

Fifolet

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Fifolet

by [WallyWasTaken](#)

Summary

Fifolet

/definiton/

A bright light in Cajun folklore seen in swamp areas meant to misdirect or disorient those who perceive it as leading them to safety.

Notes

This is really fun to work on!! I already have the second chapter finished, i'll update pretty soon.

Chapter 1

Blithe has, admittedly, the worst luck.

He's a horrible, horrible klutz, tripping on literal air more than half the time. He probably trips a hundred times on average, and his legs are littered with Band-Aids and half attempted bandages. He can never stop thinking, and it's partly his anxiety but it's mostly just the fact that he can never stop day-dreaming. Anything can trigger it; The sky, the smell of coffee, a car honking, someone's voice when he passes them on the street, laughter, looking at someone, waking up, going to sleep. He is in the constant motion of thinking and reflecting. His mom tells him he should start thinking more about the future, but he's happy how he is.

So, maybe he's been fired from four out of six of the libraries in the city because he keeps holding books overdue and never paying. Maybe he lives on a first-floor apartment with no lock and is a horrible coward, who thinks he could probably handle himself if it came down to it but will probably still get stabbed. So, he went to college for Weather Studies and he's never used it, it's his backup anyway. He's happy, and it's not his fault that he's just someone things happen to. He stands still and moves in small, insignificant steps as the world rushes around him. He's walking down the street to get groceries, even though he only has 15\$ left and he can't decide if he wants to live off only macaroni for the next few weeks or if he should pick up some soups too. He's pretty damn near close to being fired and he thinks he'll probably just move on to Barnes & Noble.

He picks up a variety of soups because they're a dollar each and a couple boxes of macaroni which are much more expensive. He self-checks out because he's afraid of being in line and people waiting for him as he tries to pick up his change from the ground because his hands are too shaky, and he *always* drops them. He's walking home and hoping to god nobody broke in while he was gone. He lives alone and that's how he prefers it, really.

It all happens pretty fast. Or, maybe it was slow; so slow he could barely follow it and could only catch parts of it, like water spilling from his hands. There is a woman walking in front of him and he does not think anything about it. She is a pedestrian like him and she probably has a place to go. There is a black sedan, and the first thing he notices, for some godawful reason, is that it has an unmarked license plate. The second thing he notices is *that it's coming right at him*. Specifically – at the woman. Who happens to be in his vicinity.

He is so terrified in that moment his knees buckle. He's still walking, so he trips – and, coincidentally, he knocks over the woman. And, coincidentally, he takes the full front of the car for her.

And it *burns*.

If he could describe the main feeling in that horrible, split-second moment, it would be the burning. It seared itself into his brain – It hurt so significantly the only thing he could really say it was is **hot**. And then, he falls. And then there is screaming. And there is a car engine and the woman saying, "Oh my god."

When he falls, he hears a crowd oohing, like if someone fails at doing something or fails a magic trick horribly and they're all collectively wincing. It's probably in his head, and he knows that. His mind goes from a mile a minute to nothing, and the crash of the thoughts coming back are what really gets him.

He just got *hit by a car*. And he saved a woman. *And the car is gone*.

He sits up, terrified. It hurts to breathe. When he looks down, there is soup spilled all over his lap, but he can't feel it. It hurts to breathe. He wheezes, and it goes black.

...But he can still hear.

"What?" He hears himself saying. He is dazed and there is shouting and someone calling the police. He doesn't know what's going on. He doesn't know if he's dead. Maybe he made a mistake sitting up, and hurt something, and now he is dead. Being a klutz is forever going to be what killed him.

"*What?*" He says again, hysterical. It still hurts to breathe. He isn't sure if he's breathing anymore.

"Are you okay?" someone says. It's a lady's voice. He feels a hand on his back.

Can he feel?

"I don't-" He hears himself sobbing. "I can't,"

There are sirens and sobbing and doors being slammed open. There are people chattering but their voices are fading, kind of like they're being pushed away. It's chaotic. It's loud. There is a ringing white noise in his head. There are shushes and a hand on his back and he desperately wants to shake it away. Everything is rushing fast around him and he feels slow. Slow, slow, slow.

"Alright move! move!" Someone yells, like they're pushing people. The hand leaves his back and he doesn't know if he's relieved or if he wants it back. He's panicking, and he runs all the drills robotically.

What does he feel. He feels the pavement. He feels himself crying. He felt the hand on his back, and he feels the pain of existing. *What does he hear* – He hears shouting and people and sirens and the thick accent of a man pushing people away. He tastes blood and tears. He does not see anything because he cannot see. He determines he's probably alive; *But he can't see*.

He can't see.

There are different hands on his arms; firm. He can't really describe it, because he's a little more focused on the fact he can't see.

“You’re okay – Hey, you’re okay. What’s your name?” The owner of the hand says, and he’s speaking loud and forcefully calm. It does Not help.

