



**Andrea Wang** is the award-winning author of *The Nian Monster*. She loves to travel and sample new and unusual foods. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of her writing is about food. Andrea writes picture books and middle grade novels. Her second picture book, *Magic Ramen: The Story of Momofuku Ando*, published in March 2019. She has also written seven non-fiction titles for the library and school market. Andrea holds an M.S. in Environmental Science and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing for Young People. She lives in Colorado with her family.

**Andrea will be accepting application from:** marginalized/BIPOC writers of PB fiction or nonfiction.

**1. If you could be in any movie or tv series, what would it be and what character would you play?**

I'd love to be in *The Durrells in Corfu*, playing a girl version of young Gerry Durrell. He mostly stays out of the family drama and spends his time studying natural history and bringing home all sorts of creatures, which sounds like the perfect life to me.

**2. If you could have any supernatural power, what would it be and why?**

Given everything that's going on in the world right now, I think the power to heal myself and others would be incredibly helpful.

**3. What are your five favorite picture books not written, illustrated, and/or edited by you?**

This is such a difficult question! I have a ton of favorites, for different reasons. Some for the artwork, some for the text, some as mentor texts, etc. But because I'm a person who loves books that make me cry (in a good way), I'll give my five favorite recent picture books that ranked highly on my *Moved to Tears* scale: *A Different Pond* by Bao Phi & illustrated by Thi Bui, *We are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom & illustrated by Michaela Goade, *All of a Sudden and Forever* by Chris Barton & illustrated by Nicole Xu, *It Began with a Page* by Kyo Maclear & illustrated by Julie Morstad, and *What Miss Mitchell Saw* by Hayley Barrett & illustrated by Diana Sudyka.

**4. What writing and/or publishing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I met a teacher in Houston last year who said that they used *Magic Ramen* as the basis for four weeks of lessons, which boggled my mind. To have written a book that teachers find useful in the classroom, but that also entertains students and provides a window or a mirror for young readers, gives me so much joy.

**5. What about mentoring excites you most?**

I'm super excited to help a diverse writer find their voice and tell their story.

**6. What are your strengths as a mentor?**

I like to think that I'm good at story structure, character motivation, and plot arcs. I also really like to find the emotional heart of a story. For nonfiction, I think my background in science helps me winnow down a lot of data/information into a manageable (and relevant!) amount to cover in a

picture book. I like STEM subjects, I've discovered a love for history, and I think weird things are fascinating.

**7. What is your feedback/critique style like?**

I'm supportive and encouraging, but I'm also going to tell it straight if I don't feel like something is working to tell the story. I do try my best not to impose on the author what I think the story should be about, but instead to extract what the author's vision is.

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

Someone who has an open-minded attitude towards revision and trying new approaches, who knows feedback is about the work and not the writer, and who is proactive about learning craft or studying the industry.

**9. Who are you not the best mentor for?**

Slapstick humor or stories told in rhyme. I do have two boys, so I've encountered a lot of, um, *scatological* humor, but it's not my favorite subject.

**10. How will you help your mentee and their stories develop?**

I'm happy to work on pretty much anything that goes into creating a picture book, except for the illustration stuff since I'm not an illustrator. That includes: brainstorming and developing story ideas, critiquing manuscripts, identifying weaknesses and strengths, structural changes, the nuts and bolts of preparing a manuscript for submission, providing industry insight and info, and polishing query letters.

**11. What is your style of communication like?**

I prefer email -- once or twice a week is okay, and I'll try to get back to you within a couple of days for questions about story ideas or advice. I'll usually take about a week to critique a PB manuscript, using Tracked Changes in Word, and then we can schedule a brief phone call to go over my feedback and answer any questions after you've had a chance to look my comments over. I'm not that into social media, so please don't tweet at or DM me if it's a mentor question.

**12. What are you looking for in the applications you receive?**

I hope to feel moved by the manuscript, to learn something new, or to sense the author's fearlessness and vulnerability.

**13. Any tips/advice for applicants to make their applications and/or manuscripts shine?**

I'd love to know the story behind the story -- why they're writing that particular story, what they hope to accomplish, etc. And please proofread your manuscript carefully -- I'd rather spend my time on craft and not copyediting. (Can you tell yet that I'm Type A?) ☺

**14. 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?**

Breaking into the industry can feel incredibly daunting – there's so much to learn besides the writing craft! But there are so many resources out there, including myself and the other PBChat mentors, and we all just want you to succeed. I think it takes persistence, more than any kind of innate talent, to get published. If you have that, you'll go far!