



## Laguna Cove: A Novel

By Alyson Noël

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In Alyson Noël's *Laguna Cove*, moving to sunny Southern Cal feels like punishment to 17-year-old Anne. The hippie-ish school is different from her old one on the East Coast, and the social scene is all about hanging out at the beach and surfing. And then there's Ellie: beautiful, competitive queen of the social scene who takes an instant disliking to Anne. So when Chris--one of Ellie's oldest friends and, oh yeah, the most gorgeous guy in school--reaches out to Anne and offers to teach her how to surf, sparks fly...in more ways than one ...

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## Laguna Cove: A Novel By Alyson Noël Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### About the Author

**Alyson Noël** is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling, award-winning author of *Faking 19*, *Art Geeks and Prom Queens*, *Laguna Cove*, *Fly Me to the Moon*, *Kiss & Blog*, *Saving Zoë*, *Cruel Summer*, and the Immortals series including *Evermore*, *Blue Moon*, *Shadowland*, *Dark Flame*, and *Night Star*, as well as the Immortals spin-off series beginning with *Radiance*. With over 2 million copies in print in the US alone, her books have been published in 35 countries and have won awards including the National Reader's Choice Award, NYLA Book of Winter Award, NYPL Stuff for the Teenage, TeenReads Best Books of 2007, and Reviewer's Choice 2007 Top Ten, and have been 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. She lives in Laguna Beach, California.

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## Chapter One

"Excuse me. You're in my seat."

Anne brushed her long, blond hair out of her blue eyes and squinted at the man standing next to her. His hair was dark with the kind of deep side part used to disguise the early stages of baldness, and his charcoal gray suit, light blue shirt, and red tie were all slightly rumpled. Still, he looked vaguely familiar.

"I always book 2A." He gave her a condescending look.

"Oh, sorry. I guess you're right. I'm supposed to be in 2B. I'll move," she said, picking up the letter she'd been writing and grabbing her bag.

"Forget it." He sighed loudly, dropping his briefcase onto the aisle seat. "Just stay. I'll take B."

"Whatever." She rolled her eyes and focused again on her letter, making sure she hunched over it so he couldn't peek. She was in no mood to be messed with by some balding old fart. It was because of old people like him (namely her parents) that she was on this stupid plane in the first place. Did they really think that buying her a first-class ticket would lessen the pain of being dragged away from everything she knew and loved? Like the group of close friends she'd had since childhood, her hard-earned status as captain of the dive team, and Justin, the love of her life who she'd been dating for the last year and a half? Did they really think they could buy her off with an oversized seat, hot towels, and a choice of six movies?

The plane pushed away from the gate and the flight attendants asked everyone to direct their attention to the safety demonstration on the video screens. But Anne refused to look---there was no way some stupid video could save her from a crash. Thanks to her mom's affair with the senior partner at her law firm, and the bitter divorce that immediately followed her dad walking in on them, Anne's life as she knew it was completely crashing down around her, and there was nothing she could do to save it.

"Sir, you need to turn off your cell phone immediately."

Anne looked up to see an attendant with her hands placed firmly on her navy-clad hips. She was scowling at

Mr. 2B. “Sir, don’t make me say it twice.”

“Excuse me,” he said, putting his hand over the mouthpiece and glaring. “Do you know who I am?”

“Yes, Mr. O’Rourke, I’ve seen your show. And if you don’t turn off your phone right this minute, we will return to the gate so you can disembark and continue your call while we fly to Los Angeles without you.” She reached up and smoothed her blond French twist.

Anne watched him snap his phone shut and mumble something under his breath as the attendant walked away. Oh my God, no wonder he looks familiar. It was Bob O’Rourke from that news show on FOX. And she was sitting in his favorite seat, and she’d even rolled her eyes at him! But he was kind of a jerk, so she didn’t feel too bad about it.

The plane began its runway roll, quickly gaining speed. This was the moment when Anne would normally reach over and hold her dad’s hand, until the wheels lifted off the tarmac and retreated into the belly. She looked over at Bob O’Rourke, glasses perched on the end of his nose, scowling at a stack of papers in his hand, and she knew better than to even try. She was on her own now, in more ways than one.

She closed the window shade, fearing she might cry if she glimpsed the diminishing East Coast landscape, then reread her letter. But halfway through, her throat grew hot and tight and her eyes started to sting, so she quickly scribbled at the bottom, telling Justin how much she loved and missed him. Then she folded the letter into a perfect rectangle, stuffed it into an envelope, and shoved it deep inside her purse.