“Bli- It’s – Blithe,” He says, disoriented and *blind*. There are more hands reaching and one goes to rest their hand on his leg, and he jerks away and shouts from the pain. He’s curling into himself. He can’t see, and he can’t breathe, and he’d really, really rather be dead.

“Jesus don’t – M’am please step away.” The man shouts bitterly.

“But I-“ says the woman, the hand on his back. The comfort he still doesn’t know if he wanted or if he needed.

“Step. Away,” He says again, and there’s shuffling. Different hands. He is surrounded. The world is closing in on him and he’s inhaling more than he’s exhaling.

“We’re gonna pick you up, okay Blithe?” He says. He sounds sympathetic, like someone who would take you out to coffee or a restaurant after finding out you were dumped to make sure you were okay. Like they would show all the signs of caring, but never actually care. He doesn’t get time to respond, too choked and crying and hypersensitive to everything happening around him. He’s being picked up, hands on his back and some on his thighs (And not even for a second is he bothered by that; the pain overwhelms the embarrassment.) *and he can’t breathe.*

The pain he was relieved was over in those small, significant milliseconds is back again. It lasts longer and his entire being screams. Hell, he does scream. “Fuck,” He sobs brokenly. He’s dragged onto stiff cotton and he holds on for dear life. He can’t breathe. If he isn’t dead already now he is *dying*.

“He’s going into shock, calm him down,” The familiar voice yells. He forgets. Medical. They keep themselves emotionally distant. “Gene,” He says cautiously.

There is a sharpness in his arm and a white-tight grip on it too because he is shaking badly.

“Here,” A new voice says. Different, somehow.

Whatever they stuck in him is hitting him in very large waves, and he feels dizzy and sick but high at the same time. He wants to throw up and he wants to nap at the same time, and it is undoubtedly the weirdest feeling he’s ever felt yet. His tongue feels weird in his mouth, tingles like he ate something he was allergic to. (Peanuts. Truly a curse.) He barely realizes they’re moving, now.

There’s someone shuffling behind him and he goes to turn to the sound, even though he can’t see, but cold hands cup his face. He gets goosebumps immediately, and whatever white noise clogging his head halts and stutters, for a moment.

“Blithe. Blithe, hey look at me,” The newer voice says. It’s this sweet sweet drawl. He feels loopy.

“Can’t,” he manages. His throat is horribly, horribly dry and he’s breathing in stuttered breaths. “See.” He explains, after a few seconds.

‘Gene’ sighs, worriedly. “Okay,” He says. He is *worried*.

He falls in love instantly.

And all he can think of is that one old song, Accidentally in Love. It is broken and loopy when he imagines the tune, the main chorus warped and demented. It sounds like sirens.

“Like your voice,” He says, tiredly. Someone laughs.

“Thanks,” Gene says blandly.

He doesn’t know how he went from going to get groceries because he is about as poor as a college student to sitting in an ambulance, drugged and smitten. He does not think about medical bills, but it crosses his mind briefly. Someone is pulling his shirt up and he lifts his hands cautiously.

“Woah,” He says. The pain is dull, and he has dignity. Someone laughs again.

“We’re not doin’ anything,” The first guy says. “Just checking your heartbeat, alright?” He lowers his hands.

There’s the cold of the metal on his stomach, and he flickers for a second, remembers where he is and what just happened, but then Gene’s thumb strokes his cheek and he’s back where he started all over again. He remembers, with a faint realization, that he can hear, and Gene is talking. It’s foreign and not English, and he can’t guess what he’s saying barely at all. He imagines he’s talking about all the places he’s been and all the things he likes. A joke he heard or what his friends are like or a book he’s read. He can feel his eyelids closing but it is still the same familiar darkness. His breathing feels easier, but it is tight, and he is breathless for multiple reasons.

“It’s an MI-“ Someone rushes hurriedly, and they’re all swarming around him a little quicker. He thinks he should be alarmed, but there is Gene and the pain is dull, and this is all he needs. His goosebumps are fading and he’s warming Gene’s hands, clearly, because they’re a little less cold.

“Stay with me,” Gene says clearly, a quick switch to English. Hi thumb moves to the soft skin under his eye, and he opens them. He doesn’t know if he’s staring right at him or not, and he weirdly hopes he is. He’s searching through the darkness for any sign of Gene’s features; wants to know the color of his hair and what kind of shape his face is.

“Almost there,” A voice behind Gene says. Driver. He’s in an ambulance, he realizes slowly.

“Aspirin-“ someone says, and a hand leaves his face. He blinks, worriedly.

“Goin’ give you some Aspirin, ok? chew first.” Gene says. He goes to reach up and grab it blindly from his hand, but it is promptly laid back down and he just lets Gene put it in his

mouth. It feels foreign on his tongue, and he tongues it mindlessly as he thinks about what kind of person Gene is before chewing slowly.

“Fermi,” Gene says, although he doesn’t understand. “Good.”

