

REJECTED BESTSELLERS

ON THE REBOUND

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If you ever feel like you've made a wrong decision in life, just think about the 12 publishers who rejected *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* before finally the 8-year-old daughter of Bloomsbury's editor demanded to read the rest of the manuscript her father had shown her. Nevertheless, JK Rowling was advised to get a day job because the editor thought she had no future writing children's literature, not to mention that she was also asked to use her initials instead of full name because apparently the male readers would not read a female author's book. Look how the tables have turned.

It's miraculous how bestselling authors were initially demotivated by the harshest rejection letters, yet fought to get their works published. I shudder to think what children's literature would look like had Agatha Christie chosen to give up after struggling for five years to publish her first book; after William Shakespeare, she's the bestselling author of all time. Millions of

children's lives would be infinitely less magical with CS Lewis having given up on *The Chronicles of Narnia* after being rejected for years. Stephen King's *Carrie* was rejected no less than 30 times before being published. I'm sure the man often has a good laugh about that as he enjoys winter vacations at his huge waterfront mansion in Mexico.

Leonardo DiCaprio wouldn't be raising wine glasses as Jay Gatsby at pool parties if F. Scott Fitzgerald agreed with publishers that *The Great Gatsby* was "An absurd story as romance, melodrama or record of New York high life." HG Wells' *The War of the Worlds* hasn't been off print

ever since it came out in 1898 and the joke's on the publisher who said, "An endless nightmare. I think the verdict would be 'Oh don't read that horrid book.'" I have no clue how my life



would've turned out if I'd never read *Anne of Green Gables*, if LM Montgomery had given up on her brilliant debut novel which touched uncountable lives just as mine.

The stories of rejection are only sweet as long as they turn into success stories. JM Barrie, the creator of Peter Pan once said, "We are all failures – at least the best of us are." None of us would find our true calling if we never even try. Certainly

William Golding felt down as *The Lord of the Flies* was rejected as "An absurd and uninteresting fantasy which was rubbish and dull." But as his book landed on the list of the bestselling books of all time, who's having the last laugh? Not the misguided critic, of course. The charm of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* still thrives in literature and on the silver screen because he chose to reject the rejection letters.

So dear writers [reading this], bring out that carefully hidden manuscript you've put so much effort into. Get on to the battlefield. As JK Rowling puts it, "It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default."

Your work may be the next bestseller I'll be using as an example.

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MOVIE REVIEW

LIFE'S IRONIES IN THE KING OF COMEDY

SHUPROVO ARKO

Directed by: Martin Scorsese
 Starring: Robert De Niro, Jerry Lewis

I've been on sort of a Scorsese binge lately, going through the popular stuff first and then onto his lesser-known movies. If nothing else, this marathon has convinced me that Martin Scorsese is one of the greatest directors to have ever graced the medium.

When I first read the synopsis, The

King of Comedy seemed quite unlike the rest of the director's filmography, which features his trademark violent outbursts and excessive grandeur a la *Goodfellas* and *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

Nevertheless I fell in love with it and now I can't stop recommending it to every person I meet.

The plot follows Rupert Pupkin, a down-on-his-luck comedian trying to make it big, following in the footsteps of his idol Jerry Langford, a famous talk show host. Now the cliché thing to do

would be to get the underdog to beat all odds and win, but instead Scorsese shows the viewer how a 'real' underdog would fare in the ruthlessly competitive world of show business.

Rupert is obsessed with stardom to the point of being delusional, creating daydreams for himself where everyone adores him. Quickly you realize that he is borderline psychotic, more concerned with the applause he "deserves" instead of the jokes themselves. What makes the movie outstanding though is the career-best

performance by Robert De Niro, whose nuances and subtleties makes the already uncomfortably optimistic Rupert even more memorable, showcasing his incredible range as an actor.

Midway through the movie, Rupert mentions that he gets all the material for his jokes from the terrible life he had growing up. This to me is what *The King of Comedy* is all about, a study on how ironically funny life can get once you think about it for long enough. So be sure to watch it!