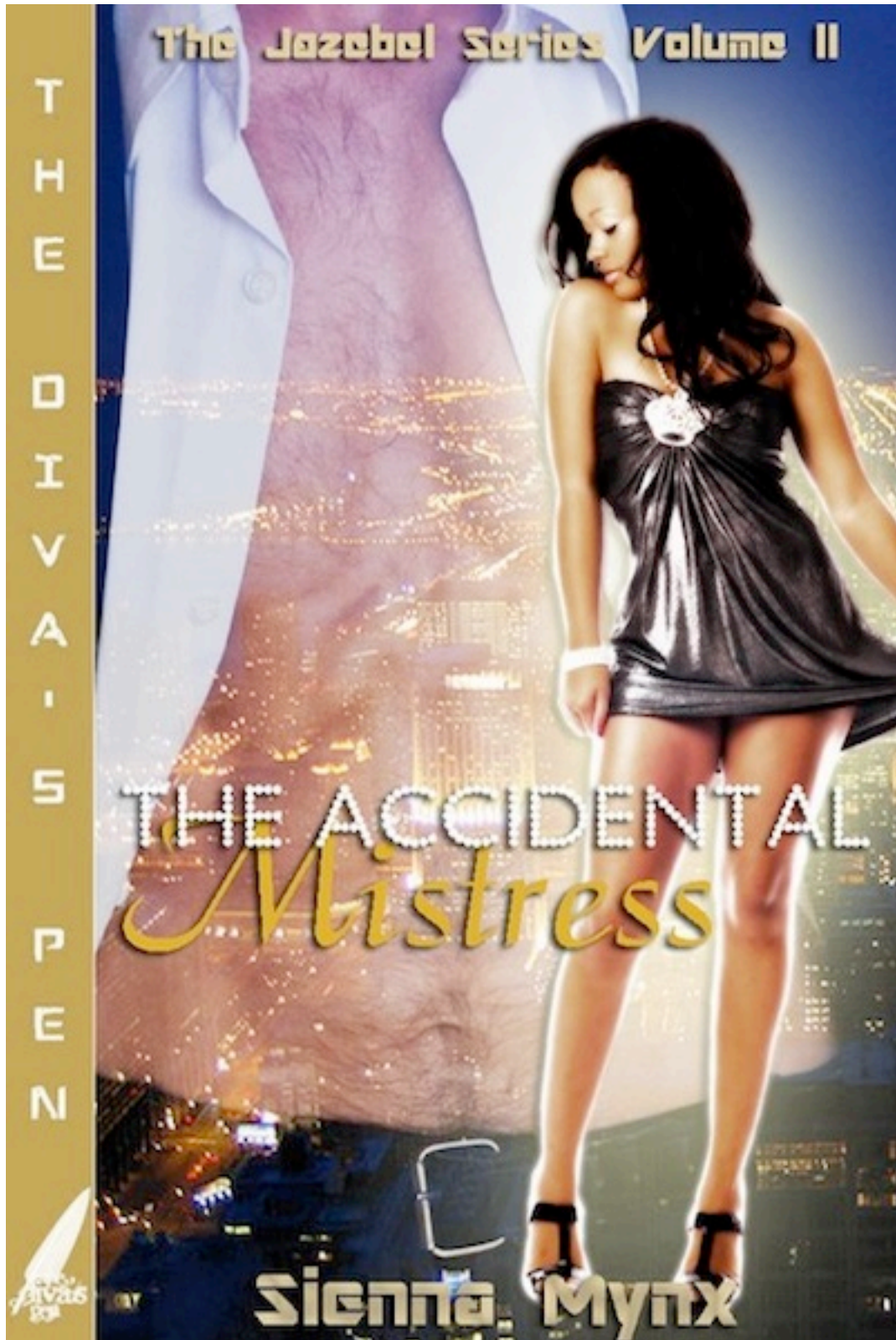


The Accidental Mistress by Sienna Mynx



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Accidental Mistress

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J'ai découvert le vrai bonheur le jour vous avez marché dans ma vie.

I discovered true happiness the day you walked into my life.

Zuri Baptiste is in trouble. She's lost her virginity to the man who is set to take over her father's business. How did such a thing happen? Years later she's forced to answer that question to the smooth debonair stranger who's responsible for the only reckless thing Zuri has done in her life.

Christophe Montague is a very pragmatic man. But after a horrible breakup he seeks comfort in the arms of a young woman to forget. It works. For the next few years he channels his energies toward monetary success not love. The Oasis, a now bankrupt resort on the island of Martinique, is prime real-estate to acquire. To his surprise he encounters the young woman from his one nightstand. He soon falls into her web of lies, deceit and love.

