To Court a Monster: Hannibal Edition

by Rhiw

Summary

At thirty, Will Graham is finally evolving into his adult form, much to his consternation and his father's delight. But to Ezra Graham's absolute dismay, his emotional boy still refuses to hunt, feeling far too connected to the humans he grown up amongst. But at a hundred, the elder Graham know he's entering the last chapter of his life and won't be able to hunt for his fickle son for much longer.

No, what his boy needed was a dominant mate to whip him in shape.

It would be difficult. The Roux-Ga-Roux was a dying breed even in the old countries and were far more sparse here in the New World. But Ezra refused to be intimidated. If they left a big enough calling card, surely someone would come. To his utter surprise he finds two
(two!) rather fine specimens responding.
Prologue: A Father's Greatest Pride

Chapter Summary

Ezra gave him a soft smile. "You'd really just give up everything to be with me?"

"In a heartbeat."

"Your poor wife."

"What-"

The sound of a neck snapping filled the small space, the fragile bones breaking cleanly. The body under him spasmed once and then went limp. “I despise cheaters.”

Chapter Notes

I was requested to do a true monster love A/B/O between Hannibal and Will, with it's own culture and complicated mating rituals and competition.

Basically, an old fashioned courting.

Be aware that bad things will happen to humans in this fic.

(Like, seriously, they die. A lot.)

Betaed by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The man behind him was grunting loud enough to wake the dead, entire frame heaving as he pounded into the smaller body.

"Fuck, you - look at you." The man gasped, stumbling over his words as his Boston accent thickened. From where he was grasping the dirty sink, Ezra Graham made sure to give a quiet, want filled moan as he glanced demurely up at the nameless truck driver via the mirror. The man groaned at it, hands digging into wide, almost feminine hips as he slammed inside one last, violent time, releasing with a loud moan. He pulled out shortly, spinning the smaller man around pressing a heated kiss to pliant lips.

"Wasn't sure you'd want an old man like me. I mean," Ezra said softly as they pulled away, biting his bottom lip in faux nerves, "I'm pushing sixty."

...give or take several, several decades.

The man grinned wolfishly, a hand coming up to caress Ezra's well maintained beard. "If I wanted a little boy I'd a picked up a whore. You're beautiful, baby."
"That's not what my ex thought. He," Ezra looked away mournfully, "he left me for someone younger. I'm on my way up to Virginia to tell our boy now."

The man in front of him glowered, face furious and alight with righteous indignation. A meaty, muscled arm wrapped tightly around his waist, a comforting kiss pressed against his lips as he ground a thigh against Ezra's still present erection.

"He's an idiot to leave someone like you." A light bite was pressed against his throat. "Let me get you off, sweet thing."

Ezra moaned, arching wantonly into the touch, before sliding his hands down to pump the limp, damp member. "Want you inside me again - want to ride you."

"Jesus," the man rasped, growing hard again as Ezra worked his cock skillfully into another erection, "how the fuck are you real? Haven't been able to get hard again so quick since I was a kid."

"Mm, let me ride you, please?"

The driver nearly fell as he scrambled to lay himself flat on the tile floor. Ezra wasted no time in mounting him, moaning egregiously as he slid down on the hard length. It didn't take them long, the man under him face turning bright red with passion as Ezra rode him fiercely, head thrown back as he bounced. A hand clasped his cock, pumping it shakily as they both rocketed towards completion.

It wasn't enough – was hardly ever enough with a human – but it would have to be. The smaller man reached behind himself, roughly shoving three fingers alongside the pumping cock. The reaction was immediate. Ezra cried out, entire body arching as he came, clamping down on the dick and fingers inside him. The trucker let out a shout, hands flying about in desperation before settling once more on too wide hips.

"Oh, sweetheart." He moaned. "You're so tight; like you're gripping me inside." Rough hands ran down his front in a gentle pet.

"I like to keep my muscles in shape." Ezra said breathlessly, grinning down at him. The man was pretty enough for a human – with russet hair and bright, clear green eyes and a wide, muscled body that lay out so wonderfully below him.

"Damn, I can see that." The man gave a shaky laugh. "You said you were going up to Virginia, yeah? Maybe – maybe, I could go with you." The driver said hopefully, hands stroking a warm line against Ezra’s hips.

"But...your job?"

"I hate it."

Ezra leaned forward, resting all his weight on the man's front as eager arms wrapped around him. He stroked his hands over a sweaty neck, thumbs playing with the large Adam's apple. "And your wife?"

"Hate her, too. Got this job to get away from her. Look," green eyes stared up at him, serious and beautiful, "I know this is crazy. We just met and we just – Christ, in a rest stop bathroom - but I've never met anyone like you. You're...you're perfect. Like...like you were made for me. It’s gotta be fate, us meeting like this! What are the chances you'd have a flat in the middle of nowhere and find me? I want to - I want to take care of you. Want to be good for you, baby."

Ezra gave him a soft smile. "You'd really just give up everything to be with me?"
"In a heartbeat."

"Your poor wife."

"What-"

The sound of a neck snapping filled the small space, the fragile bones breaking cleanly. The body under him spasmed once and then went limp. "I despise cheaters."

Ezra lifted his hips, sliding off the limp dick, and stretched, precariously keeping himself balanced and off the dirty floor as he pulled his discarded pants to him. He dressed quickly; he did have a schedule to keep after all. He lugged the larger body easily over his shoulder, walking without fear to his car. The rest stop was abandoned at this time of night and was so rural that there were no cameras. Besides, he'd checked.

He'd only just set the body in the trunk, shoving it down into the false bottom between another body and his spar tire, when his cell phone rang. Ezra felt his whole face light up at the personalized ringtone.

"Will! It so late, bunny, what are you doing up? You should be in bed."

"I'm thirty, Daddy, stop trying to give me bed times."

He let out a short laugh at his son's annoyed answer. "I'm always going to give you bedtimes. How are you feeling?"

There was a strained sigh. "Moody. And uncomfortable; no matter how I lay I can't get comfortable. And it's so damn hot all the time."

"I see. Hot flashes already. Pre-Change heats are the worst in that sense. Goodness, I remember those. Of course back then we didn't have air conditioning; I practically had to be naked to survive."

"And you walked to school uphill both ways." Will grumbled dryly.

Ezra shook his head as he shut trunk. "I can't believe my baby boy's finally going through the Change. Do you have enough to eat?"

"I still have that dry stuff from your last visit and some stuff in the deep freezer."

Ezra frowned as he started the car. His baby had always struggled with hunting, something he blamed on Will's sire entirely. "Will, you really need to start eating better. You can't live on jerky and freezer burn."

"I'm not having this conversation again, Daddy."

The older Graham tched. "Well, no matter. I've got something fresh."

"...are you going to be here soon?" The fragile insecurity in his baby's voice broke his heart.

"Soon," he promised gently. "By the time you're done with class tomorrow. I'm very proud of you, William. I love you."

"I love you, too, Daddy. Be careful driving."

As he put the car in drive, Ezra wondered not for the first time if he'd allowed Will leave the nest too soon. He himself had been with his parents well into his forties before venturing off alone. But his
William had always been such a willful child and Ezra had found it hard to say no to him. Their nature was a hard one to deny, with deeply rooted instincts, and if Will had truly felt it was time for him to leave there was little Ezra could have done to stop him.

Still, having his only child so far away from him was a challenge for Ezra. As a Submissive of his species, all he wanted was his family close. But his mate’s abandonment of them had left a deep scar on both Grahams. Abandonment was so utterly unheard of for their kind that it was…well, life ending for them both.

With their odd aging patterns it was difficult for their kind to stay in one place and they needed to move every decade or so to keep suspicions down. But when his mate had left – with most of their life savings – Ezra had been forced to buy a remote property in Nowhere, Louisiana with what little he’d left and settle. He survived easy enough, his affinity with all things mechanical leading to him having a fairly successful repair business. Skills that he’d gathered throughout his life (greying his hair slowly through dye, growing a beard, dressing just out of style, walking hunched) had allowed him to stay longer then he usually did.

But they were creatures meant to be on the move, especially in youth, and Will had wanted more than a backwards, empty fishing village on the edge of the bayous.

Who was Ezra to deny him that freedom?

Still, Ezra feared he should have at the very least gone with Will. His boy was just not mature enough to handle living on his own, not with his hang ups about killing humans. He truly had no idea why, but his baby boy had the hardest time viewing humans as the prey they were, which was…well…ridiculous, really. As a Roux-Ga-Roux, Will would require human flesh for as long as he lived, doubly so now that he was about to become an adult. As it was his boy would eat anything he was brought – Will wasn’t suicidal, apparently – and so Ezra visited every few months and restocked his supplies.

But that was something he could only do for so long.

Will needed to begin hunting but Ezra knew his son wouldn’t listen to him. He’d try – try harder than he had before, because as an adult (especially a newly turned one) Will’s heats would take a harsh demand on his body and he would need more food than ever before to survive them. At a hundred, he was nearly in the last stage of his life span, and there was no way Ezra could go meet whatever gods ruled over their kind with the knowledge that he’d left his baby boy alone and defenseless.

No, what Ezra needed to do was find his son a mate.

It would be difficult. The Roux-Ga-Roux was a dying breed even in the old countries and were far more sparse here in the New World. But Ezra refused to be intimidated. If they left a big enough calling card, surely someone would come. Now he just needed the right kind of stock – it would have to be perfectly done, beautiful and controlled, naturally, to attract the right kind of mate for his bunny. Something clean, something well-polished enough to really kick up a fuss.

As if on cue, his head lights cut across a figure walking down the highway, gas can in hand. Ezra pulled over, rolling down the window as the human approached. He was a tall man, older, with short cropped greying hair and in BDU’s – military. Most likely from the base nearby. Someone important by the copious amounts of bells and whistles on his shoulder.

Someone who’d be noticed missing immediately.
The human gave him a rueful grin as he leaned into the car. “I didn’t think anyone actually still stopped anymore, but boy am I glad you did. Think you can give me a ride up the road a few miles? There’s a gas station nearby and I need to get back to base.”

Ezra gave him his kindest smile, leaning over to unlock the door, mind already alight with possibilities. “Sure thing, soldier. Hop on in.”

Chapter End Notes

Please drop me a comment or kudo if you'd like to see the rest, I'm writing the next chappie as we speak.

(If I don't get dragged back to my TW fic.)

Btw, in my mind Ezra looks like a greyer, older Hugh Dancy with a nice, full beard. Kinda like this, but aged a bit more.
Of Age: No Longer a Child

Chapter Summary

“I know how fond you are of them, bunny, but you’re not a human. If you can’t accept that you’ll never be happy. Or healthy. You are so skinny, baby. I could smell the sick on you from the drive.” Ezra pressed a kiss to Will’s crown. “You are trying so hard to be a sheep when you are a wolf.”

“Why do they deserve to die so I can live? I’m no better than them. Some are…some are even better-”

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence.”

“They’re just like us, Daddy.”

“Oh, William.” Ezra muttered softly, utterly troubled. “No, they are not.”

Chapter Notes

Here we go.

Now betaed by Felicia.

I should clarify the timeframe. This is very early on, neither Hannibal nor Will have met each other yet.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Jack,” Will sighed, running a hand through sweat soaked hair. His voice was hoarse, the barest of sounds, and he knows it’s a useless argument because Jack didn’t give two shits, “you’re not listening, I can’t.”

The door to his room opened as Ezra Graham backed into it, a breakfast tray carefully balanced. His father gave him a soft smile, setting the tray on the bed before pressing a kiss to his sweaty forehead.

“The hell you can’t!” The Human snarled. “I’ve got whoever's killing those girls still at large and now I’ve got a dead three star General cut up and carved, stuffed with flowers! In a goddamn marble clam shell of all things.”

“It’s Botticelli, Jack, a recreation of the Birth of Venus.” Will said with a sigh, glancing at his entirely too pleased father, “and I know someone else had to have pointed it out to you.”

“Will, people are dying. I don’t need a half-baked art major, I need you.”

Besides him, Ezra was glaring darkly at the phone and the younger Submissive knew he was only moments away from his father physically taking the phone and hanging up on the disgruntled man. “I told you, my father’s in town and I’m sick. You’ll have to wait.” The silence on the other line was
ominous. “Look, daffodils mean new beginnings and lilac’s usually have something to do with sexual awakenings. The fact that he was placed in a church probably means something as well. I’ll be in as soon as I can.”

“Not good enough, Will.”

“Jack, you have to under– Daddy!” But his father had already hung up the call, tossing the cellphone over his shoulder.

“You have enough stress about tonight without listening to some human yell at you.” Ezra said sharply, nudging the plate full of fried foods towards him. “Eat. You’re going to need your strength. Tonight’s the last stage of the Change. Trust me, you’re going to want to be full.”

“Botticelli, Daddy, really?”

“We needed to make a splash.”

“For who?” Will snapped, glaring up at him, “the FBI? Because they’re certainly interested now!”

“Oh, hush. They’re just Humans.”

“Daddy,” Will groaned, bringing up a hand up to rub at his forehead in frustration, “how many times do I have to tell you that they’ve changed? This isn’t the eighteen hundreds – or even the early nineteen hundreds! They have ways to track people now, really good ones, and-”

He was silenced abruptly by a slice of bacon being shoved into his mouth. “Put your pretty mouth to a better use, bunny.”

Grumbling, Will admitted defeat (it was an old argument between the two of them and the older Roux was set in his ways) and bit into it. The flavor immediately bloomed across his tongue, the gnawing hunger that was always present in his stomach dying off. His father was still talking but for the most part Will ignored his blathering. While Ezra may be ecstatic that he was finally going through the Change, Will was not. That didn’t stop him from eating though.

It had been a long time since he’d had fresh meat.

He reached down to grab a slice of toast, heavily piled with a sunny side up egg and a round, thin piece of meat, and paused as he stared at his hand. His skin was almost translucent, showing the dark red of his veins in vivid detail. It was as if Will’s skin was suddenly made of the thinnest of paper. He knew that if he’d had the strength to make his way to his mirror, Will would have looked drastically different; utterly inhuman in a way that he hadn’t been since birth.

The Change was the final evolution in development – after tonight, Will would stop growing completely until his death. He would be an adult, ready to breed and hunt at will. But he didn’t want to breed. Having children had never held any interest to Will, nor had he ever enjoyed hunting.

It wasn’t that he disliked the taste of human flesh – how could he? It was just…Will had spent his entire life learning how they functioned; how they thought, how they worked, why they felt the way they did about things. They weren’t just…just animals to be killed at whim! They were living, breathing things, things that loved and talked and felt just as strongly as he ever did. Stronger, honestly. They created beautiful things, art and music and literature. Even death and murder in their own way were a form of art.

Will just couldn’t bring himself to kill them, not just to feed himself. Not when…not when he -
There was a soft pressure on his head as his father rapped him lightly with the crossword he was currently in the middle of finishing. “Stop thinking so hard and eat or it will get cold. Cold eggs are no fun.”

The younger Roux sighed, digging his fork into the pile. In the end it didn’t matter what Will felt. The Change was happening one way or another.

The house was silent save for the sounds of Will’s heavy panting and the soft, placating whimpers of the dogs that were scattered across the bathroom floor. From where he sat Ezra hummed softly, the quivering form of his son carefully cradled against his chest. His poor bunny was having a terrible time of it, his entire body covered in a thick layer of sweat, his curls glossy and tangled against his scalp. His body was alight with a fire that couldn’t even be curbed by the ice filled bath they were currently in.

The final stages of the Change was sweeping through his boy. Already the sweet powdery smell of childhood was fading from Will, being replaced with a deeper, headier scent that was uniquely his own. His hair had grown several inches in the last few hours, the awkward self-done cut and rough kinks being replaced with curls of spun silk. His skin, which was aged and cracked from lack of care, was being shed slowly but surely, helped along by Ezra and a rough washcloth, long particles of it floating in the icy water. At the moment the new skin was nearly translucent but in a few hours it would darken to something more human in appearance, the new tissue a hundred times stronger than his previous set.

“Daddy,” Will whined pitifully, pressing his face even further against his father’s neck.

“I know, I know.” Ezra soothed, his free hand brushing sweaty bangs back from an equally damp forehead. “But we’ve got to wait it out. It's almost dawn, it’ll end soon.”

Will whined again, tugging fruitlessly at the bindings that held his wrists together and while the silk tie (one of Ezra’s own, his softest) was hardly strong enough to hold their strength, Ezra’s iron grip on them kept them still.

“Daddy. Daddy, it hurts. Please.” Will grasped, legs kicking uncoordinatedly while his hips shifted restlessly, trying to find some relief for the aching arousal. His poor boy was painfully erect, his cock hard and weeping, slick leaking from between his arse cheeks that Ezra could feel despite the fact that they were in water. “I need…I need…” the younger Roux broke off into a series of sobs.

“My poor bunny,” Ezra mumbled, stroking his hair again, “you don’t even know what you need do you?”

He was every bit as miserable as his son. The heat was only a micro one, a sliver of what Will would feel when his cycle truly began, but it was enough to send his son into hysterics; both frightened and confused by feelings that he hadn’t felt before. While Ezra knew that his boy had experienced crushes and perhaps love – true love, even – for the Humans he surrounded himself with Will, like all Roux children, had never truly felt lust.

He had even come to Ezra once in his early twenties, disturbed and confused, unable to understand what he saw amongst his college mates, utterly convinced he was asexual.

The Roux-Ga-Roux, a species that human myths often described as dog-headed men, in truth survived by camouflage. Unless one knew how to look – or caught a newborn or someone going through the Change – it was almost impossible to tell them apart. Both genders – Dominant and Submissive – looked exactly like a human male. Only a detailed look at their insides through an MRI
or dissection could show how very different they were.

While they had fully developed GI and urinary tracks, neither gender actually used them. Roux-Ga-Roux’s neither defecated or urinated, but rather absorbed every inch of fuel provided to them. While a Dominant’s rectal cavity was vestigial, for a Submissive it was a vital part of the reproductive process, serving the same functions as a human vagina, capping out into a cervix and uterus instead of the lower intestines.

Until the Change, sexual development had yet to be complete. In a Submissive, the uterus and ovaries were not yet completely formed, the cervix hard and unwieldy. In a Dominant they were not capable of creating live sperm or forming the long, curved erection unique to Roux-Ga-Roux. Neither sex was truly capable of experiencing sexual want; they had no appetite for the act. Thus Will’s fears. Ezra had never had more than one child, something which was somewhat rare for their kind, and as such Will had never had any siblings to compare experiences with.

Only his Human friends and peers.

“Let me – let me go.”

The older Roux sighed, running a gentle hand down his boy’s front to pump his son’s erection. Will had come several times already, but that kind of stimulation wasn’t what his Will needed. “We tried that, remember?” He reminded softly as he worked the hard flesh towards another orgasm. “You couldn’t be a good boy.”

“It hurts, Daddy!”

“I know it does, but you can’t put anything up there, darling. You have to remain pure for your mate.”

“I don’t have a mate.” Will sobbed, body convulsing in a dry orgasm that did nothing to abate the aroused heat devouring his body. “I’ll never have a mate.”

“Don’t say that,” Ezra admonished, “of course you’ll have a mate.”

“No one would want me. I’m a freak.”

“Hey!” the older Roux said sharply, gripping his son’s chin painfully and forcibly pulling his face free. “What have I said? You are not a freak. And after that display someone will come looking.” He glared down angrily – he hated it when Will put himself down in front of him – but felt the rigid plains of his face soften at the miserable expression he found there. Ezra sighed and let his baby hide once more. “I fear I’ve failed you, letting you parade around as a Human for so long.”

“Daddy.”

“I know how fond you are of them, bunny, but you’re not a Human. If you can’t accept that you’ll never be happy. Or healthy. You are so skinny, baby. I could smell the sick on you from the drive.” Ezra pressed a kiss to Will’s crown. “You are trying so hard to be a sheep when you are a wolf.”

“Why do they deserve to die so I can live? I’m no better than them. Some are…some are even better-”

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence.”

“They’re just like us, Daddy.”
“Oh, William.” Ezra muttered softly, utterly troubled. “No, they are not.”

Mid-morning found both Roux outside. Ezra was dosing lightly on the porch swing, kept from the chill of the air both by the warm morning sun as it made a steady path across the wood and several warm bodies. Will’s dogs – a necessity for any Submissive living alone – were a wonderful bunch, well trained and loyal to a fault.

Will had seen to that.

He may not understand how to interact with other speaking beings, but the Roux understood dogs. He understood all canine on a deep level. The newly Changed adult stood in the fields surrounding his home, staring out at the entrance of the woods with Winston, the dog a warm comfort as he leaned bodily against Will’s leg. Sighing he glanced up sky, amazed at how blue it seemed frame by white fluffs of cloud. How could the world just keep turning when everything had changed? When everything had shifted?

By his side, Winston gave a low whine.

“It’s alright, boy.” Will gave him a soft smile, reaching down to itch his ears. “We’re alright.”

At least his dogs hadn’t turned from him, hadn’t thought anything of the Change. Ezra had assured him it would be so, but the younger Submissive hadn’t been so sure. He glanced down at his hand, the skin looking baby soft and smooth amongst the ridges of Winston’s fur. He brought the other hand up, holding it up to the sun and marveling at the fact that all the callouses he had amassed over the years had completely disappeared. Every scar, every blemish was just gone.

It was strange as Will hadn’t thought it would, but the Change was more than just physical. He felt so…different.

It was as if his skin had never truly fit before, as if he had been wearing pants too small or a tie too tight for years. It was disturbing. Will didn’t want to feel more comfortable, he didn’t want to feel like this, because the young Roux knew that it meant that he was even less human then before, that he’d gone even further from them.

In his most honest, most self-aware moments even Will was unsure as to why it meant so much to him to try and be as Human as possible. Didn’t understand why he wanted their company, why he both wanted to understand and be understood by them. They were not his kind. He ate them almost daily. If they had even an inkling of what he truly was, they would undoubtedly turn on him, try and destroy him.

Yet Will wanted it, wanted it so very badly.

From his earliest memories of watching them play together in groups in kindergarten, he had longed for the easy company they found with each other. But no matter how Will tried, even looking and smelling as they, even when he tried to emulate the way they acted and spoke, even at that tender age, they would not accept him. It was as if they sensed somehow, on some deep instinctual level, that Will was not the same as they. As they grew older it was even harder for Will to pretend, to understand how they ticked. It was as if they spoke a completely different language from him; a language of subtle gestures and motions as much as emotions.

How he longed to go to sit and laugh with them. To go to the movies or a party and get lost in their simple pleasures. How the Roux wanted to go out to the bars or a coffee shop and be accepted into the both the swinging masses and small chatting groups. But he never could achieve that, Will could
never fake it well enough to not scare anyone else.

And now…now Will was even more different.

Even further from them.

Let outing a deep sigh, the brunet let himself fall backwards, the un-harvested hay catching him easily. He let his eyes close, ignoring the itch of the sticky plant stems against his skin.

Alana…

He was unsure how long he laid there, Winston warm and plaint against his side, lost in his thoughts, when Will heard the unmistakable sound of a car making its way down the gravel driveway. A moment later Winston tensed by his side, ears perking up as he rose in curiosity. Will followed him, propping himself up on his shoulders and then letting out a sharp curse as the familiar dark form of Jack Crawford’s four door turned the corner of his drive.

Alana Bloom was adult enough to admit that she was pissed. She’d evolved from angry to furious on Will’s behalf about an hour into the drive. The doctor hit the steering wheel in frustration as she caught the tail end of Jack’s car turning down Will’s driveway. She had hoped to catch them before they’d arrived. The young doctor felt no small amount of anger at herself for giving out Will’s personal information, but if the brunette had any idea – any at all! – that the forceful man had intended to drive down and harass her friend she would have told Jack Crawford just where he could shove it.

Thank god Hannibal had called her.

Unfortunately she’d missed the phone call as she’d been giving a lecture, but clearly Hannibal had thought something was odd enough about meeting Will all the way out in Wolf’s Trap to call her. She had known that Jack had planned to get Hannibal involved to evaluate whether or not Will was stable enough for field work. Hell, she had been the one to suggest it. Someone had to look out for Will Graham’s best interests and it was becoming more and more clear that Jack had little interest in doing so.

But when her friend had called to ask her to take over his class for a week, stating a terrible cold that coincided with his father’s visit, Alana had thought that Jack would be postponing the interview. Will Graham was not a well man; he was deeply troubled and needed to be handled with kid gloves at the best of time. Despite the new murders, the fact that Jack had the gall to impose on Will at his own home while he was not only sick but with his father – his father who he rarely ever saw – was enough to drive her completely over the edge.

Honestly she was grateful that Hannibal would be there. Her old mentor always had a calming presence and without it Alana was afraid she’d lose her professionalism completely.

As she approached the house, she could spotted what could only be the elder Graham exchanging what seemed to be rather harsh words with Jack. She threw the car in park, slamming the door far more harshly than she intended. Hannibal was standing to the side, looking as close to awkward as Alana had ever seen him and that only pushed her even further. She felt guilty that she had not only put Will and his father in this uncomfortable spot but dragged Hannibal into it as well.

She was more than slightly pleased to see Jack’s face go dark at her arrival.

“Alana.” Hannibal greeted.
She gave him an apologetic smile as came to a stop at his left. “Thanks for the call, Hannibal.”

“Dr. Bloom,” Jack said sourly, puffing his body up in an attempt to dominate the space, “I wasn’t aware you were visiting today.”

“Funny,” she drawled icily, “I wasn’t aware you were either. I was under the assumption that we agreed to give Will time to recover.”

“People are dying,” and Jesus, if that wasn’t Jack Crawford’s favorite line, “and I need my best. Will is my best.” That last part was addressed to Mr. Graham.

The man looked so much like Will that it was startling. It was as if she was looking into the future, seeing what her friend would look like in fifteen years. The elder Graham was only slightly graying, looking incredibly young and hale for someone in their sixties, face drawn tight in anger. He was slightly shorter than Will, though he still seemed imposing and almost regal from where he glared at them from the porch steps.

“While that may be so,” Mr. Graham said sharply, his irritation causing his Southern drawl to become even stronger, “this entire meeting is incredibly rude.” And Alana had to fight a wince as the lines around Hannibal deepened as his lips tightened. If there was one thing that had remained consistent with her mentor, it was that he could not abide rudeness. “As my son told you yesterday morning, he is not yet capable of returning to work.”

“Mr. Graham, I’m Alana Bloom, I’m a friend of your son from the Academy. I have to apologize, I had no idea that Agent Crawford was going to drive out here and bother you.”

“I also have to extend my apology,” Hannibal said evenly and again there was that awkwardness that she had never seen from the man, “I was under the impression that I was expected.”

The elder Graham eyed him, something peculiar and evaluating on his face as he did so. “I see. Well, I suppose such a thing can be forgiven under the circumstances. Under these circumstances, only. You understand of course.”

Perhaps it wasn’t such a strange thing to say, but something about the phrasing struck Alana odd. Yet Hannibal only nodded his assent. Brows furrowed as she took in his stance; hands behind his back, shoulders hunched, head slightly bowed. It wasn’t only disarming and unthreatening but also…deferential? In the entire time she’d known him, Dr. Lecter had always been a dominating presence, an Alpha male in every true sense of the word. He seemed almost incapable of not commanding any space he was in, consciously or unconsciously demanding obedience and attention. Yet here he seemed to be making himself smaller, willingly giving control to the shorter man on the steps.

“However, it is-”

“Jack? Alana?” A confused voice interrupted whatever Mr. Graham was going to say, “what are you doing here?”

“Will, I-” Alana turned, an explanation and apology on her lips, and immediately forgot what she was about to say. Perhaps it was the way that the morning sun was hitting him, bringing out the red tone to his hair, or perhaps the fact that it was cut differently – still short but long enough now that half formed curls formed wispy halos around his face – or maybe it was that he was looking healthier with rosy cheeks and a clean shave, but Will looked almost alien from the man she had known.

Had his eyes always been that grey? They were stunning.
There was a soft sound from next to her, a barely audible intake of breath, and Alana belatedly realized that it had come from Hannibal. The tall blond had gone utterly still next to her, the stern lines around his lips and eyes going lax as he stared. As Alana watched his stance straightened, reclaiming all of his six feet, shoulders pushing back as his hands drifted from his back, uncurled loosely by his side. Confused, she followed that intense stare back to Will only to find her friend was meeting it.

Completely.

With full eye contact.

Something strange – something thick and heavy – had filled the air suddenly, the usually noisy clearing was silent save for the sound of the wind moving through the tall grass. All at once Alana felt like she was intruding, as if she had somehow stumbled on something incredibly private and she glanced away, looking first at her hands and then at the others, as if to find some kind of answer for the bizarre mood shift. But Mr. Graham seemed unperturbed, watching the exchange with a neutral if calculating look. Jack, however, was watching with an intentness that Alana didn’t like.

The agent cleared his throat and the moment was lost. “I see that I’ve come at a bad time. I do apologize, however I do need you back as soon as possible.” Alana blinked, confused at the usually stubborn man’s sudden surrender. “Perhaps you’d like to ride back with your colleague, Dr. Lecter.”

“I think that would be best,” Hannibal answered, his tone containing only the slightest hint of an edge. Which, for him, was as good as shouting.

“Well, I’ll take my leave. Will, good to see you looking better.” The agent dug out his car keys, heading towards the passenger door. “Dr. Bloom, enjoy your visit. Dr. Lecter, I expect your call tomorrow.”

All at once she realized what he intended and Alana fumed, crossing her arms. Jack seriously thought by leaving that Hannibal would continue with his evaluation! As if Alana would seriously allow that.

“We’ll leave too, Mr. Graham,” Alana said shortly, trying and failing to hide her smirk at how the agent paused before fully lowering himself in the car, “we’ve caused you both enough trouble.”

“Yes, I think so,” the elder Graham said with a smile. “Will, why don’t you go check on lunch.” But Will didn’t move, staring down at the ground. And was…was Will blushing? A “now, William,” was added and that seemed to breathe life into her friend. He gave Alana a weak grin, eyes locked firmly on her chin, before giving both doctors a wide birth as he headed into the house, his path an unnecessarily wide semi-circle.

“Again, Mr. Graham,” Alana managed after Will had disappeared inside, “I am just so sorry about this. It’s a total breach of your privacy and when I gave Agent Crawford Will’s personal information I never dreamed he’d pull something like this.”

“Please, call me Ezra.” The elder Graham said warmly, face lightening with a kind smile, “and it’s quite alright. Will’s friends are always welcome. Why don’t you both visit tomorrow for lunch?”

“I’d…I’d love to,” Alana said, more than slightly thrown by the man’s transformation from a furious, threatening presence to a warm, doting one, “but I believe Dr. Lecter has afternoon appointments.”

“As luck would have it, my afternoon is quite empty tomorrow.” Hannibal corrected smoothly, both hands once more behind his back, shoulders lowered and head slightly bowed. It was less cowed
than what she’d seen before and some of the confidence that had been lacking seemed to have returned once more. “Shall I bring something?”

“That would be delightful,” Ezra said with another blindingly bright smile, “William’s stomach is quite sensitive right now as you can imagine.”

Honestly, Will had looked anything but sick. In fact he looked better than Alana could ever have imagined.

“Something mild then. Perhaps a soup?”

“Do you cook well, Dr. Lecter?”

“Very well,” Alana found herself quick to reassure, “Hannibal is renowned in Baltimore as quite the chef.”

“She exaggerates.” Hannibal said with a sigh.

The younger doctor laughed at the sheer nonsense of that statement, “I do not.”

Ezra followed her into laughter, the sound incredibly attractive and at odds with the age of the man it came from. “Wonderful. Tomorrow, say around two? Do you have any idea what you’ll bring? Short notice, I know, but I’d like to ensure we have something proper to go with it.”

“Two would be fine with me, if it is with you Alana. And I was thinking something light. Something fresh. Perhaps homemade chicken noodle soup.”

“Fresh.” Ezra repeated, looking pleased. “That would be good. My poor boy does not eat well enough, I’m afraid. Well, it’s a date then. I look forward to seeing you both.”

And then, like that, Alana found herself pulling back out onto the main road, Hannibal a silent but steady presence in her passenger seat.

She felt slightly perplexed. She didn’t quite understand it, but she felt as if she had somehow had missed something, that she’d somehow been left out of half the conversation. The entire exchange had felt completely surreal.

And she had no idea why Hannibal seemed so utterly pleased with himself.

Chapter End Notes

And so one of the suitors has (inadvertently) be introduced. Poor Hannibal is quite embarrassed to be imposing on his own kind so rudely.

Let the games begin.

Hope it wasn’t to awkward reading from Alana’s pov. Did you guys like the biology I’m making up for the Roux-Ga-Roux?
Chapter Summary

There was a startle of thought across the younger Roux’s face, awkward posturing forgotten as he looked at him curiously. “You’re named after a Carthaginian invader?”

“I am.”

“Do you have a strange, ill-advised fondness for Alpine heights?”

Hannibal felt his smile tug wider. “I’m afraid I rather despise the cold.”

“Oh. No driving urge to bring any republics to their knees?”

“Not as far as I am aware of. And, alas, no elephants.”

Chapter Notes

Okay, I feel like Hannibal is a mix between food and clothing porn. So, I added a healthy does of both in the story. Be prepared for clothing and food descriptions that are...well...a reflection of this, lol.

Now betaed by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Will stared at the contents of his underwear drawer, a towel slung low on his hips. What had once contained a series of old yet dependable boxers thrown about in a haphazard manner, now held row after row of new, carefully folded and rolled fabric. Utterly bewildered, Will pulled out a pair of boxer-briefs feeling his eyebrows climb even higher at the butter soft feel of them. They were, quite possible, more expensive than anything the Roux previously owned. The boxer-brief’s stuck to him like a second skin, far tighter than the loose boxers Will was used to, but were so soft and smooth that they felt like wearing nothing. With a sinking suspicion, the Submissive threw open his closet.

“Daddy!”

“No need to shout, Will.” Ezra said as he entered the room, Will’s favorite’s Pluto coffee cup (he had several, but the white one that had the original Pluto design doodles printed on it was the best) in one hand and a less garish, tan and black striped one in his own. He looked stylishly yet casual, utterly put together as always, in a button up and well cut jeans.

“What did you do?”

“Hm?”

“Daddy.” Will warned, trying to make his voice low and threatening.
“What’s wrong?”

“My clothes, Daddy!” He nearly shouted, throwing a hand to the completely gutted and restocked closet.

Ezra let out a dismissive sound, pushing the Pluto mug into his hand while waving nonchalantly with his own cup. “You mean those old rags? My goodness, William, they were practically thread bare. I threw them out.”

“You what?” The younger Submissive was tearing through the closet, yanking clothes across the hanger bar so fast the metal hooks sung. A slew of designer labels stared back at him; Burberry, Tom Ford, 7 For – “What the hell is 7 For All Man Kind? Jesus, Daddy, these look expensive.”

When the hell had his father even had the time to do this all?

“You don’t have to thank me.”

Will gaped at him. “Thank you? Daddy, you can’t just – they were mine, damn’t, and you…you can’t just…” He found himself sputtering into silence at his father’s unimpressed look.

“You have less than an hour if you want to go for that walk with the dogs and still help me with lunch.”

Startled, Will glanced at his clock and cursed at the neon green 12:30. He’d been sleeping so much lately. A pair of black calf socks were pressed into his hands. They, like the underwear, were stupid soft.

Will stared at the tightly rolled fabric morosely. “Even my socks?”

“Do you need me to pick something out for you?” Ezra asked, tone seemingly full of endless patience.

“No, I think you’ve done just about enough.” Will snapped, pushing his father bodily back out the door and shutting it. For a long moment he just stared at it, trying to breath past his anger (alright, it was more like supreme annoyance than anger) and just let it all go. Ezra had a habit of doing these types of things; the last time his father had been up to visit he’d basically completely redecorated the house.

In the end there wasn’t much Will could do about the whole thing and so, with a body heaving sigh, he headed back into his closet. After a long moment of just being completely and utterly overwhelmed, Will decided to just dress as close to normal as he could. He chose an oatmeal henley, one with ribbing so fine and close together the material barely picked at his skin, and a pair of straight leg blue jeans that fit him like a glove. Despite the tightness, they were surprisingly comfortable. He didn’t have to search for flannel; while his wardrobe was no longer saturated with it (and all of his work shirt flannel had been replaced with clean solids and soft patterns) there was still a healthy amount. The shirt he ended up with was more of a two-tone check than flannel, a soft white over laid with a green and blue pattern, and he covered it with a thick, dark grey snap up cardigan.

Will didn’t want to think of how much money he was wearing.

He yanked on his favorite pair of green Hunter wellies, filled his pockets with the small little dog biscuits his pack liked from a jar on his dresser, and made for the door. The young Submissive paused in front of it, mouth parted in surprise at the sight of himself in the mirror hanging off the back. For the first time in perhaps the entirety of his life, Will thought he looked…well…attractive.
He shifted uncomfortably, chewing on his bottom lip as he stared.

…it had to be the clothes.

Will knew better though, he knew that it was the Change, shifting his body to be more; more attractive, more fetching, more captivating, more enticing, more, more, more. If his father was to be believed (Will had never really spent any time with others of his kind) all Roux were this way after the Change. Humans tended to be more willing to open up and let their guard down around handsome men. Will reached out, tracing the contours of his features in the reflection. His jaw had softened, only slightly, just enough to give him a gentler look than what he’d had before. And the blue in his eyes had leached out almost completely, leaving his irises an almost surreally clear grey color. Ezra had recut his hair for him shorter than before and it had definitely changed texture and deepened in color depth.

Will felt like an ass, being displeased that he was suddenly more attractive, but…but damn’t he didn’t want this. He didn’t want to be turning into Humans’ fiercest predator. He felt like everything was spinning completely out of his control (not that it Will had ever felt in control before) and he was just lost, caught in some turbulent tide that was dragging him further and further away from whatever small measure of normalcy he’d managed to carve out for himself. He didn’t want this.

But…Will looked away from his image, checks flushed. He couldn’t pretend he wasn’t pleased with his new appearance.

Feeling awkward with himself Will made his way down the stairs, chugging his coffee until the heat of it burned his throat. He accepted two pieces of buttered toast stuffed with bacon between, exchanging his Pluto mug for a thermos of blood and honey sweetened milk, the mix turning the skim milk into a thicker, pastel pink.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to come out with you?” Ezra asked as he followed his son outside. “I wouldn’t mind the walk.”

“I’ll be fine, Daddy.” Will murmured, “I’ve got my dogs.”

“All right, bunny.” The woods seemed to be calling to him and Will was eager for the isolation they would bring. “Just remember, you see anything come straight home. It’s still too soon after your Change to try and fight. I don’t think we have to worry about any debile couilles right now, but not everyone is willing to play by the rules.”

Will nodded, a single flick of wrist gathering his pups by his side. He glanced at Bear, his biggest dog and an American Staffordshire Terrior and Pit bull mix, before holding his hand in the stay position. He would feel better knowing the strong dog was watching over his father, just in case. Debile couilles translated roughly into weak/feeble testicles – a French phrase that Ezra had always used to describe Dominants who refused to play by or failed the rigid etiquette of the Roux-Ga-Roux society. It was also what Will usually heard instead of his sire’s name. He was three when Jonathan Graham had left them, which was truly young for a Roux, and he had very few memories of him.

Other than that he had been tall.

Very tall. Like a mountain to his child eyes.

The wood seemed to welcome him, accepting Will and his dogs into the fold in a way that no Human could ever be manage. Forest creatures rarely scattered in his presence and when they did, it was because of the threat of his pups. Whenever Will had been confused or tired of pretending the solitude of nature had always been a welcomed place to escape to. As a child, it had been the thick
bayous of the South and he'd bought his place in Wolf Trap due to its close vicinity to the large, open nature preserve in an attempt to recreate that feeling.

Will kept his walk shorter than normal, just under nine miles and forming a large figure eight as he made his way back to the house. It was still enough time to think. Alana and her friend – a Dr. Lecter, according to Ezra – where coming over. Will didn’t know if he was ready. He wasn’t quite done figuring out his new body and as he explored the young Roux drove himself to walk faster, jump further, pushing the new muscles up to and past his old limits.

It was awe-inspiring.

But for the most part, Will was just afraid of his new body. He had always struggled with Human interaction and if what he had seen from living with his father, his improved physique was only going to call them in like the pied piper. He had resisted the urge to hunt them, fought off the need to dominate, by keeping them at a distance. It was easier when Will had still been a cop. Roughing up or running down perps brought him a sense of peace, even if he never quite felt complete as he threw the Human into the back of his car or jail. As a teacher, the Roux had settled with dressing poorly, behaving oddly, and hoped it was enough to keep everyone just far enough away that he could resist temptations – but still close enough to drive off the biting feeling of total isolation.

But now…the last thing Will wanted to do was ensnare Alana. He wasn’t sure what he felt for the Human woman but Will knew that it was the closest to true attraction than he’d ever felt before. He respected her wit and intellect, admired her insight and easy handling of her fellow Humans. Unlike others of her trade Alana had never pressed him to open up, had never pushed to try and get him to explain his unique abilities; she simply was…well…Will’s friend.

And that wasn’t something he had ever had a lot of.

There had been more than one head shrinker (more than one Jack Crawford) that had come and try and use Will. He had an ability to understand Human killers that must seem supernatural to them. In truth, Will could see so clearly because in that moment the Humans who killed – true, deranged minds that did it out of hatred or sick love or pleasure – thought closer to the patterns of a Roux than ever before. It was those who killed out of passion, who killed in a moment of emotion or irrationally, that were blind spots for him.

And then there was this Dr. Lecter.

Will had been able to see him as he had drawn closer to the argument blooming between Jack and his father, but he hadn’t recognized him as a Dominant Roux until he’d been close enough to get a strong scent. His reaction to the man had been…bizarre.

A warm flush had bloomed across Will’s cheeks at the sight of Lecter, his heart beginning a rapid staccato against his ribs, his breath strangely heavy in his lungs. There had been a stirring in him, an odd ache in his belly Will had never felt before, that had left him staring stupidly at the handsome Dominant.

And the doctor had been handsome.

He’d been impeccably dressed in neutrals, sharply cut so that even with a blazer over a sweater and a button up the broad, strong set of Lecter’s shoulders had easily shown. He had been tall, perhaps only a few inches taller than Will, in truth, but he’d seemed so much larger than the Submissive somehow. With dirty blond hair, patrician features, and eyes such a deep brown they appeared almost maroon, the doctor seemed as if he could have stepped from an old world aristocratic painting.
Will’s reaction to Dr. Lecter was so beyond anything the young Roux had ever felt before, that paired with the fact that he actually met a Dominant, it was all fairly terrifying. It wasn’t as if Will didn’t know why Ezra had invited him over for lunch, or what his father wished to happen. How could he not?

_Botticelli_, he thought sourly as the house came into view, _why did he have to choose Botticelli?_

He left the dirty wellies in the mud room, taking time to detail and dry off each of his pups before joining Ezra in the kitchen. Helping his father wasn’t too much of a strain. Will could make Creole or Cajun style food blindfolded. He knew what the meat was and while he tried (desperately, almost) to feel some sort of guilt, he found himself popping the cooking flesh into his mouth. The Bonne Femme was an old family favorite, though there was most definitely a chicken substitute, and they were also making a Catfish Courtbouillon with actual catfish for Alana at Will's insistence. The spicy food would be too much for Will as a whole – his stomach was still acting absurdly picky – but apparently Dr. Lecter was bringing homemade soup for him.

“…Daddy?”

“Did you burn the meat?”

“Daddy.” Will answered flatly and Ezra had the good nature to look slightly abashed.

“Sorry, bunny.” His father dried his hands on a dish towel, leaning against the counter as he turned to face him. “What’s on your mind?”

“Why did you invite Dr. Lecter over?”

Ezra’s head cocked slightly to the side, “I think you know why, Will.”

He shook his head, frustrated. “I wish you’d asked me first.”

“It’s a little unorthodox, I know, but your pet Humans didn’t really leave us any choice. Best to salvage the situation as we can.”

“That’s not what I mean and you know it.” Will snapped, gripping the counter. “I…I don’t want a mate. I’m not ready-”

“I can’t keep waiting for you to be ready, William.” Ezra’s voice was level, but not without its own edge.

Will tossed the knife down angrily, ignoring how it skidded across the wooden countertops. “It’s my life!”

“And I’ve given your space to live it and to what end?” His father asked, just as sharply. “Every time I visit you’re weaker. You insist you will not hunt, you ration off what I bring you, and you were barely strong enough to survive the Change. You follow this mad conviction to not hide but _live_ as a Human! Tell me, William, where are your friends? That woman, Bloom? That horrible man? Do they soften your loneliness? Do they fight for your attention, care for you, love you the way a mate would? The way your own kind would? And what would they do if they knew what you are? Would your friendship, your gracious piety save you from their wrath?”

Will looked away but a firm hand on his jaw dragged his attention back to his father.

“What would you have me do, Will? Sit by and watch you kill yourself?”
“I eat,” came his hoarse response, voice weak at the sound of his fears (and what he knew deep inside as truth) verbalized.

Ezra let out a weary sigh. “You eat what I bring you. You can’t afford to continue to live in this delusion, one that I have perpetuated for far too long. When I pass - no, listen to me. When I pass, and I will, if you do not hunt or have a mate to do so for you, you will starve to death. And that is a terrible way to die, my bunny, and I will not have that for you. So,” the older Roux blinked hard, his eyes glossy to Will’s utter horror, before clearing his throat roughly, “either you hunt or I will find you someone who will do it for you.”

Will stepped forward, wrapping his arms tightly around his father’s middle and hid his face in the slender curve of his neck, breathing deep the comforting smell of mother. “I’m sorry, Daddy. I… I don’t mean to…to…”

“I know.” Ezra said softly, holding him just as tightly, “but things have changed now. Once you’ve spent some time in your new form, spent some time with others, you’ll realize how wonderful being a Roux-Ga-Roux is.” The older submissive pulled back, pressing a kiss to Will’s forehead. “A little socialization will do you a world of good. I promise. Now, scoot, the meat’s burning.”

The trip to Wolf Trap took just about forty-five minutes but Hannibal stretched it to well over an hour. Alana was driving herself, her schedule giving her less freedom to leave than Hannibal’s. One of the joys of being your own boss was being able to reschedule at will and after the debacle with Crawford, the Roux was unwilling to be anything but promptly on time. His roster had been filled with his less needy patients, with the exception of Franklyn, and they could handle waiting a day. Besides, Hannibal had more pressing things to deal with.

He could count the times he’d been truly humiliated on one hand and the fact that it was brought about by a Human like Jack Crawford was infuriating, to put it lightly.

When the body of General Andrew Joshabee had been found gutted and stuffed in a Washington D.C. church with a Greek Ω (the traditional symbol of a Submissive Roux-Ga-Roux) painted across his chest in blood, Hannibal had been filled with a rarely felt sense of excitement. Roux were rare in the Americas and the blond had only met a handful in his life here. He had begun to think that he would have to travel back to Europe to find a mate when the Submissive had announced it was coming into Season. The Dominant had his own plans on how to respond, something elegant and precise to show the true extent of his abilities, and had been set and ready to begin his own display when Crawford had come calling and almost ruined everything.

Nothing, not even his earliest school days in France when the thick tongue of his motherland made him sound slow and dimwitted, had made Hannibal feel like such an unrefined klutz as the expression of disgust on the beautiful Ezra Graham’s face had when he had realized a Dominant had come uninvited onto his property.

Roux-Ga-Roux were creatures of almost extreme manners. Fiercely territorial and quick to stamp out any perceived insult or threat, strict rules were necessary to keep both sexes from killing off their own kind. And despite their sparse number, there were rules for every aspect of interaction that were rigidly enforced. There was a certain way one introduced oneself, for one, and you were never to come unannounced less you intended it to be an insult or declaration of violence. And despite what the name might imply, Submissives were the heart of a Roux home as their spieces was - for lack of better phrasing - matriarchal. Crawford’s visit could have cost him dearly.

Indeed, it was somewhat remarkable that Ezra was allowing him to return given that Hannibal had yet to declare his interest with his own display. It was all very backwards, thanks to the human agent,
and Hannibal was determined to try and get things back on track as soon as possible. He hadn’t smelt the presence of a Dominant on the property, and given how close it had been to William’s Change (and how the scent of fading heat had teased him) if his sire had still lived he would have been there. As he was most likely dead, this meant that Ezra alone was a deciding factor in how their courting would play out.

And Hannibal Lecter was more than interested in courting William Graham.

He had been breathtaking; emerging from the tall grass like some Persephone come to life, as beautiful as - if not more than - Ezra must have been in youth. William had smelt perfect; the Change having shed any tainted scents of the world from him and left behind only the pure and unfettered smell of a fertile Submissive. Hannibal had only meet a handful of the opposite gender a few of times in his life - and only one after he’d completed his Change - and none that had ever struck him with such an immediate need to possess as Will had.

The courting would be long, of course, to give them enough time to both understand and impress each other. For while instinct had made it more than clear to Hannibal that his body was interested, he would not let it dictate him. Years ago, when Hannibal had still been fresh faced and starry eyed from the Change, he had rejected a Submissive. He had courted for a few weeks, his freshly grown body itching for the chance to mate, before eventually deciding that no amount of lust could override the Submissive’s cloddishness. And Hannibal would do so again if necessary, regardless of how enticing Will smelt. He would not tolerate stupidity or laziness. His mate had to be suitable, interesting, engaging, or nothing at all.

He was a Lecter, after all, and even if their wealth and status had been taken from him, Hannibal’s blood line was an old and pure one.

The aged and faded wooden siding of the Graham house came into view as Hannibal guided the car to slow stop moments before the clock shifted to two. He gathered his traveling warmer that held the carefully prepared soup, pausing for a moment only to smooth his vest and tie and adjust his overcoat, before settling in to wait patiently at the bottom of the stairs. The front door opened precisely at five minutes after and Hannibal was slightly startled to realize that it was Will greeting him and not Ezra. That implication was that the house was legally owned by the younger Submissive, which wasn’t that odd but paired with the Louisiana plates on the Volkswagen parked in front of him, the blond found himself concerned at the thought of someone of Will’s youth living alone.

While Roux-Ga-Roux without family were forced to live alone out of necessity, they were not naturally solitary creatures. And as a Submissive, who felt the craving for the companionship and security of family stronger than their Dominant counterparts, Will would have surely felt the bite of loneliness more severely.

“Good afternoon, Dr. Lecter.”

“Good afternoon, Mr. Graham.”

He gestured for Hannibal to climb the stairs and he did so carefully, keeping a wide swath of distance between the two of them. Touch, unless in matters of duress or under precise invitation from the Submissive to do so, was forbidden. Despite the distance, he was still closer than he had been the other day Hannibal found himself caught once again by the beauty of the younger Roux; eyes raking over the well-shaped form in a hungry sweep, nostrils flaring slightly as he breathed in the gentle scent. The Submissive ducked his head under the attention, a faint blush dusting over his cheeks, but Hannibal didn’t miss the hooded interest in those grey eyes as they observed him. Will’s stare grew longer, almost reaching indecency, and Hannibal couldn’t quite stop the wolfish tint to his polite
All at once Will seemed to pull himself together, posture shifting from shy to a rather forced one of authority that was incredibly endearing. Will cleared his throat, crossing both his hands behind his back as he straightened, head high, grey eyes fierce in their sudden refusal to be cowed. “Thank you for coming, though please call me Will.”

“Then I insist you call me Hannibal.”

There was a startle of thought across the Submissive's face, awkward posturing forgotten as he looked at him curiously. “You’re named after a Carthaginian invader?”

“I am.”

“Do you have a strange, ill-advised fondness for Alpine heights?”

Hannibal felt his smile tug wider. “I’m afraid I rather despise the cold.”

“Ah. No driving urge to bring any republics to their knees?”

"Not as far as I am aware of. And, alas, no elephants.”

Will paused, the smile on his face small but genuine, and Hannibal found himself completely enthralled by it. “What a pity. Would you like to come inside, Hannibal?”

"Very much so, my dear Will."

Chapter End Notes

Your guys’ response to this story has been fantastic. I know it's moving slightly slow, but it'll pick up speed pretty quickly once we get the first real meeting out of the way.

Did you guys like? Was Hannibal and Will in character? Any favorite parts?

For Fun:

Will's Pluto cup of this Chapter:
Coming Out: A Youthful Blossoming

Chapter Summary

Despite his best efforts Will couldn't help but be slightly flattered. The preparation and planning that had been involved, the controlled delicacy of the kill, the guiding hand of the display - the cold, contempt for the victim throwing into sharp relief the warmth of the killer Will had been tracking, highlighting everything he’d missed before.

Chapter Notes

Will discovers his new adult body.

Okay, I posted the unedited version of this! Sorry, sorry. Fixed now.

Now beated by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The hot water felt wonderful against his skin. Will sighed, eyes closing as he leaned into the warm spray. The day had been eventful to say the least. Eventful, stressful, but a welcome break from his father’s machinations.

Ezra had been less than pleased when Will had told him he had to fly to Minnesota for a few days. Without his father. Since his Season was announced, Will was technically not supposed to go anywhere unchaperoned. But work was work and Will genuinely wanted to help Jack. A large part of it was that he really did believe the Shrike needed to be stopped before he killed more girls, but an even larger part of Will did it because he found killers fascinating. They often felt more strongly than their normal counterparts and when he was able to use his natural empathy (an ability common in Submissive Roux who, unlike Dominants, tended to lure more than overpower) to connect with them...for a moment, even if their loves/obsessions/cruelties were so terribly far removed from the range of acceptable Human behavior, Will could feel like they did. As if for a moment a bridge had been completed between Will's lonely, grey world to their wild, colorful one.

Though Will could hardly say he'd been lonely lately or that his world was the same boring grey of usual. With his father constantly by his side and the presence of Dr. Lecter, Will had found himself involved in more daily social interactions then he had been in years.

Ever since Lecter had been over for lunch Ezra had been fussy, insisting on analyzing every conversation and moment, watching the news obsessively for any sign of Hannibal’s response. Everything was along the lines of “he seemed well-raised, but we must wait to see how he can perform, anyone can wear a suit and be clever” or “Will, did you have to spend so much time talking with your Human pet?” or, Will’s favorite, “he was quite dashing, don’t you think? Old World, mm.” God, his father just wouldn’t. stop. talking.

And yet, what Will hated the most was that the Dominant Roux had been a perfect gentleman at
lunch and then again when Jack had made them meet in his office. Will had desperately searched for a fault - a flaw - each time and found none.

Hannibal had even spilled his tea all over the last of the 'chicken' when Alana had arrived so she'd have to have the catfish! It was as if he'd sensed Will's discomfort with turning his friend and maybe crush into a cannibal even with Ezra's uncaring glibness of the act. Though he was courting (and how he loathed to even think the word) Will, as the eldest Roux and his father, Hannibal should have been more concerned with pleasing Ezra.

So why had he done it?

Lecter didn't know him; surely he hadn't done it for Will's comfort.

And the display in the field - and it had been a display, Hannibal's undoubtedly, given its similarities to the case – was a clear enough response that he was interested in courting.

That girl was dead because of him, because of Ezra's announcement, and she probably wouldn't be the last either if any other Dominants answered. And while Will knew he should be disgusted, horrified, guilt ridden, (and he was, to some extent) the young Roux couldn't help but be impressed. The kill was flawless. Utterly flawless. There was nothing to track the kill back to the murderer. It was unlike anything he'd ever seen before, save for the Butcher's kills. The victim had been IDed as Linda Mangin, a fitness and personal defense trainer, and there'd been no drugs in her system. She must have fought, but there were no bruising on her to match a sustained struggle. The lungs had been taken out with surgical precession, with very little damage to the rest of her body save for where she'd been mounted.

Despite his best efforts Will couldn't help but be slightly flattered. The preparation and planning that had been involved, the controlled delicacy of the kill, the guiding hand of the display - the cold, contempt for the victim throwing into sharp relief the warmth of the killer Will had been tracking, highlighting everything he'd missed before.

The display had been so thought out, so carefully tailored for Will, to not only impress but help the Submissive. He'd thought Hannibal would mock Will for his passion for helping humans, but instead...instead Will had gotten that display. It had filled him with a dual set of emotions. A feeling of dreadful anticipation and horrified responsibility, paired with awed gratitude as his mind lit up as the missing pieces of his prey's behavior snapped into place. He'd become filled with the deep impression of the love the Shrike felt for his victims; for his daughter.

Will let out a soft moan, startled to find the hand not resting against the grimy tile but cupping his rapidly hardening cock. When the hell had he done that? He tried to scrounge up the will power to pull away, but all he managed was to slide his hand down further, cupping his useless testicles and giving them a soft squeeze.

The arm supporting him gave at the flash of foreign pleasure, Will barely catching himself with his forearm. The Roux had never understood why his Human school mates had always been so interested in anything sexual. But if they felt an inch of what Will felt as he squeezed his hand around his frightfully hard dick, he didn't understand how they ever managed to get anything done.

It felt amazing, so much more amazing now that he was out of heat and could fully experience it. Will cried out as he ran his hand over his full cockhead. He'd played with himself in the past, to try and see what would happen, but Will had never gotten hard. This...this was...god, almost too much.

Will was pumping his length fervently now, knees buckling slightly and he slid his feet as far apart as
the narrow tub basin would allow. The sounds coming from his mouth were the same as they had been the night of the Change; high pitched needy mews, whines and gasps. His lowers ached, his cock slightly soothed by the rhythmic touches but it was not enough to quell the throb of need in his hind quarters. Will squirmed, gasping as he turned so his back was against the tile, the water painting a warm pattern over his sensitive nipples. But something felt wrong, off, and Will switched positions again. He pressed the entirety of his chest against the wall, back arching as he spread his legs, and - yes.

This was right.

Right hand glued to his dick, Will cautiously slid his left back between his cheeks. The first gentle probe at the damp hole sent a bolt of lust and pleasure so strong he barely kept his feet. His father's warning forgotten, Will slid the finger up as far as it could go, gasping as his cock twitched madly in his grasp. He clenched down on the intrusion, hard, moaning whoreishly before experimentally moving the digit around. The hand on his dick flew to the wall, pressed tightly against it for support as he began to thrust into himself.

Soon one finger was added and then another and another until suddenly Will was fucking himself back against four, his free hand wrapped tightly around his wrist to support the awkward angle and add more force as he drove it inside.

Will was panting, face crushed uncomfortably against tile as he chased relief desperately. His cock was weeping precum, his balls drawn up tight as his insides quivered around his fingers. Will felt it approaching like a wave, the half remembered feeling of climaxing from that night hitting him hard enough his vision whitened. He locked down on his fingers so hard it was almost painful, as if the digits were caught in a velvet covered vice instead of the knotting muscles of his spasming passage. His hips rocked forward, the impotent cum of a Submissive splashing against teal porcelain before the clear mucus was rinsed away.

When he came back to himself Will found he was incredibly sleepy, body limp and drained as his neck and back protested his awkward position. Barely drying himself, a thoroughly sated Will stumbled into bed naked.

If masturbating felt that good, then what would if feel like to have sex? Everything Will had ever seen of Human porn flashed through his mind all at once. What would it be like to have another person inside him? Will shivered, arms curling around himself as he buried his face into the hard pillow, trying to stop the low burn in his belly at the thoughts. He didn't want this, he didn't want to mate. He didn't!

And yet...

Will bit his lip, squeezing his eyes shut as he yanked his boxers down, two fingers pressed deep inside again. He bit the pillowcase to muffle his moan as he slid flat on his belly, hips dragging across the mattress, grinding his cock against the rough sheets as he dug in with his fingers, trying to reach that far back ache.

