

THE REJECTION CARE PACKAGE



**...for authors readying to embark on their
querying and submission journeys!**

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**CONGRATULATIONS ON REACHING THIS POINT
IN YOUR WRITING CAREER!**

YOU'RE DOING IT!

YOU'RE TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR DESTINY!

**YOU'RE IN IT SO THERE'S EVERY CHANCE YOU
COULD WIN IT!**

I SALUTE YOU!

WELCOME TO THE GANG!



BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

Before setting off on your querying or submission journey, here are some things to remember:

1. This is not a querying guide.

This is purely to help you with the pain of rejections, be that from agents, editors, or from readers.

2. You will not be an overnight sensation.

Okay, I can hear you all screaming at me now. Yes, yes, yes! I know this might appear to have happened before – in fact I’ve seen it myself; and if not overnight, in short time frames like a week or month. It seems that some authors burst onto the scene and sign mahoosive book deals before you’ve even typed THE END. So, two things:

1) these authors will no doubt have a completely different story to tell you about their years of struggling and giving up and being the one who watched their friends succeed time and again;

2) be comfortable with the fact that it’s 99.9% likely this will not happen to you. You are part of the majority. And though us writers love to be unique, in this case it’s not a bad thing; it’s normal. So, settle in for a long and emotional ride.

3. Accept that you are not the exception.

Ugh, that sounds harsh, but it’s true. Once you’ve researched an agent or editor’s wishlist, don’t decide to send them something they haven’t asked for anyway. You’re probably looking at an instant rejection. Sorry. Hop over to the #MSWL feed on Twitter where agents regularly tweet about what they’d like to see in their inbox, or to **Manuscript Wishlist** [here](#).

4. You finished a book, you are proud of your book; you are steps ahead of an even bigger majority.

What are you talking about, you might ask? Well, how many people have you spoken to who say “Oh, I want to write a book” or “I have the best idea for a book” or even “Yes, I’m writing a book?” Everyone has a book in them, right? Right! They may have even started writing it. Yet the number of those who think about it but never begin, or those who do begin and abandon their project midway, will always outweigh those who actually finish. Because writing a book is hard. **RIDICULOUSLY HARD**. It takes dedication and persistence and perseverance. And you, my friend, did it. Back-pat time.

5. You will be rejected.

Can't escape it. You will be. And it is likely to hurt. But always remember: ***IT IS NOT YOU WHO IS BEING REJECTED, IT IS YOUR MANUSCRIPT.*** It will feel personal and that's because this book is made of your blood and your soul and it took years of your life. Agents and editors aren't fond of rejecting authors, but they have to because it simply isn't possible to publish everyone's hard work. It isn't. Fact. They have to come at this with a wall between them and the author, they have to fall in love, not just like, so you must learn to construct your own wall, one that stands between you and your manuscript.

6. Keep writing new books.

Please don't pin all your hopes on this one book. Agents generally look to take on career authors, meaning authors with more than one book in them, and many will ask about other projects and manuscripts you might have written or plotted. Fans, once in love with your work, will come back for more and more from you, so it's definitely in your best interest to work on new stuff. And we all know that honing our skills takes time, so the more you write, the more you study the craft, the more professional you become. (Psst, there's a whole page later on in this package where you can jot down some new story ideas!)

PREPARATION LIST

If you haven't followed every single step below, go back and do so right now!

1. Research all agents and editors to whom you submit.

There are A LOT of nasty stories out there that might put you off joining the query train. Many schmagents and small presses that have ripped off authors or simply aren't the right fit for what you need and want. Things happen, it's life, but with the internet being the way it is and people sharing their experiences on forums and their blogs, you should spend some time researching every professional to whom you send your work. And take a peek on **Absolute Write** forums [here](#) while you're at it. Not only is it a great place to talk shop, but there's a Beware, Recommendations, and Background Check section that is worth a peep. Or why not hop over to **Writer Beware** [here](#), which includes posts of how to protect yourself. Always remember, when reviewing anything like this, you're reading about personal experiences, which can vary widely. And don't forget **Publisher's Marketplace** [here](#). Although there's a fee, this is a great resource for researching agents.

