

Trop chaud dans la cuisine

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Trop chaud dans la cuisine

by [GGCharms](#)

Summary

Babe has spent his entire life dreaming about working in renowned French restaurant, Sainte-Marie-Du-Mont, and finally gets his chance...as a garbage boy.

Notes

I do not own Band of Brothers or Ratatouille

Hey everyone, I'm still working on Easy's Omega, but I was watching Ratatouille one night, and I couldn't get over the fact how much Babe looked like Linguini, and how Colette looked like a female version of Gene. So this was born lol. This will probably be three-shot, maybe only a two-shot. We'll see how this ends XD

Just watch these two videos and see how much Babe and Eugene act like these two, it's hilarious.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TawS7eTAN8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgiK-HWKPjw>

As usual, I hope you enjoy!!

Babe could honestly say, he imagined life to go a lot more smoothly.

And why wouldn't it? He's always known he wanted to be a chef. As a kid, his ma would let him help make dinner while his siblings were at their after school activities. She would stack every book in the house, making it so his carrot top head would just peak above the counter, and carry him around the kitchen so he could grab the ingredients.

Then everyone would come home, and tell him what a good job he did, that it was the best they've ever had. Today, he knows it was always his ma's cooking that won everybody over, but back then, his little body would be filled with joy at the idea of people enjoying something he created.

He first cooked something by himself when he was eight year old, or rather, he attempted to bake something. It was after his dad just up and left them, no explanation, no regrets. His ma always put on a brave face for them, though.

When Babe would crawl into her bed at night, tears streaming down his face, saying it was probably his fault he left in the first place, she would simply carry him into the kitchen, clean his face off with a damp washcloth, and give him a bowl of ice cream. She then carried him to the couch, where they would stay up watching late night cartoons. He always wondered how she was able to act like everything was alright, that nothing was different.

About two weeks after his dad left, they had to move out of their house. His ma never told him why, just simply saying, "It's too big for us now, Babe, it should go to a family who needs it."

He knew that wasn't the real reason, though, since the single floor house has always been too small for them. He couldn't remember a time he didn't share a room with his two brothers, his sisters camping out on the pull out sofa in the living room.

He didn't question it, though, since they were moving into his best buddy's house, the Guarneres! His ma was friends with their ma from work, and he would always go over to their house to play with their youngest son, Bill. Bill was two years older than him, but they've always been thick as thieves. They even got to share a room together! To him, it was like an extended sleepover.

His ma made sure they understood it was only temporary, though, just until she found a better job. Mrs. Guarnere had ten sons of her own, after all, so it was kind of unfair to them, even though she insisted that it was no trouble at all.

"Now I won't hear any of it, Augusta! You an' ya children are stayin' right here until you're completely back on ya feet! No ifs, ands, or buts about it!"

One night he woke up to sobbing. He turned over and tried waking Bill to see if he heard it too, but the other just slapped his hand away. Babe pouted, and tried again.

"Jesus Christ, Babe, whaddeya want?" the ten year old mumbled.

“I think your house is haunted or somethin’,” he spoke in a nervous whisper, “I hear crying comin’ from outside.”

“It’s an old house, Babe. It’s probably just making weird noises and shit,” Bill responded, and rolled over, ending the conversation.

Babe sat there in silence, waiting for it to happen again. When it did, he vaulted over Bill, earning a displeased grumble in response, and the loss of his blankets. Carefully, he cracked open the door, and tiptoed into the hallway.

He’s never seen a ghost before. Tommy Spanner in his class bragged about seeing his dead Grandma once, but everyone said he was speaking bullshit. At the moment, Babe wish he could believe it was bullshit.

He followed the crying, until finally, he reached a bedroom door. He stared at it, realizing that it was his ma’s room, and that was her muffled cries.

Babe frowned. He didn’t like the idea of his ma crying. But when he cried, she usually gave him ice cream, and the Guarneres didn’t have any ice cream since, according to Mrs. Guarneri, they were “hyper enough already”.

He tried to think of what else he could do. Usually sweets helped him when he was upset, but they didn’t have anything like that either.

They did have flour, butter, eggs, and sugar....

And Babe got an idea.

With a large grin, he quickly (but silently) made his way to the kitchen. He didn’t exactly remember his ma’s cookie recipe, but he did know you just had to mix basically four things, and then bake it in the oven on a pan, so it couldn’t be that hard.

That was before he dropped an egg on the floor, poured flour on the floor, and microwaved butter in a bowl, only to have it overflow. He could admit he made some mistakes, but he added extra sugar to make up for it, because more sugar was better, right?

He also fell asleep while he waited for it to come out of the oven, but he immediately woke up when he smelled something burning, so at least he had a nose for that!

