

The One Where it's Not as Bad as it Seems

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The One Where it's Not as Bad as it Seems

by [HatlessHoneybee](#)

Summary

Gene's weeks are never easy, but when Babe and Bill's buddy Julian comes for a visit and brings out the reckless side of Babe, Gene's week gets a whole lot harder.

Notes

I'm soooooo happy that you guys are enjoying this alternate universe. I'm planning on doing a few other things in the fandom on the side and posting them on here, but I'll still be working on Curahee Complex. Anyways, I hope you all like this one as much as the others. It's not so much a humorous story as it is just about caring and some fluff. SaintMerriell wanted either some Babe/Roe or Spierton for this fic and since I had no inspiration for Spierton, I went with Babe and Roe. I really hope this one lives up to your expectation! Here goes nothing!

As always, I own nothing. Band of Brothers is property of HBO. I intend no offense to the real veterans of the 101st airborne. This is a complete work of fiction based on the fictional versions in the show portrayed by actors. I do not mean to imply or insinuate anything about the real men!

This is also self edited (and finished kinda late) so please excuse any typos or grammatical errors! Thanks everyone! - Bee

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Gene shouldn't have answered the phone. It was his night off and he had just come off a triple shift, crashing on the couch in his apartment because he couldn't even bring himself to trudge to bed. On principle, he shouldn't have answered it, but when he saw the name 'Heffron' flash up on his screen and the picture of his favorite redhead, he couldn't stop himself from swiping the screen and bringing the phone up to his ear.

"Heffron, you got any idea what time it is?" He drawled, most of his patients dried up hours ago. The moonlight shining through the window told him it was late, a fact re-enforced by the fact that Spina was gone, probably working his shift.

"Uh, this Gene? The doctor?" The voice on the other line certainly wasn't Babe's, it was higher pitched and with a strange undertone to the accent. Immediately, Gene was lifting himself up off the couch.

"Who is this?" He asked, suspicion obvious in his tone. Who the hell was taking Babe's phone and using it to call him?

"This is Julian, Babe's friend," The voice told him and Gene suddenly remembered. Edward had been gushing about Julian's upcoming visit, excited to have the young man visiting him for the week. Gene had been so preoccupied, he had forgotten that Babe was supposed to pick the kid up from the airport earlier.

"Right," Gene nodded, though he knew the kid couldn't see him.

"You're the doctor, right?" Julian asked again, something strange in his voice. Voices carried in the background, loud and obnoxious, along with thumping bass.

"Yeah," Gene was more alert, worry forming in the pit of his gut. "Why? Where's Edward?"

"He's here," Julian muttered. "Quick question. What does alcohol poisoning look like?"

"What?" Gene snapped, standing up. He was across the room in a flash, slipping on his sneakers and grabbing a hoodie off of the coat hook. "Is it Edward?"

"I think he had a bit too much to drink, Doc," Julian admitted.

"Fuck!" Gene hissed, pulling the hoodie over his head while trying to keep the phone near his ear. "Julian, is he pale?"

"Yeah."

"Vomiting?"

"Well, he did once."

"Is he responsive? Is he answerin' you?"

"Yeah, he's talkin'."

"Ask him a question, like what month is it."

Julian's voice became distant, like he had turned the phone away from his mouth. Gene strained to hear their mumbling while he grabbed his keys and locked up the front door. In the hallway he passed Malarkey and Muck who were stumbling in with glitter all over themselves and giggling like school children.

"He answered right, Doc," Julian finally came back, his answer a soothing balm to Gene's nerves.

The doctor let out a breath of relief. If Babe was unresponsive, he would have told Julian to call the paramedics right away. "Where is he?"

Julian gave him the club's name and the nearest street sign. Gene told him to keep an eye on Edward and call 911 if he seemed to get worse. It took Gene a couple of minutes to get a cab, but he paid the driver extra to get him there as fast as he could.

When Gene finally arrived, it was to the sight of Babe on the curb, head between his knees and a young kid who Gene assumed to be Julian rubbing soothing circles on Babe's back. Within seconds Gene was crouched next to the redhead, fingers under Edward's chin to tilt his head up.

"Gene!" Babe managed a sloppy smile when he realized that Gene was there. "When did you get here?"

"Just now," Gene told him, pulling out his phone and turning on the flashlight. "How you feelin', Heffron?"

"Like shit," Babe answered with a pout. "Better now that you're here."

Gene couldn't stop the corners of his mouth from quirking up. He raised the light and pointed it in Babe's eyes. "Look at me, Edward."

"Gladly."