2. Revise and edit your book until it's as perfect as you can make it. Never query a first draft.

Get critique partners and beta readers. They are invaluable. Check out **CP Matchmaker** [here](#) for more information on what a critique partner is and where you can find one. Or the **Overhaul My Novel Beta Program** [here](#). Alternatively, join a local writing group, maybe via your local library or those set up by **NaNoWriMo** [here](#), or **SCBWI** [here](#) if you write for children, and hook up with other writers this way. Or, use a manuscript critique assessment agency or a professional editor. There are heaps of ways to get feedback on your manuscript before you seek representation. Only ever submit the best work you can because, like adding too much salt to the recipe, once it's out there, it's very hard to take it back and start over.

3. Follow submission guidelines.

Agents and editors receive hundreds of submissions from hopeful authors, sometimes in a week, so they will be working fast. If your submission package doesn't adhere to the guidelines they clearly outline on their website, chances are they will overlook your email without even checking out the brilliant writing. Yes, it might be a lengthy and frustrating process – correctly formatting your sub can take an hour or more and result in many saved files on your laptop – but if you want the agent to sign you, show them you're professional, thorough, respectful, and that they could work with you. Would you rock up to a job

interview in your PJs? No, you would pick your best suit, fix your hair, and crank up that smile. Works the same here.

4. Read the rest of this package!

Yep, this package has a ton of useful info and ideas to keep you focused and on track. You have to be in it for the long haul and you have to develop, not necessarily a thick skin because I've yet to meet an author who isn't upset by a rejection, but definitely a wise and grounded approach to the process. Preparation is key! Lay out your coping plans before the rejections start rolling in. Sometimes we think things won't hit us as hard as they actually do, so it's much easier if you have healthy coping mechanisms in place well in advance. Having all you need in one place, here, in your **personalised rejection care package**, will help you survive this experience unscathed!

FAMOUS REJECTION STORIES

Famous author rejection stories are plastered across the internet and it's not hard to hop online and find some. A lot only tell you about the number of editor rejections; they don't touch on how many literary agents turned them down before that (though, yes, many of these were back in the days when things were obviously very different).

I recommend you don't stop at famous author stories; keep looking, keep searching and asking around, and you'll see the struggles of mid-list authors too. Reading these experiences always makes me feel better. We're all in good company!

J.K. Rowling: Reported 12 rejections from editors.

***Chicken Soup for the Soul*: Reported over 140 rejections from editors.**

Beatrix Potter: Reported to have received so many rejections she self published.

***A Wrinkle in Time*: Reported over 25 rejections.**

***The Help* by Kathryn Stockett: Reported over 60 rejections.**

Stephen King threw his debut *Carrie* in the trash because it was rejected so much.

Don't believe me? Then go [here](#) to read more about these famous stories and some! And then click [here](#) and [here](#) and keep searching if you need to. Take comfort in knowing that you're not the first to go through this, but you could be the next big thing.

REMEMBER WHY YOU WANTED TO BECOME A WRITER

You're not alone in wondering why you bother sometimes, especially when those rejections start pinging into the inbox. Even the greatest, most famous writers have hit brick walls, fallen into the jaws of self-doubt, and contemplated giving up. But it's important to remember where, when, and why your passion started, and that you're never alone in your struggle.

Here are a few quotes to inspire you to keep writing from some well-known names...

“We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.”

—**Ernest Hemingway**

“If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it.”

—**Toni Morrison**

“I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn.”

—**Anne Frank**

“You can make anything by writing.”

—**C.S. Lewis**

“A word after a word after a word is power.”

—**Margaret Atwood**

Writer's Digest has put together a myriad of famous quotes [here](#) and [here](#), **The Writing Cooperative** [here](#), and on **Goodreads** [here](#). And don't stop there, Internet search to your heart's content and you'll love what you find!

THE INDULGENCE PAGE

Every writer I've ever met has a brain that works like this:

HEARS 50 AMAZING COMMENTS ABOUT THEIR WORK AND CONVINCES THEMSELVES THAT PEOPLE ARE JUST BEING POLITE. DID THEY EVEN READ THE MANUSCRIPT?

HEARS ONE NEGATIVE COMMENT ABOUT THEIR WORK AND BELIEVES IT WITHOUT QUESTION.

It's true. We all do it. And not just writers, though we undoubtedly doubt more than most. It's human nature to focus on the weeds and overlook the blossoms, so know you're in good company.