He rushed towards the oven, almost forgetting the mit along the way, and pulled the pan out. His bright eyes filled with excitement immediately changed to disappointment and despair when what he pulled out what a misshapen, burnt mess of something that looked nothing like his ma’s cookies.

His nose started running, and he couldn’t stop his eyes from watering. He wanted to make ma happy, like she’s always made him happy when he was upset, but he couldn’t even do that for her. The tears started spilling over, and he didn’t even have the energy to wipe them away as they started to drip onto the pan.

“Babe?” a voice suddenly spoke up behind him, causing him to jump.

He quickly wiped his eyes and nose with the sleeve of his pajama top, and turned around only to see his ma in the doorway. Her own eyes were rimmed with red, tear tracks still evident on her cheeks.

She looked around the kitchen in confusion, taking in the piles of flour on the floor, the opened fridge, and the melted butter dripping out of the microwave.

“What are you doing up so late, sweetie?”

Babe took in her wondering eyes, and began to look around himself. Almost immediately, new tears began to fall at the mess.

“I’m sorry, mommy, I just wanted to bake something.”

His ma slowly walked over towards him, taking great care not to step in anything that could be further dragged across the floor. When she finally made the distance, she looked at the pan Babe was hovering over.

“Who was this for, sweetie?”

“You, mommy”

She looked at him with surprise, causing Babe to drop his head in embarrassment, “You always give me ice cream when I’m upset,” he explained, “but there isn’t any here, and there isn’t anything else either, so I decided to make you something myself. I kind of remembered your cookie recipe, but...”

He trailed off at that, his ma good clearly see the disaster that was created right in front of him.

He could feel her heavy stare on him, he didn’t even want to look up to see her disappointed face, so he kept his head down.

When a hand shot out in his field of vision, and grabbed the cookie with no hesitation, he finally looked up in surprise at his mom.

With no hesitation at all, the kindest woman he has ever meant ate the cookie one bite at a time, savoring every bit of it. Every time she swallowed, there was no face of disgust, just a neutral expression as she finished off the dessert. She even licked her fingers afterwards, and finished off the leftover crumbs on the pan.

When she was done, she faced Babe, taking his face in her hands. For the rest of his life, Babe would never forget that look she gave him. Her face was glowing, her eyes were brighter, and her gentle smile seemed to light up the whole room. It was the happiest Babe has seen her since his dad left.

“Thank you, Babe. You always know how to cheer me up.”

Babe gave her a big smile of his own, and didn’t even flinch when she took a damp washcloth to clean his face.

They then cleaned the kitchen together, and settled on the couch for the night, falling asleep to cartoons.

That feeling he had that day, of making someone happy, he wanted to feel that for the rest of his life.

So he went to school, got straight As, took up a part time job, and practiced cooking everyday.

He was good at it, too. He cooked for his family and the Guarneres (they never did leave) every night. When his friends were over, he always had them taste test his new creations (not that they ever complained. Julian was always begging for his cooking). And while he only did go to culinary school at his local community college for two years, he did not let that discourage him from his real goal, and that was Sainte-Marie-du-Mont.

No, not the place in France (but that would be cool). It was a French restaurant in New York City, and it's been ranked in the top three in every food magazine in the country. Owned by renowned chef, Dick Winters, and husband Lewis Nixon, it was any chef's dream to even step foot in that kitchen.

And with Winters's motto ringing in his head, "Anyone can cook," Babe knew that, one day, his poor Phillie ass would become Head Chef there. One day, he would see inside that beautiful kitchen for himself.

And that day was...

"Holy shit, Gonorrhea! I mean, just, holy shit!"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Bill answered from his relaxed position on the couch, a small smirk on his lips, "download the thing on your phone, why don' ya, so I don't have ta keep listenin' ta the damn thing."

"Is that really possible? Can I do that? I mean, this is a real voice message from THE Dick Winters! Ya know? The owner of Sainte-Marie-Du-Mont?! My dream job!"

"Jesus Christ, Babe, I know! I work there, rememba?"

"Ha, yeah, as a waiter." Babe laughed as he vaulted over the couch to sit next to his best friend, and was immediately met with a pillow to the face.

"Watch ya mouth, kid, I only moved down to this goddamn city, and took up that job to watch after you, like I promised your ma."

Babe looked down sheepishly at the true statement. When he announced right after college he was going to move to New York and finally accomplish his dream, he was met with a lot of hesitation and reluctance. It wasn't until Bill agreed to hold off on being a mechanic, and live with Babe until he gets on his feet did his ma finally relent.

