

THE ART OF BEING REJECTED by Sharon Horton

"Dear Writer - While we are sincerely flattered that you chose our editors to entertain with your charming adventures in fiction-land, we regret that it is not suitable at this time. Please accept our sincere best wishes in placing your work anywhere else in the future. Sincerely - Someone paid to write vague letters."

Okay, everyone who has received one of the above intriguing and informative form letters raise your hand. Wow, what a breeze that caused!

Seriously though, as you do get these types of rejections the first thing you need to remember is you're in good company. You're also not alone in thinking anyone with a modicum of consideration, or at the very least good manners, would take the time to tell you more about why they didn't accept your stellar work of fiction.

Obviously the large houses just can't take the time needed to address all of us. However, they all can do us the one courtesy of at least reading our initial synopsis before requesting a partial, or worse yet full manuscript. It still might result in a rejection, but at least you would've been signaled of defeat before you mount your steed and ride to Little Big Horn without a gun, a prayer or a Custer's chance in you know where.

Another frustrating aspect of rejection is the fact that no two readers are going to view your story equally. I once entered the same story in three different contests so that I could get a better idea of what might be right or wrong. Well, my scores varied so much that I soon realized that no matter how I describe a scene or character there will always be a difference of opinion. It didn't mean I was right or wrong in some cases. It just meant that what one person read one way, another read it a different way.

So how do you figure out who to listen to? Hey, if I knew that answer I'd write a book on the subject. Sorry, cynical humor surfacing.

I guess what I'm trying to say though, is we need to do all in our power to bring our book and characters to life, and keep in mind that the only opinion that matters is the person who is able to publish us. Until then, we'll have to remember that there are just too many ways to view things in this world, and no one can say only one way is the right way.

A rejection is not worth a thousand words. I know the agony of wondering, "What could I have done better?"

Keep writing and keep loving it, for if we're doing that much then no one can say, even with rejection after rejection, that our work is not suitable at this time.