

WRITING

In the Eyes of 12 Year Old Ivy Anderson

I find writing the beginning of any story the most challenging, as it is the most important aspect of your story; the easiest to ruin as you are gifted with only one first impression, thus setting a stage for the rest to come. If you don't reel someone in immediately, they are most likely to drop the book and hop on their phone. It is even more challenging nowadays, with the rivalry of technology over literature.

So, the question is 'How DO you start your story?' This is what I asked myself when Mum told me I had the opportunity of writing this article for Top Wire. What better way to solve this equation than to simply begin by writing about the debate. Hi, my name is Ivy May Anderson, and I am the youngest in the Anderson family, here on Cymbric Vale Station, north east of Broken Hill. I am 12 years old and have recently finished my first semester at Boarding School in Adelaide and am here to share my experiences and opportunities that came with that semester, as well as talk about my experience as a young writer in the outback.

WRITING

From when I began to learn how to read, I became a bibliophile (*someone who loves books*). After self-publishing a novella at the age of 9, writing drafts of the following trilogy, beginning a new series in which I work on today, and attending many writing workshops, conventions/festivals, competitions, media, and seizing every writing opportunity given (more so with in the past few months within boarding), I have devoted hours to this passion and wish to spread it to more country kids like me from rural areas where the passion isn't so common. It was never: "I wonder what I'll be when I grow up?"; It was always just: "I'm going to be an author when I grow up."

One of the top toughest hurdles for getting into the writing game and exceeding my dreams was attending school via distance education. It was a challenge to pursue my passion from our little school room on the property and Mum and I knew that for me to get anywhere, we were going to have to dig a bit deeper to find an external learning source. In doing this, I began attending a writing workshop via zoom classes that I continued to advance from for a year. They felt useless at the time but are DEFINITELY worth it looking back now. I appeared on the Barrier Truth, and we also discovered and entered two writing competitions, and applied for a job on a children's magazine. Although I failed a lot, (*and I mean a LOT*) I used each mistake and failure as a ladder step to get better and keep going.

Another barrier that I have found and I suspect more endured, is the stereotype of bush kids. Motorbikes or horses? Take your pick. Growing up, it was harder to find anyone to want to talk about authors, or music, or even just books! I often felt like an outsider, or as if I were doing something wrong because I wasn't super passionate about things like motorbikes or horses. Everyone should know that one is perfectly fine as a person and there is nothing wrong with what you are passionate about. You'll eventually find your people and your place, as I did and will continue to do through my years at Loreto.

A primary example of how life-changing Boarding in Year 7 has already been would easily be the 'Dream Big: Write Now Festival'. Wowowow. A day I could relive for the rest of my life! One morning in the student bulletin during Homeroom, it mentioned applications for a Writing Festival in the Adelaide Convention Centre and South Australian Library. Very willingly I applied, and nearly fell off my seat when I saw I had been accepted. Thus, mid-May, myself and about a dozen more girls venturing for their careers hopped on a bus and attended the festival of our dreams.

I cannot ramble on all day, thus, to summarise: We attended our preference workshops, viewed and entered incredible old buildings such as the Mortlock Chamber (my heaven) and met half a dozen authors whom had amazing advice to share! Throughout the duration of the festival, I got amazing advice and even received a signed copy of 'Sensitive' by the incredible Allayne L. Webster, whom I later told about my novel. I thought I was dreaming, so pinched myself to make sure I wasn't.

OPPORTUNITIES AND BOARDING

I encourage to investigate online things like the writing workshops I mentioned earlier, for whatever your child may be interested in. In late

2021, I developed a curiosity to look into Violin. I thought it would be impossible until I would be sent off to Adelaide. Instead, I learned Violin for over a year via zoom classes, and now take once-a-week face-to-face lessons. Thanks to the widespread opportunities Boarding School now offers, I was able to do what I could have never imagined myself doing, for example, mentoring a Year 3 Strings concert, and playing in front of over 1000 people in the Adelaide Convention Centre for Loreto Colleges' Performing Arts Festival in Term 2.

If you told School of the Air Ivy what Year 7 Ivy was up to she would call you a headless chicken! As mind-blowing as Loreto is, of course Boarding comes with sacrifices. Homesickness is an immediate answer; Weekends can feel dull at times. Culture shock is one that I've struggled with a lot; the different people, hobbies, trends, clothing, language, setting, etc, etc can be overwhelming and extremely lonely.

I've certainly learned to appreciate home and everything about it when I'm there; from the views, the peace and quiet, to even my jeans and caps. Another form of loneliness comes from feeling outcast by the day students. The majority of girls attended the junior school together and are close. I have been very lucky, as I find myself blessed with an amazing friend group I never DREAMED of having, and a beautiful boarding community (*It's like having 52 sisters!*). Therefore, when you compare all these negative aspects, they cannot fathom the outweighing positives it brings.

Thanks for the read, and I hope to see many bush kids pursuing their passions and dreams.

Ivy May Anderson
Cymbric Vale



Judy Newton

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

*Congratulations to Judy Newton
for the recognition of her tireless
work for ICPA.*

*She was awarded Federal Life
Membership at the recent Federal
Conference in Darwin and we thank
her for her continued contributions.*