Of course, to afford their 550 square foot apartment in Queens, they both had to take up jobs. For Babe, he worked a bunch of odd jobs here and there: pizza delivery boy, cashier at grocery markets, custodians for schools, sunglasses salesman, barista, ran a mall kiosk, and once he was even a bouncer. Well, really he was hired to make sure no punks from different schools crashed another high school's prom, but his friends didn't need to know that.

Bill, on the other hand, was able to find one good paying job almost immediately. And, of course, it was at the place he's wanted to work for his whole life.

Babe let out an angry huff, "I can't believe you took the job in the first place, knowing I've wanted to work there forever."

Bill snorted, "I didn't know it was ya dream to be a waiter."

"Yeah, well, it would've been a step in the right direction," Babe sighed, "it's taken two years just for them to hear my name. Haven't ya been talkin' about me, Bill?"

"Of course I have, Babe, but it's not tha' easy," Bill responded almost immediately, "Do ya know how many résumés those guys go over a day just for being a busboy?"

"Hey, I would have made a damn good busboy!"

"Trust me, we have enough of those," Bill muttered underneath his breath, but then continued in a louder voice, "Look, just be happy I got ya this job now, ok?"

"Yeah, so grateful, Gonorrhea, thanks a lot," Babe responded sarcastically.

"Hey, like ya said, it's a step in the right direction. Everyone has ta start somewhere."

"Start somewhere, huh? How many great chefs do you know that have started as a-"

"Garbage boy!"

Babe cringed as his new name rang throughout the kitchen. He tried, sneaking into the pantry, but someone caught his shoulder, and spun him around. He was met face to face with a mildly pissed off Martin (but, then again, he always looked like that), who then pushed him in the direction of the mess by the dirty dishes. What was left for him was some brown goop the garbage disposal decided to spit up, and some customer's spilled soup on the floor.

Sighing, Babe took out his mop, and began to clean up the mess. He had to admit, when he first found out he was finally going to see the inside of New York's most famous restaurant, he was so ecstatic, Bill had to sneak a benadryl in his dinner so he would sleep that night. Now, as he was on his hands and knees scooping what looked and felt like throw up into a bucket, he felt like he was getting nowhere faster.

Not that he wasn't grateful for Bill, he would have never even come this far without the other Phillie man's help. It was just, day after day as Babe was called to clean up every disgusting

grime that appeared throughout the five star restaurant, he felt further and further away from becoming the greatest chef in the nation.

As he caught his reflection in the dirty mop water, Babe couldn't help but let out another sad breath of air.

"Hey, what's got ya down, Babe?"

Babe looked up, only to see one of the four busboys, Skip Muck, looking back at him while cleaning a bin full of dirty dishes.

"Aha, nothing, Muck, just thinking," Babe answered while scratching the back of his head awkwardly.

Skip hummed in understanding, "Well don't think too long, Sobel has been making his rounds again. Don't wanna get a reprimand from him."

Babe quickly nodded in agreement, and continued to clean up the rest of the grime, before making his way to the cleaning closet. Sobel was the Head Chef that took over after Winters decided to focus on running the business instead of cooking. Many of the men describe Sobel as a "clusterfuck", a ticking time bomb just waiting to destroy the whole kitchen. Babe once asked, if Sobel was so bad, why didn't the others just tell Winters.

The Expediter, Carwood Lipton, explained that it was their respect for Winters that was holding them back. They knew the man must have made the decision to hire him for a good reason, they've just been waiting to see what that good reason is.

For the moment, it was up to the staff to make sure none of Sobel's disasters left the kitchen, and ruin the restaurant's reputation. As the person to inspect the food before it left the kitchen, the job mostly fell on Lipton's shoulders. Despite Babe's words of sympathy (since Babe has smelled the food Sobel has come up with, and, yikes), Lipton just chuckled and reassured him that he didn't mind.

"I will do anything to keep this restaurant going," the man answered Babe's confused expression with a kind smile.

It didn't take long for Babe to realize the entire establishment was filled with men like that, dedicated to their job, the food, and their boss (Winters, not Sobel).

Bill was able to introduce him to a bunch of them too. Along with Bill, there was Joe Toye, Floyd Talbert, Charles Grant, and Smokey Gordon as waiters, and a kind French hostess named Renee. Then came the busboys, Skip Muck, Donald Malarkey, Alex Penkala, and Donald Hoobler. All of them were either just using the job to help get through school, to pay off some bills, or, in Bill's case, help his best friend get on his feet before moving back home.

While most of them complained about annoying customers, and the long hours on their feet, Babe can see deep down that they really enjoy their jobs. Way deep down for some (*cough* Toye *cough*).