He was oversensitive enough that Will came almost immediately, cock sputtering weakly against the sheets, but it was like a Pandora's Box had been opened within his own body. Even as his dick refused to do more than swell halfheartedly Will drove his fingers into himself again and again, awkwardly perched on his knees and shoulders as he pulled orgasm after orgasm from his flushed body, whining low and needy as each one built up the sensitivity of his cunt. He was leaking slick everywhere, the lubricant dripping down his wrists and fingers to pool on the sheets as Will grunted...
and moaned and fucked himself to the imagined weight of another on top on him. This orgasm fought him and he knew it was different, stronger. Will could feel its intensity as he rocked his body desperately towards it, finger tips striving to reach even further back. But he couldn't get there.

With each come, Will had become painfully aware that he couldn't get deep enough, couldn't fill enough, fuck himself hard enough.

...a Dominant would have been strong enough to do it right, Will's traitorous mind whispered. Ezra had told him how they were larger than most Humans, their cocks curved to reach deep inside him and flared at the base. A knot. Knotting was supposed to be one for the most pleasurable experiences of a Roux's life.

A Dominant would know how to fill Will's greedy hole better than anything he could manage, how to soothe the fire in his stomach so he could finally sleep. He'd hold Will down with his big hands - hands that had made the ugly beautiful - and fill him full with his big cock. Dark eyes would watch him, like Will was special and beautiful as he plugged him up with his big knot. He'd knot him so wide, split him open until ...until this fucking ache left and -

"Hann-" Will bit down hard on the name, silencing himself as he felt the gripping muscles of his insides lock down even further, slipping over his fingers as they pulled up as if to coax them deeper. A rush of slick escaped from around his fingers. There was a series of wet thuds as his slick hit the bed forcibly and Will was filled with a squirting sensation that he imagined would feel like the most intensely pleasurable piss of his life, if he was capable of urinating.

Will collapsed onto his chest, entire body shaking, barely having the presence of mind to dry himself off before passing out.

The hotel smelled strongly of chemical disinfectant and various Human body fluids. And Will. It mostly smelled of Will.

He'd lit a scented candle, filling the air with vanilla and honey, and cracked the window before he went to shower. That had helped and Will had crawled back in bed to be under the warm covers as the room aired out, awake in the itchy sheets, staring up at the stained ceiling in quiet thought. He couldn't believe that his first time masturbating (well, first successful time, Will had tried it a few times when he was younger to try and figure out what all the commotion was about) had been sparked because of a dead Human girl. What was wrong with him?

What was he becoming?

This was all Hannibal's fault.

There was knock at the door and Will glowered. He revised his earlier statement. This was all Jack Crawford’s fault. Frustrated, he let out a kittenish growl as he kicked off the covers, storming to the door. He swung it open, rude greeting on his lips, only to freeze in mortified horror.

It wasn't Jack at the door.

Hannibal stood before him, bundled against the chill, the sharp angles of his handsome face taking a distinctly animal edge as he took in Will's ensemble of sleep shirt and boxers. The sound that escaped him was most definitely not a squeak as he slammed the door. Will yanked on a pair of jeans and a sweater, cursing his luck as he fought down his blush. When he opened the door again Hannibal was
still there, looking contrite.

"Forgive me, I should have called ahead. I forget not everyone is as early a riser as myself." The words and tone were apologetic, but Will didn't miss the amused slant to his lips.

"No, its fine." He mumbled, embarrassed. The hotel clock blinked an angry red nine-thirty. "Eight is usually sleeping in for me. Where's Jack?"

"Detained at court, I'm afraid." Hannibal explained as he looked into the small room. His patrician features wrinkled in distaste. "It's just you and I today."

"Alone?" Will asked sharply. It was far too early in their relationship to be alone together. Instantly, he rebuked his thoughts. They were not in a relationship, damn't!

"I will be taking my own car, of course. Here," a bundle was pressed into his hands, "I brought you something for breakfast. My card is on the lid. Call my cell when you are ready to leave."

Breakfast...

...god, he was holding what was left of Mangin.

Will almost wanted to give it back, but that would have been incredibly rude, so instead he only nodded, waiting until Hannibal walked away to shut the door.

The food containers seemed to weigh a hundred pounds in his hand and Will stared at it wearily. He set the containers down, staring at it for a moment more before turning away and dressing correctly. He thought about not touching it at all, just dumping it down the toilet, but Will found himself reaching out and opening the warmer before he could stop himself.

The smell of a protein scramble, rich and heady with spices and well cooked meat made Will's stomach growl. He bit his lip, staring at the inconspicuous meal.

It looked delicious and Will was so hungry. He hadn't really eaten at all yesterday. Cautiously, as if the meat and eggs could somehow hurt him, Will plucked up the fork, spearing a perfectly fluffy egg, bell pepper, and sausage and popped it into his mouth. The flavor exploded on his tongue, catching him off guard and Will moaned in a manner not unlike he had last night.

He dug into the meal, completely taken by its well-balanced tastes. Hannibal was a better cook even then Ezra and that was really saying something. The containers were empty - and Will's appetite guilty sated - when he met Hannibal at the cars.

The Dominant took the bundle back with a nod, saying nothing at their light weight. Will took his silence gratefully, instructing him on their destination – a construction site, one of three local ones that had strong signs of being connected to the last murder – before slipping into his own car. But while Hannibal had seemed more than willing to let the exchange go, it stuck with Will.

Because it was rude, incredibly so, that he hadn't thanked him. Ezra would have flipped if he'd witnessed it. His father would have taken Will over his knee on the spot, thirty years of age be damned, and whopped his ass. And so after they'd visited their first construction site (no red flags, complete bust) he paused by his rental car door.

Seeing him stop, Hannibal paused as well, head cocked slightly to the side. “William?”
“Um,” he fiddled with the edge of the car door, “this morning…breakfast, it was amazing. Thank you.”

“You are most welcome, Will.” He was rewarded with a muted, but genuine smile. “I have some more in the car, if you would prefer an early lunch.”

Will hesitated, it was almost noon and Hannibal was a very good cook. The next site was a half hour away…but…it was just...he didn’t usually know who he was eating (Linda Mangin, 29, graduate of University of Minnesota, non-smoker, hard drinker, three cats – mother took them) and...

"I'm not hungry yet," Will lied, ignoring the knowing look on the doctor's face. "I want to try and knock out these sites as quickly as possible." He paused, unsure, it had been a while since he’d had a partner. "I mean, if that's alright with you.”

"More than fine, Will. I am here only to observe. I will follow your lead." Hannibal said as his lean fingers straightened his tie. Will's cheeks stained red as the action strangely brought into harsh relief what he had been doing last night and who he'd almost called out for.

He turned away abruptly, swallowing around a dry mouth as he slid into the car, completely missing Hannibal's amused grin.

The hotel still smelled horrible, but Will hardly noticed it as he scrubbed the blood off him in the small shower. He let out a sigh as he worked the shampoo into his scalp harder. While the trip had been successful, it hadn’t even remotely turned out how the Submissive thought it was going to.

He leaned his head against the tile, eyes closing as he ran a hand over the healing cut on his arm. The second site they visited had given them their lead to Will’s killer, (Hobbs, Garret Jacob, 40, pipe threader, member of the 404, 859 W. Laurel St, Wakefield, MN) and the ride there had been spent in a long profiling phone conversation with Dr. Lecter. The focus on work had helped him shrug off the pushing feeling of pressure and anxiety their lunch talk had dredged up.

But then they had arrived at the house and...well... Will had forgotten how fast everything had happened in the field, how quickly he could lose control of a situation.

The house was cute looking, an almost stereotypical converted farm house, set in a beautifully maintained lot and Will frowned at it as he got out of his car. Hannibal joined him a moment later, hands in his pockets as he took in the home. “How evil things can hide behind such quaint fixtures.”

“Hobbs may not be the Shrike. But...maybe you should wait outside. If this is our guy, he could get pretty violent pretty quick.” Will said after a moment, hand instinctively fiddling with the gun on his waist band.

The look Hannibal gave him was one of flat disbelief tinged with incredibility.

Will sighed. It had been worth a shot. “Just follow my lead, alright? Looks like we’ve been noticed.”

The arrival of two cars at once had caused a medium height, balding man to step out onto the front porch, face confused as he dried his hands on a dish rag. “Can I help you folks?”

“I’m looking for a Garret Hobbs,” Will said evenly as he approached.
He had only just gotten his badge out when the human bolted into the house. With a curse, Will launched himself forward and bodily caught the door before it could close. He let out a cry of pain as his arm was slammed in the door jam, ignoring Hannibal’s worried “Will!” and kicked the door back open with a snarl. He sprinted past a stunned looking woman in a floral sun dress and towards the back of the house, gun drawn and teeth bared.

There was a body on the floor, twitching as it slowly bleed out.

A teenage girl.

A brunette with fair skin and deep eyes.

The Golden Ticket.

He shouted for Hannibal to care for her before streaking out the backdoor, eyes locked on Hobbs’ retreating form. Blood pumped through his body, legs moving at an inhuman speed as he tackled the fleeing Human just on the edge of the wood line. Adrenaline, long longed for and half-forgotten from his days on the streets, filled his system and corrected whatever advantages Hobbs may have reaped from Will’s rusty fighting abilities.

The two tumbled for a moment over a kitchen knife, Will hissing angrily when a shallow thrust cut across his already injured arm, and the pain gave him the extra push he needed to pin Hobbs, lips peeled back in a vicious snarl. He slammed the man’s head hard enough against the ground to stun him, slapping cuffs onto him before forcing him to his knees and half dragged him back to the door as if he weighed nothing.

Hannibal stood there, forearms and face bloody, a small smile curving his lips. “And you said you didn’t hunt.”

For a long moment Will just gaped at him before the sound of approaching sirens brought him back. “The girl?”

But even before Hannibal shook his head negative, he could hear the harsh wailing of Mrs. Hobbs inside.

The day had been a nightmare. Sure, Hobbs had been caught, but Jack was furious that Will hadn’t waited for him before acting on his hunch. The dominating man even had the nerve to imply that the daughter, Abigail’s, death was on his hands.

Seriously.

He couldn’t win with the surly Human. Jack was pissed when Will didn’t perform and pissed when he did. He got out of the shower with a groan, pulling on his favorite pajama bottoms and a t-shirt before padding into his hotel room. He flipped the TV onto something to fill the space with noise before fishing out his travel Pluto cup from his suitcase and (against his better judgment) set some water to boil in the room’s ancient looking coffee pot. Will had only just located and pulled out a packet of chamomile jasmine tea from his bag when his cellphone rang.

“Hannibal? What’s wrong?” The older Roux had gone with the unlucky Mrs. Hobbs to the hospital to help get her settled in, but he’d gotten back an hour or so ago. Not that Will had been watching the parking lot. He’d just been enjoying the view. Of the highway. The clock read nearly nine at night and their flights home were early.
“Forgive the late hour, but I’m afraid I was tied up dealing with a patient in crisis back home that I couldn't in good consciousness abandon. I was hoping I could come over and look at your injuries.”

Will glanced down at the bruising on his left arm, as well as the angry but shallow scratch that ran width of his forearm. “That’s very kind of you, but not necessary. Nothing’s broken and the cut was pretty shallow.”

“He cut you?” The response was instant and sharp, almost a bark, and it sent Will to his feet in alarm. “I’m on my way now.”

“What? No! I said that wasn’t – look its fine. Really, it’s not even a proper scratch! It’s barely bleeding-” There was a harsh intake of breath followed by the distinctive sound of a door shutting and locking on the other end of the line. “Hannibal!”

“William, I’m doctor. I’m not going to send you home in worse shape than you left it unless I absolutely must.” Will could hear Hannibal now from the outside walkway as well.

“I’m telling you its fine.”

“Open the door.”

“This isn’t even – you’re overreacting, it's not-”

“William.” His rambles cut off abruptly. The Dominant’s voice had dropped an entire octave, the accent heavily pronounced in each syllable of his name. “Open the door, please.”

Will opened the door.

Hannibal stepped in, a bag in each hand, eyes bright with a concern that made Will’s stomach twist with something odd and warm. He set what looked like another food container on the small table.

“Breakfast for tomorrow and a snack if you should need it,” he explained before gesturing for Will to sit on the bed corner. The doctor opened the second bag, bringing out a thick gauze and a packet of disinfectant wipes and held them out to him. Will took them carefully, keeping their fingers far apart.

He cleaned the already clean wound under Hannibal’s critical eyes and instructions, before wiping it dry.

“Will I live?” The Submissive teased with a small smile that stuttered into a frown when the other didn’t answer. Hannibal just sat crouched at Will’s feet, eyes locked on the bruised and battered arm, face dark and thunderous. “…Hannibal?”

The blond cleared his throat, turning away as he dug in his bag. “Forgive me. This is…distressful, for me.”

“Oh.” Will curled his arm protectively against his chest, feeling defensive and not a little off put. So what if Hobbs had gotten some lucky shots. It wasn't like Will had asked Hannibal to come. “I’m… I’m sorry?”

“No, you have nothing to apologize for.” Hannibal corrected softly, “I should have protected you better.”
"I didn’t need protection." Was Will’s sharp response. “I caught him, remember?"

“Yes,” the kneeling Roux agreed, “you did. I promise Will, that it has little to do with you and your abilities and more to do with biology. It is physically painful for me to be near an injured Submissive.”

Oddly that statement, said so gently and carefully to placate his bruised pride made Will feel worse, a strange feeling (disappointment, maybe?) filling him.

He was handed a packet of butterfly strips with the instruction to place no more than six to help the skin knit. Will peeled the packaged open silently, heart aching from where it had relocated in his throat. Something of what he was feeling must have shown on his face because the Dominant frowned. "Will-

"Like this?" Will interrupted, extending his arm for him to examine, close enough that he could feel the warmth of the other Roux’s body. Maroon flickered up and they locked eyes, the air around them suddenly charged with something Will couldn't name.

Before Hannibal could answer - if he was going answer at all - Will's cell phone rang. It was his father's number and he answered it quickly, glad for a way to diffuse the suddenly thick atmosphere.

"Hey, Daddy, what-"

"Turn on the news."

He started slightly at his father's abrupt tone. "What station?"

"Any."

Will reached for where the remote lay on his fresh bed clothes, fumbling with it before flicking on CNN.

"- found with by the Opera's night janitor, Roy Hernandez. A viewer warning, the images displayed are graphic."

The picture shifted from a grim but pretty blonde to a blood stained chair and stage.

"The victim, who we believe is Senator Peter Middendorf - had a portion of his throat removed and vocal cords...tampered...with - we're still unsure of the details - before being gutted and left to die. Our specialists say that it would have taken him up to an hour to die. A Greek symbol, Α, was carved into his left cheek. This of course brings to mind the recent killing of Army General Andrew Joshabee, who whose found with a similar symbol on him. Here to discuss what it all means is Dr. Spencer Reid, a profiler who works with the FBI. Dr. Reid, do you think we have a serial killer on our hands? And if so-"

Will stopped listening, mouth open in shock as he held his cellphone in a death grip.

"You've got another suitor, bunny! Isn't it wonderful?"

Another suitor. A low swirl of arousal was building in his stomach, just above his hips. Another Dominant.
Next to him, Hannibal looked furious.

Chapter End Notes

Let the competition begin.

Jesus, this thing was like pulling teeth to get out for some reason. Had to step away from it for a few days and come back to finish it. I hope it's alright. I'm a little worried because it fought me so much.

Also, sorry again about posting the raw version. My bad. Hope I fixed it before too many people saw it.

Will's Pluto cup of the chapter:
Coming Out: The Social Circle Expands

Chapter Summary

The groan that inspired was utterly over-dramatic and completely adorable, the Submissive bringing both hands up to rub at his face in frustration. “Months? Hannibal!”

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long to get out. I finally watched the end of all the Hannibal episodes and I got depressed.

Sigh.

If only there were more slash fangirls on their writing staff. Just a bit of fluffy and lovely smut to make me feel better, lol.

Betaed by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The regional airport was small but crowded with the early morning traffic, Humans standing in close file. Hannibal disregarded it for the most part, hardly concerned with being so surrounded by them, but next to him Will seemed to be having a harder time of it, shifting his weight uncomfortably from foot to foot.

Hannibal knew better than to acknowledge it though, as from what he'd observed the Submissive was fiercely independent and very protective of said independence, and chose to ignore the way Will alternately leaned into and then away from Hannibal, eyes wary as he glanced around them. They were packed in rather close together in the security line, the younger Roux a pace behind him as they waited their turn. Despite the close quarters, Will was in little danger. Even had Hannibal not been there (and as he was, Will was in very little danger indeed) he would have been fine. Still, he was clearly restless.

It most likely had to do with the Change and the stronger, more insistent instincts it brought about. As an unmated Submissive, even one as self-sufficient as Will, Hannibal knew the crowded space was setting him on edge.

Even with his (admittedly limited) experiences with the gentler sex of his species, Hannibal knew that the Grahams were unique. They were certainly different from his own mother and younger brother. Mikhail - Misha, to all that had known him - had been gentle, shy to the point of reclusiveness and had depended on his Dominant father and brother for almost everything. It was not something that Hannibal had ever faulted him for but he found Will's willingness to be assertive far more attractive.
Will was moving into his space in small but steady increments that Hannibal pointedly ignored, carefully keeping his face blank for the nervous glances the Submissive shot him with each approach. As if Hannibal would ever have minded his closeness. In fact, the Dominant had to fight off a pleased smirk at the idea that Will was comfortable enough with him to seek his reassurance.

They had almost made it to the metal detectors when the man behind him let out a harsh hiss, talking quickly and angrily about overnight deals and a botched conference call, a hand flying about as he gestured. The explosion of sound and movement caused Will to startle, body tense as he swallowed nervously. Hannibal let out a soft hum and slid his right foot back, his stance widening until Will’s side was facing his chest at an angle. The younger Roux gratefully took a step into the newly open space and Hannibal instantly readjusted until he was bodily blocking the furious Human.

The Submissive's distinctive scent washed over him. Will was so close in the crowded space that Hannibal could feel his warmth along his front, and he had to fight the urge to step in even closer, to draw the younger Roux in until the tense lines of his shoulders disappeared completely. His father had told him that the need to protect a Submissive was strong and Hannibal had experienced it more than he would have liked those last few days with Misha. But this...

It was almost a madness, the compulsion was so strong. The very thought of Will in discomfort set him on edge and the black rage he’d felt when he realized Will had been injured in his fight with Hobbs was something Hannibal had not thought he’d feel again. Will may not have realized the seriousness of it, but had he been a Human the cut from Hobbs would have caused him to bleed out in a matter of moments. Only the durable skin of a Roux had saved him.

The sight of the red, inflamed wound on the Submissive's bruise mottled arm was almost enough to make Hannibal once more kill for something other than food or protection. If Hobbs wasn't so fiercely guarded or Hannibal thought he could get away with it he would gladly take hours picking the Human apart.

Some of what he was thinking must have bled out into his scent or stance because Will glanced back at him questionably. He gave him a reassuring smile, banishing the dark thoughts away for another time. The rest of the trip through security and to their gate passed with relevant ease, the two Roux experiencing a stroke of luck and finding their plane boarding almost immediately.

Hannibal had called the night before and managed to get them seated together but the aisles were three seaters unfortunately. Will slid down to the window seat immediately, his shoulders relaxing slightly as Hannibal settled in next to him, using his body once more to separate the Submissive from the masses around them.

"Alright, Will?" He asked softly as he secured his laptop case in the seat cubby.

"Yes, I-" he gave a strained laugh, "I don't know what's wrong with me. I just can't seem to...to..."

"Turn it off?" Hannibal offered, watching as Will slumped into his seat with a nod. "I was much the same after my own Change. It took me quite a while to get used to some of my more demanding instincts."

"How long is a ‘while?’" Will asked dryly.

“A few months.”

The groan that inspired was utterly over-dramatic and completely adorable, the Submissive bringing
both hands up to rub at his face in frustration. “Months? Hannibal!”

Hannibal chuckled, aware of the affection that was softening his features. “I have every faith that you will be fine.”

“I feel so on edge,” Will said, voice muffled from behind his fingers before he slid them down his face, clear eyes staring up at the space controls above them, “I’ve never liked crowds but this - this is ridiculous. I can’t stand being near them, I feel like I’m gonna rip the next arm that touches me off.”

"It is understandable, Will," Hannibal assured, voice pitched just as low to avoid any unwanted attention, "you are only a week from your Change. Your instincts are running rampant."

"Was it like this for you?"

"Oh, yes." He remembered the stressful few weeks that followed his Change well. Everything had been brighter, more fiercely defined, and all he had wanted to do was kill, eat, and mate. "Dominants are not so different. I still struggle at times."

That earned him an unveiled look of surprise. "I have a hard time picturing you flustered, Hannibal."

"It was one of the reasons I quit being an ER doctor." He explained with a shrug. While his control may be above average, even Hannibal had his limits. Being around so much fresh meat had been taxing.

"I can see why that could have been hard." Will agreed. "Daddy warned me I'd be jumpy for a while, but this isn't what I was expecting."

"Despite all of our civilities, we are animals, William." Hannibal reminded gently. "And being unmated adds a challenging edge to everything. I've been told matehood tends to settle things."

"Why didn't you ever---" Will stopped abruptly, blushing hotly.

"Take a mate?" Hannibal finished amicably.

The Submissive winced. "I'm sorry, that was rude. Forget I asked."

"I don't mind. Despite the fact that we are few in number, I did have an opportunity shortly after my Change."

"But...?"

"But we were not suited for each other," the older Roux explained, "and despite what I said, I refuse to be ruled by my instincts."

"Oh." Will said quietly. He bit his lip, another question posed on his lips, and Hannibal was suddenly aware that they’d leaned into each other to keep their conversation private. Hannibal felt the stirrings of arousal. Slate colored eyes - free from even the slightest taint of other color - were staring at him with a painfully curious, insecurely shy look that made something inside him swell with want. How very dearly he’d like to lean in and touch, to possess and own the smaller creature at his side.

"Will?" Hannibal prompted gently, more to stop himself from acting too bold than anything else.
"Do I - I mean, am I-" Will cut off abruptly, eyes shuttering as they glanced behind Hannibal. Annoyed at the interruption, the Dominant followed the look to find a well dressed human standing in the aisle, staring at Will with a slightly dumbfounded look.

"Can I help you?" Hannibal asked curtly, shifting so his upper body blocked Will from the overinterested Human's sight. His voice seemed to jerk the man from his trance and he blinked hard before gesturing at the seats.

"I, uh, have the window seat."

It was true - their tickets were for a middle and aisle - but Will had wanted the privacy and security that came with the window seat. Hannibal gave the man a genial smile. "My friend here gets quiet nervous about flying, the window calms him. You understand."

Hannibal felt the slight tick of irritation above his eyebrow worsen as the Human all but leered at Will. "Yeah, I can get that. Whatever will help the little guy."

There was a scoffed 'little guy? Are you serious? I'm 5'11,' from his side and suddenly Hannibal's annoyance was replaced with amusement. He settled into his seat, angling his body and newspaper to continue to block Will and began to catch up on Vilnius news as they began to taxi. Besides him, Will had fished out his Kindle and began to read.

The flight was fairly uneventful after that, a comfortable silence falling between the two Roux as they both silently read. Hannibal tried to focus on his newspaper, but found his thoughts returning again and again to the young Submissive by his side. He discreetly observed each expression and silently found himself captivated by the faces the younger made in response to whatever he was reading. Eventually Will let out a soft sigh as he shifted, turning off his Kindle and stashing it in the seat pocket.

"I'm going to try and sleep some," he murmured, eyes heavy, "Will you..." he nodded at the space beyond their little pocket of isolation, "watch?"

"Of course," Hannibal assured instantly, "sleep. I will alert you if anything of importance happens."

He was rewarded with a small smile. "Thanks, Hannibal."

He watched in mild fascination as Will retreated into his jacket, curling slightly as he leaned against the plane window. It seemed as if it only took a few moments for him to fall asleep. If the Dominant had been flattered by Will’s earlier actions, the ease in which he slept under his watch – the trust it implied, the implicit implications that Hannibal would protect him if needed – floored him.

"It is of no problem, William." Hannibal answered softly, aware and uncaring that his words were falling of deaf ears, "I will always watch over you."

Will stood by the bed uncomfortably, running a hand through his short hair nervously. This entire trip was just one disaster after another.

He’d awoken when their plane landed unscheduled at a local airport; the weather had taken a turn for the worse and they’d been grounded. The original intention was that they’d be able to take off again a few hours later, but it hadn’t looked hopeful from the start and everything had gone downhill after a half hour and they took everyone off the plane and let them into the terminal. They were told to
wait to see if anything would clear up and hopefully they’d be rescheduled later that night.

That prospect didn’t seem too likely and while they waited, Will had grown even more agitated over
the close quarters. He’d never been found of being around large groups of people, too uncomfortable
with his prey drive to ever really settle, but what he’d felt in the airport was completely different.
When before he’d been afraid of what he might do to the Humans, Will had found himself uneasy
about what they may do to him.

It was absurd.

Will had known he was in no more danger than the next annoyed traveler making their way through
the circus that was an airport. And yet it was there. His father had warned him that he may be jumpy
until he’d formed a mate bond or put some major distance between himself and the Change. ‘Jumpy’
didn’t even begin to explain what Will was feeling.

He was over-aware of every color, every mark, every heartbeat and shuffle of the Humans around
him with an amount of startling detail and coherency that he’d never experienced before. Every
movement was observed and carefully cataloged, looking for weakness and threats and it was as if
every instinct that made up Will was on acid. He was torn between wanting to find a nice, dark
corner to hide away and snapping the next person’s neck who bumped into him. And in the busy
chaos of the airport Will had felt overexposed, like a frayed nerve, and nothing seemed to calm down
his hyper-awareness.

Except Hannibal.

The Dominant’s presence had been and still was like a balm, an unexpected oasis of calm and
stability in the madness. When it had finally been announced that no more planes would be leaving
for the day or night due to the storm front, Will had been more than happy to agree to sharing a rental
car with Hannibal and escaping the crowds to the comfort and privacy of a hotel.

However it seemed that their luck wasn’t fated to improve; when Will had gone into the lobby to
reserve rooms for them while Hannibal parked the car, he had been irritated to find the hotel almost
as crowded as the small airport had been. By the time he’d made it to the front desk, there was only
one room available – and it had only a full bed. It did have a sofa, though, and so with a sigh of
resignation, Will accepted the idea of waking up with a cramped back and neck.

Hannibal was even less pleased with the idea than he had been, going so far as to suggest sleeping in
the car.

“It’s terribly improper, William.” The Dominant had scolded, “If your father was to find out-”

“Daddy isn’t going to find out,” Will had interrupted with a weary sigh, “we’re both adults,
Hannibal. Are you planning on assaulting me?”

The Dominant had actually stepped away from him with those words, looking as if Will had struck
him. “Of course not!”

“And I have no intention of jumping you. So. We can share a room.” When he’d made to interrupt
again, he’d channeled his inner Ezra and sent him his best glare, “it’s going to get below freezing
tonight. You are not sleeping in the car.”

In the end Hannibal had given in, though he insisted on taking the sofa. Will found it stupid,
especially when they’d entered the room and saw the tiny size of it, but the older Roux wouldn’t budge. What’s more, Hannibal had actually pushed the sofa so that it was closer to the door and further away from the bed.

So, after a call to Daddy (who had been very displeased indeed, as staying an extra day would cause Will to miss his introduction to the new Dominant), Will found himself in his current predicament.

Which was feeling more awkward then he ever had before.

Because despite all his bravado about them both being reasoning adults above their own biology, the Submissive found himself slightly terrified at the thought of spending a night with a Dominant. Alone. It wasn’t Hannibal that was making Will nervous; he really believed the other Roux wouldn’t make any approaches. It was just…

He sent an anxious glance to the closed bathroom where Hannibal was changing into his pajamas. Will was already in his and though it was a long sleeved shirt and thick flannel bottoms, he felt next to naked. The sound of movement in the bathroom had Will panicking and he nearly threw himself into the bed and under the covers as Hannibal emerged.

Thankfully, the Dominant seemed willing to ignore Will, carefully keeping his gaze averted as he made up his bed on the sofa. Will attempted to do the same. Still, he found his eyes drifting back to Hannibal despite his best intentions. He bit his lip as he took in the strong lines of the tall body. It wasn’t that Hannibal didn’t usually look nice; the doctor was always impeccably dressed and well maintained. But seeing Hannibal like this, in his sleep clothes, it just seemed so much more… intimate.

Without the layers the well muscled form of the Dominant could easily be seen, the white undershirt seemingly highlighting the shifting plains of Hannibal’s back and broad shoulders as he spread a blanket over the couch cushions. The shirt clung tightly to his biceps, drawing Will’s eyes to the defined muscles. He bit his lip when Hannibal leaned down to tuck the blanket in, the Submissive’s eyes following the movement until they were locked on a very firm, tight rear end.

The shock of arousal – strong enough that he felt his guts clench with it – snapped him out of his daze.

Abruptly realizing what he was doing (which was staring rather intensely and inappropriately), Will turned on his side and away, hiding his face in the pillow. The sound of rustling fabric continued for a handful of moments before finally settling. “Shut the light off when you’re ready, Will.”

“Y-Yeah,” he managed to choke out and quickly reached out and flicked the side lamp off. What the hell was wrong with him? Had he really just been leering at Hannibal? “Goodnight, Hannibal.”

“Goodnight, William.”

Christ, that accent – stop it. Go to sleep, he commanded his body, squeezing his eyes shut as he steadfastly ignored the lust building in his groin. Sleep, goddamn’t. But he didn’t know how he would be able too, not with Hannibal’s scent filling the small hotel room.

It was going to be a long night.

The hotel room was silent, the rustling of Will finally having died off as the Submissive drifted off to
sleep. It was close to three in the morning but Hannibal was wide awake. He stood silently at the end of the hotel bed, watching the steady rise and fall of Will’s chest. What he was doing was such a violation; the things Ezra Graham would do if he learned they had shared a hotel room, much less that Hannibal had seen his precious son in such a state of undress. But the Dominant couldn’t bring himself to look away, eyes greedy.

The city light was peeking through the edges of the curtains, coloring the room with the off-white of the street lights. It was more than enough light for a Roux to see and he let his eyes track over the younger Roux’s features; from plush lips to the well constructed arch of his nose, to the thick, full lashes that spread over the sun kissed apples of his cheeks. The short wisps of Will's hair only just managed a handful of curls, the rich browns set off so wonderfully against his coloring and scattered across the pillow.

He was beautiful.

Their sons would be stunning.

Will let out a soft breath, brows furrowing slightly before he rolled onto his back, one hand flying out across the empty bed space. He fidgeted, hips shifting as he resettled and Hannibal watched each twitch and wriggle, feeling himself harden at the sight of such innocent seduction. Those pillowly lips parted in a sigh, showing for the briefest of moments the soft pink of Will’s tongue, and Hannibal had to look away, moving silently through the room and into the bathroom. He slid the inset door shut, keeping the lights off as he silently pulled the toilet cover up.

He pulled himself free, eyes fluttering shut at the first touches of his cool fingers against his heated dick. He was already almost to full length, his head a flushed pink. He ran an open palm over his length, dragging carefully over the swollen glands of his knotting bulb before sliding up and over the curved flesh to his pouty and already weeping slit.

Hannibal resisted an elbow on the smooth plaster above the toilet, allowing his head to drop against his arm for support as he worked himself quickly to fulfillment, mind filled with William. With the sound of his even breathes and gentle hitching gasps. With the way his scent, already so heady with the clean scent of fertility, had been so enhanced earlier by the musty notes of arousal. With the image (forever preserved now, in his mind palace) of supple hips shifting and squirming and the Submissive was right there; with only soft flannel and cotton keeping Will from laying utterly bare before him and –

Hannibal sank his teeth into his forearm, biting hard, to muffle his low moan as he came.

His hips jerked forward three - four - five times, releasing until his balls ached and the back of the toilet was painted with his seed. It had been a long time since Hannibal had given into his body’s demands in such a primal way. Years, even. There had been no call to. None of the Humans who threw themselves at him could had even remotely have a chance of gaining his attention. Outside of a handful of times a year when he could no longer resist the urge, Hannibal was quite happily celibate. But now, with a prospective mate so close by, the Dominant found his gluttonous body demanding more and more attention.

Perhaps he had spoken too soon to William when he’d told him he’d gotten over his Change within a few months. For as he cleaned himself and the bathroom, Hannibal couldn’t deny that he felt rather sheepish; like a cub who’d just come into his maturity instead of a fully grown Dominant with the Change nearly eighteen years behind him. Honestly. Masturbating in the hotel bathroom under the cover of darkness, with the Submissive he was trying to court sleeping, oblivious, a few feet away. How was he ever to look Ezra Graham in the face again?
Yet as Hannibal approached the couch he found his eyes once again trained on the sleeping Will and – unbelievably – could feel the twitches of lust beginning in his groin again. He forced himself onto the small sofa, pulling the blanket over his head and closing his eyes. Will was still young and skittish about himself. He deserved to be courted correctly. Especially if there was another Dominant in play. Hannibal pushed the furious ball that had settled in his chest away at the thought of another going after Will.

The more time he spent with William Graham, the more Hannibal was convinced that he was the mate he’d been waiting for. His very obvious physical attraction aside, Will was incredibly intelligent. He was clever, more than competent at holding a deep conversation about a diverse number of topics, and Hannibal had found himself enjoying the depth and variety of conversations about the Human mind and behavior they shared. Will was also quite quick with wit; even his dry, biting brand of sarcasm had grown on Hannibal rather quickly. And he was capable. His handling of Hobbs had shown him a sufficient if poorly practiced hunter. Nothing that couldn't be fixed. The Submissive had such potential, all he needed was a guiding hand. Someone older and experienced, to help him navigate living as a predator in a world built for prey.

That Hannibal could be that - that he could be the one to shape William from the curious child he was into something glorious - was a most appealing thought. It was not an opportunity that he planned on allowing to be taken from him. He had no idea who the other Dominant could be nor did he care. He refused to even entertain the idea of losing such a promising mate. Hannibal would do whatever was needed to keep William by his side. He would not lose him.

To anyone.

Ezra slowly licked the last remnants of his ice cream as he waited in the nearly abandoned park. The twilight of the evening cast the simple playground and statues into something sinister, but the Roux hardly noticed it. The park had been mostly empty since the General's body had been found in the church across the street, though Ezra supposed that was all probably fairly par for the course considering the murder was rather grisly by Human standards. He bit into the cone, snapping the breading clear in half and let his eyes flutter shut in pleasure as he chewed the chocolate coated cookie stem.

When he opened his eyes he found himself staring at a dark eyed, mocha skinned, absolutely gorgeous young Roux. The Dominant was watching him curiously, eyes following the path of the last bits of the cone into his mouth before cocking his head to the side. He was tall - shorter than Hannibal but still taller than both Ezra and his son. He was dressed sharply, in a well tailored grey three piece and a Burberry trench. He was young, most likely younger than Lecter, though still a few years past his Change if Ezra was pressed to take a guess.

"Somehow, I don’t think that display was for you.” His voice was rich and cultured, a smooth sound, “not that I am in any means objecting to the company.”

He swallowed the last of his treat dainty, giving the inquisitive Roux a small, well constructed smile. "No, it was not. My son is currently trapped out of town due to this ungodly weather, so I am here in his stead. Does it ever get warm in this state?"

That definitely earned him a lip twitch. “You’ve come calling at the wrong time of the year if you’re looking for that, I’m afraid.”

Ezra offered his hand first with no hesitation, immediately taking control of their interaction. He was old enough to probably have taken this whelp’s sire over his knee. He refused to show deference. At
his age, Ezra figured he’d earned the right to lord over upstart Dominants. If his forwardness startled the young Roux, he hid it very well. “Ezra Graham.”

“Tobias Budge. Perhaps I can buy you something warmer, a coffee perhaps. That ice cream couldn’t have helped anything.”

Ezra made a long show of looking the boy up and down before accepting the offered arm, sliding his gloved hand into the crook of his elbow. Homosexuality was growing to become more accepted, but things moved slowly in the Human world. Ezra had spent most of his matehood as the ‘close brother’ or ‘cousin’ of his Dominant, having retreated to the only family he had after his wife died in childbirth. “Quite brave of you,” he teased, “aren’t you afraid people will talk?”

“Let them,” the young Roux said with a scoff, “I count myself lucky to be amongst such company. If your son looks anything like you, I’m afraid I’d be too smitten to respond with anything intelligent.”

“Oh-ho,” Ezra laughed, smacking his arm with a gloved hand, “flattery will get you everywhere, my boy. Now tell me, Tobias Budge, just what makes you think you’re good enough for my bunny?”

Tobias started slightly, amusement causing crinkles to form around his mouth and eyes at the nickname and began to sell himself. Oh, Ezra thought, he was very pretty indeed and what a lovely voice. And apparently he was a musician. William was going to be thrilled to finally have someone to play with. This was all turning out so much better than he could have hoped.

Chapter End Notes

Creepy! Hannibal is slightly creepy. And yay! Tobias! Here is how I imagine Will post Change.

Thanks for reading guys!
Tobias Budge was quite…different…from Hannibal, though that wasn’t necessarily a bad thing. Will tried his best not to fidget as his father fluttered about them, pouring tea and coffee, bringing out trays of freshly baked delights. He was almost as tall as Hannibal and most definitely another Dominant – but the similarities ended there, both in appearance and personality.

While Tobias had the same polite, well-educated drawl of a properly raised Roux he held himself completely different from Hannibal. He was looser (younger, according to his father) and more casual yet still somehow held the easy arrogance and confidence that seemed to go hand and hand with Dominant Roux-ga-Rouxs. He was a musician; teaching as well as making string instruments and Will had already been coaxed/bribed/forced into playing a short piece on the piano.

Tobias had been full of praise though Will did not know if he could believe it under the circumstances. Lunch drew on (a meal of gumbo and rice, supplemented with a woman who picked the wrong ‘faggot’ to attempt to draw back to the Lord’s side when Ezra had been shopping yesterday) and a heady sanguinaccio dolce gelato that Tobias had brought for dessert.

The gelato was delicious, a deep burgundy with the perfect mix of the sweetness of the chocolate and the salty tang of blood. As much as Will hated to admit it, his hesitation in eating what was put before him was growing less and less. He could not deny the increased hunger of his new body, nor that he had slept better (felt better, in every way) with his improved diet.

He wanted to hate himself, but as he led Tobias out onto the back porch for coffee and a breathtaking view of his garden and the back woods, Will couldn’t quite bring himself to. His father had stayed in the living room, sitting in a chair that gave him clear view of the porch and their activities and Will tried not to embarrass himself under the steady eyes of Tobias Budge.

“Do you like to garden, Mr. Graham?” Tobias asked as the silence had carried on.

“Um,” Will’s hands twitched at his side and he gave in to the urge to reach up and brush a curl – despite knowing it was too short to stay and the unruly thing bounced back immediately, bothering the shell of his ear once more. “Yes, I find it calming. Would you like a tour?”
Will’s garden was actually fairly extensive in the back. It was mostly flowers; a very large and well maintained rose garden that took up most of the left end. An equally maintained and far more rigorously segmented vegetable and herb garden took up the garden space to the right. In between the two was a small pond populated by the descendants of the various goldfishes Will had won/rescued from local fairs, and a far less planned out garden of various flowers. Most of it was still dormant, but still impressive.

Well. At least Will thought so.

The smile he was rewarded with was full and oddly took Will’s breath away, a blush warming across his cheeks and ears. “That would be lovely.”

He stuck his head into the house to inform his father of their plans and then helped Ezra move his tea and books out to the porch where he could watch them easier. A sharp whistle drew three of his dogs to him and Will stepped out into the morning sun, hoping he looked more confident than he felt.

To say he was nervous would be an understatement. Will was absolute shit at social interactions and he most certainly had no idea how he was supposed to approach a courting. The Submissive had a hard time thanking the baristas at the campus coffee shop, much less hold a conversation with the Roux that may be his mate!

But if he was being awkward, Tobias either didn’t notice or didn’t seem to mind. He followed Will around his garden at a respectful distance, asking questions out of what seemed a true, genuine interest. The Dominant admitted that he’d never tried his hand at gardening (apparently even the plotted plants at his home and shop struggled to maintain life) and seemed very impressed by Will’s healthy and thriving garden.

Will couldn’t deny that the praise and interest made something inside him glow. What’s more, Tobias’ questions seemed to help level him. Will had always done better when he could teach or lecture (hence his job) and the younger Roux found himself falling into a comfortable conversation as he explained each plant’s like and dislikes, future plans for expansions, and even the name of his goldfishes. Tobias politely asked how to keep his plants from dying and Will helped him the best he could from what little information the Dominant gave him about them.

“Ferns never enjoy being inside,” Will explained with a frown as he crouched down to tug up a new weed that must have popped up overnight. “They’re really meant for southern areas – hot places. They’re good for being on your back porch for the summer, but they don’t usually survive the winter and even inside they’re not happy. It’s the mites, but you can buy a spray – or just make it, actually; get a spray bottle and fill it with water, a few drops of dish soap and a tiny drop of alcohol – spray once a week and that should help kill them off.”

“It is a point of constant discussion between me and my friend, Franklyn. He is the one who usually gifts them to me. I’m very fond of him. If you take me up on a visit to my shop you’ll probably meet him.” Tobias paused, looking almost uncomfortable, and Will cocked his head to the side, curious as to what could make such a self-confident Dominant look so. “He is simple, but I’ve known him for many years and he has always tried to help me – as misguided as his attempts are. He is…Human, though. I hope that won’t be a problem.”

And just like that, the Submissive found himself warming, smiling despite himself as he dug in with his fingers to pull out some of the root that had broken off.

“It’s not a problem, Mr. Budge.” Will assured. “Alana is one of my best friends and she is a Human.”
“I feared I might be a bit too progressive.” Tobias admitted. “While I have no qualms in survival, I
do find myself admiring them. Music, in particular. It is hard for me to view them all as cattle when I
make my living off their gifts after all.”

“I don’t think there is anything wrong with that.” Will said as he placed the remains of the weed on
the grass to be collected later. If anything, it was refreshing to hear someone who felt anywhere
remotely close to what he himself did. While Hannibal had never said anything too decisive about
Humans in front of him one way or the other, the Submissive got the impression his own beliefs fell
closer to Ezra’s than Will’s.

He glanced up at the Dominant, ready to suggest some hardier plants that would fare well inside and
felt the words fade away. Something twisted in his stomach – the strong, gripping feeling he’d come
to know as physical interest – as he took in their positioning. Tobias had kept a polite distance, but
only just. He towered over Will; his body lean and tightly coiled and pure male. He stood close
even that with the light wind Will could smell his scent. It was spicier than Hannibal’s but no less
potent or virile and Will swallowed as he took in a deep inhale almost instinctively.

The move had not gone unnoticed by the Dominant and as he watched, Tobias’ eyes seemed to
sharpen, darken, and Will knew all at once what he must be seeing. An unmated Submissive,
prostrated on his knees before him, scenting and observing him so boldly. Will cleared his throat,
embarrassed at his own forwardness as he stood, wiping his hands on his pants in an attempt to hide
their shaking.

A handkerchief was offered and Will took it carefully, using it to clean off the dirt from his hands.
“I’ll wash it and return it.”

“Keep it,” Tobias offered, his keen eyes locked on Will’s nimble fingers as he carefully cleaned and
wiped them.

“I couldn’t possibly!”

“I insist. In fact, I can think of no better place for it to be.” Tobias drawled, eyes flickering up from
Will’s hands to his face, “a token, William.”

It was bold, almost terribly so. A token so early paired with the blatant use of his name before
permission was given had Will flushing at the Dominant’s gall. But it wasn’t unpleasant and Will had
been overly forward himself. He tucked the handkerchief into his pocket, mumbling a thank you. “…
would you like a warm up for your coffee?”

“That sounds lovely. Almost as lovely as you.”
The younger Roux felt himself blush even more. “Mr. Budge.”

“Tobias, please.”

“You are very forward.”

“Forgive me,” the Dominant said, a rueful smile on his face, “but I find it hard to contain myself in
your presence. You are much more than I ever dared to hope.”

“You don’t even know me!” Will protested but couldn’t deny the pleased, satisfied feeling in his
bones.

“Something I intend to remedy as soon as possible. Say you’ll come visit me at my shop.” Tobias
pressed, looking very handsome and youthful with a hopeful smile on his face, eyes bright with
excitement. “I’ll play something beautiful for you and your father, treat you to lunch at a wonderful Italian place across the street.”

“I’d have to check my schedule.” Will stuttered, clasping his hands behind his back as he glanced up at the porch. Ezra was watching them like a hawk, leaning on a support pillar. “And Daddy’s, but…I suppose that could happen.”

“This week?”

“I…yes, if I can. I…you are very bold.” Will said with a laugh, hands wringing behind him. He didn’t quite know if he liked it – but he certainly didn’t dislike it. It was just so very, very different from what he was used to.

“I’ll be waiting for you call.” Tobias offered him a card, “the bottom is my cellphone. Ring me at any time.”

Will took it almost shyly, eyes roaming over the bold type, memorizing everything on it in one sweep. He glanced back up at him and found Tobias staring at him intently, eyes roaming unabashedly over his face before focusing directly, without pretense, on Will’s lips.

“William! Mr. Budge!” His father’s sharp voice jolted them both from the moment, the younger Roux turning completely red as he spun on his heel and nearly fled back up the porch steps.

The lunch meeting with Tobias would have to wait, it would seem, as Sunday brought a trip to Hobbs’ hunting cabin with Jack. As usual his boss was unwilling to just let the case die, utterly convinced that Hobbs had a partner, either his now institutionalized wife or his deceased daughter. Will was fairly certain he hunted alone and told Jack as much. But as was what the Roux was beginning to realize was fairly par on course with the dominating Human’s personality, his opinion was ignored, just as it always was if it did not line up with Jack’s.

Then there had been his dreadful Tuesday class, where his poor misguided students failed from the start to see the lesson he was trying to teach them. Will hadn’t really done anything to catch Hobbs; it had all been dumb luck and mistakes on the part of the Human. That was the lesson – with any hunt, luck played a major part.

And then the ambush after class. The not so subtle directive to go and talk to someone about the emotional ramifications of his slaying of Hobbs or face being shelved once more and lose this new opportunity to get back into the field. It was clear that Alana didn’t want him back out there, just as obvious as it was that Jack wanted him there.

But what did Will want?

He wasn’t sure. A large part of the Submissive wanted it. For as long as he could remember being out in the field – hunting and catching Humans who broke their own laws – was the only source of release Will had for his pent up instincts. The only way to stretch his legs as a Roux, just as he had with Hobbs, and that short sprint had been invigorating. What’s more, Will honestly did feel a strong urge to stop these terrible men and women, to save the Humans from themselves.

And the tastes they gave him…the momentary lapse into the murder’s world of bright emotions had for years been the only way the Roux had ever been able to feel anything. But was that still true? Was that still true now? Did he still need that sort of work to achieve those feelings? Will thought of his father and the sweet, familiar comfort of his companionship. Of Hannibal and Tobias and the feelings they invoked in him. Of the feel of his own hands upon himself, of the bright pleasures he’d
found and took from his own body...of the perfect feeling of an orgasm and the itching need for more.

The time for denial was over. Will was a different person from who he’d been only a few weeks ago. His life was different, brighter and fuller, more compelling now that it was no longer cast in the colors of self-isolation and starvation. It was just...even if these things felt right they were so different from anything he’d ever imagined for himself! They went against anything he thought he’d ever wanted before. In fact, some of it was dead against beliefs about himself that Will had held onto tightly for years, using his convictions to deny both his father and his own desires.

It was disorienting, that everything had changed so quickly, and he wasn’t sure if he should be panicking more about the fact that he wasn’t panicking.

Will let his fingers trace over the leather spines of Hannibal’s books, trailing over titles in different languages and on more subjects than he’d thought would be in a psychiatrist’s office. Ezra had things he’d needed done in town so he’d driven Will into work this morning to save on gas and had intended to pick him up. So when Jack had pressed (and Alana had shamelessly begged) him to go to Hannibal’s to be evaluated, he’d allowed Alana to drive him over and immediately called his father to come chaperon.

Will had immediately removed himself to the loft upon arrival much to Alana's displeasure, and while he knew his friend thought it was a thinly veiled attempt to keep from engaging in conversation with Dr. Lecter, it was in reality to maintain a proper amount of space between them while they waited for Ezra to arrive. Things had been pleasant enough, though Will could tell his presence had alarmed Hannibal, the elder Roux keeping Alana for a long moment before she finally excused herself.

He could feel the weight of the Dominant’s eyes on his form from where he stood below and did his damnest to ignore the prickly sensation it gave him. Will had entered this whole thing – the Change, courtship – with no small amount of derision. But now that he’d found himself wading deeper into his new found majority and courted by two Dominants that Will was willing to admit – at the very least – caused a deep reaction on a biological level, he just wasn’t so sure what he wanted anymore.

Courting brought mating and mating...well, mating brought children. He’d never thought he’d be interested in having a child, or any of the madness it required but now...mating was no longer some strange, faceless concept to him. Tobias seemed charming and the unknowns about him – the potential of what could be – was incredibly intriguing to the Submissive. And Hannibal...Will’s fingers hitched on a title (The Evolution of Human Sexuality by Donald Symons) before forcing himself to move on.

Will sighed, leaning against the railing, his back to the open part of the room and glanced down at the flat expanse of his belly. He tried to picture himself gravid, swollen and heavy with child. His mind conjured images of a tiny boy with claret eyes and curly blond hair and a dark skinned, dark eyed beauty at the same moment. Will felt himself shudder as his imagination ran even wilder, Hannibal’s scent bringing into sharp relief the memory of the night they’d shared a room, and of the dreams he’d had of the blond fucking him into that cheap bed. Will’s insides twisted as his buttocks tightened, his hole clenching down on the imagined phantom of a cock.

“Are you alright, William?”

Will jumped at the sound of Hannibal’s voice, letting out a gasp as he stepped away from the railing guilty. The Dominant was directly below him, eyes intense as he stared up at him and Will was overly aware of the slight dampness between his cheeks.
“Yes.” He managed, swallowing harshly, “just a little thirsty.”

“Of course.” Hannibal said, crossing the room in a few steps and disappearing into a back room. He reappeared a few moments later, several bottles of water in his hand. Will cursed his own lie as it meant one of them had to draw closer. “Forgive me, it was quite remiss of me not to offer you something earlier.”

“Think nothing of it,” Will murmured, carefully not meeting the Dominant’s eyes as he approached, keeping them locked on the patterned wood beneath his feet. He accept the bottle of water, taking a long, unnecessary swig of it.

“You seem distressed.” Hannibal observed quietly.

“I…” …was busy imagining you fucking a baby in me…”was just thinking about this whole thing.”

“The evaluation? I’ve passed you, if you’re worried.”

Will snorted, leaning against the railing as he took another sip of his water. “The evaluation, going back into the field. Everything.”

“If you wish to talk, Will, I’m more than willing to listen.” Hannibal offered and Will glanced at him wearily, but found nothing except earnestness.

“I never wanted to mate.” He admitted, staring at his scuffed shoes, wondering if he’d somehow offend Hannibal with this line of thinking. “I never wanted children or a family. I didn’t even like to hunt. And,” Will sighed, “I still don’t want to hunt, but now…”

A gentle probe of, “but now?” was offered as he fell silent again.

“I…I mean, I…” The Submissive bit his lip, looking to the side so Hannibal’s face was removed from even his peripheral. “Before the Change I had no interest in any of this. I used to know what I wanted, I mean kinda knew what I wanted. And now I find myself wanting things I never did before, things I never planned on.”

“You were, quite literally, a child before the Change.” Hannibal said gently. “You have spent much of your time alone with Humans, but you are not like them. Is a ten year old expected to have all his goals and dreams cemented into certainty? Human priorities change as they age. Though our process may be more drastic, we are no different.”

“I feel like I’m changing into something that I don’t understand.”

“Change is never easy, especially in this. As Roux we live so long as adults before we actually physical mature that such a shift in priorities as what you’re experiencing can be overwhelming, even frightening. I know it was disturbing for me—”

And here Will could not help but scoff, because it was very hard to imagine Hannibal off put or frightened by anything,

“I assure you it was.” The Dominant said wryly, turning until he mirrored Will’s position facing the bookcases. “Like you, I spent most of my teenage years living amongst humans and apart from my caregiver. I had little interest in mating or starting a family. I had…other plans…for my life.”

Something dark flashed across Hannibal’s face. It was only a split second and had he not been staring embarrassingly intensely at the blond’s face he would have missed it completely. There was a story there, Will knew, something unpleasant and he had to bite his lip and look away again to keep
“And suddenly within a week of my Change the only thing I knew for sure was that my previous goals and aspirations were no longer adequate. Years of planning nearly useless. Such a sudden shift was distressing for me, as I am sure it is for you. But William,” he looked over to find the older Roux watching him earnestly, “as I said before, I have every confidence that you’ll be just fine.”

Will chewed his bottom lip in thought, turning until he was facing the other Roux. “Do you really believe that?”

There was no hesitation as he turned to face him. “I do.”

And that was - oddly - very reassuring to Will and he gave the Dominant a small smile that was returned. It was then that Will noticed they'd drawn closer again. Just like before, the space between them seemed to have shrunk without either realizing it, and Hannibal’s hand on the banister was close enough that Will could feel its warmth on his own. The Submissive knew he needed to step back, restore a proper distance, but couldn’t bring himself to move. Hannibal’s free hand twitched by his side and for one wild moment Will thought he was going to reach out and pull him even closer or perhaps just touch him - to stroke his face or hair - but it only curled into a light fist by his side and Will was stunned at the strength of his disappointment.

His own hand slid forward as if with a mind of its own, closing the tiny gap, and Will bit his lip at the feel of Hannibal’s skin pressed against his own. Even such a light touch felt electric, as if he was hyperaware of every nerve ending from where his forefinger rested against Hannibal’s.

The Dominant’s breath caught, the soft sound somehow echoing in the empty office, his entire body tense. The burn of skin on skin increased as Hannibal’s finger pressed into his own, the fleshy pad of his forefinger brushing over top his nail. Will’s heart felt oddly heavy as it beat an uneven pattern in his chest and his eyes dropped to half mass as the finger grew bolder and slid up to the soft flesh below his knuckle with slow, circular movements.

The damp sensation – so conveniently forgotten during their discussion – made itself known again and Will fought the urge to give himself away and shift uncomfortably at the feel of it. But there was no denying the arousal in his gut, nor the way that it spiked as he slid his own finger forward and underneath the exploring digit, trapping it between his fore and middle finger. A thumb slid up the cradle of Will’s, dipping against the soft, tender flesh of his palm and Will felt his eyes flutter slightly as he let out a nearly silent gasp, overwhelmed by the feel of it all.

The sound of the office door opening and closing had them both breaking away from each other abruptly and Will was horrified to find himself half hard and completely flushed as his father entered loudly, calling out to them both from the waiting room.

“You’ll be the death of me, William.” Hannibal said quietly, voice low and strained in a way that did nothing to calm Will, as he straightened his tie with deft fingers - fingers that he knew now were calloused and big and so, so warm.

And as Will ran a shaky hand against his mouth, struggling to pull himself together before facing an already suspicious sounding Ezra, the younger Roux couldn’t help but agree.

Chapter End Notes
Did you like ballsy little Tobias? He certainly figured out his angle. Next chapter will have a lot of him. Did I manage to get anyone hot with my Victorian-esqe foreplay of ::dramatic gasp:: finger touching? Will's a terrible flirt with both of them, dirty boy. He's just a big ol' ball of hormones. Also, Ezra takes his job as cockblock very seriously. No hand holding or prolonged staring under his watch!
Visiting: Improvement on Earlier Calls

Chapter Summary

And with those words, for what would be most likely the only time in Franklyn Froideveaux’s pathetic existence, he had garnered Hannibal’s full attention and the Human knew it, leaning forward eagerly in his seat.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait, guys. My laptop was thrown across the room by a crazy woman (family, gotta love them) and I'm still waiting for the new one to show up. Sigh. My mom's going through some issues and things have seriously sucked lately. I don't live at home, so that helps, but the ten minutes I do show up she destroys my $800 laptop.

Things have been seriously shitty.

So I wrote to cheer myself up, entirely on my phone, so I'm sorry about any mistakes, I'll re-read it a lot tonight to try and catch any weird auto-corrections it may have done or my natural typos.

Enjoy.

Betaed by Felicia.

Three weeks passed in a blur for Will. Work was very busy as they were approaching the end of the semester and the stress of final papers, presentations, and exams had the Roux on edge. It didn't help that Jack had been absolutely insistent that Hobbs had help, either from his daughter or wife. But as Abigail was dead and Francine Hobbs had experienced a complete mental break, sliding deeply into a PTSD induced catatonia, there was little hope of getting answers. Still, the domineering human had insisted, bullying Will and Alana into visiting the tragic Mrs. Hobbs in an attempt to get something. There was nothing to be caught though, even by Will's abilities. When he stared into the eyes of Francine Hobbs all he saw was a blank slate, like a freshly washed blackboard or a pane of glass. The poor woman was truly gone.

When they'd returned answerless and the autopsy showed no anomalies in Abigail Hobbs, the Roux had thought his boss was going to have a conniption fit right there in his office. It was what it was however, and with no evidence Jack had finally been forced to give up his witch hunt. That topped with the fact that neither of the 'Greek Alphabet Murders' (seriously? The press had no imagination now days) had any leads, that meant long, blissful weeks without the agent's heavy handed presence in his life. With Jack off his back, Will had thrown himself into his teaching, writing and re-writing his exams till all hours of the night. His days were spent with makeup lectures, study sessions, and arguing with the Academy over whether or not his essays questions were 'too vague.'

And then there were the Dominants.
Will had been seeing both twice a week; Hannibal on Wednesday and Friday under the guise of a therapy session, Tobias on Tuesday and Thursday at the shop, were he was teaching Will how to further his piano skills. The first week it had only been one visit, but Will found himself actually wanting to spend more time with his suitors. Hannibal was so clever, so handsome and gentle. And Tobias...he was so wild and carefree, mature but somehow still with the fae-ness of childhood. He spent hours with each, talking and learning what he could, all under the watchful gaze of his father. Ezra had hardly left his side now that there was an established visiting schedule and Will didn't know if he was disappointed or relieved by that.

The Chardophone String Shop was modest enough despite what was most likely a truly intimidating rent, housed in a brownstone and painted with dull greens and blues. String instruments hung from the walls, filling the rooms with the most distinctive smell - Will had never smelt anything like it before. The upstairs was Tobias' personal apartment, while the bottom floor held several show and playing rooms, as well as a modest kitchen. There was a basement (and the Submissive had found that place very interesting indeed) where Tobias made his own 'catgut' strings. When he'd first shown his workshop to Will, the younger Roux had run the still lax strings through his fingers, head cocked to the side. He knew that it was Human intestines Tobias was selling and despite himself, Will was not only impressed but amused by the thought that Humans were playing their own kind without realizing it.

The little bell above the door rang pleasantly as the two Roux stepped in, Ezra debasing a car that had splashed a dirty puddle across his legs in flawless, angry French. Will nodded as he listened, occasionally throwing in a statement himself. His French was a little rusty and so his father had begun to demand they speak it more. Honestly, he was surprised at how quickly it all came back to him once he started using it every day. The sounds of a viola - slow and almost uncertain - filled the space.

Ezra was still muttering to himself, a handkerchief pulled out from God know's where as he dabbed at the stained khakis, and Will took the moment to wander deeper into the shop. He settled against the glass display counter, watching shamelessly as a nine year old struggled through the music, her instrument almost comically big on her. It was clear that the girl was having issues, her little features scrunched up in frustration as she pressed the toes of her Mary Jane's into the floor. Tobias was pointing to the notes with one hand, the other occasionally correcting the bow's positioning. After a moment the girl let out a cry, whipping the viola from her shoulder so quickly Will thought she was going to throw it.

"I can't do it, Mr. Budge! The concert is in two weeks and I'm going to sound so...so...stupid!"

