

A Man And His Car

By AmandaK

She could tell the exact instant he was gone.

She felt his absence in the same way she had down in Florida every single time for one hundred Tuesdays in a row. She sensed it through a bond that the laws of nature said *couldn't* be, but which existed anyway. And what was so strange about a bond between man and machine in a world where werewolves turned out to be pretty girls and magic guns could kill smoke-shaped demons?

But now that connection had broken, snapped without warning.

She sagged against her springs and shed a couple of thick, oily tears onto the blacktop beneath her.

But not too many! Sam would still need her services, and she'd been charged to watch out for him.

"You'll look after my little brother when I'm gone, won't you, baby?" he'd whispered, his hands splayed on her roof, forehead resting against the edge of the driver-side door, his breath fogging her window. "Take good care of him?"

She'd given a barely-perceptible shudder in response even while her rapidly-cooling engine ticked a plea: *please don't go*—and he'd offered her a small smile of affection before he'd walked away.

And now he was gone.

Her memories went wheeling back to the long, cold months after Florida. She'd stood by Sam all through that time, even though she hadn't made a promise like she had now. Carried him wherever he wanted to go, given him her all, even when he pressed pedal to the metal until she roared with effort, and dug his fingers painfully into her steering wheel.

But those had not been happy days for either of them. Sam might have kept her trunk neat to the point of obsession, but he never gave her special oil treats on Sundays, or languorous waxy back rubs with a soft cloth while she basked in the warm sunlight. Sam never sang along with the radio either, like he did: sometimes humming softly beneath his breath, sometimes belting out lyrics at the top of his voice. Heck, Sam hardly ever

turned *on* the radio. And when he did, it wasn't to listen to the classic rock she'd come to love, but to local weather reports or to NPR stations where people talked in low voices about things she didn't understand.

And now he was gone, again.

This time she feared it'd be for good. And she would go back to being nothing more than 'the car', a method of transportation to take people from A to B, like millions upon millions of other cars.

Oh, sure, it had always been her most important purpose in life, the task for which she was built, and she'd done it willingly, without complaint. She'd seen so much of the world—or at least the part of the world that was called United States; raced along smooth interstates and bounced over rutted dirt tracks; listened to the hollered joy of a job well done and experienced bone-deep grief, never more so than back in the early days when the boys were asleep in the back and John expressly avoided looking at the empty passenger seat...

Yeah, she'd seen some bad times along with the good.

Yet, she had never been happier than during the years *he* rode her, and she'd taken him to distant places and new adventures. Sure, John might have been her first but those years with *him* were among her most joyful memories: his weight pressing down on her padded leather, his hands resting lightly on her wheel, guiding her with gentle but firm touches while they sped through dark nights and her tires ate mile after mile of dusty road. He'd always thank her, with a loving stroke across her smooth skin as he walked around her hood in a parking lot, or a playful pat on her rear end after he closed the trunk.

Sometimes, during endless drives when he was in no rush, she'd let a rattle sound from under her hood on purpose. She knew he'd pull over to the side of the road as soon as he could, and have callused fingers dancing over her insides moments later, prodding and poking with light yet sure touches.

She trembled on her rims at the memory.

But then she remembered that he was... gone, and her grille groaned softly as the corners dipped a little. Another black tear escaped to land in the puddle under her belly.

She loved him, as she knew he'd loved her. Loved her more than any of the flesh-and-blood women he'd known. She *knew* he did.

And if she'd needed proof, well, it had never been more obvious than when she died, and

he refused to let her go. They'd all said she was a goner, nothin' they could do about it: Sam, Bobby Singer, even John.

But not him. He didn't give up on her, even though common sense dictated she should've been scrapped. Her body was nothing but torn sheet metal, her engine block cracked, the entire chassis out of alignment; she'd surely been headed for the crusher.

But he'd saved her from oblivion, put her back together piece by piece through long hours of loving care.

She just wished she could do the same for him....

Author's note: I am aware that in *In My Time Of Dying*, Sam argued against Bobby's suggestion that the Impala was beyond rescue and should be scrapped. However, I believe that wasn't about the *car* so much as it was about *Dean*. For Sam, giving up on the car meant giving up on Dean. I'm quite convinced that, once Dean had recovered and announced his intention to rebuilt the Impala, Sam tried to talk his brother out of what must've seemed a mission impossible. And that's what she's referring to.

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