Then came the jobs in the kitchen, the ones Babe would kill just to have a day in their shoes (except for Harry Welsh's job as the kitchen manager. He could keep that.)

Like he's mentioned, the Head Chef was a man named Herbert Sobel, a complete fuck up in the kitchen, and way too involved in everyone else's space. Babe has seen first hand people having to be held back by the other's, or their face getting so red from anger they looked like a ripe tomato as Sobel took over their station. In the end, he would mess up the entire dish, causing that Station Chef to start over.

The Sous Chef was a man named Ronald Speirs, and honestly, Babe was more afraid of him than he was of Sobel. He would catch the brown haired man staring at him at random points during the day causing little shivers to shoot up his spine. Babe swore he was doing it just to make him squirm, because he never did it to anyone else.

In total, there were eight Chef de Partie, or Station Chefs.

Similar to Speirs was the Grill Chef, Pat Christenson. Just like Speirs, Christensen was a quiet man, but held an air around him that just screamed 'no bullshit'. He was almost as intimidating as the Sous Chef, making Babe want to hide in a corner whenever he ended up getting in the man's way.

The Pantry Chef was in charge of preparing cold dishes, such as salads, and to check the refrigerated food to make sure it is all fresh. To Babe's delight, the man was also from Phillie, moved down just a few years before Babe did. His name was Ralph Spina, and, besides Bill, Babe felt the most comfortable talking to him.

Besides Speirs and Christenson, Babe felt the least comfortable talking to Joseph Liebgott, or just Liebgott around the kitchen. He was the Fish Chef, and honestly, his temper could boil any pot of water. Seeing him blow up at simple mistakes, orders that were sent back that he thought were perfect, and over Sobel was a normal occurrence. The others could actually tell when he was sick or depressed about something if he didn't have a temper tantrum at least two times a day. So to avoid getting in Liebgott's line of fire, he stayed far away from the Fish Chef unless he was called over to clean something.

A complete 180 from Liebgott was the Pastry Chef, Shifty Powers. Shifty always arrived to work the earliest, besides Speirs and Babe himself, to prepare the bread for the day. Babe always enjoyed that time of the day, since he could take his time cleaning up while listening to Shifty tell stories from back home in his soft, Virginian accent. He even gives Babe a small piece of bread or whatever pastry he's created when no one else is looking, so he quickly became one of his favorites.

The Vegetable Chef was one of the more normal ones in the kitchen. The only weird thing about Buck Compton was his obsession with health, and therefore, healthy food. He usually showed a look of displeasure on his face when he saw a dish go out made up of nothing but red meat and cheese. He even tried to convince the owners to make it mandatory for every dish to have a vegetable side, but they turned him down. Besides that, he was still a nice guy, even invited Babe and the rest of the guys to some touch football in the park. Babe was close to saying yes, but Bill intervened and said they were busy that day. When Babe asked why he

would lie to get out of a nice offer, Bill just shook his head and said, “You wanna be a chef, right Babe? Well you ain’t gonna make that happen with a broken hand.”

So Babe guess that was a good call. He still felt bad, though, and offered to play baseball sometime instead. Buck smiled at him, “I’ll hold you to that, Babe.”

On the opposite of Buck’s field of expertise was the Butcher Chef, Bull Randleman, and the Roast Chef, Johnny Martin. Both were closer to the meat than Christenson, thus making them close friends. Their stations were right next to each other too, so it made it hard not to be. Bull was a big man, with a deep Southern accent. Spina told him he grew up on a cattle farm in Arkansas, which made total sense to Babe. Martin, on the other hand, was on the smaller side, but that didn’t make him any less intimidating. The way that man handled a fillet knife would make anyone turn and run away in fear, especially with that scowl that always seemed to be stuck on his face.

Finally, there was the Sauté Chef. The Sauté Chef was probably one of the most important cooks in the kitchen. They were in charge of sautéing the food, a technique which, if not done right, could ruin the whole meal, and preparing the sauces and gravies for each dish. They were so vital to the kitchen, they only reported directly to the Sous Chef or the Head Chef.

Besides getting Head Chef or Sous Chef, a Sauté Chef was a title Babe could only dream of getting, and at that moment it was held by the most beautiful man Babe has ever laid eyes on.

Eugene Roe was a small man, but definitely not as small as Martin. He was lithe too, but Babe could tell that was because the man did some form of exercising after closing (most likely running if his ass looks as good as it does in those pants).

His eyes were the color of cornflowers, light in the middle, but dark as the deepest part of the ocean around the rims. And when he was concentrated on his dishes, his passion for food could clearly be seen within those depths of blue.

His hair was so dark, it reminded Babe of the charcoal they put in the grill.

