

# REVENGE OF THE WANNABES

A CLIQUE NOVEL BY  
LISI HARRISON



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

New York → Boston

## BODY ALIVE DANCE STUDIO

5:25 PM  
November 13th

Alicia Rivera usually thought sweating was a sign of weakness. But today she flaunted her shiny forehead like a badge of honor. It proved how hard she had just danced and would remind every girl in the class that she was the best.

Alicia lived for Thursdays at 4:30 PM. She craved the clean, lemony smell of the studio's wood floors and felt reborn the second she inhaled the clean, crisp air that hummed from the ceiling vents. She loved being surrounded by mirrors and pretending that she was a professional dancer in a music video. But the main reason Alicia took modern jazz lessons was because Massie Block didn't. And that meant every week, for one whole hour, Alicia Rivera was the most popular girl in the room.

"This is the final combination of the day, so make it count." Sondra, the no-nonsense instructor, pinched the waist of her low-rise Capezio pants and folded them over twice, revealing her perfectly sculpted six-pack.

"You don't get abs like these watching the WB." She slapped her stomach. "Do you, ladies?"

The room was silent as fourteen girls caught their breath.

"*DO YOU?*" she asked again.

Alicia saluted Sondra and shouted back, “No, sir!”

“What was that?” Sondra looked around the room.

Alicia immediately regretted talking back to her teacher until she heard Catherine Carlisle let out a snort. Then a few other girls snickered too. Alicia focused on the ground, trying to look sorry, but she loved being the center of attention, and it was written all over her face. She lined up her head with Olivia Ryan’s, hoping her friend’s blond ringlets would hide her smile from Sondra. But it didn’t work.

Sondra aimed her piercing green cat eyes in Alicia’s direction and stared for what felt like nine lives. Alicia could feel her insides starting to shake from all the nervous laughter she was trying to suppress and willed her teacher to look away before she exploded.

“Ms. Rivera,” Sondra finally said.

Alicia craned her neck out from behind Olivia. She widened her brown eyes, hoping to look innocent, and ran her hands over the top of her head, where her glossy black hair had been slicked back into a high ponytail. “Yes?”

“Please come to the front of the class.”

Her stern yet steady tone made Alicia even more nervous, and she pinched the back of Olivia’s elbow in a silent cry for help.

Olivia casually turned around and used her big navy blue eyes to let Alicia know she was wishing her luck.

Alicia lifted her chin and lowered her shoulders to demonstrate perfect “jazz posture” before she started to make her way to the front of the class. It was one thing to get in

trouble for a funny comeback, but getting busted for bad form would have been mortifying.

Alicia took her time slowly weaving her way through rows of Lycra-covered bodies. Her father always told her she was “an exotic beauty” and a “special girl, well worth waiting for,” and so Alicia had decided never to rush for anyone. Not even angry dance teachers.

The girls stood completely still, watching Alicia’s every move in the studio mirror, wondering what was going to happen next.

When Alicia finally arrived, Sondra smiled and sighed. “You are like poetry in motion.” She put her lean, muscular arm around Alicia’s shoulders and turned to face the class. “Girls, I want all eyes on Alicia for this last combination. She’s going to lead. Not only does she have a dancer’s attitude, or dare I say, ‘bad-itude’”—Sondra paused briefly and grinned, appreciating her own cleverness—“but she is the only one who seems to fully *get* this routine.” Sondra began clapping, and everyone felt obliged to join her.

Amid the applause, Alicia locked eyes with Olivia and giggled softly. She hadn’t expected this.

Alicia pulled the red elastic band out of her hair and retied her ponytail as tight as she could to show the girls that she was up for the challenge. The hours she had spent practicing at home were about to pay off, and she found herself wishing Massie was there to witness her big moment in the spotlight. Maybe then she’d realize she couldn’t *always* be number one.

“Ah-five, ah-six, ah-five, six, se-vaan, eight,” Alicia called the eight count and led for the entire length of the Black Eyed Peas’ song “Let’s Get It Started,” which was blaring from the stereo. For the next three minutes and thirty-five seconds Alicia understood what it felt like have a roomful of girls copying her every move. She understood what it was like to be Massie Block.

