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### After Popularity on Online Writing Platform, GWU Alumna Will Publish First Novel

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BULLDOG PROFILES

# After Popularity on Online Writing Platform, GWU Alumna Will Publish First Novel

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON APRIL 27, 2021

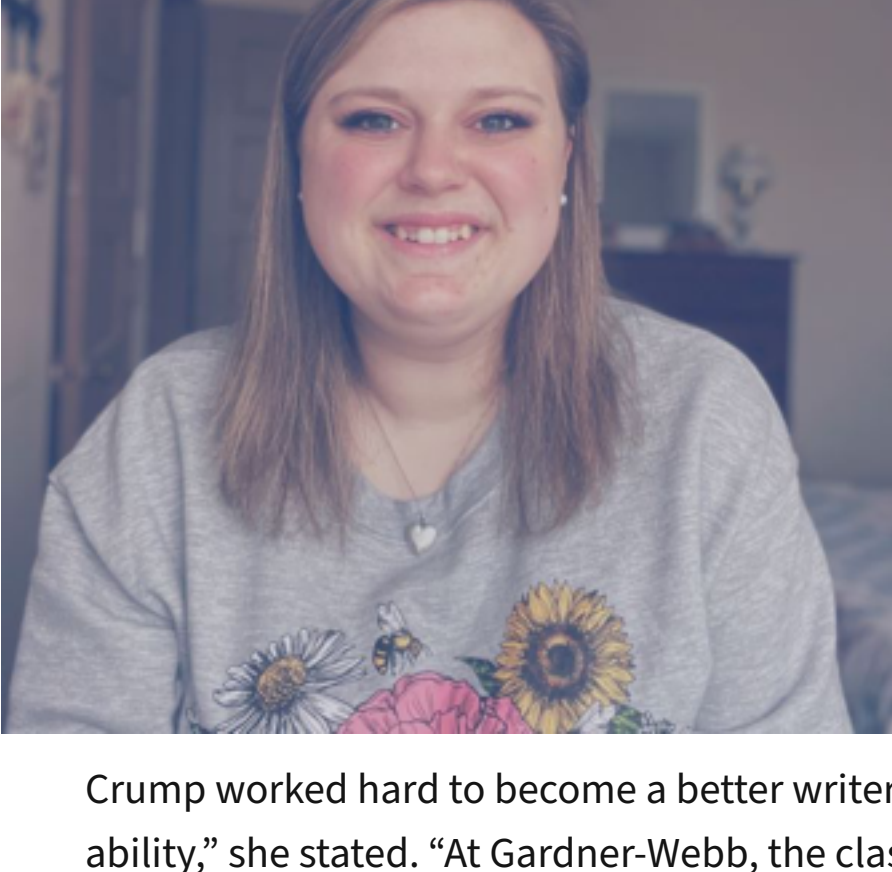


## Brianna Joy Crump Says English Professors Gave Her Tools to Accomplish her Goals

In the fall of 2022, Brianna Joy Crump, a Gardner-Webb University alumna, will accomplish a goal she's worked toward since middle school. Her book, "The Cullid Crown," will be published by Wattpad Books. Crump received undergraduate and graduate degrees in English from GWU. In 2017, she earned her bachelor's with an emphasis in creative writing and in 2020, she completed her master's with a concentration in writing. She is also employed as residence hall director for Decker Residence Hall.

A Raleigh native, Crump grew up reading Harry Potter, or listening to her dad read the Potter stories to her. "After that I was hooked on anything fantasy," Crump said. "The book that drove me to try writing my own was 'Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Darkside' by Beth Fantaskey. I remember checking it out of the public library in the eighth or ninth grade and really liking it. That was when vampires were all the rage."