He was a very quiet man, kept to himself during smoke breaks, and never contributed to any small talk, except, maybe with Spina every once in awhile. He kept his body hunched inward, closing everybody off from himself, and only ever should relaxed, dismissive emotions. That was, of course, only when they were on break.

When the man was cooking he was as fluid as a water, never once missing a beat. It was like watching a new artform, the way he moved around his station and everyone else’s.

And his voice. What was quiet outside of the kitchen was loud and strong inside of the kitchen. What came out of that mouth was a smooth French accent, a strong bass that reverberated across the room whenever an order was ready or on it’s way.

No one had anything bad to say about ‘the Doc’, as they called him (and for some reason, they refused to tell him why). He was dependable, and as long as he was in the kitchen, each night would be a successful one.

Really, Babe looked up to all of the Chefs in the kitchen (besides Sobel), but there was just something about the way the Doc cooked that made Babe admire him above the others.

Even now, watching the man flip vegetables in a pan with one hand while stirring a spoon with another made Babe let out a lovesick sigh.

“Working hard, Babe?”

The sudden voice of Buck Compton almost made him knock over the whole mop bucket.

“Ah, yes! Sorry, I was just about to start mopping!”

Compton let out a single laugh, “Is that so? Enjoying the view while working?”

“V-view?” Babe quickly flicked his eyes towards the French man, making sure the other couldn’t hear the conversation, “Uh, I don’t see a view here, sir! Nope, just nice clean floors!” Babe awkwardly started to laugh as he moved the mop back and forth like a spaz.

“Whatever you say, Babe,” and Buck left with a cheeky grin. Sometimes he really hated how close everybody was into everybody’s business. So what if he had a crush Eugene? What was not to like? No one had to give him a hard time about it.

Babe continued to mutter defences to himself as he continued to clean the floor. Unfortunately, he was so lost in his justifications for his feelings, he didn’t realize he walked all the way to Sobel’s area, and with his luck, he almost ran into the man.

“Sorry, sir!” Babe immediately apologized, but only got a dismissive snort in response.

“Keep out of my way, garbage boy,” Sobel spoke in a harsh tone, and waited for Babe to step aside before he walked into the manager’s office.

“Bastard,” Babe muttered to himself. How the staff didn’t form a coup by now was beyond him.

Not wanting to run into him again, Babe decided to quickly mop up that area and move on. What he didn’t expect was to smell the most foul creation ever known to man. Babe looked everywhere around him, making sure he wasn’t missing any rotten food that’s been laying around, but he seriously doubted that with how Speirs ran the kitchen.

Still, the smell had to be coming from somewhere. It was like a dead animal combined with some kind of moldy cheese, and not the good kind. On top of that, whatever it was was burning.

Babe took one last look around, and finally landed on Sobel’s soup cooking on the stove.

‘It couldn’t be,’ he thought ‘he may be bad, but he couldn’t be that bad.’

Babe hesitantly walked towards the boiling liquid, leaning over the pot when he got close enough. It looked fairly normal, but when he took a spoon and tasted it, his mouth immediately filled with vomit.

Babe scrambled to find anywhere to throw up, and finally just threw half of himself out of the tiny window above the sink. When his stomach settled down, he pulled himself back through the window, and looked around. To his surprise, and delight, no one saw the embarrassing display.

But when Babe looked back at the soup, he could feel another round of spit up fill his throat. He was able to swallow it down that time, but he seriously pitied the customer who ordered that monstrosity, or the chef who had to fix it.

So Babe went back to his cleaning, knowing that at any moment Lipton was going to come by and check the soup, only to have Speirs or someone fix it before Sobel got back, or before a customer ordered it.

Minutes went by, and still no Lipton, but no one seemed to be interested in a light soup yet, so everything was fine.

At least, that's what he told himself every time he caught himself looking at the pot. He just needed to add a bit more pepper, some salt, maybe a hint of nutmeg. It seemed Sobel started with chicken broth if the leftover taste in his mouth was correct, so if he added some sweet onion and leeks, some heavy cream if it was available, he could fix it no prob-

No. No, no, no. He couldn't mess with the Head Chef's food! He may be crazy, but he wasn't suicidal. If he was caught, it would be a sure way out of here, losing his one way ticket to his dream.

So he would just mop, like he's been doing. That was easy. Just ignore the soup. No need to get fancy with it. Just keep mopping...

Screw it.

Babe rushed back to the stove, and with a quick look, he realized that no one was looking at him. He picked up the spoon again, and very carefully tasted the broth. He hid his gags in his sleeve, but from that one taste, he knew exactly what to do.