When the song ended, Alicia quickly turned to Sondra and asked, “Can we do that again?”

The exhausted girls let out a collective moan.

“We’re out of time.” Suze Charskey pointed to the clock on the back wall.

“Yeah,” another girl panted.

“It *is* getting late,” Sondra said to Alicia with a sympathetic grin. “We’ll pick it back up next week.”

“Can I lead again?” Alicia asked quietly while the other girls raced for their bottles of Glaceau mineral water.

Sondra crouched down and popped the CD out of the stereo. She slid it into one of the clear sleeves of her black Case Logic before she answered.

“I should probably give someone else a chance,” she said as she zipped up the case.

“But you said I was good,” Alicia heard herself whine.

“You *were*,” Sondra reassured her as she stood up and slipped into her floor-length baby blue puffy coat. “You’re one of my best.” Sondra waved and said good night as she hurried toward the studio exit, but Alicia couldn’t respond. She wanted to be *the* best.

The other dancers had run to get the only shower with strong water pressure while Alicia just stood there in the dance studio, facing the mirror. At five-foot four, she was taller than a lot of girls in her grade and above average when it came to her big boobs. At school socials or bar mitzvah parties, boys always asked her to dance, and she got e-mails from different guys all the time asking her if she wanted to hang out after school. But she usually turned them down because she had more fun with her best friends: Massie, Kristen, and Dylan.

Being told she looked like a “hotter version of Penelope Cruz with a better nose” used to make her happy. But lately Alicia wanted more. She was tired of being known as Massie Block’s beautiful friend. And today, for the length of an entire song, she’d been “Alicia Rivera: the best dancer in the class.” But now that song was over.

Alicia took a deep breath and rolled her shoulders back before she turned to join the others in the locker room.

Meredith Phillips turned off her hair dryer when she saw Alicia saunter through the door. “You were really on today.”

Alicia peeled off her black Nuala yoga pants, covered herself in a towel, and then wiggled out of her racer back tank top. “You *think*?”

“Beyond,” Meredith said before turning the hair dryer back on. “I wish you could lead every week,” she shouted as she ran a comb through her stringy beige bob.

Normally Alicia wouldn’t have cared what Meredith the Mouse thought. Her tiny bland features and her oatmeal-colored skin made her hard to notice, even when she was

the only other person in the room. But at that moment Alicia thought Meredith's opinion was just as important as a pretty person's.

"Me too," Alicia replied to her red toenails as she padded across the cold tiles toward the showers. "Maybe you could say something to Sondra."

"I totally will," Meredith said. "I promise."

And that gave Alicia hope.

While she washed her hair with Glisten shampoo, Alicia made a mental note to try and convince the other girls in her class to speak to Sondra too. She was determined to lead again.

Alicia took her time drying off, knowing Olivia would wait for her.

"You were *better* than J.Lo," Olivia said when Alicia walked over to her locker. Alicia was surprised to see that she was still wrapped in a towel, tugging on her silver lock. Olivia turned the dial again and yanked down, but it wouldn't open. "Ugh! I am spacing on the combination. This totally sucks."

"You really think I was good?" Alicia asked, towel-drying her hair.

"Do cows *fly*?" Olivia said, letting go of her lock and looking at Alicia with a warm smile.

Alicia stopped drying her hair and raised her eyebrows. "No."

"Oh." Olivia looked confused. "Wait, I got that wrong. What I meant was *yes*. You were awesome."

Alicia exhaled and opened her locker.

“You had perfect timing and you didn’t miss a step,” Olivia said, still tugging on her lock.

“And what about how you called Sondra ‘sir’?” Catherine butted in, then snorted at the thought. She had huge dimples and a cute round face that reminded Alicia of a cherub. “Rivera, this class would *so* suck without you.”

Alicia put her hand on her heart and shook her head slowly. She wanted her public to know that she was truly grateful for their support.

“Heeelp,” Olivia whimpered. “I can’t re-mem-ber my locker combo.”

Alicia reached for her yellow quilted Chanel makeup bag, unzipped it, and pulled out a folded piece of paper. “Here.” She handed it to Olivia.

