

Catalyst Profile
Catherine Scully

For Catherine Scully, who graduated in 2009, haunting her readers' imaginations is all in a hard day's work. As a young adult horror, fantasy, and science fiction writer, this WCU alumna has built her career on all things sinister and diabolical.

Her middle-grade book, "The Sparrow Curse," turns paranormal researching on its head through featuring a pair of ghost hunting children. Though the piece was recently picked up by The Seymour Agency, a New York City publishing firm, this novelist got her first big break in the Whee.

While here at WCU, Scully threw herself into writing. As an English major with a professional writing concentration, she took creative writing and literature courses with professors such as Pamela Duncan and Brent Kinser. Beyond the classroom, she served as an entertainment journalist for the *Western Carolinian*, a nonfiction editor for the *Nomad*, and a script supervisor for the film club. In 2008, she even scored a creative services internship with Cartoon Network.

Her years of studying writing were "invaluable." After graduating with honors in 2009, Scully adapted a script written for Terry Curtis Fox's Writing the Television course into a full-length novel. This manuscript would eventually be picked up by Donadio & Olson Inc., a 50-year-old literary agency that represents authors like Mario Puzo and Chuck Palahniuk.

"My little horror television script that was a homework assignment for my last semester of college became the novel that landed a literary agent," said Scully. "I finished what I started and had the courage to query and network."

The networking did not stop there. In the past six years, Scully has created storyboards for Ydraw, edited manuscripts for Cornerstones Literacy Consultancy, and acted as a brand communications manager for Micromeritics Instrument Corporation.

Now, she spends her time illustrating world maps, chapter headings, and concept art. She has designed book covers for Spencer Hill Press Middle Grade, the most recent featuring a menacing human skeleton with a fractured cranium.

"I'm a published illustrator with Simon and Schuster from a world map I did for Claire Legrand's young adult book 'Winterspell,'" said Scully. "And I have had multiple illustrations published in anthologies by REUTS press."

As the young adult editor for the Horror Writer Association, Scully also runs a blog titled "Scary Out There: What is Horror in Young Adult Fiction?" And in 2014, she was offered the chance to explain her love affair with horror in an interview with CNN.

Though her passion for “all things that go bump in the night” has earned her national recognition, Scully accredits much of her success to WCU’s English Department.

“So many of my teachers in my creative writing classes helped guide me,” said Scully. “They pushed me to go further than I knew I could.”