He administered a few tests to gauge how drunk Babe was, and the results set him at ease. It was clear after awhile that Babe was not suffering alcohol poisoning, but would most likely suffer a massive hangover. Gene felt himself relax as he pulled Babe to his feet.

"He ain't bad," Gene told Julian. "But you did the right thing. I've seen enough cases of idiots drinkin' too much and nearly killin' themselves. How much did he have, anyway?"

Julian pursed his lips, thinking it over. It was clear that the young man had been drinking as well, but he could either handle it better than Babe, or he hadn't had as much. "Well he had a couple beers, but then we started a shot challenge. The bartender cut him off, though."

"How come you ain't on your ass?" Gene raised an eyebrow at the kid, ignoring the way that Babe drunkenly dragged his hand across Gene's chest. If he acknowledged it, he would surely start burning up.

Julian put on a stupidly proud smile. "I got the highest tolerance of us Philly boys. That's what started the shot challenge."

Roe rolled his eyes and hefted Babe up better, pulling the redheads arm over his shoulder while he gripped at his waist. "It's time to go home. You, too, boy."

Twenty minutes later Gene was dragging Babe into the young man's apartment. When he questioned where the others were, Edward drunkenly informed him that Bill had worked late at the factor and crashed at Frannie's, and Joe was visiting his mom.

"Then I'm sure Bill won't mind you layin' up in here," Gene told the younger man as he settled Babe onto Bill's bed, helping to pull his shoes off. He spared a quick glance at Julian, who was hovering in the doorway. "Bring me two bottles of water."

Julian scurried off, coming back with the desired items which Gene took from him. It took a bit of cajoling, but Gene managed to get Babe to drink one and a half bottles of water, leaving the other half on the nightstand. Julian said his goodnights and thanked Gene before heading off to sleep in Joe's room.

"You gotta take it easy next time, Edward," Gene said with a sigh, looking down at the bundled up form of Babe. Gene had swaddled him with a blanket and helped him get comfortable. From the way that his eyelids were drooping, he was very comfortable.

"Jesus, Gene," Babe huffed. "Only the nuns call me 'Edward'."

Gene chuckled, bringing a hand up to card through Babe's hair. "So you've said."

Babe hummed happily, leaning into Gene's palm. "'M not as bad as I look."

"Edward, you are a walking catastrophe," it might have been an insult if Gene hadn't said it with such fondness, a small smile crawling onto his lips. His fingers pushed the red strands off of Babe's forehead. The younger man sighed, closing his eyes and visibly relaxing.

"Stay with me," Babe was drunk enough to ask, but that didn't mean he didn't want it. Laying with Gene would have been something out of a dream, but also something he didn't dare ask for. However, pliant and loose under Gene's caring gestured and the influence of tequila, he just couldn't stop himself.

Gene drew in a breath, but closed his eyes and forced himself to shake his head. Babe was drunk and they were both tired. So, Gene fondly scraped his fingertips on the redheads scalp and gave a chuckle. "Heffron, if I go to sleep, I ain't wakin' up for the next twenty-four hours. I think it's best I do that in my own apartment."

"Gene," Babe muttered, but it only took a few more strokes and he was out like a light. Gene gave a soft sigh and pulled out his phone, ready to send a text.

Sent 2:47 AM to Spina: Hey, would you mind lookin in on Heffron when you get off? He drank too much and I need to get some sleep.

Gene pushed himself off of Bill's bed and left the apartment entirely, heading back to his own. He knew that Ralph was taking the graveyard shift and would come home in the morning, so he hoped that the paramedic would be willing to check on Babe. If not, Gene would force himself to wake up and do it.

By the time that he had gotten into his own room in apartment 2E, Gene had received a text from Ralph, confirming that he would be sure to check on Babe when he got home. With that weight lifted off his shoulders, Gene fell into bed and promptly sacked out.

It was two days later when Gene found himself worrying over Heffron again. The day after, Gene had woken up to a text from Babe spewing his embarrassment and thanking Gene for taking such good care of him. He would have told Gene in person, but he didn't want to wake him up. Since that night, Babe had been out of the apartment showing Julian around and spending time with the kid, which Gene was glad to see. Only, Babe couldn't stay out of trouble forever.

Gene had just finished consulting with a man who came in for a mild cardiac episode, going through the recommendations of diet and exercise (and the subsequent argument that came when the man refused to give up his steak night every week). After dropping off the chart at the nurses station, he was ambushed by a worried looking Renee, one of the nurses and a good friend.

"Gene," She breathed his name with some relief. "That little redhead you speak of, celui que vous voulez sauter."

"I don't-" Gene started to protest, his cheeks flaming.

