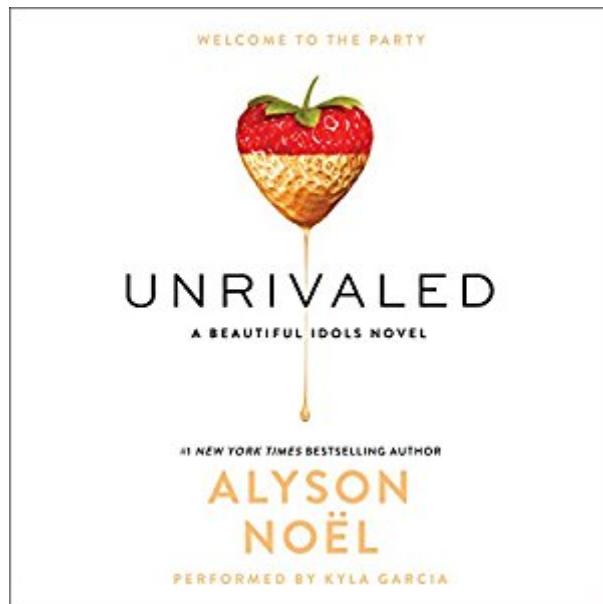


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# Unrivaled



## Synopsis

Everyone wants to be someone. Layla Harrison wants to leave her beach-bum days for digs behind a reporter's desk. Aster Amirpour wants to scream at the next casting director who tells her "we need ethnic but not your kind of ethnic." Tommy Phillips dreams of buying a 12-string guitar and using it to shred his way back into his famous absentee dad's life. But Madison Brooks took destiny and made it her bitch 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 VIP invites to the glamorous and gritty world of Los Angeles' nightlife and lured into a high-stakes 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. Unrivaled is number-one New York Times best-selling author Alyson Noël's first book in a thrilling suspense trilogy about how our most desperate dreams can become our darkest nightmares. Hollywood Boulevard is a place best viewed behind a pair of polarized lenses and lowered expectations. Yet if you know where to look (and if you're fortunate enough to boast a spot on the guest list), it's an oasis of the city's hottest nightclubs - a hedonistic haven for the young, fabulous, and rich. But there's no exiting through the gift shop if you buy a ticket to this show. Once you push past the velvet ropes and pulsing crowds, you might never escape.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What do you get when you have a town full of wannabe celebrities? Ones that are willing to do

anything to get their shot at fame which could lead to bigger and better things? For a group of five, they will do anything that they can. Ira Redman is the man to have an "in" with when it comes to Hollywood and LA. He is also the owner of several clubs and has a competition to help promote his clubs, kind of similar to Donald Trump's The Apprentice show. Here we meet Layla, Tommy, and Aster. Layla is a journalist wanting to get her big shot, so she sees this as her way to the insider world of clubs and celebrities. Tommy is a musician and also Ira's secret son that not even Ira knows and Aster is a stunning ethnic girl who wants out from under her parent's control and to make it as an actress/model. On the other side of the actual celebrity world, we have Madison - a current actress who is HOT at the moment and Ryan who is her Hollywood boyfriend who also is on the way out. During the competition we read as each of the three will interact with Madison and when she disappears will become suspects in her so-called Murder. Filled with text messages of threatening to expose Madison's past - someone wants her to disappear but what will happen when they have the opportunity to use Layla, Tommy, and Aster as scapegoats? Find out in Book #1 Unrivaled which though the tagline read Gossip Girl meets Pretty Little Liars, I found more Gossip Girl like than Pretty Little Liars and had hoped that in this book we could have got a deeper look into Madison's past, but let's hope that happens in Book #2 Blacklist.

