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When she moves around the truck and peers down the road, I get the sense that she really does know what she's talking about. "So, it's happened to your car, then?"

"I don't drive."

My growing hope that I can avoid an expensive repair evaporates. "You don't drive, and yet you think you know things about trucks? And what the hell are you looking at?" I growl.

Her attention returns to mine. "My dad liked to work on cars any chance he got, and it was something I liked to do with him. Anything I took an interest in, he always made the time to explain to me. We would talk through any car problems and then we'd test each theory out until we'd fixed it. Aunt Mel hasn't ever needed to take her car to the shop to be repaired because she comes to me, so you don't need to know how to drive to be able to fix a broken car." Her words are soft, but her gaze is so direct that I don't have a response for her.

It isn't often anyone ever gets the best of me in an argument or a fight, but I feel like I've just gone head-to-head with Briar Fenix and lost.

She glances back the way we came. "It hasn't rained the last few days, but there are wet patches on the road."

I dart a glance and confirm she's right. "And?"

"That's another sign a transmission needs replacing. Leaking fluid. There was also a faint burning smell under the hood. I could be wrong, but all three points at a problem with the transmission clutch."

Arousal hits with the force of an uppercut to the jaw. It could be because she's talking about cars and a hot woman talking about cars is always sexy. Or maybe it's that she bested me in an argument without having to raise her voice once.

All the wolves I've ever known have liked their women submissive, but not me. I want one who can hold her own, and Briar Fenix can certainly hold her own.

I stalk toward her. Her eyes widen in alarm before she backs up until she bumps into the side of the truck.

“And what is the fix?”

I watch a small pink tongue wet her bottom lip. Placing my hands on the top of the truck, I lean closer, caging her in. Her soft belly cradles my cock, and the sweet, sultry feminine scent of arousal tickles my nose. My wolf growls at me to press my nose between her legs and inhale.

“Um, new transmission,” she murmurs, her voice husky.

I lean closer. “Something less expensive.”

She licks her lips again. Desire grabs me by the throat and forces me closer. My gaze fixes on her pouty lower lip.

“You could top up the transmission fluid, or...” her voice trails off as my mouth hovers over hers.

I itch with the need to taste the sweetness of her lips. “Or?” Mine whisper over hers, and she sucks in a sharp breath. The sweet scent of arousal deepens.

She swallows hard. “Or cleaning can sometimes...”

I close my hand around her nape and lift my gaze to her eyes. “Sometimes what?”

But she doesn’t speak, just peers up at me with need-filled intensity. I stop caring about the transmission. I stop caring about anything but the need to taste this witch’s lips.

My head lowers, and as I do, her eyes flutter shut. As my mouth touches hers, an explosion rips through the silence, followed a second later by another, and then another.

I jerk my head from hers and turn in the direction it came from. With the tall trees blocking our view of the town, I can’t see what just happened, but the heavy scent of smoke in the air tells me whatever went up, it was big. Almost as big as Calla’s Cauldron. “What the fuck?” I growl.

“Aunt Mel,” Briar breathes.

I dart a glance at her face. It's so pale that she looks about a second away from fainting. She sways.

"What?" I prepare to catch her.

"Diana," she whispers, her eyes fixed on the smoke drifting into the sky. "She doesn't know I'm not there."

I blink down at her. "Not where?"

Silence

I shake her. "Briar?"