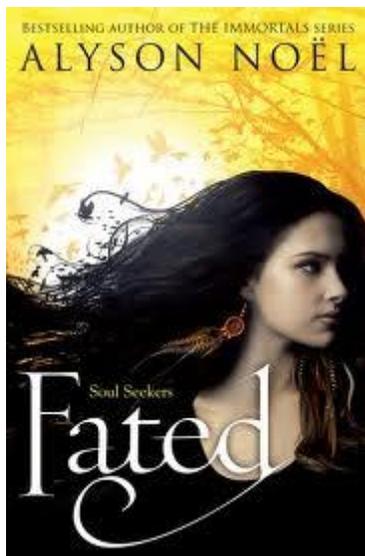


DEADLINE

NEW YORK

Arnold Rifkin Relies On Former Agency To Secure Film Rights To ‘Soul Seekers’

By **MIKE FLEMING** | Friday October 5, 2012 @ 3:02pm EDT Tags: [Alyson Noel](#), [Arnold Rifkin](#), [Soul Seekers](#), [WME](#)



EXCLUSIVE: [Arnold Rifkin's](#) Cheyenne Enterprises has optioned screen rights on [Soul Seekers](#), the young adult book series by bestselling author [Alyson Noel](#). Rifkin, the former head of WMA who had this deal brokered by WME, sees the series as a potential franchise on the order of *Twilight* and *The Hunger Games*.

There are four books in the series: *Fated*, *Echo*, *Mystic* and *Horizon*. *Fated* is [currently](#) in stores; *Echo* comes out in November 2012; and *Mystic* and *Horizon* will both be available in 2013. The *Soul Seekers* series follows a rebellious 16 year-old, Daire Santos, who is plagued by strange happenings: crows mock her, glowing people stalk her, time stops without warning, and a beautiful boy haunts her dreams. Sent to live with her grandmother in the small town of Enchantment, New Mexico, Daire's visions and reckless [behavior](#) are recognized for what they truly are – the call to her destiny as a Soul Seeker: one who navigates between the worlds of the living and the dead. As she learns to use her powers, she meets identical twins she's dreamed about. They hold the future of the world in their hands. There is Native American lore involved in the series, and Rifkin is determined to cast the films with Native American actors when appropriate.

“I did a lot of research into Shamanism and Native American spirituality to create the world of The Soul Seekers series,” the author said. “In using these ancient practices and ideas as a jumping off point for the mystical world of the books, I tried to portray them in an authentic way and to do so with reverence. After meeting with producer Arnold Rifkin, and learning first hand of his personal passion for these themes, I have no doubt that he will do the same.”

Noel's earlier 6-book series *The Immortals* was optioned by Summit/Lionsgate for a TV series and *Fly Me To The Moon* was optioned by Scott Free, with Sharon Maguire directing the script she wrote. While WME repped Rifkin, Noel's repped by Bill Contardi at Brandt & Hochman.

OrangeCoast

Danielle

P.3



LOVE



rect.

ed
preme
the man's
oil, he
tension
the tension
turned 40 million
back to the

was
between
was the
in land in the south

96
96



Author Alyson Noël had everything she could want growing up in Yorba Linda.

A big house. A horse named Lucky. Regular jaunts to the Broadway to keep up with the latest styles.

Then one day the Linda Vista Elementary sixth-grader came home to a kitchen-table talk with Mom: Dad had left and wasn't coming back. Her mother, a full-time homemaker raising Noël, 12, and her sisters, then 17 and 22, took a minimum-wage job at JC Penney to feed the family. Noël sold Lucky, dropped out of extracurricular activities, and took as many babysitting jobs as she could find.

She recalls feeling "financially alienated" from most of her upper-middle-class friends. "I grew up overnight. We no longer had the same things in common. I no longer cared about what boy was going to ask me out when we were eating waffles for dinner and couldn't even afford those."

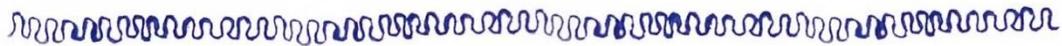
Noël returns to that difficult time to make her popular teen series—The Immortals, Riley Bloom, and, starting this month, Soul Seekers—more substantial. Although Noël's characters sometimes visit the afterlife or go on fantastical supernatural journeys, her books aren't escapist. She explores the same tough issues teens tackle today. The themes have garnered Noël a loyal audience, including more than eight *New York Times* bestsellers in the children's paperback and children's series categories.

Striding into a Starbuck's near her Laguna Niguel home, Noël gives off a youthful vibe that belies her 47 years, and says she feels more comfortable writing in a young-adult voice. Though she has no kids of her own, she spends many hours with teens, especially those in her extended family.

With "Fated," the first book in her Soul Seekers series, coming out May 22, we asked Noël to tell us, in her own words, the things she knows for sure about today's adolescents.

HOLLYWOOD-BOUND?

The box-office success of "The Hunger Games" has made young-adult stories hot properties in Hollywood. The dramatic rights for the six books in Noël's Immortals series and the four in Riley Bloom have been optioned by Summit Entertainment, and Ridley Scott's Scott Free Productions has optioned her adult fiction title "Fly Me to the Moon." None are yet in production.



Peer pressure is crushing.

I'm amazed by the amount of pressure today's teens face, and I admire those who can shut out the noise and stay focused on what's truly important—that it's perfectly OK just to be you. Social media bring teens together but they can also be a pulpit for bullying. It's one thing to get bullied in school—and I was—but with Facebook and Twitter, it's 24/7. Now you go home, turn on your computer, and they're bullying you there. The "Am I Pretty or Ugly?" YouTube phenomenon [where 'tweens and teens post their photos for critique and get some ugly responses]—that broke my heart.



They're expected to live up to a 'perfect' ideal.

There's this huge pressure on kids to look beautiful and sexy and fit—and there's less appreciation of just being who you are. When I was growing up, I read *Vogue*, and everyone in there was so much older, I never felt it had to be me. Today, you're on your tablet, you're on the Internet, there's this constant reminder that you don't measure up. But there's nothing real about reality TV or a Photoshopped model. The media show this person who has it together, but they don't show how everybody's struggling, even the people whose lives look perfect.



3. They're incredibly creative.

The Internet has opened up the world in so many ways. For example, I get a huge influx of fan art. They'll create a piece of art around something in the book. One fan painted this beautiful portrait of [Immortal series protagonist] Ever, her version of what I described in "Shadowland." It's the wildest thing. Also, fan fiction. They'll continue the story. They'll make a book trailer, do casting for the Immortals movies, make me jewelry and art that I describe in the books.

4. They're visual.

We're in a time of great change with e-books, and some people see this as Chicken Little, "The sky is falling." They think it's the end of paper books. All I know for sure is it's not the end of storytelling. Story is what brings us together as a community, what differentiates us from other species, what makes us human. With e-books, you're going to see a lot more embedded content. Videos, click-throughs, gaming. My favorite children's book is "Harold and the Purple Crayon." Now there's an app on iPad; you can draw stuff with Harold. It's interactive. And for younger kids, the picture books will be things you can move around on the page. The written word will remain, but it may become more of a mix, including images.

5. They're pressured to grow up too fast.

They're living in a world that has a lot of violence—and I mean sexual violence, as well. We need girls to be really empowered to create their own boundaries. It bothers me to see padded bikini tops for little girls. I find the sexualizing of little girls troubling. They're also more bombarded by material things. They're being marketed this acquisitive lifestyle. It's everywhere. Teens are the target market.

6. They care—about people and the planet.

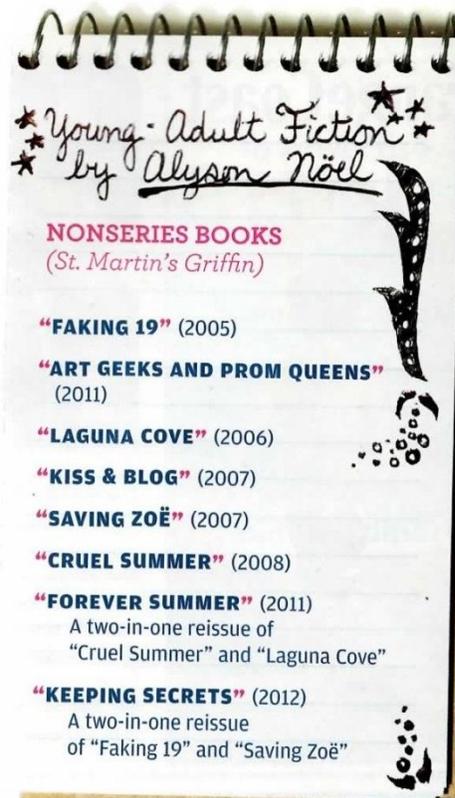
The Internet has made us all more aware of the challenges the Earth faces. But they're trying to do something about it. They're doing more charity work. A friend of mine's son is going to an Indian reservation in Minnesota. I'm very close to my niece and nephew. They're really aware of the importance of recycling, of what's going on in politics. I think they're building an awareness of community, of helping others, a respect for other ways of living. My world was much smaller than theirs.

7. They love to read.

People see teens playing video games, and they assume they're not reading. But the young-adult shelves are exploding. The YA market is one of the few areas of growth in publishing. Kids like to attach themselves to the journey of the protagonist. They look to the protagonist to find themselves.

8. They like their books action-packed.

The hottest book out there right now is Suzanne Collins' "The



Hunger Games." You care about these characters right off the bat. Teens are so pressed for time it's a miracle they're reading at all. But to keep their attention, you have to get in there. There's less patience for a slow book such as "Wuthering Heights," one I loved as a teen.

9. They see beyond their cul-de-sac.

Whether it's buying a pair of Toms shoes [with each purchase the company donates a pair to a needy child], volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, or traveling abroad with their families or school programs, kids today have a much broader worldview than previous generations.

10. They refuse to wait for their dreams to come true.

You have all these young tycoons. They're ambitious. When they want something, they find ways to get it, to go after what they want. They have few resources, but if they want to go somewhere or do something, they find ways to make it happen. They just see possibility. There's no reason to wait, and it's fantastic.

Laura Saari, the magazine's *Rituals* columnist since 2008, learns new things about teens daily while raising three children.



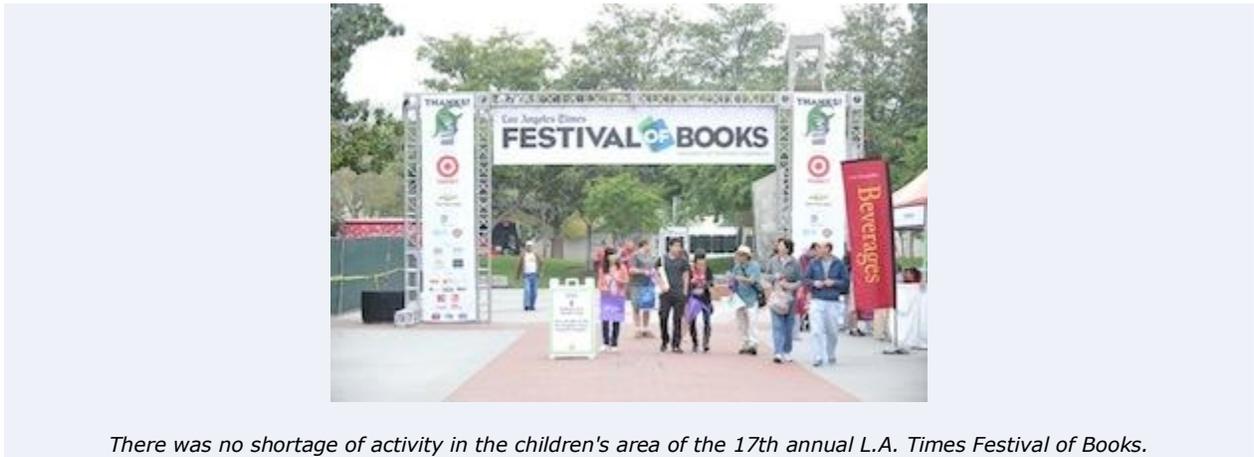


Children's Books Shine at the 17th Annual L.A. Times Festival of Books

By Wendy Werris

Apr 26, 2012

More than 100,000 people, many of them families with kids, turned out for the 17th annual Los Angeles Times Festival of Books on the village-like campus of USC on April 21 and 22.