"Yes you can," Tobias soothed, taking the instrument from her and setting it on a stand and the Submissive watched, intrigued, as he set about calming the girl. Will felt a strange tug at his stomach as he watched the scene, feeling a small smile grow on his face as the older Roux gentled the girl. After a few moments he had her smiling again, abet it was a teary, wobbly one. He patted her on the shoulder. "We'll just double your appointments, shall we? I won't even make you pay. I promise I won't let you look like a fool up there."

"Thank you, Mr. Budge." There was a honk from outside and the girl leapt up, fumbling to put her instrument back in its case. Tobias watched, clearly amused, before helping the girl into her rain boots and slicker, carefully buttoning it up under her chin and pulling the hood up. Will felt the fond feeling grow at the sight of him worrying over the child. He would have never guessed that Tobias was good with kids. The girl ran past them and out the door, disappearing into a waiting BMW.
"You were very good with her," Will praised as Tobias came to join him, feeling the butterflies in his stomach intensify at the warm smile he was given.

"I adore children of all kinds." Tobias said, stepping into the kitchen and reappearing a moment later with a tray. "Coffee, or Cocoa if you prefer, to combat this horrible damp."

The Submissive couldn't help the wide grin on his face as he spotted his favorite type of cookies as well. "I'll take coffee, thank you, black. Daddy?"

From where he was still trying to salvage his damaged pants, Ezra looked up, frowning heavily. "Hm? Oh, either's fine. Tobias my dear, I hate to be a bother but do you have a washroom I can use?"

"Of course," Tobias answered, setting the tray down and stepping out from behind the counter partition. "What happened here?"

Will fought a snigger as his father launched into the transgressions of the 'idiotic deer driving a raised Jeep in downtown Baltimore,' his spirited voice carrying just fine through the walls as he was led into the back of the store. He poured himself and his father a cup and after a moment of long hesitation, poured one for Tobias too. The Dominant appeared a moment later, looking highly amused, and Will felt himself blush as Tobias' eyebrows rose in pleased surprise at the sight of his filled cup.

"Very kind of you, Will." He said, voice so smooth that it sent a shiver down Will's spine. "How have you been since we last talked?"

"Busy." He answered after taking a sip, sighing at the familiar caress of caffeine. He let his hips cock, resting one against the counter. "School is winding down - which means the start of my mad rush to get grades and performance reviews in on time. And Sadie isn't acting right."

Sadie was one of Will's newer dogs, and found her wandering a deserted highway late at night a few months ago, just before he found Winston. She was a good dog, highly intelligent and quick to take to commands, just like most Border Collies. And just like most of her breed, she was a bundle of barely restrained energy. But lately she was listless, sluggish even, and seemed to have taken to curling up in front of the space heater he kept in his barren fireplace rather than going on walks or leaving the house. With all the stress with Hobbs and work, Will had only noticed it in the last week or so and it was very distressing for him.

A Submissive's dogs was their first (and in the worst case scenario, last) line of defense. Not only did they alert Will to any trespassers on his property, dogs were one of the few animals that activity recognized (or at least responded to) Roux-ga-Roux. Should a challenger or an unwanted Dominant come near his house, Will was confident that his dogs would react in such a distinctive manner that he would know instantly.

It was one of the reasons why he was so uncomfortable with the fact that his father had none at the moment; when Ezra’s pack had died off of old age he’d refused to get any new dogs. “I’m old, bunny,” Ezra had said dismissively more than once during their phone calls, “no one’s going to bother with an old man like me.”

But there was more to it than just protection. Raising a healthy, obedient pack was a sign of good instincts and a strong will in Submissives, both of which were required in ample quantities to raise their rambunctious young.
"Is she eating?" Tobias asked, frowning.

"Yes, her appetite is the same it’s always been. I've got a vet appointment for her this evening it's just - I should have noticed sooner. With work being so busy and Jack..." Will shook his head, feeling horrible, "I should have noticed before now."

What if something was really wrong? If he lost Sadie because he let Jack and the Academy run him ragged (and, if he was honest with himself, rather let himself get caught up with thoughts of Dominants) Will would never forgive himself.

“I’m sure Sadie will be fine, Will.” He glanced up and flushed at the look the other Roux was giving him, rich sable eyes bright as they watched him. “After all, she has you looking after her. A very lucky girl indeed. Tell me,” there was the softest of tugs against a fly away curl, “what must I do to get you to speak of me with such care?”

“Tobias…” Will breathed out as fingertips dared contact, brushing against his cheek in a touch so light he barely felt it.

“I would give you the world if you wished it, Will.” Tobias said, voice low with deep-seated interest. “I would give you so much more.”

They were leaning into each other, so close that Ezra would have a fit if he found them like this, but Tobias drew even closer until he was nearly crowding Will into the counter. His breath smelled like the thick, bitter-sweet Turkish coffee they were drinking and it mixed so wonderfully with his natural scent that Will felt light headed.

“All you have to do is ask,” Tobias continued softly, his eyes flickering down to Will’s mouth before slowly, languidly, drawing up to meet his eyes. “William, I-”

The front door slammed open with an excited shout of Tobias’ name, starting the Submissive so badly that he spilt his coffee with a yelp of surprise, the hot drink a momentary spike of stinging pain.

“Tobias! I…oh…” A short, portly Human stood at the door, his face shifting from excited to confused to suspicious in a short handful of moments. “You have company. A student?”

Tobias’ mouth twitched, the only sign of his irritation at being interrupted, before stepping away from Will and turning to face the man. “No, not a student. Will, this is Franklyn Froideveaux-”

“...his best friend.” Franklyn finished, setting a package on a nearby table before offering a hand. Will took it, trying not grimace at the sweaty skin against his own. “And you are?”

“William Graham.” Tobias said, “a friend of mine.”

“A friend?” Franklyn asked, looking distressed, “I’ve never met him before.”

“Will usually eats with me on days when your class runs over.”

And now the Human looked completely worried and Will pushed back against the counter, eyes locked firmly on the man’s scuffed shoes, feeling incredibly awkward.

“Every week?”
“Is that a problem?” Tobias’ voice was edged, though Franklyn didn’t seem to notice it.

"Oh no, of course not. It’s just…you know, thought you would have said something. Well you would have if he was important.”

Tobias stiffened, his frown fierce as he glared down at his friend and now Will was feeling very awkward. Before the moment could spiral even more out of control, the Roux’s cell phone rang and he nearly fumbled, he pulled it out so fast. He had never been so relieved to see Jack Crawford’s number in his life. They had another homicide, a serial killer, who apparently had buried his victims alive in the woods. Will had been glad to leave the shop, nearly pulling a startled Ezra out and into the car, more willing to listen to his father’s ranting about rudeness as they drove to meet Jack than have to stay in that situation a moment later.

Things had been going so well – with Hannibal and Tobias, that is – that Will had almost forgotten how utterly terrible he was at any kind of social interaction. He wondered if he had somehow misread what had happened, as Franklyn had acted more like a spurned lover than a friend. While their kind was known to have dalliances with Humans, it was rare and Franklyn’s scent had been clean of Tobias’. So he must have read that wrong. Sighing, Will pressed his head against the cold window.

“You’ll still take Sadie to the vet for me?”

“You should be going.” Ezra said sharply in disapproval, but nodded with a sigh. “Of course I will.”

“You’ll call me right after, right?”

“Yes,” his father turned on his blinker and carefully merged through traffic, “but bunny, I’m fairly certain I already know what’s wrong.”

Will straightened in his seat as if struck, head snapping to stare at his father. “What?”

“Sweetie, Sadie’s unspayed.”

He sputtered, face turning red. “She’s…she’s…”

His father hummed, “you never got Bull fixed. Either it was him or…it doesn’t really matter, nature does as she wishes.”

“I would have noticed!”

“Not necessarily. Queenie got the jump on me with a litter once; some dogs don’t show much. I reckon she’s about two weeks to her due date.”

Will was at a loss. He’d already promised Jack that he’d go to the scene, but all he wanted to do was go home and check on his girl. He let out a soft sound of distress, gripping the fabric of his seatbelt.

“Oh don’t look like that, bunny. She’ll be fine.”

“How can she be fine? She hasn’t been to any vet checkups and – and I’ve not got her on a special diet or vitamins or anything!” The younger Submissive cried out, feeling even worse.
"Dogs have been doing this for thousands of years without our help. Sadie’s at least six – that’s a good age, she’ll be a good mother. And if she’s not we’ll step in and show her how to do it. This is a wonderful thing, Will. Birth is always a wonderful thing."

“How long have you known?” Will asked accusingly.

“I only notice a few days ago, but I wasn’t sure until last night.” Ezra said evenly as he pulled into the Starbucks were they’d be meeting Jack.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Will demanded, eyes narrowed angrily. That was a whole eighteen hours that he could have been handling this!

“Don’t you take that tone with me,” his father warned, voice still controlled but not without a sharp bite, “they’re not my dogs, they’re yours; your responsibility.”

“I’ve been busy and-”

“You will always be busy.” Ezra interrupted as he parked, turning to look at his son. “If there is one thing in this world that is true, my boy, it is that you will never be ready when life decides it is time for you to move on.”

He gave his father a flat look. “We’re not talking about Sadie anymore, are we?”

“You’ve been visiting for nearly four weeks, Will. You must declare one or both with your favor so we may move on to courting.”

Will groaned, unbuckling his seatbelt as Jack’s black sedan pulled in. “Look, I’ve got to go. Can we talk about this later?”

Ezra did not look impressed.

“I’ll be home as soon as I can and I promise, we can talk about this then.” He threw his father a pleading look. “Just…please look after Sadie for me? I’m really worried; what if something’s wrong with the pups because we didn’t know?”

The older Roux’s face softened, leaning over to press a loving kiss to Will’s cheek. “I will, darling. Now go, try to have some fun.”

Will shot him an incredulous look. “It’s a mass grave, Daddy.”

Ezra shrugged. "Doesn't mean you can't have a little fun."

"Daddy!" Will giggled, his laughter caught somewhere between humor and disbelief.

Hannibal hadn’t seen Will in nearly a week due to his current case. Five days and thirteen hours to be precise. His grip flexed around the pen in his hand. Hannibal had grown used to having Will’s scent scattered across his office, reinforced with their biweekly meeting so that it never truly faded. Without it, the Roux found it hard to concentrate and despite how confident he had been in their match, even Hannibal was surprised by how much his thoughts drifted to the Submissive. He wondered about Will as he cooked, thought of him in sessions, dreamt of the Roux during the night. How many nights had Hannibal awoken, rutting into his mattress? Forced to finish himself like some
The Dominant felt vaguely irritated by it all though his current patient, Franklyn Froideveaux, could hardly tell how unsettled and irked the Roux was. Hannibal was half tempted to hunt down the killer and be done with it. At least then their wouldn't be any distractions and the courting could proceed.

“-and now he has a new friend!”

“Franklyn,” Hannibal said calmly as he continued to work on a new dessert idea that he believed would properly cater to both Submissives sweet teeth, “we’ve talked about this before. Tobias is allowed to have his own friendships outside of you, just as you are. In fact, we have discussed many times about you finding additional companionship. It is unhealthy to rely so much on one individual.”

Franklyn perked up. “So would you go to dinner with me, then?”

Hannibal frowned as he looked up at his patient; the Human was so predictable it was tiring. “We have had this conversation before, Franklyn. It is inappropriate for me to socialize outside of this office. What about the book club you were thinking of joining?”

He tched, “it didn’t work out. You don’t understand, Dr. Lecter. You’re…well, you! Tobias is my best friend, I can’t lose him to some upstart. He’s been having him over for lunch for weeks! He never said a word about it to me!”

Hannibal sighed, placing his notebook aside and clasping his arms over his crossed legs.

“I mean, Tobias says that he comes to visit with his father, but still!” Franklyn huffed, crossing his arms in a truly ridiculously petulant manner. “I’m being replaced by some pod person. Do you know he and his father looked exactly the same? I mean a total clone.” Hannibal’s grip tightened slightly around his fingers, eyes narrowing. “He didn’t even look at me, the rude bugger. I googled him, you know, and there was some seriously crazy stuff. He’s some hot shot criminal profiler or something, wrote a lot of books.”

Hannibal took a minute breath, nostrils flaring.

“And the way they were standing when I came in…let’s just say they looked pretty damn cozy for only knowing each other for a few weeks. And you know that Tobias doesn’t take my feelings seriously. He told me to leave it alone, but how can I? I know you don’t approve but this is a serious problem for me, Doctor!”

“When you say ‘cozy’-”

“I mean all but making out!”

And with those words, for what would be most likely the only time in Franklyn Froideveaux’s pathetic existence, he had garnered Hannibal’s full attention and the Human knew it, leaning forward eagerly in his seat.

“I see you are very worried about this.” Hannibal mused casually, “and while I do believe it is still vital for you to expand your social circle, this Tobias…?”

“Budge, he runs a music shop downtown.” Franklyn offered eagerly.
“Perhaps I could go down and talk to Mr. Budge – only with your tacit approval, of course – and see if I can’t try and explain things from a perspective that he can understand.”

Or rip his beating heart out, the Dominant thought darkly. The thought of another near what was his made something primal and dark – dark even for Hannibal – grow in his chest. To think that this… Tobias…would dare to put his hands on his Submissive-

“That would be wonderful, oh that would be so wonderful! Will you really? Of course you will!” Franklyn chattered happily, utterly unaware of the dangerous atmosphere that had descended around them, “you’re a man of your word, after all! Here, I’ll just write down the address, shall I?”

“Yes,” the Roux drawled with a sharp smile, “that would be very helpful.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh, I needed some good old fashion 'to woo the girl' type of romance to cheer me up. Like I said, I've been writing from my phone, so sorry for that. The next chapter should be up (god willing) tomorrow or the day after.

Btw, a lot of these titles are taken from these cute little Victorian-era cards that tell a story about dating. They're so cute!

In case any of you were wondering, I did some hardcore guessing of Will's dogs breeds (along with naming them).

Bear: American Staffordshire Terrier/Pitbull Mix, brown, M.
Bull: German Shepard/Pitbull, all white with tan patch on eye, M.
Sadie: Border Collie, Black Tri-color, F.
Winston: Chow Chow/Australian Shepard Mix, brown, M.
Louie: Tibetan Spaniel/Pekinese, white with overbite, M.
Buster: Jack Russel Terrier/Beagle Mix, Beagle coloring M.
Stella: Bichon Frise/Maltese, curly white, F.
Visiting: In Which Favors are Given

Chapter Summary

“Now, now. Behave.” He kicked the woman onto her side, eyes fierce and features twisted into a hateful sneer. “You’ve hurt my bunny’s feelings and caused quite bit of trouble-”

Chapter Notes

Again, typed on my phone. Hopefully I caught everything I could. Will keep re-reading it.

Now betaed by Felicia.

Warnings for smut and fluff (here's your Hannigram, I missed it too) and violence.

Thanks so much for your guys kudos and comments, really helped cheer me up.

Will sat awake in his bed, hands folded over his waist as he stared up the ceiling. The soft breathing of Sadie filled the room, the pregnant bitch tucked happily away in the whelping box that Ezra and Will had made her. Her impending delivery made Will nervous, as the Submissive was busy with finals week and the new case. He frowned. This new killer was proving to be slightly difficult; it was hard to get a complete read on him. There was a soft sigh from where the box was resting at the foot of Will’s bed and the Roux smiled, letting the thoughts of work drift away as he thought of his dog.

Sadie had a week or so left before she was to deliver. The vet had assured them that she was in good health, with a large litter resting in her belly, and would probably experience an easy birth as there were signs this was not her first time carrying. They'd offered to board her for the delivery, but it was traditional that a Submissive hand deliver his pack and so Will had politely declined.

The whelping box had been painstakingly built; the wood had been sanded and stained until it was as smooth as silk, with porcelain tiles that would be easy to clean up, and contained two compartments. The largest one was for Sadie and the pups to lay in, while the second was a narrow exercise area. It was topless, its smooth sides just large enough to keep puppies in but not hinder Sadie. It was lined with blankets and a dog bed at the moment, but it would be replaced with newspaper for the actual birthing.

Now that he knew she was healthy and safe, he was filled with rarely felt excitement, and it bled out into every aspect of his life. Alana and Beverly had already laid claim to a puppy each, but whether it was because they caught up in Will’s joyous fervor or just so pleased to see him happy that they took them to keep his mood up, the Roux didn’t know. He didn’t care either. He knew the puppies would do well in each house.

Hannibal had given him a kit with everything Will would need for the birth; scissors, iodine,
unwaxed dental floss to tie of the umbilical cords, absorbent pads, and a doggy thermometer, as well as offering his services. The idea of the elegant doctor on his knees, birthing puppies made Will endlessly amused. And Tobias had given him a gift card to two different dog boutiques, each of an obscene amount.

In the last week, Sadie had begun to show. Her nipples had become more defined, growing darker and larger, and her belly had begun to really sag for the first time. And the best part? If Will pressed his hands to her stomach, he could feel the pups kicking and moving about inside. Each little squirm sent Will over the moon. His father was right; watching Sadie swell with new life was a magical, wonderful thing.

He still felt nervous about being a father but now, as he felt the growing excitement and anticipation of Sadie’s pups – of trying to predict the genders and coat colors, of picking out names – instead of thinking of the terrors of failing a child, Will began to think of what he could offer them. He had so much to teach and with Ezra’s help surely he wouldn’t screw up too badly; his father had been wonderful with him. Roux-ga-Roux were naturally very attentive parents and both Dominants would make good fathers, Will could tell.

Will sighed, pressing his palms flat against his stomach and for the first time in his life felt something inside him twist with want. He could never have imagined wanting this, yet watching Sadie made something inside him fill with a deep craving. What would it be like, Will wondered, to feel those movements in his own stomach and to know that it was his baby? A little creature, made half of Will and half of…

Will bit his lip as he felt himself harden in his boxers, his cock filling out from where it was pressed against his thigh. How would Will look with a belly full of a child? He tried to picture the baby. What would a mix of Will and Hannibal look like? A mix of him and Tobias? Would it be a Dominant, a little man who would spend his time conquering and possessing? Or maybe a sweet little Submissive, who would coyly charm all of his teachers and classmates?

He let out a groan as he slid his boxers around his thighs, eyes closing as he squeezed and petted himself. Lubricant was already beginning to drip from him, making his cheeks slide against one another as he shifted and quivered into his own touch. Will imagined himself completely swollen, imagined running his hands over a distended stomach and feeling his little one reach out to him from inside, and pumped his length harder as his arousal amplified at the thoughts.

Will twisted, panting, and rolled onto his belly. He had quickly found that prostrating himself like this – on his knees with his weight on his shoulders – was his favorite position. He didn’t know why, but it was the most fulfilling to masturbate in. He whined, mouthing at the pillow to mute himself as he slid his fingers into himself.

His womb seem to throb, his insides quivering with lust, and as always there was the demanding ache deep inside – far too deep for Will to ever reach with his fingers, no matter how desperately he tried. The Submissive knew that only a Dominant could ever reach it, the curve of his cock would fill him until it was locked inside, pressed against the mouth of his womb. Only then would it leave him.

Will shuddered, thrusting back on his fingers at the thought of it. He tried to imagine what it would feel like, to have something alive and warm inside him, filling him in all the ways he needed. His mind flashed through images of Hannibal and Tobias thrusting into him, fucking him so completely that there was no way that Will could not be pregnant.

The image shifted, altered, and suddenly he was seeing himself heavy with child as he was fucked; his Dominant’s cockhead kissing the thick mucus plug that sealed the mouth and protected their
baby, desperate to fill him despite already achieving that goal. His orgasm was so close, yet Will couldn’t reach it and he squirmed and rocked, whimpering as tried to coax it out. Despite the newness of the act, Will had gotten to know his body increasingly well, hardly able to keep his hands off himself for more than a few days at a time. Will opened his eyes in frustrated despair, glaring unhappily at nothing even as his hands worked frantically.

Then his eyes fell onto the hairbrush.

And Will considered.

He’d never put anything inside himself besides his fingers before, but the Submissive found himself growing even hotter at the idea, slick leaking down his thighs. He reached out, shivering as he wrapped his palm around the thick, round handle and the no-slip plastic grip. Will took a deep breath, shoring his courage, and slid the brush between his legs. He hesitated only a moment against his swollen and open pucker – and then slid it inside.

Will’s body bowed, nearly concave at the feel of it, and whined loudly. It was as if his hands had a mind of their own, because while he was still too overwhelmed to think they began thrusting the brush in and out, pressing it so far in the bristles brushed teasingly over his ass. If a brush handle felt this good, a cock would have to feel even better, and the thrusts became almost violent with the thought.

In the end, Will didn't even need to touch his cock to come. The brush alone was enough, his mind half convincing his body that it was Hannibal or Tobias behind him, and just that thought had him locking down on the intrusion so tightly in orgasm, he found he couldn’t even move it any longer.

Will collapsed into a pool of his own slick and barren seed, breathing and shaking so hard that the young Roux felt he would fly apart. Though it made him feel perverted, he left the brush in. It felt so wonderful to be full and Will pulled the covers up over himself, eyes already shutting in exhaustion.

When Will came to his appointments, he made sure there at least ten minutes before as Hannibal preferred, so to eliminate any chance of patients running into each other. There were two entrances to his office; one that lead to a waiting room and one that was solely used as an exit, but both lead to the same hallway. Hannibal’s work space took up nearly the entirety of the third floor of the impressive building, with only a narrow hallway, what appeared to be a janitors closet, and the elevator not a part of it.

But today he’d come nearly a hour early, frustrated by the lack of advancement in the case and with the hopes of catching Hannibal without a patient. Will had tried to show up on the half-hour with the hope of arriving before the end of an appointment, but the Roux found himself stepping off the elevator at the same moment the exit door opened. It revealed Hannibal and to his great surprise, Franklyn Froideveaux.

The man was standing very close to the Dominant, seemingly unwilling to leave even as Hannibal lead him out into the hallway.

“...get tickets to new musicals, so if you change your mind, you can let...me...” Franklyn’s face grew darker at the sight of Will, “...know.”

“William.” Hannibal greeted affectionately, looking genuinely pleased by his arrival before frowning at Ezra's absence, “you are early, is everything alright?”

“Yes, nothing like that.” Will said, bringing a hand to rub at his neck sheepishly, “I was hoping to get your perspective on a few things...but, I didn’t think this out. I should have called first or
something, you’re probably busy and I can just leave and come back later at our time, or-

“Nonsense,” The Dominant interrupted smoothly, “I just so happen to be free for the next hour.” Franklyn looked horrified and Will shifted on his feet, confused and bewildered at the chances of running into the strange man again.

“If you’re sure, I’d hate to impose.”

“Of course.” Hannibal assured, gesturing towards the office. “A visit from a friend is hardly an imposition. Franklyn, I will see you at our next appointment, do try to-”

“You two know each other?” Franklyn asked, sounding both aghast and disappointed, his voice a strange pitch. “Doctor, this is-”

“Franklyn, have a pleasant evening. William, come.” The younger Roux moved past the gawking man, head bowed and uncomfortable, and stepped into the office. He couldn’t even pretend what he felt was anything but naked relief when the door clicked behind him.

“Are you alright?” Hannibal inquired and Will glanced up to find the Dominant looking at him with concern.

“Yes,” Will said as he moved to sit in his favorite chair. “It’s just I’ve met Franklyn before while… um…on another visit.” He explained awkwardly, but Hannibal did not react to the mention of his rival, “and he acted very similar to how he just did now. It’s…weird.”

“He sees you as a threat undoubtedly, with your other suitor,” and here the word was only slightly emphasized with distaste, barely enough inflection for Will to have caught it, “and now with me.”

“I don’t understand, is he in love with you?”

Hannibal shrugged as he poured Will a glass of water. “It is not so simple as that, I’m afraid. Mr. Froideveaux has the misfortune of being drawn to dangerous creatures.”

Will snorted, “talk about poor survival instincts.”

The smile he was rewarded with was all teeth. “Very. The nature of the attraction may be sexual, but he does not actively seek that fulfillment. He wants a friend; a particular type of best friend to be precise.”

“So what, he wants to tame the wolf?” Will asked as he nursed his water, amused now that he fully understood what was happening.

Hannibal nodded. “The level of commitment he expects is on par with a marriage. Which, his abominably dependent personality aside, is one of the reason why he has so little companions. But come now, Will, this is not why you came to me today. Does your father know you are here early?”

“No,” the younger Roux sighed, “but as this was a work oriented visit, I thought it might be alright. I need help putting things into perspective. Today’s been terrible, between finals and Jack and Sadie. I’m so stressed I can hardly think and…” Will shrugged, glancing down at his clasped hands, before continuing in a quieter voice, “you help me think better.”

_You calm me_, went unsaid between them, but the upturn of Hannibal’s lips seemed to say that it did not go unheard.

They talked about the case for the nearly the next half hour, Will eventually abandoning the leather
chair to pace the room. Talking to Hannibal did help though, as he was highly educated on human behaviors and mind, and was a perfect sounding board. When the time for his appointment drew closer, Will moved to the waiting room to wait for his father, hopeful that Ezra wouldn’t catch that he’d come early.

His father arrived five minutes later, giving him a kiss before sweeping into the office as if he owned it, laying out a lunch on the table. The three of them chatted for a while as they dined, before Ezra moved off to the balcony to give the two some pseudo-privacy. They spoke of the case some more, and of Sadie again for a bit, before Hannibal began to advise him on ways to get Jack to respect his personal space.

“I admit that I do not approve of how he tries to push you.” Hannibal said with a frown. “Not that you do not do an admirable job pushing back, William.”

“It’s Jack’s job to push me,” he said, ignoring the snort from above them, “but I will say that I get pretty tired of it. Especially as lately-” Will broke off, unsure if he wanted to finish that thought aloud.

“Lately?” Hannibal probed.

“Lately…I don’t know, I guess I’ve been thinking more about what I want.” The Submissive sighed, eyes drifting to stare out at the grey sky. “I used to love going after murders. Stepping into their minds made me feel a rush, I guess, of things that I didn’t feel or understand. But these people I go into, they’re not normal Humans by any means. It’s like they leave an imprint of their sickness in me. It used to bother me because it made me want to kill – I still don’t want to kill – but they also gave me night terrors, sometimes hallucinations. Since the Change things have been different, but I still dreamt about Hobbs for a few days after. Nothing on the scale that it was before, but it had also had been a year since I’d used my empathy. Now that I’m active again…it used to be worth it.”

“But not so much now.”

“No, not so much. If I start a family, I don’t know if I can keep up at this pace or even if should. I can’t be sick like that or stressed like this.” The vet had repeatedly gone over how stress and fear were to be avoided for Sadie at all cost, and the Roux knew it would be no different with himself. “If I get pregnant I can’t risk hurting the baby or being a bad parent, but I doubt Jack would just let me quit.”

Will nodded decisively, letting his gaze wander back to Hannibal. His body language was casual, composed, but the Roux didn’t miss the naked want or longing in those maroon eyes. He felt his own answering trill of desire, the feeling morphing into something thicker, more encompassing, as he realized that Hannibal was most likely picturing Will carrying his child.

“If you wish to quit,” the Dominant said, timber slightly rough, “than you will quit. Jack will adjust. If not, I’m sure your father will be more than willing to correct him…or myself.”

Will felt his eyes widen in pleased surprise at the bold statement and what it implied, ducking his head to hide his blush and small smile. He stood as Ezra began to descend, gathering his coat and scarf as their hour came to an end. “I’ll see you on Friday, Hannibal.”

“I will be waiting eagerly as always, dear Will.”

That night, Hannibal dreamed of William.

Unlike his other dreams, this one was of a simpler pleasure. Will was glowing with pregnancy, one
of the few t-shirts Hannibal owned (earned from completing the famed Hawaii Ironman Triathlon) stretched over his stomach. They sat on his couch, watching *Witness for the Prosecution*, the Submissive stretched out with his feet in Hannibal’s lap as he massaged them, a bowl of ice cream resting on his bump.

His mate had looked over at him, waiting patiently until he’d had Hannibal’s attention, before giving him a breathtaking smile.

“I love you,” the dream-Will had said and it had filled Hannibal with such warmth that it stayed with him as he woke and made breakfast. The Roux was still riding the aftermath of the dream when he’d begun to read the paper.

And felt his good feelings diminish completely. He had caught Freddie Lounds when she’d come in for the appointment following Will’s, her true purpose blatantly apparent. It was clear that she’d not understood much of what she’d heard – that was, the Human had no idea that the trio in the room were not Human – but he’d made her delete her audio recording. Hannibal had thought his warning would be enough to silence the magpie.

He set the paper down coolly, eyes narrowing as he sipped his coffee.

Perhaps a visit to Ms. Lounds was in order. After all, Hannibal could hardly allow such filth to be printed about his future mate, could he?

In response to the article written about himself, Will canceled his office hours. He doubted anyone would show up, as he purposely ended his class a week before the term actually finished in an attempt to help space out his students’ demands. He only had one appointment scheduled, with an ESL student that wanted a chance to go over her English grammar before submitting her paper. The article had been ugly and insulting, and though Will knew that he shouldn’t take what was basically a tabloid to heart, especially such obvious blatant yellow journalism, he was disturbed by it.

Ezra had been more angry, doubly so when he’d seen Will’s face, and had attempted to get him to stay home all together, but the younger Submissive had too much grading to do and hadn’t brought even a quarter of it home last night. So, here he was, hiding in his office as he worked. Jack had apparently gone and threatened the journalist, as that was what Jack did best, but Will knew it wouldn’t matter. He’d seen Freddie Lounds work before; she was like a Pitbull. Once she’d locked onto something, she rarely let it go. More articles were most likely in his future.

He was already through the brunt of his day when his office door opened. Will didn’t bother to look up; the person had neither the scent nor the gait of his student. “Hours are cancelled today, unless it’s an emergency. Feel free to email me and schedule an appointment for some point this week.”

Silence.

Confused, the Roux looked up – and froze.

It was no student that stood in his doorway. Eldon Stammets, the pharmacist suspect that Will had sent Jack searching after only this very morning, was standing in his office, staring at him. Will stood slowly, his hand sliding across the desk in an attempt to find his gun despite knowing it was tucked away in his briefcase.

“Can I help you?”

“You’re…Will Graham.” Stammets said slowly, the name soken with a strange reverence. “You…”
“you understand. Don’t you?” The Human took a step forward, hands splayed out beseechingly.
“You – someone – has to understand! They’re so perfect, you know? They help me ascend.”

“The mushrooms help you ascend.” Will repeated slowly, eyes flicking to the open doorway as his
mind raced through options. “They help you see, help you connect. They broaden you.”

“Yes.” Stammets breathed, eyes wide from beneath his glasses. “I can show you, if you let me. They
can speak and they’ll show you, like they showed me.”

“How would you do that?”

“We just need someone – but it has to be someone special! Someone who deserves a chance to be
united.”

“And if I don’t want to see?” Will asked carefully. The Human’s face grew darker, ominous, and
Will had his answer as he pulled a gun from his waist band, pointing it at the Roux threateningly.
He’d show Will, regardless of what he wanted. “Alright,” he soothed, “you can show me, I want to
see. But not here, we should go and-”

“Professor Graham?” An accented voice called out and Will felt dread pool in his stomach as the
door to his office was pushed wider, Sofia Gutierrez de Francesco sticking her head inside. Stammets
started, whipping around as his student screamed, gun at the ready. The Submissive threw himself
forward, his entire weight hitting the man’s side. They struggled, Will trying to wrestle the fire arm
away as Stammets fought back with every inch of his strength. But he was only a Human and Will
managed to get the gun away from him. One of his wooden office chairs was suddenly smashed
against them – the off angle suggesting that Sofia had only meant to hit Stammets – and the gun went
off.

Sofia was screaming bloody murder, both hands still positioned as if she’d just held the chair, as
Stammets dropped.

“Hey,” Will soothed, stepping away from the prone Human reaching out and pulling the startled
woman into a one armed hug, “it’s alright. Everything’s okay.”

The hallway was filling with the sounds of shouts and pounding feet as the Roux held the sobbing,
clinging woman. Stammets stared at them from his death throes, chest rattling. “I just…wanted…you
to see.”

Will sighed.

“I know.”

He put paper work in to take the rest of the week off, though Will doubted he even had to ask. The
loss of Human life didn’t affect him as much as what it implied. Stammets had sought Will out at his
place of employment, had endangered one of his students, to show Will – forcibly if needed – his
design. He had learned of the Submissive’s empathy through Freddie Lounds’ article, no doubt, and
the added news coverage (by both Lounds and additional stations and papers) only put Will’s name
and abilities out there even more. While not everyone read Lounds' shit, it was impossible to miss the
added reports, at least in the state.

Will had little doubt that Stammets would not be the last of his kind that sought his ‘understanding’
out. Not every serial killer craved company, but they all wanted to be seen, understood, admired. It
made Will uneasy.
It infuriated Jack.

The fact that his suspect had just walked into a federal building drove him insane, and he insisted that there be a stationed guard outside his lectures and office now, much to the Roux’s irritation. Ezra was hardly pleased either. If he’d been irritated by Lounds article, this latest situation had pushed him well into infuriated. And a angry Ezra Graham was a dangerous, careless Ezra Graham.

Will did his best to calm his father, cancelling his visits with Hannibal and Tobias and sticking close to home, trying to draw Ezra back into Sadie’s impending birth. The safety and familiarity of their home, plus the added bonus of being able to fuss not only over Will but the pregnant bitch at will, seemed to calm the elder Roux somewhat to his relief.

The coming puppies seemed to be the only highlight of the month and Will waited for them with bated breath. It was late Wednesday evening when Sadie began to pacing, showing signs of discomfort and distress, refusing to leave Will’s room or be far from the whelping box. By the time the sun had risen the next day, the box was full of squirming, squeaking pups. But even here, Will’s happiness was mired.

Sadie had given birth to twelve puppies, a large litter by any breed’s account, but only ten made it to the evening.

The Submissive had been inconsolable, sobbing into his father’s lap as Ezra soothed him the best he could. He was convinced that it was his fault; if he had noticed the pregnancy sooner or had spent more time at home. If he had her on a good diet and prenatal vitamins, this would never have happened. His father had talked to him gently, telling him that while stillborns were rare, it was a very large litter and perhaps it was not so strange. Sadie herself seemed not to care, focusing on her remaining pups even as a wrecked and tearful Will had pulled the limp bodies from the box. They buried them under the only apple tree in the garden, so that they’d have the pretty blossoms in spring to watch.

Will had wanted to lock himself away, spend all of his time miserable in bed, but Ezra had forced him into action, insisting that Sadie needed his help and the Submissive was damned if he was going to fail her again. Under her watchful eye, he changed the bedding, lining the box with the softest, warmest blankets he had and set up a timed heat lamp. Will cleaned them, pressing his face into their fur and imprinting their scent so he could always find them and so that they would know the Roux as deeply as their own mother. He helped her with feedings, as nursing all ten on her own would most likely dry up her milk, diligently getting up every two hours to feed them formula through a dropper.

And to his surprise, as the week progressed, Will began to feel better. Bull was most definitely their sire, if their coloring and oversized ears were any indication. While they were still floppy and closed, they were far larger than Sadie’s were. He already had a post-birth vet appointment set up and Will had arranged to get Bull neutered the same day. Sadie would have to wait longer to be spayed, but it was something that needed to happen. He was lucky that he had space for more dogs and that some of the puppies were spoken for. Neither Will’s land or house (nor his wallet) could handle a second litter. He’d meant to do it long ago, but it had simply slipped his mind.

Not that he minded much, with hands full of tiny, squirming, heated puppy.

“Daddy,” he said softly once when they were both up feeding the puppies in the dawn light, “what if my baby-”

“It won’t.” Ezra interrupted, voice firm. “Stillbirths are unheard of in Rouxs.”

“But there’s a first time for everything, what if-“
“It won’t happen, bunny.” His fathered reassured, “all of my siblings were born hale and healthy, as was your father’s, and I had no problems carrying or delivering you.”

Will nodded and didn’t mention it again, but the fear remained.

They all got names. Alana would get the female Hallie, a play on the meaning of her name, and Beverly would get a little boy named Gizmo. While Will hadn’t been terribly impressed by the movie, his Human friend adored it and even had a Gizmo key chain and t-shirts. To his great relief, Ezra had agreed to take two of them, females so he could breed them if he wanted, which he named Lulu and Cece. That left four with Will. The last two to be born were easy enough (if not as creatively) named; a girl named Nona, Latin for nine, and a little boy named Dix, which was French for ten.

As for the remaining two…

It was the afternoon on Sunday when Will pulled up to Hannibal Lecter’s posh home. It was huge, a mansion built by the old rich of Baltimore, since updated and with an iron-wrought fence around its spacious front, back, and side yards. It must have cost a fortune. Hannibal was waiting for him on the porch, looking dashing in a pair of khakis, a robin’s egg button up and a slate grey sweater. He was without a tie and it was most likely the most informal Will had ever seen the older Roux.

“Good Afternoon, Will.” Hannibal greeted as he crossed his yard and pulled the gate open, stepping down inlaid stone steps to his driveway. “Your call was quite a surprise, but a welcomed one. May I inquire about the occasion? You said this visit would not be long.”

Ezra was also not present, which could not have possibly gone unnoticed.

Will nodded, ignoring the flutter of nerves in his chest as he reached through the open window and pulled out a tiny, five-day old puppy. He took after his mother in coloring, a brilliant sable tricoloring, but Will could already tell that his fur would be the soft, short hairs of his Pitbull father.

“Sadie gave birth, then.”

“She did,” Will said gruffly, swallowing around the lump in his throat, “a litter of twelve. We lost two.”

The other Roux’s face was instantly sympathetic. “My condolences. This is one of them?”

So young, the pup’s eyes weren’t even open yet, his ears still droopy against his skull, and he mewed and squeaked in his warm bundle. He was dependent on his masters and mother for everything; for feeding, for warmth and protection, even with aid to defecate and urinate. The puppy needed constant attention and care, and without his mother, keeping him alive would be a challenge.

But it was one that Will had convinced himself to take.

Because watching Sadie give birth had solidified inside him the want for his own child and Will found himself utterly taken with the urge to breed. He wanted a baby and he wanted it soon. It was as if some switch in his brain had been flipped. But to do this, he needed a mate. A strong, capable Dominant that he could trust. Will pressed a kiss to the puppy’s head.

“His name is Mago,” after the youngest brother of Hannibal of Carthage. Will glanced shyly up at him, pleased to see the reference had not gone unnoticed. “He’s only five days old, so he’ll need constant care to keep him alive. I’d like you to have him, as a gift,” and a test.

Hannibal reached out, taking the puppy relevantly, though his eyes never left Will’s face. The
significance of the gift, which served the dual purpose of showing the Submissive’s approval of Hannibal’s bid and his willingness to move into courtship, was not lost.

“I’m honored.” The Dominant’s thumb stroked a line over the pup’s silkly fur. “...there is another puppy in the car.”

There was. His name was Ovadia – Ovie for short – and like Mago, a play on Tobais’ name meaning of ‘servant to God.’

“Yes.”

“But you came to see me first.”

“Yes.”

The tight lines around Hannibal’s face lessened.

“My suspect came to see me at school.” Will said softly, an unhidden change of subject. “He wanted to show me his design.” The younger Roux looked away unhappily. “Armed. Nearly shot one of my students.”

“I am relieved to see you unharmed.”

“He won’t be the last one, thanks to Freddie.” Will said bitterly, looking away unhappily, arms crossing across his chest. “Jack’s gotten me an escort for school.”

“Perhaps that is not a poor idea, if your visitors insist on bringing weapons.” His voice was low, words sharp.

“I can’t have a bodyguard forever.”

The Dominant’s grip tightened around the puppy. “Yes, you can.”

Will licked his lips, grey eyes flickering back up to take in the dark intent on the older Roux’s face. “Would you protect me, Hannibal?”

The response was instant.

“Eternally.”

Freddie Lounds’ apartment was disgustingy simple, pictures of his boy and the murders he’d investigated – crime scene photos, no less – posted everywhere and serving as impromptu wallpaper. From where he stood in the dark, Ezra felt his lips curl. To him, it was as if she’d decorated her walls with images of raw and poorly cooked food.

Disgusting.

The Roux leaned against the wall directly behind the front door, filing his nails in boredom as he waited for the horrible woman to come home. It was nearly five hours before she did (Ezra hardly minded, experience had taught him to be patient) and Ezra silently pocketed the file as the key jingled in the lock. He waited until she’d stepped in, a bag of groceries on her hip, before shutting the door and locking it.

The Human jumped, the contents of the bag spilling across the floor. To her credit, Ms. Lounds hardly missed a beat before wiping out a can of mace. “I don’t care who you are, buddy, but you...
picked the wrong apartment to rob. Get the hell out and maybe I’ll let you keep your eyesight.”

Ezra tisked.

“You are just a foul little thing aren’t you?” The Submissive mused before his hand shot out, knocking the mace free and sending it clear across the room. His hand latched onto the woman’s wrist and Lounds cried out, dropping to her knees in an attempt to keep the pressure of his hold from breaking it. “My name, Ms. Lounds, is Ezra Graham and I have to say, I don’t approve of your writing style.”

Her eyes widened as she went completely white. Her chest heaved in the beginnings of a scream but Ezra’s hand snapped out, smashing her throat so that Lounds choked on the sound, her throat spasming.

“Now, now. Behave.” He kicked the woman onto her side, eyes fierce and features twisted into a hateful sneer. “You’ve hurt my bunny’s feelings and caused quite bit of trouble—”

“Not my fault!” Lounds heaved, “I can’t control every wacko who reads my – ah!”

Ezra kicked her hard enough to send her bouncing across the room. “Do not interrupt when your betters are speaking. Now, just what do you suppose we should do about your nasty transgressions?”

The red head only whimpered in response, trying to crawl away as Ezra advanced, a wicked smile on his face.

Chapter End Notes

Oh Freddie, dear, you should really watch out who you pissed off. And Franklyn. Ha! Poor guy’s worlds imploding. I figured a good way to have Will mature was through the things he had the greatest connection with; his dogs. Thus Sadie’s adventure into motherhood. Did it work?

If you wanna know what the puppies look like, just google Pitbull/Border Collie or American Staffordshire/Border Collie mix and they’ll pop up. Smart, loyal, protective dogs that are adorable. They require a lot of energy and training. Definitely high maintenance puppies but totally worth it if you can dedicate the time.
Courting: In Which Favors are Returned

Chapter Summary

His heart rate, still elevated from his previous activities, seemed to skyrocket even more and Will couldn’t help the soft, almost silent sound that escaped him. It was so quiet, it could barely be considered a gasp, but Hannibal had heard it nonetheless.

Chapter Notes

Written (for the last time, I hope, as my laptop is set to be delivered this morning) from my phone.

Beated by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Hannibal shushed the yipping puppy tucked into the crook his arm, wrapped tightly in a warm fleece blanket. The kitchen was dim, the only light coming from the muted corner lamp, but the Roux didn’t need it to see in the darkness. He plucked a pre-sterilized bottle from the drying rack where it was resting, pouring in the homemade puppy formula with ease despite not using a funnel and doing it one-handed.

It had been years since Hannibal had owned a dog, not since his childhood in Lithuania, but he’d seen his carrier Simone care for puppies countless times and still recalled what to do. He tested the formula on his wrist and finding the temperature acceptable, gently tilted the nipple to the puppy’s mouth. Mago latched on, sucking furiously, but he was careful to keep the bottle at such an angle that only a thin dribble came out. The puppy’s paws flexed as he drank greedily.

::There,:: Hannibal mumbled blearily in Lithuanian as he moved to sit at his breakfast table, ::that’s better now isn’t it, little brother?::

As an unmated Dominant, Hannibal had little drive (or interest, in truth) to own a dog, but he couldn’t deny that the puppy had its own charm, slowly working its way into his affections. And then there was what Mago meant - that Will had accepted his bid to court. The gift – Hannibal stubbornly refused to think of where his dog’s brother had gone – of such a young puppy was telling. It was a rather creative test, in truth, and Hannibal recognized it for what it was. To William, his dogs were everything, and these puppies as his first litter were doubly so.

Usually puppies weren’t adopted out until their twelfth week, when they were hardier and had been socialized by their mother, siblings, and the breeders. By giving Hannibal a newborn, Will was not only charging him to keep Mago alive, but to raise a well-trained, well-socialized dog.

He had no intentions of failing.

Within a half hour of William gifting Mago to him, Hannibal had bought enough high-end dog gear
that the local boutique most likely wouldn’t need another sale to pay rent for a year. Within two, his house had been completely puppy proofed. A large bed – so large that Mago looked quite ridiculous on it as a puppy – had been set up next to Hannibal’s own, layered with warm fleeces and a series of hot water bottles. Hannibal had spent the entirety of his Sunday calling trainers, breeders, rescue groups, veterinarians, and researching. At the moment, his Mago was in the neonatal period, where his limited senses would allow him his first experiences with touch, smell and taste. It was best not to handle Mago much now, but by bathing, feeding, and letting the pup curl up next to him in his chair – and, if the Dominant was completely honest, Mago had hardly left his side – the dog would begin to imprint on Hannibal.

The next period, from two to four weeks, was called the transition period. Here he could be handled slightly more, but would spend most of his time trying to learn how to use his hearing and eyesight, as well as how to walk. When Mago reached three weeks and entered the critical socialization period, Hannibal would begin leaving him with a friend who bred and trained Collie service dogs. Her own bitch had a litter about a week before Mago had been born. Most of the training Hannibal preferred to do himself, but while he could introduce his pup to many things, Mago needed other dogs to teach him how to be a one. Besides, his friend owed him a massive favor and she was more than willing to pay it by watching and training his pup.

His Mago, his little brother (and did that name not make something inside Hannibal swell with pleasure) would be well trained; obedient and submissive. He would need to be, if Mago was going to handle not only the influx of Will’s dogs but their children. Hannibal ran a gentle finger down the puppy’s muzzle, eyes fond as he stared down at the precious bundle and what he represented. The Dominant imagined his house full; dog beds tucked tastefully throughout the rooms, a well ordered feeding area in the garage (Hannibal had already begun a new cookbook filled with dog food recipes), heated dog beds set up on the back porch so their pack would have a warm place to lay during the year, dog toys scattered about inside and out and his gardens ruined.

The idea of his pristine home so marked by animals did not bother Hannibal in the way that many who knew him would assume it would. Because mixed with the dog chews and bones would be children’s toys. Each of the four (soon to be filled bedrooms would hold a dog bed – directly across from the doorway, to guard his brood from any that would wish them harm). A Roux-ga-Roux’s pack was obscenely loyal, bonding so totally to their Submissive – and by default the Dominants that mated them and the children that come of their union – that even the smallest of breeds would choose their own death over harm to any they guarded.

Hannibal gently pulled the empty bottle away, tossing a towel over his shoulder before maneuvering Mago into a better position. He tapped lightly on the pup’s back, trying to coax out the air in his stomach. Hannibal yawned. He required very little sleep as a Roux and needed even less than the usual six they did himself, but Hannibal knew that even his light sleep schedule was going to be taxed keeping Mago healthy and fed. He reached for the remote and turned on the television.

It was on a news station (as it customarily was) and Hannibal felt his eyes brows raise in surprise before his lips bloomed into a smile.

Well.

It seemed as though he wouldn’t need to be visiting Ms. Lounds after all.

Will ate his breakfast cheerfully, feeling incredibly lazy and content with his dogs curled around his feet and the sound of puppies filling the kitchen air, still in his pajamas despite it being well past ten
in the morning. He was entering his second week of vacation. While he still had some school things to do, the murder front was quiet (much to Jack’s frustration) and there had been little work that Will couldn’t accomplish from his own home.

The Dominants were visiting him almost daily, with Hannibal adding Monday to his Wednesday/Friday schedule and Tobias a Saturday to his. Sunday, though…Sunday was just for Will and Daddy. The young Roux glanced over, grinning widely around a mouth full of scrambled eggs at the sight of his oversized kitchen windowsill practically covered in fresh flowers.

He’d received such wonderful gifts from his suitors. Flowers and cards, sheet music and books, warm scarves and sweaters, chocolates and candy…every visit was an exciting as the Dominants tried to outdo not only themselves but their rivals. Will hid his smile behind the rim of his glass when Ezra came sashaying into the room, singing Edith Piaf as he danced with a startled Stella in his arms.

The poor dog looked utterly confused but delighted; tongue lulling about in bemused excitement. Will laughed at his father’s silliness, grinning widely as Ezra dramatically dipped Stella. The younger Roux shook his head as he took another sip, the glass freezing against his lips as the small box TV that rested on the counter caught his attention.

Will slowly set his cup down.

The picture on the news station was far too familiar to Will – it was an addict who had attempted to mug Ezra a few weeks back when the Submissive had been shopping in one of Baltimore’s many knock off allies.

“Oh no,” Will whispered, eyes wide as he turned up the volume. “Daddy,” Ezra ignored him, hips shaking as he popped toast into the toaster. “Daddy, turn the music down!” Will said louder, reaching for the remote, “Daddy, they’re looking – I thought you said you harvested everything!”

“I did,” his father soothed, setting Stella down as he leaned against the counter, “I did everything by the book, bunny. He had no family, I took him from an unmonitored lot, and we ate the last of him just the other week.” His father gave him a dry look. “I have been doing this for a long time, Will. I was careful, I promise.”

The younger Roux felt like his heart had completely frozen in fear, convinced that his father had finally been too flippant and left behind evidence that would at the least expose their race, at the worst ensure his Daddy’s death. How many times had Will warned him that Humans were smarter than they used to be? But to Will’s surprise Ezra was telling the truth, as the addict, one (ironically named) William Foltz, wasn’t dead, just a person interest to the police.

For the suspected murder of Fredricka Lounds.

Will turned to stare mutely at his father.

Ezra stared back unashamedly.

He glanced down at his bacon, feeling his lips start to curl in disgust.

“Oh, please, William.” His father said with no small amount exasperation, “as if I’d feed you that. You know I only serve you the best cuts.” A plate of perfectly golden toast was slid across the table.

Will opened his mouth to chaste him but hesitated, slowly pushing his eggs around in thought. Eyes drifted back to the television where the newscaster was talking about how DNA evidence had linked the other William to the crime.
“I don’t know what’s got you so upset, the woman was absolute trash,” Ezra continued on, seemingly unaware that Will wasn’t actually objecting. Because Freddie Lounds was trash and Will was hardly upset that she was dead. And his father had seemingly gotten away with it, framing one of his murders with another.

Perhaps Ezra had read all those forensic books Will had been sending him over the years?

“I mean! She wrote all those terrible things about you – and Stammets would never have found you if she’d kept her trap shut. Even you must…wait a moment, you’re…” Ezra’s defenses dribbled off. “You’re not upset about this, are you?”

Will shrugged, picking up a piece of toast and spreading a large helping of apple butter over it. “You were careful, they clearly think it was that Foltz guy – the DNA was a nice touch. I just wanted you to be really careful when you hunt now. I can’t lose you, Daddy, you know? Besides, she almost got one of my students killed…and I really didn’t like her article.”

Ezra’s mouth opened and shut a few times, lips moving but nothing came out. Will grinned to himself, pleased. It was a rare moment that anyone made Ezra Graham speechless.

“Daddy, will you make those little tea cakes for Tobias’ visit today?”

“Of…of course, bunny, whatever you like.”

Ezra watched from the living room window, humming quietly to himself, as Tobias and Will talked on the open patio that stood a few feet away from the house. The Dominant was quite good at courting, the eldest Graham had to admit, eyeing the flowers (roses – blush pink for admiration and beauty, yellow for affection - lavender for grace, purple pansies to signify Will’s place in his thoughts) as well as a trio of sweaters that most likely bore a price tag that would make most people balk.

Yes, Tobias Budge certainly knew how to talk to the fairer sex, Ezra mused. He was charming and charismatic, a terribly skilled flirt, and very young. Only six years past his majority. And so, Ezra was watching him.

Like a hawk.

Perhaps it wasn’t something that most parents could understand, but seeing how these two young, virile Roux lusted over his son (they thought they hid it well, but please, Ezra had been around the block too many times to miss such a thing) was incredibly thrilling. Empowering, even.

I made that, a part of Ezra crowed each time Hannibal or Tobias stared wantonly at his boy, all but undressing him with their eyes. And how could he not be flattered? Will was the very image of himself as a youth. Yes, there were things that were solely his sire’s; the slight angle around his mouth, the way his lips ticked when he frowned or thought hard. Those were all his worthless mate’s.

But most of Will was Ezra’s.

It was almost always so with Roux. Though both sexes were a mixing of their parents genetics, the children always favored the parent whose gender they matched; Submissives with their carriers, Dominants with their sires. Ezra’s siblings – Dominants, all of them, and all long dead save one – were often mistaken as two sets of twins.

Ezra marveled in his good fortune to have such a perfect Submissive son – and Will was perfect,
despite the fact that he’d spent nearly the entirety of his youth railing against his own nature. Without the fog of illness brought on by his forced starvation, Will had become truly stunning. And the extended time he’d spent among his own kind had lent his son a social grace he’d never had before. Even as Ezra watched, Will laughed at something Tobias said, legs spreading ever so slightly in the wicker chair, shoulders settling lower but still open, head tilting to the side to show the barest flickers of his neck.

Whether his boy knew it or not, Will was performing the age old dance to a tee.

And while he knew that the chance that his son may become a frequent hunter was still wholly a long shot and unrealistic one at that, there were signs that Will was finally - finally - outgrowing this nonsensical, Human-loving, hippie stage. So yes, just because he was proud and utterly ecstatic that his bunny was finally coming to peace with himself, that did not mean that Ezra was going to allow any tomfoolery. And out of the two Dominants, Tobias was the one who required the most supervision. He did not know if it was the Roux’s age or just his precocious personality, but Ezra had little doubt that if he could get away with it Tobias would take every inch his son let him.

It reminded him far too much of his former mate.

Ezra’s hand drifted to his lower stomach thoughtlessly, pressing against the barren and scarred womb that was hidden there. Like most of his race, Ezra had wanted a large family. A filled nest was the utter picture of a happy nest.

But Will’s birth…

Ezra had lied to Will about the simplicity of his birth, but it was only a half lie. For most Roux birth was a fairly painless (well, as painless as birth can be) event. The hand tightened, fingertips pressing into the firm skin of his belly. He had almost lost his boy that night and the after effects of it had cost him his mate. Ezra swallowed against the bitter emotions that filled him. It didn’t matter, that was all in the past.

He had his Will, healthy and finally happy, and soon he’d have that full nest. Like any other Submissive, Ezra had always imagined having more grandchildren then he could properly hold. And whether it was Tobias or Hannibal (who, honestly, was Ezra’s personal choice) that gave him that mattered very little.

No matter what his mate had thought, Ezra Henry Graham had successfully guaranteed the continuation of his line. His son was perfect, without any issues, and one day he was going to find his good-for-nothing, abhorrent Dominant and rub his filthy face in it.

Right before he tore it off.

Yes, Ezra thought, pushing the door open to intercede when Tobias began to encroach just a wee bit too far into Will’s personal space, everything had worked out for the best.

Will was into his third week of vacation and more happy then he could remember being. His visit with Tobias had gone incredibly well, the charming Dominant coaxing embarrassing – yet still very funny stories – from Will’s adventures in undergrad and graduate school from him in the warm sun of the early morning. And it gave him a chance to see and check on Obie, who seemed to be doing well enough.

Noon had found his father going into town to shop and Will, who had no urge to be around a crowd, was left behind, feeling rather cooped up and bored. While he was enthralled with his free time, it
was the most amount of time spent not working that Will could remember having in years. It was a blessing – but sort of boring, if he was completely honest. So about a half hour after Ezra had left, Will strapped on his favorite pair of running shoes and headed out into the forest. He stood just inside the tree line, gesturing for his pack to stay behind, and took a deep breath of the cold, frost tempered forest air.

And then ran.

The woods blurred around him, the wind moving so fast across him that the winter air felt ten degrees colder than it was. Despite the cold, Will was only wearing a pair of wicking thermal tights and under shirt, light weight gloves (gifted to him by Tobias, actually) and a windbreaker vest. The Roux hardly felt the cold with the excitement rushing through his pumping blood.

Will let out a wild laugh as he launched himself over the edge of a narrow but quite deep valley, easily clearly the thirty odd feet required. He sped up, ducking and jumping over branches and debris, his feet hardly making any noise as they touched the ground. Will had never run so fast, so gracefully in his life and he strove to go faster still. He stretched every muscle out, pushed everything to its absolute limit. It was so freeing, so perfect. He imagined this was what flying must feel like. He felt so alive; Will had never given a thought to what his body (restored to a healthy perfection from the Change and plumped by his father’s steady meals) could give him if treated right.

The house was just around the corner and the Roux let out another laugh, using a low hanging tree branch to fling himself forward, clearing another staggering amount of space before landing. He broke from the tree line, the burrs of the tall grass tugging at his clothing. The dogs were calling out a greeting, rocketing themselves across the backyard and into the untamed field, blurs of color and joy as they came to him.

Will let himself fall forward, rolling happily and uncontrollably to a stop, his body barely prone before he was assaulted by wet noses and warm tongues. The Submissive giggled, latching onto Bear and rolling with the large dog, the Pit mix letting out barks so excited they almost sounded like chirps. Painless bites, nothing more than points of pressure, were dotting all over his body as the others danced and jumped around the pair, barking (and in Maggie’s case, baying) playfully. Will pinned Bear, careful to keep his full weight off the dog, catching an oversized leg with his mouth and nipping at it gently.

Bear kicked widely, tongue rolling out as he bucked free and took off, Will and the rest pack at his heals. For a handful of moments they played catch the rabbit – Will and his dogs taking turns as the rabbit at random – and the field was filled with the sounds of their merrymaking. Stella (who was lightening fast despite her tiny size) lead them on a merry chase, weaving in and out of the tall grass with pin point accuracy, before sprinting hard – her little legs tucking so fast they were hardly touching the ground – towards and around the house. Will and the pack followed, barking and laughing respectively, and the Roux turned the corner, ready to catch the tiny Maltese mix – and ran straight into what felt like a wall.

Will smacked so hard that he literally bounced back, unsteady on his feet. The Submissive let out an involuntary whine of alarm, arms wind milling as his preternatural balance fought hard to fix itself. He was suddenly corrected; a tight grip locking onto his upper arms and Will’s hands shot out on instinct, digging into strong forearms for support. The act stalled his movements just long enough for his body to shift its weight distribution, his stance spreading to re-catch his balance. The entire thing had only taken a split second, both parties moving almost too quick for the naked eye.

Will swallowed, throat dry, and stared up into sanguine eyes.

*Hannibal.*
They stood less than six inches apart, each Roux seemingly shocked into a stunned silence. Will swallowed around a suddenly dry mouth, aware all at once of how wild he must look, his cheeks still stained red with the winter air, his hair a tangled mess, the smell of sweat and dog that clung to him. In contrast, Hannibal smelt and looked wonderful. His scent was clean but deep, accented by the woody smell of his cologne, but somehow the other Roux’s natural scent seeped through it still, and the two worked in perfect tandem. Hannibal was as put together as always, looking stunning in a slate colored suit and a grey, violet, and blue stripped shirt and pale sapphire tie.

So close that, with the evening sun directly in Hannibal’s face, Will could see the starburst pattern in the Dominant’s eyes; strange, wavy lines of brown much darker than then the already dark, almost burgundy iris. And as he watched, the pupils began to expand, crawling outwards. His heart rate, still elevated from his previous activities, seemed to skyrocket even more and Will couldn’t help the soft, almost silent sound that escaped him. It was so quiet it could barely be considered a gasp, but Hannibal had heard it nonetheless.

Will’s lips parted minutely, his own breath almost a sting on the chapped skin, and the Submissive felt his groin tighten as those intense eyes (always, always so intense) drifted down to his mouth, the grip on his arms tightening almost imperceptibly. Will’s lids shuttered to half-mast as he fought not to be utterly lost in the Dominant’s overwhelming presence. Hannibal’s hands were so big – nearly taking up the entirety of Will’s forearms, their grip strong and unquestionable - and he felt them like hot brands through the thin layer of his clothing.

