

Feeling Rejected ... Actually, no!

Originally written in 2015

Those of you who are regular readers of my blog will know that in the middle of April I talked about my options as a writer after receiving a glowing report from my submission to the Romantic Novelists' Association New Writers' Scheme. I discussed my thoughts on how I felt about the whole traditional publishing versus self-publishing dilemma. Today, roughly one month later I thought I'd give you an update and a little insight into where I am now.

As I mentioned in that blog I used my Easter holiday to come up with a battle plan for submissions to agents / publishers. I researched suitable avenues to explore, read submission guidelines, and looked at umpteen bits of information about each company and its agents, and for every submission I made my application as individual as I could make it. I followed their guidelines implicitly, wrote individual cover letters, and about four different synopses of varying lengths, pitches, blurbs, whatever was required. After a week of information gathering I sat down one day and submitted, in total to six agents and one publisher. I marked the dates in my diary and then I prepared to wait, for what I had been lead to believe would be a very long time, several months in some cases. I thought you might be interested to see the results.

Agent one, submitted on 8th April, response received on 24th April (2 weeks and two days later).

Agent two, submitted on 8th April, response received on 30th April (3 weeks, one day later).

Agent three, submitted on 8th April, response received on 11th May (4 weeks, five days later.)

Agent four, submitted on 8th April, response received on 16th April (1 week, one day later).

Agent five, submitted on 12th April, response received on 13th April (18 hours later).

Agent six and publisher one have yet to reply.

First of all, let me make it clear – I don't currently have five offers on the table, believe me if I had I would have been heard screaming across the land! The rejection emails were all very polite, had an air of the mass produced about them, but nevertheless were all very encouraging and appreciative.

I'm not surprised to have received these responses, I'm not suffering from sour grapes, feeling indignant or hard done by. I view rejection (harsh word!) as part

of my right of passage into the career I am now determined to follow, and I hope, as with all that I do, that I'm learning all the time. I am also fully appreciative of the fact that in the current climate getting a positive response from an agency is just below winning the lottery, however much I believe in the strength of my work. What I would like to comment on, however, and what surprised me most is the speed with which the responses came back.

Everything I've ever read about the submission process refers to the endless wait that authors face once their enquiry has gone off, and I honestly believed that this would be the case. However, the above agencies were all large and very well respected and I think a fairly representative sample, which leads me to believe that were I to submit to another six I might get a similar set of results. Now there could be many reasons for the above, the first of course being that my book was so spectacularly shite that listen hard and you could hear the agent's laughter as they read it, but to date throughout my whole journey all the comments I have received have been positive and I'm beginning to wonder whether the market is just at total and utter saturation point.

Several of the emails I received made reference to letting me have an early reply so that I could seek representation elsewhere and, while I'm very grateful for this sentiment, it did smack slightly of *actually we just want you out of our hair as soon as possible*, particularly the one which arrived less than 24 hours after submission. It felt just like a rather more polite version of an auto reply.

So all this led me to thinking, and I wonder whether the world of publishing really is changing. I've read a few articles recently about the change in perception of self-publishing, how far from being a rather militant subversive group these authors are now being viewed as no different to traditionally published. Certainly my readers never make reference to it. I don't think any of them give a fig who publishes the book they're reading, they just want it to be a good book. There is also the point that there are some phenomenal amazon rankings being seen from self-published authors. If perchance you happen to be an agent on the scout for some new talent, well perhaps you don't have to look too far... beats wading through a ton of submissions...

So, feeling rejected? No, far from it. I'm thrilled at the successes I've had so far with *Letting in Light*, charting at number 50 in romantic literary fiction, and what's more nothing gives me greater incentive than the experiences above. I'll keep going and doing the very best I can, because my future is in my hands, whether that's success with an agent, through my own success in self-publishing, or maybe one day, one could lead to the other. Who knows, just bring it on!