There was no shortage of activity in the children's area of the 17th annual L.A. Times Festival of Books.

The atmosphere in the children's area, arguably the most popular place to be at the festival, was colorful, energetic, and mobbed on both days. Between the Target stage, the YA stage, and the *Hoy* area, which is the dedicated Hispanic portion of the festival, there were continuous sources of kids' entertainment, author readings, music, and games. Scooby-Doo made several appearances, and Judy Blume, David Shannon, Julie Andrews, and Marc Brown were among the most sought-after authors at book signings. Children's booksellers Once Upon a Time and Mrs. Nelson's did a brisk business on both days, topping their 2011 festival sales. (See our [extensive photo essay](#) for a look at many of the weekend's highlights.)

With more than 20 panels devoted to children's and YA books, it was apparent that interest in this genre shows no sign of slowing down. At the "Children's Books: Painting the Picture" panel on Saturday, moderator Allyn Johnston, publisher of Beach Lane Books, brought out the best in panelists Bob Staake, Kadir Nelson, and Marla Frazee in the sold-out auditorium. Staake, who lives in Chatham, Mass,, flew in for the festival and said he was pleased to be back on the campus of his alma mater.

Johnston first queried the trio about the current form of the picture book. Frazee, creator of such books as *The Boss Baby* and *All the World* (with Liz Garton Scanlon) said the form is challenging for her because of the myriad ways she can approach a book. "At least half of a story has to be told in the pictures," she said. "I also have to decide which parts of a story should be told in words, and which in pictures." Frazee said she is at the point in her career now where she can decline to illustrate a manuscript. "The writing may be good," she said, "but sometimes the resonance is off."



L. to r.: Bob Staake, moderator Allyn Johnston, Marla Frazee, and Kadir Nelson at the "Children's Books: Painting the Picture" panel.

Staake was selected this year to create the logo and illustrations for the Festival of Books marketing graphics. He told the audience that he is often commissioned to illustrate books that are written by others. "If the story is written by someone else, my job is to make that story better with my illustrations," he noted. "When I'm working on my own books there's no answer to the question, 'what comes first – the pictures or the words?'" When Staake conceived of his popular *The Red Lemon*, for instance, the title came to him first without any knowledge of what the book would be; that appeared much later.

Kadir Nelson is known for his books about African-Americans and their history and culture. Because he worked in film early in his career, he thinks of the picture book form as a silent film. "I think like a director, working in wide-angle shots and close-ups," he said. "Each image should stand alone and work together with the other images in a cinematic way." Nelson appreciates the freedom to both write and illustrate. "But if a manuscript isn't relevant to where I am spiritually and professionally, I won't do it."

The panelists all work in different art forms. For Frazee a sketch comes first, followed by soaking a blank piece of Strathmore 500-series paper in a bathtub. She then stretches the paper on a piece of wood and begins to paint with a water-based paint such as gouache. Next she paints layers on top of each other to create a wash, which "builds up the color really slowly." In his downtown Los Angeles studio, Nelson works in oil on canvas or wood. His paintings can be up to eight feet long, so his photographer then shoots them digitally and reduces the size. With the exception of background art, which he paints and then scans, Staake's work is composed on a computer; he draws digitally with a mouse and works in Photoshop 3.0, one of the oldest versions around. "I make *lots* of circles," Staake said with a laugh.

Regardless of the medium it's clear that Frazee, Staake, and Nelson are all inspired by children and the idea of childhood. "When I sit down to work," Staake said, "I try to conjure up the images that would have excited six-year old Bobby." Frazee is always being mindful of the child, and how well children read pictures. "I think about that in a humbling way," she says. Responding to a question from the audience about where his ideas come from, Nelson said, "All creative expression comes from the same place. Maintain your vision, and be honest."



L. to r.: moderator Aaron Hartzler, Cornelia Funke, Alyson Noël, and John Stephens at the "In the Middle: Tweenage Fantasy" panel.

Sunday's "In the Middle: Tweenage Fantasy" panel was moderated by Aaron Hartzler, author of the forthcoming YA memoir *Rapture Practice*. Held outdoors on the festival's YA stage, panelists Cornelia Funke (*Ghost Night*), Alyson Noël (*Whisper*), and former television writer John Stephens (*The Emerald Atlas*) each read a few pages from their respective books to the large audience; the children sitting on the grass in front of the stage were especially awestruck by Funke's dramatic rendering.

The panelists first discussed what part of themselves they bring to their characters, and Noël, who told the audience she lost five close friends in three months during the same year her husband was diagnosed with leukemia, said, "I wrote *The Immortals* while I was grieving. I poured my grief into the character of Eve, and it was an amazing experience. As I got better, so did she." Stephens said that the sibling rivalries in his book are similar to those he experienced in his family. "My siblings were always testing me, and yet I knew I could depend on them if I really needed them. This shows up in my characters and in the story." Funke said that her characters are always surprising her. "I feel like I'm constantly in wrestling matches with them, especially when one wants more attention than I want to give to that character."

An audience member asked the panelists what books they read when they were young. Funke, who is German and grew up in that country, mentioned *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Princess Bride* as being among her favorites "when I wasn't reading obscure German books." Noel favored the *Little House on the Prairie* books ("I was Half-Pint!") and every Judy Blume novel she could get her hands on, even though her sixth-grade teacher referred to them as "trash." Stephens read books "that gave me the sense that magic was right next door," such as *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Tarzan*.

An earnest young man wanted to know if it was difficult to capture the essence of adolescence in YA fiction. "You know," Funke told her, "we're all everywhere at the same time – very young, teenaged, and I suspect you already have a sense of the old man in you." The panel concluded with Noël's words. "No matter who the character may be, the core journey never changes in adolescence," she said. "Hang on to that."



L. to r.: moderator Susan Carpenter, Maureen Johnson, Maggie Stiefvater, Lauren Myracle, and Jacqueline Woodson at the "Young Adult Fiction" panel.

At the "Young Adult Fiction" panel on Saturday, panelists Maureen Johnson, Jacqueline Woodson, Maggie Stiefvater, and Lauren Myracle agreed that nothing is off the table when it comes to themes and topic matter for their books. With moderator Susan Carpenter, staff writer at the *Los Angeles Times*, at the helm, the panelists did not hold back during their discussion of sexuality and violence in YA writing, how race and class are presented, and their reasons for writing for the YA market. "I don't know how to write a good sex scene," said Woodson, author of *Beneath a Meth Moon* and *If You Come Softly*; I don't find sex literary." Stiefvater, who wrote *The Scorpio Races* and *Shiver*, added, "But sex scenes can be so hilarious when you read them." There is sex in Myracle's *Later Gator*, and several of her books appear on national Banned Books lists. "Be very careful with the use of the F word," she cautioned the audience. Woodson won't write gratuitous violence into her books; Stiefvater said she learned about violence by reading about it.

"The issues of race and class seem untouched in YA writing," Carpenter said, and Woodson, who is black, suggested that it might be because not a lot of people of color are writing in the genre. "Also," she added, "for authors it doesn't show up on the page until you have that experience." The panelists tried to explain the difficulty in the descriptive process when writing about non-white characters. Johnson, author of *The Name of the Star*, is uncomfortable labeling black characters. "It shouldn't matter," she said. Woodson thinks otherwise. "The reader shouldn't assume all the characters are white unless stated as black. If a character has depth, all that stuff comes out," she said.

Johnson, who attended an all-girls' Catholic school in a convent despite the fact that she wasn't Catholic, said that she wrote her first YA novel on a bet with another student. "I planned my escape from there for four years," she said of her experience as an adolescent. That particular period of time seems to have been noteworthy for Woodson as well. "Adolescence is the age you're stuck in, from eight to 15. I was crippled as a young girl," she told the audience, "but through my writing and my characters I can fix that stuff."

Los Angeles Times

Festival of Books: YA authors and tweenage angst in the afterworld

April 22, 2012 | 2:00 pm



The panel titled “In the Middle: Tweenage Fantasy” Sunday began lazily, in the best possible way: A massive crowd gathered to see John Stephens, Alyson Noel and Cornelia Funke at the YA stage, filling every seat and spilling onto the lawn.

The authors appearing at the L.A. Times Festival of Books each gave a short reading from a current work. Twelve- and 13-year-olds sat on the edge of their seats, others followed along in dog-eared copies they had brought along; adults and older couples stretched out on blankets, coffees in hand. If only there had been milk and cookies.

Soon the discussion developed into a lively romp through the world of fantasy writing for a tween and teen audience. According to New York Times bestselling author Noel, adolescence is no different for her Riley Bloom character, who lives in the afterworld. She still wrestles with issues of identity and body image. “Riley’s just a typical teen girl in fantastical circumstances,” Noel said.

PHOTOS: Festival of Books

Funke and Stephens touched on the universal struggle to create, regardless of genre. Stephens spent 10 years as a TV executive, during which time he worked on “Gossip Girl” and “Gilmore Girls” among other shows. But writing his debut novel, “The Emerald Atlas,” was far more difficult, even scary, he said. “When you write a TV script, you write with a staff,” he said. “If it’s not perfect, you think, ‘Oh, maybe the actors will be good; maybe there’ll be music.’ [Writing a novel] you’re solo; it’s more terrifying.”

Funke, an international bestselling author who’s named on Time magazine’s Time 100 list of most influential people, has a much different relationship with the writing process. “Writing, for me, is like chocolate,” she said. “When I’m doing rewrites and my editor sends notes, then it’s stressful. But otherwise, I’m addicted!”

Stephens said he writes first drafts on his computer, then writes “many subsequent drafts” by hand on legal pads. (“That’s why my right hand is much bigger,” he joked.) Funke, whose “Ghost Night” comes out in May, said she writes in her native German, not English, in a little cottage-like “writing house” in her backyard. “It’s the most wonderful place in the world,” she said. “It’s filled with things readers have sent me.”

FULL COVERAGE: Festival of Books

In the comfort of that custom writing palace, Funke said, she often lets herself get carried away. The characters come to life, they speak to her and the story unfurls -- often taking on a pace and rhythm of its own. Her “Inkworld Trilogy,” for example, was never intended to be a series, she said. But momentum took over.

“I only finished it because I wanted to know how it played out!” she said. As it should be.

ALSO:

[How our fears and habits shape us](#)

[Memoirists share private-turned-public lives](#)

[‘Write your brain barf’ and other WriteGirl tips](#)

-- Deborah Vankin

Photo: John Stephens, left, Alyson Noel and Cornelia Funke at the YA panel Sunday. Credit: Ringo H.W. Chiu / For the Los Angeles Times



Q & A with Alyson Noël

By Sally Lodge

Apr 12, 2012



Photo by Nancy Villere.