He quickly got to work, throwing in different kinds of spices and vegetables around him, tasting testing the dish as he went along.

He was getting into the groove of cooking again, that mental state where he knew what a dish needed just by looking at it, where his mind became completely blank, and he was zeroed in on the task at hand.

He was just about to add one more pinch of spices, his hand hovering over the pot, when a booming, headache inducing, and, at the moment, soul snatching voice was heard behind him.

"What do you think you're doing?!"

Babe slowly turned around, hand still hovering over the soup, but as he made eye contact with the Head Chef, he let go of the final spices.

“Are you cooking in MY kitchen?!”

“Um, w-well, ya see, I was just-”

“How dare you cook in my kitchen?!” the taller man began backing Babe up in a corner, shoving his finger repeatedly into his chest. By this point, the whole kitchen was their audience.

“Where do you get the gall to even attempt something so MONUMENTALLY idiotic?! I should have you lined up against the wall, and shot! I’ll do it! I think the law will be on my side!”

Babe just let random stutters leave his mouth. He couldn’t seem to form a sentence even if he tried. It was easily the most nerve racking moment of his life.

As Sobel continued to berate him, Lipton finally appeared. Oblivious to the spectacle being performed in front of him, he poured a small cup of the soup, and handed it to Talbert to be served.

Babe was a dead man.

“T-th-th-t-th-”

“You have ruined my prized soup! Forget being shot! I should have you stuffed into the oven for what you’ve done! What are you blabbering about!?”

Finally being able to draw in a calming breath, Babe shouted, “Soup!”, and pointed his finger in the direction of Talbert.

“Soup?” Sobel responded in confusion, and followed Babe’s finger, only to see Talbert walk out of the swinging doors, a steaming bowl the only thing on his tray.

“Stop that soup!” Sobel screamed, and ran towards the doors, “Nooo!”

The doors swung open, a yelling, open mouthed Sobel entering the dining area. Realizing his mistake at the sight of staring customers, Sobel quickly reentered the kitchen, and peaked out of the circular windows. There Talbert was, handing the bowl to a lone woman at a table.

The woman took a sip of the soup, and to the horror of Sobel, made a face, and motioned for the waiter.

Sobel visibly winced, before turning his furious self towards Babe.

“Heffron! You’re fired! F-I-R-E-D! FIRED!”

Babe shrank into himself, and couldn’t even look up when Talbert re-entered the kitchen.

“She wants to speak to the Chef!” he announced.

Sobel began to sputter, “B-but, he, he wa-,” but then straightened himself up, and walked into the dining area.

Babe stayed hunched into himself, panicking over the thought of losing his job, he didn’t even notice Eugene walk over, and taste the soup himself, his eyes widening in surprise.

Talbert and Sobel reenter the kitchen with a loud bang from the doors, startling everyone.

“What did the customer say?” Eugene immediately asked.

Talbert shook his head in shock, “It wasn’t a customer. It was a critic.”

“A critic?” Shifty asked with slight fear, “Who?”

“Solene LeClaire...” Sobel responded in a dazed state.

Everyone seemed to suck in a breath of air at the name.

“LeClaire?” Eugene said in shock, “What did she say?”

“She liked the soup!” Talbert answered in happy surprise.

The staff watched as Sobel stomped his way back over to the pot, ripped the spoon out of Eugene’s hand, and tasted the soup himself. Despite his face trying to portray that he hated it, his eyes couldn’t lie.

He spun around to face Babe again, “What are you playing at?”

Babe was shocked out of his depressed state as a spoon was waved dangerously close to his face, “I, uhm, didn’t-Am I still fired?”

“You can’t fire him!” Eugene spoke up, surprising everyone that the normally quiet man was speaking loudly about something besides food. Babe thought his heart was going to melt.

Sobel wheeled on the smaller man, “What?!-”

“LeClaire likes it,” Eugene interrupted in his smooth French accent, “She made a point of telling you so. If she writes a review to that effect, and then finds out you fired the cook responsible-”

“He’s a garbage boy!”

“Who made something she liked! How can we claim to represent the name of Winters if we don’t uphold his most cherished belief?”

Sobel scoffed, “And what belief would that be, Mr. Roe.”

“Anyone can cook.”

The words echoed across the kitchen, causing many to nod their heads in agreement. Babe looked at the man with wide eyes, seemingly not being able to believe that someone believed

in Winters's motto as much as he did. He scanned the room, and saw Bill looking at him with a proud smirk.

Sobel, realizing the kitchen was quickly turning on him, fixed Eugene with an icy smile, "Perhaps I was a bit too harsh on our new garbage boy. We should reward the risk he's decided to take, just as Winters would have done," he turned his attention to the rest of the staff, "If he wishes to fly into dangerous territory, who are we to deny him?"

