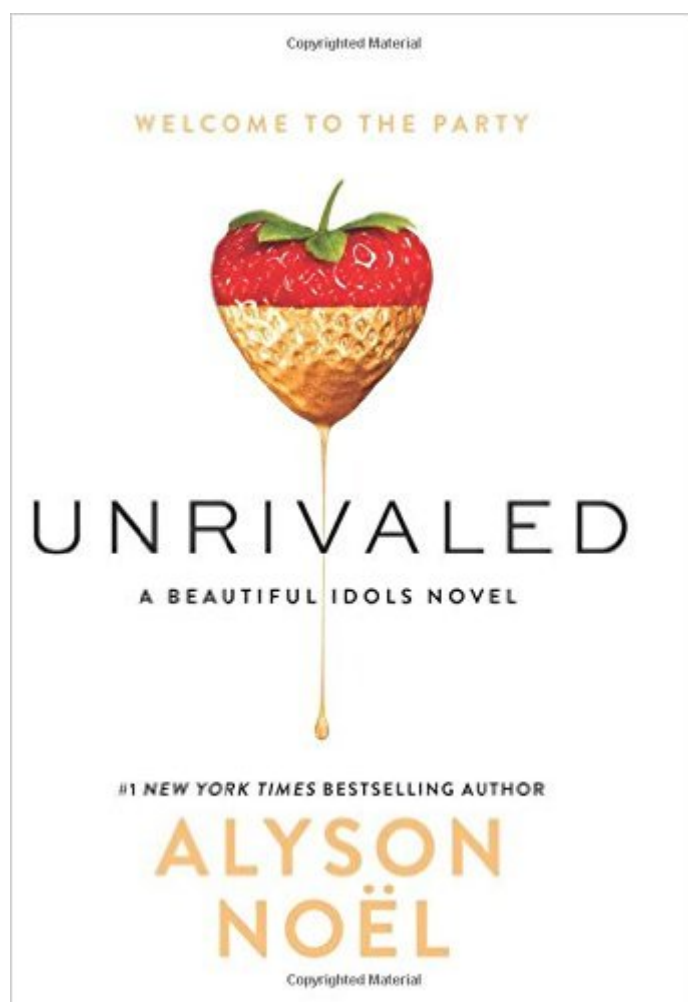


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Unrivaled (Beautiful Idols)



Synopsis

From #1 New York Times bestselling author Alyson Noë comes the first book in the Beautiful Idols series. With mystery, suspense, and an insiders-only look at Los Angeles that echoes Gossip Girl's racy and real New York, fans of Pretty Little Liars and readers who crave pulse-pounding romance will love Unrivaled. Everyone wants to be someone. Layla Harrison wants to be a reporter. Aster Amirpour wants to be an actress. Tommy Phillips wants to be a guitar hero. But Madison Brooks took destiny and made it her own a long time ago. She's Hollywood's hottest starlet, and the things she did to become the name on everyone's lips are merely a stain on the pavement, ground beneath her Louboutin heel. That is, until Layla, Aster, and Tommy find themselves with a VIP invite to the world of Los Angeles's nightlife and lured into a competition where Madison Brooks is the target. Just as their hopes begin to gleam like stars through the California smog, Madison Brooks goes missing. . . . And all of their hopes are blacked out in the haze of their lies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Noel's book brings us into the dark, sexy underworld of L.A.'s club scene. Far from being cardboard "beautiful people", her characters are nuanced--from the ice queen with the mysterious past, to the struggling musician with an estranged father, to the aspiring journalist who finds herself writing tabloid sleaze just to get by...The book ends with an OMG moment (sorry, no spoilers here!). You're gonna love it!!

Following three teens through the glamorous, gritty world of the Hollywood nightlife, where they compete for a spot as a club promoter, Alyson Noel weaves a fast-paced, mysterious tale that was hard to put down. I loved *Unrivaled*! Not only did it bring back some fun memories from when I was an eighteen-year-old experiencing the Hollywood clubs for the first time, but it captured the essence of what lurks underneath all the glitz and glam of a world most people see through rose-tinted glasses. The beginning of the novel was a slow burn, as it eased me into what it's like in Hollywood for three teens trying to accomplish their goals in a world where it's so easy to get lost among the masses. The characters of Tommy, Layla, and Aster drew me in and refused to let me go. I felt for their fears and hoped they accomplished aspirations and their character driven stories like this one that has me turning the pages at lightning speed. Out of all three characters, I most related to Layla in that she had a hard time fitting in a world she had always been looking through the window on, but I loved Tommy the most, because he spent the time pulling back the layers of the other characters to really learn who they were. As for Aster, I had a love-hate relationship with her the whole time, but by the end, I felt for her. I can't wait to see where this story goes! I highly recommend *Unrivaled* for people who love young adult contemporary, celebrity novels, mystery, and of course those who like to see a little more grittiness among the glam. *I received this book as a gift.*