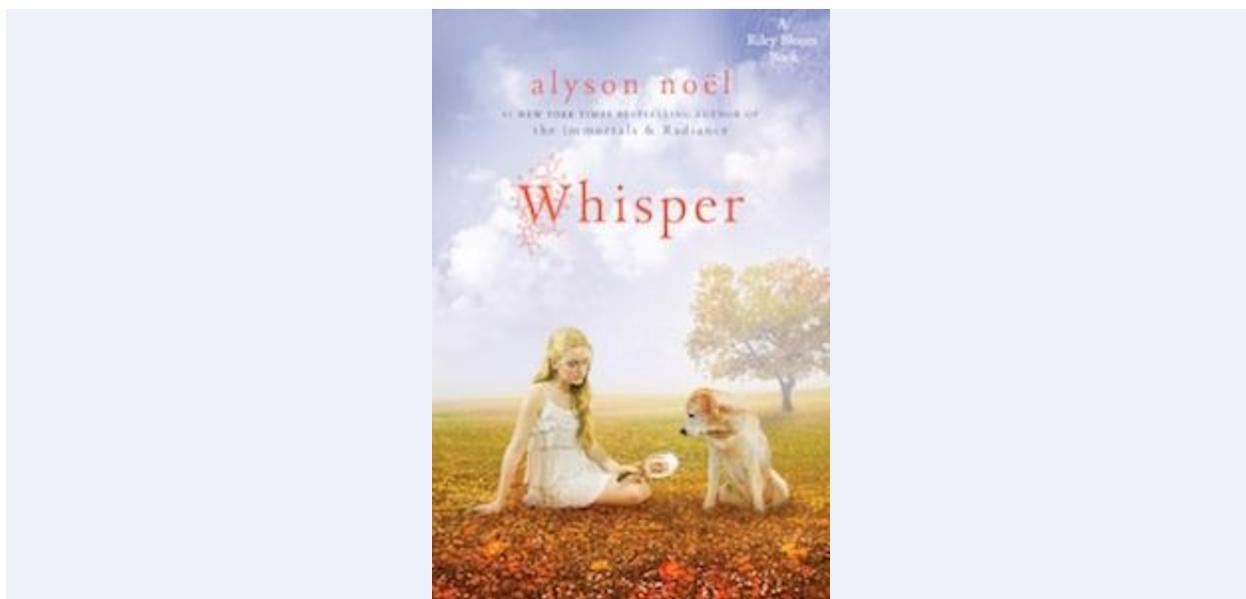
*Alyson Noël has hit her stride in both the YA and middle grade arenas. In the former, the six-book *The Immortals* series from St. Martin's Griffin has more than eight million copies in print worldwide—3.5 million in the U.S. alone. The author's first foray into middle grade fiction, the Riley Bloom paperback series (which stars the younger sister of *The Immortals* heroine, *Ever*) has more than 800,000 copies in print, and Square Fish will release the fourth installment, *Whisper*, on April 24 with a 200,000-copy print run. Noël further expands her reach into the YA market on May 22, when St. Martin's Griffin publishes *Fated*, the debut novel in her new series, *The Soul Seekers*, with a combined first printing of 250,000 hardcover and e-book copies. Set in New Mexico, the book draws from Native American mythology and introduces *Daire*, a teen who belongs to an ancestral line of shamans and can't navigate the worlds between the living and the dead. Bookshelf caught up with Noël as she traveled to Chicago from her home in Orange County, Calif., to attend this weekend's RT Booklovers Convention, where she'll take part in the second annual Teen Day.*

What inspired *The Soul Seekers'* Native American mythology premise?

I did a lot of hands-on research for the *Immortals*. I was hypnotized, took a psychic development course, and read a lot of books with metaphysical themes. In my reading, themes of shamanism kept appearing. I became fascinated with Native American mythology, but that didn't really fit into the world of *The Immortals*. So I decided it was something I wanted to explore in this new series. But I do want to make it clear that, though I did take bits of that mythology, I tweaked it for my own purposes—in fact there are liberal doses of tweaking. I'm not an authority on Native American mythology by any means!

What additional research did you do for *Fated*?

I had so much fun researching this book. I took a three-day introduction to shamanism course, and went to New Mexico, which is actually one of my favorite places to visit. On my trip, I interviewed Native Americans about living on a reservation, talked to teens about what it's like to grow up there, had a session with a shaman there, and of course read a lot of books. It's been a fascinating series to write, and it has allowed me to build a supernatural world, which I really love to do—and to build a completely different world from the world of *The Immortals*.



Completely different in what way?

The two series' settings are very different. *The Immortals* takes place in glitzy Orange County. *The Soul Seekers* is set in the fictional, rundown town of Enchantment, New Mexico. The characters live lives that are the opposite of what their town's name implies.

So you'd say that this is a definite departure from *The Immortals*—or do the two series have common strains?

Can I say *both*? *The Immortals* and *The Soul Seekers* are the same—and different. I think people who enjoy the first series will like the metaphysical themes of *The Soul Seekers*, and will find a commonality. This new series has the same focus on relationships, romance, friends, and building bonds with family. Yet the mythology is entirely different, and there's a very different feel and atmosphere. *The Soul Seekers* is slightly darker than *The Immortals*. In many ways this is new territory for me, and I'm really having fun with it.

How do the characters of Ever, the heroine of *The Immortals*, and Daire, heroine of *The Soul Seekers*, compare?

Ever is a naive, protected protagonist who has to learn to toughen up. Daire is a world-weary, cynical teen who has moved from movie set to movie set with her mother, a makeup artist, and has never had a stable life. On her 16th birthday, she undergoes terrifying hallucinations. Her mother is worried, and sends her to live with the grandmother she's never met, who knows immediately that Daire has a calling as a Soul Seeker. She learns the meaning of home and for the first time builds friendships and allows herself to become vulnerable.

Your protagonists' stories are inevitably told in their own voices. Why is that?

Writing in the first person feels more immediate, more intimate. It allows me to translate the characters' experiences directly onto the page by giving me an all-access pass to their thoughts and feelings.

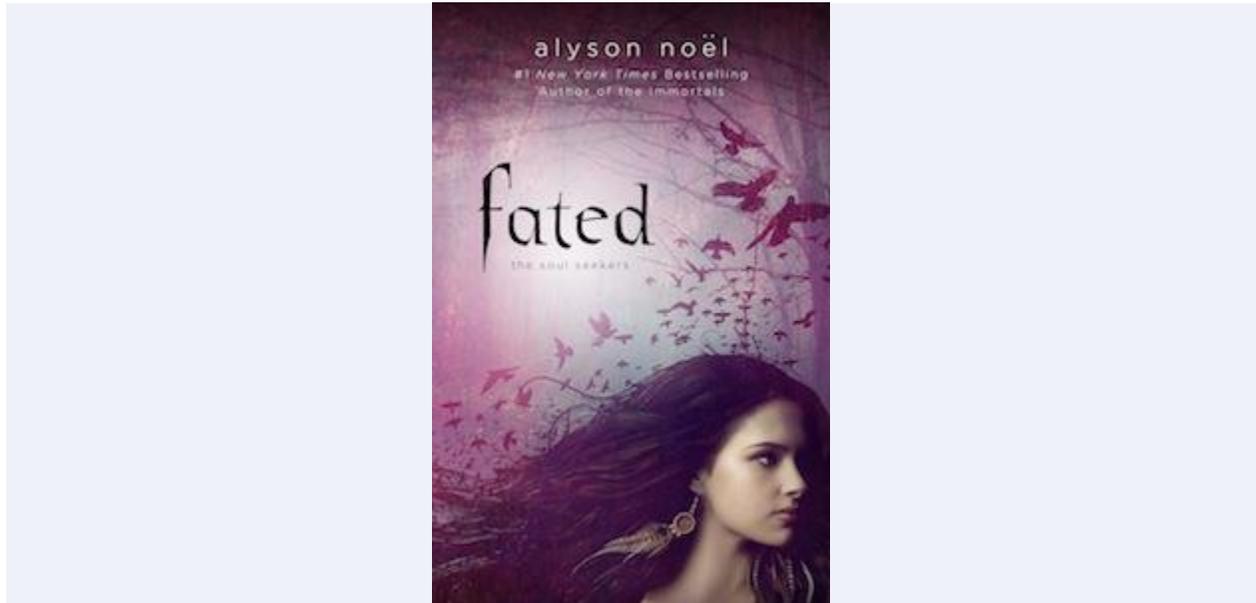
You have said that *Radiance*, the first Riley Bloom book, was the easiest book you'd ever written. Given that this was your debut middle grade novel, why is that?

At first I was terrified at the thought of writing a middle grade novel, since I'd only written YA. But I realized that it was not about writing middle grade, but about writing the character. And I love Riley's

character—I have a soft spot for her. Once I got into her head, it became really easy. In fact, all of the Riley Bloom books come easily to me.

How would you say that *Fated* ranks on the easy/hard scale?

I think the first book in every series is the most difficult to write. There is a huge excitement to it, but you're still trying to figure out what you want to say and what the world is really about. The world building takes careful thought and consideration, so it always takes me a bit longer to write that first book. Once that world is set up and the characters' roles are in place, I'm off and running.



Do you know how many Soul Seekers books you'll write, or is the series open-ended?

Well, I've written the second book, *Echo*, and am working on the third, *Mystic*. I have the arc for four books in the series, and for me that's where it ends. I always outline the story arc, but I also allow a lot of room along the way to be surprised by my characters and things that might crop up. I don't like to pen myself in. As I wrote *The Immortals*, I realized that the story was bigger than I first thought, and it took me six books to get to the end.

You've obviously also written stand-alone novels, though more recently have focused on series. Do you find series writing more satisfying?

While my first seven novels were all stand-alones, I find that I'm really enjoying writing series, as it allows me to create a much bigger character arc than I can in 300 pages. It also lets me enjoy more time with the characters and really deepen their journey.

Though creating series must have its own challenges.

Yes. The main challenge I've found in writing a series is in making sure to keep the character traits and the rules of the world consistent. It's easy to lose track of small details along the way, so I keep an ongoing "series bible" that I add to with each successive book.

Given the success of *The Immortals* and Riley Bloom, is it intimidating to launch this new series?

It is and it isn't. On one hand, it's nice to know that there is a built-in anticipation among my diehard readers, and those who have enjoyed my other series are apt to pick up *The Soul Seekers*. But every new book makes a writer anxious—every book is a new start. You can't take anything for granted,

though I think the excitement of creating something new and delving into new characters and their possibilities overshadows the anxiety.

What's next on your agenda?

I'll be touring after *Fated* comes out at the end of May, first domestically, and then internationally. I am going to Singapore, Australia, and Brazil. And I'm off to the Frankfurt Book Fair in October. Which means I'll be doing a lot of writing on airplanes!

After I finish the third *Soul Seekers* book, I'll move on to book four. And when that's in the can, I'll dive into the huge file I call my idea file and see what jumps out at me.

***The Soul Seekers: Fated* by Alyson Noël. St. Martin's Griffin, \$17.99 Apr. ISBN 978-0-3126-6485-5**

RT'S TOP GUNN: **MEET THE FINAL MR. ROMANCE**

ROMANCE | MYSTERY | PARANORMAL | EROTICA | MAINSTREAM | INSPIRATIONAL | URBAN FANTASY | SCIENCE FICTION

RT BOOK REVIEWS

read smarter!