They were leaning into each other Will suddenly realized, but the realization felt distant – as if Will’s thoughts were far above his body. Hannibal’s head tilted, the space between them shrinking by the second. Will let his eyes flutter shut, his own grip tightening, a want burning so strongly it dwarfed any sense of proprietary he had.

There was the warmth of another’s breath against his lips and Will let out a whimper, again so quiet it was nearly inaudible, and Hannibal let out an exhale that could have been his name. The sound of a car door slamming echoed through the air and both froze, a low rumble that could be nothing but a growl – and honest to god, Dominant growl, something Will had never thought he’d hear – escaping the taller Roux.

Will broke away from him, cheeks flushing even redder at the sight of Jack Crawford watching them queerly from besides his car, a hand coming up to grip at his opposite arm in a tell of embarrassment and discomfort.

“Jack,” Will said, surprised at how controlled his voice was, “what are you doing here?”

The agent said nothing for a long moment, his dark eyes drifting from Will to Hannibal then to Will again. “I tried to call your cell.”

“I don’t take it when I run.”

“Tried the house, too.”

“Daddy’s at the supermarket.” Will explained, shivering, all at once aware of how cold it was out. The look that crossed Jack’s face could only be described as a mix of victorious smugness and dislike. Will could understand that. Neither his father or his boss were overly fond of each other. “I take it there’s been another murder?”

“Yes.” Jack said with a fierce, stubborn frown that did not bode very well for Will at all. “I won’t lie to you, Will, it contains some pretty graphic things…and it involves small children.”
The Submissive visibly reacted, stepping backwards as his other hand flew up, barely able to play
the move off as crossing his arms instead of the self-reassuring hug it had started as. Out of the corner
of his eye, he could see Hannibal frown, his hands twitching by his side, but Will did not allow
himself to look at the Dominant.

“I don’t do kids, Jack. You know that.”

“I do.” The Human said, the frown growing even deeper, “which is why I had Dr. Lecter meet us
here. I need you on this, Will. I need my best.”

So much for my vacation, the Roux thought with a sigh, digging a reassuring hand into Winston’s
warm fur and tried to forget what had just happened, to force his mind off what Hannibal’s lips felt
like and back into work mode. “Come inside, I’ll make some coffee.”

Chapter End Notes

So, the mystery of Will's sire slowly becomes clearer. Also, I gave Hannibal's carrier the
same Italian name his mother in cannon has, just the masculine version of it.

And this time it is Jack that is the cock block.

God, I'm tired of android's autocorrect.
Courting: A Suitor Proves His Worth

Chapter Summary

Hannibal felt his lips curl in disdain. He was getting more than a little tired of Jack's constant thoughtlessness when it came to the Submissive's health.

To Hannibal's Submissive's health.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait.

Betaed by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Roux-ga-Roux where in many ways every bit the monster that Humans once feared them to be, but there was a nearly universal truth about them; they only ever hunted children in times of great duress. There was something utterly distasteful about the act and most Roux abstained from it unless there was absolutely no other choice. This was especially true of Submissives who were hard pressed to kill a child, regardless of species.

Of course there were variants on this behavior. Just like every other species on the planet there were outliers, those who refused to play by social mores. *Debile couilles*, as Ezra Graham called them, Dominant and Submissive alike who enjoyed the soft flesh and untried muscles. But Will was not one of them.

The Submissive shivered as he finished leaving his message for Ezra, his hands throwing shirts and pants at random into his suitcase as he did so. There was no denying he was flustered. Will had never enjoyed using his empathy on child killers, it always left him feeling so...*dirty*. There was a soft rap on his bedroom door and Will glanced up to find Hannibal standing there, his jacket resting over his forearm. The elder Roux looked worried, his frown stern and pronounced. Will padded forward, bare feet soundless on the wood (he’d kicked off his sneakers in the living room, even though he knew it would only anger Ezra) and met Hannibal at the entrance.

“Forgive my familiarity, William, but I wished a moment for us to speak without Jack.” Hannibal said, looking earnestly concerned. It could be considered unspeakably rude, the way that the doctor had just shown himself to the upper floor, but Will only found the Dominant’s presence comforting.

“No, it’s quite alright.” Will reassured. Or tried to, there was no denying the soft tremor in his voice.

He let out a sigh, allowing his body to lean against the door jam, gripping at his elbow in an unhidden act of vulnerability. Hannibal’s eyes slid over the action, the motion so smooth that it felt like a liquid touch, and as Will watched Hannibal’s form seemed to puff up – his stance widening, shoulders rolling back until the Roux was at full height. It was a knee-jerk reaction to a Submissive’s fear or discomfort and Will couldn't help the warm, affectionate feeling he felt at the sight of it.
“Perhaps I should offer my services, I do not think Jack would deny me.” Hannibal offered, voice quiet and low so the Human could not hear them.

Will’s lips twisted in a thin smile as he dropped his gaze to their feet. “Thank you, but I doubt I will be gone for longer than a night. If you could call and check on Daddy – see if he has any questions, I mean – I’d really appreciate that. I left him a message but he’s terrible about actually taking his cell phone with him into the stores, just leaves it in his car and I may not be able to answer if he calls.”

Which of course defeated the point of having a cell phone but Will had learned long ago that arguing about it was a pointless endeavor. Considering the fact that his father had been born in nineteen thirteen it was rather remarkable that Ezra even bothered enough to take it with him when he left the house.

Hannibal agreed easily, head cocking to the side slightly as Will bit his bottom lip, weight shifting from foot to foot in thought. “Is there something else you would like to ask me?”

The Submissive glanced up him through his eyelashes, lips pressing together in thought and unknowingly plumping them, ignorant of the way Hannibal’s eyes locked onto the movement. Where you going to kiss me? But Will couldn’t ask that – it wasn’t even remotely decent and so instead he let his gaze drop once more to their feet.

He thought Hannibal was going to…no. No, Will was certain that Hannibal would have kissed him had Jack not interrupted. It was far, far too early in their courting for that. Will hadn’t even decided between his suitors! And yet…and yet Will found something inside him – some strange ache that settled in his lower stomach – so terribly disappointed by the Human’s interference, even if it had saved his propriety.

What…what would Hannibal’s lips feel like? What would it feel like to be held in those big arms, pinned and kissed? Would…would it –

“William?”

Hannibal’s voice, gentle and worried, broke him out of his salacious thoughts and he cleared his throat awkwardly, his hands suddenly itching to touch, as if haunted by the memory of the feel of firm forearms.

“Dead children…they…I mean they,” Will's words faded off, eyes shuttering as he thought of the scene awaiting him, “they look so much like our own.” He finished in a low whisper. “Could I…maybe call you? I mean, if I...if I...”

“Of course, Will,” Hannibal’s voice was a low timber, the words so smooth they seemed to roll over him like a physical caress, “day or night.”

“Would you be kind enough to go and keep Jack occupied while I finish packing?” He asked, impressed with how level his own voice was. Hannibal nodded slowly, but didn’t move, ruby gaze locked on the younger Roux’s form. Will had never felt so naked while being fully clothed before. He barely kept a shiver at bay as he reached out and quietly shut the door.

That night, Hannibal fucked his hand to the thought of William. Of how Will had stared up at him so coyly, smelling lush and full. Of how those perfectly grey eyes were dark with fascination and arousal, the Submissive’s bed framed behind him so obscenely.

He sat in the privacy of his home office, in a high backed leather chair, his fist so heavily greased
with lotion that it dripped down around his grip on his cock. Hannibal’s cock was hard – harder than it had ever been in the Dominant’s life – and a bright, angry red. Even before he began, his knot was already beginning to swell, the skin bulging outwards.

In the safety and quiet of the room, the Roux allowed his fantasy (the one that had nearly taken all of his self-control to resist that afternoon) play out. In his mind, Hannibal had Will pinned against the wall, tasting every inch of that delectable mouth as his hands mapped out each and every curve and bump on the Submissive’s body. He sucked and nibbled, prodded and probed until Will’s own tongue – curious and shy, hampered by an inexperience that only made his stumbling actions that much more appealing – joined in the play. His hands yanked that sinfully tight jogging jersey free, slipping underneath to fan out over smooth skin, fingernails scrapping over perked nipples before digging beneath equally tight leggings.

Will would whimper, whine desperate little breathes against his lips as Hannibal traced and cupped his useless cock, stroking the harden flesh until it felt like it was going to burst in his hand before slipping below. Past soft, tender testicles, past the sensitive stretch of skin that followed it until finally slipping into that wet, welcoming heat.

Hannibal didn’t even have to guess what the Submissive smelt like aroused, his memory was sufficient enough, but Hannibal would bury his face into the younger Roux’s neck to rediscover it anyway, inhaling deeply as he finger fucked that perfect, sloppy little hole. Will would be utterly nonsensical, lost to the first real touches of pleasure.

Hannibal would fall to his knees; moves soundless even on the aging wood, and engulf his mate’s cock, tasting it, worshiping it, until Will was a babbling, whining mess, held up only by Hannibal’s grip on his thighs. He’d make the beautiful Submissive come with his name a scream on the boy’s lips. And then, because he’d have that cock shoved so far down his mouth that Hannibal would have swallowed his release whole, he’d do it again. Let his mouth fill with the potent-less cum, roll it around like the finest of wines as he studied and memorized the bitter taste. And just because he could, the Dominant would bring him off once more, swallowing greedily every drop of release before finally moving on.

He’d flip Will, press him spread eagle against the framed photos of dogs and Ezra and baby William, and eat that taunting little hole out until his mate was broken with pleasure; until Will’s eyes were deadened and his mouth slack jawed.

Jack would have come up to check on them when Hannibal did not appear to lead him away from the Submissive. The Human would have frozen at the stairs, incapable of comprehending what he was seeing. His precious little teacup fucked into complete incomprehension by the very man he hired to save him. And there, under the stunned and betrayed eyes of Jack Crawford, Hannibal would sink knot deep into his Will. He would fuck him until the frames fell from the walls, until Jack had turned away – retreated downstairs and out of the house in shock – until the Submissive was screaming and crying for Hannibal to knot him, to mate them forever.

Hannibal let out a growl at the image, a hand flying free to yank his tie loose. He barely had time to loop the butter soft fabric against the base of his cock, pulling the fabric with his teeth until the noose tightened around his blooming knot in a silky grip before he erupted. The Roux’s head slammed back against the seat back, hips humping violently into nothing as his balls emptied themselves to the point of pain.

In the aftermath, the Dominant let himself sink into the plush seat, chest heaving. *Soon,* he promised himself, eyes locked on the semen still dripping from his cock, pooling in the dips of his hips, left hand still strained tight to keep the ruined tie tightly bound around his pulsing knot, *soon.*
When Will returned home from his trip, he was a complete mess. Ezra had taken one look at his boy and put him to bed. Like all Submissives, Will was born with empathetic abilities that would aid in hunting. Unlike Dominant Roux whose extensive strength and agility allowed them to kill and overpower ease, Submissive Roux used their empathy to peer into their prey’s mind and gain a unique, all encompassing understanding. They used this knowledge to craft a personality that would allow them to slip past a human’s defenses, either to kill or inspire protection.

But William’s empathy was different – it was far more powerful than the average Submissive’s. It was called the Gift, and it gave him an almost unheard of insight into his prey’s mind. But Will often struggled with shaking off the Human mind’s influence. Sometimes, at its very worst, his boy would adopt the personality or traits of the Human for a short period of time. Ezra had seen such a thing only once before, with his own carrier Henri, who Will had obliviously inherited the juiced up empathy gene from. But Henri had never had the control problems that his delicate bunny seemed to struggle with.

It wouldn’t be so terrible a burden for his bunny to bear if Will didn’t insist on working with psychopaths and murderers, dark twisted Humans who he helped catch and put away, yet often left a devastating footprint in Will’s mind. While Will struggled to purge the Human’s influence, his actions were erratic; sleep terrors and walking, loss of appetite, and sometimes even severe paranoia and hallucinations. Ezra had dealt with Will like this before a handful of times, always after cases that made newspaper headlines across the nation, and was utterly bereft with worry each time.

His poor baby boy had been completely pale at the airport, eyes glossy and confused, and hadn’t been able to tell Ezra the last time he’d eaten and the older Submissive had a inkling that his stubborn boy hadn’t eaten the entire time he was gone. He’s put him to bed with a bloody shake; a mixture of vanilla ice cream and blood that had always helped perk up his bunny when he was still a cub, and fretted about the house until Will had finally fallen asleep.

That night, Ezra had been woken from his sleep by Will’s dogs, horrified to find Will on the porch roof, apparently having crawled out his bedroom window. Immediately, Ezra had called the Academy and convinced them to put Will on sick leave for however long was necessary. His next call was to Will’s favorite pet, Alana Bloom. Ezra didn’t have to reach hard to layer his voice with distress and tears, speaking quickly and worriedly into the phone as he begged her to keep Jack Crawford away while he helped Will recover.

Alana had been more than helpful, her voice going both soft and soothing and iron hard, and Ezra knew that he had an ally. He doubted that Alana alone would be able keep Crawford away, especially when the investigation into the family murders was still on-going, but Ezra was damned and determined to keep the overbearing Human from causing any more harm to his boy.

This wasn’t the first case that Will had taken after his Change, but it was the first one that had disturbed him so, and Ezra hadn’t had to wait long to figure out why this one was different.

“She burned him, Daddy. She loved him, I know she did, but she just…he was so small, Daddy, how could she do that to her baby?” Will had murmured deliriously, swaying from side to side somehow despite the fact that he was safely in bed, pillows packed around him to help keep him propped up and from rolling around, as Ezra tried to convince Will to eat something.

The food was another issue; the house stores were running low but Ezra didn’t dare leave Will alone to hunt. The natural solution was to reach out to the courting Dominants, though Ezra was loathed to show Hannibal or Tobias his son’s illness, not wanting anything to taint their perception or cause them to doubt their choice to court William. As the third day of Will’s delirium continued on Ezra found he had very little choice – his bunny needed fresh meat and blood to help him recover – and so
he made the calls.

That didn’t mean that he to be honest, though.

He told them that Will had a simple cold (something that even Roux fell victim to) and Ezra phrased the request for food in such a way that it seemed as if it was a test, a chance for the two to impress and make a good impression on the older Submissive. If all went well, they’d drop the food off and never know of the Will’s problems.

Tobias had agreed to the request quickly, even though his own larder was apparently running low, and Ezra had little doubt that the dark skinned Dominant had left for the hunt the moment they’d gotten off the phone. Hannibal had been just as quick to agree and the well educated Roux also eagerly offered his medical expertise. Ezra had thanked him, but reassured the worried Dominant that it was just a cold, even as he watched Will’s unseeing eyes (he was still deep in REM sleep, despite his appearance of awareness) tracked some invisible specter across the room, murmuring to himself.

“I’m sure he’ll be over it in a couple of days,” Ezra said as he pressed a hand to his son’s heated forehead, “but I don’t want to leave him alone. It’s terrible timing all around, really.”

“I have some fresh meat that I procured just the other day, as luck would have it.” Hannibal offered, “I can bring it over immediately.”

“It would be evening by the time you got here, supper time even, I wouldn’t want to put you out. That drive is so long and you’d still have to drive back to the city.”

“It's no trouble.”

Ezra gave a small smile at the determined note in the Dominant’s voice, “that would be lovely, Hannibal, thank you.”

“I’m on my way as we speak.”

The older Submissive felt his grin grow even wider – and more than a tad bit smug – at the sound of a car engine starting. While Tobias was impressive in his own right, there was no denying that Hannibal was Ezra’s favorite, and not just because he was older and better established than Budge. Hannibal’s personality seemed to be such a good fit for his bunny. Now if only Will would make a decision instead of dragging his feet about!

Well, that wasn’t a completely fair statement. After all, it was Ezra would raised his boy to be a well mannered traditionalist, so it made sense that Will wanted to take things slow and steady. It was the safe, conservative route that Ezra himself had not taken, choosing to rush his courting and mating all those years ago, and look where that got him.

In his bed, Will muttered, eyes finally fluttering shut. Ezra sighed, reaching over and loosening the sheets around the prone form so they wouldn’t stick as badly to the sweaty skin and be too uncomfortable.

He was getting ahead of himself. He needed to get Will healthy first.

The smell of a well prepared meal filled the cabin of Hannibal’s car. Fate seemed to have been with the Roux, as he had only just finished preparing a basil, tomato, and rice soup, supplemented with chunks of breast meat from a woman who had bumped into not only Hannibal but a young woman holding her toddler, and then began to curse at them both for causing her to spill her coffee. He had also brought a few loaves of freshly made bread and a thermos full of honeyed tea in addition to the
large cooler packed with whatever remaining meat that Hannibal had stored. He would have to go
hunt almost immediately, as there was not a scrap of Human flesh in his home (something that had
hardly ever happened, given Hannibal’s incessant drive to keep his freezer full, a need born from his
troubled childhood) but the Dominant hardly minded.

He kept to the speed limit until he hit the country roads and then opened the not inconsiderable
throttle of his Bentley. The drive was tense, Hannibal’s shoulders drawn tight, hands fisted from their
place on the wheel. From where he was secured in the front passenger seat in a dog bed just large
enough for the pup to be comfortable but with tall enough sides he couldn’t crawl or roll out, Mago
was curled up silently, picking up on his Master's sullen mood even at the pup’s young age.

Even though Ezra had promised Will was only slightly under the weather, Hannibal found himself
beset with worry. It wasn't unfounded; Will had called him only once during his three day stay in the
south, and though the Submissive was collected and coherent, focused even, as they discussed the
case, something had sounded off in the gentle Roux's voice.

He should have insisted on accompanying William. Hannibal knew Jack Crawford far too well and
had seen the nervous weariness in the younger Roux's form at the thought of dealing with murdered
children. What's more, Alana had called him earlier in the day, frustrated and asking for help in
keeping Jack away from Will, as apparently the Human felt the murders took priority over William's
health. Hannibal felt his lips curl in disdain. He was getting more than a little tired of Jack's constant
thoughtlessness when it came to the Submissive's health.

To Hannibal's Submissive's health.

The sun was already beginning to set, coloring the sky streaks of purple, orange, and grey, when
Hannibal finally turned on the state road that lead to the Grahams’ home. The Dominant rolled his
shoulders, forcing the stiffness out of them, and tried to push down the twist of nervous worry in his
chest. To ground himself, Hannibal reached over, running a large hand over Mago’s head in a gentle
stroke.

He needed to be calm and collected when he faced Ezra and Hannibal glanced down at his wrinkled
suit in disdain. He should have changed before he’d left – he had no intention of ever leaving a bad
impression which someone who he was convinced would soon be family – but Hannibal hadn’t been
able to dismiss the immediate urge to leave and go to the Submissives’ side.

Hannibal put both hands on the wheel as he turned into the Grahams’ driveway, only to slow the car
to a crawl as a flash of brown in the nearby tree line caught his attention. Hannibal frowned, putting
the car in park, as he stared at the dog – Winston, one of Will’s, and one of the smarter animals in the
pack – stood in the tall grass. The dog kept glancing to the woods behind it, tail tucked deep between
his legs.

He unbuckled his seat belt, throwing the heat on full blast so that Mago would stay comfortable, and
stepped out of the car. “Winston!”

Instantly the dog perk ed up, barking and whimpering as it ran towards Hannibal, only to stop
halfway and return back to the woods. The dog did this a handful of times before Hannibal left the
car and approached him, and Winston immediately took off, racing through the wood with Hannibal
following at a dead sprint, dread pooling in his stomach.

They made it almost a mile into the woods before Hannibal’s fears were confirmed and he stopped
short, stunned. Will was still and unmoving, lying face first in the dirt, clad only in boxers and a pair
of dirty socks. A strangled sound escaped him – a sound that Hannibal had never heard from himself
or thought himself capable of making – and he shot forward, stumbling to his knees as he reached for
“William!” He pushed the still body onto his back, cupping Will’s face as his fingers sought for a pulse. Will’s skin was chilled and cold to the touch, lips nearly blue, but his pulse beat strong beneath Hannibal’s fingertips. Hannibal ripped his coat off and wrapped it around the nearly naked form, cradling the Submissive as he desperately tried to rouse him. Winston was whining lowly, dancing nervously around them and lapping at Will’s still hand.

“Will? Will!” Hannibal’s voice was ragged, his heart beating as if he’d just run a marathon, and he couldn’t recall ever being so scared, not even those final days when he and his brother had been captured. He shook the younger Roux violently, “William, darling, please.”

There was a soft sound, more of a breath barely tinted with voice than anything else, and Hannibal took a sharp inhale as Will stirred and bleary grey eyes stared up at him.

“Hannibal?” It was clear that William was just as confused as Hannibal, brows furrowing as a hand moved sluggishly about. “Why am I...” the words cut off as the Submissive gave a harsh shudder and then began to immediately shake, eyes going wide. “C-Cold.”

“I bet you are,” Hannibal agreed, voice colored by naked relief at Will's return to consciousness, and pushed the wandering hand back inside the safety of his coat before wrapping the heavy wool tightly around the younger Roux. He pulled William into his lap as much as possible, trying to keep the chilled body from having contact with the frost harden forest floor.

“H-Hannibal,” Will gasped, entire body shaking and Hannibal felt his heart ache with both affection and concern as a cold face was hidden against his shoulder in an attempt to escape the biting wind. He tugged the brunet even closer, one hand firm in support against Will’s back while the other wrapped around his feet, sandwiching them against the warm lengths of Hannibal’s thigh and his palm. “What, what am-m I – wh-hy?”

“I don’t know, dearest,” Hannibal managed, voice choked and far from the norm for the composed Roux. Fear was still beating about his chest, like a wild bird caged for the first time, and he felt pushed to the very edge of his control. “I was delivering some food at your father’s request. When I arrived, Winston led me here, to you. I feared the worst; you were cold and unconscious.”

“I’m al-right,” Will chattered, a hand sneaking out from the jacket to grip tightly as Hannibal’s shirt, “j-just co-ld. I’ll b-be alright.” Hannibal felt the emotion in his chest swell with the realization that the little Submissive was trying to comfort him.

Hannibal was unable to stop himself from pressing his face against the crown of Will’s curls, inhaling his heady scent. “Let us get you to my car and warmed up. Ezra must be mad with worry.” Or worse. Hannibal had no idea how Will had ended up in the forest, and the urge to see the older Graham safe was overwhelming. "Are you injured? Does anything hurt? When you get home, I can look you over. I keep a medical bag in my car and-"

A gentle tug against his tie silenced Hannibal's uncharacteristic rambling and he glanced down to find grey eyes - tired but still bright and fond - staring up at him. "I'm fine, I think. Just cold." His voice was firmer and color was slowly returning to his cheeks, "thank you for finding me."

"Dear Will,” the Dominant murmured, completely taken by both Will's beauty and his words. He squeezed the feet in his hold gently, "there is nothing I would not do, nowhere I would not go, if it meant I could remain by your side."

I will always find you, Hannibal vowed fiercely.
There was a hitch in Will's breath, those stunning greys widening before the Submissive ducked and hid his face in Hannibal's shoulder. The movement was not quite quick enough to hide the pretty, pleased smile on Will's face and Hannibal couldn't help the content, smug twist of his own lips. He stood carefully, ever mindful of the precious cargo in his arms, and felt another nearly impossible surge of affection at the quiet squeak of surprise that escaped Will with the move.

"Come, Winston." Hannibal called, already thinking of the steak he was going to grill as a reward for the ever faithful hound, "you can keep Mago company for the drive."

Will perked up almost childishly, clearly pleased at the thought of seeing his wayward puppy and Hannibal chuckled, undeniably pleased despite everything as he picked his way back towards the car.

Will felt almost normal as he limped from the bathroom to his bedroom, the pads of his feet sore but already healing from his unprotected walk in the woods. Daddy had been frantic when they'd arrived at the house, practically in tears as he'd run from the porch and thrown his arms around he and Hannibal both, pressing damp kisses to every inch of Will he could reach. He'd taken Will from Hannibal with a strength that the younger Submissive had always known his father had, yet was still surprised from it every time he saw it, and carried him upstairs. Will tried his best to calm his father, not even objecting when Ezra had drawn him a bath and then carefully, lovingly, tenderly, bathed him as if he was still a small child.

"Oh, bunny," Ezra kept saying over and over again, voice tight with emotion and eyes wet, "oh, bunny."

Ezra was downstairs now, talking with Hannibal as they put the food away. Explaining. Will knew that Hannibal was too smart to buy that this was all due to a cold, that the Submissive had almost let himself freeze to death in the woods because he had the flu, but Will desperately wished that he would. It seemed that Ezra knew better as well and the Roux's strong hearing easily picked up the quiet conversation going on directly below him.

"I see." Hannibal's voice was steady, even through the wood, and impossible to tell any emotion from. "He has the Gift, then?"

"He does. He takes after my carrier, Henri. They say it skips a generation." There was the sound of dishes clattering. "He loses himself. Sometimes for days a time. He sleeps walks, talks, has night terrors. Sometimes he can even be violent. It never happened - well not like this - before he started working with Jack and the FBI. It's not healthy."

"No, it is not."

Will leaned heavily against his dresser, lips quivering as he stared at the puppy pile on his bed. Mago was curled up in a ball on Will's bed, Nona and Dix sleeping around him, and Will couldn't help but wonder if this would be the last time he saw the little male pup. Would Hannibal still want him, when he knew just how flawed Will was? What kind of Submissive was he? So weak that he couldn't control his powers, letting them drive him off into danger. Surely, the Dominant's interest in him would wane when he realized just how much work Will would be. Why would he want a Submissive that couldn't be left alone, that could hurt himself, could…could hurt a baby.

"Normally, I would not permit this, but...I think the rules can be bent a bit. Just today. Would you like to go up and gather Mago yourself? So that Will can thank you again and you can say goodbye."
"That's very kind. I would like that, yes."

Will's eyes widened, stunned, and nearly tripped over himself as he pulled out a t-shirt and a pair of sleep pants, scrambling to get the clothing on as the sound of feet on the wooden stairs filled the air. He couldn't let Hannibal see him like this! But he already had. The realisation brought Will to a stand still, entire body blushing as he made the connection for the first time that Hannibal had found him in his underwear.

He barely had time to shake off the horrified shock and pull his pajamas on, finger combing his hair attempting and failing to make it look less like a rat's nest of tangled curls, when there was a soft knock on his door. Will swallowed and hastily - yet still gently - picked up Mago, pressing the puppy close to his chest as he kissed a tiny head, drawing strength from the sweet puppy scent before opening the door.

Hannibal stood there, looking tall and gorgeous and perfect even with the dirt and grass stains on the knees of his trousers. "Will."

"Um," Will managed before ducking his head and offering Mago, "here." The puppy was carefully taken from his hands, cradled safely in the crook of the Dominant's elbow. "Thank you. And...and I'm sorry."

"Sorry?"

"For the trouble." Mago let out a whimper and Will instinctively reached for him, stroking his silkly fur in comfort. "I...I know Daddy must have told you. It's my own fault, I know I should be more careful. I understand if you...I mean..." Will felt his face flush at the sight of Hannibal's crumbled tie, the edges of the delicate silk ragged and wrinkled from where Will had latched onto it earlier. "...I've ruined your suit."

There was a soft chuckle.

"I don't care about the suit, William." With his hand still on Mago, Will could actually feel the rumble of the laugh through the Dominant. "And there is nothing to apologize for."

"Yes there is." He said quietly. "I understand if...if you were to..." God, what had become of him? Will could hardly get the words out, the sounds literally refusing to form on his tongue. But the unspoken words and their meaning hung between them, regardless.

_I would understand if you wanted to remove your claim._

"Will, please look at me." Will glanced shyly up at him, breath catching at the way the emotions on the Roux's face gentled the patrician features. "What Ezra has told me changes nothing, I meant what I said in the woods. May I come see you on our normal visiting day? Only if you are feeling up to it, of course."

The younger Roux nodded, once again robbed of words. _He doesn't think I'm a freak, or that I'm weak. He wants to see me again._ Will was suddenly filled with affection, grateful and relieved, and all at once it struck him just how very upset he would have been if Hannibal had decided to end his courtship.

After a moment, Will finally found his voice. "I'd like that, Hannibal, very much."

"I'm glad."
Will blushed, taken by Hannibal's happy smile, and the stare between them grew longer, drifting into something much more. It was as if the air between them had suddenly become weighted, each breath taken a startling illumination of how strangely Will’s heart was beating in his chest, both never more aware of the distance between them and of how close they were to each other.

Will thought of the feel of Hannibal’s hands on him, the strength hidden and restrained in them, of the way warmth and safety seemed to somehow radiate off the Dominant’s very form, of how perfect he had smelled to Will. Will dropped his gaze back to the ruined silk tie, rising and falling with each breath the other Roux took, and Will was suddenly struck by how terribly, frighteningly – beautifully – intimate the feeling was. His hand slid up on its own accord, leaving Mago's fur to rest over the muffled yet quite steady beat of Hannibal’s heart, and Will stared at it, utterly fascinated.

“It’s so steady,” the Submissive murmured, pressing into the fabric as if that would somehow amplify the vibration, “like a drum.”

“William.”

Will shivered. Hannibal sounded utterly lost, each syllable of his name crafted as a prayer, accent heavy and the Roux had to fight against the urge to lean forward, to press his ear against the broad chest and have those strong arms wrap around him once more.

Will forced himself to take a step backwards.

Then another; his shaky breath sounding overly loud in the quiet of his room.

"Goodnight, Hannibal. Thank you again."

"Goodnight, William."

Will gave him one last, shaky smile, feeling flushed and achey, and forced himself to shut the door. He all but collapsed against the wood, eyes squeezing shut as he tried to calm the lust that seemed to claw at his throat and lungs. He pressed a hand against his mouth, shocked at his own boldness, only to shudder as Hannibal’s scent – attached still to the skin of his hand – filled his nose and made him light headed.

He dug the heel of his palm against his growing erection, trying desperately to calm himself before Ezra came to check on him, and let out a soft whimper.

What the hell was wrong with him? He never acted so bold! And yet...Will brought his hand up again, allowing himself another deep, guilty inhale of the Dominant's scent.

Hannibal...

Chapter End Notes

I swear to god, this chapter fought me.

I rewrote it at least four or five times. So I'm nervous about it and I hope you guys like it. Did the explanation of Will’s ‘gift’ go okay? How did you like the Hannigram? As always, hope you enjoyed the smut :)
Chapter Summary

“Maybe he was lying.” Will said softly, nearly an hour later as he soaked in a warm bath back at the hotel spa. Ezra was sprawled in a tub next to him, the soft sounds of classical music playing in the background as the two rested in the hotel spa. "Franklyn, I mean."

Chapter Notes

Here's the next chapter.

Betaed by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

December brought an aching cold to Maryland and Will shivered against it. Besides him Ezra was bundled so completely only his (greatly unamused) face could be seen. As a creature who had spent most of his life living in the west and southwest his father loathed winter in Baltimore. Will tried to tell him that this season was far worse than usual - that Maryland was a strange, fickle mistress when it comes to her weather - but Ezra would have none of it, grumbling frequently and loudly about the madness of the state.

Will chuckled to himself as his father hiked his coat collar up higher. “-intolerable place, incredibly rude.”

“You could have waited in the cab, Daddy.” Will said with a smile as they made their way towards Tobias’ shop. After a whole two and half weeks of resting (and some limited, short visits from his suitors), the Submissive had decided he felt fine enough to begin courting again. Ezra had been pleased; worried and more reserved about the whole affair than normal, but pleased.

The plan was to surprise both of his suitors at their homes and...well, see what they could catch them doing, honestly. It was a little underhanded, but Will was very curious as to what an unprompted, unannounced visit may reveal to him. The truth of it all was that it had been two months since his Change had passed. And while only four weeks of that had been in official courtship, Will had known each Dominant for nearly the entirety of both months.

There was only so long Will could string them both along before making a decision. It was cruel to keep them both waiting so long (not to mention rude) and what’s more, Will didn’t want to keep them waiting. Courting Dominants - while incredibly faltering and wonderful for his self-esteem - were also somewhat exhausting and confusing.

A decision had to be made.

They left the dogs with a neighbor of Will’s who had watched them several times before and owned a massive farm for them to play on, and headed into Baltimore for a week. They booked the Presidential Suite in the Four Seasons hotel for an extended weekend and used the third bedroom as
a place for the puppies and Sadie. Neither Submissive was worried about the pups dirtying the
carpet. Besides the fact that Sadie was impeccably trained, they’d bought the whelping box to leave
the little ones in and hired a pet sitter to stay with them while they were out and about.

Will was somewhat confused as to where all the money had come from and Ezra had just given him
a soft smile when he’d asked and told him that he’d been saving for a long time. The younger
Graham had felt guilty; he didn’t want his father spending his security so superfluously! But Ezra
had just laughed him off and told him that there was no better way to use his money than spending a
luxurious week with his bunny-boy and would hear no more about it.

They spent Thursday lazing about, enjoying each other’s company and conversation. The suite was
beautiful, with wide extensive views of the bay and a stone faced fireplace. Will had to admit that he
had missed his father something terrible, far more than he had ever imagined that he could. All those
years of living alone had somehow dulled Will to the need to be surrounded by kin and the last few
months had brought the awareness that his life lacked that connection into sharp relief. He could not
imagine his Daddy living so far away again, or not waking to Ezra’s warm words or soft cooing.

They decided to spend almost the entirety of Friday in the spa. The spa list was impressive and huge,
and Will was completely overwhelmed as he stared at it.
Ezra decided for them and ordered everything on the menu, voice imperious as he reserved them slots. "Everything except for the Mom-to-Be, we obviously don’t need that." His father instructed with a roll of the eyes, "and no waxing. We don’t need two mani’s or pedi’s either – just skip to the advanced, thank you." He set them up to be spaced out over the weekend so they could truly be pampered, and both Submissives were practically glowing by the end of the first few treatments.

By the time Saturday had come, Will felt utterly spoiled, loose and limber and content. It was in this frame of mind that the two Submissives left for Tobias’ shop. The front door was locked as despite the weekend day it was still very early in the morning, just barely afternoon, and Will was not surprised that his suitor had no lessons.
He went around to the alleyway, where a wooden staircase lead up the side of the brownstone to small deck and second entryway, one that lead up to Tobias’ apartment. Will would not go in unless he was asked to, of course, and if he was Ezra would join him as chaperon. But some distance so late in courtship was allowed and so his father waited just outside the alleyway, flirting shamelessly with a street vendor for free coffee and snacks, all while keeping his eyes locked on his son.

Will climbed the stairs, taking a deep breath as he glanced down at himself, brushing his hands over the front of his peacoat to remove hairs and lint that Ezra had already assured would not be there. He looked smart and casual, his curls perfectly formed from the treatment, skin clear and soft, nails clean and glossy. He wore a black peacot, a Burberry scarf tied tightly around his neck and a pair of matching (unbelievably, stupidly soft) leather gloves on his hand.

The Submissive steeled himself before knocking on the door.

But it was not Tobias that answered.

It was Franklyn Froideveaux. And in his arms was Ovie. It was an honest to god draw to see who was more shocked, the Human or the Roux.

“Franklyn,” Will choked out, blanching at the horrible turn of events. What on earth was he doing at Tobias’ house so early? Surely…surely they weren’t… but it wasn’t uncommon for Roux to lay with… The Submissive shook his head to rid himself of the thought. That couldn’t be what was happening here, could it? Tobias was courting him, he couldn’t possibly…right? “Oh, I…its…I came to see Tobias, is he home?”

Please, the Submissive begged silently, please say no.

The look on Franklyn’s face was unreadable but deeply sour. “Why are you here?”

“To see Tobias, of course. Like I said.” Will repeated, frowning. He fidgeted nervously, aware of Ezra’s concern stare. “If he’s not home, I can come back later.”

In Franklyn’s arms, Ovie whimpered, reacting to the Submissive’s voice. Even after being gone for so long, the puppy still recognized Will. His hand flew forward on its own accord, reaching for the puppy, but Franklyn immediately shifted away, scowling.

“Excuse me! Don’t touch him, Rocky is too young to be touched much. And not at all by strangers!”

Will stared at the man. His mouth twitched, lips forming the name ‘Rocky’ silently, once, twice, completely stunned. “Rocky? That’s…the puppy’s name?”

“Oh, Tobias'?” Franklyn snapped, looking bewildered, “of course he is. I named him for Tobias.”

“For Tobias?” Will repeated dumbly.

“Yes. He’s Tobias', naturally.” The Human said, pressing a kiss to the puppy’s ears.

“And he let you name him?”

Franklyn was staring at him like he was mad. “Well, he didn’t tell me the puppy had a name when he asked me to watch him, so I just named him myself. He was a gift to Tobias from a very important friend. Not as important as me, of course, but an old friend. A family friend, most likely, of his parents or something. Old, I’m sure, like his parent’s age.” The Human rattled, eyes distant, “and it was very important to him that Rocky be raised right. Trained up and everything. That’s why he gave Rocky to me.”
“He…” Will swallowed against a tight throat, “gave…Rocky…to you?”

Franklyn nodded, face pleased. The Human was clearly basking in the shocked expression on his self-declared rival’s face. “I’m his friend you see. His best friend. And I’m very good at these sort of things, a regular Caesar Milan. He stays here with Tobias during the weekend, but during the week he’s with me, day and night.” The short, stubby human’s head cocked to the side, a snide little smile on his face. “Say, does Toby know you were coming?”

_Toby?

“No,” Will said faintly, “no, he doesn’t.”

Tobias had given his gift to a Human? To _Franklyn Froideveaux_? He wet his lips, bringing a hand up to smooth his scarf as he tried to rally. Will felt hurt, betrayed even, and terribly let down. But he wondered if he had a right to feel this way. He knew that Hannibal had a puppy sitter for when he was at work as well, but he also knew that Mago stayed the majority of his time with the blond Dominant.

Or so Hannibal said.

He could have lied, just like Tobias apparently had.

“A bit rude, just showing here unannounced.” Franklyn sniped, sniffling as he leaned against the door frame. “Why, Tobias could have been doing anything. As it is, he’s out shopping. We’re having brunch today. You can wait if you like.”

The look on the horrid little man’s face clearly stated his opinion on the matter.

“No, I’ll…” Will shook his head, already turning towards the steps, “I’ll go. I’m sorry to have bothered you, Franklyn.”

“Mr. Froideveaux if you please.” Franklyn corrected sharply, brown eyes positively alight. The Roux doubted he understood exactly why this was cutting Will so deeply, but it was obvious to him that it had and Franklyn was clearly thrilled at the concept of Tobias choosing him over Will. Even if Franklyn didn’t understand just how he’d one-upped him. Humiliation crested over Will like a wave, making his cheeks burn hotly in the winter air.

Will didn’t answer, trying to keep his pace even as he walked down the stairs, head held high even as his heart sunk somewhere around his knees. Ezra met him at the alleyway mouth. It seemed he’d heard everything easily enough, and his eyes were locked on Franklyn, expression dark and ugly.

“No, Daddy,” Will murmured, taking his father’s hand just as he started for the steps, “I just want go back to the hotel.”

“But, bunny-”

“Please, Daddy.”

Ezra’s hard face softened, a hand reaching out to brush across his son’s cheek. “Okay. Let’s grab a cab, hm? We’ll go back to the hotel, stuff our faces with good food from the restaurant – even chicken tastes good when you’ve only had beef, yes?” His eyes crinkled, but Ezra’s smile didn’t reach them.

“I don’t want to be around people.” _Around Humans_, went unsaid between them.
“Then we’ll order room service. Get in our pajamas and order all the paper view movies, curl up with the pups.”

Will nodded, letting his father open the cab door. The younger Submissive was about to dip inside the cabin when a startled voice called out to him. It was Tobias, arms full of groceries, looking surprised but pleased. Will stiffened, hand tightening on the door frame. “Will? And Ezra! What an unexpected surprise!” The Dominant’s smile muted, “but… are you leaving?”

“Yes.” Will kept his eyes on the chipped yellow paint of the cab, unsure about what he was feeling to look at the other Roux. “I came to surprise you.”

“Well, I am surprised.” Tobias continued, eyes and tone weary as he picked up the atmosphere around both Submissives. “Must you rush off? I was just about to make a late breakfast for my friend and myself. I just bought fresh vegetables from the farmer’s market, I would love make you one my famous omelets. My friend swears by them; calls them godly.”

“I’ve already met Franklyn,” Will said slowly, eyes finally flickering over to look at Tobias, “and Rocky.”

The Dominant’s face paled, eyes widening. “Will, I can explain. It’s not what seems, I promise. Whatever Franklyn’s told you—”

Ezra stepped between them, physically blocking the dark skinned Roux’s view of his son as well as cutting off his words. “I don’t think my son is in the mood for visiting at the moment, Tobias.” He gently pushed Will into the cab. “We’ll call you.”

“William,” Tobias cried out, “please, can’t we just talk? This isn’t…this isn’t as dire as you think, as bad as it looks, I swear it. Franklyn exaggerates, he lies! He’s just my dog sitter – Will!”

But the cab was already pulling away.

“Maybe he was lying.” Will said softly, nearly an hour later as he soaked in a warm bath back at the hotel spa. Ezra was sprawled in a tub next to him, the soft sounds of classical music playing in the background as the two rested. "Franklyn, I mean."

“Mm, he could have.” Ezra agreed, eyes closed and face soft with bliss. “Humans are weak little things – hardly any strength of character. He could have just been jealous, as you’ve told me he was before.” His father cracked an eye open to watch him. “But that’s not what you think, is it?”

Will hesitated in answering, playing with the rose petals that floated in the water as he thought. Franklyn was jealous, even Hannibal had said so. He could have lied about everything, yet Will didn’t think so. He made a living sniffing out liars and Franklyn – while appearing zealous and quite possibly deranged – did not seem to be lying to Will. Not about everything, at least.

Slowly, the younger Graham shook his head. The puppies had been a test, one that Will had thought up personally. It wasn’t a normal part of the courtship process. Of course, there was very little rules surrounding what could and could not be given as a gift (well, for the Submissive, of course. There were loads and loads when it came to the Dominant side of it), especially once an official courting had begun, and Will’s gift was far outside of the norm.

“Did I ask too much?” He voiced quietly. “Perhaps I shouldn’t have gifted puppies. They’re so much work and – and both Tobias and Hannibal are very busy.”

“Stop that.” Ezra commanded crossly from his tub, turning to lean on the side as he glared at his son. “Stop making this your fault, you always do that and I can’t understand why. Everyone in life is
busy – including you and me. But that doesn’t give anyone permissions to take short cuts. You may
not have said anything directly, but it was more than implied that Tobias was to be the main
caretaker.” His father snorted. “Rocky, really.”

And that was the worst of it. Will sank into his tub, letting the scented water pool around his ears and
mouth, keeping only his nose and eyes out. He could almost understand it if Tobias was just using
Franklyn as a dog sitter, but the name? It implied that the Dominant had never even bothered to tell
the Human Ovie’s name.

The name that Will had so painstakingly picked out to match and complement Tobias’.

How deeply could Tobias really want to mate him if he couldn’t even take the time to watch a
puppy? And could Will ever trust him with a baby? Of course, the Submissive recognized the sharp
difference between the two. A puppy was a puppy after all, and a baby would be as much a part of
Tobias as it was Will. The Dominant’s instincts would be hard press to allow him to neglect his own
offspring; Roux raised young in pairs. And yet Will could not fight the unsettled feeling in his bones.

The water shifted around him before a warm body slotted itself next to him the tub. The porcelain
thing was large – large enough to fit both Roux – but it was still a snug one, and Will let his father
shift him until he was resting between Ezra’s long legs, head cradled against his smooth chest.

“Sweetheart,” Ezra said with a sigh, “this why we court. To show us things that we would miss
otherwise in a quick mating.”

“He’s called my mobile three times.”

“Yes, he has.”

Will sighed, fiddling with a rose petal, pushing and sliding the velvety thing between his fingers. “I
should give him a chance to explain himself.”

“If you want to, bunny, you can.” Ezra said, each word measured as his fingers carded through
Will’s hair, “but don’t be too forgiving, William. They are courting you, not the other way around.”

He nodded, letting the petal slip from his fingers, turning his head so it rested in the comforting curve
of his father’s neck. “I’ll see him, give him a chance. But I want to see Hannibal first.”

Hannibal’s home was as impressive as it was the last time Will had visited it, and sadly the
Submissive was no less nervous about this second visit then he was about the last one. The episode
with Tobias had shaken his confidence – in both himself and his suitors – and Will fidgeted
uncomfortably on the stoop as he waited for the Dominant to answer. The hour was still very early
and though it was the purpose of the entire visit, Will was nervous at what he might find.

The door opened to reveal a still sleep disheveled Hannibal, clad in a long sleeved maroon shirt that
was just tight enough to show the ripple of his muscles and still be comfortable, and a pair of stripped
bottoms of the same color on below. And in his arms – looking just as confused and startled – was
Mago.

Will let out a soft laugh of relief, reaching out to stroke the downy fur. “Hello, pup,” he greeted
happily, “did I wake you and your master?”

“I was up, actually,” Hannibal greeted warmly, “just making breakfast as it was. You are a pleasant
surprise,” the Dominant said with a smile, stepping back and opening his door wide. “Please, come
in out of the cold. Are you hungry? I have more than enough for all three of us.”
“That would be wonderful, Hannibal.” Ezra said cheerfully as he stepped inside the large foyer and immediately began to shed his winter layers, "I simply cannot abide this state's idea of weather!"

Hannibal chuckled. "Luckily for you, I just made fresh coffee. Nice and hot."

He poured them each a cup from a complicated looking machine, putting out cream, sugar, and cinnamon, before disappearing upstairs to change. Will settled in at the kitchen table, the coffee cup a welcomed warmth in his palm, and lovingly tended to the puppy who'd been left in his lap. Mago looked healthy and happy, and the two Submissives shared a smile before Ezra excused himself with a wink, settling in a plush looking living room located just across the hall from the kitchen.

Hannibal appeared only moments later, clad in pressed charcoal slacks and a white button up with the sleeves rolled up to expose his forearms, a pair of house loafers on his feet. Will could not deny how well he wore it, eyes roaming over the tall form in appreciation.

“Dear Will, to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?” Hannibal asked as he began to cut vegetables for the omelets.

“I was feeling better, so Daddy and I decided to stay in the city for a bit.” Will explained, only slightly lying. He ducked his head, staring into the murky liquid of the coffee, “and since we were already in the city, I wanted to come see you.”

The smile that earned him was small, composed, but undeniably bright. “I’m certainly not complaining,” Hannibal said as he began to prepare the eggs and when he spoke next, his voice was low. “I am happy to see you well, William. I confess that I worried for you. The thought of you in that woods again…”

“I’m sorry.” Will apologized softly, ducking his head once more, this time to hide the smile on his face. He did feel guilty for worrying the other Roux, but he felt guiltier at the warm, pleased feeling that filled him at the sight of such worry.

“As I have said before, you have nothing to apologize about.” Hannibal reassured casually as stirred the mix. “Your gift is nothing to be ashamed of, and under the right circumstances it is what its names implies; a gift.”

He knew Hannibal was talking about Will’s field work with the FBI, but the Submissive didn’t try to defend his choice to work with the Bureau. Because the truth was that the younger Roux was beginning to doubt the strength of conviction to stay in the field. Was it worth it? Was the horror of the last few weeks – the shooting in office, the annoyance of Freddie Lounds, Jack’s callous treatment, not to mention the sleep walking and terrors, the blackouts and moments where Will completely lost himself to his mind – still worth it? Was catching Humans worth the worry it caused Ezra? Worth the risk of alienating one of his suitors? The chance of bodily and mental injury? Was it worth risking never falling pregnant? Of never having a baby, never having his family?

Just a few months ago, Will knew what his answer would be. But now?

“I may not go back,” he admitted, hugging Mago close.

“Oh?” Hannibal asked, voice far too casual to be so.

“If I mate…when I mate,” the blond’s fingers stilled on the whisk at Will’s correction, claret eyes snapping up to lock on the younger Roux, “I’d want to carry.” Will could hardly believe his own daring, eyes darting to where Ezra was pretending not to listen, absorbed in a book. “As soon as I could and…as much as I...maybe I’d teach, but I think I’d want to work from home. There’s a
publishing agency that has been after me for ages – for personal narratives and textbooks and things like that. I’d want do that, I think. That’d be best, don’t you think?"

Hannibal swallowed audibly, nodding slowly.

“I’d need a quiet place to work though,“ Will continued, setting his cup down on the wooden table, “an office, where I could shut out the world to work. With lots of soft things to sit on and places for my books. A fireplace would be lovely.” The Submissive let out a wistful sigh. “I don’t have any place like that at home, though.”

“I know a wonderful contractor.” Hannibal offered, and Will shivered at the rough edge to his voice, the way his eyes had gone dark. “I’ve was just thinking about hiring him myself, to remodel one of my libraries.”

“Really?”

“Yes. Between my main library here at the house and the one I have at the office, I have no need for a second one.”

Will nodded in understanding. He hadn’t seen either library here, but he had seen the impressive one in Hannibal's office. “What is it going to be?”

“An office.”

Alana Bloom let out a sigh of frustration, the stress ball bulging out around her fingers as she funneled her anger into torturing the frog shaped thing. The voice on the other side of the line was loud and constant, and the young doctor found herself pacing her home office in an attempt to keep herself calm.

“I do understand your position, Jack,” Alana said, each word carefully measured and spoken to display nothing but cool control, “I do, but that doesn’t change the facts of this situation. Will is not healthy enough to be in the field right now.”

“I need him.”

Alana fought the urge to throw the stress ball. Jack had been saying the same lines over and over again, all variants of ‘I need him,’ ‘people are dying,’ ‘Will can fix this, children - Alana,’ and just for a change of pace, more ‘I need him.’

“Jack, he’s sick. Will’s not eating, he’s not sleeping and when he does, he has night terrors and sleep walks. For Christ sake, Jack! Ezra found him on the roof! Completely asleep, completely incoherent, completely vulnerable.”

“Did you talk to Will?”

“What?”

“Did you talk to Will or to his father?”

Alana’s brows furrowed in confusion, “Ezra, but I don’t see-”

“I want to hear it from Will.”

“Jack, you can’t be serious.” She asked, aghast. “Why on earth would Ezra lie about this? Will is sick, he’s not in the position to be making calls.”
But the man’s voice was firm, hard – unmoving. “I’d like to hear it from Will himself.”

Alana threw the ball, seething and winced as it knocked a coffee cup she was using to store pens and highlighters. She forced herself to take a deep breath, finding her center. Will had always been a delicate man and what was happening now had been just what the young doctor had been afraid of with him re-entering the field. Will had seemed to be handling it well enough for the last two months and Alana was under no illusion that it had everything to do not only with the bi-weekly therapy sections with Hannibal (Dr. Lecter was, after all, considered one of the best not only in the state but the country, and had a strong international reputation) but – perhaps most importantly – with Ezra Graham’s presence.

Since the elder Graham moved back in with his son, Will looked healthier than ever. For the first time in the years that Alana had known him, her friend looked happy and healthy. His skin was practically glowing, the angles of his body softened by the desperately needed curves of a well-fed man. The dark circles and swallow skin were finally gone, his eyes bright and his hair – which had always been limp and straggly – had become luscious curls that any woman would kill for.

Will had also become more outgoing, smiling and laughing more, sharing coffee and agreeing to go out to lunch with his co-workers and for the first time in the six years that he’d been teaching at the Academy, Alana saw Will making friends. The fear, the anxiety, the overwhelming misery that had always hung around her friend like a cloud had finally begun to lift.

In short, it had reinforced everything Alana had ever believed; there was no such thing as an unreachable or impossible patient, no one who could not experience a healthy and fulfilling life with the help of proper diagnosis and treatment.

And, on a much more selfish, personal level, their relationship had never been better. They ate lunch together almost every day, emailed and texted (and hadn’t that been a hilarious and bizarre moment – receiving a text from Will Graham!) multiple times a day. Alana had always considered Will a good friend, but now he had become a dear one. Before, she had felt the need to keep some distance between the two of them so that if the worst ever happened, Alana could count on her judgment being uninfluenced by any attachments. But now, with Will improving so much…she wasn’t even sure if letting him closer had been a conscious thought or not, but the brunette certainly didn’t regret it.

Will had always been funny (even if the funny was dry and aerobic and at times verged on being cruel) but now he was hilarious, always having the right sort of quip or witty remark to make. He was charming, warm, and caring, to the point that even when Will made social faux pas – which he still did frequently, as nothing would change the fact that Will was an odd bird – it was easier to ignore because of how earnestly, charmingly confused about it he was.

Honestly, it was as if Will had become a completely different man. No, that wasn’t true. It was more like Will had finally blossomed and grown comfortable in his own skin. And Alana was not going to let Jack Crawford cause Will to lose what he’d fought so hard to earn.

“You had me assigned as consultant because – by your own words – you trusted and valued my professional opinion.” Alana reminded, voice stern but non-confrontational. “You asked me to help monitor Will, to keep him from being pushed too far. You can’t just ignore what I have to say now because you don’t like it.” There was a scoff on the other side of the line, but she pushed on. “What’s more, Hannibal – who you also recruited to keep Will healthy – agrees with my statement.”

“I’m sure Dr. Lecter does.”

There was something – something odd about Jack’s tone that gave Alana pause. But still, Hannibal
was no Ezra Graham, he was a trained professional and not only Alana’s mentor but a friend, and she leapt to his defense. “Dr. Lecter is incredibly talented in his field, Jack, and he’s made amazing progress with Will. You can’t possibly tell me that you don’t believe him.”

“It’s not a matter of belief, Dr. Bloom. I think that Dr. Lecter has gotten too…involved to give an unbiased assessment.”

“What are you implying?” Alana asked, aware that her voice was as baffled as she felt.

“They’re clearly seeing each other. Or they’re going to be. I let it slide because I felt he was helping with Will’s recovery, but I don’t believe that Dr. Lecter can see the situation clearly.” Jack said the words with such confidence, such belief that it drew her up short.

Hannibal and…Will?

God, she couldn’t even picture it.

“Jack, I think you’re reading too much into this.” Or just seeing what you want, Alana thought, thinking of the raw, ruthless streak in the FBI agent and the driven – almost obsessive – way he handled his cases. It was a well-known fact that there was little Jack Crawford wouldn’t do to keep his close case numbers climbing.

“Hannibal is a professional. And even if this was true, he’s violated no ethical code because you asked him to take Will on under the table. What’s more,” and for the first time of the conversation, Alana heard her voice start to rise, “I can produce a number of other psychologists who would agree with both Dr. Lecter and my own assessments with only a handful of meetings with Will. This isn’t going to happen, Jack. This can’t happen. It will kill him.”

The conversation disintegrated from that point and Alana hung up the phone knowing that there was still an battle on the horizon; a large, long, drawn out battle. By the time the call was over, her normally perfectly style hair was standing up at various angles from how often she’d run her hand through it in order to fill a physical need to do something as she talked to the bull headed man.

As it was, Alana knew that she needed to give Hannibal and Will (or Ezra, most likely) a heads up. She dialed her mentor’s home phone number and was hardly surprised when Hannibal picked up on the second ring. Hannibal was always home on Sundays. Everything about the blond was controlled and predictable – which was why the idea that he would break his own strict ethical code by dating a patient (even if Will was technically not a patient) was so absurd.

“Alana, what a pleasant surprise.”

“Hannibal, hello,” Alana greeted with a strained smile, “I wish I could say that I’m calling on a pleasant terms. I’ve just had a conversation with Jack Crawford.”

“Ah.”

“Yeah. He’s incredibly upset about Will not coming to the field. Nothing that I say seems to be getting through to him…” Alana’s words faded slightly as she picked up the muted but still quite recognizable sound of Will’s voice in the background.

“-so warm, you really don’t mind if I wear it? Oh, I’m so sorry, you’re on the phone.”

“And I just wanted you to know that he isn’t going to drop this.” She finished lamely, ears straining for anything else. That couldn’t have possibly been Will! Will was sick at home and – and there was no reason, no professional reason, for him to be at Hannibal’s house at eight in the morning. “Maybe
you should call him, preempt it, since I’m sure he’s going to call you.”

“Yes, I'll do that. Thank you, Alana.”

“Of course.” She answered, eyes widening at what was definitely the distinctive sound of Will’s laughter in the background. Will was with Hannibal. At Hannibal’s home, at eight in the morning. On a Sunday. “I was thinking we could grab lunch soon, Hannibal. And talk.”

“That sounds wonderful. I’ll call you tomorrow to schedule.” There was a deep amusement in Hannibal’s voice, tempered with a fondness that Alana had never heard from him before and the young woman was certain that it was not directed at their current conversation but rather something going on in the background.

“Yes, that sounds perfect. Have a good day, Hannibal.”

“You as well. Goodbye, Alana.”

Before the line went dead, she caught Will’s voice once more.

“Breakfast was perfect.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you guys for all your kudos and comments! They really help me get inspire. Next chapter should be up soon (god willing) and things are about to get real ;P.

Hope you guys enjoyed the chapter, especially the Hannigram.

For fun, I've the spa menu from the Four Seasons in Baltimore. I spent a long time lusting over the options, wishing I could have them.
“Will, I cannot apologize enough for what happened yesterday. I can only imagine how that must have looked to you and the idea that I’ve hurt you is unbearable. I know what Franklyn told you and I beg you to just give me a chance to explain. Franklyn is my oldest friend, but he is a possessive, jealous friend. Please, just…let me talk with you. Please, just give me a chance and if you never want to see me again after that, I’ll…I’ll leave.”

Will sighed as he listened to the message, leaning back against the wall. They’d spent most of Sunday out and about on the town, playing the part of the tourist and Will was surprised at all the things he’d never seen or done in the city despite the fact that he lived within reasonable driving distance.

They’d visited the zoo and the Baltimore Art Museum, had lunch in the Fell’s Point neighborhood, before retreating to the Inner Harbor to visit the sites. They were at the National Aquarium now, and Will had quickly found the jelly fish exhibit and sequestered a quiet spot to sit and watch their gentle movements. Jelly fish were always Will’s favorite at any aquarium, ever since he was a little kid, and he always found peace and contentment watching them.

Ezra was a few paces away, chatting up a mother and her three children, all smiles and charm. His father always did that. He naturally found a way past humans of any gender defenses, dazzling them with his slow, southern drawl and good looks. Men wanted to fuck him, own him, possess, and while women sometimes felt the same, they usually wanted him as their GBFF (gay best friend forever) and seemed to trust him implicitly within a few moments of conversation.

Will could never hope to be as suave or smooth as his Daddy.
The young Roux let out a sigh as he pulled up a text message, frowning as he stared at the blank screen. He really should give Tobias a chance...the Dominant had been nothing but polite and kind to Will, and Franklyn was clearly unbalanced, but Will’s feelings were hurt.

“Everything alright?” Will glanced up to find a Human standing in front of him, hands in his pockets and attractive face twisted in concern. The male was probably only a few years older than Will, if even that, and very handsome. He was tall, with dark chocolate hair with a near matching eye color, and just enough stubble to highlight a strong jaw.

“Oh, yes, I’m fine, thank you.” Will answered awkwardly, shifting uncomfortably.

The man’s frown increased, a deep ‘v’ forming between his brows. “Do you mind if I sit with you?” The Roux shrugged, moving his coat from the bench. “Thanks. I’m here with my little brothers-” he nodded towards where no less than three boys, all in various stages of preteen years, were gathered around a tank, “- and they’re exhausting me. I’m greatly outnumbered, you know.”

Will gave him a small smile. “I’m visiting with my father.”

“Where you from?”

“Very near here, actually.” Will admitted, “just never came into the city and looked around. It’s a very nice aquarium.”

“Yeah, I’m actually a member. I love it here. Here and the zoo.” The male said with a smile. He offered his hand. “I’m Jacob.”

