

## Mac's Vow – Chapter One

*Ten years earlier...*

“I’ll never understand why you torture yourself with these movies, Alyssa,” Mac said, as he plopped down onto the couch next to her and helped himself to her enormous bowl of popcorn.

Alyssa tried to keep her breathing even, but it was always difficult when Mac Braden was nearby. He melted her insides when he smiled at her. His messy, black hair hung over his forehead and he was forever pushing it out of his eyes. It was sexy, but Alyssa knew the reason it was too long was because he couldn’t afford a decent trim. He couldn’t afford most things. What little money his mom earned at her crap job of waitressing went to his stepdad’s alcohol habit. Alyssa felt bad for Mac, but if she ever showed even an ounce of pity for him he’d stomp out and never come back. He had bucket loads of pride. And she was half in love with the big, silver-eyed buffoon. Unfortunately, he saw her as a kid. Jimmy Saint’s bratty baby sister. God, she hated that Mac would never see her as a woman. One ready to do away with her virginal status. With him as the star of the show. Sure, and pink elephants existed.

Alyssa squashed her girlish crush—yet again—and focused on his words. She tossed a fat kernel of popcorn into the air and caught it in her mouth. “What do you mean, torture? And Jimmy is working.”

“I know he is; I came to hang with you.” Mac chuckled and grabbed another handful of the buttered treat and shoved it into his mouth. He barely chewed, before swallowing. “You watch all this blood and gore, then you can’t sleep because you’re too scared. Makes no damn sense.”

Alyssa sucked down half a can of red pop, before handing the rest to him. “It’s fun, dummy. I like not knowing what’s coming. Being scared out of my wits. It makes me forget my

problems.”

He took the pop and drank the rest in a few swallows, then smashed the can between his hands. He angled his big, muscular body on the couch until he was facing her. “What problems?”

She sighed, wondering how much to tell him. Anything she said to Mac would end up going straight to Jimmy. She put the bowl of half-eaten popcorn onto the old beaten-up coffee table in front of her, then sat up and pulled her legs underneath her. “Look, ever since mom and dad died, Jimmy has worked two jobs just to make ends meet. When he’s not working, he’s doing homework and trying to keep his grades up so he can graduate in a few months.”

His arm came around the back of the couch and he started to play with her ponytail. He did that a lot and Alyssa wasn’t even sure Mac realized he was doing it. “That’s Jimmy’s shit. We’re talking about you.”

Her face heated and she stared down at the bubblegum-pink blanket covering her. It was one her mother had bought for her on her fourteenth birthday. A month later a drunk driver had killed both her parents. “I feel dumb talking about this. Especially considering all the sacrifices that Jimmy makes for me.”

“Jimmy is tough, Alyssa,” he murmured in that sinfully sexy voice that sent shivers down her body. “He can handle the load better than you think.” He tugged on her hair. “Tell me what’s going on.”

She bit her lip and picked at a loose thread. “I’m tired of being a virgin,” she blurted as she lifted her head and stared at him. “There, I said it.”

His entire body stiffened, and he quickly glanced at the TV. “Uh, okay.”

Alyssa rolled her eyes and swatted him on the arm. “Don’t freak out. It’s not a dirty word.”

His eyes narrowed as his gaze landed on her again. “You should be a virgin, damn it,” he growled. “You’re too damn young for sex.”

There it was. Out in the open. Alyssa Saint, the kid. The virgin. “I’m not a baby! I’m only a year and a half younger than you, Mac. I bet you were younger than fifteen when you had sex for the first time. I know Jimmy was. He wouldn’t stop bragging about it.”

To Alyssa’s utter shock, Mac’s cheeks turned bright red. “My sex life is none of your business, brat.”

She snorted. “Yeah, that’s what I thought. Anyway, I want to have sex. I want to know what all the talk is about. All my friends at school have gone all the way. I’m like the last apple on the tree and I’m about to start rotting if someone doesn’t pluck me!”

His lips twitched and he started to massage the back of her neck. Her nerve endings fired to life. “Pluck you? Jesus, that’s a horrible analogy.”

A laugh bubbled out. “It really is, but it’s pretty accurate to how I feel.” She sobered. “The guys I ask out all turn me down. They’re terrified of Jimmy. With good reason because Jimmy would beat the crap out of them. At this rate I’ll be a virgin when I’m twenty-five.”