CHARLAINE HARRIS
ON VAMPIRES' TRUE COLORS

TEEN SCENE SPOTLIGHTS
MICHELE JAFFE & AMY PLUM

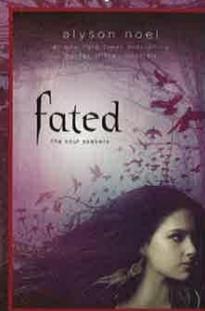
TOO TOUGH FOR TEENS?
TABOO TOPICS IN YA

SELF-PUB CRAWL
THE BEST IN EVERY GENRE

LAUREN DANE'S
SEXY SPACE SAGA

Alyson Noël

4½ Top Pick!



**"A MASTER
WITH WORDS!**
*A must-read
that will leave
you breathless."*

— RT Book Reviews

RTBookReviews.com



292 NEW BOOKS REVIEWED & RATED

[View the complete cover story here!](#)

OrangeCoast

Coast Lines » BOOKS



A Curious Death in Africa

A 61-word news report on the death of a U.S. missionary in Kenya was all it took to send *Los Angeles Times* reporter Christopher Goffard on a four-year quest to uncover the truth.—Jane Glenn Haas

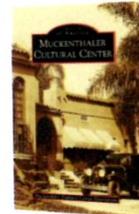


You Will See Fire
Christopher Goffard
(W.W. Norton)

Contemporaries in Kenya described Father John Kaiser as the “John Wayne of priests.” A 6-foot-2 former U.S. paratrooper, he could “creep close enough to a buffalo to kill it with a single half-powder round through the lungs or heart,” writes Christopher Goffard. The Irvine author heard about Kaiser in 2007 when a brief story in the *Los Angeles Times* reported that his 2000 death—first ruled a suicide—was finally labeled a murder. But why had no one been punished for killing a (Continued on Page 34)

Muckenthaler Cultural Center

Muckenthaler Cultural Center Foundation
(Arcadia Publishing)



In 1924, Walter Muckenthaler and his wife built an 18-room Mediterranean-style villa on 8½ acres of Fullerton hilltop. They lived there for 30 years, and in 1965 their son donated it

to the city. By 1999, it was listed by the National Register of Historic Places. Known for its art exhibits, the home is virtually unchanged today. This slim paperback is part of the publisher’s “Images of America” series, but a good review of the center’s history would have improved it.

Cat Chase

Jennifer Jacobs Peters
(Self-Published)



He’s a cop. She’s a call girl and a thief. They’re after the same killer. This romantic mystery novel has plenty of “swollen arousals.” Still, the author’s weaving

of intrigue and intimacy makes this a fun read and a good first effort. Peters lives in Santa Ana and teaches mass communications and public relations at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa. She’ll release her second novel, “Final Heist,” next year.

Everlasting

Alyson Noël
(St. Martin’s Griffin)



The Immortals series by the popular Laguna Beach author has been dubbed “a mesmerizing tale of teenage angst, love, and sacrifice.” As the jacket of this latest says,

“Their darkest enemies are defeated and Damen and Ever can ... finally experience the passion they’ve been longing for.” Never too much for a romance reader. Do they find love? Ah ... this is the last book in the series, so what are the odds?



Alyson Noël

la **SUCCESS** story de la semaine

"J'étais hôtesse de l'air. Le 11-Septembre m'a poussée à réaliser mon rêve : être écrivain"

 **En 2001, Alyson Noël a remis sa vie en question et, surtout, s'est mise à écrire. Depuis, elle a vendu 6 millions de livres dans le monde. Closer l'a rencontrée lors de son passage à Paris.**

Paris, le 18 oct.

Etranglement, c'est l'attaque terroriste sur les Twin Towers qui a permis à Alyson Noël de réaliser son rêve d'enfant : devenir écrivain. Un changement de vie total pour cette Californienne. « J'étais hôtesse de l'air et je vivais à New York au moment du 11 septembre 2001. Un choc terrible... Après cette tragédie, mon métier a complètement changé : il n'était plus question que de mesures draconiennes de sécurité, de la hantise des bombes, des attentats. La peur s'infiltrait partout autour de nous ! » Alyson remet alors tout en cause : son métier et sa vie. « Depuis l'âge de 12 ans, je rêvais d'être écrivain, mais sans jamais avoir essayé de le devenir. Très vite, je me suis dit : "C'est maintenant ou jamais ! Tu dois tout faire pour tenter ta chance ! Et tu n'as rien à perdre..." » Très jeune déjà, elle trouvait dans l'écriture de petits textes un moyen de s'évader d'une adolescence difficile : « J'avais 12 ou 13 ans quand mon père nous a quittés. Brusquement, nous n'avons plus rien eu pour vivre... A 40 ans, ma mère ne possédait aucun diplôme, aucune expérience professionnelle. Elle a travaillé comme elle a pu. J'ai dû faire du baby-sitting et plein de petits jobs après l'école pour joindre les deux bouts. » En classe, l'adolescente a la chance de suivre des cours d'écriture et son prof l'encourage. Alyson ne cessera ainsi jamais d'écrire, mais uniquement pour elle...

Des mois de travail, des refus en série... puis le succès planétaire

Jusqu'à cette année 2001, où le choc des attentats la décide à changer de direction. Elle ignore alors qu'il lui faudra travailler de manière acharnée pendant des mois, qu'elle devra aussi essayer de nombreux refus avant de savoir enfin construire un récit. Mais, en 2005, elle sort son premier livre. Le thème, l'immortalité, lui est inspiré par une



© DAHIANE POUR CLOSER

épreuve personnelle : « J'ai perdu trois proches en cinq mois, et j'avais du mal à faire mon deuil. Peu après, une leucémie a été diagnostiquée à mon mari. Durant un an, j'ai eu très peur pour lui. Il a suivi un traitement et va très bien, mais ce fut la période la plus noire, la plus effrayante de ma vie. » Depuis, Alyson ne perçoit plus le monde de la même façon : « J'ai commencé à réfléchir à l'au-delà. A la manière dont je pourrais garder le lien avec des êtres disparus. Parfois, je les sens autour de moi... » Aujourd'hui comblée par son métier d'écrivain, elle remercie chaque matin la providence en s'asseyant devant son ordinateur.

En six ans, elle a écrit presque vingt livres, qui se sont vendus à 6 millions d'exemplaires ! Ses sagas, *Eternels** et *Radiance*, ont été traduites dans 37 langues et 50 pays, et Alyson est l'auteure star des adolescentes. Enfin, cerise sur le gâteau, son livre *Fly me to the Moon* (titre français : *Emmène-moi au ciel*) va être adapté au cinéma par Sharon Maguire, la réalisatrice de *Bridget Jones*, et produit par Ridley Scott en personne ! Pour la belle quadragénaire, le rêve continue...

Elizabeth Elkine-Vincent
courrier@closermag.fr

SON LIVRE EMMÈNE-MOI AU CIEL BIENTÔT PORTÉ À L'ÉCRAN PAR LA RÉALISATRICE DE BRIDGET JONES!

* Une étoile dans la nuit, tome 5 d'*Eternels*, vient de paraître chez Michel Lafon. Site officiel de l'auteure (en anglais) : alysonnoel.com

O.C. CONFIDENTIAL



Home Grown

Orange County serves as the setting for bestselling author Alyson Noël and her popular works of fiction. | *By Alisha Gomez* | *Photography by Duncan Stewart* |

Chances are, we're going to start hearing a lot more about Alyson Noël. The Laguna Niguel resident is not only a successful author (she has several *New York Times* bestsellers), but she's also a bit of a Hollywood darling, penning deals for her young adult novels—the *Immortals* and *Riley Bloom* series—with Summit Entertainment (you know, the company behind the blockbuster *Twilight* films). Her chick-lit novel, *Fly Me to the Moon*, was optioned by Ridley Scott's production company and now has famed director Sharon Maguire (*Bridget Jones's Diary*) attached to the project. And that's not to mention her latest publishing deal: a multimillion-dollar contract for a new book series, *Soul Seekers*, debuting in 2012.

Although she spends a fair amount of time with her head in the clouds (dreaming up her next hit, no doubt), Noël and her stories remain firmly rooted in Orange County. Here the admitted vampire-phile shares her favorite area haunts.

You write a lot about teens and young adults. How are you still a kid at heart? Despite the number of birthdays piling up behind me, I never really feel like an adult. I always feel more like a kid who somehow ended up with a husband, a mortgage and credit cards.

You grew up in Yorba Linda. What's your favorite childhood memory? Riding horses with my friends after school was the best. We would race home, dump our books, hop on our horses and meet in the lakebed where we'd have great adventures until the sun went down and it was time to head home. Those were truly good times!

Several of your books take place in Orange County. Why is it such a great backdrop for your novels? Aside from being a great place to live, I love the dichotomy of coastal Orange County. I love how, on the surface, it appears to be this perfect, pristine place of stunning beaches and upscale shopping—but inside all of those beautiful homes are real people, living real lives, facing real struggles. Those struggles are what interest me. That's where the story lives.

Who would you love to see play your lead character, Hailey Lane, in the movie version of *Fly Me to the Moon*? I hate to admit it, but I'm really bad at this game. I see the characters so clearly in my head while I'm writing that it makes it impossible for me to replace them with real people. But, with Sharon Maguire directing, I've no doubt she'll surprise me in a good way—I loved what she did with *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

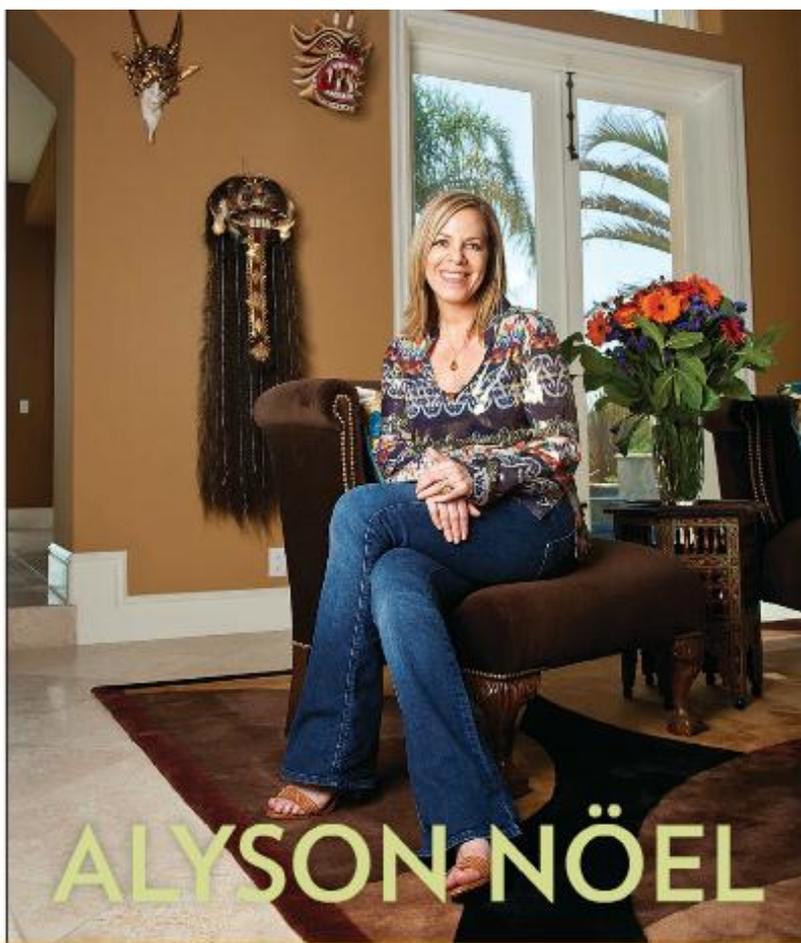
Favorite O.C. restaurants? Vine in San Clemente; Stone Hill Tavern at The St. Regis Monarch Beach; Studio at the Montage Laguna Beach resort; Izakaya Wasa Sushi at the Irvine Spectrum; The Original Pancake House in Yorba Linda; and Marché Moderne, AnQi and Charlie Palmer, which are all at South Coast Plaza.