The vile man then turned his attention back to the Doc, "Since you have expressed such an interest in his cooking career, you should be responsible for it."

Babe couldn't help but admit how excited he was to hear the news, but that excitement was quickly crushed by the fallen look that appeared on Eugene's face.

"Anyone else?" Sobel asked the group. Most glared at the man, but they all knew better to speak against him, so they turned their heads.

"Good...then BACK TO WORK!"

As if a switch was slipped, the kitchen was bustling again with words flying around the room, and people bolting from one side to another.

Just to have the last word in Sobel faced Babe one more time, "You are either very lucky, or very unlucky. In my kitchen, you will need to know a lot more than just making soup, and I will be watching you."

The man stormed off.

Babe released a breathe he didn't even know he was holding.

'Ok,' he thought, 'you can calm down now. You were not fired, you are not in too much trouble. Instead you get to work with...,' he spared a glance in Eugene's direction, who was still staring at the spot where Sobel was standing. He felt giddy inside.

"So," he decided to break the awkward silence, "I'm Babe by the way. Babe Heffron. I don't know if you've noticed me around, but I've been working here a couple of weeks, and-"

"Tomorrow," the Sauté Chef answered with a tone that hit Babe like a glass of ice water, "we start tomorrow."

Then he walked away, ending the conversation.

"Jesus Christ," Babe muttered to himself.

"Doc's just intense like that."

"God!" Babe jumped, "Spina! Don't sneak up on me like that!"

The Pantry Chef began to laugh a distinct Phillie laugh, "I'm just warning ya, Babe. You're gonna have a hell of a time with Gene as your mentor."

“What do ya mean by that?” Babe asked, but the chef was already walking away.

Babe shrugged. He got to spend an entire day and more with the most attractive man he’s ever met.

What could go wrong?

Babe woke up the next day feeling extra energized. He quickly got out of bed and gathered his new uniform. He then awkwardly power walked/ran to the bathroom, making an impressive leap over Bill’s sleeping form on their living room pull out couch.

After showering, brushing his teeth, and checking himself out in the mirror, he was done getting ready in record time. He made his way to their little kitchen, quickly grabbed a muffin, and scarfed it down while carrying his bike down the stairs. Usually he and Bill took the subway to work, but Babe didn’t wait any delays that would make him late, Bill being one of those delays. That bastard always slept in till the very last minute, and Babe didn’t want to be scrambling to get to work that day.

That was because that day was Babe’s first day being trained by the most beautiful cook in the world. His heart beat faster just thinking about those eyes on him all day. Just the thought made him pedal faster.

When he finally got to the kitchen entrance in an alley, he throw his bike to the ground, and excitedly bolted up the stairs. He reached for the handles, ready to fling the door open, and get started on his first step to the rest of his life.

Babe gave a sharp tug to the door, expecting it to fly open.

Click

Ok, what he didn’t expect was for them to lock in place the moment he pulled a few centimeters.

He pulled the doors a few more times, and even pushed once to make sure he wasn’t going crazy.

But they didn’t budge. They were locked.

Babe quickly pulled out his phone, and checked the time, which he probably should have done first thing in the morning. It read 7:02, an hour before they even opened.

‘Well, there goes my adrenaline.’ Babe thought with a sigh, and sat himself down on the steps. There was really nothing to do but wait.

So he did wait, played Candy Crush on his phone to pass the time. There was no better time to beat the level he’s been stuck on for three weeks.

And that's how Speirs found him, his face stuck in his screen, muttering curses to himself.

The man must have found the sight amusing, because he continued to stand there and watch as Babe finally lost his temper.

"Gah, what was that?! This goddamn game, it's ruining my life, why can't I jus--"

Babe was mid rant when he finally noticed the smirking man five feet in front of him.

"S-Sir! Sorry, I-I was just, just," he cleared his throat, "Good morning, sir."

Speirs gave a single nod, "Good morning, Heffron," and walked right past him to unlock the door.

Babe sheepishly followed close behind the man, but his embarrassment was soon forgotten as Speirs turned on the lights, and Babe, for the first time, really looked at the kitchen.

He took in the white and black floor, being able to even see his reflection in the perfectly polished tiles (all thanks to him).

The island and ovens were made up of a black stainless steel, brass making up railings, handles, and knobs around them.

The copper pots and pans shined in the hanging ceiling lights, creating some streaks of reddish orange on the white brick that lined the walls.

And the cabinets! His ma has always dreamed of having cherry wood cabinets, and now there they were, right in front of him! The whole kitchen was like something that popped out of a cooking magazine.