She was just drifting off to sleep when that same attendant came by and asked if they’d like anything to drink. And after listening to the very important Bob O’Rourke grill her about the available wines and their grape origins, Anne was feeling so bad for her she said, “Um, I’ll just have a bottle of water. I don’t need a glass or anything.” Then, determined to ignore the famous jerk beside her, she put on her headphones, extended her footrest, and turned on her in-seat video unit.

On channel 3 they were showing that movie, *Blue Crush*, but Anne flipped right past it. No way was she gonna watch a bunch of sun-struck surfer girls talk about the beach and “killer” waves. She’d be forced to live among people like that soon enough, and she was in no rush to get there.

She was down to just a five-hour cushion between her beloved old life and her dreaded new one, and she was determined to make the most of it. The only surfing she planned on doing was channel surfing.

She thought about her last phone call with her dad, and how he sounded so excited when he told her about the house he’d bought. “It’s in a private gated community called Laguna Cove, and we’re right on a cliff overlooking our very own beach.”

“We have our own beach?” she’d asked.

“Well, we have to share it with the neighbors.” He laughed.

“Is there a pool?” Anne remembered asking.

“No, honey, there’s not. But I think you’re really gonna like it here if you just give it a chance.”

Easy for him to say, since he’s never home much anyway, always away on location, or busy schmoozing

with fellow movie execs. And how could she possibly like a place with no pool? Diving was her passion! She'd spent the last three years at her private school, earning a reputation as a skilled and fearless competitor. And then, right when she finally makes captain, they yank her and send her to some stupid California beach town that's probably filled with pot-smoking hippie surfers named after flowers. She wasn't being negative, she told herself, just realistic.

The flight attendant reappeared with a bottle of water for Anne and a glass of red wine for the jerk in 2B, who was currently missing in action. "I'll just set this here for when he returns," she said.

But by the time they came by with the meals, he still wasn't back.

"Do you know what happened to the person that was sitting here?" Anne asked the male attendant with a deep tan and tightly cropped, bleached blond hair. "I think his name was Bob O'Rourke?"

"He moved to 5C. Looks like you're on your own. Do you need more wine?" he asked, motioning toward the untouched glass.

"Um, no. Maybe in a little while."

Then, the second he was gone, Anne craned her head around and peered down the aisle at 5C. Sure enough, there was Bob O'Rourke, napkin tucked into his collar, smug nose buried deep into his wine glass. Carefully picking up the wine next to her, she placed it on her own tray. Then she looked around nervously, to see if anyone noticed, but nobody seemed to care. Besides, the attendant guy thought it was hers, so it may as well be.

She lifted the glass to her nose and inhaled just like that O'Rourke guy did. Though she wasn't exactly sure what she was supposed to be sniffing for. Was it to see if it's rancid? And what did rancid wine smell like anyway?

She lowered the glass to her lips and sipped cautiously. Sometimes she and her friends drank beer and once last New Year's, champagne, but this wasn't too bad.

So she took another sip.

And no one seemed to notice she was still four years away from her twenty-first birthday.

Maybe flying first class wasn't so bad after all.

"Miss, Miss. Excuse me, we've landed."

"What?" Anne opened her eyes to find the blond attendant with the French twist kneeling next to her. "Are you feeling alright?" she asked, eyes narrowed with concern.

"Um, yeah. How much longer?"

"We're here."

"What? Oh my God! Okay, just let me get my stuff," Anne said, running her fingers through her tangled, messed up hair and searching the seat back pocket for her bottle of water. The inside of her mouth felt like

the Mojave Desert.

“Are you sure you’re okay?” she asked again.

“Yeah, really I’m fine,” Anne assured her, even though she felt the exact opposite of fine with her throbbing head and stinging eyes. And where is that damn water bottle?

“Well, we’re laying over and our van is waiting, so you really need to hurry.” She stood and ran her hands over her tight blue skirt.

“Okay, okay, I’m ready. Do you know where baggage claim is?” Anne asked.

“You can follow us.”

Anne stumbled behind the flight crew, listening to their laughter as they made fun of Bob O’Rourke. And even though she had no idea what their lives might really be like, at that exact moment she would have traded places with any one of them, no questions asked. Because at this point just about anyone’s life looked better than what she was in for.

Okay, maybe on the surface, moving to Laguna Beach, into a big house with a private beach, didn’t sound so bad, but it was all relative to what she was leaving behind.

She shifted her purse to the other shoulder and mentally scolded herself for drinking too much, passing out, and generally wasting the past five hours on the plane. And now she didn’t even have time to freshen up, since she knew her dad would be wait...

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