Coffee, tea or cocktails—and where do you like to get it? A glass of Champagne at the Montage resort lobby bar at sunset is a favorite way to celebrate.

Favorite place to shop in Orange County? South Coast Plaza—it has everything!

Guiltiest pleasure? Watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* reruns while eating Golden Spoon frozen yogurt.

Coollest thing that ever happened to you as a writer? Meeting Judy Blume in person and getting to tell her that her books inspired me to be a writer. She's been an idol of mine since I was a kid, and she was just as kind, gracious and warm as I hoped she would be. ■



ALYSON NÖEL

If there's a teenager in your household, there's a good chance she's heard of Alyson Noël, the prolific OC-based novelist who has captured the voice and imagination of girls in middle school and high school through two bestselling series with supernatural themes. With more than a dozen young adult novels and anthologies to her name, Noël continues to write from the Laguna Niguel home she shares with her husband. Here's a peek at her lifestyle.

AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY OF YOUR HOME Contemporary, global and eclectic. We're drawn to bold pieces with clean lines, and during our travels are always on the lookout for interesting art and artifacts to incorporate into the décor. My husband has an extensive collection of tribal masks he's acquired from

all over the world – so many that they cover the two-story wall in our entryway.

FAVORITE PART OF YOUR HOUSE I'm not that big on formal living rooms – they tend to come off as sort of stiff and unused – like museums of fine furniture. So when we moved into our home about a year ago, we were determined to make the space both usable and fun. We have a zebra sofa, a glass-topped amethyst geode that we use for a coffee table, and we christened it the "Champagne Room." Once a week, usually on a Wednesday, we head in there to toast something good that's happened recently – could be anything from hitting *The New York Times* bestsellers list, to a particularly beautiful sunset – it ensures the room gets used, and when we have guests over, we use it as a starting point, too.

YOUR FAVORITE CHAIR We have two matching overstuffed chaise lounges in our master suite sitting area. They're set before the fireplace, and my husband and I love to sneak up there with a glass of red wine to read in front of the fire.

THE BEST PLACE TO THINK AND WRITE

YOUR NOVELS My office/library – the moment I saw the beautiful built-in bookcases I was sold! We painted the walls a nice, muted purple – my favorite color and one that promotes creativity – and I decorated from scratch, carefully picking pieces that would turn it into a comfortable, feminine place to work, including a Michael Madzo painting I picked up on a recent research trip to Santa Fe. I was stunned by how closely it depicts the new YA series I'm working on, *Soul Seekers*, and his method of stitching pieces of the canvas together reminds me of the storytelling process.

THE LATEST THING YOU BOUGHT FOR

YOUR HOUSE Well, it was actually two things – a three-foot tall citrine geode cathedral that's placed in the den, and a George Bucquet peach, opal, ribbed, hot cast glass bowl that sits on the bar.

THE ONE THING YOU CAN'T LIVE

WITHOUT IN YOUR HOUSE The view of the canyon – I love watching the hawks that soar through it with the ocean beyond – it's both peaceful and inspiring.

A TYPICAL WORKING DAY AT HOME

My husband and I both work at home, so around 7:30 each morning we commute to our offices – his upstairs, mine downstairs – where we catch up on e-mails and get focused for the day. Usually around nine we meet in the kitchen for breakfast, then we head upstairs and work out, maybe take a sauna, shower and then head back to our respective offices again, where we work pretty much non-stop until seven at night.

ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND

An oversized lamp that was converted from an antique Chinese urn that my husband inherited from his grandparents, a scented candle and a small stack of books

IF YOUR HOUSE HAD A SIGNATURE

SOUNDTRACK, YOU WOULD PLAY Joey Ramone's rendition of "What a Wonderful World" – LISA LIDDANE

LISTEN UP

■ **MEET THE AUTHOR** ■ Alyson Noël will sign and read her latest young adult novel, *Everlasting*, June 14 at 7 p.m. at Barnes & Noble, 791 Main St., Orange. ■ alysonnenel.com

Alyson Noël

We first met Alyson Noël by reading her heartfelt relationship books, *Cruel Summer* and *Saving Zoe*. Next she stole our hearts with the fabulously romantic *Immortals* series. Now our little sisters have embraced Ever's hilarious little sister Riley as their own in *Radiance* and *Shimmer*. Is there anything Alyson Noël can't do?



What inspired the leap to paranormal romance with *The Immortals* series?

A few years back I went through an extended period of grief after losing three people I loved in five months and then I nearly lost my husband to leukemia. At that point I was ready to write *Evermore*. In a quest to heal from my grief, I read a lot of books on metaphysics, the afterlife, psychics, mediums, reincarnation, etc., and Ever and Damen's epic love story was born from there.

What is it about Ever's sister Riley that made you feel like she needed her own series (*Radiance/ Shimmer*)?

I had so much fun writing Riley's character in *Evermore* that she ended up getting a much bigger role than I'd planned. She kept showing up, usually in some kind of crazy wig and costume, and I kept allowing it because she was great to have around. Riley is an especially fun character to write—partly because she's such a bundle of contradictions! She's overconfident, sassy, more than a little bit snarky, and not one bit happy about dying just shy of her 13th birthday—but she's also incredibly vulnerable—

she misses her sister tremendously. Also, her being dead means she has no boundaries at all. She can travel anywhere she wants and can deal with ghosts from any period in history, which keeps the storylines fresh and fun.

Which character is most like you?

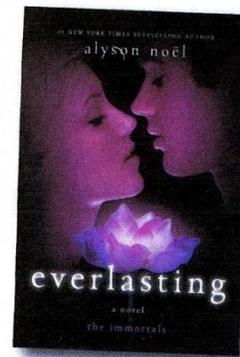
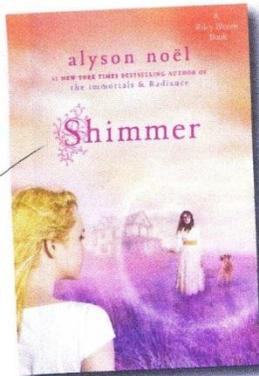
While Ever's grief over losing her family was directly channeled from my own grief, Riley's the one I relate to the most. I know what it's like to be the annoying little sister who totally idolizes her older sister, and then chooses to express that admiration by "borrowing" her clothing, makeup and jewelry!

Your books are so visual and we could easily see them turned into movies or a TV show like *Vampire Diaries*. Any plans in the works?

Yes!! I'm thrilled to announce that both *The Immortals* series and its spin-off *Riley Bloom* series have been recently optioned by Summit Entertainment!

With the release of *Everlasting*, the sixth and final installment in Ever and Damen's epic love story, are you going to miss them as much as we are?

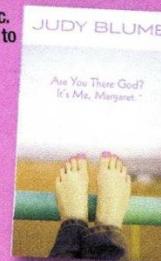
I feel a little corny saying this, but I already miss them! Typing "the end" was so much harder than I ever imagined. I'd lived so closely with these characters that they became very real to me, like imaginary friends. But at the same time I feel really satisfied with the way things worked out for them, and I definitely think they deserve a break from all the torture I put them through!



"My readers have suggested Ben Barnes from *The Chronicles of Narnia*."

Book that inspired you to be a writer?
Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret.

"... so authentic. I knew I wanted to write like that."



Who would you cast as Damen for the film?

ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

Publishers,

Hollywood Take Liking to Laguna Niguel Author's Novels

By **ALISHA GOMEZ**

Sunday, May 22, 2011



Laguna Niguel resident and author Alyson Noël is helping to fill a seemingly insatiable appetite among publishers and Hollywood producers for young adult novels featuring teens facing the supernatural.

Noël, a contemporary and young adult author, recently struck a deal with Summit Entertainment—the studio behind the “Twilight” movies—to turn her “The Immortals” and “Riley Bloom” books into TV series or movies.

The six-book “The Immortals” series follows a young woman who escapes death and returns with the power to read people’s thoughts when she touches them.

“Riley Bloom” features a secondary character from the “Immortal” novels.

Summit Entertainment paid six figures for an 18 month option on both series’.

“It’s an area of the market that remains big,” said Rachel Deahl, a senior news editor at trade publication Publishers Weekly.

Booming Market

“Harry Potter,” “Twilight” and now “Hunger Games” all have fueled interest in the young adult and children’s market, according to Deahl.

Noël’s also sold rights to a contemporary novel, “Fly Me to the Moon,” to director Ridley Scott’s production company.

Part of the lure for Hollywood and publishers: paranormal or fantasy books appeal to a broad audience.

“About 40% of my readers are adults,” Noël said. “I love that these boundaries don’t exist anymore, and that the books are just engaging for people who want to read them.”

The young adult market is one publishing area where there’s still a lot of money being spent, Deahl said.

“There’s a lot of high-figure acquisitions being done,” she said. “That speaks to the intense popularity of the market.”

For Noël, film or TV rights also means better publishing deals. She recently struck a \$3 million deal before bonuses with St. Martin Press for a new series, “Soul Seekers,” due in 2012.

An Orange County native, Noël grew up in Yorba Linda with little money. She dabbled in college but left to start work.

She’s held a number of jobs, including flight attendant.

She became inspired to write “The Immortals” series after losing three loved ones in five months. Shortly after, her husband found out he had leukemia. He’s now in remission.

Five years ago, she quit and started writing full time.

“I just couldn’t live in the world the same way anymore,” Noël said. “I was sort of on a quest to find comfort and answers, and I started reading metaphysical and afterlife books. That’s how I got the idea for the ‘The Immortals.’”

There was a lot of early rejection, she said.

“I got rejected by just about everybody,” Noël said. “As much as it hurt, it forced me to figure out why. They were all saying the same thing: You have a great voice, but the plot needs work.”

So Noël went back to the drawing board. She attended writing classes. She took the advice of one agent and read a book on plots, “Story,” by Robert McKee.

By page 25 she said she knew what she was doing wrong.

“I was ruthless with my manuscript,” Noël said of the editing process.

She’s been with her publishing company—St. Martin’s Press, part of Britain’s Macmillan Publishers Ltd.—since the beginning.

She started pitching her first novel back in 2002. In 2004 it got picked up by an agent.

Her first seven books were contemporary stories. She kept coming back to the young adult genre, somehow always finding a teen protagonist in her stories. Her first agent who sat her down and said she had the makings of a young adult novelist.

Childhood Influence

Writing about teens is close to her heart, Noël said.

She grew up poor with divorced parents, the youngest of three girls.

Noël said she is driven by her upbringing.

“Because of my background, I don’t know if you ever reach any amount of money where you feel secure,” she said.

It was right before “Evermore,” her first book in the “Immortals” series, was published in the U.S. that she noticed things taking off. The book already was big in Germany and was being bid on by several publishers there and in other countries. Then the New York Times and Publishers Weekly noticed.

“That was the moment that I went, ‘Huh, maybe I can make a living off of this,’” Noël said.

It took 15 years to write her first book, Noël said. Now it takes three to six months to write a book, she said.

Noël works every day, weekends and holidays, too, she said.