Babe imagined his current emotions was how kids felt when entering a toy store.

"Heffron," Babe jumped as Speirs voice cut through his thoughts, "make yourself useful and start prepping some stations."

"Y-Yes, sir," he responded, and quickly started going around the room to take out the required pots, pans, and utensils for the day. Out of habit, he started to wipe down the counter tops with rag, but stopped himself once he realized what he was doing.

He was no longer a garbage boy. He was a Chef.

When he finished prepping the kitchen, he thought that he might as well check over their stock in the pantry, to help out Spina. He was probably checking the food for about an hour when Spina himself popped his head in.

"Babe, you have to see this!"

Sensing the other's excitement, Babe immediately put down his pen and clipboard to follow the Pantry Chef into the kitchen. Everyone was in at that point, and they were all hovering over a single newspaper. Even Gene was listening in near by.

“Though I, like so many other critics, had written off Sainte-Marie-du-Mont as irrelevant since the great Chef Winters has passed down his title as Head Chef,” Bill looked up from reading the article out loud when he saw Babe approaching, “Hey Babe, way ta leave me this morning, hear a load of this, ‘the soup was a revelation, a spicy yet subtle taste experience.’”

“What is this?” Babe asked in confusion.

“LeClaire’s review, now shaddup and listen, ‘Against all odds, Sainte-Marie-du-Mont has recaptured our attention. Only time will tell if they deserve it.’”

Despite the vague ending, the review seemed to get everyone’s spirits up.

Babe felt a clap on his shoulder, and looked up to see Lipton smiling at him.

“Nice job, Babe.”

“T-thanks,” Babe responded in shock. He didn’t even know what to say, his brain seemed to have short circuited from getting a good review from a top critic.

Apparently, he didn’t really need to say anything, since Liebgott took the spotlight off of him by slamming his hand on the table.

“Those fucking critics, always doubting us. Just they wait! The next time they stick their noses in here, my fish will be so fresh, it will be like eating right out of the fucking ocean!”

He then stormed off, not even phasing anyone still left at the table.

But the others did take that as their cue to get to work, so with some last minute congratulations (And even a “Keep it up, boy” from Bull), they all walked to their stations to begin the day.

After Bill grasped his hand and pulled him into a one arm hug, Babe was left by himself with the article. Or, so he thought, because not even five minutes after he started to read the article himself did a slow clapping approach him. He turned around to see Sobel standing nearby.

The man made a sweeping hand gesture, “Welcome to hell. Now, even if you were able to recreate your accidental success, you will need to know a lot more than soup to survive in my kitchen. That is why Roe,” he then waved his hand in an obviously scowling Eugene’s direction, “will be responsible in teaching you how I do things here.”

He gave Babe an evil grin, and walked towards his office.

Feeling slightly attacked, Babe took a moment to calm himself before facing the Sauté Chef.

‘Well, no time like the present to make a good impression’

Babe sauntered his way over to the cross-armed man, and leaned on the table separating them.

“Listen,” he started smoothly, “I just want you to know how honored I am to be studying under a-”

All of a sudden there was a kitchen knife pinning his sleeve to the table. Babe barely had time to react in shock before blue eyes were a few inches away from his own.

“No, *you* listen. I just want *you* to know exactly who you are dealing with,” the dark haired man spoke in a heavily accented whisper, and took out *another* kitchen knife to gesture behind him, “How many other French chefs do you see working in a French restaurant?”

“Well, I, hah--um.”

The second knife came down on his sleeve, further pinning him to the table, “Only me, why do you think that is?”

Babe could barely answer with that sickly sweet smile being shoved into his face.

“Well...huh! I-hoo,”

“Because this industry expects nothing but the best. Chef Winters only hires people who he thinks will make his restaurant thrive, and that means only the best. And still, I am here. How did this happen?”

The question was innocent enough, but Babe could come up with sputtered responses at the fast way Eugene gestured around the kitchen and leaned closer to him.

“Because, you-you, ah...”

A third knife came out of nowhere and was shoved through the very top of his sleeve, pinning him completely to the table.

“Because I am the toughest cook in this kitchen. I’ve worked too hard for too long to get here, and I am not going to jeopardize it for some garbage boy who got lucky. Understand?”

Babe nodded his head frantically at the man. The Sauté Chef then grabs the handles of all three knives, and pulls them out with one jerk, causing Babe to fall over.

He scrambled to get up, but only managed to peak his head over the counter.

“Wow,” he finally spoke, not knowing to be frightened or eager. He looked around to see if anyone else noticed the maddening display, but only saw Spina smirking at him.

‘Intense.’

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