



In My Bottom Drawer

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MY BOTTOM DRAWER is more of a recycling bin than a bottom drawer. With the knowledge that no writing is ever wasted, my intention is for nothing to stay in it forever. Instead, it serves as a temporary storage space for stories that I plan to revise.

Sometimes these stories need to find the right editor, sometimes they need to be approached with fresh eyes and sometimes they need to change age-group or format entirely. Let me give you examples.

In 2006, I wrote my first manuscript. It was a poem called *Crocodiles Need Kisses Too* and was inspired by my eldest child. She was a baby at the time and woke me five to six times a night for feeding. Needless to say, I didn't sleep much so I used that time to write.

Because this was one of the first things I ever wrote, I tucked it in that bottom drawer believing it would never see the light of day. When it did come out of the drawer, the rejections it racked up convinced me that it needed to go back *in* the drawer. But then an editor came along who saw the potential in this poem and took a chance on it. It merely needed to arrive on just the right editor's desk at just the right time.

Another book I wrote also struggled to find a publishing home, so I tucked it in that bottom drawer for three years. Recently, I pulled it out at a writing retreat. Coming back to it with fresh eyes forced me to see that it needed a more exciting setting. I rewrote it and showed it to an editor.



He loved the new setting and suggested a new character as well. I'm now revising the manuscript again to resubmit to him. Fingers crossed!

My last example is of a manuscript that I wrote three different ways over ten years. Not three different drafts, but three different versions over numerous drafts. I'd started a fourth version but could sense that it wasn't working either. Part of my problem was that I adored the title but the humour in the title was more suited for an older audience. Once I realised that, I wrote the book for an older audience and the story came to life. It's still not ready to submit but it's working better as a story for an older age group.

Then, when I started a screenwriting degree, I rewrote this idea as a script. The script wrote itself. It became obvious to me that not only did this idea need to be written for an older audience but it needed to be written in a different format also.

I appreciate that the children's books I write are shorter and easier to recycle than the average book, but I believe that all work can be recycled — if only in part. It is often just a matter of storing it in that bottom drawer and coming back to it later.