creative Grit and would be about the creative process and how different creators get through the hard parts: Francis Ford Coppola, David Wiesner, J.K. Rowling

3. **If you could instantly become an expert in something (non-writing-related), what would it be and why?**

**Megan:** Law. When you really think about it, the law (and how it changes) impacts us every day.

**Jorge:** Philosophy. It would be nice to have a lot of tools to use to better understand our world.

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## 4. What are your five favorite picture books not written and/or illustrated by you?

Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich, Adam Rex  
Nino Wrestles the World, Yuyi Morales  
Jabari Jumps, Gaia Cornwall  
Creepy Carrots, Aaron Reynolds, Peter Brown  
Mr. Wuffles!, David Wiesner

## 5. What is the toughest feedback you've ever received?

**Jorge:** "That's not good enough."

**Megan:** "Mom, that's okay. Not everyone can be a great writer."

## 6. What are some of the most important lessons you've learned so far?

**Jorge:** It's important to follow through on your ideas no matter how difficult it gets. It's what separates the really committed creators from the dilettantes.

**Megan:** Value yourself, always. Creative industries will chew you up if you wait for someone else to tell you are worthy. Know that you have value now, whether you're published or not.

## 7. What writing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?

**Jorge:** Publishing our book together, working closely with Megan.

**Megan:** Ditto.

## 8. What are your dreams and goals as an author?

**Jorge:** To inspire kids who feel left out. To remind them that there is a place for them in this world.

**Megan:** I'd love to create stories that endure, that become classics. A movie would also be nice ☺

## 9. What are your strengths as mentors?

As an author-illustrator team, we understand the full process of creating picture books. Our experience in entertainment, gaming, and toys also provides with a lot of unique insights in the market and business. Plus, we love helping and nurturing creators! We're able to supportively nudge you into thinking more deeply about your work so you can harness more of your potential.

## 10. Who are you not the best mentor for?

If you don't like revising and really digging into your work, we probably aren't the best mentors. We believe in going out there with your best selves...which often means revising and wrestling with the heart of your stories.

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## **11. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?**

Willingness to revise and start over if necessary  
Good communication; we're often direct about feedback and appreciate directness in return  
Maybe a bit of an edge  
Sense of humor  
Must love The Americans series finale and be in awe of its craftsmanship.

## **12. What is your feedback/critique style like?**

Direct, encouraging, supportive, inquisitive.

## **13. During the mentorship, how will you help your mentee and their stories develop?**

We'll take a holistic approach. We can share industry insight and experience, critique your manuscripts and/or dummies, help you to identify weaknesses and strengths, tune into your strongest concepts/stories, polish query letters and work on pitching and developing your social media strategy. We can also talk about the writer/illustrator relationship and to maximize the potential of both.

## **14. What type of relationship do you hope to establish with your mentee?**

We would like to be able to support a mentee so that they are no longer mentees instead colleagues.

## **15. What is your style of communication like?**

Similar to our critique style.... Direct, encouraging, supportive, inquisitive, slightly irreverent, attentive.

## **16. While reading prospective mentee's manuscripts, what do you hope to experience?**

We would hope first and foremost to be engaged and entertained. We would like to experience the full range of human emotion, the dizzying highs and soul crushing lows, every page a journey deeper into the power of consciousness. Naw, just kidding. But laughing is good. So is a tug on the ol' heartstrings.

## **17. What will you look for in the applications you receive?**

We will be looking for unique perspectives and voices. Really great concepts, humor, and a willingness to revise and make changes when needed.

## **18. What about the idea of mentoring excites you most?**

We are excited to help usher in a new amazing creative voice into the world.

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**19. Is there anything, author and/or illustrator-related, you wish people would ask you about? If so, what, and how would you respond?**

It would be great if people asked more questions and were generally more curious about visual storytelling. There's such a focus on illustration notes and whether to use them or not to use them...when the real questions are bigger. Picture book writers can sharpen their craft by deepening their curiosity about what illustrators are really doing.

**20. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?**

Please don't be an A-hole.

Also, never give up! Learn more about your craft, your business, and yourself...and keep going.