Her literary agent serves as her film agent. She has one assistant. Her husband acts as her lawyer and manager, though she used an entertainment lawyer for the Hollywood deals. She also has a foreign rights agent.

“The Immortals” books have been translated into more than 37 languages and have been sold in 50 countries.

Gomez is a former Business Journal editor and freelance writer based in Long Beach.

MEDIA

Movie Studios Smell Out Teen Spirits

By MICHELLE KUNG

Sequels and prequels are Hollywood summer staples, powering some of the biggest hits that are popular with young-adult viewers. But with the final installments on the way for some big series, studios are hunting for new properties.

Warner Bros.' "Harry Potter" franchise this summer winds down with its eighth movie, closing out a series that has brought parent Time Warner Inc. nearly \$6.4 billion world-wide. Next year, the fifth "Twilight" movie will mark the end of Summit Entertainment LLC's lucrative foray into the world of vampires and their teenage lovers.

To continue winning over those audiences, studios have been snapping up the rights to science-fiction and fantasy book series that have the potential to spin off sequels—and lucrative ancillary products like clothes and memorabilia. A movie from a trilogy of books by Suzanne Collins is one of the most hotly anticipated waiting in the wings, as are films with personnel from the "Twilight" movies.

"The competition for young-adult material and the market for speculative fiction, including books and packaging deals, are picking up," says Erik Feig, Summit's president of world-wide production and acquisitions. "Our biggest challenge now is to

find innovative voices without repeating ourselves so fans don't feel like we're giving them something that's a duplicate."

Like many studios, Summit has bought rights for some series of novels even before they hit bookstores, such as the dystopian thriller "Divergent," due to be published next month.

Popular fantasy novels, comic books and hits from other media are desirable because of their established young fan bases. Studios often option all the titles in a book series at once, so if the first film adaptation is a success, the studios quickly can churn out sequels.

The highest-profile of the new candidates is Lions Gate Entertainment Corp.'s adaptation of Ms. Collins's popular "Hunger Games" trilogy, which has more than 8.8 million copies in print. The series' first film, about a teenage girl forced to compete for her life on a reality television show, has a production budget of roughly \$75 million and is slated for release next March.

Viacom Inc.'s Paramount Pictures recently enlisted the screenwriter who adapted the "Twilight" series to do the same for "Earthseed," the first book in Pamela Sargent's trilogy about futuristic teenagers born from the genetic bank of a spaceship.

News Corp.'s Twentieth Century Fox and specialty division Fox 2000 have at least three

In the Pipeline

'Divergent'
By Veronica Roth
Book series debut:
May 2011
Studio: Summit
Ms. Roth is 22.

'Earthseed'
By Pamela Sargent
Book series debut: 1983
Studio: Paramount
'Twilight' screenwriter
expected to write, produce

Trilogy
By Amanda Hocking
Book series debut: 2010
Studio: Media Rights
Ms. Hocking, 26, self-published nine e-books.

Lions Gate hopes books in the 'Hunger Games' trilogy by Suzanne Collins, pictured, will form a new franchise among young adults. Some series on which other studios are banking are listed.



Associated Press

young-adult franchises in development. One of them, the "Incarceron" series, about a teenager caught in a futuristic prison, has "Twilight" heartthrob Taylor Lautner attached to star in the movie. Warner Bros., Walt Disney Co., Comcast Corp.'s Universal Pictures and Sony Corp.'s specialty division Sony Screen

Gems also have young-adult fantasy or science-fiction properties in the works.

Developing and producing a successful franchise is far from easy. For every success story à la "Twilight," there's at least one bust like 2007's "The Golden Compass," which cost over \$180 million to produce but generated

just \$70 million in domestic ticket sales for New Line Cinema. After that debut, no sequel was planned.

"Many of these studio options are speculative," says producer Roy Lee, whose Vertigo Entertainment is developing several young-adult series for film and TV. "They wait to see which ti-

ties blow up as blockbusters, and if they don't take off, they don't bother following through."

Studios adapting popular books also now must please young readers who have created devotional websites and faux trailers and communicated with authors via blogs, Twitter and Facebook.

"My fans will put together and send me videos of themselves in film trailers and email me their head shots," says author Alyson Noël, whose "Immortals" series, about a 16-year-old who can learn peoples' thoughts by touching them was recently optioned by Summit in a six-figure deal.

"Movies are not a novelty item anymore; they're a distribution platform and method of communication," says producer Bob Shaye, who has two young-adult fantasy adaptations in development.

When he was co-chief executive at New Line, Mr. Shaye endured flops like "The Golden Compass" but also oversaw one of the most successful fantasy adaptations in recent times, the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

Mr. Shaye warns that the genre may have an expiration date. "I don't expect we're going to be spending the next five years looking for young-adult material," he says. "But for the moment, we believe it's a genre worth pursuing."

COVER STORY

Alyson Noël

No. 1 New York Times Best-selling author of young adult novels

20 WOMEN TO WATCH, CONTINUED ...Published: March 01, 2011



Hometown: Laguna Niguel

Age: 46

Family: Married, no kids

First job: When I was 16, I was a member of the Bullock's Department store Teen Board, which led to a job in the Women's Suits department.

Worst job: During my 20s, I lived in Mykonos, Greece, for seven years, where I spent one summer helping to open a new hotel – a job that involved, among other things, everything from working the front desk, to tending bar, to cleaning rooms. Cleaning rooms was, hands down, the absolute worst job I've ever had!

Biggest break: Well, there were two – selling my debut novel, “Faking 19,” in a two-book deal to [St. Martin's Press](#) back in 2004. I'm now under contract with them for 21 books. And “Evermore” hitting the New York Times best-sellers list for 41 weeks – 10 of those weeks at No. 1. It opened up a whole new world of readers that I hadn't accessed before.

Secret to your success: Perseverance is key. When I first started out, I had no idea how difficult it was to break in, but instead of getting derailed by those early rejections, I vowed to work harder.

Advice to other women in business: I know it's a cliché, but always go with your gut. I've yet to regret a decision that was based on my instincts, though I've regretted plenty that were led by my head!

Favorite all-time book: The two books that changed my life early on are “Are You There God? It's Me,

Margaret,” by Judy Blume. I read it in sixth grade and was blown away by its realness, and I knew that someday I wanted to try to write like that, too. And “Catcher in the Rye,” by J.D. Salinger. I was a high school misfit and could really relate to Holden’s feelings of isolation. Both of those books made me realize that a good story could be a transcendent experience.

With more than 5 million copies in print, [Alyson Noël](#)’s books have been published in 36 countries and have been best-sellers here and abroad.

In 2010, her middle-grade “Immortals” spin-off, the “Riley Bloom” series, sold to St. Martin’s Press for seven figures. Most recently, Noël signed another seven-figure deal for a new young adult series, “Soul Seekers,” to be published by St. Martin’s Press in 2012.

As if that wasn’t enough, film rights for her adult novel “Fly Me to the Moon” have been optioned to Fox 2000, and rights for the “Immortals” and “Riley Bloom” series have been optioned by a major studio.

“I may be biased, but these days some of the best writing out there can be found on the Young Adult shelves,” Noël says. “There’s such poetry and immediacy to the storytelling, and it’s the only way for an adult to experience all of those wonderful firsts once again!”

ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

Published: February 28, 2011



Alyson Noel, Monarch Beach

Alyson Noel, New York Times Bestselling Author

Author Alyson Noel is an Orange County native who left home after high school to travel the world. Visiting locales from Paris to Marrakesh, Noel lived for extended periods in Mykonos and Manhattan, and has worked as a babysitter, sales clerk, office manager, jewelry maker, T-shirt painter, hotel front desk clerk and flight attendant. She found her niche as a writer, and is now a best-selling, award-winning author with over 5 million copies in print. Her books have been published in 36 countries, have hit the New York Times, USA Today, Publishers Weekly, Wall Street Journal, LA Times, NCIBA, and Walmart bestsellers lists, and won many awards including the *National Reader's Choice Award*.



Following the international success of her young adult paranormal *Immortal* series, the author signed a seven-figure deal for her new four-book *Soul Seeker* series. Her only adult novel, *Fly Me to the Moon*, was optioned for development by Ridley Scott. Noel now lives in Orange County, where she is working on her new series.

Peter Albæk



»Der er brug for nytænkning – ikke nye pointsystemer« S8

Mandag 29. november 2010

NR. 74 ÅRGANG 5

UDGIVET AF METROXPRESS DANMARK

24 timer

FORMIDDAG
-5°
EFTERMIDDAG
0°

WikiLeaks løfter sløret for nye hemmeligheder » S11



Vil du passe din gamle mor? » S8



På flugt ind i fantasien

Interview med bestsellerforfatteren Alyson Noël » S20

Hvordan dufter lykken? » S10



Bliv vild med det vilde

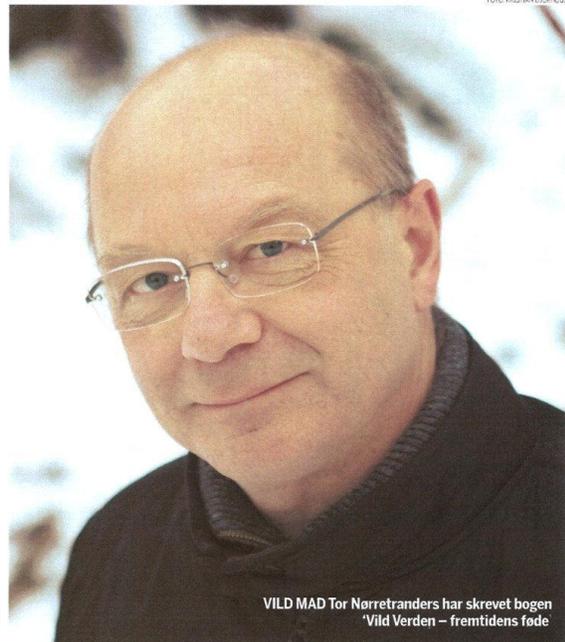
- Landbruget står foran et vendepunkt på grund af klimaproblemer, advarer professor
- Det bliver vildt mad fra naturen, der skal redde os fra sult og sygdom, mener forfatter Tor Nørretranders



■ Vildt mad kan måske være en del af løsningen på en kommende fødevareremangel, erkender Michael Stevns, Dansk Landbrug & Fødevarer

■ Læs stjernekokken Claus Meyers guide til, hvordan du selv får tjek på den vilde, gratis mad

LÆS MERE » S6-7



VILD MAD Tor Nørretranders har skrevet bogen 'Vild Verden – fremtidens føde'

Bredbånd
4/1 Mbit
179,-

Trådløs
router
0,-
SPAR 400,-

Samlet
pris
179,-

RENT UD SAGT

BESTIL PÅ FULLRATE.DK SENEST 15. DECEMBER
Mindstapris i 6 mdr. kr. 1.272,- inkl. oprettelser 198,-. Forbehold for levering. Beregnet ca. 10 % overhold.



24 entertainment

Flugten ind i fantasien

Overnaturlige fortællinger kan være en tiltrængt flugtvej væk fra virkeligheden, mener den amerikanske bestsellerforfatter Alyson Noël, der står bag ungdomsserien 'De udødelige'. For hende selv har skrivningen virket som terapi, når de svære teenageår og familiemedlemmers død skulle bearbejdes



Af Katinka Agger og Louise Leth-Espensen (foto)

Det er ikke, fordi Alyson Noël's egne teenageår var for morsomme. Hendes far forlod hende, hendes søstre og mor, og pengene i den lille familie var små.

