

To Whom it May Concern,

Hello from Hesperides! I have a project I am thrilled to get into your hands.

Ok. So, I haven't had this much unhinged, unadulterated fun since reading The Bartimaeus Sequence as a teen and snickering while I pored over the snarky footnotes that Jonothan Stroud included, or when I fell in love with the ridiculous way dwarves unhinged their jaws in Eoin Colfer's Artemis Fowl. Grand comparisons, I know, but warranted. There are shades of Discworld here (clever line-by-line writing that rewards an attentive reader), and Jonothan Strange & Mr. Norrell (a strong grounded sense of place and character). And have I mentioned yet Amelie is a ludicrously skilled illustrator? She's prepared several completed illustrations for this novel that I am including here (along with a collection of some of her sketches for this novel) in a canva presentation I threw together: [Look at this. JUST LOOK.](#)

I met Amelie by chance at the San Francisco Writer's conference where I was presenting. She didn't pitch to me: in fact, she was there as a volunteer. I caught sight of her open illustration notebook as I was passing by and did a triple take.

The Witch in the Wall (116K Words) is a **YA urban fantasy of collapsing empires, resurrected witches, cursed boys, and a sentient Britain eating itself alive.** It is as emotionally impactful as it is hilarious. It is Book 1 in a duology and I've included a detailed synopsis of Book 2 with this pitch.

The Story:

Bo only wanted to rob Buckingham Palace. Beetle only wanted to survive a field trip. Agatha only wanted to sleep through another century. But when their paths collide, they uncover a secret older than the monarchy: a living empire powered by the blood of its witches and the ghosts of its dead.

Bo and Beetle's escape from Buckingham Palace tangles them with Agatha Pemsley, the immortal Witch of the Clock: a creature of empire, half vampire, half bureaucrat, now waking into 1985 and realizing the monarchy she bled for is rotting from within. Beetle, cursed to repel magic, becomes a walking void that unravels everything enchanted, including the Queen's immortality and the lies London is built on. Bo, born of dragon-fire and greed, sees a chance for revolution.

What begins as survival spirals into an attempt to kill the undying Queen herself, whose parasitic reign feeds on ghosts, blood, and colonial sorcery. Hunted by the Queen's

alchemist and her monstrous child, the trio must decide whether to flee or fight, and whether the end of magic might be the beginning of something better.

The Characters:

Bo is a dragon witch born out of the Pechan Volcano in northwestern China. Violent, immature, just a bit sociopathic, and with an insatiable hunger for gold and precious metals, Bo nevertheless makes an excellent guardian of the Great Wall of China. She also works alongside her partner and mentor, Ren Fa Shou; a goat with the ability to extract the truth from any living being.

Beetle Peters is nothing special. He's your average 18 year-old who likes The Cure and rom coms. Only thing is, every plant in his vicinity dies and no matter how hard he tries, he can't get anyone to remember his name, much less get a date. Is Beetle looking for love in all the wrong places, or is something far more insidious...and magical going on?

Agatha Pemsley is a witch, a vampire, and the last guardian of London's most famous clock tower. After waking up from a century-long sleep in the hidden apartments of the Big Ben, The Witch of the Clock is thrust into the unfamiliar world of 1985 where she will have to examine her loyalties to the crown and the alluring group of magical rebels living in London's Chinatown.

Comparative Titles:

Bartimaeus Sequence—Jonathan Stroud

Leviathan Series—Scott Westerfeld

Airborn—Kenneth Oppel

The Eyeball Collector—F.E. Higgins

Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell—Susanna Clarke

Artemis Fowl Series—Eoin Colfer

Amelie & Her Platform:

Amelie Butkus is a UC Berkeley English graduate and a professional illustrator. Her viral reels have garnered over **1M+ views**, and her [Instagram \(39.6k followers and quickly growing\)](#) and **Kickstarter success when she was only 19 (\$12,726 raised from 317 backers in 30 days for a bespoke, illustrated MG novel)** demonstrate a passionate, engaged readership.

[Here's a recent reel](#) to show a taste of how she engages with her audience and her appealing presence as an author:

Connections so far (for potential blurbs) include Julia Vee (*The Phoenix Hoard*, published by TOR) and Ireen Chau (*The Herb Witch's Apprentice*). Amelie is also the daughter of concept artist Michael Butkus, a recognized illustrator in the film industry, who has 120K Instagram followers, 12K LinkedIn followers, and artistically collaborates with Amelie on many separate projects.

The Witch in the Wall is something special. I was laughing out loud through the whole book. I know that exaggeration pervades many pitches, but I really see Amelie as a successful author in the making. She is 23 and already this good! She is prolific and is already working on her next series, featuring demon hunters in Los Angeles. I've attached the manuscript as well as a detailed synopsis of Books 1&2 to this pitch.

Warmly,



Connor Smith

Co-Founder at Hesperides Literary