After reading the first chapter I think it's safe to say I was not totally impressed with what I thought this book was going to be about. It appeared that the whole book was going to be about a girl that moved to LA and became a stuck up snobby rich girl who happened to disappear. Then after reading the next couple of chapters, I thought it was going to be about a couple of kids that lived in or moved to LA to chase after their dreams only to be very disappointed by how their lives turned out to be nothing like they expected. Which is definitely not typical for me to read about. BUT it turned out to be so much more than that! I would definitely have to say this book grew on me the more I read. I felt myself getting more and more invested in the characters and what was happening to each of them. By the end, I was thinking "wait, no! It can't end! I don't have nearly enough answers yet! Alyson Noel definitely left readers with a HUMONGOUS cliffhanger that we won't recover from until the next book is released. I was slightly disappointed that the book was titled after the string of night clubs that a sleaze bag runs and takes advantage of just barely legal kids. Or so it seems. And just to go ahead and get this out of the way, the series Beautiful Idols is named after one of the characters celebrity slamming blog. Slightly disappointing also. The story is mostly centered around a few characters - Layla, Tommy, Aster, Madison, and Ira. How these characters

are all brought together is quite interesting in itself. Layla is the celebrity slamming blogger. She is a very interesting character. She was definitely one of my favorites, but I couldn't figure out why she was always so angry and standoffish. From what I could decipher, she really had no reason to be that way. But she was. Despite that, in my opinion, she was still the most likable character in the book (other than Tommy). I can understand her situation because she is dealing with a lot of backlash in her relationship and doesn't have much support in the path she decides to take. So there is always a lot of tension there for her. Always the feeling that she is doing something wrong. Tommy was also one of my favorites because he was a good ole country boy out trying to chase his dreams in LA (cliche). In the beginning he comes off as this nice guy with a pure heart. But the more we learn about him, you begin to question that. Not entirely, but somewhat. The ONLY thing I didn't like about Tommy is that he is a little bit (ok A LOT) flip floppy. It is very annoying and typical boy behavior that I didn't expect from him. But I suppose everyone can get caught up in those bright LA lights. Hopefully the next book Tommy can be a little bit more stable. Aster is an immediate love/hate relationship. She is a rich and beautiful Persian princess who thinks she is entitled to absolutely everything. She is super bitchy and rude. Definitely thinks she is too good for pretty much everyone else. Then towards the middle of the book, she shows you a little bit of a vulnerable side to her. The things she lets happen to her draw a lot of sympathy. BUT once she gets over the vulnerability and letting her guard down she turns right back into Queen Bitch. Ira. He is the sleaze bag night club owner I mentioned above. While I still stand by my first impression of him, there is a little bit of something more there with him. He is a sleaze bag that genuinely cares for certain people, but has a weird way of showing it. He will do something nice and you will be wondering what exactly is he expecting in return. As far as I can tell so far, nothing. Regardless he will choose himself over anyone else. Madison is the character you want to like so bad because behind the glamour you can see who she really is. But she hides it so well, you can't help but to hate her anyways. As the synopsis of the book says, Madison disappears. Honestly, I find the who situation very, very suspicious. And how the book ends sends you through a tail spin. I know I was stuck on thinking it is not true and then second guessing based on what you find out. The things each of these characters will go to for just a little bit of fame may or may not surprise you. But reading them journey through it is very interesting. Most of the book, in my opinion, is setting the scene for Madison to disappear.

Which doesn't happen until close to the end. So luckily, we already know there's another book in the series to hopefully answer some of our questions that we are left with. While it definitely was not what I was expecting, it was still worth the read as the 4 stars indicate!

Which is highly disappointing after reading raves about this book. I went in with the highest of hopes. I think because it was touted as a YA mystery. What is wasn't was YA...and...sheesh...the mystery didn't kick in until almost the end of the book. Sort of. It starts off okay with the disappearance of the hot "it" actress, Madison Brooks. But that was a few pages at most. The story goes off on a far tangent, dividing into three stories--Layla's, Tommy's, and Aster's--though all focusing on one contest to become a club promoter. And that's where it started to fall apart. Nothing felt cohesive or solid, even though the characters were all revolving in this contest. It felt so first person, but was third person to read. Eventually, there were five characters stories going around. Not that I got confused, but some of it wasn't information relative to the story...parts that could have been left out so the real story could shine. And the characters weren't mysterious. All of their lives were pretty much spilled out in the first chapters...By the time any mystery kicked in, I was kicking myself for not DNF'ing it. I kept hoping it would change for the better. The real story was going to start...and it didn't. I think this book was a preface, really. Book 2 is looming out there in the future, and I'm willing to bet, book 2 is where this story will shine it's brightest. Honestly, I'd say wait for book 2 before reading this. Book 1 just...SMH...It fell flat for me.

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!!

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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