“What’s this?” Olivia smiled, forgetting her lock for a minute. “A secret note?”

The other girls stopped dressing and watched Olivia with curiosity and envy. She turned her back to them and quickly unfolded the paper.

Olivia glanced down and saw a series of numbers, then lifted her head and smiled at Alicia. “What would I do without you?” She turned to face her lock, spun the pink dial three times, pulled it down, and snapped it open.

Meredith, Catherine, and a few other girls started clapping and cheering. Alicia climbed up on one of the wood changing benches and bowed.

When Alicia stepped down, Olivia gave her a big hug and said, “You really are my friend, aren’t you?”

Alicia reached into the deep outside pocket on her green alligator Prada bag and pulled out a sheet of stickers from *Lucky* magazine. She ran her Vagabond Red nails along the *nos* and then *maybes*, knowing Olivia was anxiously awaiting her response. After a few more moments of playful teasing, Alicia peeled off a *yes* and stuck it to Olivia's arm.

"Yes! I'm a *yes*," she said, holding her arm out for everyone to see. "Does this mean I can start going to Massie's Friday night sleepovers?"

Olivia's question hurt more than an eyebrow wax. Alicia wondered if all this time Olivia was using her just to get in with Massie.

"Massie has a strict GLU policy for her sleepovers and there's nothing I can do about it," Alicia said, avoiding Olivia's hopeful eyes.

"What's a GLU policy?" Olivia asked.

Most of the other girls had their jackets on and were leaving, but Alicia noticed Meredith and Catherine lingering by their lockers, hoping to hear her explanation.

"A GLU is a Girl Like Us," Alicia responded, sounding bored.

"How does someone become a GLU?" Olivia pressed down on the *yes* sticker before sliding her arm inside her navy peacoat.

Meredith and Catherine stopped masking their interest and moved in closer.

"You can't *become* one," Alicia snapped. "Massie, Kristen, Dylan, and me are the only GLUs."

"Who made up *that* stupid rule?" Meredith squeaked.

“Massie,” Alicia said, then slammed her locker shut.

“Well, don’t you have any say in who you hang out with?” Catherine asked.

Alicia stuffed her pink knit scarf and hat into her bag and quickly put on her gray wool coat. She was desperate to get away from their questions, because she didn’t like the answers any more than they did. “It’s Massie’s party, so I guess she gets to decide who goes, okay?”

“Then why don’t *you* have the party?” Olivia said, rubbing Burt’s Bees lip balm across her pouty lips. “Then we can all go.”

It sounded like a simple solution, but it was beyond complicated. Everyone knew Massie owned Friday nights in the same way that MTV owned the Ten Spot. She had claimed the night; therefore it was hers.

“It’s so funny, ’cause I always thought *you* were the one that made all of the rules.” Catherine zipped her ski jacket. “Not *Massie*.”

Alicia should have been surprised that Catherine and Meredith knew so much about her best friend, considering they didn’t even go to Octavian Country Day School, but she wasn’t. Everyone knew Massie.

“Why?” Alicia wasn’t sure if she had just been complimented or insulted.

“Well, you’re prettier, you have a ton of friends, your clothes are all designer, the Briarwood boys are in love with you, and you’re an amazing dancer,” Meredith said, running her fingers through her limp hair.

"It's true," Catherine added. "I bet if you had sleepovers, they'd be so awesome. I always tell my friends about the funny things you say in class and they all want to meet you."

"And your house is way bigger than Massie's," Olivia added.

Alicia's heart felt like it was beating faster than a hummingbird's and her armpits started to sweat. "You know, maybe I haven't been living up to my full potential," she said out loud, more to herself than to the others.

"Not even close." Olivia threw her arm around Alicia.

"Hmmm," was all Alicia could say.

Had she been eclipsed by Massie's shadow all these years? Was the world waiting for her to step out on her own and shine?

"Why *shouldn't* I be able to have my own sleepover?"

It was the first time Alicia had considered doing something new on a Friday night. She smiled to herself when she thought of how jealous Dylan and Kristen would be for not thinking of it first. "You know, now that I think about it . . ." Alicia tapped her chin with her index finger. "It's not natural for *anyone* to stay 'in' for more than three years. Even Burberry's out again."