When he swallows, the hand leaves his face again, and he waits for something equally as embarrassing. “Oxygen,” he says simply, and he sighs.

He places the plastic on his face, and the goosebumps on his arms rise again, and for a second, he is truly afraid he can’t breathe, but then the oxygen starts coming in loudly and suddenly *it is too much air*.

“Doin’ alright, Mouche a mielle,” He says comfortingly, hand going through his hair instead of returning to his cheek. It is a billion ways better in a billion ways he doesn’t know how, and he is self-consciously aware he has bedhead when his fingers catch and pull a knot. He would say this is the most at peace he’s ever been, but the drugs and the oxygen mask and the I Got Hit By A Car aspect weirds it out a little.

“Gene,” someone says. It’s faint. He’s straining his ears to hear.

“Yeah,” He says, fingers still pulling the knots from his hair. He wants him to do this forever. He wants to be in his arms forever.

“Might have to knock em out,”

“Okay,” he breathes. “Okay.”

“Don’t punch me in the face, Gene,” He says weakly, muffled by the mask. There’s snorting and giggles.

“I like him,” someone says. It’s a different voice. Gene just rubs his thumb on his cheek.

That’s where it goes wonky.

He can’t remember anything really after that; he’s in an out of reality. There’s yelling, there’s Gene shushing him, and his chest feels empty. There’s silence and there is Accidentally in Love blaring so loud he deliriously keeps trying to cover his ears; but they always push them back down and he is stuck moaning in crying in Gene’s arms. He’s left to his own devices, then – he’s back to Just Blithe who is horribly unlucky and unconscious. He was thrown into this entirely different world with Gene in it – and suddenly it’s just him. Like the world is showing the difference.

He desperately wants to properly meet him. He wants to sit down at the shitty overpriced Starbucks in the Barnes & Noble which he will inevitably work at in the near future, thank him for every moment in the ambulance and learn as much as he can. He wants to exist near him. He doesn’t even want to hold him and know him; really, if he can just exist around him and be a friend, that would be good enough.

He is in a lull of peace, like falling asleep and barely getting enough reality to know that you were sleeping. That you are asleep. There is barely any sound but there are hands on his face,

and he remembers that. He feels like he doesn't really have a body anymore, he is just something that exists. Like he's been reduced to what he's always been. He is something that does not move but is constantly moving. There is a sky above his head with unfamiliar clouds and someone is shaking his shoulder calling his name and hands rubbing his arms and something is whispering in his head too that *he's going to be okay* -

And then – and then it's over.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Blithe wakes up in the hospital and churns over Gene. Someone visits.

Chapter Notes

This is kinda filler for later, and also I had a fun time writing Shifty. He's such a neat guy, really, I love him

He wakes up again.

He gasps for air and he immediately goes to sit up, can see for a blur of a second before his world flashes in a world of yellow and white and pain – and he yells, and breathes harder, coming to the realization he was breathing at all. There is a beeping, for a short second, and he gets to look around the room before a nurse rushes in and shushes him. She lays him down, and he is asleep again.

He hates this. It happens a few more times, where he wakes up and all he can do is moan weakly in pain before either someone comes in and doubles his morphine or he eventually passes out. He wakes up, once, and notices someone sitting in the chair in the corner, a man with brown hair bouncing his leg. He does not catch his face because he is too tired to stay awake anymore.

When he finally, actually wakes up, he lays there for a second and just waits to fall asleep again. It doesn't happen. The ceiling is white, and he *swears* he is the unluckiest guy. This is the worst and longest fall he's probably ever had. His leg feels heavy and casted and he finally broke the record of never breaking anything.

"Mr. Blithe?" A woman says, knocking on the door. He rolls his head over and winces at the name. Blithe is as much his first name as it is his second, and it sounds weird coming out of someone's mouth who only knows of him as *Albert*. Weird. Sounds weird.

"Blithe is fine," He finds himself politely saying.

"I'm your nurse," she says, walking closer. Her heels click against the floor and he realizes that the hospital is kind of stereotypically right. They weren't exaggerating, the floor tiles really are just a dull grey-white. She has this foreign, pretty accent. He feels like he's heard it somewhere, but hers is softer.

“Okay,” He says uneasily, and goes to sit up. She immediately jerks forward, moving to the button that moves his bed up but freezes when he stops. He turns to it, holds the button, slowly sits up. Weird. His mouth is dry. He feels dizzy. Weird. He stops pressing the button.

“I assume you recall what happened?” She asks, pulling back. He got to see the flicker of emotion on her before it was all mild reservation all over again.

The memory of walking with a plastic bag full of macaroni in his hands resurfaces. Of everything being okay one second and then not the next. A car swerves to hit a woman and he has the *worst* of luck and it hits him instead. He remembers going into an ambulance and someone holding his face, but he does not remember anything beyond careful quieting whispers and hands. He knows his ribs are broken, because that’s really the only thing that explains the bandages and her jerking when he went to sit up, that his breaths are a little more labored.