Mac’s hand on her neck stilled and his eyes turned a steely shade of grey. “Who have you asked?”

His eyes glittered with anger and Alyssa was suddenly scared to say more. “It doesn’t matter.” A loud scream on the television drew her attention. “Let’s just watch the movie.”

A warm, strong hand cupped her jaw and dragged her gaze back to his. “Who, Alyssa?”

She jerked out of his hold and glared at him. “Why? You want to go tell Jimmy?”

His gaze traveled down her body and he seemed to get hung up on her chest. She had decent breasts, or so her friend Stacy was constantly telling her. And the black tank top nightshirt left little to the imagination. She resisted the urge to drag the blanket higher to cover herself. This was Mac, after all. Didn’t she want him seeing her body and getting naughty thoughts? When Mac reached out and plucked at the strap that hung halfway down her arm, her body revved to life. His silvery gaze met hers again and his voice was low and deeper than she’d ever

heard it. "I'm not going to run to your brother, but I do want to know who you're interested in. Tell me, Alyssa."

She shrugged, trying to appear unaffected by his touch, his nearness. "Ron. I asked him first. He's in my algebra class."

Mac's gaze narrowed as his finger drifted over the top of her breast, barely grazing the skin just beneath the neckline. "Ron Vebrizzio?" She nodded, unable to speak. His lip curled. "Ron is a dick. He treats girls like shit. Be glad he turned you down."

She bit her lip and watched as his gaze seemed drawn to her breasts. He licked his lips. That was a good sign, right? Alyssa took a deep breath and let it out. "I wasn't planning to marry him. I just want to...feel."

He cursed as his other hand went to the back of her head. "You're curious and that's no reason to get rid of your virginity. It should mean something to the guy. It should mean something to both of you. And it should be special."

"Have you ever been with a virgin?" *God, why did I ask that? Why torture myself with the image of Mac making love to some perfectly built blonde barbie?*

Mac lifted his head and a sexy half-grin appeared at the side of his mouth. "I don't kiss and tell."

"I'm not just curious," she replied, frustrated that he wasn't getting it. "I want to feel something besides my own fingers for once," she explained, spelling it out. "I want the things other girls whisper about in the school bathroom. I want sex, Mac. I want to feel a guy inside me. Deep. I want a screaming orgasm. Hell, I want several of them, if I'm being honest."

Mac's eyes widened and he shot off the couch as if he'd been bit by a snake. He stalked across the room, fisting his hands at his sides. Alyssa knew better than to talk. She'd seen Mac mad before. He rarely yelled and he never punched walls, but if Alyssa wasn't careful Mac would leave. And she so didn't want that.

Several tense seconds went by before Mac turned and pinned her with his silver gaze. He shook his head. "No one at school is taking your virginity."

The way he said it, as if he had any say at all, really pissed her off. She crossed her arms over her chest, wishing like hell she wasn't so in love with the idiot. "I might have to take orders from Jimmy, but I won't take them from you, Mac. Don't even think it."

He moved toward her, his strides eating up the distance. He kicked the coffee table out of the way with one booted foot and leaned over her, his hands planted on the couch on either side of her head. "You want your virginity gone then I'll do it," he stated, his deep voice filled with dark promise.

"Say again?" Had she heard him right or was she dreaming? It wasn't impossible. She'd had so many dreams about Mac. She always woke up aching and frustrated.

He moved his hands away, then went to his knees on the floor in front of the couch. "Lay down, Alyssa. On your back."

She wasn't about to question him. Her mother hadn't raised a fool. Alyssa tossed the pink blanket aside and stretched out on the couch. She put her arms under her head, using them as a pillow. Her legs were pressed together. She should widen them, show him that she wants this, that she's not shy. But the truth was obvious. She wasn't just shy; she was nervous as hell.

Mac's gaze took a slow, leisurely path down her body. When he came to the little cotton sleep shorts she wore, he lingered. He lifted his hand and rested it over her crotch, the warmth seeped into her, turning her on. She felt wetness between her thighs. Something that had only ever happened when she'd played with herself, after having one of her Mac dreams.