The girls jumped up and down and hugged each other, excited to be in on the start of something so new.

"And how cool is it that some of us go to different schools?" Catherine said. "That's never been done before."

"What should we plan for our first night?" Meredith asked Alicia. "Name something you've always wanted to do."

Alicia clapped. "How 'bout we give you a makeover?"

Meredith leaned in toward the mirror and examined her face, but Alicia was too excited to notice. “My mother was just in Spain visiting my grandparents and she brought back a ton of European makeup. You should see my bathroom right now. It’s so Sephora.”

“Are you going to invite Massie?” Olivia asked.

“Oh my Gawd, how much fun would *that* be?” Meredith said.

“It would be great. Massie is sooo good at putting on makeup. Have you ever seen her at the MAC counter?”

Alicia rolled her eyes. She couldn’t believe they were talking about Massie again.

“No, I wish,” Meredith said. “Have you?”

“No,” Olivia admitted. “But I *heard* she’s even better than the people that work there.”

“Didn’t they ask her to quit school so she could work with them?” Catherine said.

“That’s what I heard.”

“Why are you guys so *ob-sessed* with Massie Block?” Alicia asked. What she really wanted to say was, “Why are you guys more obsessed with Massie Block than you are with me?” But she stormed out of the locker room instead.

The girls chased after her.

“What’s wrong?” Olivia called. “What did we do?”

Alicia poured herself a glass of cucumber-infused water from the pitcher by the receptionist’s desk and waited for Catherine and Meredith to catch up. She was only going to say this once.

As soon as Meredith and Catherine arrived, Alicia spoke. Her voice was crisp and controlled, but on the inside she was shaking.

"I am about to put my social life on the line to host a sleepover party for you and all you can talk about is Massie Block," she announced, tossing the cup full of water into the trash. "News flash, I'm not the head of her fan club, okay?" Then she took off again.

The sound of the girls' feet following her lightened Alicia's mood.

"We're sorry—we'll never mention *her* again," Meredith shouted.

"Yeah, never," Catherine said.

"Come on, wait up," Olivia pleaded.

Alicia stopped, then sighed and turned to them with a forgiving smile that said, "Your begging worked."

The girls apologized one last time for hurting her feelings before they said their goodbyes.

"Call and let us know what time to be at your house tomorrow night," Meredith said.

"Wait," Olivia said. "Don't we have the *Teen People* interview tomorrow?"

"Oh my Gawd, I almost forgot." Alicia fluffed up her hair. "We're going to New York City tomorrow. The fashion editor at *Teen People* is doing a big story on us because we won a uniform design contest at our school last week."

"I know," Meredith said. "We heard all about it. That's sooo cool."

“Does this mean the sleepover is off?” Catherine asked, her dimples slowly fading.

“No, it just means we’ll have tons of great stories to tell you when we get back.”

Catherine’s dimples popped back on her face and Meredith put her hands over her mouth and jumped up and down.

“Don’t forget to call us later,” they called back to Alicia as they pushed through the heavy glass doors and ran outside to meet their parents.

“I won’t.” Alicia waved goodbye to her dance friends.

A gust of freezing winter air smacked her cheeks and made her eyes water. She was relieved to see her father’s driver, Dean, waiting in their limo. It meant she didn’t have to stand alone in the cold thinking about what she had just done.

Alicia still felt chilled a half hour later when she sat down to dinner with her parents. The six-bedroom estate often felt big and lonely, especially when Alicia’s cousins and grandmother weren’t visiting from Spain. The staff had the night off and it was one of those rare occasions where Alicia, her mother, Nadia, and her father, Len, were alone in the house. Nadia had done her best to make the big house feel like a home with music, cinnamon-scented candles, and authentic Spanish cuisine.

“What *is* this?” Alicia slid a dark, salty chunk of meat across her gold plate with the side of her knife.

“*Cordero asado* and *escalivada Catalan*,” Nadia said.

“Ohhh.” Len sounded impressed. “It’s delicious.”

“What is *that*?” Alicia asked.