“Uh, mostly,” he thinks. She nods. She’s holding a clipboard, but she doesn’t write anything on it yet.

“You recall you were in a car accident, yes?” he nods. “After you were hit, the car took off,” She has, waving her hand as she tried to find the right word and could only land on took off.

It all clicks, suddenly. Like a puzzle piece he knew was there but couldn’t connect. They’re all white and there is no clue where to put them and they’re all the same shape, but they click. There is a woman whispering *holy shit* and he sits numb on the pavement with only the parked cars from before to be seen. Like a force of nature decided to knock him on his ass, and his pants are stained from the broken soup cans spilling onto it. He can’t find himself saying anything but comes back to reality when he realizes she is talking.

“-She wants to visit, if you are welcome to meeting.” She offers, smiling nicely. She radiates a painful sweetness, like it isn’t something she wants but naturally does anyway. He shakes himself out of his own head.

“Wait, who?” He says, confused. She blinks, also confused.

“The woman. The one you saved,” she says, like it is obvious. It doesn’t really explain anything.

“I didn’t – I didn’t save anyone,” He is no hero. That isn’t something he just – does. He curls his fingers into the bed sheets, feels the weird itchy-soft feeling and his knuckles straining against the tape against them. He dully feels the scrapes beneath them.

“You - you pushed her out of the way, she could have gotten hit,” she frowns, drawing close to his heart monitor and begins writing onto the paper she holds. The pen is attached from a little string and has a fake flower taped to it; a Penelope. It’s pretty, and somehow... fitting. She is something only painted in whites and blues and shades of brown. He looks away, furrows his eyebrows. Weird.

“Do you want to see her?” She asks, after a beat of uncomfortable silence.

“I’m okay.” He says distantly. She sighs.

She doesn’t ask him about it again or really say much else. She takes his vitals and asks him how he’s feeling with the odd, reserved medical look they all have. If he looks in her eyes, he will see nothing, and it’s mildly terrifying. She tells him to rest and press the button if he needs anything, and then she is gone with the click of the door.

He doesn’t have much to do, after that. There’s a TV in the corner of the room but the remote is next to the guest chairs and shifting has him squinting and keeling in pain, so he does not think it’s possible to just get up and grab it. He was never really a TV person anyway. The one benefit of mindlessly daydreaming for hours is that it’s an easy time waster, which has its own multiple perks. He wonders if he could get someone to pick up some books from his bookshelf, so he can at least read, but then he kinda realizes he doesn’t really know anyone well enough to have a phone number and he’s just been alone this whole time.

For the first time, that gives him an unpleasant feeling.

He’s always been okay with being alone. As a kid he was partially homeschooled, and maybe that had something to do with it; but really, he’s just always been too caught up in his head to move with the speed of the world around him. When he was thrown in public school in third grade, he did not seek out friends. He’d talk, and he’d laugh, and he’d sit at lunch with people even though he barely only knew their names, but he never actively was their friends. For once, he thinks he’d like someone to think of him as a friend. To wonder *where’s blithe he didn’t come into work today* or *I haven’t heard any crashing from blithe’s apartment I wonder if he finally died*.

He feels horribly, horribly lonely.

He thinks of Gene.

He thinks of his hands cupping his face and barely held memories of whispered nothings in a foreign language. He thinks about who he is and what he looks like. About if Gene is short for Eugene, or if Gene is really his name. He thinks about what language he spoke, and how he likes his coffee. He thinks how he has never been so weirdly smitten for someone, and he deeply wants to know him. He wants to cup his face and know all the things he has seen, and he wants to ask if he is okay. (He’s a paramedic. Or, he works in an ambulance, obviously, so he’s seen some horrible things clearly.)

The pain settles into something duller, and everything seems a little quieter. He blinks tiredly and falls asleep to the memory of a certain paramedic he can’t place the name of.

On his third day of doing nothing and being okay with that, he gets a visitor.

It isn't who he expects. It isn't his mother, who they've probably called and who has probably called him even though his phone must be broken beyond repair. It isn't his boss coming to place a get-well card with all his coworkers names on it, and it isn't a nurse informing him they want to keep him a little longer to scan more tests on why he went blind, because someone already came in to tell him that. ("Brain ones not free of charge," the male nurse had said, jokingly. "Apparently this stuff is pretty interesting, though.")

It's a frequenting bookstore visitor and the barista at the small corner Starbucks in the Barnes & Noble who told him they were hiring, Shifty Powers. His little name tag said Darrell, but he wrote Shifty over it on a thin piece of packing tape. He seemed genuine and has this dorky accent (clearly from Virginia, but really his is this whole other level to it) so he was pretty good in Blithe's book. He has a little bounce to his step before he enters, like he's excited. It disappears, but he noticed. He holds coffee and a *book basket*.