Unrivaled sees four teens compete in what can be described as the ultimate and most extreme job interview ever! If you combine a teen version *The Apprentice*, with *Pretty Little Liars*, *The Hills* and *Gossip Girl* you still wouldn't be all that close to the premise of the book but you'd be heading in the right direction. Layla, Aster, Tommy and Madison all have very different motivations for entering the show, but they all want to make it in Hollywood and keep their fame. I'm going to admit that I didn't necessarily like all of the characters and did find some of the backstabbing *Made in Chelsea* style dramas a little much at times, BUT I did really enjoy *Unrivaled* and found myself getting sucked into the mystery. I did get the song *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* stuck in my head reading the book, and for somebody not all that into reality TV, I enjoyed seeing them battle for the club promotion job and recognition. Alyson Noel does a great job conveying the fickle nature of fame and the lengths people will go to not only achieve celebrity status but also to maintain it. I particularly enjoyed the structure of *Unrivaled* and felt the mystery/thriller element really helped keep the plot intriguing so it wasn't all teen drama...I received a review copy

Alyson Noel is one of my favorite authors so I was so excited to get my hands in the first of her new LA-based YA series. The characters are very interesting and engaging, and I was quickly and thoroughly sucked into their nightclub promotion contest. Beware, *Unrivaled* is very hard to put down! Can't wait for the next *Beautiful Idols* novel!

This review originally appeared on stayontheblog.wordpress.com. Fame, fortune and power. These mark the boundaries of who's in and who's out of the gritty world of the Los Angeles club scene in Alyson Noel's newest novel *Unrivaled*, the first in her *Beautiful Idols* series. The novel follows the interconnected stories of three teens aspiring for fame, fortune and power, each of them finding themselves competing in a club promoting contest for connections and the promise of a life-changing cash prize for one of the winners. Layla dreams of becoming a reporter and needs the money for journalism school. Tommy dreams of being a musician and needs the money to get on his feet and his career on track. Aster dreams of becoming an actress and escaping the clutches of her overprotective family who wants her to marry and start a family instead of a career. However, the competition is cutthroat and club owner Ira Redman has more than a few deceitful tricks up his sleeves. Besides fighting each other for gets at their clubs, each of the teens also find themselves entangled in the life of Madison Brooks, the top starlet in the Hollywood circles. When her life begins to spiral out of control, Layla, Tommy and Aster find themselves caught in Madison's web. And then, one night, she vanishes. The first novel in a new series presents several challenges, the first being the necessity of backstory and set-up. And that's exactly what the first hundred pages of this novel felt like. The opening chapters are dry and info-dumpy. A prologue sets up the mystery of Madison's past and disappearance. Then reader learns about Aster's controlling family, Layla's inherently flawed relationship with hot surfer Mateo and her financial pinch, and Tommy's crumbling dream after leaving his Mid-American hometown. Details are given about the contest and the initial hostility between the main characters is established. This set-up is important, but it drags and comes off as boring. However, it's worth sticking with the book because once I stuck with it, I wasn't able to put this book down. As the stakes for the contest are raised and the characters find themselves deeper and deeper into the world that Noel describes with exceptional skill and detail, this book becomes un-put-downable. It became the book I wanted it to be when I first heard about it, full of suspense, twists and intrigue. None of the characters are particularly likable, but all of them are simultaneously flawed and relatable. The challenges to Layla's journalistic integrity spoke to the difficulties of being a young writer and having to

choose between clicks or conscience. Tommy's aspirations to be a musician felt somewhat underdeveloped, but the fact that is a series leave hope this will be remedied in future books. Aster was perhaps the most developed character in the novel. At some points, her wild story overpowered the others. Madison's character felt less one-dimensional than most Hollywood actresses in YA books, but the hints at her past life weren't enough to make her completely three-dimensional. Once again, that's a problem that can be solved through the series as a whole. Only time will tell, but there is certainly potential in this series. The plot twists were believable and interesting in this slow, but overall decently paced novel. Ira Redman is perhaps one of the seediest club owners I've ever encountered in a book, but his wit and complexity add depth to the novel. More development of relationships with secondary characters like Layla's dad, Aster's younger brother Javen and Madison's PR flame Ryan Hawthorne are also needed, but once again, these are issues that can be addressed in future books. Unrivaled just left me wanting more by the end. Speaking of endings, the ending of this novel left me on the edge of my seat and wishing for the next book just to find out what happens. The fast-paced turns in the final chapters have a bit of a whiplash-effect and one can only hope that No. 1 will build off this momentum in the second installment to her series.

The pacing of action in this novel was very slow, but it was still an intriguing storyline. I appreciated all of the time the author took to set up this world and these characters, but I do wish we had gotten to the meatier part of the plot earlier. I guess that's something to look forward to in book two, and I am excited for that!

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