Chapter Two

Zuri strolled back through the hotel's lobby. Taking her time, she admired the pearl grey floors and Grecian décor. Almost to the revolving front door, the soft tinkling of piano keys beckoned.

She looked around, her eyes finally falling on a sign, which read, *Bernard's Bar*. With the spicy taste of red wine coating her tongue and a bit of rebellion stiffening her spine, she contemplated celebrating her birthday, differently.

Joi was right. She was the one hiding from the world. Swinging her purse at her side, she entered the bar. It was empty except for three men staring into their drinks.

As she approached, several heads lifted. Their eyes fixated on her reflection beyond the bottles of liquor and lights along the mirrored wall. Zuri didn't shy away from their leers, even though she found the stranger's mostly too old and unwelcoming to be real prospects for conversation.

"What can I get for you pretty lady?"

"A red wine."

The bartender smiled. "Merlot, Cabernet, Pinot?"

"Um... Merlot."

"Got some ID for me, beautiful?"

Zuri blushed. "Yeah, I do." she reached in her purse and the box of condoms lifted into view. Zuri quickly tried to cover, but the bartender leaned in with a wolfish grin.

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She found her license between her ATM card and her student ID and turned it over for the bartender. He gave it a cursory glance and then reached for a wine goblet.

Zuri fixated on her image in the mirror behind the bar. She had gone all out to look mature. She was quite impressed with her dark locks curled past her shoulders and her raised bust line under her coat. She was an adult. She wanted to act like one.

Christophe chose a corner table. The octagon shaped bar made his choice the best for obscurity. He sipped his scotch, counting down the minutes of the evening. Maybe he could drink the sun in. He didn't want to go upstairs to the empty bed awaiting him. He didn't want to be alone with his thoughts. He sure as hell didn't want what the courier had left for him in a brown envelope at the concierge desk.

He arrived at Bernard's just minutes before she did. She entered and instantly his interest piqued. Her long and slender legs and her graceful stride were enough as his gaze followed her to her seat.

Strange that she would be in this hotel, on this night. He tossed down the scotch. She was quite beautiful. After Gabriella, he should be leery. Still he couldn't tear his eyes away.

"What's your name?"

A lean man with bifocals and breath of vodka sprayed the question. Zuri stiffened; she glanced over to him and tried to decide if it was safe for her to answer. Before she could, Mr. Stinky Breath put a hand to her back, leaned in and looked down at her breasts. "You got big tits. How much?"

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"Please don't touch me," she said shifting her body forward on her bar stool to make his hand drop. But it just slipped down her backside. Her eyes stretched in alarm. "Yeah, you got a nice ass too. How much?"

"I said don't touch me."

"Or what? You a working girl, aren't you!" he barked at her.

Zuri shriveled a bit.

"The lady said back off."

Her gaze turned to the stranger behind them. It was her stranger from the restaurant.

"Now move on."

The drunk stammered an apology, grabbed his drink and staggered out to one of the tables. Zuri released a deep sigh. "Thank you. Thank you very much. He just wouldn't stop."

"You okay?"

Mon Dieu, he's tall. What is he, six-six? She had to careen her neck back to get a glimpse of his handsome face. Thankfully, he didn't stand in too close as she noticed the way his toned body dominated what appeared to be an expensive suit.

"Are you okay?" he asked again.

"Yes," Zuri smiled, finding his concern endearing. "Thank you."

"Christophe." He extended his hand.

"Zuri."

"Beautiful name. It was nice meeting you, Zuri." The stranger's gaze softened. She found it sexy that a man could smile with his eyes. "Have a good night," he said, tossing bills on the bar to pay his tab. He turned and walked away.

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Where did he come from? She didn't see him when she entered. And for the second time that night he left her spellbound. Disappointed, Zuri turned back to her wine. She downed it fast. "Can I have another please?"

Christophe wasn't the kind of guy who rescued damsels in distress. She compelled him to be chivalrous yet again. Thankfully, when she smiled he came to his senses. Women in need of rescue only meant trouble his mother would say. He abandoned the idea of a nightcap in the bar and decided to take one in his room.

"Mr. Montague! Excuse me, Mr. Montague?"

Christophe stopped. The hotel clerk caught up with him. When he turned, she was panting before him. In her hand was the envelope he'd avoided all day. He didn't need proof. But his mother had insisted on it. Christophe knew there was no need in avoiding it. There wasn't enough scotch in him to take his mind off of it.