"Hey Blithe, you're lookin' good," He says, pausing to look at him before shaking into himself and easily sliding over to the guest chairs like they are close and this is just natural. He felt cold, for a second, under Shiftys' stare. Like he was staring right through him. Going from something bright to dead cold and back again is something he really should not know how to do. "Feelin' better?" He asks.

"I think so," He says, easily. He's sitting up and his abdomen doesn't hurt as much as it used to before. They told him he has metal somethings on or apart at least near his ribs – the point is there's metal inside him (he was kind of spacing out) and if he was a kid he'd say he was part robot now. He was never a big fan of robots, but that would still be pretty cool. "How's-how's it been for you?"

"Oh, I'm alright, jus' been busy," Shifty says, focusing on sorting through the books for a second before realizing he still had a coffee in his hands. "I brought you a drink. Said it was mine and I remember your order."

"Haven't had coffee in forever." He can't hold back the smile. He really doesn't even want to try to. He takes it when Shifty stretches out his arm, holds it in his hands and just enjoys the warmth.

"Yeah, it's- I thought you'd like some," he smiles, glad. "Sounds like you've been through hell, too," he says, sets the basket on the chair next to him. He shrugs, sips the drink. It doesn't burn his tongue, and the miniscule edge of fear he had sipping it is gone.

"It wasn't – I'm not all that bad," he says, insecure. He's doing better. He was never really doing bad, in his book. Maybe, not good, but; He doesn't know. He draws into himself.

"Wasn't saying you looked bad." Shifty explains, and his voice is unintentionally tight, a little dorky and remarkable. "Just, y'know, bein hit by a car is kinda rough."

He just hums. Sips his coffee. He's never been good with people. They're quiet, and Shift grabs the remote and turns on the TV. He doesn't go to the news, or anything like that, but somehow finds an old black and white movie he doesn't know the name of. They both enjoy

the peace that comes with it and the actress in it is doing a phenomenal job, he thinks. She kind of exaggerates everything in the places she needs to and it's perfect. He drifts off and wonders if she's still alive.

"Blithe?" Shifty is saying. He turns to him, afraid he missed what he just said. It doesn't look like he did. "Do I have your phone number?"

This genuinely takes him aback. He does not have any contacts on his phone. Actually – he doesn't *have* a phone.

"No, I don't think so. But I – I kinda lost my phone," He says cautiously. He has never had anyone want his phone number, or at least want actual contact with him more than awkward greetings when they run into each other. He's kind of a pro at awkward run-ins, now. "when I got hit."

Shifty blinks and nods, a sudden understanding. "That's fine. I'll write mine down for you." He offers.

They have no notepad or pens. Shifty has to get up and leave for a minute or two to go ask for some paper. He comes back quickly with a teared piece of notebook paper and a story that still kind of has him wheezing before he can tell it.

"Had to steal it from a resident," He says, smiling, "she kept hittin on me. I was trying to say I wasn't open and finally the doc steps in and says, 'He's gay, Amanda'." He's still laughing.

"Are you?" He asks Shifty, smiling with him. Shifty just shakes his head.

"I don't think so."

They leave it at that. He doesn't think he'd mind if he was or wasn't, anyway. He isn't one to judge; he's still horribly smitten for a (Gene? Eugene?) paramedic and it's deeply confusing him. They talk and it's easier, after that. They're both too kind and awkward to keep the regular standard of normal conversation, but they still joke and can make each other laugh. He thinks about how Shifty asked for his number and that maybe he can actually count him as a friend.

They have beats of silence where they pause and watch the movie on the screen, which shifts into a new one which is also black and white. It's nice, and then a nurse steps in and mentions visitor hours are over and he needs rest.

"Oh. It was good seeing you," He says, standing with the basket after depositing the pile of books onto his bedside table. ("It's a work basket," Shifty explains. "I keep stealin too many and giving out too much free coffee.")

"Yeah – Thanks for, coming," He responds awkwardly, waving his hands. Shifty smiles, and he smiles back, and he's gone with the nurse without barely making a sound. Like something just passing through, a gust of wind and a piece of paper and a phone number.

He does not stop smiling. He grabs a book and reads the description inside the cover, and he does not feel as lonely.

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He gets the testing over with and they don't see anything at first. Someone catches something and it's somehow a miracle.

"We believe it to be a form of conversion disorder," The woman explains. There's a man with her, who he saw earlier, and he doesn't know if he's a shadow or a nurse. He keeps glancing at him nervously, but he keeps his head down. It makes him fidgety. Is it the hospital clothes? Is it because he can't get up to the bathroom for a shower and he probably smells or —

"What?" He says, catching himself. He doesn't know what that is.

"Basically, Hysterical Blindness," She explains. "This can be a common sign of Conversion disorder, but your case and the disorder itself is very rare. Do you have any sudden weakness or pain in limbs, and past seizures...?"

