Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

May 15, 2015 00:00 BST

Northumbria graduate set for ‘runaway’ success

A journalism graduate who was signed up by publishing giants HarperCollins just 18 months after graduation will release her debut novel this month.

Laura Salters, who studied Journalism and Media at Northumbria, will see her debut suspense novel, RUN AWAY, hit bookshelves on both sides of the Atlantic when it is published on 19 May.

The Berwick-upon-Tweed native took little time in putting pen to paper following her graduation in 2013 and describes the experience as a ‘dream

come true'. She said: "Once I left Northumbria, I started a job as a staff writer at a regional lifestyle magazine but the concept of writing a novel was still lurking in the back of my mind. I decided to just take a leap and as soon as I wrote my first paragraph, I was hooked. From then on, I spent my lunch breaks, evenings and weekends typing furiously into my laptop. I ended up finishing the whole 85,000-word novel in eight weeks."

Laura sent out her novel to literary agents here in the UK and to the USA, but had little expectation of success due to fierce competition within the industry. She said: "Most agencies receive 10,000+ submissions every year so when I was contacted by the wonderful Suzie Townsend, I couldn't believe it. She said she loved my book and wanted to offer me representation, and of course I jumped at the chance to work with her.

After just a few months, Suzie – whose agency also represents the likes of DIVERGENT author Veronica Roth - had sold world English rights to RUN AWAY to Harper Collins and Laura had landed a book deal with one of the biggest publishers in the world.

Laura said: '"It's a bit of a cliché to say it's a dream come true, but it really is. The phone call telling me I had an offer from Harper was completely surreal – in fact, I still can't believe it now. I've always been told you can't make it in publishing unless you're based in London, so it feels incredible to prove those people wrong."

Laura, who is currently working on another suspense novel as well as a young adult fantasy series set in a radically different Great Britain, believes her passion for writing was ignited when she opted to take a Creative Non-fiction module in her final semester at Northumbria.

"When studying this module, I really felt I could embrace my own writing style and this is when I really started to entertain the idea of trying my hand at writing fiction," she recalled. "My tutor at Northumbria, Dr Barbara Henderson, was so supportive. She spent time talking me through all my options.

"I'm still in touch with her to this day, and I know in my heart I'd never have made it to publication without her. She was so encouraging and helpful, and really made me believe it was something I could do."

Dr Barbara Henderson, former journalism lecturer at Northumbria, added: “I taught Laura on the journalism course for three years. She was always an exceptionally talented writer but particularly blossomed during the final year’s very popular creative non-fiction module. I was absolutely delighted – but not a bit surprised – to hear of her publishing deal and I feel sure she’s a name to watch in the writing world. I wish her all the success in the world.”

Suzie Townsend, of New Leaf Literary & Media Inc, added: "When I first read Laura's manuscript, I could not stop thinking about it. Long after I finished it, the characters stayed with me. I just knew I had to work with it.”

For more information about studying Journalism and Media at Northumbria, or to find out about our Creative Writing courses, register for Northumbria’s Open Days on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 June
at www.northumbria.ac.uk/openday

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go towww.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call 0191 227 4571.

Contacts

Rik Kendall
Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk
07923 382339

Andrea Slowey
Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436

James Fox
Press Contact
Student Communications Manager
james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk

Kelly Elliott
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk

Rachael Barwick
Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415

Ruth Lognonne
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
ruth.lognonne@northumbria.ac.uk
07971274253

Gemma Brown
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk