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Northumbria graduate becomes Sunday Times bestseller

Cally Taylor, who graduated from Northumbria in 1995, has seen her latest novel, top the Sunday Times bestseller chart in both England and Ireland, as well as the Amazon Kindle chart this month.

The psychological thriller actually draws on her time at Northumbria and features four female characters who meet at the University.

Cally describes her time at the University as three of the happiest years of her life. The writer said she had always known she wanted to be an author from a

young age. “When I was eight years old, I sent a ‘book’ I’d written to Penguin publishers and received my first ever rejection letter,” She recalls. “I wasn’t deterred though!”;

After winning a number of short story competitions over the years and having had work published in a variety of anthologies and literary magazines, Cally decided it was time to put pen to paper on her first novel.

“In 2006, one of my best friends from school died suddenly and I was reminded that life is short and that I didn’t have all the time in the world to write a novel,” Cally explained. “I had started and abandoned several novels before, but when something so unexpected happens, I, like many people do in such situations, re-evaluated my outlook on life. Time is precious.”

Three years after this, Cally’s first novel, a romantic comedy called *Heaven Can Wait*, was published by Orion and translated into 14 different languages. A second book followed in 2011, *Home for Christmas*, which has since been turned into a feature film by independent film company, Jumpstart Productions. However, it was while Cally was on maternity leave in 2012 that her writing took a twist into the world of psychological thrillers – drawing on her psychology degree from Northumbria. Writing as C L Taylor, her third novel, *The Accident*, was published by world renowned Avon Harper Collins and became one of the top ten bestselling debuts of 2014, according to *The Bookseller* magazine.

However, Cally’s greatest literary success so far has been her most recent novel, *The Lie* which was released on 23 April this year. The psychological thriller flew into the *Sunday Times* paperback bestseller chart just days after being published, where it shared the top 5 with literary legends such as Stephen King and Ian McEwan. It has also quickly climbed the Kindle charts, and has just reached the number one spot. The bestselling psychological thriller is also currently being reviewed by a range of film producers, with an interest in acquiring the film rights.

“Of course, I have my fingers crossed about *The Lie* possibly becoming a film, but the best part about being an author is holding my book in my hands,” she said. “That’s the biggest thrill of them all. I love getting emails from people who read and enjoyed my book too – knowing that something you wrote touched or entertained a total stranger is an amazing feeling.

“In *The Lie*, my four female characters meet as students at the Northumbria University. I drew on my own personal experiences at Northumbria, such as Fresher’s Week, to write certain scenes too.”

Evidently, Cally still has fond memories of her time at Northumbria. She said: “My three years at Northumbria were incredible, the most fun three years of my life and I’ve got the most wonderful memories of my time there. I was a member of the Drama Society at Northumbria and acted in several productions. I think that acting can really help an author become the characters they create, and make them more real.”

The future looks bright for Cally, with a further three-book deal with Avon, a HarperCollins imprint, and she is currently writing her third psychological thriller which will be published in April 2016.

She added: “My advice for aspiring writers is to write the book that keeps you awake at night. Write the story that you can’t get out of your head, that makes your heart beat faster. Write the story that you can put your heart into, the book you can’t stop thinking about.”

Northumbria offers a range of Creative Writing courses, both undergraduate and postgraduate. These programmes are designed not only to build on students’ passion for creative writing but also to enhance employability.

For more information about Cally’s writing, visit www.cltaylorauthor.com

To find out more about the courses we offer, 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 to www.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](tel:01912274571).

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