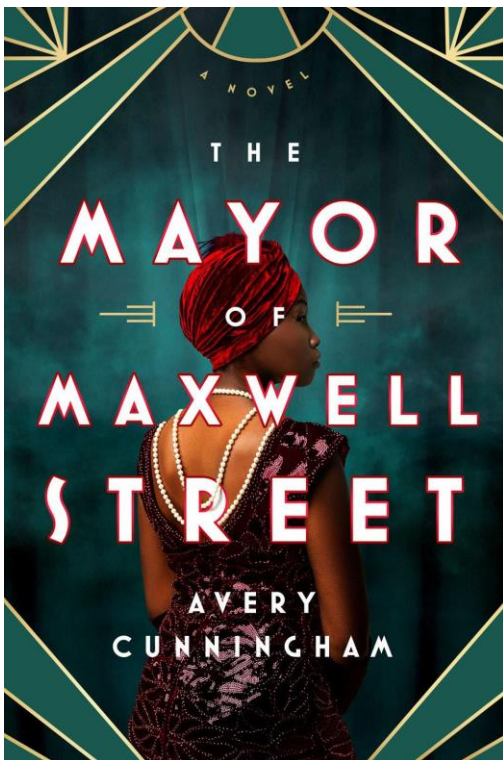
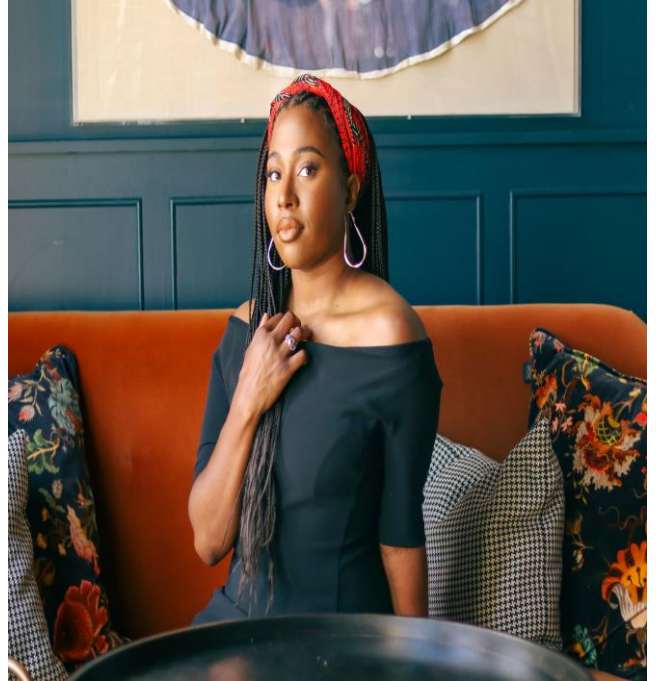


# Avery Cunningham

**Avery Cunningham** is a resident of Memphis, Tennessee, and a 2016 graduate of DePaul University's Master of Arts in Writing & Publishing program. She has over a decade of editorial experience with various literary magazines, small presses, and bestselling authors. Avery grew up surrounded by exceptional African Americans who strove to uplift their communities while also maintaining a tenuous hold on prosperity in a starkly segregated environment. The sensation of being at once within and without is something she has grappled with since childhood and explores thoroughly in her work of historical fiction. When not writing, Avery is adventuring with her Bernese Mountain Dog, Grizzly, and wading waist-deep in research for her next novel. She aspires to tell the stories of complex characters at the fringes of history fighting for their right to exist. *The Mayor of Maxwell Street* is her debut novel



**When a rich Black debutante enlists the help of a low-level speakeasy manager to identify the head of an underground crime syndicate, the two are thrust into the dangerous world of Prohibition-era Chicago.**

*The year is 1921, and America is burning. A fire of vice and virtue rages on every shore, and Chicago is its beating heart.*

Nelly Sawyer is the daughter of the “wealthiest Negro in America,” whose affluence catapulted his family to the heights of Black society. After the unexpected death of her only brother, Nelly becomes the premier debutante overnight. But Nelly has aspirations beyond society influence and marriage. For the past year, she has worked undercover as an investigative journalist, sharing the achievements and tribulations of everyday Black people living in the shadow of Jim Crow. Her latest assignment thrusts her into the den of a dangerous vice lord: the so-called Mayor of Maxwell Street.

Born in rural Alabama to a murdered biracial couple, Jay Shorey knows firsthand what it means to be denied a chance at the American dream. When a tragic turn of fate gave Jay a rare path out, he took it without question. He washed up on Chicago’s storied shores and forged his own

way to the top of the city’s underworld, running Chicago’s swankiest speakeasy, where the rich and famous rub elbows with gangsters and politicians alike.

When Nelly’s and Jay’s paths cross, she recruits him to help expose the Mayor and bring about lasting change in a corrupt city. But Jay also introduces a whole new world to Nelly, one where her horizons can extend beyond the confines of her ivory tower. Trapped between the monolith of Jim Crow, the inflexible world of the Black upper class, and the violence of Prohibition-era Chicago, Jay and Nelly work together and stoke the flames of a love worth fighting for.

Debut author Avery Cunningham’s stunning novel is at once an epic love story, a riveting historical drama, and a brilliant exploration of Black society and perseverance when the ‘20s first began to roar.