The shorter brunet took it with only the slightest of hesitations. “I’m Will.”

“Are you not enjoying your visit?”

“Huh?”

“I’m sorry,” Jacob said with a shrug, “it’s just your sitting over here in the dark, all by yourself. And that frown? Epic.”

Will blushed, fiddling with his phone case for lack of something to do with his hands. “No, I’ve had a great time here, it’s just – things on my mind, I guess.”

“Ah.” The Human said with an exaggerated nod. There was a shuffling sound and suddenly a bag of Teddy Grahams were being offered to him. “Want a bite? I keep them around in case the boys get hungry, but I guess they’re too big for Teddy Grahams now. Now me?” A wink was thrown at him as he popped a handful into his mouth, “I’ll never be too old for Teddy’s.”

A laugh left him and he reached into the bag, fishing out a teddy. “Cheers to that. Thank you.”

“So,” Jacob drawled after a moment of companionable chewing, “girlfriend trouble?”

Will started, blinking in surprise at the Human. How had he figured that out? He frowned, staring back down at his phone. “Not really, I mean, it’s nothing serious. He and I are just sort of seeing each other right now anyway.”

“Ah, boyfriend trouble.”

Will stiffened, eyes widening as he realized what he’d just given away. A growing amount of people had no problem with gays and lesbians, and though Will was technically straight, the nature of their
race made it appear very different. Maryland was fairly liberal and they’d just recently begun to murmur about equalizing marriage, but still. It wasn’t something he usually stated outright to strangers, even if they were pretty.

Some of his panic must have shown on his face, because Jacob frowned. “Hey, hey, now. It’s alright, I can hardly judge. Be a bit hypocritical as I’ve been known to walk the curved road myself a few times.” At Will’s confused look he clarified. "I'm bi."

“I see. I'm sorry to assume, you just never know.” Will said with a shrug.

“Don’t have to explain that to me,” The Human said with a nod. “Not that it’s any of my business, but I can’t imagine anyone ever wanting to fight with you.” Will looked over at him, confusion clear on his face. “I mean, beside the fact that you’re stunningly attractive? You just – there’s this gentle air around you. Soft, kind of. I bet you’re a great person.”

Oh.

Oh.

Will felt his cheek and ears go beet red with the realization of what was happening. He was being flirted with. For the first time, he looked at their interaction through the eyes of a hunter. Jacob’s entire body language nearly screamed the intensity of his interest; his legs were spread wide, his thigh just far enough away not to press against Will’s but still far closer than would be accepted as casual. His upper body (his chest and shoulders) were turned towards him, and his eyes had rarely left Will’s face. Jacob hadn’t come over here out some misconstrued concept of pity – he’d come because he wanted Will. He’d sought Will out, even though he was there with his family, and begged his attention without any prompting.

The Roux realized this all at once, feeling something hard and sharp and dangerous swell in his chest, and felt powerful.

“Thank you, Jacob. That’s very kind.” Will said, surprising himself with how silky smooth his voice had become, his words tinted with just enough pleased shyness to make Jacob swallow, a tongue darting out to wet his bottom lip. He leaned back slightly, opening his seated stance before placing a hand on the bench seat between them, leaning heavily on it as he stared forlornly at his phone. “He lied to me.” The Roux admitted softly, “or at least I think he did. I…haven’t really given him a chance to explain.”

“Yes?” Jacob said, clearing his throat slightly. “That was stupid of him. Is he cheating, or…”

Will sighed, thinking of Franklyn so comfortable and happy in Tobias’ kitchen. “I don’t think so. I gave him a gift, a very important gift and he gave it away.” There was a stuttered intake of breath from next to him and the Submissive watched in fascination as something like frustrated indignation flashed across Jacob’s face. “Dogs – my dogs – they mean everything to me. I gave him a puppy from my first litter to raise. He said he wanted it, but he gave it away.”

“Not to a shelter!”

“No, not a shelter. He gave it to a friend of his who…who doesn’t like me very much. He wouldn’t even let me see my pup!” Will said sadly, shaking his head. “I’m right to be angry…aren’t I?”

“Yeah,” Jacob said instantly, “yeah of course you are. That was a dick move. I’d…I’d never give away anything you gave me.” The man groaned, bring a hand up to rub at his face. “Jesus, I’m doing so bad at this. Look, I apologize. I’m usually way more smooth than this. Here,” he dug out his
wallet, pulling out a card and handing it to Will, “you should give him a chance to explain things. But, you know, if it doesn’t work out I’d love to take you out to dinner. There’s something just really special about you, Will, and – uh – I just want you to keep that in mind. You’re…you’re worth a lot. A lot. And if I can see that just from talking with you for a few minutes - you deserve to be with someone who sees that, that is going to treat you like that. Trust me, you could have anyone. Don’t settle.”

Will nodded, taking the card and running his fingers over the printed letters, reading the name.

“Would you treat me like that? Like I was special?”

Those dark eyes raked over the Roux’s form, half-massed and heady with lust, and the smile grew into something sharper, more wanton. “Yeah, Will. Always.”

The stare continued between them for a long moment before one of Jacob’s brothers called out to him and the Human reluctantly left, glancing over his shoulder every few moments before they’d cycled out of the room.

Will leaned back against the wall once more, a self-satisfied smile on his face. Jacob was right. So was Daddy. Will could have anyone – anyone. While like any other Submissive Will craved a Dominant mate, someone to protect and cherish him, to pin him down and fill him full of babies until Will couldn’t remember what it was like to not be carrying. But he didn’t need them. He could wait, if Hannibal and Tobias failed him. There were other Dominants out there, there had to be.

And if there wasn’t?

Will glanced down at the swanky card in his hand.

Well, there were others.
Tobias fought the urge to pace as he waited for Will to arrive. They were meeting in Little Italy, a neighborhood that was located fairly close to the hotel the two Submissives were staying at. The Dominant was eager to see his Will, wanting desperately to smooth over the confusion and – as he saw it – a bump in their relationship. He took a deep breath through his nose, willing himself to stay calm and settled. It would do no one any good if he startled Will with his anger. What Franklyn had almost cost him was not lost on the Roux, and he had nearly wept in relief when Will had finally agreed to meet with him.

Because Tobias had plans.

Will would be like his own carrier; kept in the safety of their home, pregnant with Tobias’ baby after every heat. Will would quit his jobs, of course, because there would never be any need for his Submissive to work. What’s more, Will would be far too busy keeping the house to Tobias’ high standard of organization and cleanliness. Every night since their first meeting, Tobias had dreamed of the life he would have with his Will.

The day would start with a homemade breakfast, Tobias’ eating true southern cuisine as he read the paper. Will would be on his knees, tucked in the safe space between his Dominant’s thighs as he slowly, expertly, sucked Tobias off. That would be his mate’s morning meal. Nothing but the seed that would keep him swollen and fat.

For lunch, Will would bring down a tray and they’d eat together in between lessons. Maybe Tobias would take him then, fucking his mate hard and fast, eager to fill him up before his next lesson came. He wouldn’t be able to knot – that would take far too long – but Tobias had already bought several silicone and glass plugs to keep his cum inside his little Will.

Dinner would be a grand affair. They’d dress for it like Americans had done in a more civilized time, and afterwards Tobias would do his paperwork and bills while Will cleaned the kitchen. And then… then he take his Submissive until Will was incomprehensible, until he passed out on his knot. And the children! Oh, the children. Eventually they’d have to move, but that was fine. Tobias already had his eye on several properties close to the shop.

Yes, Tobias had it all planned, and so he had to fix this.

The honest truth of it as was that he had given the puppy to Franklyn, but only to aid in raising it. The pup was still Tobias’ and once it was completely house trained and could take meals for itself, he would allow it to live full time with him. As it was, the elegant Roux was not going to allow his very expensive oriental rugs to be sullied by urine or excrement. He had no idea where Franklyn had gotten the name ‘Rocky,’ as if that was something that Tobias would ever name a dog, or why he thought he needed to name him at all.

It had been made very clear to the Human that he was a stand in, a service, and that the dog was ultimately Tobias’.

It wasn’t that big of a deal and was something that – truthfully – Tobias had never intended Will to find out about. White lies and all that. Nor did he think that it would hurt the fairer Roux so much once had. So he had outsourced the puppy care, it wasn’t as if Franklyn hadn’t been doing a good job. The puppy went to the vet once a week for checkups, and was perfectly on track in all of his developmental stages.

Tobias couldn’t understand why Will was so upset, but the hurt on the Submissive’s face was clear to him that morning, and Tobias would do anything and everything in his power to remove it, to never see that look again.
He perked up at the sight of Will and Ezra making their way towards him. They stopped in front of a bookstore, exchanging a kiss before the older Roux ducked inside. He instantly settled in an open table next to the window, where he could easily keep an eye on their interaction. It took a moment for Will to cross the busy street before finally joining Tobias.

“Will,” the Dominant breathed, taken as always by the beauty and scent of him, “thank you for meeting me.”

The reply was emotionless. “Tobias.”

“I bought you coffee. A caramel latte with fat free whip and an extra shot of cappuccino. That is still your favorite, yes?” Will nodded, taking the coffee mutely. Tobias sighed. “I won’t deny that I gave Ovie to Franklyn to watch while I was at work, but I promise you that he was never given permission to rename him, or to keep him. He returned the puppy every day after business hours.”

Will’s brows furrowed. “Franklyn said he kept him all throughout the week.”

Tobias pressed his lips together. “He was lying, of course, as he was about much else.” He let out a sigh, shaking his head, putting on his best forlorn expression. “Franklyn was one of my earliest friends. My first friend, to be honest, and I don’t have many. Dominants rarely get along, as you know, and with no Submissive in sight, I was lonely. I allowed Franklyn more privileges than I ever should have, allowed him to get away with so much. He is jealous and cruel to those he feels threatened by. I should have cut him loose long ago – you are not the first person he has lied to or offended. It was why I was so hesitant in first telling you about him.” Tobias gave a deep, heavy sigh. “But, I was lonely.”

There was a gentle touch against his arm, the slightest offering of comfort, but one that made his heart sing. He glanced down at the Submissive, giving him a pained smile. Will returned it with a small one of his own.

“I can understand loneliness.” Will said softly. The younger Roux stared up at him searchingly. “Is everything you just told me true?”

_Not necessarily._

“Of course, yes.” Tobias placed his own hand over the gloved one, squeezing it. “I would never lie to you, Will.”

There was a slow nod. “You said was.”

“Pardon?”

“When you were talking about Franklyn, you said ‘was.’ You used past tense.”

“I did.” Tobias thought of the fat, bloated form that was still sprawled across his kitchen floor, eyes frozen wide in horror with a chest and throat dyed crimson.

“But he was your best friend.”

“He almost cost me you, Will,” he tightened his grip on the slender hand, fighting the urge to growl at the mere thought of what Franklyn had nearly ruined for him. “I thought I’d lost you. I couldn’t face that.” He was not sure if the news pleased the Submissive or not, those grey eyes looked up at him with a mix of emotions. Tobias brought his hand up to cup a perfectly shaped jaw, and fought to keep his breathing steady as he asked the question he dreaded. “Tell me I haven’t lost you, William. Please, I can’t bear not knowing. May I…may I still court you?”
The sound of traffic around them was loud, mixed with the murmur of the people around them, and Tobias felt his heart lurch as the silence grew on.

“I need some time to think, but yes. I think so, yes.” Will said. Tobias let out a shaky laugh, brushing his thumb over the swell of the Submissive’s cheek, eyes closing in relief. He hadn’t lost him. Tobias hadn’t lost William.

The Dominant’s eyes flickered up as the rumbling screech of a city bus pulled next to them and Tobias immediately moved to take advantage. He pulled Will to him, amused at the soft squeak of surprise that escaped the shorter man at the move, and tilted Will’s chin up before capturing the lips that had haunted his every waking thought.

Will stiffened under him, hands latching onto Tobias’ arms in surprise, grey eyes wide. It was heaven; those lips soft and full, plush and perfect against his own. The Dominant tightened his grip, pulling Will even closer. He broke it only seconds later and when the bus pulled away both Roux were in their original positions.

Tobias smiled fondly at the dazed, stunned look on Will’s face, his cheeks flags of red.

“Come,” the Dominant said softly, taking Will’s hand as began to lead him across the road, “let us go tell your father the good news.”

Will was silent the entirety of the ride to Hannibal’s house. They were spending their last dinner in the city with the Dominant. While Roux would and could eat outside their main food source easily enough and with little repercussion, they gained little nutrition from it. And after a full four days of eating out and about, both Submissives were craving actual human. Hannibal had promised them a full course meal and both were excited about it. They’d stopped at the hotel to shower and change; neither of them wanted to show up smelling of Tobias, that would be far too rude – showy even.

However, Will was at an utter loss.

Tobias...kissed...me. The younger Graham thought, dazed. He brought a hand up to his lips, still stunned from Tobias’ bold move. The kiss had been fleeting, but had filled him with a warmth that he had felt all the way down to his toes. His first real kiss. Will had kissed humans before, but actually being kissed by another Roux was…it had been…he shivered.

Next to him, Ezra gave him a knowing look that Will eagerly ignored.

Yet, as pleasant as the kiss had been, there were many things about their interaction that gave him significant pause. Will wanted to believe Tobias’ words, that the Dominant hadn’t lied to him. But there was something just...off.

And Franklyn!

While the Roux felt little grief at the loss of such a rude, intolerable Human, he was disturbed with how easily Tobias had killed what was – by his own words – his oldest friend. Would Will kill Alana for Tobias? Or for Hannibal? No, Will didn’t think he would. Not unless it was a life or death situation, not even in response to Tobias’ perceived loss of their relationship.

Of course, Will would have done nothing to warrant that response in the first place. If the courtship lines had been reversed, the Submissive would never had allowed such a miscommunication to happen. The kiss had been wonderful, but the rest of the interaction had filled him with unease and left a strange taste in his mouth. After all, Will had told the Dominant he would think about their continued courtship, but Tobias had so clearly taken that as a clear yes.
Will needed more time to think, he was too unsure about how he felt. He felt worried, uncomfortable, and somewhat at a loss of how he was supposed to be feeling.

He tried to push the confusing thoughts away as they paid the cabby and climbed the steps to Hannibal’s door. It wouldn’t be fair to the other Dominant if he let his mixed feelings about Tobias color the dinner. Hannibal met them at the door, utterly breathtaking in a dark blue and umber plaid three piece and a paisley tie in matching colors, a sapphire blue button up and polka dotted pocket square providing splashes of color.

Will nervously straightened his own suit jacket. His father assured he looked stunning in his all black ensemble. The two piece suit was tailored to fit him perfectly and it made him slightly uncomfortable – he couldn’t remember the last time he had such an honest fit on. Ezra had dressed him in a matching black button up and tie, which held the only inch of color on him with the tiny silver lines that crossed over it. But as always (at least to Will) his father stole the scene; Ezra looked striking in a navy suit and dove grey tie.

They spent the first hour talking, enjoying an appetizer of fresh fruit and an accompanying white wine in the living room, before retiring to the dining room for the rest of the six courses. The soup was a Czernina, a sweet and sour soup made from fresh blood, chunks of meat and noodles. Will had to truly force himself from inhaling the delicious broth, even more aware of how much he had been craving a proper meal.

The fourth course was a perfectly seared tuna, followed by black pudding and then a Shepherd’s pie that was a mix of meats. A fresh salad, clean and delicious, cleared the pallet for a dessert of homemade cheesecake. They retired to the parlor for coffee, talking cheerfully about everything and nothing all at once, simply enjoying each other's company.

Will had almost forgotten the unease of earlier; he was so full and happy. If he mated Hannibal, Will knew that he could expect meals like this at any time. While perhaps they would not always be so grand, he doubted that they would ever be any less delicious, and he had complemented the Dominant so frequently throughout the night that Hannibal was practically glowing with smug pride.

The night came to a close much sooner than Will wanted and the Submissive was surprised to find himself pouting at the late hour. He wanted to stay much longer, but Ezra was insistent that they had long drive in the morning and Will was anxious to get his dogs back. Hannibal helped them to the cab, carefully negotiating a veritable tower of tupperware containers into the trunk, before they said goodbye.

They waited until he was safely back inside before giving the cabby directions, but at the last moment Will called out for him to stop.

“I need to tell Hannibal something.” Will explained as he undid his buckle. “I’ll be right back.”

Ezra gave him a long, long look and the silence between them was heavy with a shared knowledge, while Will struggled not to spontaneously combust under the strength of his blush.

“Alright, bunny.” His father said finally, “if that’s what you want. Don’t be long. The meter is on.”

“I will, Daddy.” Will promised, slipping from the cab. He made his way up the icy sidewalk as quick as he dared and by the time he reached the porch the door was already open.

“Is everything alright, Will?” Hannibal asked, brows furrowed in concern. “Did you forget something?”
“No, I…” Will felt his confidence flicker before steeling himself. “Can I ask a favor of you?”

Hannibal nodded. “Can I come in for a moment?”

“Of course.” The older Roux said, stepping back, clearly confused, eyes flickering to where Ezra was clearly still waiting in the cab.

Will stepped into the warm entryway, swallowing against a lump in his throat. “Close your eyes?”

“William-”

“Please? I’m sorry, just…humor me. Please, Hannibal.” Hannibal watched at him for a moment longer before obediently closing his eyes.

Painfully aware of his father’s stare, Will reached out and shut the door just enough to block them from his sight. At the creak of the wood moving, Hannibal’s brows furrowed even more, lip twITCHING SLI淡淡的ately. Will took a shaky breath before stepping into the Dominant’s space. At the first touch of his palms against his chest, Hannibal went completely stiff, but Will forced himself to continue on before he lost his courage.

He’d been wondering the entire night what it would feel like to kiss Hannibal, if it would feel anything like the kiss with Tobias had. And, as the Submissive told himself shakily as he brought his face closer, it was only fair to…to…

A whimper escaped him at the first touch of skin on skin and the answering sound from Hannibal could only be described as wounded. A bolt of heat shot from his mouth, arrowing down his stomach and curling in the hollow of his hips, and he felt both his cock and hole twitch with it. Will could hardly believe how something as simple as a kiss could feel like this.

The strength in his legs gave out abruptly and Will slumped against the door, pressing it fully closed with a loud ‘click,’ eyes fluttering shut in pleasure. Hannibal followed him, the contact between their lips never breaking, resting his forearms against the door on either side of Will’s head. He felt completely surrounded by the Dominant. But instead of feeling threatened or trapped, the younger Roux only felt safe.

The kiss lengthened, deepened, as Hannibal’s mouth slanted more comfortably across his own. Will’s fingers curled into the suit jacket, shaking at the sheer overwhelming amount of feelings the chaste kiss was pulling from him. Kissing Tobias had been one thing, but this…this was something completely different. Will felt something inside him shift and uncurl, like a flower blossoming, and he gripped at Hannibal desperately.

This was…this was right.

A pitched whine filled the air as Hannibal pulled away and Will tightened his grip, trying to keep the older Roux against him. A feather light kiss was brushed across his lips – almost like an apology – before Hannibal completely broke away, resting their foreheads against each other.

“We have to stop,” Hannibal managed, sounding completely breathless, “I have to stop. It’s…tobula, per daug, per tobulas.”

Will frowned at the foreign words, eyes opening and feeling his cock harden even further at the sight of Hannibal completely flushed and practically wanton, lips kiss-swollen and red, eyes cloudy with need.

“Hannibal.” The Submissive breathed, turning his head to nuzzle against the side of his fist. It immediately uncurled, a big palm cupping his face.
“You have to go.” The words seemed forced, as if it had taken everything in Hannibal to say them. The older Roux pulled back and Will immediately tightened his hold once more, barely muting the whimper at the widening distance, “I know, darling, I don’t want you to go either.” Hannibal rasped, “but your father is waiting. And this – I will not do anything to jeopardize winning you.”

“Come see me,” Will asked, only slightly surprised to hear the note of begging in it, "tomorrow, please.”

“Of course.” Hannibal promised, a thumb brushing down the bridge of Will’s nose, expression fond. “As soon I can.” The Dominant hesitated before continuing. “William, let me court you privately. Please, Will, I can’t imagine a mate that could ever fit me better than you. I promise you will never regret it, you’ll never regret anything if you chose me.”

He knew his eyes had to be as wide as dinner plates at the declaration; it was not unheard of for a Dominant to try and move a courting to the next level, but it wasn’t common either. The final decision always remained with the Submissive - and to some extent, their parents. Will’s heart was beating so rapidly in his chest, he knew that Hannibal had to have heard it. Was he ready? Was he sure?

Will thought of Tobias, of Ovie – then thought of the perfection of how Hannibal had felt against him, of the sheer rightness of that kiss, of the gentle, understanding warmth and care the Roux in front of him had always shown him.

And nodded.

Chapter End Notes

Ooo00000000okay.

Will gets a much needed confidence boost, we finally know what's going on in Tobias' head, Franklyn's ego got him KO'ed, and Will has made a choice. But the courting - and the repercussions - is far from over. How will Tobias react to this news? Why does Jacob get his own card? Is it cause he's hot? Will he show up again? Is it just cause the picture I found him for him was suuuper hot? So eager to know what you guys think. :P

Also, the Lithuanian in this chapter means (according to Google Translate, of course) is: perfect, too much, too perfect.

Here are the outfits for the dinner party:

Hannibal:
Will (but clean shaven):
Ezra (finally found a bigger one):
“I DO LOVE A GOOD SUIT. I’M AN ENGLISHMAN, AFTER ALL”

This is what Jacob Butler looks like:
Interlude: The Cards You're Dealt

Chapter Summary

Or, a day in the life of Ezra Graham.

Chapter Notes

Now betaed by Felicia, but still written after a third. ::que sleepy laughter:: I wrote this all at once! Only proof read twice, will come back and make it more spiffy later. I want to get it up so I can access later at work.

If you want to make this chapter a tiny bit more ambient, here's the song I was listening to as I wrote it: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzIGIBQXVqA

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The sun had only just begun to color the morning sky when Ezra Graham woke. He yawned, rolling on his back and executing a full body stretch, arms and legs swastika-ing across the bed. Ezra blinked blearily up at the plaster ceiling before yawning again. The clock by the bed glowed 5:59. Like clockwork, every day. Ezra wished he could sleep in – after all, there was no real morning chores he needed to do – but you know what they say; you could take the boy out of the farm, but you couldn’t take the farm out of the boy.

Up with the sun, regardless of how cold out it was. The Roux pulled the covers back and sat up, shivering against the frigid tempature. He slipped his feet into slippers, yanked a robe on and made his way out into the hallway, petting the various dogs that greeted him. He stuck his head in his boy’s room, shaking his head at the sight of Will curled tightly around a rather strangled looking Winston. His bunny had always been a snuggler.

Ezra was still yawning loudly as he let the dogs out and started the coffee. He lined the dog bowls up and began to prepare the fresh meat, dry kibble, and water mix that they fed their pack. None of that nasty package crap was ever going to make it into any of the Graham pack’s stomach, thank you very much. The Submissive carefully juggled the tower of bowls, wincing at the way his body cracked and cracked, protesting the repeated bending he did as he placed them out. Ezra stood, groaning as he rubbed at his lower back. Definitely not as young as I once was, the Roux thought with a weary mix of acceptance and irritation.

A sharp whistle brought the pack from the forest and to the bowls. Ezra left them to it and set about checking on the puppies. It took him a few minutes longer to heat up the premade soft slush they’d been feeding to the litter. It was a messy event and Ezra watched them with amused disgust as the pups stepped in, tracked about, and smeared the food everywhere. He waited until they were done before gently whipping them down and finally going for his coffee.

Ezra crammed his feet into a pair of fur-lined wellies, pulled on a thick down jacket and beanie, layered a woolen scarf, and a pair of thick mittens, and began the mile and a half trek to their mail
box. The dogs followed him (save for Winston, who would not leave Will’s side until he woke, no matter what bodily needs drove him) and nipped at his hands and legs, begging for attention until Ezra shooed them away, spouting threats in French. Which, honestly, seemed to just excite them more.

He arrived just in time to greet the young lady who delivered their morning papers; a pretty girl with olive skin and eyes the color of wet dirt, who was working three jobs to pay her way through the local community college. She was a nice, polite girl (her name was Annie, or Anthy, or something like that) and Ezra had developed a rapport with the female Human.

“Good morning, Mister Graham!”

“Good morning, dear.” Ezra greeted, nose wrinkling at the white puff that followed his words. Abominable state, really. He handed her the spare coffee he’d brought her, disposable cup and all, and the young lady laughed.

“You really don’t have to do that, Mister Graham!”

“Ezra, sweetie, please. I feel old enough this morning already.” Ezra instructed as he sipped his coffee. “So, tell me. Have you seen anything interesting this morning? Anything going on in town?”

Annie/Anthy grinned, leaning out the window conspiratorially. “Well, as a matter of fact…”

Twenty minutes later, frozen to the bone but now completely caught up on local gossip, Ezra returned to the house, a bundle of local and national newspapers tucked under his arm. Having lived as long as he did, the Roux knew that it was essential to stay up to date on what was happening in the world. Just because they may not change, didn’t mean the world stayed frozen around them, and maintaining the illusion of fitting in was essential. The dogs almost knocked him down in their hurry to get in, and the Submissive had to chase some of them (particularly Stella) around the house for a few moments before he could dry all their paws.

Half past seven found Ezra finally readying his own breakfast, setting a plate of three strips of bacon, two eggs, grits, and another huge cup of coffee – black, naturally. How else could you taste the flavor of the bean? He sat down, pulled out the New York Times, and began to fish around under the table for his slippers – only to freeze, a shiver running through his body so strong that the hairs on his neck stood up as his left foot smeared into something cold and squishy.

The Submissive felt his lip twitch as he set down the paper and glanced under the kitchen table. A dismembered bunny-rabbit head stared back at him, eyes glossy and bucked teeth stained red. Bull sat inches away, grinning proudly as he stared at Ezra, muzzle equally stained.

“Thank you, Bull.” The Roux said flatly, pushing away the table and hobbling on the heel of one foot to try and keep the blood from getting into the rugs. A fresh pair of socks, a plastic bag, and a huge heaping mountain of salt to try and bring the stain up from the kitchen rug later, Ezra finally ate his breakfast and steadfastly ignored the fact that it was mildly cold.

He took his third cup of coffee spread out on the couch, giggling to himself as he watched cartoons. It was probably an childish act, especially considering his age, but Ezra had always loved cartoons. Steamboat Willie had literally blown his mind when it had come out. It had blown everyone’s mind. An animated mouse that had sound? It whistled and then you heard it whistle. Ground breaking. Ever since then, the Roux couldn’t quite kick the habit.

Morning was for cartoons, afternoon for soaps, and evening for the news.
Around nine he shut the television off and he cleaned the house, starting a load of towels before doing the kitchen dishes. He put a plate of breakfast (grits fattened with blood sausage and the grease it had cooked in, sliced ham and bacon, as well hardboiled eggs – his bunny needed to fatten up) in the fridge for Will before heading up to bath.

Ezra always insisted on bathing unless he absolutely had no other choice but to shower. When he had grown up, they had always bathed. The water, however, hadn’t always been warm. Modern plumbing was without question the greatest invention of all time. He filled the claw foot tub until it was steaming, pouring in a generous amount of vanilla, honey, and sandalwood scented bath soap. He soaked for a long time, just enjoying the heat, before finally beginning his ritual.

He washed his body twice; once with a deep exfoliating scrub before following up with a gentler soap that was more lotion than not. He scrubbed his nails thoroughly, both finger and toenails, careful with the plastic bristles to not stress the skin. Ezra’s skipped shampooing and moved straight to a deep conditioner. It was the first Monday of the month and the Submissive liked to reward his locks for putting up with the nonsense product he used in it throughout the month. Ezra didn’t leave the bath until he started to prune, even then it was accompanied with much grumbling and pouting.

Lotion came next, lotion everywhere, on every inch of skin. Though it may appear to an untrained eye that a Submissive naturally had no hair on their body save for their face and scalp, the truth was that they carried hair everywhere that a Human male did, it was just so soft and downy – and always a light, almost white blond color – that it appeared otherwise. Their skin also seemed more sensitive to temperature changes as well, and using lotion and creams was essential to keeping a Roux’s skin healthy.

The elder Graham stayed in the captured heat of the bathroom and watched the snow fall, bare to it all as he stood in front of the window and slowly dried, completely unashamed of his nakedness. Once he no longer felt sticky, Ezra turned, a frown tugging at his lips as he stared at himself in the mirror. He looked much as he had a fifty years ago and could easily pass as a Human anywhere from his late thirties to his early sixties, but Ezra knew the truth.

He was getting so old, he could feel it in his bones.

At least Will was going to be cared for.

Ezra dressed in the outfit he’d laid out last night, so carefully planned and thought out. A pair of blue jeans, a light grey button up and a thick, zip up cable knit in a dark grey. Equally thick (if not thicker, as if there was one thing Ezra could not tolerate it was cold feet) socks and a pair of cute winter boots went on last. A tiny bit of product went into his hair, just a smidge of jell to keep his hair wavy and slightly pushed back from his face, before Ezra set about to make sure his beard was perfectly groomed.

The end product was perfection; even with the faked grey and white, the Submissive still knew he looked good. He tilted his head to the left, then to the right, examining every angle carefully. He already knew every inch of his face; knew which angle made him look more threatening, which made him appear more docile, how to work his expression to be coy or frightened. This was a game after all, and Ezra had been playing it for a long time.

But, the Submissive wondered, feeling a deep heaviness settle in his stomach, was it even worth it when there was no one – no one of importance, that is – to notice it? But then again, Ezra did just fine on his own. Hell, he’d been without a Dominant longer than he’d ever had one - and that included his Sire and brothers. He’d learned not only how to survive, but thrive on his own. After all, there was nothing that a Dominant did that a very determined Submissive couldn’t own his own, as Ezra had very well proved. He knew this, was proud of it.
And yet…

And yet there was a part of him, so carefully buried and shut away, that insisted that he shouldn’t have to. That there was supposed to be his mate, his Dominant, here to help and care for him.

The Roux sighed, shaking the bitter thoughts away before finally stepping out into the cold of the hallway. He ignored Bull (and just when that dog had grown such a heavy obsession with Ezra, the Submissive would never know) before making his way over to Will’s room. He gave the still sleeping bunny a very unimpressed look before checking his watch. 10:08. Well, Will had been up late with his friend Beverly, a very vocal Human who Ezra had actually liked. She made things interesting, if nothing else, and made Will very happy. That was an automatic win in Ezra’s book.

“Will, sweetheart,” Ezra said, pulling open the curtains in the room a window at a time, “time to get up. It’s almost noon.”

“Nnh.”

Ezra snorted. “Very articulate. I told you not to drink so much last night.”

“Nnnnn.”

The older Submissive shook his head fondly, watching as his son tried to hide from the light, practically burrowing into his pillows and Winston’s winter coat. “Come on, now. Get up. Winston needs to go out anyway and you know he won’t go without you.”

That finally got some movement, even if it was only Will sitting up in bed, blinking blearily up at him. “W’ya going?”

“Into town, I’ve got some things to buy. Groceries and what not.” A blank look was all he got. Ezra rolled his eyes. “I’ll be home in a few hours. Will you be alright here?” Another mute nod. He leaned in, resting a hand on the bed as pressed a kiss to his son’s forehead. “I love you. Stay safe.”

“Lo-” a wide yawn interrupted the word, “ve you, too.” Will brought a hand up to scratch at his ear before giving him a wide smile. “Good morning, Daddy.”

God help him, Ezra didn’t think the love he felt for his son had faded a single bit from when he first held his naked, screaming baby. He gave Will a soft smile, completely smitten. “Good morning, bunny.”

The roads were absolute shit and if it hadn’t been for the bare state of their pantry – but not their meat freezers, thanks to very fruitful Hannibal – had driven him out. The Dominant was coming for dinner later tonight – weather willing, though Ezra doubted highly that Hannibal would not come after Sunday’s events – and he had nothing to work with.

He made it into town just around one. His first stop was the dry cleaners (courting had made their local cleaners very happy, as Ezra would have nothing but the finest for his bunny…and finest often meant dry clean only) and he left with two handfuls of pressed clothing. He maneuvered them into the back seat, hanging them up on the rear right window, muttering under his breath angrily as the wind and snow swirled around him like some sort of distasteful aura of horribleness.

Nearly two hours later found his personal errands (there was a few new gentleman boutiques that Ezra just had to check out, as well as the required stop at Starbucks) completed. Grocery shopping was the same annoying experience it had always had been and the only highlight was that Ezra had managed to charm several cart boys into carrying his bags to the trunk. The last stop of the day was the post office to pick up several packages of new clothes (again, courting was incredibly expensive)
and Ezra picked his way across the icy pavement carefully.

The Submissive let out a sigh of relief when he finally deposited the packages in the car, glancing at his watch and noting the late time. Deciding he just had to have something to nibble on before facing the hellish ride home, the Roux crossed over to where the town square was. A skating rink had been set up in the middle and vending booths had popped up all around it. He ordered a hot chocolate and a bagel, leaning against a free standing heater (and shamelessly dominating the space) as he ate and watched the festivities around him.

Everything was done up for the holidays; white lights and garland hung everywhere, and Christmas carols echoed off the walls of the small square. Humans of all ages were gathered on and around the ice. Some wobbled or glided easily, in singles but most in pairs, and even the benches around the rink were occupied by cuddling duos.

Almost immediately there were eyes on him, male and female alike. Ezra was used to it for the most part, he knew he cut a striking figure. His slacks and coat was all clean lines and tailored cuts, fitting his body like a glove and eliminating any bulkiness that may have been hidden in store bought, unfitted clothing. Everything about his image was constructed to scream *educated, wealth,* and *sex,* the three things that never failed to draw in and keep Human attention, and even as he ate he could see at least three potential meals eying him up from across the square. The Roux schooled his facial expression into one of fond kindness, edged with just a bit of nostalgia and with loneliness he didn’t have to fake.

Ezra felt his smile slip slightly as he took the sight of so many mated and family groups, swallowing rapidly to try and stop the wave of emotions. It was always like this around the holidays. He’d met his former mate around this time of year, and it was also around December that he had first learned of his brothers’ fate in Europe. It was easier when Will had been younger, when the Submissive had been a little boy and demanding in the way all children were. It was easier to push it all away when Ezra had been needed so consistently. But now…now William was past his Change, living on his own, and about to mate…about to start his own family.

There would never be anything but joy and happiness for his bunny in Ezra’s heart at that, but he couldn’t deny the sadness and maybe if he was completely honest – the jealousy – that lurked in him.

Ezra hadn’t felt so alone in years.

Even here, with the eyes of so many Humans on him, the Submissive felt an island. He shook his head, forcing the dark thoughts away again. This wasn’t about him; Ezra had already had his time, his chance. This was about Will finding happiness and he would do everything in his power to assure his baby got it. And he was positive that Will would find it with Hannibal.

Tobias had been wrong for his boy, Ezra saw that longer he knew the dark skinned Roux. It was strange, at first he had thought that Tobias’ forward ways would be just what his boy needed, but it had turned out to be such a bad fit. It was a odd way to think of it, but Tobias’ overly modern, forward approach to courting had been what had lost his bid, even if he was at heart a traditionalist. On the other hand, Hannibal’s strict adherence to the rules had won him the day, even if Hannibal was actually very modern and forward thinking when it came to the role of a Submissive in the household. Which was good, because god knows his boy never hesitated to speak his mind.

They would be very happy together. Will would never experience what Ezra had and that would bring him all the happiness he needed. And if Ezra’s bed felt too big and too empty, no matter how many dogs he added to it? If he ached at the thought of returning to his lonely life in the South, with no one to cook or clean for – no one to look after? If he grew tired of always looking his best for the ignorant masses of Humans?
Well…no one needed to know.

Ezra had been dealt his cards, he knew that. His chance had come and gone, and he could more then make due with what he had. He sighed, tossing the mostly uneaten bagel away, his appetite gone. He tipped his back, throat working overtime, Adam’s apple bobbing as he chugged the cooling hot chocolate down. The Submissive threw the cup away, tongue darting out and across his lips to capture the very last bits of flavor, and turned to leave.

Completely unaware of the interested stare that followed him.

Ezra barely made it home in time make dinner, a worried Will meeting him on the porch.

“I’m alright,” the elder Submissive huffed, “the roads are just horrible.”

Will bit his lip worriedly, staring up the driveway. “Do you think Hannibal will make it?”

“Trust me,” Ezra said dryly as they traveled back and forward from the car, unloading, “I don’t think anything mother nature could throw at him is going to keep that boy away. You’ve completely ensnared him, you little minx.”

“Daddy!” He laughed as Will easily turned three different shades of red, nearly tripping on the icy steps. Ezra’s hand snapped out, steadying his boy on reflex. “Careful, now.”

“I’m fine.” The younger Graham snapped, clearly embarrassed. “I’m going to go get ready.”

Ezra rolled his eyes at the moodiness. It was fairly common so close to the Change; comparatively to a Human, Will was still only in his late teens. And of course there was no one safer to act out and on than his father – they both knew that Ezra wasn’t going anywhere no matter what Will said or do. And they both knew that Will didn’t mean most of it.

That being said, it didn’t make the dramatics any less annoying.

It was already nearly five o’clock by the time Ezra had finally gotten dinner going. The smell of something wonderful and spicy the small home. Hannibal seemed to enjoy Cajun, so the older Submissive was committed to introducing the Eastern European to the quality and art of the cooking style. The pack swirled around him like a fog of fur and hot breath. They knew better than to actually beg, so they simply got in the way and hoped.

Ezra ‘sshetd’ at them loudly more than once, shooing them away with a well-placed foot push or a pot holder. Finally, he set everything to a low simmer and checked the time. Almost seven. Hannibal would be here any moment. Will had yet to come downstairs and Ezra really doubted it was taking him so long to decide what to wear. Frowning, he untied his apron, threatening the dogs with an oven mit to stay away from the cooling corn bread, before making his way upstairs.

He found his bunny sitting quietly on his bed, staring out over the stretch of his land. Winston was curved in a ‘c’ around Will’s back, the furry body undoubtedly a source of heat and comfort. A hot cup of tea was cradled between his thighs. The snow was falling heavily outside, giving an unnatural light to the evening that - to a Roux’s eyes - was like a never ending day. Will’s entire body was drawn up with anxiety, his movements stiff as he brought his tea up to sip. Ezra knew that it had to be about Tobias. They had talked about it a bit on the drive home. His son had told him that the Dominant would be blindsided by the news, that Tobias had thought they were completely back on track, that everything where okay, and this would seem so out of left field. Despite the recent uncomfortableness between the two, Tobias was a nice enough Roux and Will felt incredibly bad about it the idea of hurting him so.
And it would hurt him.

There was no way that this wasn’t going to end with him hurting Tobias and deeply at that. After all, Will would basically be telling the Dominant – one who dedicated so much time and effort into courting – that he wasn’t good enough for you. It was enough to hurt anyone's pride, much less someone who was as proud and bull headed as Tobias. He wouldn't understand that it wasn't a matter of being good enough or being the bigger, better Roux; it was about a emotional and biological connection that couldn't be faked.

Hannibal and Will just had that, it was no one's fault.

Ezra left just as silently as he had come, moving to his room. He had something that he thought might help. He dug through the box he’d brought up from his own home, shuffling things about before finally liberating a plain, wooden box about the size of a shoe box. For a long moment the Roux just stared at it, smoothing his fingers over the wood. He could still remember when his Sire had made it for him. Ezra sighed, pushing that thought away, and made his way back to Will’s room. He knocked on the door, waiting until his boy looked up at him.

“Pretty serious up here. You okay?” Will shook his head, burrowing his hand in Winston’s fur. Ezra crossed the room, setting the box down before sitting next to him on the bed, wrapping an arm around his shoulder. Will leaned instantly into the contact with a sigh. “You thinking about Tobias, I take it?”

He nodded.

“Not having second thoughts are you?”

“No,” Will shook his head, “it’s not that. I just don’t know how to tell him.”

“Best to do it all at once, like taking off a band aid.” Ezra advised. “Don’t put it off, Will. It will only make it worse.”

“You right.” He agreed softly. “I just…really, really don’t want to do it though, Daddy.”

Ezra let out a huff of laughter, squeezing his shoulder. His sweet, sensitive bunny. How was he so lucky to have gotten Will? “I have something I want to show you, it might help. Or at least cheer you up.”

He set the box onto his lap reverently, fingers running over the hinges before gently lifting it up. Inside was a small pile of pictures, each carefully labeled on the back in neat cursive. Before the modern age – say the last fifty, sixty years – when everything and everyone was photographed and archived on facebook or google or some other social media outlet, the Roux had very little to fear about being caught with their extended lives. They simply moved when the time was right and started a new life with a different age. Their ambiguity was essential; they were so few in number compared to their prey, god help them all if the Humans wised up to their existence and simply wiped them out. So the pictures (some spanning all the way back to the first widespread use of photography) were a surprise as they were a fairly unwise thing to keep around.

Ezra had never shown them Will before and felt guilt swirl in his chest as his son’s eyes widened in pleasure. It was just too much, looking at these. But Will needed to see where he came from, to see his roots, so that he could understand that he needed to move on. Roux were creatures that did only two things; hunted and mated. The next generation was paramount, especially as their numbers were so low. Ezra licked his lips, eyes softening in memory as he pressed the first into his hand.
“Daddy,” the younger Graham gasped, grinning, “what on earth are you wearing?"

Ezra scoffed. "It was the seventies, bunny, plaid was all the rage, trust me. Here, my college graduation in '43, and this one's of me in...hm, has to be 1958 because that was a neighbor's car...hm, he sold it in '61 I think."

Will ran his thumb over the faded photographs, expression soft. He looked so much like Ezra, especially when he was younger - so, so, much like his Carrier. He'd been telling Will that from his youth that children tended to take after the Roux parent they shared their gender with, but he knew it must be something else to actually see. They chatted about the photos, Will teasing and questioning all at once, and Ezra gladly gave each story behind the photographs.

There was a sharp intake of breath next to him as Will pulled out the next photo. It was of him when he was very young and the resemblance was between them was strong, Will had looked identical as a child. But it wasn't just the resemblance, Ezra knew. It was one of the few pictures Ezra owned of him not in a suit or perfectly styled. Instead he wore a simple dark button up (his best blue church shirt at the time) and was taken against the painted wall of a general store. Even Ezra was caught by the seemingly foreign youth on his face.
"Daddy..." Will murmured, eyes locked on the photo and completely taken with it. "You're so young here..."

"I'm eighteen here." Ezra said, voice soft and distant because had he ever really been that young? "All the Submissives in our family have been baby faced."

More images came. Pictures of his family – his brothers, his Sire and Carrier, his grandparents – all mixed in, unorganized and leading them off on various tangents as each was pulled out. Ezra found himself telling the same stories he’d entertained Will with as a child and some he'd never shared either because of his tender age or because he'd simply forgotten. Stories of the tiny town in southern Alabama called Patience, a backwards place that was dirt poor and perennially stuck twenty years behind whatever the year was. How there had been nothing in Patience for Ezra and his brothers, or for any young person for that matter.

Both Ezra’s Sire and Carrier had died young, leaving his eldest brother Harrison in charge and the first thing he’d done was get them the hell out of Patience. They never quite escaped poverty, and the towns that followed were all small and just as dirty – but they were new. Then the Great War had come. Ezra handed Will a picture of the three very young, very gallant looking men in army dress uniforms. It had been taken just before they’d left for Europe.

All three of them - Harrison, Joseph, and Julian - had all died in World War I. The world may have no idea they existed, but Roux were still a part of it, and the prospect of fighting in a war (and possibly finding a Submissive in Europe) was too much of a draw for three young, virile Dominants to pass up. They’d all thought they’d be heroes, mighty hunters like those Roux of the past who’d launched their race into the infamy of mythology. So very much like everyone else had in early fervor of the year. Everyone had thought the war would be over quickly and with little fuss.

A year in the trenches had seen the end of that.

There was another brother, Isiah, who had died in a farming accident before he'd even reached his Change. The second youngest, Julian, had somehow managed to obtain life insurance on all three of them before they'd gone over, and the money had given Ezra enough of a head start to settle in to Savannah, which was where he would eventually meet Will's Sire. As if summoned, under the pictures of family Will would never know and farmsteads he would never walk, Will pulled out the single picture of his sire.
His son went completely still before slowly turning the photo to read the back.

Written in fading cursive was the name John Hutton Graham, with a little heart drawn next to it. Will stared at the cursive, mouth actually hanging open. Ezra let out a soft laugh, reaching out a hand to gently flip the photo over and reveal John’s image once more. His former mate was staring off at something, looking utterly dashing in his vest and suit. The Grahams had been from Wales and England respectively (Wales for the Hutton line, England for the Graham) and of old, old money. To Ezra who had grown up on the stories of grand old Europe from his French Carrier, John had seemed the very embodiment of Old World nobility. A real life fairy tale, just for him.

"That was in forty-eight, long before we met. Your Father gave that to me when he left on a business trip because we didn't really have any other pictures of him." Ezra explained fondly, fingertips dancing across the frozen features. "I had a heat and we were certain I was pregnant - and I was, with you - and I used to sit up at night and stare and stare at it."

Will nodded next to him, at a loss of what to say. They rarely, if ever, talked about John and his choice to leave them. There was a long silence before the younger Graham took a deep breath through his nose before taking the photo from his father's hand and tossing it back into the box. He pulled the rest of the photos over top of it, as if by burying it under the images of the Bardot and Lloyds would protect them from it, somehow keep that horrible male from hurting them anymore. Will pulled the lid down he gave Ezra a heated glare. "I have never needed that man a day in my life. I've had you."

Ezra gave him a sad smile, reaching out to gently brush his cheek.

"That means more to me than you could ever know, Will." He took a deep breath, pushing the hauntingly empty feeling in his chest away, “but I brought this out because I wanted you to know that your father was the exception, not the rule. I can't tell you why your Sire decided to leave us.” His voice croaked slightly and Ezra shook his head, staring at his clasped hands. “I don’t know if it was because he found someone else or…or because of me.”

“Daddy, no-”

“- but you must know that this will not happen to you. What your father did…it’s unheard of, Will.” He speaking past the lump in his throat, willing himself not to fall victim to old insecurities and
wounds. He needed to say this, needed to tell Will this. This was more important. “I have always known, and had great faith, that you were going to find someone wonderful to not only take care of you but cherish you. To truly appreciate that wonderful mind and independent spirit of yours. I feel that Hannibal can be this for you and I don't want to see you hesitate and miss a chance at real happiness. I don't want our...my failings...to affect you in any way or to hold you back. Hannibal is not your father. And you are not me.”

“No, no Hannibal is not.” Will said sharply, “but if I am half the Roux you are, I would count myself fucking lucky.”

Ezra blinked against tears, swallowing rapidly. “Language, bunny.”

His son shook his head, turning suddenly and all but climbing into his father’s lap, burrowing his face in the space between the older Submissive’s collar. “You are the most amazing person I’ve ever met, Daddy. All I’ve ever wanted to be was you.”

Ezra let out an ugly sob, only catching half the sound before looping both arms around his son. “Thank you, baby.”

Chapter End Notes

I apologize for nothing.

::sob::

I've made the only OC I've ever created and liked so lonely, wtf is wrong with me.
Chapter Summary

The two Roux jumped apart from each other as if they’d been electrocuted and Will felt his face turn a cherry red at the amused look on his father’s face. Ezra stared at them from the warmth of the kitchen, a single eyebrow raised.

Chapter Notes

Your guys response to this story has been stunning. Thank you, truly. To say thanks, I got this chapter out early.

Beated by Felicia.

Lots of UST ahead.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was cold out, but Will ignored it as he stared out into the woods from his back porch, leaning against a roof support. It was nearing seven-thirty and Hannibal had yet to show. Ezra seemed fully convinced that the Dominant was simply running late and so Will had allowed himself to accept that as truth rather then agonize over whether or not Hannibal had changed his mind. Besides, the extra time gave Will a chance to do what needed to be done.

Tomorrow was Tuesday; Tobias’ visiting day.

It had to be done now, it would be too cruel to make him travel all the way out here just to be released from courting.

Winston sat at his feet, leaning heavily against his leg, and Will tried to take comfort from his steady presence as he took a deep breath and brought his cell phone to his ear. It only rang a handful of times before the line connected and the Roux winced at the excited tone of Tobias’ voice. “William! What a wonderful surprise, I was just thinking about you.”

Will let out a sigh, already feeling horrible, and couldn’t help the strain of misery that made it into his words. “Good evening, Tobias.”

“Good evening,” the older Roux parroted back after a moment of hesitation, “is everything alright?”

Will braced himself.

“No, Tobias we…we need to talk.” There was a long, long silence on the other end of the line. “I just want say that you’re a wonderful Roux, Tobias, and a good Dominant. I’ve been honored by your attentions and completely flattered by your constant consideration for me. What’s more, you have a wonderful personality; you’re funny and clever – and the music you play! Really, it’s something else. I mean, you could have performed professionally if you liked, and-”
“Will.” The Dominant interrupted, voice flat. “Are you ending our courtship?”

“I…” Will stuttered, taken aback by Tobias blunt approach, “I…yes, Tobias. I am. I’m sorry.”

There was another long silence before Will heard the Dominant clear his throat. “May I ask why?”

He winced at the hurt in the other Roux’s voice. Oh, Tobias was doing his best to hide it, but Will didn’t miss the quiver in his words, the raspy quality of his tone. The Submissive tangled his fingers in Winston’s fur, feeling like a coward for his own guilt and hesitations. Will had made this decision, the least he could do was own up to it.

“I’ve chosen another suitor.”

A sharp intake of breath.

“You think he’s better then me.”

It wasn’t a question. Will sighed, shivering slightly against the cold wind. “No, not better. It’s not like that, Tobias. He’s different from you. That’s all.”

“And this…difference,” the word was growled out, the Dominant’s voice colder than Will had ever heard it, “that’s what you want.”

His voice was a whisper. “Yes.”

“Why did you agree to continue our courtship yesterday?”

“Tobias-”

“Did you intend to lead me on?”

“No!” Will said quickly, breath coming so rapidly the air around him was fogged with it, “no, of course not, Tobias. I would never do that. I know you may not believe it, but I never wanted to hurt you.”

“How can you say that?” He asked darkly. “We kissed, William.”

“You kissed me, Tobias.”

“You let me. You could have pulled away at any time, but you didn’t. You’re making a mistake, Will. You and I are good together, so good. Can’t you see that? There is no one better for you than me.” Despite the proud words, Will could so easily hear the begging behind them, and brought a hand up to his mouth, eyes squeezing shut as guilt weighted each breath. “I’ve thought of nothing but you and I for weeks, Will, of how happy we could be.”

“Tobias, please don’t-”

“Is this still about Ovie? Have I wronged you else somehow? Was my courting not enough? I can fix whatever’s wrong, I swear it.”

“Tobias-”

“Don’t do this, Will.” The Dominant implored, no longer hiding the desperate edge, “I love you!”

Will let out a choked sob, pressing his hand harshly against his lips in an attempt to silence the sound. “I’m sorry, Tobias. I can’t.”
“Will!”

Oh God, the anguish in Tobias’ voice was heart wrenching.

“Goodbye.”

“Will, wait-”

He ended the call, letting his phone fall limply from his fingers and into the snow uncaringly. For a long moment Will just stared at where it lay, Tobias’ name still on the display. Only once the screen went black again did Will move, bringing his arms up to hug himself in self-comfort. Tears hung heavily in his eyes and when the Roux finally brought himself to blink, they fell liberally down his cheeks, leaving cold trails on the skin.

He’d done the right thing, Will knew he did. So why did he feel so cruel?

“I love you!”

He let out a sob, hugging himself tighter. The Submissive knew that he hadn’t loved Tobias and the fact that the other Roux had felt that strongly towards him only made Will feel worse. By his side, Winston was whimpering, head craned back as he stared up at him. It had always been set to end like this; someone was going to get hurt. If it hadn’t been Tobias, it would have been Hannibal. And yet, Will felt so horrible.

“Will?” The Submissive turned and felt his breath catch with the sheer relief he felt at the familiar form of Hannibal making his way around the side of the house and towards the back porch, his arms full of tupperware. “I thought I heard you…William, what-”

The younger Roux barely thought before he was moving, launching himself off the deck. Alarm flashed across Hannibal’s face, dropping the tupperware as he suddenly found himself with an armful of Submissive. Will clung so tightly that the Dominant couldn’t even set him fully on his feet, Will awkwardly perched on his tip toes as he hid his tear-stained face in Hannibal’s scarf.

“Will? Darling, what’s wrong?” Hannibal asked worriedly as he gently tried to pry him back, to get a better look, “are you hurt? Where is Ezra?”

But Will wouldn’t budge and the older Roux gave up with a sigh, running a soothing hand over his back while another gently caressed the back of his hair. Eventually Will calmed, his grip loosening enough that he drifted fully back down on his feet.

“I told my other suitor about us.” Will explained, voice muffled by the fabric, and Hannibal’s grip on him tightened. “I don’t regret it but – oh, Hannibal. I – he was so sad. So upset and he…”

Hannibal shushed him, “take a deep breath, Will. In and out, there. And thank you.”

Will frowned, finally freeing his face from it’s hiding place long enough to stare up at him in confusion. “For what?”

A hand (still so very warm despite the cold leather it was encased in) cupped his cheek, maroon eyes gentle as they stared down at him. “For calling him, for ending it, for choosing me. I know it must have been hard. I can’t imagine what he must be feeling; I know I would be devastated if you had ended our courtship.” A thumb stroked his cheekbone. “So I must thank you for saving me that pain.”

Hannibal’s name was a whisper and Will felt his cheeks heat as he realized how close their faces
were. He could feel the warmth of each of Hannibal’s breathes against his cheeks and thought at once of last night's kiss. It seemed that he wasn't the only one occupied with the memory as the hand on his cheek shifted, tilting Will’s face into an angle as if to better receive –

“Hannibal. William.”

The two Roux jumped apart from each other as if they’d been electrocuted and Will felt his face turn a cherry red at the amused look on his father’s face. Ezra stared at them from the warmth of the kitchen, a single eyebrow raised.

“Dinner’s getting cold, boys. Why don’t you come inside?”

Now that they were officially courting, Hannibal was allowed to visit almost everyday (in fact, Ezra encouraged it) and early Friday evening found the Dominant at their home once again, despite the terrible driving conditions. Will was touched, but also incredibly worried. Roux were not immortal; a car crash killed them just as easily as it could a human.

Private courting was in many ways the same as public courting in the sense that the Dominants still gave gifts and were still vying desperately to impress the Submissive and prove how fit of a provider they were. But that was where the similarities ended. Private courting was broken into two stages, walking out and sitting, which were in turn supervised and unsupervised.

Walking out was always with a chaperon, while sittings were not. Proper walks were always done as a trio or even a quartet, with the Submissive's parents. But the level of the chaperone’s involvement lessened the longer the walks went on. The first walk – which they’d done under the stars Monday night – was done with Ezra trailing far enough behind them to give them an illusion of privacy, yet still firmly in a Roux’s eye and hearing range.

Will hadn’t minded Ezra’s presence. He felt rather comforted by his father trailing behind them, even if he was listening and watching every move. They talked about many things, education, friends, but mostly about work. Hannibal talked about what it was like to be a psychiatrist, of the fascination he had with understanding the depths and complexities of the human mind. Will had likened him to Jane Goodall without thinking and while he had thought the joke incredibly lame, the deep, full body laughs Hannibal had let out seemed to disagree with that assessment.

Will had talked about his time as a cop, about teaching and the FBI – though he skimmed over Jack, he never was in the mood to talk about Jack anymore – and expressed a surprise at his own lack of care that the FBI’s latest serial killer; the Angel Maker. That had led to another conversation about changing priorities which had left the younger Roux hot and bothered, as no amount of discreet wording changed the fact that what they were really talking about was what Will was going to do with himself if Hannibal impregnated him.

The night had ended around ten o’clock, with the courting pair exchanging a chaste kiss while Ezra kindly turned a blind eye as he dried off the dogs. When Hannibal had left, Will had sat up late talking with his father, and it was fairly clear to both of them that the younger Graham was ready and willing to progress onto less supervision. When the Dominant had arrived the next day, Ezra had walked far enough back for them to escape his line of sight – but not his hearing.

The evenings were cold, but Hannibal had apparently taken the late months of Will’s season into thought, because when he arrived he’d brought a very expensive winter ensemble for both Will and Ezra of heavy, woolen trench coats and thick leather gloves, and a pair of matching scarves and caps. Will was careful to wear the winter clothes every time they went out, wanting not only to assure the suitor of his gratefulness but also because it was so incredibly comfortable to wear.
The next few evenings were spent in such a manner, the two walking hand-in-hand and speaking quietly about various subjects, both seeking to deepen and broaden their knowledge of each other. By the time Friday night had come about, Tobias had become only a fleeting thought (and one that only just made his preoccupied mind wince with guilt) and both Will and Ezra felt comfortable enough with the blond Dominant to enter the last and final stage of walking.

That night when they began their foray into the woods, the pack (save Sadie, who remained behind with her pups) yelping and baying happily as they danced and frolicked about in the snow, Ezra waited until he could no longer see or hear them before following. If Will was to call out – or say anything louder than a calm, reserved speaking voice – Ezra would still be able to hear and come to his aid if needed.

Hannibal’s hand was a welcomed warmth in Will’s and he let the Dominant choose the path even though the other Roux didn’t know the woods a fraction as well as he did, and couldn’t help the silly grin on his face as Hannibal insisted on helping him jump across even the tiniest of creeks or over the lowest of logs. Will watched in fond amusement as Hannibal stepped down a steep embankment before offering his hand to Will. He took it, his fingers exerting the barest of pressure as he easily hopped down himself. For a moment the two didn’t move, lingering in each other’s space, enjoying the other’s warmth, until they heard the sound of Ezra approaching off in the distance.

“Your father is a good man,” Hannibal offered, smiling at the easy grin that took Will’s face at the mention of Ezra, “you are very lucky to have him.”

“I know, Daddy’s wonderful.” Will hesitated, biting his lip in thought before letting his eyes drift to watch his feet as they walked. “It’s always just been me and him, you know, for as long as I can remember. My sire…he…isn’t around.”

The hand holding his squeezed tightly. “I’m very sorry for your loss.”

“He’s not dead.” Will sighed bitterly, looking away to hide the flare of resentment on his face. “He left us.”

Next to him, Hannibal abruptly stopped walking. Will followed suit, eyes still downcast, afraid to see whatever expression the older Roux may be wearing. What would Hannibal think of them now that he knew they were abandoned? Would his feelings for Will lessen?

“…I see.” The hand not holding his own reached out and gently trailed over his chin, tilting his focus from the ground. Will found Hannibal watching him, brows furrowed as those sanguine eyes searched his face. “He’s a fool, then.”

A great tension Will wasn’t fully aware he’d been carrying left him all at once and he nearly sagged with it, leaning into Hannibal’s hand. He let his eyes flutter shut as the touch shifted into more of a hold. It wasn’t the first time the other Roux had done this, but Will was always so stunned to see how easily his cheek seemed to fit in Hannibal’s palm, and he loved how the touch made him feel like something precious.

“Daddy says that’s it not normal, that my sire was a debile couilles.” He opened his eyes again, unsure if Hannibal would know the phrase, but it appeared he did and the Dominant was sporting a heavy frown.

“It is…uncommon,” Hannibal said slowly, “but I have heard of others abandoning their mates before.”
Will let out a sigh of relief; he hadn’t wanted to believe what his father had said, didn’t want to believe that his sire was the one to break the mold of their species. Somehow that just made it all a thousand times worse. “He left us when I was very young, I’d just turned three.” The Submissive said, “I don’t even remember him.”

Hannibal made a strange sound that seemed a mix of a growl and snarl, but lacked the heat of both. “Like I said; a fool.”