Og som om det ikke var nok, blev Alyson oven i købet drillet i skolen. Alligevel er teenageårene blevet en tid, forfatteren igen og igen vender tilbage til helt frivilligt.

»Indeni er jeg stadig 16 år – lige meget hvor mange gange jeg har haft fødselsdag. Jeg er en teenager, der er endt med hus og mand uden at vide hvordan,« fortæller forfatteren, da hun gæster København i anledning af, at tredje bind i hendes bestsellerserie 'De udødelige' for nylig er udkommet på dansk. I alt har hun skrevet 13 bøger, og kun en af dem var ikke for teenagere.

»Jeg har skrevet én voksenbog, og det var meget sværere for mig at komme ind i hovedet på min hovedperson end ellers,« forklarer forfatteren og tilføjer, at hun skam gerne ville skrive mere for voksne, men at ungdomsbøgerne bare falder hende mere naturligt.

Og så nyder hun kontakten med læserne, der ifølge forfatteren bliver langt mere direkte med den aldersgruppe, hun skriver til. Det

'SKYGGELAND' OG 'DE UDØDELIGE'

■ 'Skyggeland' er tredje bind i ungdomsserien 'De udødelige' og udkom i Danmark i oktober. Serien har seks bind i alt, som alle er udkommet i USA. De sidste tre bind kommer på dansk i løbet af 2011. Flere af bøgerne har ligget på New York Times' bestsellerliste.

■ Serien handler om den 16-årige Ever, der opdager, hun er udødelig, da hun er eneste overlevende i en trafikulykke.

ALYSON NOËL

■ Alyson Noël er født og opvokset i Orange County i Californien i USA. Hvornår hun er født, holder forfatteren imidlertid hemmeligt.

■ Efter en rygsækrejse kort efter high school slog hun sig ned i Grækenland, hvor hun arbejdede flere år i turist-industrien. Tog derefter en uddannelse som stewardesse og boede i New York, mens hun arbejdede for Delta Airlines i mere end 10 år. Hun opgav jobbet og begyndte at skrive på fuld tid efter terrorangrebet den 11. september 2001.

■ Bor i dag igen i Orange County.

er langt fra usædvanligt, at hun modtager e-mails fra teenagere, der selv har prøvet at blive mobbet eller kender til andre af de problemer hun skriver om.

Skrivning var terapeutisk
Oprindeligt begyndte Alyson Noël da også at skrive, fordi hun ønskede at bearbejde sine egne teenageår. Men med serien 'De udødelige' gik hun skridtet videre efter to familiemedlemmer døde af kræft, en god ven druknede, og hendes egen mand fik leukæmi – alt sammen inden for få måneder.

»Døden og hvad, der mon kom efter, fyldte pludselig utrolig meget i mit liv. Og det var det, der gav mig ideen,« siger hun og forklarer,

der slår hele hendes familie ihjel. Hun er desuden synsk og finder sin sjælsmage i den rige mand Damen, der ligesom hende selv er udødelig.

■ Alyson Noël har udgivet syv bøger, inden hun begyndte på serien. Hun arbejder lige nu på en serie for tweens, hvor hovedpersonen også har optrådt i 'De udødelige'.

rer, at det overnaturlige derfor fik lov at gøre sit indtog i hendes bøger. Og endnu en gang havde skrivningen en næsten terapeutisk effekt.

»Det var at skrive de bøger, der hjalp mig igen med det. Min mand er rask i dag, men jeg fandt alligevel ud af, at jeg tror på en form for udødelighed – at vores sjæl lever videre, efter vi er borte,« siger hun. At 'De udødelige', også ramte lige i hjertet af hendes unge læsere, forstår forfatteren sådan set godt.

»Den har det overnaturlige element og på samme tid også nogle realistiske elementer. Ja, min hovedperson Ever er ganske vist udødelig og synsk og kan løbe helt utroligt stærkt, men hun er også en ægte teenager med helt normale problemer,« siger forfatteren og tilføjer, at det overnaturlige desuden giver læserne en flugtvej ind i fantasiens verden, som mange nok kan have brug for.

Og det mener hun nok også er en af grundene til, at genren er så stor netop nu i en usikker verden med økonomisk krise og krige, der varer i det uendelige. En usikkerhed, som hun mener man kan lægge oven i alle de problemer, de fleste teenagere i forvejen går og kæmper med.

Men selv om engle, vampyrer og dæmoner synes at være højeste mode inden for litteraturen, så afviser forfatteren, at hun har tænkt i trends, da hun begyndte på serien.

»Jeg begyndte på 'De udødelige', netop som den trend begyndte at tage fart, men alligevel var jeg faktisk ret nervøs for, om bøgerne ville falde i god jord. For de var så meget anderledes end de andre bøger, jeg havde skrevet,« siger hun.

I dag kan hun glæde sig over, at det gik trods alt, for flere af seriens bøger har siden ligget på New York Times' bestsellerliste.

katinka.agger@24timer.dk



SKRIVETERAPI Dødsfald i familien inspirerede Alyson Noël til at skrive historien om den udødelige pige Ever i serien 'De udødelige'.





ANMELDELSER

Søg efter nye og gamle anmeldelser fra Berlingske Tidende på www.berlingske.dk/anmeldelser

KULTUR

»Bøgerne hjalp mig ud på den anden side«

Der skulle et terrorangreb, tre døde familiemedlemmer og en kræftsyg mand til, at Alyson Noël begyndte at skrive fantasybøger for teenagere. »Når jeg er ude at møde mine læsere, er omkring 20 procent af dem voksne,« siger forfatteren, der er oversat til 35 sprog.

Af Jeppe Bangsgaard

Teenagepiger kaster sig forslugent over bøger, hvor spøgelse færdes blandt mennesker, og hvor romancer mellem vampyrer og skolepiger er det mest naturlige i verden. Særligt Twilight-serien af amerikanske Stephenie Meyer har både som bøger og film fået overvældende succes.

En anden superstjerne inden for genren i kølvandet på »Twilight« er amerikanske Alyson Noël. Hun har på verdensplan solgt over tre millioner eksemplarer af fantasyserien »De udødelige«, der er oversat til 35 sprog og har ligget på The New York Times' bestsellerliste uden ophold i langt over et år, ligesom den har modtaget en strøm af priser. De tre første bind er udkommet på dansk og er allerede solgt i ni oplag.

Men hvad er det, der gør især unge piger så fascinerede af magi, mystik og parallelle universer? Spørger man Alyson Noël, handler det blandt andet om tryghed i en usikker verden.

»Vi lever i en tid, hvor vi hele tiden hører om krige, økonomisk krise og miljøkatastrofer. Nyhederne, vi bliver bombarderet med, er meget dystre for tiden. Fantasyliteratur bliver en måde at slippe væk fra virkeligheden på,« fortæller Alyson Noël, da hun besøger København.

I hendes serie »De udødelige« er hovedpersonen den 16-årige pige Ever. Da hendes familie kommer ud for en trafikulykke, er hun den eneste overlevende, og i forbindelse med den hændelse udvikler hun overnaturlige evner. Blot ved en flygtig berøring af et andet menneske kender hun hele vedkommendes livshistorie og kan læse tan-



Alyson Noël mener, at fantasygenrens succes skyldes, at vi søger tryghed i en usikker verden. Foto: Christian Als

ker. Senere møder hun den udødelige, eksotiske Damen, der kan se ind i hendes sjæl. Netop det romantiske spor er afgørende for pigerne, der læser bøgerne, mener Alyson Noël.

Søger sjælevenner

»I »Twilight« var romanen central, og det er den også

i mine bøger. Der er noget utrolig romantisk over tanken om to sjælevenner, der er bestemt for hinanden og kommer tilbage til hinanden gennem århundreder, som det er tilfældet i mine bøger. Der er så meget håb i ideen om, at der er én person derude et sted, og det appellerer til teenagepiger. Og så er

der også det aspekt, at man særligt i de her usikre tider fokuserer på det, der virkelig betyder noget, nemlig relationer mellem mennesker og ikke det materielle.«

Men selv om temaet på den måde kan minde om »Twilight«, er Alyson Noël ikke inspireret af sin kollega Stephenie Meyer.

»Da jeg startede på serien, var jeg ikke klar over, at jeg var del af en ny trend. Jeg skrev bare det, jeg følte, jeg skulle skrive.«

Forinden havde Alyson Noël skrevet syv bøger, der foregik i et realistisk univers. Egentlig er hun uddannet stewardesse og har arbejdet nogle år med at rejse verden rundt. Der skulle en dramatisk begivenhed til, før hun turde kaste sig over den gamle drøm om at skrive.

Terrorangrebet 11. september ændrede fuldstændig vilkårene for arbejdet. Man søgte efter bomber i hvert eneste fly, og lønningerne faldt, så jeg tænkte, at nu ville det være et rigtig godt tidspunkt at se, om jeg kunne lykkes med at skrive en bog. Så det blev virkelig et vendepunkt for mig.«

Dødsfald i familien

Det var dog ikke før, hun mistede tre familiemedlemmer på kort tid og hendes mand

blev alvorligt syg af leukæmi, at hun selv begyndte at skrive bøger, der bevægede sig ind i det paranormale. Som en slags terapi oven på de voldsomme personlige oplevelser opsøgte hun alt, hvad hun kunne finde af information om metafysikken, tog kurser i det og var også flere gange i hypnose.

»Derefter følte jeg mig klar til også selv at inddrage det paranormale i mine bøger. Bøgerne hjalp mig med at komme ud på den anden side.«

Alyson Noël skriver fortrinvis for teenagepiger. Men hun har også mange voksne læsere.

»Når jeg er ude at møde mine læsere, er omkring 20 procent voksne. Efter Harry Potter-bøgerne er fantasy ikke længere noget, voksne skammer sig over at læse.«

Når det netop er litteratur til unge piger, der er blevet Alyson Noels metier, skyldes det, at hun selv føler sig i målgruppen, selv om hun for længst er blevet en etableret forfatter og en gift kvinde.

»Jeg har indset, at jeg har en svaghed for den periode af livet. Jeg har aldrig følt mig som en voksen, men som en teenager, der bare er havnet i et hus med en mand.«

3 AF ALYSON NOËL – »DE UDØDELIGE«

Serien består af i alt seks bind. Bind fire udkommer på dansk til marts.



Bind 1: Evermore

Da den 16-årige pige Ever opdager, at hun kan læse andres tanker, lukker hun sig inde i sig selv. Men da hun møder den drømmemagtige fyr Damen, bliver det endnu mere mystisk – for han kan se ind i hendes sjæl.



Bind 2: Blå måne

Den blå månens opstigning varsler et uhyggeligt valg for Ever – skal hun skrive tiden tilbage og frelse sin familie fra den ulykke, der tog livet af dem, eller skal hun blive i nuet og redde Damen, der bliver svagere dag for dag?



Bind 3: Skyggeland

Evers elskede, den udødelige Damen, er blevet forbandet af en hævnerrig rival fra sin fortid. Nu kan selv en flygtig berøring mellem Ever og Damen vise sig fatal – og et kys kan kaste dem begge ned i evig glæmsel i det uhyggelige Skyggeland.