“Roast lamb and roast vegetables.” Nadia smiled with pride. Her perfectly white teeth looked like pearls against her dark olive skin and her red lipstick made them seem even brighter. She hadn’t modeled since she’d left Spain and moved to Westchester, fifteen years ago, but Alicia thought she still could.

“It’s good.” Alicia tried to be polite, but she had no appetite. Every chunk of dead meat on her plate was a reminder of what she would be when Massie found out about the sleepover.

They sat around the rectangular glass-and-cast-iron table, eating to the frenzied rhythm of Spanish music Nadia had brought back from her last trip to Barcelona. The singer’s voice sounded like a groggier version of Ricky Martin’s. She knew her father felt the same way when he casually pressed the bottom arrow on the remote control to lower the volume.

“I know what you’re doing,” Nadia said to Len.

“What?” Len smiled. “I love this song.” He winked at Alicia.

“Can I be excused?” Alicia said. She forced a piece of roast zucchini down her throat. “I’m full.”

“Homework?” Len asked, his face becoming serious. The flecks of gray in his full black hair made him look handsome, not old.

“Yeah, I think a few girls from dance are going to sleep over tomorrow night, so I want to get my room ready.”

Alicia pushed her chair away from the table and tossed her napkin on her plate. She wanted to escape before they could ask her the one question she was hoping to avoid.

“Why are you doing that *now*?” Nadia asked, looking at the clock on the microwave.

Alicia was relieved. That wasn’t the question she was afraid of.

“Because I have the *Teen People* interview tomorrow, so I won’t have time to set up before they get here.” Alicia turned to leave.

“Wait, isn’t tomorrow Massie’s sleepover?” Nadia asked. Faced with the dreaded question, Alicia tried to look casual by picking invisible pieces of lint off her black cashmere turtleneck.

“She isn’t sick, is she?”

“No.” Alicia turned to face her mother but spoke to the bottle of red wine in the center of the table instead.

“Is she jealous because you beat her in the uniform design contest and you’re going to *Teen People* without her? I bet she is and she’s giving you a hard time, right?” Nadia raised her wineglass and toasted herself. “If there’s one thing I know, it’s catty women.”

“Puh-lease, she’s not *jealous*. This has nothing to do with the design contest.”

Alicia had been haunted for days by what she and Olivia had done to Massie and Claire during that contest. She felt a little guilty for switching the ballot boxes moments before the judges tallied the scores, but she had been desperate to

win. She was tired of taking second place and wanted to know what it felt like to be number one.

And it felt great.

Since then Alicia wondered if Massie suspected what they had done. Every night she would lie awake in bed and relive the day's events in her mind, analyzing every word Massie said and every gesture she made, desperate to figure out how much she knew. Massie had been acting completely normal, though, so after nearly a week of nerve-racking days and restless nights Alicia figured she had gotten away with it. But every now and then she had to wonder, because Massie always had a way of finding these things out.

"This has nothing to do with Massie, okay?" Alicia folded her arms across her chest. "I should be *allowed* to have my own sleepover if I want."

"No one is stopping you." Nadia smirked and shook her head. "Go from it."

Len chuckled and immediately put his hand over his mouth.

Alicia knew her mother meant to say "go for it," but she sometimes mixed up American expressions. Alicia stood up from her chair and hurried to the winding staircase.

When she got to her bedroom, she closed the door and locked it. Ever since her room had been redecorated two years earlier, it had been her favorite place on the planet. She'd wanted it to look like the kind of bedroom Jasmin would have in *Aladdin* and it did . . . only Alicia's also had a walk-in closet and a private bathroom.

The walls were painted deep red and orange and the canopy that hung over her bed was gold. Her CDs were tucked away in tall wood cases that looked like towers, and multicolored “magic carpets” were spread out across the floor. But nothing topped the cozy “reading nook” in the far corner of her room. It was piled high with Moroccan pillows and cashmere blankets. It was perfect for long phone conversations. Alicia flipped open her brand-new Motorola picture phone and flopped down on a stack of velvet cushions. She had five new messages.