“I don’t even know why he left us. I… I found the note once, when I was sixteen. Daddy had it hidden in desk drawer. ‘I’m sorry, Ezra. Take care of Will.’ That’s all it said; he didn’t even try to make an excuse.” Will said heatedly, unable to help the anger in his voice. “I thought mated pairs were supposed to be for life, that Dominants were suppose to cherish and care for their families.”

“They are.” And now there was definitely the edge of a growl to Hannibal’s words. “We do.”

“Then why did he just throw us away, like we were nothing? Do you know the things my Daddy had to do just to put food on the table for us?” Will nearly cried out, only remembering to keep his voice down at the last moment (and thank god he did, for out of all the conversations they could have, this was the one that he wished his father to know nothing of more than any other) and in response his words were punchy, high pitched and distressed. “Why did he leave us, Hannibal?”

“I don’t know, Will.” The blond’s voice was gentle, subdued, and all at once Will seemed to come back to himself, seemed to realize the accusatory tone his voice had taken, that he’d ripped his hand away from Hannibal’s at some point.

Will took a deep breath, trying to calm himself, before reaching for the larger hand once more. “I’m sorry, Hannibal. I don’t know why I – I didn’t mean to take that out on you.”

“It’s quite alright, William.” Hannibal soothed, taking the offered hand and pressing a kiss to his knuckles. “This is an old wound and not one that heals easily.”

“Will you leave me, Hannibal?”

The Dominant froze, lips still resting against Will’s gloves, and he felt his breath catch as sanguine eyes locked with his own, nearly burning with intensity. “The Devil himself couldn’t tear me from your side if you were mine, William.”

“Can you promise that?”

“I can swear it. I’ve already lost a family once, I never intend to again.” Hannibal said, the words rumbling from his chest, and stepped into Will’s space. He allowed it, staring searchingly into the taller Roux’s eyes. “You, and any children you give me, will never know want for material wealth, or love… or physical need.”

The Submissive couldn’t help the not so silent pant that escaped him at those words, feeling his cock swell, and he knew within seconds that Hannibal must have scented it. The blond Roux’s pupils nearly doubled in size, his own lips parting as if too better taste the air, and –

A stick cracked in the distance.

Ezra was growing closer once more and the two broke away, making their way deeper into the woods. The interruption was timely, as Will honestly didn’t know what would happen if that moment had carried on. As savory as the images of Hannibal taking him right there - right on the forest floor like their savage ancestors of old - were to him, Will didn’t want his first time to be in the cold dirt.
And then there was also Hannibal’s words.

“You…lost your family?” Will asked carefully, hoping he wasn’t overstepping any boundaries by asking. Next to him the Dominant tensed, the movement so strong that Will could feel it in the hand his fingers were curled around. “You don’t have to tell me.”

“No,” Hannibal said, voice strained. “No, you should know. I want you to know.”

They were starting to turn, slowly heading back towards the house and almost ten minutes had passed before he spoke again. Will allowed the silence, watching wearily from the corner of his eye as Hannibal so clearly fought to find a way to tell his story.

“I was born in nineteen sixty-seven in Lithuania, to a very wealthy, noble family. My sire was a count, Aleksandras Lecter, and direct descendent of Hannibal the Grim, a warlord who defeated the Teutonic Order. My carrier, Simone, was descended from the Visconti and Sforza lines, who ruled Milan for nearly three hundred years.”

Will felt his lips twitch at the pride in the older Roux’s voice, but could hardly begrudge him from it. Will most certainly did not come from such notable stock, so he could understand why Hannibal took such pride in his lineage. It would have taken a great deal of cleverness to hide under the attention that nobility brought.

“Growing up there was very much like living in a fairy tale for my younger brother and I. We were a principality once, and my earliest memories are walking the halls of our castle. We hid our nature by traveling frequently, claiming to be our own ancestors when necessary, returning from education or traveling over seas. Some of the villagers knew what we were, but as long as we could provide protection and hunted only outsiders, they left us be. We were like Dracula, a legend scarcely believed and yet people still crossed themselves when seeing us.

The second world war devastated much of Europe; the fighting between the Germans and the Russians destroyed nearly everything it touched. Industry, infrastructure, raw human life. Our village was not unique in the struggles it faced. The Germans destroyed much of what the villagers had when they fled, and the Russians were no kinder. They nearly burnt the entire castle down – they did managed to completely destroy the east and south wings, I was never allowed to play in them as a child.

The Humans blamed my fathers for not being able to protect them, both during the war and the chaos and violence that came under Soviet rule. Life in the Lithuania SSR was unpleasant. Thousands of Lithuanians were sent to gulags or forcibly deported. Food was scarce as the economy plummeted and struggled. My sire knew of this, but even he had no idea how deep the resentment ran.”

Hannibal paused, both in walking and speaking, and Will finally looked up from where he’d locked his eyes on the scenery, to afraid to do so when the Dominant had still been talking. It was an understandably painful subject, but Will and was stunned at the expression on the older Roux’s face. He shivered at the raw, black hatred on the so-reserved Dominant’s features.

“When I was eight, my family had gone to one of our hunting lodges for a holiday. We had only been there for a day when they came for us. At first I thought they were just villagers, but there were other men with them too. Russian men…Russian Hunters.”

Will gasped, tightening his grip on Hannibal’s hand as his eyes darted around the dark clearing as if expecting one to jump out. He’d never encountered a Hunter before, but he’d heard stories from his father. Their numbers were few in the Americas but they were much higher in the Old World. Before the age of science and industry had almost completely destroyed belief in the supernatural, they had
apparently been prolific in all of Europe.

They were Humans who belonged to secret societies – much like the Templers and the Teutonic Knights and later private clubs like the Freemasons – who specialized in identifying, tracking, and killing Roux. Some did it because they felt it was their god given duty to protect their race, others did it out of morality, and some solely for the sport. What could be more exciting then the hunt of the ultimate carnivore? To strike down Human-kind's only real predator?

“One of our stable hands had reported us. I’m sure he believed he would be paid handsomely, but all he earned was a swift death at the hands of the Russians. They caught us at unawares and my sire fell protecting us. My carrier had been hunting with some of our men and they used me and my brother – Mikahil – to bait him out. He must have known it was a trap, but my tėtis came anyway.”

Hannibal’s voice died out for a moment and Will blinked against tears, nausea a hard rock in his throat, as he watched in horrified fascination as the Dominant composed himself.

“They held us for a few more days, hoping to draw more of our kind out. When it became clear that there was no one else, they turned their guns to me and my brother. Misha…he was so gentle, only a toddler, and so tiny, even for a Submissive. I escaped and hid in the forests. My Uncle Robertas found me a few weeks later, nearly feral, feeding on the local farmers and their flocks.” Hannibal’s voice turned fond, gentle. “He’d come searching when he’d not heard from my sire. A more kind and patient man you will never find. He took me home with him to France, spent years pulling me back from madness. I owe him everything.”

A silence fell about them as Hannibal finished, heavy with the knowledge of the past, the air so thick that Will felt he could choke on it. Whatever demons he had expected from Hannibal’s past, this was not it. It was too horrible, too tragic. It made his own tears for his Sire seem wasted. How could they not be, when he shed them now for something so much worse than abandonment?

Hannibal seemed lost where he stood, his face so forlorn and distant, wrapped in misery and sorrow, caught still by the sticky hands of memory. It struck something deeply inside the younger Roux. It was selfish – incredibly so – but the thought of Hannibal experiencing something such as this made the Submissive inside Will scream and whimper, curling tightly in his chest in commiseration. He had never wanted anything in life more than he wanted that look gone from Hannibal’s face. Gone and never seen again.

Will closed the small space between them without thought, hands clinging to Hannibal’s collar as he dragged the Dominant’s lips down to meet his own. The other Roux let out a startled sound that quickly morphed into something deeper, more sexual, and arms like iron bands pulled him even closer. Will’s hands loosened their grip on the distressed fabric, looping around Hannibal’s neck as the kiss grew more intent. There was a swipe of wet warmth against his bottom lip and the Submissive immediately opened, whimpering as his tongue darted out to meet the Dominant’s. The kiss was messy and wild, almost burgeoning on too rough, and yet at the same time was not enough, not nearly enough.

Will’s arms tightened, pushing his body even closer and the move eliminated the slight height difference between them and aligned their hips perfectly. The low growl that escaped the Dominant at the act made Will shake and whine, a gush of slick escaping his hole and coating his thighs. Hannibal’s hips rolled against his own and the Submissive broke the kiss with a gasp, fingers clawing at a well-tailored back.


A high pitched whistled interrupted him, sharp and harsh, and it rung through the forest air. Ezra was
close – not quite upon them, but close enough to hear the sounds of their pounding heartbeats – and the two reluctantly pulled away from each other. Neither it seemed were quite ready to let go, however, and when they began the hike back to the house it was with the older Roux’s arm curled around Will’s waist, the Submissive tucked tightly against Hannibal’s side.

“Thank you for telling me about your family, I know that wasn’t easy.” Will said softly when the lights of the house just started to be visible through the trees. He pressed even further into the blond’s side, glancing up at him. Hannibal’s expression was tender as he returned the look. “Will you come to sit tomorrow?”

They had only been walking together for a week, but the Submissive couldn’t imagine waiting any longer. Hannibal’s eyes widened with surprised pleasure before nodding, glancing over their shoulder to assure that Ezra was still out of sight before pressing a kiss to Will’s lips that left him breathless.

“I’ll bring us something fresh to eat.”

The Submissive’s smile was blinding. “That would be wonderful.”

Chapter End Notes

Ah, Ezra.

The ultimate cockblock.

So, Tobias knows he’s been dumped. And (some) of Hannibal’s secrets have been revealed to Will. Not even gonna lie, there be smut in the next chapter. Not full blown sex, but smut. :P

Also, Tėtis = Daddy in Lithuanian.

There was so much going on in this chapter, but I gotta ask, did anyone have a favorite part?
Courting: The Couple Gets to Know Each Other Better

Chapter Summary

In that moment, Hannibal was struck by the violence that he had always known lurked behind the elusively lithe frame, and he fully realized the unfortunate series of actions that would have taken place had he caved to his instincts.

Chapter Notes

Here's the next chapter! ::Lithuanian being spoken::

Betaed now by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Ezra smiled to himself as he moved about the living room with an extra sticky lint roller. While the dogs were banished outside or upstairs with a baby gate, the sheer amount of them in a Roux home meant their hair was everywhere. To combat this, most Roux kept leather furniture, but Will had a few fabric chairs and pillows that were covered. Ezra wanted the house perfect for their first night of sitting. It was a big step and the last and final one before an engagement was agreed upon – or not.

For the first night, Ezra would be sitting in the kitchen, reading but still keeping an ear out for the activities happening a wall over. Despite his presence, the couple was encouraged to touch and cuddle (mildly, of course) and get a feel for each other. If Will felt comfortable after tonight, then Ezra would retreat upstairs and catch up on his shows. Far enough to give the couple some hard won privacy, but close enough to hear if his bunny call if he grew frightened or didn’t like anything that was happening with Hannibal.

Not that Ezra thought that was even remotely going to happen.

Will was a huge fan of Hitchcock and he owned all of his movies, so the elder Graham was hardly surprised he’d picked out his favorite, Vertigo, to watch. Ezra had made up fresh pretzels, half salted with butter and half with Cajun spices, and had them already cooling on the coffee table. A small cooler had been set up next to the couch, filled to the brim with Italian soda and waters so they wouldn’t need to leave the room. And his bunny was currently in the kitchen, humming happily as he popped fresh popcorn on the stove.

Ezra grinned, pleased both to see his boy so happy and the night coming together so easily. He had little doubt that there would be a mating – and the wedding that Ezra would insist upon – in the future. He already had bought a giant wedding planning kit, along with practically raiding the magazine aisle at the grocery of wedding magazines. Will came into the living room with the bowl of fresh popcorn, setting it down on the table.

“Excited, bunny-boy?”

“Daddy,” Will muttered, embarrassed.
Ezra’s smile turned sharkish. “Now, now, Will. No reason to be embarrassed, I want you to have fun.”

“Daddy!” The young Submissive hissed, “you’ll be in the other room!”

“So be quiet.” He offered with a wink, smirking as Will twitched uncomfortably. His boy looked perfect, dressed in a slacks and a button up. Still formal, but much more relaxed. There was a knock on the door and before his son could answer Ezra was already crossing the room. He pulled the door open to find Hannibal standing there, a winter bouquet in his hands. The Dominant always looked sharp and today was no different, though he looked far more casual in a tan suit, matching sweater, and no tie.

Ezra gave him a warm smile. “Good evening, Hannibal.”

“Good evening, Ezra. You look resplendent, as always.”

“I’ve missed your silver tongue in the few hours you’ve been gone,” the eldest Graham snarked, smile widening as the flowers were offered to him. “Why thank you, they’re beautiful. And what do you have there?”

“Homemade nachos. I’ve been told by Alana Bloom that nachos are a requirement for movie nights. I’ve made them with mixed corn chips, seasoned meat with garlic,” Ezra found his lips twitching as Hannibal listed the ingredients with pride, “onion, tomatoes, cumin, chili powder, and cayenne pepper sauce, topped with ground beef, beans, pico de gallo, and melted asiago pressato.”

“That sounds wonderful, Hannibal. Please, come in, Will's already in the living room waiting for you. I'll be in the kitchen if you need anything. Best to get these into some water." Ezra smirked at the awkward way that Hannibal nodded and cleared his throat, stepping to the room and stripping off his winter layers.

It was not something verbally acknowledged - ever - but everyone in the house knew that at the very least a make-out and/or petting session was on the horizon. They would go no further than that though, as no matter where in the house Ezra was he would be able to smell if they’d tried anything more serious. A Roux’s sex had a particularly strong smell – and different versions of it depending on their gender – and the scent was so distinct that once registered, it could never be forgotten. And though the sharp smell was able to escape somewhat through clothing, it truly overtook the air once it was exposed.

The second Ezra smelt the scent of a Dominant’s prick, the eldest Graham would be in that room in a heartbeat, ready to tear both boys a new one. His Will was no slut; there would be a proverbial ring on his finger before Hannibal ever got a chance to get his rocks off, or else Ezra had failed at his job. The rule was an ancient but important one, put in place to keep Dominants from leaving the courtship once they’d gotten their kicks.

The same rule did not apply to the Submissives, however fair that was. The blunt truth of it was that as long as the Dominant never completed, the couple were pretty much left alone. A major part of the sitting process was touching, allowing the couple to test their physical chemistry and they were practically encouraged to experiment - as long as it stayed within the allotted boundaries.

The eldest Graham settled in at the kitchen table with a giant cup of tea and a plate of cookies, the colorful bouquet in a vase at the center, and started on the latest Nora Robert’s book he'd picked up at the store. At the first soft, barely audible moan, Ezra smirk grew utterly indecent, reaching out to flick on the radio.
Will grinned at the nacho spread, feeling himself salivate at the scent of cooked human drifting from it. He reached down and grabbed a stacked chip - and moaned at the delicious flavor. "This is so good, Hannibal."

"I'm glad you like it," the Dominant said with a smile. "I take it we are watching Vertigo tonight?"

Will nodded. "I'm a big Hitchcock fan. I was thinking we could re-watch some of my favorites. If that's alright with you, I mean."

"More than acceptable. It's been years since I've watched any of his films, but I find them quite enjoyable."

The Submissive grinned, grabbing the remote and starting the film. It was a little awkward, sitting next to Hannibal like this with his father just in the other room. Will had sat in the middle of his three person couch, giving Hannibal the option of which side he wanted to sit on, yet still indicating without words that he wanted the other Roux close. Will was completely confused on how to continue. He'd never had any real significant others, mainly because Will had never really craved sex, and that tended to put quite the damper on dating Humans. As such, he had very little experience in the field of flirting. To cover his nervousness, the younger Roux focused on the food, and by the time Kim Novak had fallen into the San Francisco Bay, the snacks were gone.

Besides giving his nervous energy an outlet, the food also had the side effect of making Will feel full and content, and his anxiety lessened in the face of such comfort and for the first time of the night, Will leaned back in his seat. At some point Hannibal had slid the length of his arm over the back of the couch, and Will's new position placed his nape against Hannibal's sleeve. Will bit his lip, holding his breath slightly before letting himself settle completely against the limb. After a few moments Hannibal's arm drifted lower, resting against Will's shoulders, his large hand running up and down his arm in slow, steady pets. As the movie carried on, the younger Roux let himself relax even further into the large frame.

Jimmy Stewart had fallen heads over heels for the fay Kim Novak, and Will had kicked off his shoes, feet curling up and tucking beneath his legs, lying almost boneless against Hannibal. It felt nice. Beyond nice, actually. It was rare that he ever actually felt completely relaxed, but Will was. He felt well-fed and safe, Hannibal's arm a comfortable weight around him, secure with the knowledge that the Dominant wouldn't allow anything to happen. He let out a content sigh, nuzzling lightly against Hannibal's shoulder. There was an answering hum, the older Roux turning to press a kiss against his forehead. Will leaned into the move, eyes shutting in pleasure as he shifted his head to the side to expose more of his face. There was another kiss pressed against his forehead, then another against the ridge of his eyebrow, and a slow rumble - a Submissive purr - escape him.

Hannibal froze, lips hovering over his cheek. Will's eyes opened to find him staring down at him, pupils blown and expression heated, and he barely had a chance to whimper before his mouth was being claimed. Despite the heat in Hannibal’s eyes, the kiss was incredibly gentle, as were the ones that followed it. They were hardly more than the lightest of touches against skin and even Hannibal’s tongue did little more than bathe his kiss-plumped lips before slipping inside, flicking casually against his own. They pulled away from each other after only a few, brief minutes, but the actions had filled his heart with a warmth that radiated all the way down to his toes.

Will traced Hannibal’s features with his fingers, studying each dip and upturn as if to memorize them, and the Dominant Roux watched him work with the softest of expressions, his lips quirked in a tiny smile.

Eventually the movie won their attention again and if possible Will curled even tighter against Hannibal, draping himself not only in his warmth but his scent, and he delighted in the tight grip of
Hannibal’s arms around him. They sat like that – Will’s head resting in the crook of the blond’s neck, Hannibal’s fingers drawling nonsensical patterns against his arm – until the movie ended. Even then, Will had changed to the cable and the pair watched a nature documentary.

But all programs had an end, and when the credits had finished rolling on the documentary, Hannibal reluctantly untangled himself and begun to say his goodbyes. Will followed him to the door, ignoring Ezra’s very interested stare as he watched Hannibal pull on his outer clothes. He fidgeted, hands twisting as he glanced out from the snowy night to Hannibal and then back again, scowling.

Hannibal let out a soft chuckle, reaching out to stroke Will’s cheek with the back of his hand. “I know, dearest. I don’t want to leave either.”

Will blushed, appalled that he’d been so easily read and embarrassed at his father’s not-so-silent, gleeful laughter, but reached up to grasp Hannibal’s hand regardless. He stared up at his suitor pleadingly. “Please be careful, I hate the thought of you driving so late in this.”

“Yes of course.”

“Will you text me when you get home? Or…email me, or something? Just so I know you got there okay?”

“It will be late, but I will.”

Will determinedly ignored the third party to their interaction as he stepped in close, nudging at Hannibal’s chin with his nose, nearly purring again when the Dominant responded instantly, turning into the touch. “Come see me tomorrow?”

“Nothing would give me greater pleasure. Good night, Will.”

“Goodnight, Hannibal.”

Will watched him go forlornly, hands shoved in his pockets, and pouted. He waited in front of the storm door until Hannibal’s tail lights could no longer be seen, fighting the urge to find his cellphone and call Hannibal back.

“Don’t look so morose, bunny.” Ezra said as he appeared next to him, shutting and locking the door before turning off the downstairs lights. “You’re seeing him tomorrow.”

“I know,” Will muttered self-consciously, following his Carrier up the stairs, “I just wish it was Spring.”

“Ahh, so your heat would be here.”

“Daddy, no! Because of the weather!” The younger Submissive sputtered, bringing both hands up to rub at his face in frustration. “You are enjoying this way too much.”

“Of course I am.” His father answered cheerfully, “I haven’t done my job if I don’t scar you a little bit. You have to have something to tell your psychiatrist – hey, wait a minute.”

“Daddy.”

Hannibal had spent a lazy Saturday cleaning his home, utterly distracted from everything, and he’d been forced to refile his recipe holder three times due to his own foolishness. His attention had been left behind with William. Everything in his mind revolved around the Submissive. How had he felt
this morning? Was he scared? Excited? Had he been as disappointed to wake up alone as Hannibal had been? Did he look forward to their sitting tonight as much as he did?

The day dragged by, Hannibal’s mood growing lighter with each passing hour, until it finally became close enough for Hannibal to begin his daily trek to Wolf’s Trap and not arrive far too early. He left Mago with dog sitter, paying her extra to watch him overnight again if needed, and started out. The drive was long and annoying, taking up the whole of Hannibal’s concentration as he navigated first the congested city streets, than the poorly ploughed highways, before finally picking his way across barely salted country streets.

It was close to seven o’clock when Hannibal turned onto the long gravel driveway of the Graham home – and the Dominant found himself instantly tensing, lips curling in dislike, at the sight of Jack Crawford’s car in the drive. He parked next to it, grabbing the dessert bundle he’d made for Ezra, and made his way quickly to the front door.

Only the glass storm door was closed and Hannibal could both see and hear the argument taking place inside. Ezra was all but snarling at the Human, quivering around the hand Will had pinned to his chest, exchanging vicious words with the agent. The sight of both Submissives so clearly frazzled made the Roux's protective instincts roar, and he stepped into the house at his full height, features cold and hard, instantly claiming the space with his mere presence.

“Dr. Lecter.” The agent’s expression only grew more dour, “why am I not surprised to see you here.”

“Hannibal!” Ezra called out, grey eyes furious, “get this man out of my house.”

“Last I checked this was Will’s house, Mr. Graham,” Crawford snapped, "and he and I are in the middle of a conversation.”

“There is no conversation.” Ezra seethed, “as he’s told you countless times over the phone, he’s not helping you anymore. You have Dr. Bloom for that.”

“Alana is talented, but she is no Will. I need him, I need his help.” Crawford insisted, “I don’t understand why you won’t even hear me out. Hell, you won’t even let Will speak! Are you really so selfish that you’d let people die-”

“Selfish?” Ezra’s voice had gone deathly quiet, “you think this is about my selfishness? When I came here, my son was sick; pale, thin, haunted by night and day terrors. All because he’d been working with you. Every health professional that I have talked to tell me that it is because of your pushing, that I need to remove you from the picture or lose my bunny. And I’m being selfish?”

“With all due respect, Mr. Graham, Will is an adult. And this is his decision.”

“And my decision is no.” Will broke in, his voice a calm oasis amongst the flurry, “I told you this over the phone, Jack. I'm extending my sick leave from the field indefinitely. Neither Alana nor Hannibal think it’s a good idea for me to keep working you. I have to think of my health - I don't even know if I'll be returning to teaching.”

“I’d like you to get a second opinion.”

Hannibal’s eyes narrowed as Will scoffed. “Hannibal was your second opinion, Jack.”

“Let me rephrase that; I’d like you to get an opinion from someone that isn’t your best friend or that you’re sleeping with.”
The entire house froze. It was as if the very air had been sucked from the room and Hannibal found himself lost for a long moment imaging the many different ways he could kill Jack Crawford, and of the meals he could make with his flesh, but then Will spoke. The brunet Roux’s voice was void of all emotion, his features filled with contempt. “Get out of my house, Jack.”

“Will-”

But Hannibal had heard enough.

“I believe it would be in everyone’s best interest if you left now, Agent Crawford.” He held the door open, daring the Human to object. Jack looked almost like he was about to, but the combined glare of all three Roux was too much for any Human, and he stepped out into the cool air. Hannibal followed the agent out, closing the door firmly behind him. “For the sake of our friendship, I am going to ignore that this conversation ever took place,” Hannibal announced casually as he walked the man to his car, “but if you do not cease harassing the Grahams, I will be joining Alana in filing a complaint with your superiors.”

The glare Crawford sent him was impressive for one of his kind, but it barely registered to the Dominant. “I sent him to you to fix, not fuck.”

Hannibal ruthlessly clamped down on his rolling anger, forcing the predator inside him behind the mask of Dr. Lecter, year long friend of Jack Crawford.

“Will was never legally my patient, Jack, and I have ceased providing him my services. While I can admit that seeing him outside of my office is entering into an ethical grey area, I do not intend to cheapen our relationship by denying it to anyone.” He gave the Human a long, disappointed look. “For the first time in many years, Will is happy and healing. And so am I, for that matter. I would have thought, as our friend, that you would seek to protect that as much as we do. I invite you to take a step back from the situation and take an unbiased look at your own actions here tonight – and over the past few weeks. You are a good man, Agent Crawford, I believe you will be surprised by what you find.”

To say that Will was furious over Jack’s interruption was an understatement. It had ruined the mood for the night and upset his father something terrible; Ezra had already retired up to upstairs, taking two unopened bottles of red wine and declaring a need for a hot bath to calm his frazzled nerves. It had felt like an invasion, an invasion of the Roux’s home while he was vulnerable and busy with a courting. It made Will feel like his nest had been compromised, and he hated that. The whole reason why he’d bought a home out here was to prevent that, to be so removed from humanity that any interaction with them would be a planned thing; no surprises.

And despite the recent bad blood between them, Will had believed Jack if not a friend, a colleague at the least, and the disrespect and lack of care for his health that he’d showed tonight was disheartening to say the least. Jack was a reminder of a life that Will no longer recognized as his own and that made him uneasy. He couldn’t connect the Will Graham of four months ago with the Will Graham of today, the Will Graham that was currently waiting for the Dominant he intended to mate with a eager want that he still found stunning. Jack was the jerking stop of a car breaking suddenly on the highway, a violent reminder that when this was all over Will was going to have somehow reconcile his old life with the new one he was creating. And he had no idea how to feel about any of that. All he knew was that he wanted Hannibal, wanted not only what he could provide but the Roux himself, and somewhere along the last few weeks, Will had stopped caring what he’d have to give to get that.

He was sitting on the couch, head cradled in his hands when Hannibal rejoined him.
“He’s left.” Will nodded, lips pressing together as he kept his gaze locked on the rug. There was a sigh as Hannibal sat next to him and a moment later a comforting hand was resting on the middle of his back. “Do not let his actions cut too deeply, William. Jack is a greedy man and he does not understand the full implications of his actions tonight.”

“I don’t want to talk about him.” Will said sharply, peeking out at Hannibal from between the ridges of hands, “I don’t want to think about him tonight. I don’t want you here as my psychiatrist, Hannibal.”

“All right,” he soothed, the hand running up the length of his back to rest lightly against his neck, “then what is it you would like?”

“I want to forget he ever came here. I want to forget him and the things he makes me remember.” Will swallowed nervously as he sat up, tongue wetting his lips and felt his heart stutter as Hannibal followed the action. “I want you to kiss me.”

Hannibal’s smile was roguish as he pulled the Submissive across the small space, “I am forever yours to command, dear Will.”

The kiss was heated from the start, Will pressing into Hannibal as their tongues tangled and swirled, a hand still holding his nape in a gentle hold. The grip adjusted his head, changing the angle of the kiss and giving Hannibal more room to explore. Will gasped, hands clinging to Hannibal’s shirt front as a clever tongue systematically mapped and tasted every inch of his mouth. They drew away only for a moment, the two Roux staring at each other with dark, wanton expressions, before they were pressing together again, the idea of a movie completely forgotten.

The kisses grew more impassioned, hands roaming across at each other, lips reddened and bruised from the constant touches. Time seemed to disappear, everything seemed to disappear save for Hannibal’s mouth against his own. A willful tongue lapped at his, the muscle long and smooth, pressing and coaxing Will’s into a more skillful play. He shifted, turned partially at the waist to have greater access to Will, and the younger Roux shuddered as Hannibal’s free hand slid across Will’s body, traveling across his back and against his side, finger tips leaving trails of heat despite the barrier of clothing.

The lust Will felt was overwhelming, twisting and tightening his stomach, and the Roux felt drunk on the other’s scent. He’d never felt anything of this caliber before, not amount of play by his own hands made him want so badly. His cock ached, fully erect and swollen, snaked down a trouser leg and it throbed painfully in time with heartbeat. He could feel his juices leaking, pooling around his full and drawn balls and it was so much - too much! Will broke the kiss, hiding his face in Hannibal’s neck, panting. The Dominant made a questioning noise - one that cut off abruptly as Will guided the hand that had been stroking his stomach to where he wanted it the most.

This was the point of sitting, an unspoken understanding of their time together, but Will had never felt as mortified as he did in that moment. But his body craved Hannibal, breaking down Will’s self-control and overriding his embarrassment.

He felt the growl more than heard it and hid his face even further in the warm skin, too far in disbelief at his forwardness to even look as a large palm stroked over his thigh. Will bit his lip violently, muffling his whine at the touch, hyper aware of his father’s presence above them. It still escaped him moments later, at the first touch against his covered cock. Will’s legs instantly slid as far apart as they could, opening his hips up to Hannibal’s touch. Hannibal’s hand was so large that the Submissive’s small sex fit almost completely under it, and Will’s hand flew to his mouth, desperate to silence the obscene sounds.
Clever fingers traced the lines of his erection, so pornographically outlined in his slacks, before gripping him through the smooth material and pumping. The unattractive sound Will made was more of a gurgling than anything else, hips arching up to get as much of that wicked touch as possible. Will wasn’t going to last long – he could already feel his orgasm rising, wrapping tightly around the base of his cock. Hannibal’s scent was everywhere, especially so close to his neck and each stuttered breath brought more of it in. Will couldn’t get enough of it. It drowned out the foul stench of Jack’s anger that had so colored his home, leaching the carefully constructed warmth from it. It was too much too soon, especially for someone who had only recently discovered masturbation.

Hannibal seemed to sense it, his palm rubbing harder and faster as he sought the younger Roux’s mouth in an insistent kiss, swallowing every whimper and whine that escaped him, the hand not stroking him off pinning the squirming Submissive down at the hip. Will was right there – on the very edge of what promised to be a massive orgasm – when Hannibal broke their kiss. He mouthed at Will’s neck, murmuring a stream of hungry words in Lithuanian as he huffed the younger Roux’s scent with long, rhythmic inhalations and short exhales.

The hand slid down, leaving only the very heel of it’s palm to greet Will’s frantic hips. There was a sudden pressure against his clothed hole – fingers digging into the soaked fabric, a fingertip slipping inside despite the layers – and Will came at once, back cracking it arched so quickly. The fingers and palm never left, pressing and pushing for the length of it, and his vision whited, eyes rolling back into his head at the strength of the pleasure, ass cheeks clenched so hard that they shook.

When he came to himself moments later, Will’s chest was heaving, lying completely limp against the couch, and every inch of him overstimulated to pain. Hannibal’s hand was still on him, cupping his soaked crotch, and the move was oddly comforting. Even though the pressure almost hurt, he felt so safe and wanted, Hannibal’s warmth a welcomed balm to the sensitive skin.

Hannibal pulled his head from Will’s neck, face flushed and eyes wild, and captured the younger Roux’s lips in a bruising kiss that quickly turned into gentle nips and licks across the abused skin. When he finally pulled away, Will felt utterly drained and weak. But it was a strange, perfect kind of exhaustion. It felt as if some long born strain had finally been relieved, burnt out of him with the heat of that orgasm. Hannibal, however, was clearly still erect, hard and ready and Will heart thumped at the sight of it. The well-tailored pants left very little to the imagination and Will could easily see the very generous length outlined, as well as the swollen bump of both his tip and what could only be a knot.

How terribly he wanted to reach out and touch it, to coax it out of those khakis and stroke it, taste it, learn every inch of it until there was no part of it Will did not know. But Will was tired, exhausted really, and they both knew that any ignorance Ezra was feigning upstairs would end the moment he smelt Hannibal. So instead he snuggled deep against the blond, allowing him to twist them until they were lying side by side, Will wedged between the back of the couch and the older Roux’s large frame.

The small space should have felt uncomfortable, but Will only felt safe – the safest he’d felt of his entire life. He knew in the morning he’d be humiliated at the thought of his father sitting just a few feet above them, but at the moment the knowledge of both Hannibal and his Daddy nearby was only comforting. He squirmed slightly, shifting and wriggling until he managed to press even closer to the blond, a leg worming its way between Hannibal’s as he hid his face in a broad chest.

Will let himself drift off like that, content and happy, secure in his Dominant’s interest with a cock, hard and heavy, against his hip and a nose filled with the potent scent of lust.

Maintaining one’s dignity when in front of one's future father-in-law was incredibly difficult to do in
a ruffled suit, a strategically placed jacket hiding one’s erection, and covered head to toe in his son’s arousal. Yet Hannibal did what he could. Ezra, the Dominant couldn’t help but noticed, seemed utterly tickled by the entire thing.

They exchanged parting pleasantries, his tone calm and collected even though everything inside Hannibal was objecting to thought of leaving his little mate alone and vulnerable in sleep. If the mating impulses had been difficult before, they were a horror now.

Hannibal had always known how compatible he and Will would be, but now that he’d had a taste of it, it took every inch of his not inconsiderable amount of will power to leave him there. When they had first parted, he had stood over him for a long moment, watching the peace with which Will slept, and fought an almost undeniable want to slip himself free and cover that pretty face with his come. From some distant, muffled part of his mind, Hannibal’s schooling recognized it as a purely hindbrain urge. It was grating on his instincts to leave his Submissive behind unmated and unmarked, naked of anything that truly branded him as Hannibal’s.

Slowly – and with more control then Hannibal had ever thought he would need – he managed to turn away, jaw clenched and fists curled tightly at his side. It was the right move, as Ezra had been watching him from the living room’s open entryway. Ezra’s eyes shone menacing in the half-light of the television, his body loose and lax in preparation, hands open and ready at his side. In that moment, Hannibal was struck by the violence that he had always known lurked behind the elusively lithe frame, and he fully realized the unfortunate series of actions that would have taken place had he caved to his instincts.

After the first few steps away from his William, the tension was gone from Ezra’s frame, as if it had never been there, and Hannibal watched in bemusement as the older Roux fretted over his scarf and cap. He’d retied the plaid scarf one last time, patting the knot before glancing up at him with a warm smile. “Breathe, Hannibal. You’re doing well. Almost to the end now – there are never more than a few days of sitting.”

And with those parting words, Ezra had shooed him out of the house. The Dominant had only made it a mile onto the road before pulling over. He almost broke his zipper in his haste to free his turgid cock, yanking his glove off with his teeth. Hannibal pressed his hand to his face, tongue lapping at the scent drenched skin, inhaling the still present smell of Will’s orgasm. It took less than two pumps before he was coming violently. The Roux snarled, teeth bared and angry as his head slammed back against the head support, hips hitching up again and again, cum leaving stringy pearls against the front of his jacket until it looked like snow.

He sat there for a long while, letting the gentle vibrations of the engine and the soothing heat of the car seats calm his frantic heartbeat before finally gathering enough wit to be able to give the icy roads the type of attention they required.

The Roux got back to Baltimore sometime after one and he longed for the days when he would no longer have to make the trip to Wolf Trap, when he’d be coming home every night to find Will waiting for him, fat with his child. He picked his way carefully up the stairs, his scarf thrown haphazardly over a shoulder and already undoing the buttons of his coat as he unlocked the door. It would need to be dry-cleaned, all of it, he thought sourly as he peeled off the come splattered coat – and froze, head snapping up to stare down the front hall. The house was silent and dark, seemingly no different from how he left it. Except it was.

There was someone here.

Hannibal bit back the growl that wanted to escape him, battling with instincts he usually found so easy to control. It was much harder - almost as hard as it had been when he was a child - his self-
control weakened by the nature of the nights encounter with his chosen Submissive. They screamed at him to slink through the darkness of his home and find the intruder, to kill him and bring the body to Will and Ezra to show him his might. What Hannibal wanted to do, however, was to walk calmly into his kitchen, turning on lights as he went, pick up his favorite carving knife, and wait for the intruder to come to him. In the end it mattered little, as before he could act either way, the lights to the front foyer were flipped on and Hannibal felt the fight leave him all at once. The Dominant Roux that stood in a pair of Hannibal's own pajamas was a familiar – if uninvited sight.

“I see the courting is going well.” A heavily accented voice said, tone clearly amused. Brown eyes were alight with humor as they took in his disheveled form, particularly his stained front. “Has becoming American robbed you of your manners, mažai vilkas? Or perhaps it is that sweet kvėpaliai that has stolen your speech?”

Hannibal let out a sigh, shrugging off his coat and folding it until the crusting stains could no longer be seen, and gave the aging Dominant a tight smile. “Hello, Uncle.”

An hour later found Hannibal freshly showered and dressed, making a meal for his last remaining family. Robertas – or Robert, as he went by in the western world – was watching him, the same mocking smile that had driven Hannibal up the wall the entirety of his youth still on his lips.

::He’s a beautiful little Submissive.::

Hannibal agreed on reflex before freezing, turning slowly to stare at his uncle’s unapologetic form.

::It is incredibly rude to spy, Uncle.::

The smirk only grew wider. ::Spying is such a crude term for it my boy, I only wanted to make sure he was good enough for you.::

::Whether or not William meets standard is my decision, Robert.:: Hannibal ground out, striving for – and failing – to find his calm. He not only loved but respected his uncle dearly and was deeply indebted to him, but there was something about Robert that got under the younger Lecter’s skin. The two had butted heads fairly nonstop since Hannibal’s Change, and though they talked bi-monthly, the conversations were often trying. The cycle of their relationship wasn’t terribly unusual; it was difficult for two fully grown Dominants to share any space, even if they were family.

::Well, he’s certainly up to my own.::

::Robert::

::Yes, yes, I know,:: his uncle said with a roll of the eyes, ::my opinion is of little matter to you. Whatever happened to that adorable little cub that used to hang on my every word? You used to follow me around like a lost lamb, he was far more endearing then you are now.::

::All children grow up, Uncle.::

There was a noncommittal hum. ::I must ask though, where on earth did you find him? I wouldn’t have believed you could have found such a gem in the Americas. At least not North America; the South at least had the influence of the Spaniards.:: Hannibal forced himself to take a deep breath and concentrate on his dish, less he burn the eggs. ::I haven’t the slightest clue what the appeal is you find here.::

::We are not having this conversation again,:: the younger Dominant said, tone definitive, as he flipped the omelet. ::And if you must know, I met William when he announced his season.::

::And the other one? His carrier? What’s his name?::
Hannibal froze, lips twisting in dislike. He’d grown incredibly protective (and quite possessive) over both Grahams, and the interest of another Dominant – even his own flesh and blood – left a sour taste in his mouth. He placed the finished egg onto a plate before turning around.

::His name is Ezra,:: the blond answered as he slid the plate uncaringly across the granite, ::and he’s out of your league.::

Robert’s smile was all teeth.

::I respectfully disagree.::

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys enjoyed! The Lithuanian in this chapter means ‘little wolf’ and ‘scent.’ Did you guys enjoy the smut? Hope it was worth the wait. What do you think of Robert? And don't worry by Tobias' silence; he has not left the scene quite yet.
“And…” Will’s voice dropped to a low whisper, “…and I want the Chesapeake Ripper to go away.”

Chapter Notes

Now betaed by the darling Felicia.

Robert calls Hannibal 'Anya,' which is a diminutive of Anna/Hannah, which I figured would work for 'Hanni,' and the fact that it was meant for girls just made me giggle all the more. Also: Sūnènas = nephew. Dėdė = Uncle.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Hannibal.”

“- and you will find a plate for you warming in the oven and I’ve made a pot of your favorite tea.”

“Hannibal.”

“Mago has already been fed, but if he gets hungry there is some dog food in a labeled tupperware in the fridge. I’ve left reheat instructions-”

“Sūnènas.” Robert interrupted, tone sharp but expression amused from where he leaning against the door frame, lips twitching. “I believe I am more than capable of managing an evening without your aid, but your care is noted, Anya.”

“Do not call me that, I am not a cub.” Hannibal snapped, though it was more out of annoyance than anything else and lacked any real heat.

“Neither am I.” His uncle reminded as he stepped into the younger Roux’s space, hands straightening his vest and then moving to his rolled sleeves, crisping the folds. Hannibal rolled his eyes but allowed the primping. “If anything I feel ancient, watching you go off a-courting. I would prefer to meet them both first, but if your William moves to end the courtship tonight, you have more than my blessing to do so if you wish.”

He bit back the retort that’d he be doing so with or without his uncle’s blessing – Robert was trying to be gracious, after all – and settled for nodding silently. Just as he moved to leave, Hannibal was startled by a heavy hand settling on his shoulder. They were hardly a tactile or emotional family at the best of times, the balance of their familial unit thrown off kilter with the lack of any Submissives to soothe frazzled pride and ease territorial tensions. Yet there was no denying the fond (and Hannibal almost dared to call it affectionate) emotion on his uncle’s face.

“I am very proud of you, sūnènas.” Robert’s expression grew wistful, distant, and Hannibal knew
that he was thinking of their shared loss. His father and uncle had been very close, far closer than most Dominant Roux managed after reaching maturity, and the act that spoke volumes of both males’ patience, intelligence, and self-control. Hannibal knew Robert missed his brother dearly and had long realized that his resemblance to his father caused his uncle no small amount of pain.

He reached out, gripping the arm and giving it a firm squeeze as he echoed the sentiments he’d shared with William during their walk. “Everything I am, dêdê.”

The small smile was well worth whatever emotional discomfort the admission had cost Hannibal, and the younger Dominant gave the arm one last squeeze before stepping out into the winter air. As he drove to Wolf Trap, Hannibal found his thoughts returning to Robert again and again. It had been decades since his uncle had last taken a lover and those that he had were all human; they could never serve as anything more than a distraction for his uncle.

There had been a Submissive once, an elegant Japanese Submissive, working the French show scene as a cross-dressing ‘Geisha’ (it had been the ‘60s, Paris was an interesting place) who had gone by the stage name ‘Murasaki.’ Hannibal had only met him once, shortly before he’d been sent to boarding school, and Murasaki been a beautiful, but delicate creature.

There had been a brief few months when Hannibal had thought the two would bond, but for whatever reasons the Submissive and his uncle had parted ways and Murasaki was never spoken of again. Abstractly, Hannibal wondered if uncle was lonely. It was a strange thought, as the younger rarely had thought of Robert Lecter in such terms. Robert had always seemed so controlled and collected that emotions seemed below him.

But then again, was that not how all children viewed their elders?

Hannibal had spent virtually no time with his uncle after his Change and the Roux was startled to realize that he knew little (nor had given any thought, to be honest) of Robert’s mental state, which was particularly goading given Hannibal’s profession. The idea weighed heavily on his mind, and the thought - along with the severe frown that accompanied it - were unwelcomed companions for the entirety of the drive.

Their grim presences abated at the first sight of his Submissive though and Hannibal’s expression gentled as William greeted him. The younger Roux was dressed even more casual than he (and for Hannibal, the lack of a sweater, tie, or jacket was him practically naked) in a pair of flannel sleep pants and a loose, long sleeve university t-shirt. He grinned up at Hannibal, smile nervous as he leaned forward to nuzzle against the Dominant’s chilled cheek.

“Hey.” Will murmured, turning to press a light kiss against his cheek bone. Whatever tension that had remained left at that simple greeting and Hannibal pulled Will into a loose, one-armed embrace as he sought those plump lips in a chaste kiss. He broke the kiss after only a moment, resting his lips against William’s forehead. “You smell…” the brunet's nose wrinkled adorably, “…different.”

“My Uncle Robert is staying with me.”

Will gaped up at him, eyes wide with surprise. “I thought he lived in France?”

“He’s come to visit for a while. He would like to meet you and your father.” Instantly, the younger Roux’s eyes nearly doubled in size, paling slightly before Hannibal pulled him close once more. “Hush, William. He will love you, there is nothing to be nervous about. And even if he didn’t, I could care less.”

“Of course he will love you,” Ezra announced sharply from where he stood on the stairs, clad in a
bathrobe and with his hair up in a towel wrap, a cup of tea in one hand and a rolled up magazine balanced under an arm. “Forgive the intrusion boys, but I thought I smelt something odd. Your uncle, you say?”

“Yes, Robertas Lecter, though he prefers the English or French variant when he’s outside of Eastern Europe.” Hannibal gave Ezra an apologetic smile. He should have called ahead and forewarned of the foreign scent as he had little doubt that a proud Submissive like Ezra Graham wasn’t very pleased at being seen in his pajamas. He held up a pink and red box in an act of blatant bribery, “I’ve brought chocolate,” and fought a grin as the stern look on Ezra’s face faltered, “from my uncle.”

“Will, be a good boy – thank you, dear. Oh my, these are French.” The elder Graham let out a moan that was borderline indecent as he bit into one of the perfectly sculptured sweet. “Well, I suppose he can’t be all that bad.” He gave them a little wave with the half-eaten chocolate. “I’m retiring; don’t be up too late boys.”

Will shook his head fondly at his father’s theatrics, leading Hannibal into the living room by the hand. “Chocolates were a good move,” he whispered conspiratorially as he pulled them down onto the sofa, “I’ve never met someone with a sweet tooth like my daddy.”

Hannibal grinned, content to find that the gift had seemingly soothed both Submissives’ nerves, and the grin took a decidedly more wicked edge as Will pressed against his side, hands tugging him closer by the vest. He went with the move willingly, a hand curling around the younger Roux’s neck as he angled the kiss and deepened it, claiming the wet space almost anxiously. Though it had been less than twenty-four hours, it felt far longer. Too long. They made out lazily, kissing until their lips were chapped and numb, necks aching from the awkward positioning, and longer even still after that.

Finally they pulled away, the younger Roux a limpet in Hannibal’s arms.

“Hannibal?” Will’s voice was a breath against his skin, but Hannibal heard him easily enough.

“Hm?”

“I still want to work, but not with Jack.” The Submissive said just as quietly, hands tightening around Hannibal, teeth picking at his bottom lip nervously. “I want to teach, even with cubs. Is that… agreeable?”

Hannibal froze, eyes widening in startled hope.

Negotiating.

They were negotiating.

Will was ready.

The Dominant forced his tone to betray none of the elation he felt.

“More than,” Hannibal said softly, leaning in to free Will’s tortured bottom lip in a fierce kiss, “but no teaching when you’re carrying. I won’t risk something happening or you being exposed. Or for the first nine months…at least until they’re weaned. Our children will need you and you know it is not as simple as hiring a nanny or putting them in daycare.”

The younger Roux took a long moment to think about it, head cocking to the side sweetly and Hannibal had to force himself from leaning in to kiss him once more.

“That sounds fair.” Will settled against his shoulder once more, hands drifting from his neck to fold
into the space between their bodies. “…I don’t want to sell my house, not until I know if Daddy wants it or not. Plus, I like the idea of having my own things. Which is why I want to keep my bank accounts and credit cards. And my car. I don’t want a curfew or travel limits or any of those things that my sire did to daddy.”

“No travel limit or curfews – but only if you keep the lines of communication open between us, William. I won’t stand for you traveling without notice, nor coming home at odd hours without so much of a call of warning.” Hannibal tightened his hold, shifting Will up higher in his lap. “I am a Dominant Roux, you will be my Submissive. As such, your safety and well-being will rest heavily on my mind; doubly so once children are involved. I don’t mean to be draconian, but I must know where you are. I have lost one family already, William. I cannot promise I will react…well to such careless disregard of my feelings.”

“I can agree to that, I would never do that – leave you hanging like that, Hannibal. At least never on purpose, I promise.”

“That’s all I can ask,” Hannibal said softly. “You can keep a car – with the title in your own name even – but I want to buy you a new one. Something safe, I hate the death trap you drive now. I don’t care about your bank accounts or credit, but you’ll have little need of them; I’ve already had several set up in your name from my own so that matters little to me.”

“I want my friends safe, and my students. Hannibal, if I say no – if I say you can’t – you have to listen to me.” Will said urgently, hands tightening on his vest, “unless…unless it is life threatening – a direct threat to me or our family – you can’t kill anyone in my life without asking me.”

“Fair enough.”

“And…” Will’s voice dropped to a low whisper, “…and I want the Chesapeake Ripper to go away.”

Hannibal froze, mind racing. He’d never revealed himself to Will, nor had they talked about any of the cases, too focused on their courtship. He did not believe Will would be angry with him for his fun and yet –

There was a soft sound, almost like a squeaking sigh, and Hannibal was suddenly aware that he was holding the Submissive far too tightly, that he’d allowed the silence between the two of them grow for too long. Will was stiff in his arms and the air was sour with the scent of fear. The Dominant loosened his grip immediately, an apology on his lips, only for the words to fall to the wayside as Will’s forehead bumped his jaw gently.

“I liked that,” Will murmured, nuzzling into his chest, “when you hold me tight like that, I feel safe.” Hannibal’s grip tightened immediately, drawing the younger Roux so close it was hard for either to breathe. “I figured it out when I was boxing up my case files to send to Jack. I can’t believe it took me this long to see it, I feel like an idiot.”

“You were a little preoccupied,” Hannibal comforted in the spirit of honestly, pressing a kiss against his mate-to-be’s curls. “You are not angry?”

“No.”

“Then why…?”

“Why do I want you to stop?” Will sighed. “You’re too good, Hannibal. You’ve called too much attention, too many people see you as their meal ticket. The ultimate serial killer; you’re like the Zodiac except more alluring. People don’t just stop being interested in someone who kills like you
They’re always going to want to know, to understand, to stop you. Every stupid, new young buck that comes through the FBI is going to try and find you. And one day, you’re going to make a mistake. Or technology is going to advance and they’ll find a new way to track you. And then they’re going to come and take you away from me.”

“They are no closer to catching me than when I just started.”

“I don’t care.” Came the immediate, sharp retort. His Submissive shook his head, pressing a kiss against the skin of his neck. “I’m not asking you to stop hunting, I’m asking you to stop showing off. You’re smarter than the Humans. Okay, everyone gets that. Trust me, Jack gets that you’re smarter than him. You can go down in history as the one that got away. But…I won’t be alone, Hannibal, I won’t have that, I’ve seen…” his voice dropped to the barest of whispers, the sound barely audible even to the Dominant, “I won’t be my father.”

Will pushed against his chest until he was free and to Hannibal’s horror, tears were threatening to tumble from those beautiful greys, Will’s bottom lips quivering.

“You stop as the Ripper or…or I can’t. What if they don’t just find you? What if they find me? And I’m pregnant or – or find our children? I won’t risk that, Hannibal, I…I just won’t.”

“William,” Hannibal breathed, reaching out with a thumb to brush a stubborn tear that had escaped the Submissive’s firm control, “please, darling. Don’t be upset. I’ll quit. It was just…just a game.”

A bachelor’s game, his mind supplemented, something to keep the Roux from losing his mind as he lived day in and day out surrounded by stupid monkeys. He doubted he would need it now, though it jostled Hannibal’s pride to give up on something he’d worked so hard to shape and craft. But was it not only fair? The Dominant had asked William to give up his career with Jack, to put away his own dangerous game in favor of family life. How could he not do the same?

The younger Roux let out a strangled laugh of relief, leaning down for a messy, open mouthed kiss. When he pulled away, his eyes were still wet but so, so much happier. Will’s hand cupped his cheek.

“William,” Hannibal breathed, reaching out with a thumb to brush a stubborn tear that had escaped the Submissive’s firm control, “please, darling. Don’t be upset. I’ll quit. It was just…just a game.”

A bachelor’s game, his mind supplemented, something to keep the Roux from losing his mind as he lived day in and day out surrounded by stupid monkeys. He doubted he would need it now, though it jostled Hannibal’s pride to give up on something he’d worked so hard to shape and craft. But was it not only fair? The Dominant had asked William to give up his career with Jack, to put away his own dangerous game in favor of family life. How could he not do the same?

The younger Roux let out a strangled laugh of relief, leaning down for a messy, open mouthed kiss. When he pulled away, his eyes were still wet but so, so much happier. Will’s hand cupped his cheek.

“My heat…it’s still a ways off, but we could mate then – if you don’t mind waiting?”

The younger Roux let out a strangled laugh of relief, leaning down for a messy, open mouthed kiss. When he pulled away, his eyes were still wet but so, so much happier. Will’s hand cupped his cheek.

“William,” Hannibal breathed, reaching out with a thumb to brush a stubborn tear that had escaped the Submissive’s firm control, “please, darling. Don’t be upset. I’ll quit. It was just…just a game.”

A bachelor’s game, his mind supplemented, something to keep the Roux from losing his mind as he lived day in and day out surrounded by stupid monkeys. He doubted he would need it now, though it jostled Hannibal’s pride to give up on something he’d worked so hard to shape and craft. But was it not only fair? The Dominant had asked William to give up his career with Jack, to put away his own dangerous game in favor of family life. How could he not do the same?

The younger Roux let out a strangled laugh of relief, leaning down for a messy, open mouthed kiss. When he pulled away, his eyes were still wet but so, so much happier. Will’s hand cupped his cheek.

“William,” Hannibal breathed, reaching out with a thumb to brush a stubborn tear that had escaped the Submissive’s firm control, “please, darling. Don’t be upset. I’ll quit. It was just…just a game.”

A bachelor’s game, his mind supplemented, something to keep the Roux from losing his mind as he lived day in and day out surrounded by stupid monkeys. He doubted he would need it now, though it jostled Hannibal’s pride to give up on something he’d worked so hard to shape and craft. But was it not only fair? The Dominant had asked William to give up his career with Jack, to put away his own dangerous game in favor of family life. How could he not do the same?
he let his mouth drop lowered, nipping at the exposed throat, “and your taste.”

Will arched into the shallow bite, a hand gripped tightly at his hair while its twin dug into his shoulder. The act slid the Submissive’s cock against his chest and Will let out a wounded sound, hips jerking without rhythm against Hannibal’s hardened muscles. Hannibal grit his teeth, eyes squeezing shut at the feel of a plush ass rocking so intensely against his clothed length. The movements were frantic and unpracticed, but that only seemed to drive Hannibal even further out of control.

“Hannibal.”

The sound of his name made the Dominant’s cock pulse violently in his pants, the base already tensing and stretching and Hannibal growled, hands stilling his Will before he did something both of them would regret. Will moaned, hips straining in his grip but Hannibal kept firm, capturing his mate-to-be’s mouth in a searing kiss. But Will would not be contained, nearly wild as he squirmed and writhed in Hannibal’s lap and eventually he was forced to push the brunet Roux up onto his knees, breaking the sweet contact between them. Will whined pathetically, lust-glazed eyes staring down at him in confusion.

“Do you know how mad you drive me?” Hannibal asked and could hardly recognize the ragged voice as his own “What the sight of you – the smell of you does to me?”

Will bit his lip, somehow embarrassed by the words rather than the very intimate position they were in. He licked at the smaller Roux’s lips, dragging the tip over the soft skin but not allowing it to slip inside, even when Will's mouth opened obediently. He squeezed at a full ass cheek, cock twitching at the slight dampness that meet his palm, before pulling the bottoms down.

William’s grip on his shoulders became bruising, legs spreading as far apart as they could in the confines of his bottoms, chin tucking against his chest. Hannibal took in the submissive gesture, inhaling sharply as his fingers slid his briefs down and up slick-wet thighs. He couldn’t have stopped the low, possessive growl that escaped him as he parted those fleshly cheeks, the tips of his fingers tracing across the hole that had haunted Hannibal’s dreams.

“O-Oh.” Will panted, eyes rolling back at the first, gentle push of the Dominant’s forefinger inside. Hannibal had to stop there – just a single finger knuckle deep – and forced himself to breathe through his mouth as he fought for control. He could have stayed like that forever; just that finger stuffed up inside that moist, twitching warmth, but it seemed his Submissive was far less willing and Hannibal growled warningly, free hand tightening around Will’s cheek as the younger Roux dropped his hips, forcing the finger deep inside.

“I-Hannibal,” Will whined, clenching so tightly around the digit that his hand flew to his cock, pressing against the aching flesh. He’d known that Will would be tight; every inch of his channel tight and virginal – just for Hannibal. Always just for him. “Please, I…I need more.”

“Have you ever touched yourself like this?” He asked, sanguine eyes sharp and attentive as he watched his lover’s face, slowly pumping the finger in and out. “Answer me, William.”

“Y-Yes,” he panted, nearly collapsing against Hannibal’s chest, forehead resting against his shoulder as Will’s hips fruitlessly tried to hurry the pace.

“Do you touch yourself at night? After your daddy’s put you to sleep with a full belly of food that I’ve brought you.” Another nod and Will's nails were digging into his skin as Hannibal added a second finger, spreading them wide as he slid them in and out. “Just your fingers?”

Will’s hips stuttered, but he didn’t answer and Hannibal stilled, a hand tightening on his hip to stop
the frantic humps, bringing their desperate touches to a grinding halt. “William-”

“A b-brush.”

Hannibal snarled, thrusting up into the Submissive with three fingers, rewarding the honesty with an unforgiving pace. The idea was almost too much; how clearly he could picture Will, spread out and naked on his bed, driven too such wantonness that he would resort to a brush handle for pleasure.

Will cried out, his passage opening easily to the additional girth, words a sob against Hannibal’s neck as he rocked down to meet each thrust. “I know I wasn’t supposed to – but I felt so – so empty, I need to be f-full-”

The Dominant choked on a growl, sharp fingernails pressing into his covered cock – into the swell of his knot – and dug in, pinching and twisting the skin harshly. Pain blossomed behind his eyes, so sharp tears pooled in response, but it managed to beat back the wave of orgasm that had nearly overwhelmed him. Above and around him William was falling apart, cunt squeezing tightly against Hannibal’s fingers in an impossible vice that made everything inch of Hannibal want.

There a flush of wet against his hand, slick following the curves of his palm and wrist as it dripped down his forearm at the same moment that clear, thin come sunk into the thick material of his vest. Hannibal basked in it; in the feel and scent of his William’s total completion at his hands.

All at once Will went limp against him, head lulling against his shoulder. Hannibal met questing lips in a gentle kiss before guiding the drowsy brunet’s face to his neck, and Will immediately burrowed there, arms latching around his shoulders in a crushing grip. He’d been warned that after a mating where a knot was not achieved, Submissive Roux instinctively sought another manner to keep a Dominant close and so Hannibal took the clutching in stride, holding the younger Roux just as tightly. He managed to navigate the afghan off a nearby chair with his foot, bending his leg awkwardly until he could grab the material and wrap it around William, mindful of the cold, drafty build of the Graham house.

There was a flash of something - barely a shadow of a shadow in the dark - in the window situated directly across from the couch and Hannibal tensed, arms reflexively tightening around Will as he stared intensely into the night. But the house was silent; neither the dogs nor Ezra seemed to be stirring and after a handful of long, tense moments the Dominant allowed himself to dismiss it all together. Hannibal’s instincts were at their most wild at the moment, and that meant they weren’t necessarily at their sharpest. His entire body was thrummed tight, aching for release, and the scent and feel of his chosen mate pliant and happy (but so very, very unclaimed) in his arms was enough to put him on edge. A bit of wildlife most likely, given how far out Will lived, or perhaps an odd reflection from something in the room, and Hannibal let himself relax.

He pressed a kiss against his already slumbering Submissive, settling into the couch. He flicked the television on mute, browsing through the channels. The night was still very young – it was hardly even nine o’clock – and Hannibal had no plans of leaving anytime soon.

He was getting incredibly tired of leaving William behind.

In the cold dark of the night, Tobias Bulge glowered. The large dog – Bear – was romping about in the snow next to him, too busy entertaining his long lost packmate to alert the others to his presence. Ovie tried his best to keep up with the larger dog, plodding after him at a snail’s pace in the snow.

Tobias hardly noticed the puppy’s struggles. His attention was locked on the writhing forms, teeth gritting tighter and tighter together as he watched the two hump and paw at each other like animals.
Tighter and tighter still – tighter until he thought they might shatter – as the Submissive’s lithe body arched, hips fucking against intruding fingers. Even from the distance, Tobias could easily see the strength of Will’s arousal, see the sheen of slick as it dripped down the blond’s arm, as it fell ignored and unseen onto the carpet below.

