



Oct 03, 2023 10:34 BST

Northumbria student signs first major book publishing deal

An English Literature student at Northumbria University has had her mysterious and dark fantasy novel released by one of the leading publishing groups in Poland.

Third-year student Aneta Swoboda was approached by Uroboros – part of the Foksal Publishing Group – after her novel, *Pentagon Scholarship Mystic* was viewed a million times on the self-publishing online platform, Wattpad.

Aneta, who is from the Silesia region in Poland, began writing her novel in

the widely popular dark academia sub-genre, while she was still at high school. Dark academia books have a traditional academic setting, often with a gothic edge. One of the most well-known examples is the Harry Potter series of books, written by J. K. Rowling.

Aneta's debut novel was published in Poland in September this year and the 22-year-old took part in a launch event at a major bookstore in Warsaw, where she signed copies of her new book.

"The book launch was quite something," she said. "The publishers paid for me to stay in a hotel in Warsaw and covered all my transportation costs. The publisher took 70 books to put on the shelf that day and 50 of those sold on the first day – it was unbelievable.

"I can't believe it was the publisher that reached out to me, as opposed to me having to chase for a publishing deal. This is the first book of what I hope will become a series or a trilogy, so I'm overwhelmed that it's performed so well, so early on."

The book is written from the main character, Mystic Andrew's perspective. Mystic has accepted a scholarship to the prestigious Dirvenly High School, after the place had originally been offered to her recently deceased sister. Mystic hopes to learn more about her sister's tragic death while attending this gothic and magical boarding school, hidden among the forests. Lonely and full of doubts, Mystic begins her training to take part in the inter-school Senshuken championship and proves to everyone that, like other talented students, she belongs there.

Among the many secrets that Dirvenly High hides, one is the key to the events that destroyed the order of the supernatural world hundreds of years ago. When Mystic begins to experience dangerous accidents involving magical forces, she already knows that this school will change her life forever.

While Aneta's novel is available solely in Polish, it is hoped to be translated into other languages in the upcoming year and sold beyond the major bookstores in Poland. Aneta says she would like to perhaps stay on and study for a Masters degree after completing her undergraduate degree at Northumbria and described what she has learnt during her time at the University as "invaluable."

“My lecturers have really enabled me to be a critical thinker when it comes to literature,” she said. “This has proved important while I have been part of panel discussions promoting my new book. I have felt confident in answering the questions asked of me and it has improved my ability to breakdown the story and explain the narrative.”

Dr David Stewart, Associate Professor of Romantic Literature at Northumbria, and one of Aneta’s course tutors, said: “Aneta is a highly gifted student who is always curious about literature. While it’s no surprise that she has produced such an engaging novel, success on this scale so early in her career is extraordinary. Aneta is an intelligent, thoughtful writer, and I’m sure this will be the first of many wonderful books she will write.”

Aneta’s novel can be purchased via [Polish online bookstore Empik](#).

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