"His name is Edward Heffron, yes?" She asked, cutting him off.

Furrowing his eyebrows, Gene nodded. "Yeah, why?"

"He is in room six," She pointed towards the curtained off room.

"What?" He blanched, but she took his hand and lead him towards the room, not that he wasn't ready to go investigate himself. Oh, God, what if Babe was in an accident? No, he would have seen the fuss. What if he was suffering after-effects of the other night? Or he could have gotten mugged.

All his worrying was put to rest when he entered the room to find Babe on the bed, flanked by Bill and Julian, a bloody rag clutched inbetween his hands. Edward lifted his head, a sheepish look coming to his face when he saw Gene. "Heyya, Gene. Fancy meeting you here."

"Heffron," Gene brought a hand up to rub at his temples. He swore this boy was gonna give him either a head of grey hairs or a heart attack. "What the hell did you do this time?"

"These two knuckleheads were wrestling around," Bill spoke up, ready to explain. His arms were crossed over his chest and he was giving Babe and Julian a glare he could only have perfected after spending years with the pair. "Babe tripped up, managed to break the glass in his hand."

"The doctor has not been in, yet," Renee told him. "Tu pourrais le prendre."

Gene nodded. "I'll take it."

It didn't take long for Gene to assess the situation. After asking for the full story, Gene knew that Babe had broken a kitchen glass and therefore wouldn't need any shots or tests, since it would have been extremely unlikely that he would contract anything. All that was left was for Gene to stitch up the wound.

"I'm gonna administer a local anesthetic," Gene told him as he went through the process, explaining it all to Babe. The young man didn't seem concerned, only embarrassed. He was pretty sure that Julian was trying to hit on Renee behind him, which was a lost cause.

"So you're from France?" Julian asked, receiving a polite nod from Renee. "That's a shame you're not local. I was gonna ask if you knew of any good bakeries around 'cause I'd love to have a cutie-pie like you."

There was groans from both Bill and Babe. Renee giggled at Julian. "That was bad."

"So it didn't work?"

"I have a girlfriend," Renee told him with a sympathetic smile.

"Damn," Julian sighed. "Can't blame a guy for tryin'."

"Calm down, Jules," Bill cast the kid an amused glare.

Gene was sure that he heard Babe mutter something like 'goddamn virgin', a fond smile on his lips for his young friend. He finished up Babe's stitches, wrapping the hand in a bandage and running his fingers over the covered wound.

"Didn't I just tell you to be careful, Edward?" Gene looked up, forcing Babe to catch his eye, even though the younger man tried to evade his gaze.

"It's not as bad as it looks," Babe tried, earning an exasperated sigh from Gene. The Cajun stood from his chair, snapping the latex gloves off his hands and tossing them in the trash.

"No, I know how bad it is, Edward. 'Cause I just stitched up your damn hand!" He couldn't stop some of the bite in his tone. Renee laid a hand on his arm, raising her eyebrow at him. Gene sighed and ran a hand through his hair before stepping closer and placing a hand on the back of Edward's neck, fingers playing with his hair. When he spoke, his tone was softer and more tired than anything. "Just please try and keep yourself out of trouble."

Babe swallowed, nodding like a bobblehead. Guilt was welling up in his chest and he cleared his throat. Bill had averted his eyes, pretending to find great interest in the walls. Julian was

watching the pair with great interest, until Bill slugged him in the arm and turned him around. "I'll try, Gene. Really."

Gene smiled fondly at the redhead, squeezing his neck. "That's all I ask."

That should have been the end of it, but nothing was ever easy with the people who lived in Curahee. So Gene shouldn't have been as surprised as he was when he came home from his shift three days later to find Babe at the top of the stairwell, his butt planted firmly in a garbage can lid and a pot on his head.

Julian was next to him, arms out as if he was ready to give Babe a push. Behind him was the interested faces of Muck, Penkala, Malarkey, George, and surprisingly Leibgott. It took Gene's tired mind a moment to piece together what was happening, but when he did, he dropped his things and pointed an accusing finger at Babe.

"Edward Heffron, you stop right there!" All eyes snapped to Gene, mixed looks of fear and shame coming to all their faces.

"Gene-

"No, I don't wanna hear it!" Gene snapped. "You get your ass outta that thing right now and back away from the stairs! And the rest of you better get where you're goin' before I start in on you next!"

The crowd dispersed as quick as bats away from the light. The only ones left were Babe and Julian, both wearing sheepish looks on their faces. The latter was looking at Gene with a cute and innocent smile, most likely hoping to charm his way out of it.