Even from where he was hidden in the garden, the Roux had no trouble seeing everything in horrid, putrid detail. Nails dug into the palms of his hand, not yet enough to draw blood – and with it attention – as Will’s rapid movements grew more graceless. His fingers popped as his grip squeezed even tighter, eyes furious as his Will shouted in completion and was immediately cuddled into the Dominant’s frame.

Some dark emotion – some bitter mix of anger, jealousy, betrayal, and hatred – seemed to swirl in his chest, growing thicker and heavier with each gentle caress, each sloppy kiss, each loving whisper exchanged between the pair. He watched as Will slept and woke and began again. No amount of orgasms seemed enough to sate their whorish lusts, and there was seemingly no end to their petting or fondling, no relief from the way their bodies seemed so desperate to entwine and become one despite the layers of clothing that separated them.

The night drew on.

And Tobias watched.

And watched.

And watched.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter:

Interlude: A Curious Meeting

::cackle of joy:: I'm pretty excited. Also, Tobias is a perv. How we feeling about Robertas so far? Betcha guys were wondering where the hell the Chesapeake Ripper stuff was. And here is how Robertas looks like in my minds eye. It is indeed David Bowie (you can thank the show for that) but without the eyes:
Added AN: Also, holy shit. Have you guys read Wage Your War by Della19? Omg, I just read it and fucking gobsmackers. That story is amazing. Go read it now.

Added AN 2: I left a reply to a comment that is a bit spoilerish about Robertas, Ezra, and Murasaki, which you may want to avoid if you do not want said spoilers.
**Interlude: A Curious Meeting**

**Chapter Summary**

Despite himself, Ezra couldn’t help but be somewhat impressed. He let none of it show on his face, eyes narrowing, tsking loudly to silence the growling dogs. “Count Lecter, I presume?”

**Chapter Notes**

Now Betaed by Felicia!

Ezra and Robert finally meet!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Ezra hummed to himself as he walked with the dogs, reaching out and flicking at whatever ear or tail came close, chuckling at the way it drove the pack mad. It was cold even with the late morning hour and the Roux shivered despite the fact that he was layered in a long sleeved hoodie, a pair of matching sweats, and a puffy down jacket.

Will was off to the city for the day, first to Quantico to try and sort through his office and meet with his students, then on to share a lunch with Hannibal and Alana (whose presence was the only reason Ezra had chosen to stay behind) before returning to the Academy to spend the afternoon in meetings with his bosses to discuss his health and possible return to teaching. Than later in the evening they would all meet up for dinner in Baltimore so Hannibal could introduce the mysterious *Grafías Robertas Lecter*. The dinner was to be a casual affair and Ezra had already planned his outfit accordingly. He was so caught up in trying to imagine the type of Roux Hannibal’s uncle could be that he nearly missed the faint, unfamiliar scent all together.

As it was, Ezra Graham was a Submissive Roux who spent the majority of his life mateless and with a cub, and he most certainly did not.

He froze, every instinct rearing at once, and took a deep, deep inhale of the freezing air. He pivoted on his heel, eyes narrowing before whistling sharply, calling the pack to his side. Ezra steps were silent despite the snow, each footfall measured as he tracked the scent. It led him further around the side of the house and towards the thick garden bushes.

The Submissive’s brows furrowed as he knelt, taking in the tracks only just buried under a thin layer of fresh snow. He tugged off his glove with his teeth, finger digging into the snow and bringing it up to scent. Ezra let out a low, angry growl, sending the pack scattering around him as they pranced and flittered about nervously.

*Semen.*

He let the snow slide from his hands and the growl turned into more of a snarl as he stood, aware all at once that from this spot one could see fully into their living room. Ezra had his cell phone free and
was dialing Will’s number before it was a fully conscious thought, struck with a fierce need to know his bunny was safe. To his utmost frustration, Will didn’t answer. A quick glance at his watch showed that he was more than likely still in student meetings, but that knowledge did little to soothe Ezra’s frantic mind. His second call was to Hannibal, who thankfully answered.

“Ezra?”

“Someone’s been here. Je vais l’écorcher vif!” The Submissive snapped, slipping into French in his fury and was contented to hear a violent and vicious growl on the other side of the line.

“Are you safe?” Hannibal’s voice was calm, but positively glacial.

“Yes, they’re gone now.”

"I'll be over at once."

“No, no need.” Ezra said with a small smile, feeling the tight knot in his stomach loosen ever so slightly at the attentive care of a Dominant, even if it was from his future son-in-law. “But I can’t get a hold of Will. I know he’s just in his meetings, but I want you to find him and stay together until we meet up later.”

"You should come meet us in Baltimore, you can stay at my home if you don't want wait at my office."

"No," he said sharply, nostrils flaring in his anger, “I won't be driven off my territory." 

"Ezra, it isn't safe."

“I’ve got the pack, I’m not running.”

There was a sigh and the sound of clinking glass and the Submissive had the distinct impression he’d driven the young Roux drink. "Then at the very least allow me to send my uncle."

“Hannibal…”

“Ezra, I can’t in good consciousness leave you there alone." There was another sigh, “nor can I face William if I must tell him I’ve left you there, defenseless.”

The Submissive hissed in annoyance, sensing that Hannibal would not budge on this. “Fine.”

“I’ll call him at once.” The Dominant promised, still sounding massively displeased with the whole thing. “Will you at least promise me to stay in the house?”

“Of course.” The Submissive agreed quickly, fingers crossing behind his back despite the fact that Hannibal couldn’t see it. “I’ll take the pack in with me, shall I?”

“Very good.” Hannibal’s voice was wary, but if he held any suspicions he didn’t voice them. “Expect Robert within the hour.”

Ezra thanked the young man and hung up. The Submissive tried Will’s cell phone one more time and left a short but very detailed message, instructing his bunny to stay with Hannibal and that he’d meet him later on as planned in Baltimore.

He finished, kicking the snow up over the fresh marking before stuffing his cell phone back into the hoodie pocket. The Roux glanced at the well-lit, cheery house in thought. To be fair, he did give Hannibal’s request a very short amount of consideration before dismissing it, retrieving a machete.
they used to tame the wild field when it encroached on the summer garden from the shed and heading into the forest, the dogs yipping at his heels.

Ezra had honestly planned on being back at the house before the hour was up, but he found it hard to return until he’d walked the whole of the property. By the time the Submissive made his way back to the house he was soaked to his underwear from both the snow and sweat, his entire body ached, and he’d been gone for an hour and half.

*’I’m not as young as I used to be,’* Ezra thought bitterly. He was tired and frustrated, he’d driven himself hard to cover all of their territory and his knees and lower back ached. There hadn’t been any other sign of the Dominant that had invaded the Graham’s territory, though Ezra could only think of one who would have come here.

Ezra didn’t want to think Tobias Budge was stupid enough to do such a thing, for while his bunny may have not have chosen him, Ezra liked the young Dominant well enough. And this – heads were going to roll for this, either by Hannibal’s or Ezra’s hands. What’s more, he knew that Will would be terribly upset about all of this.

The Submissive let out a sigh as he climbed the back porch, kicking off his soaked wellies and leaving them there, hardly caring that they would most likely freeze to solid blocks. He swung the door open and stepped into the welcoming heat of the kitchen, but he had barely taken a few steps inside with a grimace (each step made water squish between his toes grossly) when both Ezra and the pack stiffened.

He flew around with a snarl, the machete that Ezra had been holding in a vice-like grip throughout his trek (and in his instinct fueled paranoia had quite forgotten was still in his hand) slicing through the air with deadly accuracy. Only the impressive muscle control of their species kept Ezra from beheading the unknown Roux before him, the blade stopped mere inches from the exposed neck.

The Dominant didn’t even flinch.

Despite himself, Ezra couldn’t help but be somewhat impressed. He let none of it show on his face, eyes narrowing, tsking loudly to silence the growling dogs. “Count Lecter, I presume?”

“Just Robert, please.” The Dominant corrected, giving Ezra a half-smile, half-smirk that was all at once very similar and nothing like the ones he’d seen on Hannibal. “After all, we’re going to be family soon enough.”

Ezra snorted, setting the machete on the kitchen table as he began to systematically pull his soaked clothing off. “How long have you been waiting?”

“A half hour or so.” Robert admitted, tone casual and easy as he watched Ezra’s movements. He should probably care more, even if his age and status as a Submissive parent gave him virtually unlimited leeway and freedoms in their matriarchal society. But he was frozen to the bone and quite cranky after his fruitless search, and Ezra easily ignored the weight of the Dominant’s eyes.

“Put some tea on, will you?” He called out, voice muffled as he struggled to pull the water-heavy hoodie off. It clung to his chest, tangling with the undershirt and pulling it up as well, and finally Ezra just gave up and yanked both off together, glaring at the clothing darkly.

He didn’t wait for a response, moving into the small laundry room wedged between the kitchen and the living room. Ezra kicked the door shut as he tugged off his bottoms, listening to the sounds of the kettle being filled and put on the stove as he redressed. The only clothing in the dryer were Will’s, so
Ezra ended up yanking on a pair of jeans far tighter than he normally wore and a long sleeved henley layered under a thick flannel shirt.

Ezra plopped down in a kitchen chair, grumbling as he greeted the waiting dogs, patting them on the head and glanced at Robert’s back in pleased surprise when he’d found they’d already been wiped down and dried off. He also noticed that his wellies had been brought in and wiped down as well, and placed on the boot rack to dry. His jacket had also been hung, as had his scarf. He set a pair of thick socks on the table, forgoing them in favor of the tea waiting there and it was only once he’d taken a deep drink of it that Ezra was feeling even remotely civil again.

“Thank you,” He said gratefully, nodding towards the hung clothing, “and for the dogs as well.”

“I was glad to do it.” Robert offered as he prepared his own cup. “As I would have been glad to join you in your patrol.”

Ezra groaned, barely keeping his annoyance from it. “I suppose you’re going to tell Hannibal of my little breach of protocol.”

“I’m afraid I already called him.”

“Of course you did.” The Submissive said with a sigh, bringing a hand up to rub at his forehead.

There was a low chuckle. “I do apologize, however I was rather concerned when I was greeted with an empty house. That was quite a dangerous thing you did, he - myself as well, may I add - was understandably worried about you.”

“Well, it wouldn’t have made much difference anyway,” Ezra said petulantly, glaring at his frozen toes in irritation, “there wasn’t a trace of the bâtard.”

Another chuckle. “You’re a feisty thing aren’t you? Not many Submissives would seek out an unknown Dominant all on their own.”

Ezra stiffened, lips drawing flat as he stared down into his tea. “I’ve not had a Dominant for twenty-six years, I would either be an idiot or long dead if I hadn’t learned to take initiative.”

There was a brief silence and the Submissive’s eyes snapped open as his cold feet were suddenly bathed in heat. Robert had crouched before him, the warmed dishtowel that Ezra used solely for handing the tea kettle in his hands.

“I had meant it as a complement.” Robert said evenly, his large palms gentle as they massaged the cold limbs.

Blue eyes – so light they were almost colorless – glanced up at him from below thick, well defined eyebrows and Ezra let himself take in Robert’s features for the first time. He had the same strong jaw and cheekbones as Hannibal, as well as the same dirty blond color. He even shared the same hair cut (an idea that filled him with no small amount of humor as the Submissive wondered if Hannibal was aware that he was actively copying his uncle) as well a neatly maintained beard and mustache. The hands around his feet squeezed once, before one reached up and pulled the roll of socks down. Ezra watched dumbly as the Dominant slowly, carefully worked his left foot into a sock.

“You’ve been alone for a long time,” Robert said quietly, “and trust me when I say no one respects that more than I.”

He set the foot down before turning to the other and Ezra almost objected, thinking how foolish it
was that he just sit there like a invalid and allow himself to be dressed – especially by a Roux he knew nothing about. But for some reason he couldn’t quite bring himself to speak.

“But, you are no longer alone. Soon enough you’ll be a member of the House of Lecter.” The Dominant’s fingers pulled the cuffs up, his touch feather light against Ezra’s calves. “My nephew cares quite a bit for you and your son. If anything was to happen to either of you, he would be devastated. And I would hate to see Hannibal devastated.” Those clear eyes glanced up at him, expression serious. “Next time, Monsieur Graham, you will stay in the house.”

Startled into silence, Ezra could only nod as his feet were gently lowered down.

Something warm and forgotten blossomed in the Submissive’s chest at the move, and Ezra glanced away from the intent stare, suddenly overly aware of how close the kneeling Dominant was to him. He licked his lips, embarrassed to feel his cheeks flushing brilliantly. Ezra crossed his legs at the ankle, tucking them beneath the kitchen chair, and fought against the strange, sudden shyness he felt. He was a grown Roux, for heaven's sake! Not some newly Changed lad in his thirties and he’d be damned if he acted like one, and he forced his attention back to Robert.

“I haven’t told Hannibal, but I found…” Ezra hesitated, not even wanting to voice the word, and found himself muttering it lowly in French, knowing Robert understood the language well enough, “outside in the garden. Near…well, in sight of the room they were Sitting.”

The Dominant nodded stiffly, eyes narrowing he understood the unvoiced implications of voyeurism. “You have an idea of the culprit.”

“I do, but I rather hope I’m wrong.” Ezra admitted, bringing a hand up to rub at his eyes tiredly. He wasn’t looking forward to the culmination of this – neither in telling Will of his suspicions, nor in the coming violence. “Tobias Budge; he’s hardly forty.”

"This distresses you."

“Yes,” the Submissive admitted without hesitation, unashamed that the idea of killing a Roux only a handful of years older than his bunny made him uncomfortable. "Tobias is young and stupid - and we’re too few to be behaving so carelessly.” He took another sip of his tea, glancing at Robert over the rim. “But I don’t believe either one of us wants such a rude creature reproducing.”

Robert let out a bark of a laugh, as if startled. “True enough, M. Graham.”

"Please, call me Ezra." The shorter Roux insisted and the grin Robert flashed him easily took ten years off, highlighting patrician features that only came with fine breeding, and Ezra was reminded yet again that he had a rather handsome Dominant crouching at his feet. He gave a soft laugh, feeling foolish. "Robert, please, stand up. You're making me feel silly."

The Dominant stood and Ezra's head cocked back to follow the move. Robert was tall – taller even than Hannibal, which was saying something as the younger Lecter stood easily at six feet and Ezra felt dwarfed. Uncomfortable but unaware of why, the Submissive stood, setting his cup down as he moved to the refrigerator. “Are you hungry?”

“I wouldn’t want to put you out.”

“It’s no trouble,” Ezra said as he pulled out a tupperware of slim, carefully cut flank that Hannibal had brought them last week along with an armful of sandwich ingredients, “I’m making myself something, so I can hardly leave you hungry. Besides, your nephew has made sure we’re more than adequately stocked.”
“He does enjoy the hunt so.” There was a pause. “So, he has been…satisfactory?” Ezra looked up from his preparations, brows furrowing at the cautious tone, but couldn’t read the expression on Robert’s face. “In his courting, I mean.”

“Oh.” Ezra set the knife down and began to fold the meat neatly over the slices, “yes, more than, actually. Hannibal is everything I could have ever wished for Will.”

“Will you tell me about him?”

“How Hannibal?”

“About your son.”

“I don’t think you want that, I could talk about my bunny all night.” Ezra warned with a laugh. Robert’s lips quirked at the nickname and the lines around his eyes softened, but he said nothing. As the silence grew the Submissive caved, seemingly physically incapable of missing an opportunity to brag about his boy. “Well, he is rather well-known in the forensic science circles. He's been published, you know.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope everyone enjoyed their first interaction and that it lived up to expectations. Btw, the French in this chapter may continue to evolve, as various users correct and perfect it. Grafas is another word for a Count.

And just for fun. Ezra's Wellies (God, do I love wellies):
Interlude: A Walk to Remember

Chapter Summary

There is no way he is unaware, Robert thought dryly, as Ezra bent over to slide the pot pie he’d been making into the oven, presenting the Dominant Roux with a truly stunning view.

Chapter Notes

Oh dear, I am so sorry about the wait. The last two months were insane, holidays always leave me with way less time. RL gets so crazy! Anyway, here's the next chapter.

Now beta-ed by Felicia.

Blet = Russian for fuck, according to a friend is used as the same curse word in Lithuania as well.

Also, my god. You people are out for Tobias' blood. O.o

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The kitchen was warmed to a comfortable temperature, filled with the succulent scents of cooking meat. As none of the Roux were particularly in the mood to go out it had been decided that they would eat dinner at the Grahams' home. Ezra had been a flurry of movement since, moving gracefully around in the small kitchen as he prepared a meal.

Robert had offered his help, but Ezra would have none of it and so he sat at the small kitchen table. One of the larger dogs – Bull – had planted his heavy, oversized head in Robert’s lap, staring up at him with beseeching brown eyes. He alternated his attention from the dog to the darkening outside, still ever wary of intrusion, to Ezra, though it would be a bold face lie to say that anything other than the Submissive held his attention for long.

A steady stream of the blues had been pumping out of the thumb-sized iPod docked in the corner of the kitchen, and Robert was amused to think that he’d been completely and utterly dismissed. At first Ezra would glance over at him every few minutes, eyes doing an almost clinical sweep over Robert’s features, but as the older Roux continued to sit in silence, face carefully constructed to reflect only polite contentment, the glances had stopped and he was beginning to think he’d been forgotten.

Robert found the whole thing terribly humorous.

He felt his lips twitch in fond amusement as he watched Ezra’s head bob, lips pursed and hips swaying in tune with the music’s long, drawn out beats of Bill Withers. The moves were sensual, somehow slick-smooth, like the slide of a snake, and Robert’s head cocked ever so slightly as his eyes ran unashamedly down the lines of Ezra’s body, lingering on the curve of the Submissive's derrière, lids growing heavy with interest.
Robert wondered abstractly if Ezra had truly forgotten his presence and if he was somehow unaware of what he looked like dancing in such a manner. Then again, there was no way the Submissive could not know how tight those jeans were on him, how the fabric was pulled and lifted tight, revealing two perfect mounds. The song closed and another began, and Robert felt his fingers twitch against Bull’s broad skull as the smooth strings of Gloria Lynne’s *Speaking of Happiness* began and the subtle swaying of those sinful hips grew slower and longer.

*There is no way he is unaware,* Robert thought dryly, as Ezra bent over to slide the pot pie he’d been making into the oven, presenting the Dominant Roux with a truly stunning view. A thousand half-formed ideas flashed across his mind – and all of them began with him pinning that taunting form – and he felt his cock throb in response to them. Ezra Graham was beautiful and quite unlike any other Submissive he’d ever met. Intelligent and witty, strong and wildly independent, yet somehow still bled a vulnerability that called to every Dominant instinct Robert had. If the younger Graham was anything like his carrier, Robert could understand why his nephew had become so ensnared.

The Submissive stood, humming along as he set the timer before moving to one of the upper cabinets, opening it to reveal a space crammed full of cookbooks. Ezra, who was several inches shorter than his son, lifted up onto his toes to try and pull one free, wobbling slightly as he struggled to pull it out. He let out a sound of frustration that was incredibly endearing, squirming slightly as he tugged, behind flexing to keep his balance and –

– and Robert was crossing the small distance between them before it had become a fully conscious thought, mind set only on aiding the Submissive in his retrieval before he brought the entirety of the book pile tumbling down on him. However, just as his own fingers wrapped around the book spine, Ezra managed to tug it free and fell back flat on his heels – slotting his hips firmly against Robert’s.

And Robert’s half-hard cock.

Both Roux froze, startled by the unexpected contact, and though Robert immediately stepped back it was not quick enough to miss the sharp, musky-sweet spike of Ezra’s answering arousal.

Ezra turned slowly to face him, cheeks flushed as he cleared his throat. “I was thinking of pie for dessert,” the Submissive with a casualness so perfectly maintained it could only be fake. “Would you prefer apple or chess?”

“I enjoy apple,” Robert answered as he retreated back to the kitchen table, “but I’ve always wanted to try a chess baked by a true Southerner.”

“Chess it is.” Ezra declared cheerfully as he began to pull together the ingredients, but his good humor sounded forced. The comfortable mood that had ruled his earlier cooking was gone and it was clear to Robert that there was little chance of Ezra forgetting his presence once more. A heaviness had settled around them, a thick tension that couldn’t be denied, as physical and real as the arousal that still saturated the air around them.

Robert sat stiffly in the chair as he watched the Submissive bake, eyes following each and every of Ezra’s move. Somehow the terse, tense movements of Ezra’s discomfort were even more arousing than the dancing had been – if only because Robert knew that it meant that he was not alone in his attraction.

The Submissive squirmed slightly under his gaze, biting his lip uncomfortably, and Robert felt his fingers twitch as Ezra’s scent ramped up in potency. He stood abruptly, moving to the back door and tossing it open, grunting slightly as the pack of dogs surged gleefully out around and between his legs. He grabbed his coat and scarf from the hook and stepped out into the snow-bright day.
Robert shut the door, taking a few steps onto the back porch and breathing the crisp air, trying to tame the raging lust that was building in his chest. He dug out a cigarette and lit it. He laughed at himself as he smoked it. He was far too old to be so affected by a simple scent – it been decades since he went through the Change. What’s more, Robert certainly hadn’t spent his years abstinent. Humans and Submissives (widowed, usually, or the other rare Roux who never had the want to mate) had frequented his bed more often than not. In fact, it had been their existence that had led Hannibal to react so harshly to his wish to meet the elder Graham; his dear nephew had not wanted Ezra to be one of Robert’s ‘conquests,’ not that Robert had ever viewed them as such himself.

They were always casual affairs – things with the shared understanding that they would never grow pass a handful of colorful nights – they left him sated and (at least sexually) content.

And yet…

Robert glanced down at his straining erection, unamused.

And yet here he was, driven out into the cold afternoon by his own traitorous body. He took a deep inhale of cigarette, leaning against the icy railing, lips curled in an indulgent smile as he watched the pack sprint and tumble across the yard, chasing each other until the smooth snow was stained dark with mud. He’d smoked the cigarette to the filter when the porch door opened behind him.

Ezra stepped out, bundled up in a bright blue parka and a white knit cap and matching scarf, his cheeks already pinking under the bite of winter. Robert pushed away from the railing, eyebrows raised and lip twitching in a smile as he watched the Submissive pull on a pair of mittens. Good god, Robert thought with a hum, he is adorable.

“You supposed correctly.” Robert agreed, flicking the cigarette off into the yard.

“Well.” Ezra pressed his lips together and the Dominant valiantly ignored how delicate the action made them look. “I won’t waste my breath telling you how unnecessary that is.”

Robert chuckled, shaking his head as he followed the headstrong Submissive down the stairs. He offered his arm, grin growing as Ezra tucked his hand demurely underneath it, mitten resting in the crook of his elbow.

“I’m sure you’re right,” he said, patting the hand placatingly as they began to move towards the forest, “but I thank you for indulging me none the less. Besides, it’ll give us a chance to better get to know each other.”

“I suppose that would be best.” Ezra agreed somewhat mulishly, “an effort should be made. As you said, we’re going to be family soon.”

They fell into light conversation as they strolled through the woodland, one that covered topics at random in a strange pidgin of English and French, sentences flowing from one to the other with little thought. The forest was painted in heavy browns and whites, the naked boughs of trees hanging low under the weight of snow and frozen stalks of tall grass peeking up here and there. The dogs shuffled about, a few of the braver ones scouting further away from the pair, but most staying near their Master. Their lack of attention was a reassurance that the land was empty save for the occasion game animal, though Robert doubted that the interloper would return to the Graham’s territory so soon.

After all, William was not present.
Still, the Dominant split his attention between the rolling, accented voice and the wood around them. They’d been walking for nearly forty-five minutes, their path slowly starting to curve back towards the way they’d come, and by his side Ezra was talking away. Robert was pleased to note that animosity that had been there at the beginning of their walk had completely vanished, the Submissive talking animatedly.

Robert was glad for that, though it irked him that the feelings had ever existed for the Submissive. He did not blame Ezra for it, standoffness could only be expected given what the recent events. Robert had no doubt that the matter would be dealt with swiftly and harshly by Hannibal. No Dominant was good at sharing to begin with and so close to a mating his nephew’s actions could only be harsh. Not that Robert would have it any other way. The thought that a Dominant had been so disrespectful to this precious pair, who would soon become extension of his house no less, was an insult that could not go uncorrected.

The Grahams were clearly something special. They had a strength to them that would undoubtedly prove invaluable to the Lecter bloodline. It was nearly unheard of for a father-son Submissive pair to live so long without a Dominant counterpart, but the Grahams had not only done it but had successfully thrived. A lesser Submissive would have caved and taken a new mate even if it (as it so often did) meant the death of the previous Dominant’s juvenile offspring. They were animals, after all, and if the cub was young enough it was hardly unheard of. Most Dominant Roux didn’t want to waste time and energy on a cub not of their bloodline. But Ezra was clearly a fierce creature, with a willful fire burning so brightly about him that Robert half expected him to glow, and had maintained his independence so elegantly. It was so very unlike any of the Submissives he had ever met before – definitely unlike his own carrier or the tragically beautiful Simone.

Or dear Murasaki.

“– has been perfect. Of course they’ve tested the boundaries once or twice, but nothing too terrible, and they are young.” Ezra winked up at him, leaning in conspiratorially, voice pitched in a faux whisper. “I hope you don’t mind too much, Robert, but I did let them get away with a bit more than I should have. Especially in the beginning.”

Robert laughed. “Not all! As you said, they are very young still. They should be allowed a little freedom. Did you allow the same sort with the other suitor, this Tobias?”

“Of course not.” Ezra said with a scoff. “I watched Tobias like a hawk. Too smooth, that one and my bunny – well, he’s just too kind. He’s never been good at establishing boundaries or saying no. Always too afraid of hurting someone’s feelings. Besides, Hannibal was my favorite from the beginning. A credit to his upbringing, I’m sure.”

Robert let out a soft hum, eyebrow rising slightly as he watched one of the dogs – the beagle – trip over his own feet and tumble head first into a tree. The dog stumbled backwards, shaking his head once, tongue lulling, before sprinting off once more like nothing had happened.

“I suppose that would be a complement to you.” Ezra said, voice carefully constructed to be light and politely disinterested. “I understand that you raised Hannibal yourself.”

The Dominant glanced at him, amused to find the shorter Roux seeming absorbed in the dog’s foolishness. For a moment Robert thought of ignoring the comment all together before nodding. “Hannibal came to live with me after his parents died.” Then, before Ezra could ask, “hunters. He was…oh, perhaps eight and a half?”

“So young.” Ezra murmured and Robert felt a flare of approval at the genuine concern and anguish on the Submissive’s face. He could not guarantee that he would be in America forever and it did his
conscious good to think that there would be someone looking out for his arrogant wolf when he
returned to the Old World.

Robert knew that he would stay until after the mating and the resulting pregnancy. It was tradition,
after all. It was rare to find adult Roux – even those related by blood – gathered together outside of
times of extreme peril. Yet there were certain times that honor demanded that issues of territory and
pride be put aside, for the good of the whole. Roux were their most vulnerable during their Changes,
and when mating or pregnant, and accordingly it was these times that a family unit pulled close.

Their kind’s pregnancies were short, violent occasions, and it would take all three of them to keep
William’s hunger at bay. Hannibal would be hard pressed to leave his mate alone during the duration
of the pregnancy – indeed, only the need to hunt and defend could drive a Dominant Roux from his
pregnant mate - and even then it would be very stressful for both partners. More than one Dominant
had been caught, trapped by their own mistakes, in their haste to kill as quickly as possible and return
to their nest. Knowing that family was there, protecting their mate or, preferably, doing the hunting
for them was the only comfort.

His brother, Aleksandras, had been utterly unwilling to leave Simone’s side when he was carrying,
relying on Robert for the bulk on the hunting and would only leave his mate's side when absolutely
pressed - even then only if Robert promised to stay behind. It had hardly been a trial, though it had
been difficult to keep the food stores stocked (especially during the second pregnancy, when he’d
had to provide for Hannibal as well), as he'd been eager to help his brother protect their growing clan
however he could.

“They were at one of our hunting cabins,” Robert said, voice flat, “and were caught off guard. I
came as soon as I knew something was wrong, but I’m afraid I was too late to be of any real help.”

It would be the only true regret of Robert’s life and unwillingly his mind drew the horrid image of
those twisted and burnt forms of his family, left out in the harsh grasp of winter like trash. Ezra’s
hand tightened around his forearm and Robert pushed the memory away methodically, locking it in
the deepest, darkest part of his mind palace.

“I wouldn’t say that.” Ezra offered, voice soft – tender almost – and without the edge that had been
present in their conversations so far. Robert found it incredibly attractive. “You raised their son into a
fine Roux, a fine Dominant. If our kind…whatever happens to us – when we pass I mean…that is, if
they can, I’m sure they’re grateful to you. I meant what I said, Robert. Hannibal is truly a credit to
your efforts.”

“I fear that I have not been the best mentor that I could have been.” He admitted ruefully. “There is
much that I could not provide Hannibal, regardless of my intentions. There are few things that can
replace a carrier’s influence or love, and I never mated.”

Ezra let out a deep sigh. “I understand. I often worry that about Will’s growth being stunted due to
the lack of a sire. Forgive me for prying, but why did you never take a Submissive?”

“Oh, I don’t know.” Robert said after a long moment, “many things played into it, I suppose. In truth
I’m not quite sure. Perhaps I just never met the right match.”

“Dear me,” the Submissive said with another sigh, “I’ve made us both maudlin. I’ll have to ask your
forgiveness, it’s been ages since I’ve talked to another adult. I suppose I’ve forgotten how.”

“Nothing to forgive, I assure you. It’s-”

There was a loud snap above them and Robert’s head snapped up, eyes widening at the sight of a
snow heavy branch breaking free. He barely had time to yank Ezra against him, spinning them both out of the way as it dropped, a startled “blet!” escaping him.

It settled a few meager inches from them, the branch easily as wide as Robert, large enough to snap bone. The Dominant stared at it, his heart a rapid staccato in his throat, adrenalin pulsing. A heartbeat passed and then Robert was laughing at the ridiculousness of it all, the sound strained but true.

He couldn’t imagine what hell his dear nephew would drag him through if he’d allowed his future in-law to be crushed to death by a tree branch of all things. The laughter trailed off into silence, Robert still shaking his head incredulously as he turned to check on the startled Submissive in his arms. His mirth disappeared all at once.

Ezra’s eyes were wide and frightened, skin ashen, hands curled tightly against Robert’s coat lapels, and he could feel the tiny shakes that rocked his frame. Fear colored his sweet scent sour and instinct flared strongly in the Dominant.

“You’re trembling, are you harmed?” Robert asked urgently, “Ezra –”

“Robert, you’re…you’re bleeding.”

He was? Robert couldn’t even feel it. His fingers followed the alarmed stare, finding the side of his neck slick and his fingertips were colored a rich red when he pulled them away.

“So I am. I must have caught a branch when it fell.” The Submissive’s expression was grave, his lips wobbling ever so slightly. “Come now,” Robert soothed, running his hands in a pet against Ezra’s forearms, “surely there is no need for such a face. It can’t be deep, I can’t even feel it.” There was the brush of wool against his skin as Ezra pressed a hand to the side of his neck, but it had hardly settled before Robert was gently prying it away. “You’ll stain your mitten.”

There was a flicker of something unreadable in those greys, before Ezra let out a huff of disbelief. “I don’t care about the wool, you fool man.”

“Still.”

“Robert…” The Submissive ducked his head, staring intently at the bright red soaking slowly across his mitten. The bloodied hand curled, tucking the stained wool into his palm until it could no longer be seen. “Thank you.”

“Think nothing of it.”

Another huff of disbelief. “I hardly can do that. You didn’t have to do that…and you got hurt.”

Robert frowned, confused. The whole thing was a moot point to him. He was Dominant, there was no way he was going to allow a Submissive – much less one that was about to be a member of his family – to be harmed if he could prevent it. He had done nothing more than what his honor (and his nature) demanded. And yet, Ezra sounded…well, Robert wasn’t sure. Disbelieving perhaps?

“You’re really not used to this, are you?” Robert murmured, brows furrowing as he gently lifted the Submissive’s face to look at him.

Emotions had made Ezra’s face flag with color; cheeks and nose a faint rose, his lips flushed to a delicate pink that was all that brighter against the white teeth that bit nervously at them. His eyes were bright with painful emotion – with shy gratitude and pleased confusion – and the grey was almost a preternatural color, making long lashes seem black, clumped together as unshed moisture clung to them.
Robert’s breath caught at the sight. It felt almost like he’d been punched square in the chest, a painful sorrow that settled above his breastbone, and the Dominant’s hand rose without conscious thought, cupping Ezra’s cheek in a gentle caress.

“Look at you,” he breathed, “how could anyone leave such a treasure behind?”

Ezra flinched as if the words had been a physical blow and Robert felt the vice around his heart squeeze once more as the Submissive ducked his head again, blinking rapidly.

“You…know.”

“Forgive me.” Robert said quietly, flexing his hand against Ezra’s cheek in apology. “I have no right to speak of that.”

“No.” Ezra agreed, bringing his hand up to scrub at his eyes only to pause, staring once more at the blood that brightened it. Suddenly the Submissive was tucking in against his chest, face burrowing against his shoulder as his hands gripped tightly at his coat. “Just…just for a moment…hold…”

The words were hardly audible, fading off into nothing before completed, but they struck Robert deeply. His arms curled tight around the slim frame, hands fanning protectively over Ezra’s back and he could feel the slighter Roux shudder slightly at the movement. He had to bite back the growl that threatened to rumble from his chest at the thought of the foulness of abandonment and its effects, of the coward that was William's missing sire. As someone who had experienced these long years alone, Robert was acutely aware that a Submissive was a gift, something to be cherished and cared for. To be loved. Spoiled.

And he vowed - right there, under the falling snow of a country he hated - that he would see this madness righted somehow. Because despite the brevity of their acquaintance, Robert could not see a Roux less deserving of such cruelty than Ezra Graham.

Chapter End Notes

::sniff::

Oh I do love to torture my poor Ezra. Don’t worry though, dear Robert is here now. Do we still like Robert?

(Hope the mush wasn't too much. Was the mush too much?)

...also, Will may or may not get kidnapped next chapter.

::insert manical laughter::
Being in his old office was weird, mainly because that was how Will thought of it, as his old office. It hadn’t really struck him until he was standing in it, next to his desk and surrounded by his stacks of books and papers, that this life – one that he’d once fought so hard for – was no longer one that he considered his.

Will sighed, running his fingers over the smooth varnish of his desk. The meeting with the board had gone well. In truth they’d been very kind and cooperative. It turned out that being seen as a freak of nature/genius had its perks and the Academy was willing to bend quite a bit as long as the Roux agreed to stay on their payroll as a working resource. After a series of very long, very drawn out meetings it was decided that Will would teach from home using the new state-of-the-art online programs that the Academy had recently set up. Through it, Will would be able to give audio and video recordings of them. Eventually if he wanted to, Will would be welcomed back to campus to teach in person.

He’d also been in contact with a literary agent one of his colleagues had recommended, a bright young lady from New York that was going through the various publishing contracts and offers that Will had been sent to help him choose the best option. All in all, everything was going better than Will had ever dared to hope. Strangely, while Will had expected to feel sad – or at least overwhelmed – by all the changes all he felt was a sort of excited acceptance. His life was changing, but there wasn’t an inch of the Submissive that was troubled by it. How could he be, when it meant that he got to have Hannibal?

Just thinking his name made Will’s stomach twist pleasurably, made his heart skip and hole twitch with want. He’d never needed someone the way he needed Hannibal. Just the half-remembered memory of how it had felt to have the Dominant pressed against him – inside him – made the Roux’s skin tingle and hum with interest.

Will pressed his palms flat against the wood and forced himself to stop the pleasurable thoughts before his body could get too carried away. He’d be seeing Hannibal and his Uncle later today with Daddy for dinner and the last thing he wanted was to be bleeding his arousal for everyone to scent.

There was a light rap on his office door and Will smiled when the familiar floral smell of Alana’s perfume filled the air. The Human was resplendent as always, in a form fitting black dress and white sweater. Her expression was warm and open and Will returned it in full.

“Welcome back,” Alana greeted as she offered him one of the coffees she was holding. “Ethiopian,
“Full City roast, black. Your favorite if I recall.”

“Yes it is.” Will said with a smile, taking the coffee and taking a sip of it. “Ah, just what I needed after that meeting.”

Alana visibly perked up, moving to sit in one of his office chairs. “How did it go?”

They fell into an easy conversation about the board’s agreement as they enjoyed their coffee and as usual Alana’s questions and statements straddled the line of being just between friendship and professional. Will wondered if he should be offended by her attempts to analyze him, but he knew that Alana could no more turn it off than she could stop breathing and their friendship had always been like this.

They were in the midst of roleplaying Will’s upcoming resignation conversation with Jack, when the Roux began to check his watch rather frequently. It was still fairly early in the morning but Will didn’t want to risk being late and making a bad impression on Robert. And he missed Hannibal. Terribly. He knew it was just the bonding chemicals at work, hormones that were circulating in his system in preparation for his upcoming heat, but being away from the Dominant made him anxious.

After the fourth time checking his watch, Alana called him on the action. “You have something planned, Will?”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to be rude.” The Roux gave her an apologetic grin, “I’m meeting Hannibal for dinner later.”

Alana’s long legs uncrossed and re-crossed, hands folding in her lap. “You and Hannibal have gotten close.”

“He’s been very kind to me,” Will said fondly, “and to my father. When Daddy and I were doing the tourist thing in Baltimore, he took an entire day off to show us around. He even made us a fantastic breakfast! His uncle’s in town, so Daddy and I thought it’d be nice if we returned the favor and took them out to dinner.”

A tension that Will hadn’t noticed was there suddenly left the Human’s form, and Will felt his eyebrows furrow slightly in confusion as Alana gave him an easy smile. “That’s great, Will. I’m glad you two are friends. I think both you and Hannibal could use a few more of those. Are you still seeing Beverly?”

“Hm, we hang out every now and then. But she’s got a girlfriend now-” and Will was quite busy with his own beau, “-so I haven’t really had a chance to see her since I’ve not been working. But you’re right, I could use more friends. Maybe when I stop by work to tell Jack I’m quitting I can set something up with her.”

“About that,” Alana said hesitantly, “I think there is something you should be aware of so you don’t get blindsided.”

“Oh–kay.” Will said slowly, leaning back in his seat. He was far too familiar with the look on her face – it was one that usually meant Will was in for a bad time.

“Jack is under the impression that Hannibal has been…unduly influencing you. Of course,” Alana added quickly, “that’s probably because he doesn’t like that fact that you’ve started to make decisions – very healthy, positive decisions, Will – that don’t line up with his own goals.”

Great, so Jack had been harassing his friends as well as showing up at his house unannounced. God love the man, but he was like a dog with a bone when it came to something he wanted. Pity those
who stood in his way.

“He thinks you two are dating,” Alana said with a grimace, “and I’m pretty sure he intends to have a... conversation... about it with you.”

“I don’t really care what he has to say,” Will said sharply, “he doesn’t get to dictate my personal life.”

“Of course not, Will.”

“And frankly the fact that Hannibal and I are seeing each other in no one’s business but our own. I’m not seeing him as a patient, he’s no longer my doctor, so we’re not violating any rules here.”

Alana’s froze, mouth open mid-motion. She blinked at him for a few moments. “You and Hannibal are...”

“Dating, yes.” Her face did the strangest of all contortions and Will felt his eyes narrow. “Is that a problem?”

“Uh, no, um,” Alana said quickly, sounding flustered. “I – of course not.”

“You didn’t know that Hannibal was bi-sexual.” Will realized all at once, leaning back in his seat, wondering if he should be worried that he’d just ‘outed’ the Dominant.

“Hannibal is a private person.”

“Yes, he is.” Will agreed, watching the Human closely now as she straightened the hem of her skirt before interlocking her fingers.

There was hurt on those pretty features, hidden carefully but too deep and profound to completely escape even Will’s socially challenged awareness. But what kind? Was Alana’s upset that neither of the men she called friends (and in Hannibal’s case, mentor) had chosen not to confide their budding relationship in her? Or was it something else?

Alana had made it very clear to him that she’d never consider their relationship as anything but one of friendship, no matter how many times Will tried to make it more. So it couldn’t be because Will had moved on. So why...

It struck him all at once. Will knew next to nothing about Alana and Hannibal’s relationship outside of the fact that Hannibal had taught her in college and mentored her in her first few years of practice. But he knew that Alana had always spoken highly of Hannibal, that she trusted him, admired him... maybe more than admired him.

Something hot and ugly surged across the Submissive and he licked his lips in annoyance as he looked away. “We’ve been seeing each other for a while now. It’s gotten fairly serious,” Will offered as he picked at a hangnail, “I’m very happy.” Will looked up again, a bright smile on his face. “And I really have to thank you, Alana. If you hadn’t recommended that Jack send me to Hannibal, we would never have met and I wouldn’t have him. You’re the best friend I’ve ever had.”

Alana gave him a tight smile. “I’m glad, Will. I want you to be happy.” She stood, smoothing out her skirt once more. “I’m afraid I’ve got some grading I’ve put off to the last minute that I have to get turned in or Phenleski will have my butt in a sling. Let’s catch lunch soon.”

“Of course, I understand.” Will said, standing with her, “I’ll give you call. Maybe Hannibal can come.”
“That’d be great. I’ll see you later.”

Will watched her go, his smile dropping only once his office door had shut. The Roux turned with a huff, gathering his things together before roughly shoving it into his leather messenger bag. That had been childish, but – just what kind of relationship did Alana and Hannibal had?

Alana seemed just the type of woman Hannibal would go for, if he indulged in Humans that is. She was educated and influential, cultured, and stunningly beautiful. For food, that is. Will sighed as he made his way outside. He was far too wound up to wait inside. He’d drive down to his favorite coffee shop and wait for Hannibal there.

He felt slightly appalled at himself for acting so petty, and the jealousy he’d felt had been startling. What did it matter if Alana liked Hannibal? Or even if they’d had a relationship in the past? There was no way it could still be on-going, there was no way a Dominant as honorable as Hannibal would have done something like that.

Will knew this and he honestly believed it, but somehow he still felt rattled. He glanced at his cellphone’s clock. It was fifteen minutes passed the hour, Hannibal was probably still with a patient. He hesitated for a long moment before finally pulling up the text box. He kept the message short and to the point, carefully worded so that it carried no blame or accusation, just a question – and an implied one at that. He pressed the send button before he could talk himself out of it.
He sighed, leaning against his car until he could press his forehead against the cool metal. What on earth was wrong with him? Will felt like a jealous lover, like every stereotype come to life, but he couldn’t stop himself from sending it. Was this what Hannibal had felt like when he’d come to him after seeing Tobias? God, Will could only imagine what kind of hell that had been.

The Submissive let out a soft laugh, one that was full of self-reproach. It was nothing. And even it hadn’t been nothing, what he and Hannibal had – what they would make together – whatever Alana thought she could offer came nowhere close to that. He’d – Will didn’t know, buy her some flowers or something. Get her some chocolate to make it up to her. In fact, Will should go and check on her.

Feeling resolute, he pushed off the car and started to turn –

There was a sharp pain in the side of his neck, a rough hand gripping his chin, and then nothing.

Hannibal was an hour early, but he could hardly care. He had to reschedule an appointment to be able to do so, but Will's lack of response to his text messages (a mode of communication Hannibal abhorred, but would suffer through as Will was so fond of it) or phone calls had worried him.

He had sent him several, each with a growing anxiety around them, explaining that while he had always known that Alana was interested in him romantically he'd never shared the same inclinations or encouraged her in any manner.

And then Ezra had called him and Will's silence became even more alarming. He wasn't quite running through the halls of the Academy, but it was close. His worry only sky rocketed when he found not only Will's office locked tight and empty, but Alana's as well. The Dominant spun on his heel, trying to stop the dark thoughts running through his mind as he made a bee-line for the staff parking lot.

The thought that something could of happened to his William, that he could have lost his mate before he ever had a chance to have him shook Hannibal to his very core and resorted to drill calling Will's phone as he walked. He let out a loud series of curses as he reached Will's assigned parking spot, standing in the empty spot as he scanned the lot for Will's station wagon.

"You've reached the voicemail of William Graham. I apologize that I can't answer the phone right now. Please leave a detailed message with your name and phone number and I'll get back to you as soon as I can. Thank you."

"William, this is Hannibal again. I apologize for calling you so often but I must speak with you at once. Please, darling. I'm getting very worried, as is your father."

Hannibal ended the call, staring at the phone dejectedly. Something had happened, he could feel it. The Dominant took a deep breath, trying to calm himself and think where it was Will could have gone, and froze.

He took another deep inhale, chest inflating to its full capacity. It was faint, but he could just catch William's scent. And another, a fouler one. The scent pattern he'd only ever caught a handful of times before on Will or Franklyn Froideveaux; the scent of a Dominant Roux.

The scent of Tobias Budge.

Hannibal snarled, the sound loud and harsh in the parking lot, hands curling into shaking fists at the thought of that rogue anywhere near his mate. The thought of Will somewhere, hurt and scared, made everything inside the Dominant burn with a white hot anger. His was sprinting to his Bentley before he was fully conscious of it, phone already ringing against his ear.
His uncle, as always, was prompt. “Hannibal.”

::Will has been taken by Tobias Budge.::

::...I see.:,

::I’m going to his shop and home now, though I doubt he will be there.” Hannibal bit out as he threw the car into reverse. ::Uncle-:

::Calm down, Hannibal.::

::Do not tell me to be calm!:: The young Dominant barked as he merged violently into traffic. ::My intended has been taken.::

::And you will achieve nothing as you are.: Robert said sharply, voice hard. ::If you do not calm yourself, the only outcome you will see is your death and William claimed by another. Take a deep breath, slow down. The last thing you want is to catch the attention of the authorities.::;

Robert was right, even if the idea of taking the speed limit to Budge’s shop made everything in Hannibal balk. Still, he forced himself to take a deep breath, foot reluctantly lessening on the accelerator.

::Good boy. Go and search, I will call our friend in New York-::

::How will that help with anything?:

::Do not interrupt me again, nephew.: Robert warned icily. ::Our community is small; almost every Roux in the United States uses Specter as their legal representation. If Budge has any other land holdings, a cabin or a summer home, he may know of it. At the very least, he may know someone who does.: Hannibal grit his teeth, but thanked his uncle. ::And Hannibal? Be careful.::

::Yes.:: The younger Lecter promised. ::Stay with Ezra.::

::I will keep him safe, do not worry yourself with that. I will call you shortly.:,

Hannibal slammed the phone down on the leather of the passenger seat, seething as he glared up at a red light. He would kill Budge for this. He would rip him limb from limb. And if he’d touched his Will, even once…

The ride to the shop was tense and horrid and in the end pointless. The shop was locked up tight, as was the small apartment above it, and though Hannibal forced the lock open to search, he was unsurprised to find it abandoned. He stood in the middle of Tobias Budge’s tiny kitchen, staring at a picture pinned on the fridge of he and Will standing very close together in a park, smiling cheerfully out, and felt completely and utterly helpless.

It was not a feeling he was used to.

Hannibal was at a loss. He had no idea where to even start looking. Had Budge been a Human, he could have called in Jack and all the resources the FBI had to offer, but as it stood he could hardly risk the exposure of his kind. But that meant that Will could be anywhere and Hannibal had no way to track him. The Dominant leaned heavily against the wood block counters, eyes closed tight as he tried to contain the rage that was consuming every inch of his body. His mate was gone, possibly forever.

All he could think of Will, bruised and frightened, bound and naked across a foreign bedspread, laid
out for another Dominant’s taking. With a snarl Hannibal’s arm swept out, pushing the appliances from the countertop and onto the floor with a series of loud bangs and smashes.

How had he allowed this to happen? How had he’d not seen this coming? How could Hannibal have failed – again – to protect his most important person? No. No, Hannibal would not survive it a second time.

“William…”

Will woke comfortable. The feather mattress beneath him was luxurious, the flannel sheets that were wrapped tightly around him warm and butter soft. Somewhere in the room a fire cracked and the air smelled strongly of daisies. The Submissive moaned as he opened his eyes, staring up at the wood ceiling in confusion. Just to his left he could see a colorful bouquet of daisies and daffodils, along with a pitcher of water and an empty glass. The room was cast in the soft yellow hues of fire light and Will had no idea where he was.

He moved to sit up, only to find that he could not. He glanced up, eyes widening in alarm to find that his wrists bound to the head board with heavily padded shackles. Will kicked wildly with his legs, shouting as he struggled and tried to pull himself free from his bindings. Outside of the room there was a series of creaks and groans – the sound of someone walking across the wood floors – and Will froze as the door swung open, casting the room in the harsh white of artificial lights.

From the doorway, Tobias gave him a warm smile.

“Good morning, Will.”

Chapter End Notes

Man, did I enjoy putting Alana on the spot way more then I should have. I mean, I like Alana, but I just couldn't resist.

I hope to have the next chapter up soon. If the writing takes us towards some non-con sexual stuff (which it may or may not, haven't quite got that all boned out) I will be adding tags, so feel free to check up at the top after I post to make sure you won't have any triggers. Also, I may do a Roux-ga-Roux Suits story. Haven't decided yet, but I had fun throwing his name out in the story.

I hope to get the next chapter up as soon as possible, but I'm back at work and I still have family town, so free time is a limited thing and it's going to be about double this one in length, so yeah. I'll do my best!
Engagement: The Social Circle Continues to Expand

Chapter Summary

The Dominant sighed as he set the tray on the table and sat on the bed. “You’re frightened.”

“Of course I’m frightened!” Will shouted, “you’ve got me tied to a bed, Tobias!”

Chapter Notes

Warnings for bad touches. For more information, check out the new tags.

Beted by the wonderful and dedicated Felicia. Please enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Tobias?”

“I’m glad to see you awake.” The Dominant said warm smile as he navigated into the room with a loaded tray. “It’s almost three in the afternoon; you’ve been asleep for nearly five hours. I was beginning to become worried. The sedative should have only held you over for two.”

“Tobias,” Will whispered, pulling at his bindings, “Tobias, what are you doing?”

“I am sorry the restraints, I promise they won’t be needed for long. Can you feel your fingers? I tried to leave them as loose as I could.”

“Tobias, what are you doing?”

The Dominant sighed as he set the tray on the table and sat on the bed. “You’re frightened.”

“Of course I’m frightened!” Will shouted, “you’ve got me tied to a bed, Tobias!”

“Just try to calm down. I know this is scary, but I promise it’s only temporary. I had to get you out of there.” He reached out, stroking a wide palm against Will’s stomach. “You needed to get away, to have some space so you could think clearly.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Will, I could see what was happening even if you couldn’t. You were being pressured, forced into choosing other than what you wanted.” Tobias explained earnestly, “I needed to get you out.”

“No one coerced me, Tobias.” Will snapped, wiggling away from the petting hand.

“Of course you were. I could hear it when we talked that afternoon on the phone, I could hear it in your cries.”
Insane, Will thought, desperately afraid, he’s completely insane. “I choose the mate I wanted, I chose Hannibal.”

“You don’t mean that. That’s your father talking.” Tobias said sharply. “He never liked me, he favored Hannibal from the start.”

“Well apparently he was right to,” Will ground out, furious, “Hannibal would never have done this to me.”

“I would prefer it if you didn’t say that name, William. It makes me quite irritable.” The hand began to drift up and Tobias’ eyes grew dark and hungry as fingertips swirled lightly around Will’s nipple. “Everything is going to be alright, just give it a few days and you’ll begin to see clearly.”

Will lunged forward before they could make contact with the nub, snarling violently, teeth bared. “Touch me again with your foul hands again and I will rip them off.”

Tobias stood, lips pulled in a distasteful sneer. “Well, I can see you’re determined to be irrational. I will return when you are willing to be civil. Until then,” his hand lashed off, slapping the bowl off the side table and spilling the soup all over the bed and Will yelped as the hot liquid splashed against him, “you can go hungry for all I care.”

Robert glanced inside at where Ezra was putting the finishing touches on his pie before casually stepping out into the yard, eager to put some distance between himself and the house before he made this particular call. He rested against the hood of his car and a quick glance at his watch placed the hour around noon and if Robert was very lucky, he’d catch Harvey on a lunch break.

Harvey Specter was a hell of a lawyer and arguably one of the best known Roux in America. His profession success and reputation had made the young Dominant the go-to amongst their community for all legal matters – regardless of size – and any Roux who was anyone used his services. It was the same for his younger brother, Marcus Specter, who was a well-known stockbroker, and their popularity was what Robert was counting on in tracking down William.

He had little doubt that the Specter boys would help him. Besides the fact that both would be honor bound to aid in this type of situation, Robert had been the first ‘fat’ client that both Harvey and Marcus had brought to their firms.

They owed him.

The phone rang only once before a woman answered, her voice controlled and polite yet still contained an edge of superiority. “Harvey Specter’s office.”

“Patch me through to Harvey.”

“I’m afraid that Mr. Specter is in a lunch-”

“This is more important.” He interrupted, glancing back at the house, “this is Robertas Lecter. Patch me through. Now.”

There was a pause, a hitch of breath, but it seemed that Harvey’s assistant (Diane? Donna?) seemed to recall their last meeting and she cleared her throat awkwardly. “Of course, Count Lecter. I’ll put you through immediately.”

The smooth baritone of Specter’s voice flared to life on the other end of the line within seconds, “Robert, how can I help you?”
Straight to the point, that was one of the things that Robert had always liked about the younger Dominant. “I’m on speaker phone.”

“Yes,” Harvey admitted, “I was in the middle of a briefing with Mike.”

Michael Ross, a pretty little blond that was quite possibly the smartest Roux Robert had ever had the privilege of meeting. He was also a Submissive and Specter’s mate, and though he knew that his views were considered ‘archaic’ (to quote his nephew) Robert didn’t want to risk upsetting him with the news of someone out snatching other Submissives.

“Take me off it.”

There was an instant click. “What’s going on, Robert?”

“Someone has kidnapped Hannibal’s intended, William Graham. We believe it to be a Dominant suitor he rejected, Tobias Budge.”

There was the sound something shattering behind him and Robert spun around to find Ezra staring at him from the front door, eyes wide and mouth agape, hands still frozen as if still holding the coffee cups that lay broken at his feet.

“I’ll call Marcus-”

“Do that.” Robert interrupted quickly, feet already carrying him towards the Submissive. “Forgive my abruptness, but I must go. Call me as soon as you know anything.”

Robert cursed, shoving his cell into his jacket pocket and barely caught Ezra’s slim form as it shot past him, car keys clanking loudly in his hands. The Submissive was clearly panicking; he had no shoes, no jacket – he didn’t even have his cell phone. What’s more, Ezra’s mad dash had taken him through the broken porcelain and the scent of the Submissive’s blood was heavy in the air. It didn’t seem as if he’d noticed however, as Ezra fought like a corner cat, kicking and scratching as he tried to escape the Dominant’s arms.

“Ezra! Ezra, damn’t-” A fist nearly caught him in the jaw, Robert’s head ducking out of the way at the last moment. “Ezra, just listen-”

“Let me go! Robert, let me go! He’s got my boy!”

He cursed loudly, hands scrambling against the Submissive’s strength, but even when he’d managed to pin those flailing arms against his side – physically wrapping his own body around Ezra in an attempt to control him – the Submissive only fought harder to escape, kicking up from the ground to use his full body weight to escape. “Ezra, please!”

“Let me go you son-of-a-bitch,” Ezra shouted, fighting harder, desperation making his blows hard and bruising. The dogs were barking and snarling, dancing around them and the bravest lurching forward to bite at Robert’s calves. An elbow smashed into his nose and there was a burst of white pain followed by an immediate flood of blood down his chin and Robert was done.

“Enough!”

He snarled, spinning the Submissive bodily until they were face to face once more, shaking him harshly. Ezra froze, staring up at his bloody face with surprised eyes. Robert shook him one more time, finger tips digging into flesh warningly. “Enough, Ezra. Where do you think you’re going to go? What do you think you can possibly do? You don’t even have shoes on.”

Grey eyes filled with tears for the second time today, but unlike their walk Ezra let them fall freely and Robert felt his anger dissipate immediately at the sight of them. “But…my baby…”
Robert sighed, gentling his hold. “Hannibal’s looking, so are the Specter boys. We’ll find him.”

There was a croaky sob. “He’s all I have.”

Robert stiffened, cursing Tobias Budge, before bending and sweeping Ezra off his feet and fully into his arms. The Submissive let out a yelp of surprise, arms instantly latching onto his shoulders.

“Robert?”

He ignored the question, stepping over the broken shards, ignoring the still frenzied dogs, and went back into the house. He set Ezra down in a kitchen chair, warning him sternly not to move before disappearing into the downstairs restroom to retrieve the first aid kit he’d spotted there earlier. In a strange recreation of their first encounter, Robert crouched in front of him, Ezra’s left foot balanced carefully on his thigh as he cleaned out the cuts. Above him Ezra was sobbing into a fabric napkin, the sound only slowing when Robert pulled out a large chunk of porcelain, feeling his stomach lurch in revulsion at the sight of the Submissive’s blood.

Dominants were the brutes of the Roux world. Evolution had made them tanks, almost always tall and broad shouldered, with nearly three times the strength of even the fittest human male. And every inch of that strength had evolved to protect Submissives. Robert could feel that drive now, every muscle was coiled and tensed, ready to strike out and remove the cause for Ezra’s distress. Because while Submissive’s may be the weaker sex, they were – without a doubt – the more powerful.

While it was their intelligence and instinctual empathy that made them dangerous to Humans (and Submissives were almost as a rule incredibly bright, creatures that stood out like gems amongst the Human rabble they lived amongst) for a Roux it was much simpler. Submissives were the absolute heart of a nest and a Dominant would do anything to keep them safe – and happy.

The strength of his reaction to Ezra’s distress was visceral and long after he’d finished bandaging the wounded foot, Robert stayed where he was. He stared at the pale limb, at the bone white bandages, his hand still curled protectively over it, and used every inch of his self-control to fight off the rage that seemed to be bubbling his skin. He felt shaky with his fury, nauseated from the force of his disgust, his teeth clenched to the point of pain.

“Robert?”

There was a feather light touch to his face and Robert jerked, only realizing how long he most have been staring when he blinked and found his eyes dry and aching. Fingers cupped his chin, tilting his face up.

Ezra bit his lip, no longer sobbing but eyes and nose still bright red. “I’m sorry about your nose.”

Robert stared unmoving up at him, refusing to look away from the lines on the Submissive’s face even as Ezra leaned down started to clean the blood off with an antiseptic cloth. He didn’t stop until the wet nap was completely pink and he dropped it onto the table and opened another packet. As he watched, Ezra began to shake once more, another round of tears starting even as he kept stubbornly cleaning Robert’s face.

The Dominant caught his wrist mid-swipe, stilling the movement as he rose up on his knees. The kiss was chaste, just the slightest touch of warm skin against warm skin, before Robert was pulling away. To his surprise Ezra went with him, practically tumbling from the chair into his lap, arms looping around his shoulders.

The second kiss was deeper, tasting of the sour tang of Robert’s blood and Ezra’s fear. Yet there was
no hesitation when Ezra’s lips parted, Robert’s tongue sweeping in, basking in the wet warmth as a
hand rose to cradle the Submissive’s head. Everything felt far more natural than it had the right to
given they’d known each other for only a day and they both broke away at the same moment, the
kiss ending on its own.

Ezra shook his head, swallowing harshly before let his head drop to Robert’s shoulder. The
Dominant held him tightly against his chest, pressing a soft kiss to the tiny curls just behind Ezra’s
ear.

“We’ll find him.”