"No," he shakes his head, sure. It brings the sick memory of a girl who had a seizure on the entrance to the slide; they couldn't get to her and he was the one that had to stand confused and crying and pushing the hair out of her face, not knowing what to do. They cleared everyone else out of the playground and they never told him what happened later. He thinks that's probably one of the things that led to his anxiety. "No, definitely not."

She just hums, displeased. She has worry lines, like all the doctors he's seen so far. The man next to her has bags under his eyes, though, which is. Different. He wonders how late he works at night. He wonders if since Gene is a paramedic, he has bags like that.

He wonders if he can meet Gene. He hums back, for a different reason, picks at the bruises on his knuckles.

"Well, we can't officially diagnose you," She says robotically, staring at the floor. Worry lines. There is a human somewhere in there. "And there is no treatment to help since your case is so rare. But, please be careful with flashing lights and anything that could cause you to seize in the future."

"You keep saying — that, that my case is rare?" He says, looking up. "What does that mean?"

"You're- one in 25 cases in 100,000. A medical phenomenon, so far."

He blinks. He doesn't know if he feels overjoyed or concerned. He feels like something important, for once. Something unique you find after years of digging and blowing up mines underground. Once in a lifetime. He feels incredibly, incredibly heavy. Like the confirmation of something wrong added an extra weight on his shoulders. He's going to get home and fear

seizing, and stare blankly at the medical bills while he sits curled up and defensive on his couch. *Where does he go from here?*

He has no motives. Or inspirations, really. He lives in a small first floor apartment and works at the library. He steals books and officially has one friend who became his friend only the day before. He likes the sky and now he could go blind any moment.

“Okay,” He says, sighing so horribly deep the weight cuts into his shoulders.

She excuses herself and they leave. It’s dark out and it starts to rain so hard it barely makes a sound. He curls up as much as he can, pulls the covers to his eyes like a child afraid of the dark, and he goes to sleep.

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Blithe has been sitting on talking to Gene since he got to the hospital, and he finally gets the courage to ask.

He takes two deep breaths, hovers his hand on the button, in a state of millisecond timed terror, and presses it.

There’s a small delay. It’s about a minute before a nurse rushes in, calm and ready. She is of color and she has really pretty dreads dyed a little dark red in the middle parts here and there. She has glasses to match and she seems wonderfully smart. “Yes?” She asks, politely.

“Can I- can I ask, for someone?” He says cautiously. He sees the tension leave her shoulders, like maybe she was constantly ready for the worst. There are no bags under her eyes and she does not have worry lines. What a way to live.

“Um, I can see. Can you give me a name and phone?” She asks. He furrows his eyebrows, instead.

“I don’t, actually know who he is.” He states, numbly. Gene is a voice of a foreign place and hands holding him together.

“Oh,” She says.

“I mean – He was one of the paramedics, that picked me up. Gene?” He explains.

She nods in understanding, a little silent O shaped expression. It dawns on him that maybe he’s been asked about before, and it causes a painful twist in his gut. Horror is a recognizable feeling.

“I’ll ask.” She nods, going back to the door.

“Thank you,” He calls, leaning a little forward, and she is gone.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Blithe gets better and mulls over Gene.

Chapter Notes

I put in as much effort as I could with this one; it's been super super busy lately and i've been trying so hard to keep up and get this out. I had a lot of fun writing this one, and its super nice to finally wrap things up! Thank you to everyone for reading this far and being in this fandom at all. You are wonderful and have inspired me to keep writing. Keep being cool.

I did, technically, write this with a song in mind; or at least, was able to keep up the mood with it. Here it is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WbAyFMmqk>

A little later during the day, two cops come to visit him and file a report on his hit and run. They're both goofy and laughing when they come in, but the ginger tries and clear his throat into seriousness when he faces him. He still has the edge of laugh lines and a barely working stone face and the other is still laughing. They introduce themselves as Officer Malarkey and Muck. He likes them already. (He does not decide to comment anything on Malarkey's name.)

"Ok, ok," Malarkey says, losing a chuckle before holding back onto the grip of supposed seriousness. "Did you see a license plate before you were hit?"

The memory hits him with sudden clarity, all over again. It rattles his soul and he shivers in the memory of the void of a license plate shattering his bones.

"I noticed – that it was actually unmarked," He says. Officer Malarkey nods, raise of his eyebrows.

"Well, shit. That complicates things."

Blithe assumed. Unmarked ones are not a fun deal, that he can just guess easily. If it was unmarked like it was, blaring red lights, probably means it was an undercover cop. He curls his hands. The moment keeps repeating over and over, a woman rubbing his back and hands cupping his face. He gets a sudden spark of curiosity that was not welcome, and it comes with the laces of bravery.

“Do you know, uh, the name of the woman I – pushed,” He asked, curiously.

Muck rolls his eyes. “Oh, yeah. Wife of this guy we know, real asshole.”