"Don't even start, Edward-

"He sounds like your mom," Julian whispered not-so-subtly to Babe, eyes wide when he watched Gene start his lecture.

"I have told you twice not to do somethin' stupid and not even three days later your fuckin' around by the stairs! You could break your neck and then where would you be? I oughtta march you in front of Winters and Lipton, let them give you a real parental talkin' to! It's what you need with all this childish behavior! Honestly, I expected you to have a bit more sense," Gene growled.

"But Gene-

"No," Gene shook his head, crossing his arms like a disapproving mother. "You march your little ass out of the stairwell and find something less likely to kill ya to do."

Babe pouted, sharing a put upon look with Julian before the pair gave in. "Fine."

He really should have seen it coming. Babe was the clumsiest person that Gene had ever met, like he had never figured out how to work his gangly body right. So it shouldn't have been

surprising when Babe went to stand and ended up slipping on the garbage can lid and tumbling down the stairs.

"Oh, fuck!" Julian shouted, darting after Babe.

"Heffron!" Gene lunged to the side, using his own body to prevent Babe from colliding with the wall at the bottom of the stairs. The bartender knocked into his legs, sending Gene to the floor as well, but he didn't care. He was too busy scrambling to look at Babe. "Shit, Edward, you okay?"

"Ah, fuck, Gene, my arm!"

An hour later they were in a hospital room, Babe's arm wrapped in a blue cast and a few bruises on his head. Julian had taken off to take a leak and grab Babe something from the vending machine while Gene sat on a chair with his head in his hands.

"Gene," Babe started, unsure of what to say. He didn't know whether to apologize or whether to remain quiet. He knew that it was his own fault that he was hurt. It had been a stupid stunt, there was no way around it. "I'm sorry, Gene."

"Edward..." Gene sighed, scrubbing a hand over his face. This was the third time he had to see Babe hurt in a week and it made his chest ache. He cared about that young man so much and it was hard to watch him be clumsy and reckless.

"It's just..." Babe bit his lip, wondering if he should make excuses. But this wasn't an excuse. This was an explanation and one he wanted to give to Gene. "Julian and I have always been kinda reckless when we're together. We used to send Bill into a fit with our stunts. I guess, it wasn't such a big deal when we were teenagers. But sometimes, when I'm around him, I forget that I'm not a kid anymore and that this stuff is really stupid. So I'm sorry."

"Edward," Gene stood up and approached Babe, not looking in his eye but taking his non-casted arm and lacing his fingers with Babe's. "I told you once that I ain't lookin' for you to change and I meant it. I'm not askin' you to quit havin' fun or to quit being the way you are. I'm just askin' you to not get yourself hurt in the process. You may not care, but I do. I care about you a lot, Babe. I worry about you." Gene accentuated this with a squeeze to Babe's hand. "So please, for me, don't go gettin' your ass hurt every five minutes."

Babe nodded, looking down at their interlaced hands with affection. It hit him hard to know that Gene cared and worried about him. A warmth bloomed in his chest, made it feel tight, but in a good way like the way he felt on christmas morning. "I guess that if it bothers you that much that I'll try. 'Cause I care about you too, Gene."

"Good," Gene smiled and squeezed Babe's hand one more time. It was a sudden impulse, but one he allowed himself, Gene leaning down and brushing a kiss to Babe's head, earning a startled look from the redhead. It quickly melted into a fond smile, warmth in the man's eyes. Gene released their hands and sat back on the chair.

It was a moment before Babe spoke, realization striking him like a train. "Hey, Gene. You called me 'Babe'."

"I did?" Gene furrowed his eyebrows. "When?"

"Just now."

"Babe," Gene tested the name on his tongue, finding it as sweet as Edward was. "I guess I did."

"Babe," Edward mocked, a Luz-worthy impression of Gene's accent. He gave way to chuckles which earned an exasperated eyeroll from Gene.

"Heffron, watch for the damn doctor."

End Notes

Well, there it is. Caring Roe is like honey on my soul. I hope you guys enjoyed this one and, as always, I hope they were in character. I do not know French and used Google translate for it, so if anyone sees any issues with it and wants to correct me, let me know. So, I think I may try a LuzToye one again next (guys they're my OTP), but I'm also super open on pairings you wanna read about in this universe, so let me know if you guys have a request! Thanks guys! - Bee

French Translation (According to Google):

Celui que vous voulez sauter - The one you want to jump

Tu pourrais le prendre - You could take it

P.S. I have no idea why I put in Julian hitting on Renee, it just felt right. Cheers to anyone who can figure out who Renee's girlfriend is.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!