

## Debut by Local Novelist is Award Winner

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

First kisses, layers of lip-gloss, endless music and a weekend without parents might be considered a quintessential part of being a teenager. A local author has captured that whirlwind of emotions and constantly changing landscape of relationships and written about it in a fresh, engaging way that is earning her debut novel accolades and awards.

Ivy Cayden, 38, is the author of "Everything All At Once" her first novel in the planned multi-book series Chorduroys and Too Many Boys. The book tells the story of Kila Lorens and a group of friends who navigate the ups and downs of crushes, hormones and high school.

"At its heart, it's a story about the things that matter: family, friendship, love, and dreams," Ivy said. "There's a moment in every teenager's life where things morph from ordinary to enthralling. 'Everything All At Once' captures that moment, as it unfolds a little differently for each of the main characters in the story on one life-altering, parentless weekend."

The novel is billed as one for the YA (Young Adult) crowd, but Ivy says it has a wider audience.

"I initially categorized it for readers



Cambrian author Ivy Cayden with Royal Dragonfly Book Awards for her first novel "Everything All at Once." Photo submitted.

ages 15 and up, but I have since had some parents reach out to relay that their 12-year-old children also enjoyed it. (The first book is rather wholesome and only includes kissing.)

"I've also had many, many adult readers say the story swept them right back to the excitement and nerves of their own teen years. I love when readers

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reach out to me via social media (or via their book reviews) to share their personal experiences with the book. It's still so surreal to me."

For curious readers ready to start the Chorduroys and Too Many Boys series, the addition of the letter "h" in the title and why this particular fabric means so much to Kila Lorens is revealed in the second chapter. The "And Too Many Boys" part will click with readers less than halfway through the story.

Combining her love for both writing and music, four years ago Ivy launched My Multi-Track Mind, an online music blog dedicated to rising indie artists. On the site (<https://mymulti-trackmind.com/>), she covers new releases, posts in-depth artist interviews, and shares moody playlists.

Fans of soundtracks can heave a sigh of relief, "Everything All at Once" also comes with a suggested soundtrack created by the author on Spotify. It features a 67-song playlist that leans towards indie-alternative but there's also some dream pop, classic rock, 90s throwbacks, hip-hop, and even a touch of folk music.

"My characters are just as music-obsessed as I am, and the series needed to reflect that," Ivy said. "The idea for the first book's playlist existed long before I had written any of the story. In my mind, I had already associated certain songs with certain scenes. Those songs acted as a gateway from my world into the story's world, and I wanted my readers to have access to that gateway, too. I wanted the book's playlist to honor and mimic the intense, kaleidoscopic emotional range of teenagers."

All of the song names appear in bold print inside the story so they stand out. There is also a section at the front of the book entitled "All About The Playlist," that tells readers where to find the playlist and provides some easy-to-follow instructions for listening to the songs while you read along. It should be noted that the novel stands on its own and the music is another dimension but isn't mandatory to relating to the story.

Although Ivy is a relatively new resident in Cambria, her love for the area goes further back. She grew up in a "quaint" coastal town in Rhode Island where she also earned a bachelor's degree in business from Roger Williams University. Shortly after college, she made the trek across country where she was recruited corporate-side of the film industry in Los Angeles.

"On the weekends, I'd adventure up the coast—and that's how I first discovered Cambria," Ivy said. "I visited as often as possible and always stayed at the Pelican Inn right on Moonstone. (The room I preferred had a cozy window seat, where I clocked lots of hours writing.) It wasn't long until I found myself visiting Cambria so much that it made sense to rent a small studio on Lodge Hill. Living in Cambria, even just part-time, felt more like home to me than any place I had ever lived. In 2017, I was able to wave a warm goodbye to LA and establish full-time residency in a little cottage here in East Village."

That little cottage is where work is underway on the second book in the Chorduroys and Too Many Boys series. Spoiler alert, the first book ends with a cliffhanger, so more reading is in store for fans—Ivy hopes that remains true for years to come.

"Honestly, it might sound strange, but my goal is simply to keep writing," she said. "I already have an idea for a second series after Chorduroys And Too Many Boy is finished—and I hope I'm still writing and releasing stories well into my golden years."

With the list of awards for her first novel growing, things look promising for a lengthy career as a novelist. The list of honors includes: Gold Award Recipient, Mom's Choice Awards, Readers'

Favorite 5-Star Seal, three first place awards from the 2020 Royal Dragonfly Book Awards, the 2020 American Fiction Awards Finalist, Coming of Age and the 2019 Best Book Awards Finalist, Fiction: Young Adult among others.

Being honored with prestigious accolades has made Ivy even more dedicated. She is working on the second novel in the series and is shooting for a 2022 release date.

"I've envisioned the whole story as a vibrant saga that follows the tight-knit group of teens into adulthood," said Ivy. "Regardless of the total number of books, the Chorduroys And Too Many Boys series will continue to feature Kila Lorens, her brother Ethan, and all of their friends. And each book will always have its own intricate playlist."

As advice to all aspiring novelists out there, Ivy suggests picking a topic you are passionate about because the time you will spend with your characters is likely longer than you could imagine. Perhaps more importantly, she says, "Stay true to the story you want to tell. And tell your story the way you want to tell it—regardless of whatever "rules" you might be bending or breaking.

"Truthfully, it's still setting in that I've released my first book. I'm grateful for each person who has read it, and I'm humbled by all the unexpected accolades it's received to date. If you are thinking of writing a book (or starting any creative endeavor), dare yourself to do it and don't look back."

In addition to being sold on major online retailers and in indie bookstores via IndieBound.org, signed copies "Everything All at Once" are currently available in four SLO County small businesses:

- \*STASH Local Goods in Cambria
- \*Smoobage in Morro Bay
- \*Volumes of Pleasure Bookshoppe in Los Osos
- \*General Store Paso Robles.

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NOTHING  
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YOU.  
NOTHING.  
NOTHING AS  
IN ZERO,  
TRUE ZERO  
NO DECIMAL."

-KILA  
LORENS

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