"This came for you sir. We were given strict orders to deliver it to you personally. I tried your room."

"Thank you."

"Yes, sir."

Christophe sucked down a stilted breath. The weight of his pride and troubled heart was tucked away in the brown envelope. It's where he should leave it. But he was never a man to leave loose ends. He eased open the fold and removed the glossies.

Who was she kidding? Picking up a guy in a bar on her birthday wasn't her. It was insanity, and maybe even dangerous.

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Zuri dug deep, fingers searching the side pocket in her purse for her parking ticket, while trying to keep the box of condoms concealed. She felt giddy and light-headed for no apparent reason than the second glass of wine.

As her pulse buzzed in her ears, she had no choice but to reconsider her father's warning that she shouldn't be driving. Her birthday was officially a bust. She sat there a minute longer and then summon the strength make it to her sister's room.

"Johnny Walker Blue and make it a pour," A deep smoky voice spoke.

Slowly her gaze lifted. Her hero had returned. He didn't acknowledge her. His eyes seemed to be fastened on the bottles of liquor the bartender went through. His lips pressed into a tight thin line making the muscle in his jaw twitch.

"Decided on another?" she asked.

He seemed surprise to find her next to him. "So it seems," he said.

Curious, Zuri watched the bartender pour amber liquid from a blue label into a snifter and set a small glass of water next to it.

Elbows on the bar, she leaned her face in her hands and stared, fascinated with his choice of drinks.

Christophe took it down in a gulp, hissed through his swallow and chased it with a shot of water. He gave a nod to the bartender who poured him another.

"What kind of drink is that?" she asked.

"It's a perfect pour," he said dryly.

"I gather that, but you don't like it much. You drink water after?"

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He chuckled deep in his throat. "That's the point. You sip and then you savor it on your palate by chasing it with cold water. Want to try?"

Zuri sat up too quickly. A bout of dizziness hit her and she swore stars danced before her eyes.

"It's safe," he said.

She shook off the mental wave of delirium, and forced herself to sit up straight.

"Yeah, um, okay."

He eased his drink down to her.

"It's her birthday," the bartender added.

"Is that so?" asked Christophe.

"Wow, how did you know?" Zuri smiled.

"I pay attention to the little things like your ID for starters. She's twenty-one today," the bartender offered. Christophe's stare became a bit more enticing, shifting between shades of blue and violet.

Was it the lighting? Suddenly she felt sexy. Zuri nodded and tossed her chin up in a false show of confidence. "Yes, today is my day."

"Well happy birthday, Zuri."

"Thank you. Now how do I do this?"

He sat in the bar seat next to her and dropped his arm on the back of her chair. "You can tell a lot by how a person handles a perfect pour."

"Um, okay," she nodded.

"Personally, I prefer to hold the snifter at its stem, between your thumb and your ring finger."

Zuri did as he instructed, and the bartender moved on to a young couple who arrived at the other end of the bar. She glanced up for

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Christophe's approval and the sexy curl to his lips made her dizzy once more. So, she refocused on the drink.

"Swirl the scotch."

She tried but it sloshed around the wide circumference of the snifter glass. His hand came over hers and he assisted. "What's in it? I mean I know it's alcohol, but is it scotch?" she asked, believing there was something more to the story of the whisky. She had read it somewhere.

"Ah, this is a first for you, isn't it? You a virgin?"

"Huh?" she said in a hurried, revealing voice.

"Not a drinker of the malts are you?" he chuckled. She blushed. "It's a good shot of scotch, a mix of about seventeen different rare whiskeys. The grain is aged for more than sixty years."

"Scotch... from Scotland right?"

"Give the lady a blue ribbon."

"Are you from Scotland?" she asked, liking the flow of the conversation.

"No, are you?"

"Funny," she chuckled. "Okay, so I've swirled it. What next?"

"You want to take your time and inhale the aroma."

She did. It wasn't the normal stench that alcohol had for her. She liked the fragrance. It was smoky, smooth and strong, a lot like him.

"Now, this is important." He moved in on her. Not in the creepy way the other man had, but in a way that made her straighten her back and heave up her chest to entice him to stay close.

His hand lifted. Suddenly, fingers moved her tresses and tucked her thick strands behind her ear. It was the most sensual gesture, which made her heart flutter as if many butterflies were trapped inside. And his voice, though deep like timber, was now a personal whisper. "You don't

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sip but you swallow. It's your first shot of scotch. It has to be all or none or you might abandon the relationship forever. So take it down fast and think of the taste later. And when the scotch sears your throat, torches your tongue, and warms you from the center of your chest, it will spread through you like a bushfire."