1. “Hey, Leesh, it’s Massie. Just wanted to let you know what tomorrow’s Sleepover Activity is. READY?” [a second of pause] “I was thinking we could decorate our jeans. How *ah-dorable*, right? I’m getting special paint and rhinestones and glitter and a bunch of patterns, so bring a few pairs of Sevens or something. ’Kay? Laytah.”

2. “Hey, Alicia, it’s Catherine. Wondering what time we should come over tomorrow night. My mom is trying to coordinate a carpool with Meredith’s mom. Call me. Bye.”

3. “Hey, Alicia, it’s Meredith. Just wanted to find out what time you want to make me over tomorrow night. My mom is trying to coordinate a carpool with Catherine’s mom. Call me. Bye.”

4. “Hi, my name is Dan Sir Scout. I heard you were an amazing dancer and I would like to recruit you for my troupe. We will be traveling to hot boys’ schools around the country in a stretch Hummer and—[burst of laughter] Okay,

just kidding, it's me. Olivia. Just checking in to make sure you were still alive after you told Massie you weren't going to her sleepover. Call me. Oh, and you were *ah-mazing* today in dance. 'Kay. Bye."

5. "Hey, Leesh, it's Kristen. Just wondering if you happen to have an extra pair of old Sevens or something. My mom will kill me if I come back from Massie's sleepover with paint on my jeans. Dylan said I could use a pair of hers, but they'd probably be too big on me. So let me know if that's cool. 'Kay? Thanks. See ya tomorrow."

Alicia felt like she couldn't breathe. Her mouth went dry and her throat tightened. Too many thoughts were racing through her head and she didn't know what to do first. Call Massie? Cancel the sleepover? Find jeans for Kristen? Leave town?

She stood up, hurried over to the silver mini-fridge under her desk, and pulled out a diet root beer. She twisted off the cap on the cold glass bottle and took a long drink. The rush of fizz woke her senses and helped her think straight. After the second sip, Alicia knew what she needed to do. She slammed the bottle down on her Formica desk, stepped into the bathroom, and locked the door behind her.

The walls and ceiling were covered in gold and sea green tiles. The rest of the bathroom was decorated in art deco antiques her mother had collected over the years.

Alicia's favorite was an old makeup vanity that had originally been part of a 1940s hair salon. A tall oval-shaped mirror

was attached to the far side of the marble countertop and rose into the air like a peacock's feathers. A beat-up Honda motorcycle seat from one of her father's old Hogs served as the seat. For the last year it had become much more than a place for Alicia to apply her mascara. It was her newsroom.

She sat down on the motorcycle seat and faced the mirror. Then she opened the vanity's only drawer and pulled out an old karaoke microphone.

"How much time do I have, Phil?" Alicia asked as she fluffed up her hair.

She imagined Phil saying, "You're on in five seconds . . . four . . . three . . . two . . ." and then giving her the hand signal to let her know she was live and on the air.

"Good evening, Westchester," Alicia said to her reflection. "We interrupt your regularly scheduled program to bring you this breaking news story. Alicia Rivera, the new *Teen People* sensation, wants to throw her own Friday night sleepover party tomorrow night. Will Massie Block understand, or will it be the end of their friendship as we know it? Alicia is too nervous to comment but wants it known that she means no harm to Massie or her other best friends, Kristen and Dylan. She isn't looking for trouble; in fact, she hopes Massie and the others will join her as she gives Meredith the Mouse a makeover. If anyone has any advice for Alicia on how to tell Massie about this new development, please call the hotline number at the bottom of your screen. Alicia, our prayers are with you. Thanks and good night."

Alicia placed the microphone back in its drawer and

unlocked her bedroom door. She always felt better after a newscast. There was nothing she liked more than reporting gossip, and being an anchorwoman was the most respectable way to do it.

Alicia was thinking more clearly now and powered up her eMAC so she could send Massie an IM.

**HOLAGURRL : DON'T PICK ME UP 2MORROW. DEAN  
IS TAKING ME 2 SCHOOL CUZ I  
HAVE 2 GO 2 THE DR.**

**HOLAGURRL HAS SIGNED OFF AT 8:57 PM.**

By passing up her usual seat in Massie's carpool, Alicia would be able to delay an awkward confrontation with her by at least thirty minutes.

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