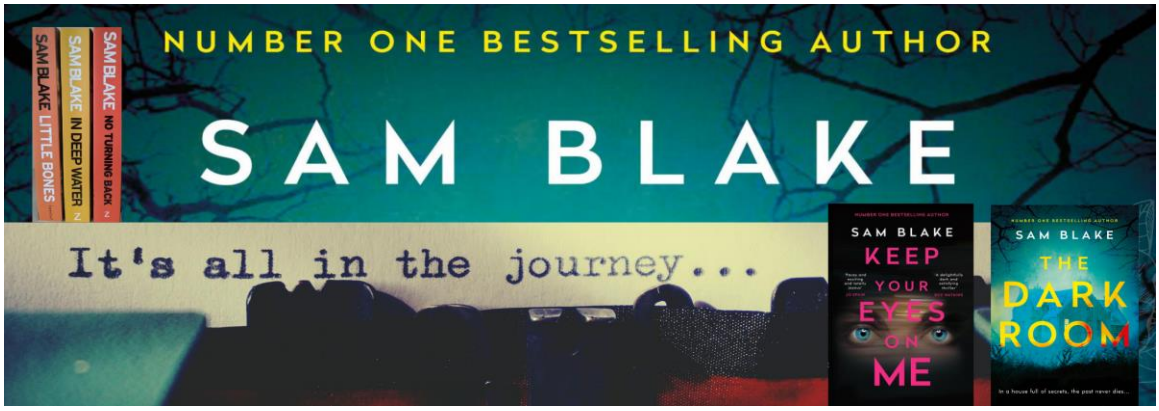

Coping with Rejection

If they are honest, even the greatest writers will admit that they have been rejected at some time (or many times!) during their careers. Indeed, one of the first rules of becoming a writer is learning to face rejection courageously, positively and often!

It might make it easier to know that:

- *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was rejected 14 times.
- *Johnathan Livingstone Seagull* was rejected 18 times.
- *Carrie* by Stephen King had over 30 rejections.
- *A Time to Kill* by John Grisham was rejected 45 times.
- *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell was rejected 38 times.
- *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter was so completely rejected, that Ms. Potter decided to self-publish.
- George Orwell's Animal Farm was rejected with the words: 'It is impossible to sell animal stories in the USA'
- Rudyard Kipling was told by the San Francisco Examiner 'I'm sorry Mr. Kipling, but you just don't know how to use the English Language.'
- The Diary of Anne Frank was rejected on the basis that 'the girl doesn't, it seems to me, to have a special perception or feeling which would lift that book above the curiosity level.'

Always having a piece of work on the go that could be a 'yes' will help hugely with any rejections that may come your way – enter short story competitions, start writing the next story or the next novel.

Here are three tips for coping with those inevitable rejections:

1. **Laugh at them.** Those who missed out on Harry Potter are kicking themselves.

2. **Learn from every rejection**. Did you send your manuscript to the right person? Does the opening chapter need more work to grab an agent or publisher's attention? Did you get any feedback you can act on? Is your idea original and fresh?

3. **Don't put all your eggs in one basket**. Have a submission strategy, plan the next move before you've even posted your submission and always have the next project underway. Be positive, be forward thinking. You only need one 'yes'.

Remember, no-one is rejecting YOU, it is the work that isn't quite right, and that can be for *many* reasons.

Literature is subjective. The first agents or publishers you try may not like what you write, but once it is of publishable quality, somewhere out there, there is someone who will.

Good luck!