"When is Jimmy due home?" Mac asked, his gaze never leaving the vicinity of her lap.

"He's working a double tonight. Won't be home until midnight," she answered, her voice hoarse with emotion and unspent desire.

He shook his head and lifted his gaze to hers. "I should be shot for this. Jimmy would kill

us both, Alyssa.”

“He won’t know,” she promised as she lifted her hand and rested it against his cheek. He was warm and he was here. And she wasn’t going to let this chance slip away. “This is between you and me, Mac.” She decided to just confess it all. “I’ve fantasized about you, Mac.”

“You’ve...about me?” She nodded and was momentarily distracted by the way his Adam’s apple bobbed as he swallowed. “Did you touch yourself?” She gave him another nod. “Aw hell, Alyssa.”

Without another word, Mac gripped the waistband of her sleep shorts and drew them down her body. An eyebrow arched when he got them all the way off. “No panties?”

Her cheeks heated to about two hundred degrees. “I’ve always hated wearing them,” she explained as she pressed her thighs tighter together.

His fingers trailed over her neatly trimmed mound. “Fuck, you are beautiful,” he whispered. “So goddamn sweet and small.”

Alyssa felt so out of her element and she wasn’t sure what the right thing to say was. “Thank you,” she murmured.

He smiled as his middle finger dipped between the folds of her pussy. “Spread your thighs for me, little baby,” he urged. Alyssa was helpless to deny Mac. He could have anything he wanted because she loved him. She hadn’t realized that until that moment. She spread her legs so wide that one came off the couch entirely. She rested it on his thighs. “Good girl. Now just lay there and let me make you feel good, okay?”

She bit her lip and said, “I heard it hurts. That the first-time hurts.”

Mac’s silvery eyes seemed to darken as he stared at her. “It does, but only for a few seconds, I promise. I’ll give you something new to fantasize about, okay?”

She nodded. “I trust you, Mac.”

“You shouldn’t,” he replied as he slid his finger up and down her slit. “Son of a bitch,

you're so wet.”

Her cheeks flamed. “Is that gross?”

“Fuuuck,” he groaned as he lifted his finger and sucked her juices off it. “You taste like honey. I’m going to need a lot more of that.”

Alyssa spread her hands out on her thighs and said, “You can have all you want.”

Mac’s head shot up and he stared at her as if she’d grown an extra head. “Never say that to a guy like me. Never.”

That confused her. “Why?”

“Because I’m a street rat, Alyssa. I’ll take everything.”

“That’s exactly what I’m offering though.”

He closed his eyes tight and breathed deep before opening them again. “No more talking. Just feel.”

She could totally get on board with that plan. When his hand left the juncture of her thighs and gripped the hem of her nightshirt, Alyssa knew what he wanted. She helped by sitting up and grabbing handfuls of the shirt and yanking it over her head. She lay back down and smiled at him.

He frowned at her. “For a virgin you sure aren’t shy, huh?”

She grinned. “I’ve thought about this a lot. Fantasies, remember? I had a lot of them.”

His eyes zeroed in on her breasts and she heard him curse. “How did I not see it before?”

“What?”

“How goddamn sexy you are. I think I must have been blind.”

She loved hearing the praise coming from Mac. “I’ve been right under your nose the whole time.”

“Yeah, you are, and that’s a real good place to be.” His head descended on her, his mouth claspng her right nipple between his lips. He sucked hard and the pleasure made a beeline

straight for her clitoris. She arched upward, needing so much more. Wetness dripped onto her thighs and her pussy throbbed. Mac licked and flicked at her nipple until it beaded for him, then he moved to her other breast. His hands shaped and kneaded the plump swells. Alyssa squirmed on the couch, the ache building until she thought she'd die from it. After several long minutes of suckling and teasing, Mac released her nipple and lifted his head. He stared down at her. "You have beautiful tits. Wet and swollen from my greedy mouth. I could spend hours tasting you."

Alyssa couldn't speak past the lump of desire. Thankfully he didn't seem to require words from her as he kissed his way down her torso to her belly. His tongue dipped in and teased the little indentation. Alyssa threw her head back and grabbed fistfuls of Mac's hair and tugged him farther south. "Please," she begged, not sure what she was asking for exactly. She only knew she needed to feel him at her pussy. Touching her there and taking away her ache.

