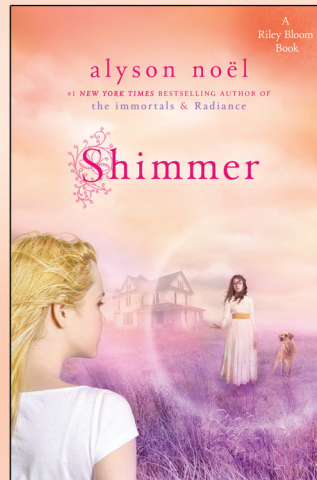


Q&A with alyson noël

AUTHOR OF

Shimmer

Book Two in the Riley Bloom Series



About alyson noël and Her Work

Alyson Noël is the #1 *New York Times*–bestselling, award-winning author of the Immortals series. She is also the author of the *Radiance*, book one in the Riley Bloom Series—a middle-grade spin-off of the Immortals. *Radiance* debuted on the *New York Times* bestseller list in its first week on sale, and soon went on to join the *USA Today* and *Publishers Weekly* bestseller lists. Now *Shimmer*, the second book in the Riley Bloom series, goes on sale March 15, 2011, and is destined to follow the same bestselling track.

In *Shimmer*, Riley is enjoying a little time off from her new role as a Soul Catcher, where she helps “stuck” spirits cross over into the afterlife. Riley, her dog Buttercup, and her mentor Bodhi are relaxing on the island of St. John. But they are interrupted when Riley encounters a young ghost named Rebecca. Despite Rebecca’s sweet appearance, she’s not at all what she seems. The daughter of a former plantation owner, Rebecca is furious about being murdered during a slave revolt in 1733. Her rage drives her to keep the other ghosts who died in the uprising trapped in a shimmering bubble she’s created to imprison them, making them relive their worst memories eternally. Rebecca promptly wields her vengeful feelings towards the Soul Catchers, trapping Bodhi and Buttercup in her world. Soon, it is clear that Riley is the only one who can save them. But is she ready to take on a ghost with centuries’ worth of strength and hate?

With over 3 million copies in print in the U.S. alone, Alyson's books have been published in 35 countries and have won numerous awards such as the *National Reader's Choice Award*, *NYLA Book of Winter Award*, *NYPL Stuff for the Teenage*, *TeenReads Best Books of 2007*, *Reviewer's Choice 2007 Top Ten*, chosen for the CBS *Early Show's* "Give the Gift of Reading" segment, and selected for *Seventeen* magazine's "Hot List" and Beach Book Club Pick. Alyson lives in Orange County, California, where she is working on her next book in the Riley Bloom series.

Questions for alyson Noël

Q. Riley Bloom first appears in *Evermore*, book one in your *New York Times*–bestselling Immortals Series. What inspired you to create a middle-grade series dedicated to Riley?

I had so much fun writing Riley's character in *Evermore* that she ended up getting a much bigger part than I'd planned. She just kept showing up—usually in some crazy wig and costume—and I kept indulging her because she was so enjoyable to have around. So, when my publisher approached me to create a series for Riley, I jumped at the chance—and I'm so glad I did. The Riley Bloom series is an absolute blast to write!

Q. *Shimmer* is your second middle-grade novel. How is the experience writing for tweens different than writing for young adults?

I'll be honest, as excited as I was to get started on Riley's adventures, when I first sat down to write, I had a moment of panic. I was so used to writing teens and adults that I just wasn't sure I could create a twelve-year-old protagonist who could carry an entire book. But when I realized that I didn't have to write a twelve-year-old *per se*, as no two are alike, that I only had to write Riley, a character I already knew and loved, the story began to flow and it turned out to be one of the most enjoyable experiences I've ever had writing a book.

I love writing YA, because there is just so much territory to explore, and since writing Riley's book, I've found that to be even more so. Even though she's dead, Riley has an entire future yawning before her just waiting to be discovered, and it's that part of the journey that makes it so much fun!

Q. In *Shimmer*, Riley faces her biggest challenge yet when she encounters Rebecca. What makes Rebecca's story all the more intense is that it's based on a true story of a slave revolt in St. John's Island in 1733. How did you discover this little-known period in history? Do you often turn to moments in history to enhance your writing?

One of the fun parts about writing Riley's character is that I can send her to any far-flung location in the world in order to deal with a ghost from any period in time—her being dead means she has none of the usual boundaries! So while I was researching an exotic location for *Shimmer*, I came across the story of the 1733 St. John slave revolt, and knew it would provide the perfect background for the kind of story I wanted to tell.