"Bush fire? Are you a poet?" she grinned.

"In another life," he chuckled. "Afterwards you smooth it out with the water. Bring the blaze down a bit."

She dared a glance. Now she knew the truth. His eyes were indeed violet, under those dreamy lids, and straight silky black brows. They were too beautiful for a man's face. Looking in them, she was reminded of the waters of the hot springs deep in the mangroves near *Mount Pelée*. The blue green waters in the cool morning were often a crystal clear shade of violet with a slow moving mist hovering over the still waves.

Zuri sobered instantly. Nodding that she understood, she did what he said. The bite of alcohol hit her hard and her reflex was to gag. She picked up the water and sipped, then drank the rest hurriedly. Setting the glass down and panting, she stretched her eyes wide, reacting to the even layered taste.

"Excellent," he said, finally moving away.

Zuri laughed, hand to chest. "That was.... wow. Johnny Walker Blue?"

"A perfect pour," he said, nodding to the bartender to fix them another.

Zuri took down two more shots again, and again, enjoying the ritual.

"Slow down, sweetheart. It has a kick."

She burped. She blushed. "Excooose me."

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It was Christophe's turn to laugh.

"How old are you?" she asked.

"Twenty-seven," he confessed.

"You seem much older," Zuri said.

"I get that a lot. It's mostly my height."

"Yeah, you taaaalllll!" she caught the base in her voice and quickly tried to lower it. "Sorry, but um, it's been a day."

"And what kind of day is that, birthday girl?" he asked, tossing back his fourth shot. He was actually making conversation. That made her even more nervous. She accepted the next shot of whiskey because it did wonders for her confidence and loosening her tongue. "Um, I graduated today."

"From college?"

"Northwestern."

"Wow, Impressive, and on your birthday?"

"On my birthday. The official commencement ceremony is in June," she hiccupped. "This is yummy. Can I have another one?" she asked the bartender after she finished.

"Are you staying in the hotel?" Christophe pressed.

"No, my family is. I," she hiccupped, "I... got an apartment all by myself."

Christophe shook his head, his brows dropped with concern. "You know, it's not really safe for you to drink and chat up strangers. You're too beautiful to do this alone."

"Thank you, I think?"

She noticed how he gave a command to the bartender with his eyes that stopped the shots from coming. She tried drinking down the water to dilute the alcohol, but it didn't work. Her head began to swim.

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"I um, gonna go home." She flopped off the stool and landed on her feet. Her legs went to jelly.

"Hey, careful," he said helping steady her on her feet.

"I don't think I feel right," she slurred, her forehead bumping his chest.

She felt his hand close around her arm. "I'll call you a cab. Have the concierge desk call you one. Come on."

"No, I don't... I just need a minute. *S'il vous plaît*," she said trying to step away, but she couldn't find her equilibrium. She felt him come up behind her. He put his arm around her waist as he passed her the purse she left on the bar. "Do you know your family's room number? I can take you there."

"*Oui*, I'll go... my sister... room."

He walked her out of the bar. She more felt it than knew it. It was like trying to walk upright under water. The pressure pushed in at all sides of her skull and made her lids sag. She burped again as her stomach churned and acidic gas surged in her throat.

How did it happen so fast? She was fine, and then when she stood it all went to hell. Zuri shook her head and tried to focus. "I'm so embarrassed," she groaned.

He gave a throaty chuckle. "Don't be."

When they stepped in the elevator, she went limp on him.

Had she spoken French? He assumed she was American, but he thought he detected an island dialect. It made her even more tempting.

Christophe looked down at her, concerned; she kind of leaned into him, her head bowed. Taking her chin between his thumb and

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index finger, he lifted her face. Her eyes were closed and her lips moved as if she was speaking but nothing came out. He studied her.

She had a round face, high cheekbones that her dark lashes rested against, full lips, an ethnic nose and skin that looked as if it were brushed with honey. She was definitely an islander. He remembered the beauty of West Indian women in their colorful garb and decorative head wraps. As a child, he'd frequented the Caribbean with his mother. His own parentage was mixed, a French mother and an American father.

"Where's your sister's room, Zuri?"

"No remember," she mumbled and then hugged his waist smiling.

"Sweetheart, wake up. Listen to me. Where is her room?" he said trying to get her to respond.

"Somewhere, up there," she giggled.