JULY 26, 2010, 2:00 PM ET

Immortals author Alyson Noël Signs 7-Figure Deal For New Series

By Gina Bernal



Nancy Villere

While other publishers continue their search for the next Stephenie Meyer, St. Martin's Press is putting its money behind a certifiable home-grown success. Alyson Noël, author of the internationally bestselling Immortals series, has signed a new four-book contract with St. Martin's Griffin imprint, brokered by Bill Contardi of Brandt & Hochman Literary Agents. A spokesperson for the author shared the details of the deal exclusively with Speakeasy, saying Noël will receive a "healthy seven-figures with additional performance bonuses that could double that." The exact amount was not revealed but confirmed to be a "multi-million" dollar advance. St. Martin's hopes to publish the new Soul Seeker series starting in 2012.

Noël has been with the publisher since her 2005 debut, but it was 2009's *Evermore*, the first book of the young adult paranormal Immortals series, that catapulted her onto bestseller lists. Currently, the Immortals can be found at #5 on the *New York Times* Children's Series list—just under media-fueled franchises *Twilight*, *Percy Jackson*, *Pretty Little Liars* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. The latest book, *Dark Flame*, debuted at #6 on *WSJ's* best seller list and *Radiance*, the first in an Immortals spin-off series, releases in September. Noël's only adult novel, *Fly Me to the Moon*, was recently optioned for development by Ridley Scott's Scott Free Productions.

We spoke with the author about her new series, making it big and writing paranormal in a *Twilight*-dominated market.

Can you tell us about the series you've just signed a new deal for? Is it set in the Immortals world?

It's a young adult supernatural novel and it's a completely new world. The Immortals is set in Laguna Beach, California, and this book is going to be set in the Southwest, most likely New Mexico. So it's going to have a very different atmosphere, landscape and feel, and it'll explore themes of Shamanism and the ability to walk through the Upperworld and the Underworld and to walk amongst the dead. It's about a 16-year-old girl who is quite different from Ever, the protagonist in the Immortals series, who starts suffering the symptoms of what appears to be a psychotic break. But her grandmother recognizes it for what it is: her heredity ability—her father had it as well—to walk between the Upperworld and the Underworld.

What do you think was the moment you really felt you'd arrived as a writer?

I think there were two. Seeing *Faking 19*, my debut novel, on the bookshelf; I had a very nerdy moment where I went to all the local bookstores with my mom just so we could stand in front of it and gape. I was raised by a single mom and we really struggled financially growing up and she sacrificed a lot in order to keep a roof over my head. She's the one that shared with me the joy and magic of books, so sharing that moment with her and going to all those bookstores and geeking in the middle of the aisle was a pretty 'I-can't-believe-this-is-happening' moment. That was the first one, and then I would say getting the phone call from my editor and finding out about [*Evermore* making] the *New York Times* and *USA Today* lists.

With *Twilight* having saturated media in general, there are people who roll their eyes and think this genre needs to go away. What would you say to naysayers?

Anytime anything becomes as hugely iconic as *Twilight* has, there is always a backlash effect that follows where people roll their eyes at everything else in the genre as well and think it's a 'me, too' or copycat. But there's so many different paranormal variables out there in these stories that we're telling, and for mine I really explore a lot of metaphysical themes. I explore reincarnation. I explore the question of mortality versus immortality. And I think—other than the books sharing a love story—that the theme and what the books are really about and the questions I explore are entirely different from what [Stephenie Meyer's] doing and from what a lot of other people are doing as well. So I wouldn't be so quick to group all the paranormal books as *Twilight* copycats and wannabes. There's so many great stories out there and they all have something interesting and unique to say.

Immortals' author thanks Troy High teacher

By LORI BASHEDA

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

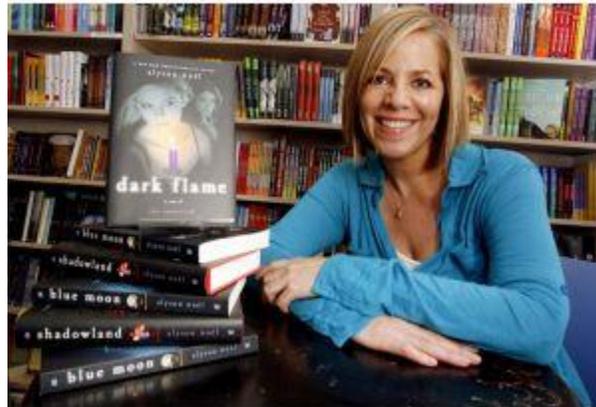
lbasheda@ocregister.com

Story Highlights

[Read a Q&A with Alyson Noel in July, 2009.](#)

Take note, high school English teachers.

The next time you ask your students to write, say, an essay on Tolstoy, and some student instead turns in a short story that has nothing to do with anything remotely Russian, go with it.



Author Alyson Noel poses with her published books at the Laguna Beach Bookstore.
ANA P. GUTIERREZ, FOR THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

[MORE PHOTOS »](#)

That's what a Troy High School teacher did back in 1983.

And best-selling author Alyson Noel says that if he hadn't, there's a good chance teens across the country wouldn't be gobbling up her new hit book series, "The Immortals."

"I didn't fit in," Noel says of her high school days. "I didn't belong. I couldn't wait to get out of high school."

But then one day in her senior year English class, the one class she didn't routinely cut, the teacher announced that a student had turned in a story that was very good and he wanted to read it aloud.

"Oh, he's gonna read a story, she remembers thinking. "Nap time."

Then she heard the words. Gulp. The story was hers.

Twenty-two years later, when Alyson got her first book, "Faking 19," published in 2005, she returned to Troy High to hand a copy of it to that teacher, Mr. Fares Sawaya, opening it up to the page where she thanks him for sending her on her way.

That's not to say that Alyson stopped cutting class after that magical moment when she heard her teacher reading her words aloud. She just started using her down time while cutting class to write stories.

...

I met Alyson for lunch one afternoon at Olamendi's Mexican Restaurant in Monarch Beach, just down the road from the Laguna Beach house where she and her husband Sandy live. She was well put together, warm and friendly. And I had a hard time envisioning her as a high school slacker.

Alyson said she didn't start to slide until seventh grade when her dad, an architectural engineer, left her homemaker mom. Suddenly, the girl who once had a horse named Lucky in the backyard of her showy Yorba Linda home was eating frozen waffles for dinner.

Her mom, Elaine, went to work for minimum wage at JCPenny. And to help put food on the table, Alyson got a job when she turned 16 in women's clothing at Bullock's after school and on weekends.

Feeling alienated from her classmates for the first time ever, she worked out her feelings by writing diary entries, poems and short stories, mostly at night while listening to old Bowie or Clash records, at a desk in a corner of her bedroom.

After high school, Alyson bounced around, at one point living in Mykonos, Greece, making jewelry and hand painting T-shirts. In 1994, she got a job as a flight attendant based in Manhattan. Five years later, while visiting Newport Beach, she met her future husband. Alyson told him on their first date that she wanted to be a writer.

"He said, 'Oh, what are you writing?'"

"I thought, 'Oh my god, I'm not writing anything. I'm just talking about it.'"

She had taken a few classes at Fullerton Community College after high school but never graduated. Now she signed up for an online writing class. A classmate, Susanne Dunlap, who has since written best-selling historical fiction, read one of her short stories and referred her to her agent.

"Your voice is great but the plot is a mess," the agent wrote back. He told Alyson to read a copy of "Story," by screenwriting guru Robert McKee. She finished it in two days, went back through her story, cutting ruthlessly, and sent it back in.

On Feb. 4, 2004, she says, laughing that she remembers the exact date, she got a call while returning a rental car at John Wayne Airport after a trip to Las Vegas. St. Martin's Griffin was signing her as its first young adult author, giving her \$10,000 plus royalties for her first book.

"I cried and screamed and all those things," she says.

"Faking 19," a story about two high school friends, was published in 2005 and Alyson was signed to write more teen novels.

Then her life took a dark turn. Within six months, her first love, skipper Gary Edwards, was killed when his crab boat, Big Valley, sank on the reality TV show, "Deadliest Catch," her mother-in-law died of thyroid cancer, her husband's twin brother died of pancreatic cancer and her husband was diagnosed with leukemia (he's in remission).

Searching for answers and comfort, Alyson turned to books about the soul's journey, reincarnation and the afterlife. And that is how she gave birth to the protagonist of "The Immortals," a series of page turners which has sold about 3 million copies and landed her on The New York Times' bestseller list for 55 weeks.

Ever is a girl who loses her parents and little sister in a car wreck and almost dies herself. Through her near-death experience, she gains psychic powers and becomes "an immortal," reading her classmates' thoughts and auras at a fictitious high school called Bay View in Laguna Beach, while falling under the spell of the one boy whose mind she can't read.

During this time, Alyson underwent hypnosis herself, doing some past life regressions with Yale-trained psychiatrist, author and frequent TV talk-show guest Brian Weiss. She doesn't want to get into specifics about the experience.

"I saw some very interesting events that when all pieced together made some kind of interesting sense," she told me, laughing at how vague she was being. "Whether a past life or an archetype, I don't know. But it was interesting."

She also did a three-day psychic development workshop with celebrity psychic (and Laguna Beach neighbor) James Van Praagh. During one telepathic exercise, she said, she was able to read an image someone was holding in their mind: A fluffy white dog. "It was really weird."

The first book in "The Immortals," series, "Evermore," was published in early 2009. The fourth one, "Dark Flame," hits stores Tuesday (June 22). On Monday, Alyson will be at the Borders in Mission Viejo to sign copies.

All high school slackers welcome. Contact the writer: 714-932-1705 or lbasheda@ocregister.com



[HOME](#) -> [INDUSTRY NEWS](#) -> [BEA](#)



ALYSON NOËL. PHOTO: NANCY VILLERE.

BEA 2010 Show Daily: Alyson Noël Steps onto Middle-Grade Turf

By Sally Lodge

May 25, 2010

With more than 1.8 million books in print, Alyson Noël's the Immortals series has clearly scored a hit with teen readers. In *Radiance* (Square Fish, Sept.), the author makes her middle-grade debut, launching a paranormal series that's a spinoff of her bestselling YA series. At the center of the new story arc is Riley, first introduced in *Evermore*, the first Immortals novel, who is the younger sister of protagonist Ever. St. Martin's/Griffin will release *Dark Flame*, the fourth Immortals novel, next month.

The idea for the middle-grade series came from Square Fish publisher Jean Feiwel, says Noël. "When Jean proposed this to me, I jumped at the chance to write about Riley again," she recalls. "Riley ended up having a bigger part in *Evermore* than I'd envisioned because I enjoyed writing her so much."

But the author had an initial moment of self-doubt. "Before I began to write *Radiance*, I went into a panic," she says. "I'm so used to writing for teens, and that's my state of mind anyway. No matter how old I really am, I am a teen in my head, so I thought, 'How am I going to write for 12-year-olds or in the voice of a 12-year-old?' But I told myself not to worry about Riley's age, just recreate the character, and that worked." Noël calls *Radiance* "one of the easiest books I've ever written. It really flowed, and I enjoyed the entire process. And, honestly, that is not true of every book I write."

Noël published her first YA novel, *Faking 19*, back in 2005, while working as a flight attendant. "We'd have a lot of downtime between flights, and of course delays, so I was constantly writing—on cocktail napkins or anything I could find," says the author, who had been determined to become a writer since reading Judy Blume in sixth grade. She turned to writing full-time after September 11: "I knew that my job as flight attendant would never be the same. When we had to take pay cuts and do bomb searches, I realized that it was time to get serious about my writing."

After writing six subsequent novels, Noël decided to venture into paranormal fiction with the Immortals and didn't know how her readers would respond. "I didn't know what to expect, but it was a great and almost surreal moment when I realized that readers embraced it."