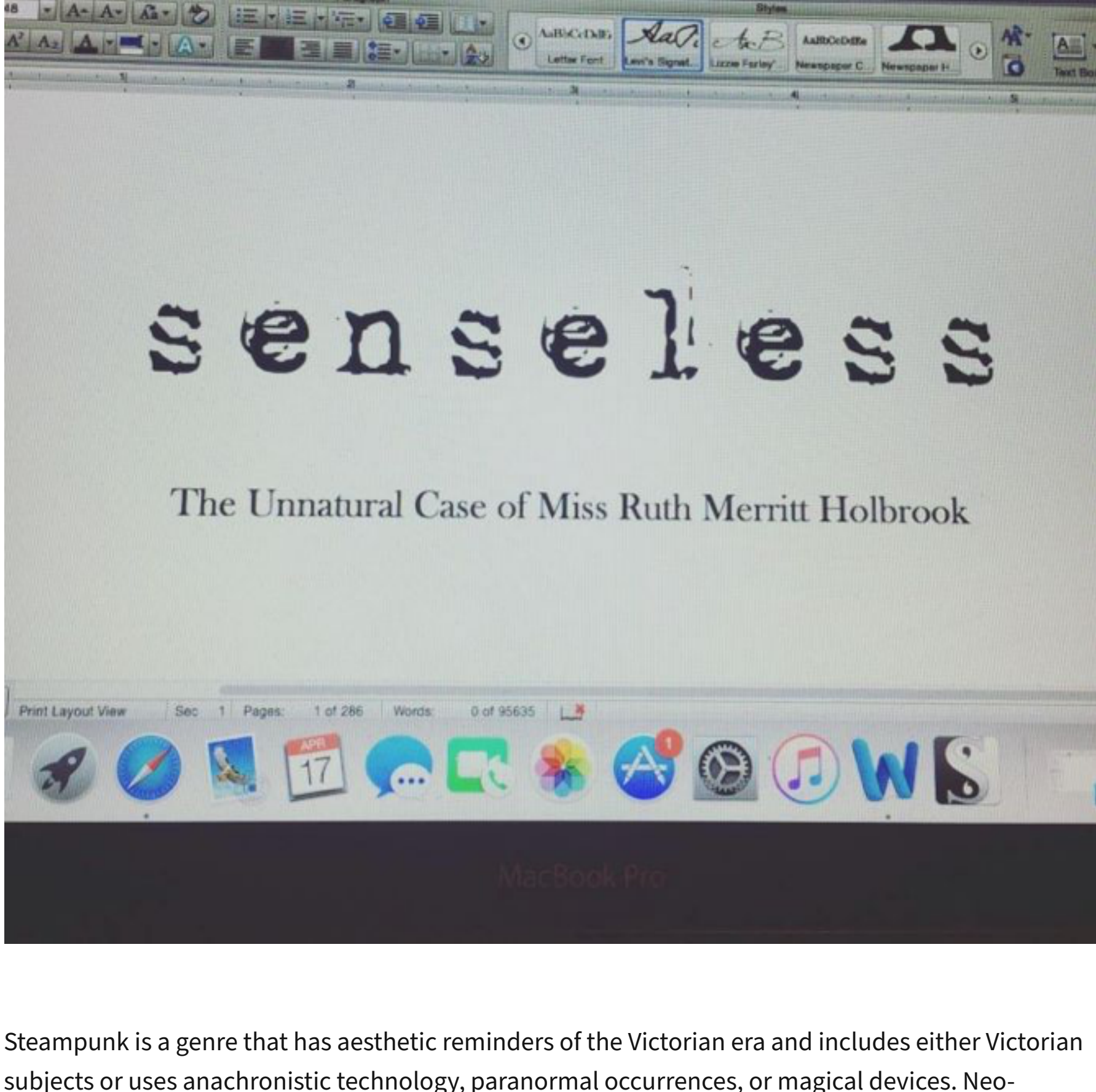
She was around 15 years old and thought, "I can do that." She started writing young adult fantasy, which she also enjoys reading. Some of her favorite authors are Sarah J. Maas, Shelby Mahurin, and Deborah Harkness. Although she wrote stories, Crump didn't become a serious writer until near the end of her first semester at Gardner-Webb.



"In November 2013, I participated in National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo)," she explained. "The goal of NaNoWriMo is to challenge yourself to write 50,000 words in a month. Dr. (Shea) Stuart in the GWU English department challenged her English 101 class to join the competition and try to write at least 7,000 words in the month. Her class was my first step into the English department and my first real attempt at writing a book. I wrote over 7,000 words the first weekend in November and finished the month having written over 58,000 words. I've been writing books ever since."

Crump worked hard to become a better writer. "They always believed in me and in my writing ability," she stated. "At Gardner-Webb, the class sizes are perfect, and the opportunities are endless. It's a place where the professors and staff truly care about you as an individual. At GWU, you are more than just a number, you're the future. The people here are invested in helping you to become the best you can be."

Her professors were even willing to allow her to complete a thesis that matched her interests. "I'd spent four years learning the craft of creative writing, but there wasn't an avenue of academic thesis that would really display all that I'd learned," Crump asserted. "With that in mind, my professors let me do something totally new to the English department. I wrote an academic thesis that was a genre study on neo-Victorian and Steampunk literature and, to go along with it, I wrote a full-length novel. My entire idea was to show that the two genres could be combined. I proved this by writing my own neo-Victorian/Steampunk novel."



Steampunk is a genre that has aesthetic reminders of the Victorian era and includes either Victorian subjects or uses anachronistic technology, paranormal occurrences, or magical devices. Neo-Victorian is a story that is set in the Victorian period (1837-1901) and includes representation of marginalized characters or unheard voices from the period. "I combined these two genres by writing a book about someone living in a private asylum in 1881 (Victorian setting)," Crump explained. "My main character is a young woman who is accused of murdering her entire family. She has been told she is mentally ill (marginalized character/unheard voice). The book uses paranormal occurrences because my main character cannot feel pain and (for the sake of protecting the plot twist, I'll say that) not everyone in it is human."

While this project gave her more practice, she also believes it's the reason her book is getting published in 2022. She uploaded the novel from her thesis to [Wattpad](#), which is a reading and writing website. "The easiest way to explain Wattpad is to imagine YouTube but for books," Crump observed. "Anyone can log onto Wattpad and start writing a book. Wattpad has an area on the website where writers can draft their own work, as well as multiple different ways for readers to discover books published on the site. When I uploaded the book I wrote for my thesis, called 'Senseless,' it gained traction on the website and, I think, was ultimately what drove readers to look at my profile and check out my ongoing project at the time, 'The Cullid Crown.'"

Book one in "The Cullid Crown" has over 826,000 reads; another book in the series has over 200,000 reads. The interest caught the attention of Wattpad Headquarters and they contacted Crump about publishing the book with Wattpad Books. "If my professors hadn't believed in me and given me a chance to do something different for my thesis, I probably wouldn't be where I am today," Crump said. "I am a better writer, because I was challenged to write outside of my comfort zone. While the book I wrote for my thesis project is not the book getting traditionally published, it was an important step in that journey. I will forever be thankful that my professors let me do something a little different for my thesis."

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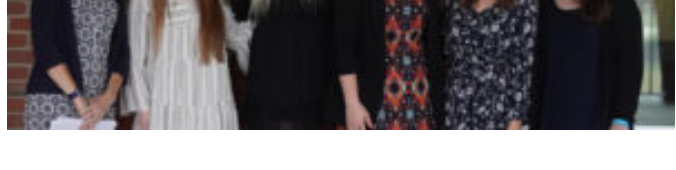
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