But, stop! Stop considering ways to burn your manuscript! Stop playing with the idea of never writing another word again.

Now, go away and pull up all the feedback you've ever received on your manuscript, as well as collecting more as you go. **ONLY**, and I mean ONLY, pick out all the good comments. No Negative-Nelly nonsense is allowed on this page. Got it? Banish them and make this your safe zone, a place you can come when you think your writing sucks. The next page is the page to **indulge**; so copy and paste those comments there. Add some colour, put it all in caps, add stickers or photos of hot bods or cuddly animals or chocolate cake – basically whatever you want. But make it a page of magical rainbows and unicorns, or mud pies and spiders if that's what you're in to, which you can review on **THOSE DAYS**.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK LIST

ESCAPE!

There's nothing wrong with escaping when you need to. It's called **SELF CARE** and a deeply underrated component in the survival of a writer. Common ways to escape are through the use of other mediums, and there aren't many of us who don't have a Netflix account these days! So here, make a list of all the books, movies, TV episodes, or songs that give you all the feels; the ones that are like old friends, warm hugs, and comforting memories; the ones which allow you to become completely immersed and forget everything else within seconds.

You need to silence that nagging brain sometimes and peel it all back to basics to remember what's really important. And that, by the way, is YOU. The next few pages are where you will find some escape routes.

MUSIC LIST

MOVIE LIST

TV SHOW LIST

BOOKS LIST

OTHER OPTIONS!

Compiled through my own personal experience, but also from suggestions offered by plenty of rejected authors I know, here are some ideas to help you overcome the emotional trauma that rejection can cause.

1. Read through this file
2. Take a few days to process a rejection and feedback
3. Go for a walk or run or bike ride
4. Start writing a new project
5. Read
6. Visit the bookstore
7. Go out for dinner
8. Clean the house
9. Make something, be creative in a different sense
10. Do some gardening
11. Rearrange your bookshelves (my personal fave!)
12. Head out into nature
13. Have a sleep
14. Have a good cry
15. Set new but achievable targets, nothing out of your control
16. Query another agent or editor
17. Do something you know you're good at
18. Talk to a friend
19. Research agent wish lists
20. Review a book you enjoyed
21. Engage in a random act of kindness
22. Exercise
23. Take a nice warm shower or bath
24. Close the windows and blinds and dance like nobody's watching
25. Colour a picture in one of those fancy adult coloring books
26. Play some video games
27. [Here](#)'s a great post by author Aimee Salter on turning rejections into motivational art posters. Own those rejections!

REWARDS!

What better way to get through the querying process than with treats and rewards!

Okay, you're rewarding yourself for having your work rejected – weird – but these days rejections are like badges of honour. They show the world you've been there, stepped out of your shell, and freaking did it; that you were brave enough to put your work into the hands of professionals and forward the career you've always dreamed of. Remember those people who've never even started writing their book? Yeah, that. So, HIGH FIVES ALL ROUND.

Idea! Make a chart or grid, or buy/download a template for a child's reward chart, and use colours and pictures; anything eye-catching and easy to update, something that shows your progress clearly.

Maybe you love chocolate or sweets or wine, cookies or cake? Well, stash some up, a box or bottle somewhere no one else in your home will think to look, and when that first rejection rolls in reward yourself. Five rejections = two chocolates! Ten rejections = two more chocolates! And onward.

Or perhaps you love heading to the beauty spa or the golf course. Every time you hit 10 rejections, that's \$10 in the spa/golf fund.

Love notebooks and pens? Me too! Start a stationery fund, where every time a rejection comes in you can stick a \$1 in the pot.

It doesn't matter what it is, but find that thing you love, that indulgence which makes you instantly better, and use it to help you survive.

LINKS TO UPLIFTING PEOPLE & BLOGS

When you just need to veg in front of the laptop, that's fine and normal and perfectly acceptable too, so don't feel guilty if that's all you want to do. While you're sitting there, here are some links that might help bring that smile back to your face, and determination back to your soul.

Writing Resources...

[Amy Trueblood](#)

Interviews with authors and agents about the querying process

[Writers Helping Writers](#)

Full of good resources all around for writers

[Query Shark](#)

Amazing and hilarious and educational

[Janice Hardy's Fiction University](#)

Writing resources

[Delilah Dawson](#)

A Twitter account filled with writing tips and advice

[WriteOnCon](#)

[Diana Urban](#)

Links to submission stories

Some other links to consider for writing advice [here](#)

Just for a laugh...