Malarkey nods. “Frannie.”

“Okay,” He says. Frannie. She doesn’t seem like a Frannie, but then again is memory is warped and looped. There are whispered comforts overlapping it all in his head. He really, really hopes he gets to see Gene.

“Bill says you didn’t want to see her?” Malarkey blurts, questioning brown eyes. He reminds him of a puppy with scraps of self-control. Muck hits his arm with his hand, not moving and keeping his gaze on Blithe.

“They say I saved her,” He frowns. Muck’s eyebrows crease.

“Uh, didn’t you?”

“No, I tripped,” He denies. Malarkey snorts and holds it together. “My knees buckled and I – I fell.”

Suddenly he gives himself something new for his brain to latch on. *My knees buckled* and the nurse listing off possible symptoms rolls in his head like a skull rolling down into a pit of mud. He determines today is an off-day. His brain is going a billion miles a minute. Everything seems too slow and now it’s all too fast.

“Well, you still saved her life anyway. Accident or not.” Malarkey nods.

“Some accident,” Muck says, and this time it’s Malarkey’s turn to hit him on the arm.

They ask him a few more questions and say they’ll file the report. (“It’ll be difficult, sayin’ as we don’t know who the hell did it, but it’ll be there.”) He informs them with the faint memory the nurse gave him – who was pleading for him to get up out of the bed and try to walk a little - that there were donuts down the hall for mobile patients and to see if there were any left. They both lit up like two kids opening their presents on Christmas, and he smugly thinks that maybe all cops really do love donuts. They eagerly leave, and he is left to plow through the stack of books Shifty left for him.

The day goes by and he has no news about Gene. They’re probably going to release him soon, since they did all the scans they wanted, and he’s mostly healed up, other than his leg and repairing ribs. He realizes with sudden clarity he has the right to leave whenever he wants. He eats the food they offer, he calls a nurse for crutches or a bulky boot to walk in, and she joyfully brings him the crutches with a sparkle in her eyes. He paces his room and

does not gain any courage to leave the small hospital room he both hates and is okay with living in; can't call it home but can't call it unwanted, either. He finally gets to stand by the window, blinds folded and pushing against his head, and watches the sun set and the cars pass by.

He wants to leave.

He pushes himself to the button to call the nurse again, hours later where it has bled into a Saturday night, crutches digging into his arms, waiting patiently. This one he hasn't seen before, and he arrives calm.

"I'd like to, leave," Blithe gets out in steady, practiced words. The man blinks, raised eyebrows.

"I mean – we'd like to keep you another day, but if that's what you want, that's fine." He shrugs. He has blue eyes and there is a huge weird prestigious vibe from him he isn't sure he likes. They are vastly different, and it does not take much to tell, as Blithe leans on crutches in a hospital gown and he stares at him with judging medical eyes. He, decidedly, isn't a fan.

"That's – alright," he says. The man smiles, a lopsided smirk.

"Kay. Just stay here for a second, I'll have someone grab your clothes."

He forgot he had clothes. He gets a weird delusional thought of him walking home on crutches, in the dark, and the idea of him still being in the medical gown almost makes him snort a little.

"Right. Yeah, thank you." He says politely. The man leaves, and he itches his arm, uncomfortable.

A different person brings in his clothes, and he thanks her and denies help with an embarrassedly red face. She looks like she holds back a smile as she says, "You're welcome" To his thank you, and he thinks he's going to miss all the nice nurses who are too polite and too tired to do anything but give up more. He changes in the bathroom and almost falls over, catches himself with a white-tight grip on the sink and has to stop and breathe. The memory of the pavement scratching his hands and being blind are rising faster than he can push them down, but he steadies himself and tries again.

His clothes are pretty torn. It's not bad, his jeans have holes on the knees and the part where his leg broke is torn - most likely from the paramedics to see how bad it was, but really it could have been anything with how many horrible possibilities his mind decides to run through - and he has faint, dark blood stains on the sides and edges of his shirt, remembers stressed laughter and his shirt being pulled up. There's one thumbprint near his neck and all he can think is *Gene*.

For a faint moment he's afraid they didn't wear gloves, and then another he realizes gloves get dirty. He rolls his pantleg up above his cast, ties his shoe, ties the other one by its laces to his crutch. God, he's probably going to be a sight to see. He grabs the book basket, barely

carrying them, and stumbles down the hallway to the nearest desk to ask for a plastic bag. His apartment keys are in his pocket. His wallet is gone. *Fuck.*

They give him his bag. He holds it with his fingertips and pushes the button for the elevator, waits. The sinking feeling of not seeing Gene holds still.

He rides the elevator down with an elderly man and holds the door open as he runs back to his smiling wife in a wheelchair. They are desperately sweet, and he is bitterly unlucky. They leave the elevator first when they reach the main floor, and he follows loosely behind him. All he can think is *I'm going to get jumped on my way home and Gene didn't come and he was probably going to come tomorrow and I'm going to miss him.*

He is a coward. He frowns, staring at the floor. An *unlucky* coward.

