**Katie Carella’s notes**

**Quintyn Hobbs**

Trixie and Truman are fun, unique names!

The most interesting part of this pitch is the school, St. Genesius’s School for Geniuses. I’d recommend expanding on what the school is all about. Also, make clear what/who St. Genesius is if that’s relevant to the story.

I was confused by Truman “[taking Trixie’s] place.” Did Trixie leave school? Or did Truman simply become the new teacher’s pet? Is teacher’s pet a sought-after title at this school?

It may be helpful to clarify the characters’ ages. All the reader of this pitch knows is that Truman is half of Trixie’s age. How old is Trixie? And, if they are so far apart in age, why would they be in the same class at school? I’m intrigued to know more, but their connection to one another is not entirely clear. And the intended audience for this story is also not clear.

**Allison Donohue**

The second line of this pitch is really cute! I love the visual of the work boots versus the ballet shoes. Great visual clues to farm versus city life.

I’d recommend reworking the first line of this pitch though, to clarify that Ellie’s “prima ballerina dreams” are sidetracked by this move. “In a tizzy” simply doesn’t convey enough. Maybe something like this: “Ellie dreams of becoming a prima ballerina, but her parents’… puts a stop to her training/pulls her out of ballet school/etc.” I was wondering why she couldn’t still take ballet classes in Maine.

The “cranky pig” and “resident ghost” threw me off. They sound like they could be fun characters, but up until this point in the pitch, I’d envisioned this as a realistic fiction story. Now I’m wondering if the pig and the ghost talk to Ellie, etc. You may want to clarify earlier on if there are less-realistic elements in this story.

**Leah Leonard**

Love Killer Zombies from Mars! Very catchy and intriguing!

Are Cade, Nacho, and Arizona all boys? I’d suggest making the characters’ gender(s) clearer in the body of the pitch.

Where does the characters’ extensive knowledge of aliens and zombies come from? What if each kid has a special talent – one has the knowledge about aliens and zombies, one loves comic books, and one is crafty with household items? It might be a helpful way to break up the long list within your pitch.

It feels jarring to close with the mention of a big test. The zombies seem much for exciting then a school test. If the test is the big thing though, then it should be mentioned earlier in the pitch so that your question at the end feels stronger. But, will there be a big zombies/aliens/humans battle in the end? That might be a more exciting thing to tease there… Just an idea!

Is this meant as middle grade or YA? Including the characters’ ages may be helpful to conveying your intended format and audience.

**Alice Faye Duncan**

Cute premise that a 7-year old writes her own survival guide!

Great use of your subtitle to convey your format! *A Survival Guide for Kids Who Live with Baby Twins.* I might recommend making it a bit catchier, like so: *A Survival Guide for Life with Baby Twins*, since I imagine the book would clearly be meant for children to read.

I’d recommend coming up with a stronger, shorter main title though. “Crumb snatchers” doesn’t sound quite right for a survival guide.

I love the details that Molly lives in Memphis and can see Graceland from her house. But I was curious as to how these details connected to the baby twins. For example, can she only see Graceland from her bedroom window, and when the twins arrive she has to change rooms?

I’d remove the mention of Mama and Daddy, to keep the focus on Molly and the baby twins.

Where does Molly look for answers? Where would a 7-year old look? It might be nice to clarify that she goes to the library or asks a teacher, for instance, so that this moment has a clear visual attached to it.

**Annie Bailey**

I’m intrigued by the school, but the pitch overall feels too vague.

If the school is a boarding school for all of these supernatural beings, then I’d clarify in your first sentence that it is a “boarding” school.

Is the principal the main character? Is this intended as YA?

What is the school for? Do the creatures train for something special here?

I like the hint at humor with the “lunchroom” and “what could go wrong” moments.

While sentence fragments can certainly be used for emphasis, I’d prefer more complete sentences in this pitch, so the information can be clearer.

**Wendy Kitts**

Cute early chapter book concept! It makes me think of Roald Dahl’s *The Witches*, which I would recommend you read (if you haven’t already) because Dahl does a masterful job of building suspense.

I’d suggest pulling out the Twenty-two character introduction into its own sentence. It’s getting a bit lost tagged onto your first sentence.

The mention of the father’s lab makes me wonder if this story will go into animal testing territory…?

I’m wondering if this could have series potential. If so, maybe consider closing your pitch with more of a teaser to that idea, “once Morph Boy realizes his powers to shift, no animal is off limits” sort of idea.

Will the ex-military mom chasing them around the house be humorous or scary? The tone is not entirely clear here so I’d recommend rewording this to clarify.

**Brian Patrick Avery**

Great job on this pitch! You really conveyed all of the key information in a clear and concise way. Just a few ideas on how to strengthen further…

I’d suggest breaking your pitch into two sentences instead of one, long sentence. This will make the information more easily digestible.

Maybe add a leading question to the end of your pitch relating to the thief’s identity or grand plan?

How old are the two magicians? This may help clarify your intended format and audience.