[Bored Panda](#)

[Cake Wrecks](#)

[It's Like They Know Us](#)

[Faces in Things](#)

Feel Good...

[Greater Good Magazine](#)

[Tiny Buddha](#)

[Feel Good Blog](#)

OTHER WAYS TO GET YOUR WORK OUT THERE

Yeah, most authors sign with agents through the good old-fashioned slush pile, aka traditional querying. BUT, this doesn't mean that in the meantime you can't get your work out there, in front of agents and editors, or perhaps to land a mentor or some editorial feedback. I say do it! Join in, because even if you don't get the success of being noticed or picked by the professionals, the communities these contests build on social media and behind the scenes are unrivalled. So many authors have found CPs and beta readers this way, other authors who support them on their journey, through ups and down, in sickness and in health, and so on. See your participation as making new friends as the ultimate goal, and the possibility of your work being noticed nothing more than a bonus.

Here's a non-exhaustive list of links to check out:

[**PitchWars**](#)

[**#PitMad**](#)

[**#IWSGPit**](#)

[**#PitDark**](#)

[**#DVPit**](#)

[**#SFFPit**](#)

[**#TeenPit**](#)

[**Revise and Resubmit**](#)

[**Author Mentor Match**](#)

[**Ink and Insights**](#)

[**WriteMentor**](#)

[**Nightmare on Query Street**](#)

[**Sun vs Snow**](#)

[**Query Combat**](#)

[**Picture Book Party**](#)

There are heaps more, so keep your ear to the ground and your eye to the sky! Or just ask around and someone will be sure to point you in the right direction.

NEW STORY IDEAS!

Yep, as mentioned earlier on, it's so good for your creativity and your skills, not to mention your chances of landing an agent and a book deal, to keep writing new things. And all those ideas, the, what might seem silly at the time, fleeting thoughts or conversations you have or witness, you should be writing them down! The dreams and nightmares, the daydreams in the shower or when you're driving, the unusual newspaper articles you read, or the spin-off scenarios you imagine after watching a TV show or reading a book, often in these are the embryos of our future stories. So, here is a page just for you to jot down some of those ideas, or at least the ones that excite you the most. Of course, use the rewards system from earlier to put some money in a jar and buy yourself a gorgeous new notebook to elaborate on these!

PLAN YOUR FUTURE BESTSELLERS HERE!

PHOTOS OF LOVED ONES

Me? My kids and dogs hold the power to instantly turn my day around. Okay, sometimes not in the best direction, I admit, but they ground me, show me happiness can be found in other places than my writing. So, whoever your special peeps are, I suggest pasting their lovely little faces right here, so when your insides are all twisted and your vision blurred with sadness and disappointment, you can come to this page and stare right into the eyes of those who love you and realize it ain't all that bad.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Hopefully you have someone who you know you can ring or email or meet for a cuppa when times get rough, when there's just no amount of chocolate or wine or Netflix that will nurse your broken heart. This page is where you must list their names and details.

And you know what? If you don't have anyone, then remember that I am always here for you. ALWAYS. So I'll just go right ahead and add my details below...

contact@katejfooster.com

@winellroad

AND OFF YOU GO

So that's it. I hope your rejection care package helps. I hope it brightens some of those days where you can't rationalize your thoughts and feelings. I hope it brings you ... hope.

I am always looking to add to this, so if you think I've left out anything important, want to make a suggestion for something that's worked for you, or suggest I change anything, you know where to find me.

This is about you, it's about us, it's about writers.

Go forth and conquer, you valiant soldier! I've got you covered.

GOOD LUCK!

A QUICK THANKS!

Many thanks to Judy Roberts and Bethany Simonsen for their help and suggestions, and a huge thank you to Katrin Dreiling for creating and sketching Reg the Rejection Pooch! And thank you to Christie Roome, Jemma Linden, Audra Atoche, and Julie Reeser for their suggestions.

And to you, the querying, submitting author. YOU are the ones who keep ME inspired. Your strength becomes my strength.

I hope to update and improve this package all the time, so if you have some great ideas you think I absolutely need to include (or holy revisions you find a typo!) please drop me a line.