"Blithe?"

He snaps his head up. There is a man looking away from the receptionist at the main desk, hand on the counter, looking at him with furrowed eyebrows. He is horribly handsome and also goddamn terrifying, because his voice registers to a name in his head. It is muddled and over repeated, but he could recognize it anywhere. Maybe he really is just a coward.

"Gene?" he says instinctively. The man's eyebrows draw and furrow more, confused and concerned. He realizes he is in the middle of a very active lobby standing still, and that he can actually move and breathe. He blinks horribly and shuffles to the guy. The receptionist looks between them, confused.

"You're supposed to be in your room," He says, bluntness much heavier than his accent, which, really, isn't that bad at all. He could exist around Gene forever. Jesus.

"I- I left early," He says, speechless. Decidedly Gene nods grimly.

"You're goin' in the dark? On crutches?" He says flatly. He caves, insecure, looks to the floor.

"Yeah."

Gene sighs. He seems like the kind of guy who sighs a lot. Like he holds so much weight on himself that it's the only way he can breathe. He pulls out his car keys. When he begins to protest, Gene waves him off. "I was comin' to see you anyway."

His heart warms, maybe a *little more* than a little.

Gene waves for him to walk with him and grabs the bag for him his hands with practiced care, something he doesn't have to do but chooses to. A little peek of shushed words of comfort, easy foreign words and hands cupping his face. Hands choosing to carry his bag for him. He is horribly, horribly smitten and he really shouldn't be so easily trusting but god, he really would do anything for Gene. (He tries not to stutter and seem weird. He's already getting a free ride, he doesn't need to weird him out.) Gene slows so Blithe doesn't have to

keep up with him, cast scuffing against the floor when he tries to quicken his pace. He is wonderful. He blinks the stars in his eyes away hard.

“Is your name really Gene?” He asks, curiously. Gene looks at him with a curious sort of oddity, before turning to push the door open.

“No. It’s Eugene. Where’d you hear that?”

“Ambulance.”

Eugene (Honestly, Gene is still much better) hums, understanding. He loosely leads him to his car, weaving through the parking lot. He is probably going to be kidnapped and murdered because he throws all his blind (at one point, literally) trust and love at him, and he really could easily kidnap him. What a way to go, though. They reach his car, which isn’t too far away and isn’t too bad, and the lights blink when he unlocks it. Blithe opens the door for himself, shuffles in, leans the crutches inbetween his legs against the seat, buckles himself in.

“Address?” Gene asks, looking up from a Google Maps on his phone. This man is simultaneously adorable and also bone chilling. It’s.. really weird. The smaller things that everyone does are suddenly getting to him with Gene. He keeps calm and does *not* think about asking for his number later. He stutters it out and curses himself for it.

They’re silent. It’s a good one, although a little stiff on Gene’s side. He genuinely just seems tired, in every meaning tired falls under. He busies himself with looking out the window and watching the cars and streetlights go by. Eventually, Gene takes a deep breath before speaking.

“Your name isn’t really Blithe,” Gene says, quietly. It takes him off guard. The receptionist probably told him. “Why Blithe?”

“I like it.” He responds, equally as quiet. The google maps chimes in to turn left, much too loud. “Plus, Albert is weird sayin’ as a kid.”

“Yeah.” Eugene agrees.

Google chimes directions. They don’t talk much. Eugene keeps up the courage to ask questions and he stays smitten while weakly answering them, trying to keep his emotions pinned down to the floor as they slowly cut up his arms. Gene does not ask why he wanted to see him. He is painstakingly grateful, because he really can’t give him a solid answer. He inwardly cringes at every weird thing he does; tries to find a million ways in his head to ask Gene if he can see him again. He can’t let this be the only time he sees him. It shakes every atom in his being. He just – **can’t**.

They start turning onto more familiar streets. He has to actually format sentences in his head instead of procrastinating, and it is majorly stressing him out and he’s barely gripping on to reality by strings and Gene’s random questions. He never took the Too Gay to Function thing seriously but *god almighty someone save him*.

They've arrived in front of his building and Gene is leaning to look at him and calling his name.

"Bli-"

"Yes! Yeah?" He asks, rushed. He's grabbing metaphorical strings in handfuls.

"Think we're here." Gene says. His eyes are soft, like he's worried and *tired, tired, tired*.

He nods. He needs to get it out.

He feels the rush of a death he never experienced again. Of checking his soups out and then it is spilling onto his lap. There are clouds and cars and book baskets and a woman rubbing his back and hands caressing his face. He has a contact on his phone, and he wants two. He is blind and he can see and there is laughter and warm air blowing from the car heaters. He is sobbing in fear and he is terribly, terribly happy. He stares at an angel and his name is Eugene.

"Do you want to grab a coffee sometime?"

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