Mac clamped a hand over her waist and held her still, then lifted his head an inch. "Easy, we'll get there, I promise."

Alyssa gasped as Mac cupped her bottom in his big palms, then he leaned down and rubbed his mouth back and forth over her slick folds. A moan escaped at that first contact of Mac's mouth. She'd thought of him doing this so many times, but reality was much better. He chuckled and slowly flicked his tongue over her distended clit. Mac used his talented fingers to spread her pussy lips open, then his insistent tongue flicked at her bud. He licked up and down, tasting every inch of her. Within seconds her stomach clenched and Alyssa arched upward as a climax washed over her. The currents sucked her under as the heat spread, soaking her thighs.

Mac didn't give her time to cool as he slipped his middle finger into her tight opening a single inch. He slammed his mouth over hers, his tongue diving between her lips as he stroked her tender flesh with his finger. Alyssa squirmed, the ache building and enticing her body to the edge of that cliff all over again. All at once edgy and needing something just out of her reach. Mac slid another inch of his long, skilled finger into her tight opening. He groaned and lifted his

mouth from hers, only to place gentle kisses over her cheek to her chin. When he reached her neck, he suckled at her directly over her pulse. He pulled his mouth off her overheated skin to stare down at her, his eyes filled with something Alyssa couldn't quite figure out. Then he plunged deep and tore through that thin barrier protecting her innocence. Alyssa cried out as the pain registered. Mac lowered his head and his tongue found her little button and he was very quickly taking her on a journey into another dimension. He pulled his finger out and thrust it back in again, as he licked and sucked her clit. Soon, another finger joined the first, stretching and filling her. It was so much better than her dreams. Her passion mounted and she arched upward as Mac flicked her clit with his tongue. He plunged one last time, and Alyssa shouted out her climax.

Several seconds went by as Alyssa tried to get her breath. When she opened her eyes, Mac was staring down at her. She held out her arms. "Make love to me, Mac."

He smiled, but Alyssa noticed it didn't quite reach his eyes. "No. You're saving that for someone special."

"I want that person to be you," she explained, then a horrible thought struck. "You don't want me."

He stood, then cupped the front of his jeans in a large fist. "I fucking want you. Never doubt that. I'm ready to explode, damn it." She wanted to say something, but her brain had gone and checked out when she'd spotted the impressive bulge pushing against his fly. He cursed, then reached under her and lifted her into his arms. He carried her out of the family room without saying another word. She wound her arms around his neck and let him take her to her bed. He placed her on top of the comforter. "Sit tight, I'll be right back."

Maybe he was getting a condom? He could've changed his mind. Crazy things have happened. When he strode back into the room carrying a white washcloth, her hopes caught fire and burned to ash.

Mac sat down next to her and gently placed the cloth over her mound. He cleaned her sensitive flesh with soft, easy strokes of the cloth. “Now those fuckers at school don’t get to have something so precious. It’s mine.”

Alyssa placed her hand over his, directly over her crotch. “I want you to have it all though. Please, Mac.”

“No, and don’t ask again,” he softly demanded as he tossed the washrag on the floor near her laundry basket. “You’re too good for me. Too good for those dumbasses at school too. You deserve a guy who can afford to take you to a nice restaurant and give you pretty jewelry. Someone who doesn’t drive a piece of shit car. That’s not me, Alyssa.”

A tear spilled down her cheek. “But I thought—”

He kissed her, silencing her confession, then lifted up and murmured. “I know what you thought and I wish it could be different. I wish like hell it was.” He cupped her chin and shook his head. “Just know that this was special to me. Your virginity is mine and I will possessively treasure the hell out of it.”

She shook her head. “No, that’s not how it works, Mac. We didn’t go all the way. We didn’t make love. So technically—”

“Fuck technically,” he ground out. “Has a guy ever touched you like I just did? Licked you? Fingered you? Have you ever come apart for a guy before?”

“No,” she muttered. “You know that.”

“Then I was your first, Alyssa. And I’ll cherish that for as long as I live.”

Her heart filled with grief. She’d lost him for good. Somehow, she’d lost Mac and he hadn’t even been hers to start with. How stupid was that?