Q. As Riley learns more about her mentor Bodhi in *Shimmer*, she discovers he had an experience with bullying that is still haunting him. Bullying is an unfortunately popular subject these days. Do you feel it's especially important to address this issue for your middle-grade fans?

Definitely. I was bullied as a kid, and though it went on for five horrible years, the effects of that experience lingered much longer. Unfortunately back then, it was a topic that no one was willing to discuss, much less acknowledge. And I had neither the tools to deal with it, nor access to anyone or anything that could help me find my way through it. It's a subject I've explored in some of my previous books, and in light of all the recent bullying-related tragedies, I felt it was time to explore it again.

Q. *Shimmer* ends with some exciting hints at what might be in store for Riley as she continues her journey as a Soul Catcher. What can readers look forward to in *Dreamland*, the next installment in the Riley Bloom Series?

In *Dreamland*, Riley sets out to find the place where all dreams are created, hoping to send a message to her sister, Ever, but instead, she finds herself trapped in a nightmare created solely for her. . . .

Q. *Evermore* was your first paranormal novel and a departure from your seven previous books, yet it debuted on the *New York Times* bestseller list. What inspired you to try writing a novel in this genre?

I've always been fascinated by the paranormal, so I'm kind of surprised I didn't try my hand at it earlier. But, as my stories are often inspired by my own life experiences, it wasn't until a few years ago when I went through an intense period of grief after losing three loved ones in five months—and then shortly after nearly losing my husband as well—that I was ready to explore concepts of the afterlife, the soul's journey, and immortality in my writing.

Q. Did you always know you wanted to be a writer? When did you decide to pursue writing professionally?

Well first, I wanted to be a princess, and then a mermaid, but it was after I read my first Judy Blume book back in sixth grade that I knew I wanted to be a writer. And though I took the occasional writing class through the years and read a lot of books on the subject, it wasn't until the tragic events of 9/11, when I was working as a flight attendant out of New York City, that I decided to finally go after my dream. About two and a half years later, I landed my first book deal for my debut novel, *Faking 19*, and I've been at it ever since!

Q. You are a *New York Times*–, *USA Today*– and *Publishers Weekly*–bestselling, award-winning author published in 35 countries, with over 3 million books in print in the U.S. alone. Did you ever dream of this level of success?

I definitely dreamed of it, but it always seemed so hazy and distant, and just out of reach—so, to have it actually happen was a very surreal, enormously rewarding moment!



Q. You were raised by a single mother, and money was not abundant growing up. How has your life changed since *Evermore* debuted on the *New York Times* bestseller list in 2009?

I've been working since I was twelve, when my parents' divorce sent my mom to work as a department stores sales clerk, and the minimum wage she earned barely covered the necessities. I pitched in with babysitting gigs until I turned sixteen and went to work in retail, as well. So, while I'm definitely enjoying this newfound abundance, I still work as hard as ever, it's just what I do, and I don't see that changing anytime soon!

Q. Ridley Scott's production company, Scott Free Productions, has recently optioned your adult novel *Fly Me to the Moon* for development. Is there any movie talk for your young adult novels?

Oh, I've been champing at the bit on this one—and I can't wait until I get the okay to announce it! But for now, all I can say is that we are very, very, (very!) close to signing a contract with a major studio with an impressive track record for these kinds of projects!!

Q. What can fans expect to see next from Alyson Noël?

Well, *Shimmer* is coming soon! It will be in stores on March 15, 2011, and will be followed by the final installment in the Immortals series, *Everlasting*, in stores Summer 2011, and another Riley book in Fall 2011. So, it will be a busy year! Then, I'll be beginning a new YA series, Soul Seekers, which is set to debut in 2012!

Shimmer: Book Two in the Riley Bloom Series

By Alyson Noël

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Middle-Grade Fiction • Ages 9 to 12 / Grades 4 to 7 • 208 pages

\$7.99 • On Sale March 15, 2011

PRAISE FOR
Radiance

Book One in the Riley Bloom series

As seen in the *Los Angeles Times* Fall Preview of Children's Books, and *Girl's Life* magazine!