"Shit," Christophe mumbled.

How did he manage to get here? She was in his arms in an elevator, intoxicated. The impropriety alone could invite trouble, considering who he was. His mother said he and his cousin (like most men in her mind) were impulsive and led by their dicks. She was proven right with Gabriella. Now this.

He removed his penthouse cardkey, slipped it in the slot in the elevator and then hit the top floor. The lift swept them up to the sixtieth floor in just over a minute.

"Come on sparrow, you're going with me," he sighed, trying to help her walk, but her small frame and stumbles had him doing all the leading. He barely got her into his suite. Taking her into his arms, he carried her through the living area to the private bedroom, placing her gently on the covers. She smiled and rolled over snuggling the soft comfort the expensive duvet and fluffed pillows offered.

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"*Joyeux anniversaire!*" she shouted, then mumbled something less coherent.

"Yes, Beautiful. Happy birthday." Christophe removed her shoes. She had perfectly shaped feet and unpolished toes. They felt delicate in his hands, feminine. He let his hand smooth up her ankle, and she giggled, but her eyes never opened.

With her foot in his hand, her leg and thigh were exposed by the pushed up shift of her skirt. He bit back the desire stirring in his groin. Gently he lowered her foot and then removed the other shoe. Casting them both aside, he reached over and pulled her skirt down to cover her shapely thighs, then lifted her a bit to draw the duvet down to pull it over her.

"I'm not going, *Père*, so stop asking. *Laisse-moi tranquille*," she mumbled, swatting at his hands.

Christophe frowned. "*Père?*" He stared hard at her. Did her father want something she wasn't prepared to give? They were alike in that regard, living in the shadows of their parent's. Christophe scratched his brow, and angry frustration soured his mood. How he hated all things French. It was why he loved the fact that his parent's separation split him between France and America. It was easier at the age of ten to convince his mother to let him remain at his American boarding school. And though he knew French, he never used it. His mother's pious smugness made him abhor every custom she cherished. He even dropped his name Stephan for an American one. Christophe was the name more to his liking.

He smoothed back his hair with his hand. Now what? She curled into a fetal ball under the covers. He thought he heard her humming in a young childlike murmur that unnerved him. Was she really twenty-one?

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What if she was a sixteen year-old with a fake ID? She looked every bit of a woman, but he had plenty of sauce in him. He could be wrong. These girls could fool anyone nowadays.

Fuck, what was he thinking! Christophe located her purse. He opened it and pulled out the box of condoms. He frowned at the magnums, setting them down. He found her wallet. Her ID had her name listed as Zuri Baptiste. She was twenty-one today. To be sure, he pulled out her other cards, and found her birthday on her Student ID. The pressure in his chest eased.

"Sleep it off, sweetheart," he said, and then left her to her dreams. He sought the suite's private bar and poured himself another drink.

In the dark, he stepped out of his shoes. He sat down on the sofa and set his whiskey on the coaster. Reaching inside his suit jacket, he removed the envelope of pictures. Gabriella had broken his heart. But she had taught him the most valuable lesson.

"Don't you understand? Your mother is doing this. Making you act like this. If you would just trust me."

"Trust you? My mother has nothing to do with me trusting you. Are you denying the fact that you are Heathcliff Girard's daughter? That you you're his spy!"

"No. I am his daughter. And if your mother had done her homework she would know he abandoned my mum and me before I was born. He has never acknowledged me. I'm not a spy. For you to say these things mean you don't know me at all. What is my crime? Tell me? Loving you when you are so unused to being loved? You have to stop this because I can't take anymore! I can't take you questioning me at every turn. Either you trust me or you don't!"

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Christophe slumped back, sifting through the photos of Gabriella dining with a man, leaving a restaurant with him, embracing him at the door to her flat, and inviting him inside by the pull of his tie.

One could argue that he pushed her to it. His refusal to commit and his mother's constant interference made him cold and distrustful. Had he forced her to seek comfort with another man? He reached for his drink and let his eyes close.

His mother was right. Montague men didn't need love to survive, and if they forgot that fact, love would be their curse. Look at what became of his father.

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About the Author

Sienna Mynx is your naughty writer of Paranormal, Contemporary, and Historical Interracial Romance for readers that love the bad boy's but desire to be the women that tame them. A current resident of south of Georgia, Sienna Mynx has just emerged into the e-publishing arena. Her novellas reflect her thirst for romance told from a fresh perspective with the diversity she craves in erotic Romance. Look for more to come. Visit Sienna Mynx at <http://siennamynx.com>