

Prologue

The Shamrock Casino

Las Vegas, Nevada

He hated dreaming. Daisy always visited his dreams. Aiden's eyes slowly opened. From beneath the shadowy veil of his lashes, his vision cleared. The patterned molding of his vaulted ceiling drew into focus. Soft amber lighting illuminated each corner of his bedroom, but the darkness claimed him. So did the dull ache of excess. There was movement next to him as the mattress dipped and his pillow shifted. Aiden's head dropped to the side, and he tried once more to focus. His thoughts and vision weren't connecting. Next to him lies a stranger, exposed, strawberry blonde hair covering her face. The sharp smell of sex and the fruity perfumed lotion she covered her skin with filled his nostrils.

Who is she? More importantly, why is she still in my fucking bed?

He sighed and changed focus. The night's events returned. The booze, the whores, all of it flashed through his mind. Self loathing was now his game of choice. He was getting good at it.

Aiden threw back the sheet and sat up. He slumped forward and dropped his face into his open palms. He felt the rough edges of a tiny package at the sole of his foot. Lifting it, he uncovered the dispensed purple foil of a condom wrapper and another not further from it.

"Aiden?" a breathy yet soft voice whispered over the pounding beat of his headache, hammering his skull.

"Get dressed and get out," he rasped. "Now!"

"Sure, sugah. Call me, okay? Okay?" His bedmate for the evening ran her hand over his back with her acrylic nails grazing his skin. The bed shifted, and he listened to her hurried actions. There was a clanking of her bracelets and the sibilant rip of a zipper running up the back of her leather mini. Those parting sounds made her just another regrettable memory. Aiden lifted his face from his palms. The private line to his suite blinked on the

phone. His presence was needed. He should have been in his office two hours ago and not boozed and barely conscious next to Trixie, Mixie, Bixie, whatever the hell her name was.

Aiden rose, stiffly. Nude, he snatched his pants from the back of a chair and slipped them on. As he zipped his fly, he crossed the cool mahogany floors out of his bedroom into his suite. There was a reason for his restlessness. He'd been on edge since he left Hollow Creek. The moment his people told him of the fire at Daisy's father's church, he was on his jet and circling the town. The minister lingered in his comatose state surrounded by friends, family, reporters, but no Daisy. After a week, he decided to return. Now, barely here two days, he regretted that decision.

But it's been five years. Why should I think she'd return now?

One sip of vodka and his mind cleared. The bitter aftertaste revived the feeling on his tongue as he walked over to his desk. He moved the mouse and sat in front of his computer's monitor. Typing in key words he opened the new file in his inbox. No change in the preacher's condition. No Daisy sightings.

"Shit."

He hit the message button on his phone and picked up the receiver.

You have 2 messages. First message: *Aiden, flying down to L.A. for business. Will stop in to see Andria, then head back for the meeting with the Gaming Commissioner. What's this I hear that you were in Hollow Creek?*

He pressed seven and deleted the message.

Next message: *Mr. Keane. This is Mathew Sterling; there's no change in Charles Johnson's condition. No sighting of Ms. Daisy Johnson. Will report when and if there is more news...*

Aiden hung up. He dropped back in his chair, frustrated. Five years of exhaustion had finally gotten the best of him. In the first two years, he nearly went mad. He checked every lead, invested a small fortune and nothing. He tailed the punk kid, Pete, with no luck. The third year, both he and Pete grew weary of the search, but not of the feeling. The need to find her never lessened. Soon, with the fourth year came acceptance. She was never his. He had her only one night. He told his cold barren heart that clung to hope for a rescue, to

get the hell over it and convinced himself it was the price of the game they all played. No woman, especially one as naïve and inexperienced as Daisy Johnson, was worth the trouble.

He was a good liar.

Aiden rocked back in his office chair reaching for his half smoked cigar. He smirked. How did she manage it? How did a girl of barely twenty-one, like her, slip past the best investigators in the business? Slip past him? His confusion and outrage fueled his guilt and desire. Black, white, yellow, brown no woman in his bed had affected him this deeply before or after Daisy. And now she was in the wind, beyond his reach, and he was growing tired of the chase. What if Donovan was right and she was dead? The cold reality of that truth disturbed him most of all.

Some evenings, her ghost visited him. She'd appear on a security monitor; a young brown skin woman strolling between slot machines with a familiar sway to her hips and toss to her dark copper-brown locks. He'd rush the casino rooms chasing her phantom around the floors, only to be proven a fool. She'd beat him well.

Then, one day, he gets a call. Reverend Charles Johnson of Hollow Creek was a hero. He'd saved thirteen of his flock from his burning church before collapsing himself. It was reported by his parishioners that the minister lingered in the hospital between life and death, not expected to recover. Surely his sweet Daisy would come out of hiding for her father. The fire had made national news. How could she not know?

If she's alive, she would know, but I need to consider the truth; that maybe she isn't.

Aiden's eyes closed, and he tried to recall her face, the feel of her skin, and the way she shuddered in his arms when he possessed her. His hand tightened on the glass. Daisy was gone. There was no such thing as second chances.

“Can you tell her to call me when she gets a break?” Pete asked.

“Sure thing, Pete. She's on rotation now.”

“Thanks, Bea.”

Pete tossed the phone and kicked off his paint-splattered workman's boots. Sniffing the funk from his socks, he pulled them off as well and dropped them on the floor. It was a long day at the garage with his shift running into the night. It usually did when Nina pulled a double shift. With the remote in his hand, he channel surfed, his thumb repeatedly hitting the button. Nothing caught his eye. The phone rang and he jumped at the chance to speak with Nina.

"Babe?"

"Hi. Can't talk long."

He could hear the smile in her voice. "I'm making strawberry pancakes and your favorite peach mimosa."

"Pancakes? Really? What's the occasion?" she asked.

"Got some news. Something to celebrate."

"Sounds serious?"

"Oh you're going to love this. Just call and wake me before you come home so I can be up."

"Love you, Pete."

"Yeah, see you soon, babe," he said before ending the call. Smiling, he reclined into the sofa's flattened pillow. If it weren't for Nina, he'd probably still be wandering, unsettled. She wasn't Daisy, and that was fine with him. She too was black, petite, with an infectious smile and round brown eyes. The second ethnic woman he's dated. Nina's mother was Dominican and father African American. He hadn't chosen her and never noticed her beauty when they were in school. Then one day standing in line at the meat section of the grocery store, there she was. It was natural for them both every day since.

Pete looked up at the television. A music video of some chocolate vixen, dancing and singing with a troupe of girls around her, played across his screen. He didn't go there often. Didn't think of Vegas, Aiden Keane, and Daisy. He couldn't. It cost him too much when he obsessed. Three years of his life had been spent obsessing. She was gone. Time made forgetting easier. That was until a fire at First Baptist thrust the Johnson family into the limelight. Now, everything he saw or heard and even tasted brought Daisy to mind.

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>