"A tale for lovers of the genre . . . For those preteens who like a mild supernatural adventure with romantic overtones, you go, ghost." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Riley, who appeared in ghost form to her older sister, Ever, in Noël's bestselling *Evermore*, takes center stage in this middle-grade spin-off, the first in a planned series . . . her wit, attitude, and maturation should have readers gladly following her into the second installment." —*Publishers Weekly*

"This new series is by the author of the *Immortals*, where readers first meet Ever and Riley. Narrating in a contemporary voice with an honest and comfortable cadence, Riley is imperfect, but always likable as she sweeps readers to her faraway land where she makes herself and readers assess their behaviors and, quite possibly, make adjustments. In the midst of this wildly fanciful setting, Noël is able to capture with nail-on-the-head accuracy common worries and concerns of today's tweens." —*School Library Journal*

"I must admit: There is not one thing I don't like about this book. I just listed all the pros and there are no cons. I would rate it FIVE STARS." —*AllyKatz.com*

"Radiance is a sweet story, a perfect summer read. . . . Like the *Immortals* series, Noël's world-building is superb. Radiance was the perfect book to tide me over until the next *Immortals* book comes out. As far as middle-grade books go, it's one of the best I've read." —*I'd so Rather be Reading*

"I think I found a great new series with tons of potential, and that series starts with Radiance. . . . This book is so cute!"
—*Bloody Bookaholic*

"I loved reading this book! Not only the fact that it was short and could be finished quickly, but also the idea of life after death and how those who have died may handle things. This read is perfect for any ages, especially younger teens! Its beauty and simplicity blend perfectly with romance and humor. I'm sad that I must wait until next year for *Shimmer*, the sequel. I will definitely miss Riley, Bodhi, and Buttercup! Also, the cover is just beautiful!" —*Novel Thoughts*

"Riley is such a great, refreshing character, and I loved her voice. She has some great inner monologues that made me laugh out loud. . . . I really enjoyed Radiance. While it's a spin-off from Alyson's *Immortal* series, you don't need to read *Evermore* to understand what is happening. It's the first in a middle-grade series, but I'd definitely recommend YA fans of Alyson Noël to pick it up. I'm looking forward to finding out what happens next with Riley and Bodhi." —*Mundie Moms*



“I loved this book! . . . Ms. Noël’s writing is fluid and flawless. She truly captures the thoughts of a twelve-year-old girl—I loved her inner monologues. They brought a smile to my face more than once. This series is going to be a treat not only for the new fans I’m sure Ms. Noël will acquire in young tweens, but I can guarantee it will be an instant hit with her YA and adult fan base. Loved it.” —[Bookwormygirl](#)

“Radiance is the first book in a spin-off of the Immortals. Although I enjoy that series, I have to admit that I was a little skeptical starting out with this book, as I thought Riley’s voice would be too young for me. Boy, was I sure proved wrong by little Miss Riley! I absolutely loved her voice and her inner monologue. . . . Overall, this was a light, fun read, and I would recommend it to any tweens and young teens that love paranormal books! I am eagerly anticipating the next Riley book, and I hope it will be just as good as Radiance.” —[5 Stars, IB Book Blogging](#)

“Riley is a unique character. She is sassy, feisty, and funny. . . . If you are a fan of the Immortals and always wanted to know what happened to Riley after she leaves Ever, you will want to read this book! If you have not read the books, this is a great opportunity to introduce yourself to the wonderful writing of the author.” —[Mrs. Yusko, Evergreen Junior High Library](#)

“I’m very pleased with this book. . . . This was a very quick read and yet wonderfully written and complex. . . . Riley’s story is touching, moving, and uplifting.” —[5 Stars, Bibliophilic Book Blog](#)

“I felt like I hit the jackpot when I read Radiance. It has a feisty girl as the main character, a lovably dorky boy, and a loyal dog. Add a plot with unexpected twists and a completely stunning ending, and you’ve got one sweet novel. . . . It was one of the most unique endings I have ever read. SWEETNESS!” —[5 Stars, Reading Vacation](#)

“All I can say is: It’s about time Riley got her own story. Listening to Ms. McInerney tell the tale led to many humorous moments, and I found myself giggling out loud. The tension between Bodhi and Riley is palpable as the story is read and unfolds. Listening to Riley’s trials and errors is definitely a treat for the ears. Overall, Radiance is a wonderful story, and the audio book uses just the right tone for Riley’s voice. The book is appropriate for anyone from middle school up.” —[5 Stars, TeensReadToo \(for the audio book\)](#)

“Alyson Noël’s Radiance is a promising start to a new and fun series for middle grades. . . . Noël has outdone herself with this one . . . it’s humorous, it’s heartwarming, and it’s extremely entertaining. . . . All in all, Radiance is a series that middle-grade girls will love. There’s a feisty protagonist, a swoon-worthy pal, an adorable yellow lab, and an incredible setting. What more could middle schoolers want?!?” —[Confessions of a Book Addict](#)