“What if we don’t?”

“We will.”

“What if…what if we’re too late?”

Robert’s felt his features harden, an angry growl tumbling out on its own. “Then Hannibal and I will
give Tobias to you.”

His nephew would object, but he and Will hadn’t yet mated. These were the rules. Ezra’s fingers
curled tightly against his back, nails digging in with enough pressure to be painful despite the layers.

“Okay.”

The sun had set outside, the room falling completely dark save for the orange glow of the fire place,
before Tobias returned. The hours in silence had given Will quite a bit of time to think. The soup had
gone completely cold and sticky, forming an uncomfortable paste against his skin and shirt.

Will had spent the first hour panicking, tugging and straining against the bindings until not even the
pads could save his wrists from bruising. The second hour had found him completely worn out and
crying mutely, longing for his father and Hannibal in equal parts. The majority of the third hour he’d
spent just staring up at the ceiling, lost.

Finally the Submissive remembered that he was an ex-cop and criminal profiler for the FBI, and (if
nothing else) Ezra Graham’s son. He could find a way out of this. And so Will forced himself to take
several deep breaths, pushing away the gaping pit of horror in his chest, and began to plan.

At the first sound of approaching footsteps, Will forced the tension from his frame. Tobias entered
with an armful of wood, giving him a small smile. “It got cold in here, didn’t it? I’m sorry, I’m afraid
I let my temper get the best of me. It wasn’t my intention to make you uncomfortable.”

The Dominant hurried over to the fireplace, ducking down to breathe new life into it, which was
lucky as it meant he missed the look of complete disbelief on Will’s face. You didn’t mean to make
me uncomfortable? Was Tobias serious? He was tied to a bed, for christ’s sake.

What he said instead was, “thank you, Tobias. It was starting to get cold.”

Tobias gave him a smile as he stood, dusting his hands off. “Well, that should help.”

“Tobias,” Will said softly, biting his lip and letting his eyes drop in faux embarrassment, “I’m sorry
about earlier, I didn’t mean to be so rude. I was just scared and I ruined the meal you made for me.”

“It’s alright, Will.” The Dominant soothed, moving to sit on the edge of the bed. “I understand, this is
a big shock. As I said earlier, I shouldn’t have lost my temper like I did.” He reached out, gently stroking Will’s cheek. “Would you like me to get you something now?”

“Yes, please. Only if that won’t be too much trouble?”

Tobias gave him a happy smile which Will returned, only allowing it to drop after he’d left the room. Will felt his entire body give a violent shudder, the skin on his cheek and chin burning illogically. It was as if Tobias’ very touch was repulsive to Will now, as if it caused some sort of allergic reaction.

He smoothed his features out into a mask of shy gratefulness when Tobias returned, allowing the other Roux to feed him a sandwich in tiny bites, sipping from a glass of ice tea. Tobias chatted to him as he pulled the meal into small, manageable bits, placing them to Will’s lips, his fingers linger a touch longer each time.

“-must admit, he tastes fairly decent. Of course, I couldn’t use much with all that fat, but this is by the best use Franklyn ever gave me.”

Will choked on his mouthful, the food suddenly ash in his mouth. He forced it down, accepting the offered tea. Oh God, he was eating Tobias’ best friend. Will gave him a weak smile, trying to calm the rebellion in his stomach. He may have never liked Franklyn Froideveaux, but that didn’t mean that Will had ever wanted him dead. What’s more, the Roux was acutely aware that Franklyn had only met his demise because of what Will had said to Tobias about Ovie.

“That reminds me,” Tobias stood, taking the empty plate and cup out of the room. He returned a moment later, Ovie cradled in his arms. The pup had gotten big, hanging in the Dominant’s arms. He perked up at the sight of Will, tongue lolling out. Will let out a sob of relief, tears pushing to his eyes. He’d long ever given up hope of seeing his pup again. Tobias grinned, obviously pleased with himself. “I thought you might like to see him.”

He placed the puppy on Will’s chest and Ovie instantly set about to lick every inch of Will’s face. Will laughed, hands pulling once more against his restraints, completely ignoring the flare of pain. He wanted to hold him so bad, wanted to see if his fur had stayed as smooth as Mago’s or had become coarse like his sire Bull’s.

“Hey, sweetheart.” Will cooed, pressing a kiss on the moist snout, uncaring that it gave the pup chance to sneak his dirty tongue into Will’s mouth. “Oh look how big you’ve gotten, you gorgeous boy. You look so much like your daddy.”

Eventually Ovie grew bored and tumbled off the bed, padding off to explore the room that had been closed to him. Will watched him go mournfully, biting back a sigh as he tugged at his bindings once more. He thought about trying to call him back, but he didn’t want to rob the puppy of his fun exploring.

A hand stroking his hair brought his attention back rather roughly and Will turned to find Tobias nearly glowing, watching him with the softest of all smiles. He gave the Dominant a small one of his own. The strokes continued, growing more and more sluggish until eventually the hand was just resting against his curls.

“Tobias?”

The Dominant was watching him intently, his dark eyes glossy and filled with tender emotion. “I’ve missed you, William.”

Will felt his heart ache then, for what could have been – for what they could have been – had things
been different. No matter how terribly misguided his emotions were, Tobias honestly believed himself in love with Will.

All Will wanted was Hannibal.

He turned his head away, fighting back a sob as the tears that had been edging around his lids since Ovie had been introduced finally fell. Tobias was instantly comforting, thick fingers brushing the liquid from his cheek as they fell.

“Hey,” the Dominant hushed, “hey, it’s alright. Everything’s alright now, Will. I promise.”

Hands cupped his face, gently turning Will to face him. Tobias’ face was blurry through the tears, but what Will saw there was terrifying in its depth. In that moment he knew that the only way Tobias would ever let him go would be through death.

“My poor boy,” Tobias said softly, genuinely distressed. “You should never have been put in this position.”

No, I shouldn’t have been, Will’s mind snapped and he nearly said it out loud – plan be damned – but Tobias was suddenly leaning forward. He forced himself limp a split second after the heavy kiss landed. Tobias took the move for submission, deepening the contact, his hands moving to tangle in Will’s hair.

The Submissive kept his eyes closed, trying to keep the abhorrence from his face as he begged Hannibal to forgive him, and let his lips part in a breathy sigh. The Dominant swept in immediately, his tongue aggressive and thorough, claiming everything it touched.

The kiss was not without talent, but it only made everything in Will recoil.

Tobias broke it a moment later, breathing heavily, his pupils dilated until his eyes were pools of black. “You taste even better than I imagined.”

The Dominant ducked down, mouthing at Will’s neck and the younger Roux tilted his head to the side obligingly, steeling himself as a tongue traced over his vulnerable pulse point. Tobias was excited, his body drawn tense and tight as he pressed further down onto the bed. A hand spread low over his chest, rucking up his t-shirt before running across the smooth skin.

Will let out a breathy gasp, eyes squeezing shut as he squirmed under the touch. In his mind he pictured Hannibal; Hannibal holding him, touching him. Tobias atop him was the comforting weight of his Dominant atop him, a physical barrier to keep him safe from anyone that wanted to harm him. The fingers that caressed his chest, that harassed a nipple to a perky peak were Hannibal’s. The wet tongue in his ear the same clever one that Will had grown so fond of.

The hand dipped down, fingertips brushing against his waistband and Will stiffened, eyes snapping open in alarm.

A sharp bark of “Tobias!” escaped him and Will instantly winced as the Dominant went still above him. Tobias’ face was harsh as he pulled away, his features stony.

“Not like this,” Will begged, jiggling the restraints above him, and gave Tobias his best mournful eyes – the ones that usually made Jack back off mid-rant, “just…it can’t be like this. How can we… how can we be happy if this is our start?”

The words seemed to work, the Dominant’s form relaxing.
“Of course, Will.” Tobias said after a moment, sitting fully back. He reached out, brushing his fingers over the Submissive’s check and Will moved into the touch, pressing a soft kiss to the pads. The last of the tension left the Dominant’s form. “Forgive me, I forgot myself. It was hard not to.” A forlorn sigh. “It’s indecent what you do to me.”

And Will could see that – could see the rather large bulge in the Tobias’ pants.

The older Roux leaned down, pressing a light kiss to his forehead before standing. “I’ll leave you to sleep. Call out if you need anything – even if it’s just to talk. I’m a light sleeper.”

Will let himself sink into the mattress, as if that single reassurance was enough to make him comfortable. “Thank you, Tobias. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.”

He left and Will closed his eyes, fingers curling around the padded restraints.

_Hannibal._

_____The morning found Will stiff. His shoulders ached, even a Roux wasn’t meant to be kept in one position for so long. His sleep had been haunted, filled with dreams of Tobias pinning him down, claiming him in a way that only Hannibal had the right to.

He had to get out. Even as he lay there, fully awake and alone, Will felt like he could still feel Tobias above him, filling him, and the idea was so stomach-turning that he’d had an honest to god panic attack. It was only once it had subsided, leaving Will limp and drained against the bed, that the idea struck. He had no idea if it would work and Will knew had only one chance at this. If he failed, Tobias would ensure there would be no second attempt. But Will couldn’t spend another moment tied to this bed, waiting to be raped. He couldn’t.

His entire body was still trembling from the attack, sweat soaking every inch of his body, eyes still stinging with tears, and Will bit down on his lip – hard. More tears sprang with the pain, but the Roux kept biting until the blood was spilling from his mouth and down his chin. He let out a deep throated whine, followed by a sharp sob and a cry of Tobias’ name.

It was only seconds later that he heard pounding footsteps on wood and the door was thrown open, the light flickering instantly on. White spots dotted his vision, but Will could still see a horrified looking Tobias rushing towards him.

“Will! What happened?”

“I – I,” Will whimpered, reaching for the Dominant until the restraints stopped the move, “I had a nightmare. I think I bit my lip. I’m so scared, please,” he made another abortive reach for Tobias, the tiny give of his bindings only allowing him to lift his body a quarter of an inch. Will let out another sob, struggling with the bindings as he tried to move closer. “Tobias, please.”

“It’s alright, I’ve got you. Just breathe, sweetling.” The Dominant cooed, an arm curling under Will’s waist as his other hand reached out and deftly undid Will’s left wrist. He latched onto the other Roux instantly, hiding his face in Tobias’ neck as his left arm wrapped tightly around his neck – and cried out as the move wrenched his still pinned right shoulder painfully. Tobias let out a distressed sound, hand flying to the remaining binding, undoing it even as his free hand moved up to try and ease the twisted muscle.

The second Will had both hands free, he lashed out.
The tableside lamp smashed into the side of Tobias’ head with enough force for the plastic base to shatter and the Dominant let out a croaked sound of shocked pain, stumbling roughly off the bed. Will launched himself forward, stopping only to swoop up a startled Ovie as he sprinted into a small hallway. He picked a direction and ran – only to skid to a stop and sprint the opposite direction when it led him to a dead end.

There was a roar of fury behind him, finger tips brushing the back of his shirt as Tobias shot from the bedroom. Will cried out, slamming into an armoire and grabbing a vase and throwing it as hard as he physically could. It smacked into the Dominant’s face with a satisfyingly thick cracking sound, but he didn’t stay behind to see what damage he’d done. Will flew down the hallway and into a rustic living room. There was a small entryway to the left and Will ran to it, shifting the squirming puppy to have a free hand to undo the locks.

The door flew open before he could touch it.

A mocha skinned Dominant stood there, towering easily over Will. The Roux’s expression was as surprised as his own, though it immediately hardened. The Roux stepped into the space and for one heart stopping moment Will thought everything was lost, but then the unknown Dominant was stepping past him, a hand nudging him gently towards the door.

Another Roux appeared, a Submissive this time, who took one look at Will’s bloody features and paled considerably. He had a blanket in one hand (which he immediately wrapped over Will’s shell-shocked form) and a gun in the other. The gun popped up, pointing into the cabin, as the sound of Tobias’ fury started up again.

The Dominant moved to bodily block them. “Take Dr. Graham and go wait in the car.”

“Derek-”

“Now, Spencer.”

The Submissive, Spencer, bit his lip, the grip around Will curling tightly before nodding and guiding them both out into the chilly morning. Spencer stopped at the stairs, glancing over his shoulder and into the cabin. “Be careful.”

The Dominant gave him a confident smile edged with affection and Will realized all at once that two were quite mated, and a wave of intense relief blossom in his chest. The blond Submissive lead him down a path to where a large SUV was parked. He helped Will into the passenger side seat, digging into the back seat and reappearing a moment later with a first aid kit.

“Where are you hurt?”

“I bit through my lip.” Will explained, voice emotionless and he was too well trained not to recognize the signs of shock. Spencer nodded, bringing a wet towelette up to wipe gently at his chin. Will took it from him, doing the act with far less care.

Spencer frowned at the sight of his bruised lips, digging through a messenger bag that rested in the foot space in front of the passenger seat. He let out a sound of victory, holding up a orange prescription bottle.

“It’s super strength aspirin,” he explained as he pushed two of the fat, white pills into Will’s hand. “I take them for my migraines. They should take the edge off anything. Hold on,” he opened the back door and there was the crinkling of plastic being torn. He offered Will a bottle of water which the Submissive gratefully took, “you should probably try to drink the whole thing.”
Spencer needn’t have worried, the moment the water touched his lips Will realized how parched he was and downed the whole thing in one swing. Another was pushed into his hands and Will put away half off it before finally stopping, gasping slightly. The Submissive was watching him nervously, brows drawn and hands fidgeting with the end of his jacket.

“Who are you?”

“Oh, of course! How stupid of me, I’m Dr. Spencer Reid and the Dominant from before was Derek Morgan, my mate.”

“Dr. Reid? From the BAU?”

Spencer gave him a small smile. The BAU was another division in the FBI which often got into pissing matches with Jack’s BSU over cases. “I’m afraid so. Going to hold that against me?”

Will shook his head, clutching both Ovie and the blanket closer. “Not likely, you did just save my ass. I’ve heard of you, both of you. I had no idea either one of you were Roux.”

Spencer shrugged, leaning against the open door. “I was way out of the Academy before you started teaching and given how much of a shitty team player Jack Crawford is, it isn’t terribly surprising we never ran into each other. And now neither of us actually work there unless we’re doing consulting. Honestly, I knew about you but you were still pretty young. I mean, I’m still pretty young, I’m only thirty-two, but I started working for the FBI when I was still in my teens.

I lived on my own but Derek looked after me, so I was technically his responsibility and he was an adult when you started working. We figured it was better if we kept our distance, most Roux don’t react well when they find their juvenile Submissives carrying the scent of a mature Dominant.”

Will could give him that. While Ezra wasn’t living with him, his father would have flipped his absolute shiit if he’d scented foreign Roux on him. And –

“I have to call my father,” Will said suddenly, voice panicked, “he’s got to be going crazy. Please, I need a cell phone!”

“I’m sorry, but there isn’t any cell service out here,” Spencer apologized, wincing at whatever expression must have been on Will’s face, “but we called your father before we got up here. He and your Uncle Robert are on their way as we speak. So is your intended.”

Will sagged into the leather seat in relief. While he was still frustrated that he couldn't speak with his father or Hannibal to tell them that he was safe and unharmed, to hear in turn that they were safe and unharmed, he was soothed somewhat by the knowledge that they were coming. All he wanted was to be away from this place, to go home and never leave. Unwillingly, Will’s eyes fell back on the cabin.

“Will,” it took him a moment to pull the name from his memory, “Derek be alright?”

Spencer gave him a nervous smile. “He is a trained field operative. And he has a big gun. Besides, I think if he’d lost Tobias would be out here by now, don’t you?”

Will shivered, clutching the brightly colored shock blanket closer. In his arms, Ovie wiggled but the Submissive refused to give him up and after a few moments the puppy stilled. He glanced at the heavily wooded area. “Where the hell are we anyway? How did you even find me?”

“We’re at the edge of the Smoky Mountains, near Knoxville, Tennessee. This place belongs to Derek’s sire, Christopher and his family. Tobias has rights to it through his carrier, Roman, who was
Derek’s Uncle.

And it, along with a half a dozen other properties, are listed in a legal trust. You’re familiar with Harvey and Marcus Specter, the big lawyer and broker brothers out of New York? Well, I guess your family got in touch with them when you went missing. They contacted us and, well, there was no way that Derek was going to let this slide.”

Spencer sighed, opening a bottle of water for himself and sipped from it.

“We were actually here in Tennessee on vacation with some friends. Derek has his own cabin just a half hour from here so we were able to leave as soon as Specter made contact. We’re not like Tobias, Dr. Graham,” The other Submissive said, almost beseechingly, “no one else in Derek’s family would ever do something so despicable. In fact, Tobias hadn’t been in contact with anyone in years. I’ve never even met him, hell Derek never even really mentioned him.”

Will nodded, feeling bone tired as he finally gave in and let Ovie jump from his lap. The puppy immediately began to explore the new Submissive and the land around the SUV, but thankfully seemed content to stay nearby. A mint colored plush bear was resting on the console of the SUV and without any real thought Will reached out and plucked it up. It was satiny soft to the touch, staring up at him with brightly colored button eyes and a silky pink bow wrapped around its neck. The smell of an infant Roux clung to it tightly and Will didn’t miss the way Spencer’s frame tensed as he turned it over in his hands.

“You have cubs?”

“One.” A phone was pressed into his hands.

The screen showed the picture of a chubby cheeked toddler, wearing a pair of glasses that clearly
belonged to one of his fathers. The baby was beautiful, with big soulful brown eyes and tightly wound ebony curls.

“Mixed babies are always cute.”

Will froze, mortified.

I did not just say that out loud.

Luckily Spencer only laughed, taking the phone back.

“I can’t believe I just said that.”

“It’s alright,” Spencer said, staring at the phone with undisguised adoration, “he is cute. And he is mixed. So you’re not wrong on either account. His name is Felix, a Submissive. He turned two yesterday, that’s why we were down here on vacation.”

Will winced and brought a hand up to rub at his eyes in frustration. “I’m sorry you got put in the middle of all this. You should be at home with your baby, not dealing with this.”

He let his hands fall to his lap, glaring at them. He had no idea why he felt so damn guilty, he was the one who’d been kidnapped after all. A pale hand closed over his, the other Submissive staring at him with grave eyes.

“There was nothing happening that was more important than this.”

“But—”

“Derek and I live in Baltimore. I teach mathematics at Johns Hopkins, Derek’s a senior detective for the BPD...and my heat is in less than a month. The last thing we wanted was for this to start a feud.”

The seriousness of the situation struck Will for the first time. He had – quite rightfully – only focused on the moment during his tribulation, but he had known that there would be consequences for what Tobias had done.

Ezra would have torn the world apart looking for him and Will knew that the same could be said for Hannibal. Had this gone poorly, had Will been raped or killed, he knew that a blood feud would be enacted. Vendettas were dangerous things in the Roux world, the likes of which would put the Hatfield and McCoy’s to shame. They were capable of continuing for generations, all out free-for-alls of violence that rarely ended without every member of one family – or both - killed.

When Roux had been more numerous Will had been told they were fairly common, but given their dwindling numbers they had mostly died off, the good of the species coming before pride. Will understood what it was Spencer was saying. Even if they had nothing to do with Tobias’ machinations, they could easily be held responsible for their cousin’s actions. The pair lived very close to Hannibal and were in a vulnerable state with a young cub and an upcoming heat.

Will carefully moved the bear back to where he found it, leveling the nervous Submissive with a steady stare. “You came for me. If what you’re saying is true and my family is coming, I don’t see any reason why this has to become any more of an ordeal than it already has been.”

“He didn’t…” Spencer swallowed, “there wasn’t any…”

“No.” Will managed to croak out, shuddering, “no, I escaped before that. There was some sexual assault, but not…that. I can’t say for what would have happened if you had not arrived. I didn’t
really have much of a plan. I couldn’t really do much of anything.”

“I beg to differ, Dr. Graham,” the other Submissive corrected softly, “you got out, didn’t you? Come on, slide your legs in. It’s getting cold, I’ll turn the heat on while we wait.”

He gave Spencer a small smile. “Please, call me Will.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope to get the next chapter up soon, I hope you guys liked it. Was Spencer and Derek too much? I don't normally cross my fandoms like this, at least not without planning to do so before hand. It just sort of popped into my mind. I was always planning on having a Dom and Sub from Tobias' extended family find Will and when I was writing (what I consider rather unimpressive OCs) it struck me that it would be awesome to do a Criminal Minds shout out along with the Suits. I mean, I've thought about it before seeing while watching both shows seeing how both units work out the Quantico. I'm a little nervous about it, honestly.

And about Robert and Ezra's kiss.

And the kidnapping, did the kidnappings go well? (...that is a strange thing to type out)

Let me know what you think!

Oh and I just stole the baby picture off of google images, which lead me to like eighty different pintrest pages with it, so I think the baby is a model. His image was literally all over pintrest, tumblr, and polyvore under various tags of 'baby swag.' Still, if this is your child, I swear to god I will remove it if you want me too, lol.
Engagement: Settling Old Affairs

Chapter Summary

The last of the fear and anxiety seemed to melt away faced with it and Will let his eyes close in relief. He pressed a kiss against the side of Hannibal’s head before ducking down and hiding his own face in the Dominant’s shoulder, inhaling greedily.

Everything was going to be okay now.

Hannibal was here.

Chapter Notes

It wouldn't leave me alone until I wrote it. Hopefully this means I can get the next chapter to the Suits offshot up.

Warning for implied torture and graphic written accounts of violence.

Now betaed by Felicia.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I totally agree,” Spencer announced around a mouthful of plastic and Nutella, the take-out spoon making an audible ‘pop’ sound as he pulled it from his mouth. The other Submissive waved the spoon around fervently. “Ferreira’s arguments are positively ancient. I mean, the man looks and writes like it’s still nineteen fifty-nine.”

Will nodded, swallowing his mouthful of Goldfish crackers. You wouldn’t think so, but the two snacks were amazing together. “Not that he’ll hear anything different. Do you know he called my paper on post-modern profiling naïve? The man hasn’t worked in the field in a decade.”

“At least he read yours.” Spencer grumbled as he dipped the spoon back into the Nutella, sprinkling it with Goldfish before handing the tub to Will. “I swear he didn’t even open mine.”

Will sniggered as he scooped up another spoonful for himself. It seemed odd to be sitting here, in some government issued SUV on heated seats, eating snacks from what Spencer had called his ‘Emergency Baby Snack Hoard.’ Just a few hours ago Will had been fighting for his virtue, kidnapped and strapped to a bed, yet somehow Will felt surprisingly calm.

Perhaps it was the presence of another Submissive (or even the scent of baby that clung to the inside of the SUV) or perhaps it was just that Spencer reminded Will so much of himself. Outside of their shared interests in the Human mind and profiling, the other Roux shared Will’s awkwardness with social settings and wry, whip-like sense of humor.

“But, I mean, it’s the same thing every time, isn’t it?” Will said, words slightly slurred by the sticky paste. “The old guard refusing to adjust or update themselves, it’s always a war of old vs. new.”
Spencer let out a hum of agreement. “Well, we’ll win. They’re all so old.”

Will’s laugh was a bark of surprise, though it quickly loosened into something smoother. Spencer joined in, the sound muffled as he blocked his full mouth with the back of his palm. It wasn’t even that funny honestly, but Will needed to laugh. Apparently Spencer needed to as well and the two laughed together for a long time. Eventually they trailed off, both nearly in tears.

“I needed that.” Will admitted, taking a swig of water.

“Me too.” Spencer said with a small smile. “So, I can’t imagine that Hannibal or your family will be much longer.”

Will felt his eyebrows rise at the use of his intended’s first name. “Do you and Hannibal know each other?”

“Mm, we met shortly after my mating at a conference.” Spencer gave him a wicked smile, “he’s a hell of a catch, Will. He made Derek so jealous.”

“What!” Will sputtered, nearly spilling his water everywhere.

“Oh, it was nothing untoward.” Spencer said quickly, still grinning like a cat that had gotten into the cream, “I was mated and we both know Hannibal’s not that type of Dominant. All he had to do was stand there, looking pretty and very put together while we talked.”

“Just him standing there?”

“Just him standing there.” Spencer laughed. “You’ll understand when you’re mated. Dominants get very possessive.” The other Roux sent him a wink. “It’s actually quite fun. In fact, I probably ought to thank Hannibal. That night was…”

Both Submissives pinked at the implication, giggling like school girls instead of two highly educated adults.

After a moment Spencer sobered slightly, though he still looked cheery. “Anyway, what are you doing after you mate?”

“Well,” Will said slowly, watching the way the Nutella tugged at the spoon as he swirled it about in the container. “I’m quitting the BSU. I won’t be advising them anymore. I haven’t really told Jack yet, but that’s what I want. The FBI wants me to keep teaching through their internet portal and I’ve also contracted a literally agent.”

“Sounds like you’ve got everything planned, but be careful with the FBI.”

“What do you mean?”

“They try pretty damn hard to keep hold of what they have.” Spencer fiddled with the Goldfish packet, looking distracted. “I can’t prove anything, but when I tried to leave they sabotaged my first three job offers. No one in my unit, of course, they wouldn’t do that to me. But it happened.”

Will frowned. He hadn’t thought of that and unlike Spencer, he could easily see Jack pulling something like that.

“Look,” the older Submissive chewed on his bottom lip, “I really hope I’m not overstepping or anything here, but I actually have a job opening in my department. I could use someone like you on my teaching staff. The pays generous and so are the benefits and…” There was an awkward laugh.
“That is, assuming that everything goes okay.”

“I really don’t think it will come to that.” Will assured softly. In fact, he knew it wouldn’t come to that because he wouldn’t let it. Tobias’ actions were literally the antithesis of what it meant to be Roux, yet it still had nothing to do with Spencer or his mate. Will wouldn’t let this foolishness hurt anyone else, not when it had already caused so many problems. “Let’s exchange our information, you can send me the job listing and I’ll take a look.”

Spencer’s smile was wide and genuine. He held the paper packet out to him, “more Goldfish?”

“Please.”

They talked for a while longer – the conversation just as easy and comfortable as before – when the sound of a car on gravel interrupted them. It was Hannibal’s Bentley and Will had never been so happy to see the overpriced thing in his life. He shot out of the car, ignoring the chill (he was only wearing a pair of sweat pants and a t-shirt) and the bite of gravel under his bare feet.

Hannibal met him half way, Will’s name a sharp cry, not even bothering to shut his car door in his haste. The younger Roux let out a choked whine as strong arms locked around him with a frightening amount of strength, his Dominant’s holding him so tightly Will was partially lifted. He threw his arms around Hannibal’s neck, hugging as they kissed fervently. The kiss broke almost as quickly as it started, Hannibal burying his face in Will’s neck.

The last of the fear and anxiety seemed to melt away and Will let his eyes close in relief. He pressed a kiss against the side of Hannibal’s head before ducking down and hiding his own face in the Dominant’s shoulder, inhaling greedily.

Everything was going to be okay now.

Hannibal was here.

Will’s scent was a comfort; clean and untainted, and Hannibal pressed an open mouth kiss against the column of his neck, inhaling deeply as his tongue pressed flat against the flesh. Will trembled against him and Hannibal gripped him even tighter.

“William,” the Dominant murmured against the soft skin, “I was so worried.”

“He took me at work. I didn’t even smell him approach. He injected me with something – sedated me – and when I woke up I was all the way out here. I tried to escape, I tried so hard! But he had me tied up. I got out though, I got out before he could touch me.” Will was almost babbling, tripping over his words. “He didn’t I touch me, I swear. I escaped before he could. You have to believe me, he-”

Hannibal stopped the rambling with a deep kiss. It was a desperate thing, almost too rough, almost too harsh, and utterly perfect. He tangled his fingers in Will’s curls, gently correcting the angle until it suited him better. Hannibal’s tongue was insistent, flickering about as he tasted every inch of Will’s mouth. His intended tasted sweet, as if he’d been eating some sort of treat recently. Hannibal pulled him as close as he could, hungry in more ways than one, until the younger Roux’s lines were pressed against his own almost painfully. They broke away a moment later, both breathing heavily. The contact left Hannibal feeling complete, centered, as if the world had suddenly been righted once more.

His mate, alive and well. Here, safe with Hannibal.
“I thought I’d lost you.” He admitted lowly. He brushed the back of his knuckles over Will’s cheek. “I would never have forgiven myself.”

Will smiled up at him, grey eyes warm and fond, and it made something inside the Dominant swell proudly.

“I’m alright.” The Submissive soothed, his nimble fingers reaching up to card through Hannibal’s hair. “I’m alright, nothing happened. Spencer and Derek got here before Tobias could do anything.”

A furious growl ripped from his throat, wild and uncontrolled, at the sound of the rogue Dominant’s name. He sought out the cabin just a few feet away, eyes darkening at the knowledge of what waited inside for him. The mere thought of what could have happened if any one of a hundred things had gone differently would haunt Hannibal till the end of his days.

He owed his uncle everything yet again.

The sound of footsteps on gravel had his head snapping back, eyes narrowed and lips pulled reflexively into a sneer – only for his features to go completely lax, the anger smoothing out instantly at the sight of Spencer Reid’s nervousness.

The blond Submissive gave him a weak smile. “Hannibal, I’d say it’s good to see you again, but…”

“Yes,” Hannibal said, shifting his grip as Will turned to face Spencer, still tucked securely against his side. “This is certainly not the most ideal circumstances. How is your son?”

The stress lines around Spencer’s mouth and eyes grew tighter at the mention of his child. “Well, thank you.”

“Spencer showed me some pictures,” Will added, leaning even heavier against Hannibal. He took the additional weight easily, shifting back on his heels to support his intended automatically. “He’s very cute.”

“Oh?”

Will settled his head into the cradle of Hannibal’s shoulder, nuzzling against his chin and the Dominant immediately reacted to the nonverbal cry for attention. Hannibal turned more to him, pressing a kiss against the Submissives forehead. Will’s smile was brilliant, his fingers curled deeply into Hannibal’s coat as he grinned up at him. “He just turned two – they left his birthday celebrations to come for me.”

A warm feeling had seemingly saturated Hannibal’s entire being with the knowledge that his attention had inspired his intended’s apparent contentment. It was (some very distant sounding part of his mind noted) textbook appeasement acts. Will wanted Hannibal calmer, wanted him eased, and was using his body to achieve that. By allowing Hannibal to take the entirety of his weight, he expressed a faith that he would be supported and protected in his vulnerable state. Will was showing the depth of his trust and submission.

It was something that Will had never done before and the fact that he was doing it now, in front of another Roux, sent a very clear message to Hannibal. He didn’t want either Morgan or Dr. Reid to be the recipients of Hannibal’s fury.

The gentling was all for naught though, for the moment Derek Morgan appeared on the cabin’s front porch Hannibal went tense once more. The wind cut an easy path through the wood, carrying the Dominant’s scent and his anger flared once more. Will shivered against him - though he did not know if was in response to the cold or Hannibal’s spike of anger. He immediately stripped his coat
off, wrapping it around the Submissive.

“Forgive me, gentlemen,” he said briskly, herding his intended back towards the SUV, “but I must take my leave. It’s quite cold out, I insist you both return to the car to wait. Ezra and Robert are not far behind me, if you could be so kind as to send them to the cabin when they arrive it would be greatly appreciated.”

Will gave him a slow nod, seeming greatly unhappy, and Hannibal waited until both Submissives had reluctantly made their way back into the car before making the short walk up the path and to the cabin.

Hannibal had only ever met Derek Morgan twice before and the circumstances had been incredibly different. He wouldn’t deny that he had enjoyed needling the younger Dominant at there initial meeting, standing perhaps a bit too closely to Spencer Reid, monopolizing the brilliant mind for perhaps a tad bit too long. But it had all been done in fun and good faith and Hannibal had not doubted for a second that the faun-like Submissive had been completely aware of it.

He also knew that Morgan had become employed with the Baltimore Police Department. Morgan had sent him a neutral email, explaining his change in employment and his new neighborhood of residency (which was located far aware from Hannibal’s own) as well as an invitation for coffee. They’d met on neutral ground – a small coffee shop attached to a rare book store in the center of town – where they’d both established clear lines of territory.

It was the polite thing to do when one knew other Dominants already lived in the city you were moving to, but not one that was always followed. Hannibal had rather respected the younger Roux for it.

“Detective Morgan.”

Morgan gave him a clipped, stiff nod. “I’ve got him secured inside.” He shifted, clearly uncomfortable and on edge. “I have no words that would be strong to apologize for this. Tobias has always been a black sheep, even when we were all kids. Pushing the limits on everything, always trying to test the boundaries…but we had no idea that he would pull something like this. None of us have had any contact with him since his parents died, we didn’t even know he was courting.”

Hannibal said nothing, gazing at the dark skinned Roux coolly.

“Dr. Lecter,” the Detective said with a sigh, a hand dragging over his shorn scalp, “I will repeat my apologizes to Mr. Graham when he arrives but let me put this bluntly; I don’t want a blood feud and I will do everything in my power to keep that from happening.”

Derek Morgan was an attractive Roux, with well-groomed facial hair, dark eyes, and strong features. Both times that Hannibal had interacted with him in the past, the younger Dominant had practically peacocked, oozing arrogance and pride. There was little of that now; Morgan seemed almost defeated and incredibly weary.

“I cannot speak for Ezra, Detective, but your sincerity has been noted.” It wasn’t much, but it was all that Hannibal could manage to give at the moment. Still, Morgan seemed relieved, nodding before opening the cabin door.

Tobias was sitting in the center of the small space, a room that combined both a living area and a kitchen, bound quite securely to a chair. The entire left side of his face was heavily bruised and slightly swollen, though even the raised, meaty flesh of a black eye did nothing to lessen the bright hate in Tobias’ eyes. He was also gagged, a fabric napkin balled up and shoved unceremoniously
“He wouldn’t shut up,” Morgan explained as he shut the door and moved to his cousin’s side, “and killing him myself was starting to be a bit too appealing.” Tobias let out a series of muffled snarls – curses most likely – and Morgan’s hand shot out, cuffing him roughly. “I wave all familial rights to Tobias, his fate is no longer mine to decide. Let him pay for what he’s done.”

The younger Dominant said the dismissal passionately and Hannibal had little cause to not believe it an honest one. Roux were fiercely protective of their family units, even when it came to second or third cousins, but even that brand of love had its limits. Tobias’ actions could easily effect his entire extended line. Even if a vendetta was not called, should Ezra wish it a few choice calls could be made to various pillars of the Roux society that would haunt them for generations.

There were some benefits, after all, to mating a Lecter.

That type of shame left a stain, making the already difficult task of mating even more taxing. Who would allow their children to mate into a family whose counted a kidnapper of Submissives amongst their bloodline? And Morgan had a toddler Submissive himself…

The Detective moved away, towards the kitchen’s tiny pantry and pulled out coffee grounds. Tobias was still growling and shouting, the sound distorted and muffled by the fabric, glaring angrily at Hannibal. He ignored him as he unbuttoned and rolled his sleeves up, taking the time to make each fold creased and perfected.

“I can smell him on you.” He announced casually as he cracked his knuckles. “It vexes me.”

The first blow was strong enough to fill the cabin with a hollow snapping sound of breaking bone. Tobias’ nose hung at an angry angle, bleeding profusely not only from his nostrils but from a cut underneath his eye socket. The strike was hard enough to stun the other Roux, Tobias hanging limply from his bindings.

“Don’t kill him.” Morgan instructed sharply from where he was making coffee. He held his hands up at the glare Hannibal shot him. “I get it,” which he greatly doubted, seeing as it wasn’t his mate that had been stolen, “but you’re not mated yet. Don’t kill him, don’t maim him too much. That right stays with his carrier, alright?”

Hannibal took a deep breath through his nose before releasing it. “Yes, you are right of course.”

“That doesn’t mean you can’t beat the shit out of him, though.” Morgan added, a wry grin on his face, before turning back to the coffee machine. Hannibal rolled his shoulders, approaching the unconscious Roux once more.

“Again, Detective, you are quite correct.”

The cabin was small but tastefully done in a style that could only be described as ‘modernly rustic,’ with untreated wooden walls of light wood and furniture of dark maples and leather. It was a beautiful property, made all the more beautiful by the beaten and battered form of Tobias Budge tied to a chair.

At least in Ezra’s opinion.

Hannibal was sitting with a tall, dark skinned Dominant, talking seemingly over coffee. They looked up when Ezra entered, Robert a silent shadow behind him. The Count didn’t enter the small cabin, however. Given that Hannibal had not yet mated Will, Robert wasn’t technically considered family
and as such he had very little right to the proceedings.

“Ezra.”

“Mr. Graham.”

Ezra gave the two a stiff nod as he stepped closer to the limp Roux. He reached out, tilting Tobias’ head back until he could fully see his face. Hannibal had done a number on him and Tobias was hardly recognizable as the young Roux he’d once been. He stared back at Ezra, eyes defeated, and the Submissive took his hand away, letting his head drop once more.

“You are Derek Morgan, Tobias’ cousin through your carrier.”

“Yes, sir.” Derek replied, voice muted. The young Dominant was hunched over, both hands shoved into his pocket, eyes studying the top of his boots as if they held all of the secrets to the universe.

“Look at me when I’m speaking to you, boy.” Derek’s eyes snapped up, immediate and obedient. “Plead your case and make it quick. I have unfinished business here.”

Derek immediately launched into a very formal and carefully worded apology, during which he quite efficiently cut all ties to Tobias, dismissed all familial rights, and reiterated – repeatedly – that his family had no idea what Tobias had been up to for years, that they certainly had no idea what he was planning to do, and had they would have immediately brought a stop to it.

Ezra watched him blankly throughout the entirety of it, eyes emotionless saved for a deeply seated anger. Eventually Derek’s words petered off, embarrassed on their own. After a few moments of awkward staring, Ezra finally took pity on the poor boy and broke the heavy silence. “Apology accepted.” Ezra turned back to Tobias, carefully working his leather gloves off finger by finger. He folded the kid gloves into his coat pocket before dispensing of the wool trench completely, handing it to a waiting Hannibal. “You may wait outside, Derek.”

“That’s not necessary, I can-”

“It was not a request.” Ezra’s voice was sharp. “You as well, Hannibal.”

“Ezra-”

“Again,” the Submissive broke in, tone hard, as he set a small bundle down atop the kitchen table. A small flourish of his wrist caused it to unroll, revealing a neatly organized surgical set, “not a request.”

The two Dominants exchanged a look before obeying reluctantly. Ezra waited until the door shut before reaching out and carefully selecting a scalpel. He let out a soft hum as he approached, running his finger against the dull edge of it.

“Tobias. Tobias, look at me.” He obeyed, his head tilting up so slowly you would have thought he bore a great weight. “I want you to understand that while this gives me no pleasure, it is deeply personal.”

Tobias’ eyes looked ancient as he stared up at him, ancient and exhausted.

“Now,” Ezra gave him a muted smile, “where shall we begin?”

The muffled sounds escaping the cabin made the younger Roux next to him uncomfortable. Even for
all that his nephew had craved retribution, Hannibal was unnerved at sight of it by the hands of a Submissive. For Morgan that seemed the case as well, if the way he’d accepted Robert’s offer for a cigarette despite the fact that he claimed to not smoke gave any indication.

There was a particularly long, strangled groan that made both Morgan and Hannibal shift. Robert chuckled, a billow of smoke escaping him with the move. He flicked his cigarette, the ash raining down to stain the wooden deck.

“And that, my boys, is why you must strive to never end up on the wrong side of a Submissive protective instincts. It’s easy to forget in the face of their docility and domestic attitudes, but Submissives are – at their heart – quite vicious creatures.”

“I don’t think Spencer has that in him.” Morgan said quietly.

Robert snorted. “Try taking that cute little cub of yours away from him and you’ll see just what young Spencer is capable of.”

He rolled his eyes as both turned their gazed upon the SUV, wearing twin looks of disbelief. Still so young, Robert thought with no small amount of amusement. The two Submissives were busy talking (much as they had been for the past hour and a half) both gesturing with their hands as they spoke, faces open and earnest, and it cut a rather adorable picture. They looked about as dangerous as a basket of kittens.

Hard won experience had taught Robert better.

“Detective, why don’t you take your mate home?” Robert suggested as he flicked his cigarette bud away. “In fact,” he turned to his nephew, giving him a pat on the shoulder, “you should take Will back to his home as well.”

“Uncle, I’m not sure that is wise.”

“And I don’t think I should leave until this is finished.”

“You should and you will. I doubt Ezra is going to be done anytime soon.” Robert insisted, “and Will has been through a trial, Hannibal. It will do him good to be home with his pack.”

“I can’t leave until I’ve had a chance to speak with Mr. Graham once more.” He could empathize with Morgan; in his place he would also be concerned about whether a vendetta was to be issued or not.

“I don’t think that’s the best idea. Besides, if he does intend a feud you wouldn’t be alerted of it formally for a few days’ time regardless. However, I don’t believe that Ezra intends to enforce any type of retribution; Tobias’ life is payment enough.”

“I agree,” his nephew said, hands folding behind his back, “it isn’t what Will wants either.”

Morgan frowned reluctantly, even as he stared longingly at his car, “I’m not sure. Someone will have to clean up.”

“Come now, lad,” Robert coaxed, “don’t you worry about that, I’ll ensure everything is put where it belongs. Besides, it’s starting to get late and you’ve got a child to get home to.”

Mentioning the cub seemed to be the last push needed and Morgan finally caved, leaving a business card with personal cell and home phone numbers scrawled across the back. It took a bit more to get Hannibal to agree to leave (and even more to get Will, though arguably the sounds from the cabin
did most of the work for Robert) but eventually they two departed.

Robert kept his vigil on the front porch, smoking clear through half his pack before the sounds inside the cabin finally ceased. He waited for the length of time it took to smoke one more cigarette before making his way inside.

Ezra stood before a lifeless hunk of flesh that was only recognizable as Tobias Budge in the loosest of classifications. The rogue had been butchered, cut so deeply in some places that the white of bone could be seen, and long strips of skin had been peeled away. Ezra was drenched with blood, his entire front saturated until it was burgundy. It gathered at his feet, dripped from his hands – where a scalpel was loosely clasped in one hand and Tobias Budge’s genitals in the other.

Robert gave a low, awed whistle and the Submissive turned at the sound, glancing at him from over his shoulder. His pretty features were stained to a darker malice, spotted with blood and eyes so manic they seemed almost to glow.

The Dominant stepped further into the room, toeing at the blood pool purposely. It was amazing how similar to Human it looked after all. “Go to dinner with me.”

Ezra gave him a sharkish smile. “Do you intend court me, Robertas?”

“No. I intend to mate you.”

Chapter End Notes

...hehe.

Don't fuck with Mamas, they get crazy.

There will be fluff and porn next chapter.
Engagement: A Much Needed Release, Part One

Chapter Summary

He wanted to reassure him that it was hardly childish or that even if it was there was nothing wrong with it – not when it only served to endear the Submissive further to Hannibal. But he could not find his voice, struck speechless. Just as he had been all those months ago when Jack Crawford had brought him to Wolf Trap and Hannibal had first laid eyes on William Graham.

Chapter Notes

Written after a third. Now beta-ed by the wonderful Felicia.

Numylėtinis = darling, lovely? Was told this from a Lithuanian guy at work.

It was nearing one in the morning by the time they finally made it to William’s home. Will had slept most of the trip, kept warm by the heated seat and the thick wool of Hannibal’s coat, and the Dominant was glad for it. There was still so much unknown about his time spent with Tobias, Hannibal wanted him to get as much rest as he needed.

The dogs were already barking enthusiastically as they pulled up and Will was just as eager to get to them, but Hannibal made him wait until he’d retrieved a pair of wellies from the outside boot rack before allowing him to leave the car.

He watched in fond amusement as Will knelt down and allowed himself to be overwhelmed by his pack. Hannibal resting a hand lightly on the Submissive’s shoulder to keep him anchored as furry bodies crowded Will, desperate for attention and love.

Will allowed it for a handful of moments before letting out a loud ‘ntch’ and the dogs immediately broke away – even the four tiny pups the Grahams had kept. After a short exchange of information (Will had slept through the call from Robert, in which his uncle had informed him that the cleanup would take much the night and not to expect them until early the following morning) the Submissive excused himself upstairs for a shower.

Hannibal set about feeding the dogs and found himself pleased at how obediently the pack settled in front of their bowls, with only the pups playing between their mother’s paws. The new puppy – Ovie, the one retrieved from Tobias – had settled in seemingly as if he’d never left, Sadie giving him a thorough bath as they waited for their dinner. It made Hannibal wish that Mago was here, though he knew the pup was safe and well cared for with his breeder friend.

It didn’t take long to find the tub of mixed raw meat, kibble, and gravy that Ezra had left for the pack and less time to deal it out. The dogs ate in a peaceful line, the puppies crowded around one oversized bowl of a fine meat paste. They were a well-trained pack and the Dominant could appreciate the skill and time that it denoted.
Ezra had made a pot pie and Hannibal helped himself to a cold portion as he heated another up for Will, brewing tea as well. He found a bed tray in the laundry room and loaded it up with the pot pie, two cups and the pot of tea, as well as a fresh loaf of honey-glazed bread he’d found resting on the counter. The dogs watched his retreat covetously but dutifully didn’t try to follow.

Hannibal hesitated outside the empty bedroom before stepping inside, setting the tray down on the dresser. Will’s bedroom was a mixed between tidiness and a controlled mess. There wasn’t much of a theme to it, other than a love of grey and flannel, but the Disney character Pluto did appear several times throughout the room. This included a winking Pluto hat, complete with lengthy felt ears hanging from it and Hannibal shook his head, lips quirked – charmed – as he lifted it from the bed pole.

“Daddy got it for me when we went to Disneyland a few years ago.”

Hannibal quickly turned, an apology on his lips, but the words were quickly forgotten at the sight of his intended, naked save for an oversized terry cloth robe that hung open around his chest. His skin was pink and velvety looking from the heat, his curls almost pressed straight from the weight of the water, a hood resting loosely atop them.

Will padded into the room, bare feet soundless as he took the hat from Hannibal’s hands and set it gently back onto its perch, fingers trailing down the felt ears. “I know it’s childish and I’m probably way too old – probably was way too old even when we went down – but I’ve always had a bit of a soft spot for Pluto.”

He wanted to reassure him that it was hardly childish or that even if it was there was nothing wrong with it – not when it only served to endear the Submissive further to Hannibal. But he could not find his voice, struck speechless. Just as he had been all those months ago when Jack Crawford had brought him to Wolf Trap and Hannibal had first laid eyes on William Graham.

His silence did not go unnoticed and Will bit his bottom lip, those startling grey eyes flickering up to glance nervously at him from underneath his lashes. “Hannibal?”

There were few moments in Hannibal’s life where he felt himself lacking in personal control, but it would have taken a far stronger Roux than himself to resist Will in that moment. Hannibal cupped the Submissive’s cheek, Will’s eyes widening before drifting half-mast, leaning willingly into the touch as he allowed Hannibal to guide their mouths together. The hand on Will’s cheek drifted down, following the strong lines of the Submissive’s jaw down his neck, resting over his pulse point before tracing over a slim shoulder bone. Will’s lips parted in a gasp as Hannibal’s hand drifted lower, slipping beneath the robe to reveal in the feel of satin-soft skin underneath his touch, and he met a questing tongue with his own eagerly.

There was another moan as Hannibal pushed the robe low enough to fall from Will's shoulder, his thumb rolling over a rapidly peaking nipple. Will’s hands gripped tightly at his dress shirt, straining the delicate material, but Hannibal hardly noticed as he pressed open-mouth kisses along the exposed skin. Hannibal’s other hand slid beneath the terry-cloth, following the curve of Will’s ribs down across his back, the dip of his spine perfection beneath his touch. The Dominant’s fingers dug into the thick swell of Will’s ass as he ducked down – straining almost – and took a pinked nipple into his mouth.

The Submissive arched into him, pressing the length of his body against Hannibal’s, hands flying up to tangle in the older Roux’s hair, pressing down hard. “H-Hannibal, oh – oh, god.”

He obeyed the request, mouthing and suckling - suckling just like Hannibal's child would be soon - at the nub before biting down lightly. A beautiful, strangled whine was his reward, the fingers in his
hair gripping even harsher, and a sweet scent filled the air, one that had imprinted itself across Hannibal’s mind ever since they’d begun sitting together.

Will was wet.

Hannibal felt his cock harden completely, straining against his khakis, as a low growl rippled from his chest. His hand slid lower, fingers gliding instantly through slick as they sought out Will’s entrance, and he teased that perfect little rosebud as he feasted on the exposed skin of his intended’s chest.

The top of the robe completely gone, hanging from Will’s elbows, and only the loose knot of the belt kept the lower half together. Hannibal could feel Will’s hard, little cock against his thigh and the Dominant groaned as Will rocked against him. He caught a bare leg, following a taunt thigh up to squeeze and knead at Will’s ass as he finally pressed two fingers inside the tight opening.

Will cried out, trembling in his arms, and Hannibal echoed it with his own pleased noise. He turned, only managing to keep himself from throwing the Submissive atop his bed at the last moment, lowering Will down instead.

“Off,” Will demanded, hands scrambling as they tried to undo the many buttons of Hannibal’s outfit, “off, I want it off.”

“As you wish, numylėtinis.” Hannibal murmured, unwilling to take his mouth from Will’s even as he tore his shirt and undershirt off and tossed it backwards onto the bed.

Will’s hands were immediately on him, his expression awed and wanton as he ran his hands over the exposed skin. “You’re beautiful.”

“That’s my line, darling.” Hannibal said with a chuckle, leaning back just enough to take in the flushed form, that damned robe finally falling far enough open to reveal Will in all his glory. Hannibal shook his head, groin pulsing and lust a harsh, tugging knot in his stomach. “You are exquisite,” he murmured as he leaned down, pressing a kiss to the rosy head of Will’s cock, “and your taste…”

Hannibal swallowed him down to the root, relishing in every cry and whimper he pulled from his Submissive. Hands tugged at his hair and after a moment Hannibal relented, letting the throbbing dick pop from his mouth as Will pulled him up. The sight of browning bruises – dotting like a macabre bracelet across his wrist – was a cruel distraction and Hannibal caught one gently, staring heatedly at the injured skin.

The needy haze in Will’s eyes cleared slightly, replaced instead with something almost weary. “Hannibal…”

He ignored him, pressing a kiss to the bruise, before repeating the action until every inch of the injured skin had been covered. He did the same with the left, a strange determination in his chest as his cock wilted and his mind switched from lust to concern as he began a thorough search of every inch of his Submissive’s skin.

Hannibal didn’t realize that he’d been making a low, distressed sound with each new bruise or scrape he found until Will captured his mouth again, silencing them. Arms curled tightly around his neck, hands splaying across the Dominant’s shoulder blade in a move of undisguised comfort.

“I’m alright, Hannibal. I’m safe, I promise, I’m okay. And later, I will tell you everything that happened - I’ll explain every mark.” Will promised, pressing a kiss of increasing demand between
each reassurance. His legs spread, knees bending upwards as he shifted Hannibal into the cradle of his hips. “But right now? Right now I don’t want to think about it. I don’t want to think about him; not here, not in my bed, not with you. I want you to touch me. I want to feel you,” the hands pressed against his back until their chests were flush, “everywhere. On me, against me…inside me.”

Hannibal’s breath hitched, hands fisting in the sheets on either side of the Submissive as his cock ached. There was nothing more in this world that he wanted more than to be inside his Will. “William…”

A slim hand cupped his covered erection, squeezing.

“Please, Hannibal.” The Dominant eyes closed as he grit his teeth, every muscle tensed to the point of strain as Will’s unzipped him one-handedly, fingers dipping inside – eager and insistent – as they eased him out. The Submissive let out a breathy sigh. “Oh…look at you…"

This was so wrong, a violation of every courting rule in the book, even if they were engaged. And yet that fact only made Will’s actions even sweeter, even more erotic, and Hannibal groaned, head hanging loose between his shoulder in defeat as he watched the contrast of Will’s pale hand against the angry red of his dick.

“You’re so warm.” The hand squeezed once before the fingers slid lower and Hannibal growled, chest heaving as they swirled around his partial knot, “that’s…your knot?”

“Yes,” Hannibal managed to croak out.

It was hard to believe that Will had never seen a knot before, that he’d never felt one, because he teased it with an innate skill that had the bulb growing quickly beneath his fingertips.

“It’s so big,” Will breathed, sounding awed and intrigued in equal measure. “This is going inside me?”

The Dominant Roux moaned, the strength in his arms failing as he tumbled to his elbows, completely undone by the innocent question. “Yes.”

“And this –” those fingers traced up his erection, “– the curve is so strong. And long.”

Hannibal’s cock was weeping now, leaking precum at a frightening rate, easily coating the curious fingers playing with the head and slit, drooling down to pool against Will’s abs and gathering in the dip of his belly button.

“I didn’t think it would be so long.” Will’s voice sounded as wrecked as Hannibal felt, rough and needy, and Hannibal’s hips jerked into the Submissive’s touch before he could abort the thrust. The resulting moan almost undid him, as did the squirm of Will’s hips beneath him. “Hannibal, please, I want–”

“Don’t.” He interrupted harshly, “don’t, William.”

He reached down and stuffed the Submissive’s hole with three fingers before he could fill it with something else. Will bowed beneath him, hands flailing before one yanked at Hannibal’s neck, bringing him down for a demanding kiss before the other wrapped tightly around his cock and began to pump. Hannibal matched the thrusts of his fingers with those of his hips, Will’s grip providing a warm tunnel for his aching flesh.

It was perfect – everything was perfect. Hannibal’s balls were drawn tight, toeing the edge of release and he wanted it, wanted to cover his Submissive with his seed, to drench every inch of that exposed
“Will, stop.” He regretfully peeled Will’s hand from his cock, even had he sped up his own thrusts, hoping to distract that younger Roux with pleasure. “I can’t, your father – he’ll scent me.”

But Will was having none of it. Hannibal’s gasped turned into a tortured moan as Will escaped his hold, moving down the bed in one quick, graceful move before sucking the whole of his dick inside his *hotslickwet* mouth. The Submissive overreached, choking slightly before retreating just far enough to ease the pressure, swallowing reflexively and Hannibal was lost.

He bellowed into the mattress, a fist punching it forcefully, barely able to keep his hips from thrusting down into Will’s welcoming mouth. The Submissive hummed happily, throat muscles flexing and releasing around him as he swallowed Hannibal’s release.

Only once the Dominant reached down, gently pulling Will off, did his intended release his cock. Hannibal guided Will’s hand to wrap around his tender knot with a firm grip. “The knot hurts,” he explained around pants, “if there’s no pressure.” Will nodded, hand tightening around the blown muscle, eyes sharp and fascinated. “That…was wonderful Will, but very improper.”

His Submissive gave him an impish smile, a wicked gleam in his eyes. “But Daddy won’t smell you now.”

Hannibal surged forward, fingers burrowed back into Will’s wet channel, another stroking his cock, overtaken by a surge of affection. “I love you.” He mouthed the words against Will’s ear, “you are everything I have ever wanted – ever dreamed – I could have in a mate. Beautiful, clever, and always–” he twisted his fingers, watching greedily as Will fell apart around him, “– so willful.”

As always, William’s orgasm was exquisite to watch, the pinnacle of art in motion, and Hannibal drank in the sight. Afterwards the two curled tightly around each other, each boneless with satisfaction.

“I love you too.” Will whispered against Hannibal’s neck, “when…when he had me, all I could think of was getting back to you. Being with you. I – I’ll never want anyone but you.”

“No one will ever touch you again.”

“Don’t make promises you can’t keep, Hannibal.” Will murmured shrewdly, “just…stay with me, please? Don’t leave me.”

“Always. There is nothing in this world that will take me from your side.” The Dominant promised fiercely, rolling so the Submissive was pinned protectively under the length of his body, and he meant it – meant it with every inch of his soul.

Hannibal would burn the world before he let anything take him from William.

It wasn’t the ringing of the phone that woke Jack Crawford, but rather the rapid slaps of his wife, Bella, angry and disgruntled at the early hour. He patted her shoulder as he pulled the phone off the hook and answered it, grumbling as he blinked at the hour.

5:57 A.M. on a Sunday, he thought irately, *this had better be good.*

“Crawford.”

“Jack, it’s Alana. I’m so sorry for calling so early on a weekend day, but…”
“But?”

“It’s about the Ripper.” The agent sat up in bed, now fully awake. “Jack, I think we found him.”

Chapter End Notes

Short, but it kind of wrote itself that way. I felt like after the drama of the last few chapters, I just needed something short and simple and sweet - like a cap for the Tobias arc. And full of smut. I do hope you guys enjoyed the smut!

The plot moves on and as we get ever closer to the end of this series - not much more left! Very soon we will be moving on to the final stage of courtship - Will's heat should take place in the next few chapters and then...Expect the next chapter this week.

I love you guys, your support for this story really keeps me going and is the highlight of my very strenuous life. You guys keep me going! Cheers.

Just for fun, Will's hat:

And the one Ezra ended up buying (he, like myself, is a massive Goofy fan. Though I admit, even I am unsure of why Pluto isn't smart and yet Goofy is, I mean, is Pluto some sort of weird slave? Is he the slow cousin they treat like an animal? The things I troubled myself over as a child...):
Added AN: I thought I'd delete the sentence about Roux not having precum ages ago, but it seems I didn't. They do have precum now, as it makes more sense with how the male reproductive system works. Sorry!
Engagement: A Much Needed Release, Part Two

Chapter Summary

Ezra shivered as he was guided onto all fours, legs spreading as he leaned down on his forearms, back bowing as his hips kicking up. Even after all these years, the lordosis was as instinctive as it had been in his youth.

Chapter Notes

I meant to have this up earlier but Ao3 was down for so long this morning!

Now beta-ed by Felicia but still originally written from inside a patrol car from my phone.

Also its cold and snowy in alot of the US stop speeding and driving crazy you idiots. (With great love, naturally.)

Kristus: Lithuanian for Christ.
Ma puce: French for 'my flea.' Apparently a popular term of endearment.
Mylimasis: Lithuanian for sweetheart/honey. Again, according to the Lithuanian guy from work.
Petit-fils: French for grandchild.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The ride back to Virginia was long, but it would have felt far longer if Ezra hadn't had such good company to spend it in. As it was, the two Roux had held a steady stream of conversation throughout the length of the drive so far, ranging from everything to an assessment of their clean up to job, to childhood memories, to favorite types of Human food, to most embarrassing kills. In short, the conversation was alive and organic, drifting from one subject to another with a strange familiarity that should not have been present in their short yet budding relationship.

"Hannibal acts exactly like his father – exactly like him." Robert bemoaned with a shake of his head. "He even laughs the same; utterly bizarre."

"Mm, it can be strange. Will takes after my carrier, Henri, so very much. His certainly has inherited my father’s scowl, that’s for sure." Ezra let out a soft huff of a laugh as he leaned against the cool window frame, letting the cold glass refresh him even as he kept his hands resting against the heat register. "I wish the two of them could have met; they would have loved each other. Henri would have spoiled his little petit-fils senseless."

"Your Parisian French is very good." Robert noted absentmindedly.

Ezra laughed at the backhanded compliment. "So is yours."

"Touché."
The main dialect of France was Parisian (spoken throughout France, yet called Parisian), which had developed very differently from the Acadian or Cajun French, which what was Ezra had grown up speaking alongside English. The differences between the two were large. Separated by an ocean and with limited contact, the two dialects had developed into vastly different nuances. It didn’t help that Acadian was a mix of French, Indian, various African dialects, and English; a patois. Those who spoke Parisian French, or ‘High French,’ often looked down on those who spoke more muddled versions.

The irony of the compliment was, of course, that despite his many years living in France, Robert was speaking his second language while Ezra was speaking one of his native tongues.

“The Bardot’s – my carrier’s family – were from France; my grandcarrier came over first to Canada before settling in the South, so my carrier always spoke a…” ‘purer’ form. The Llyod’s – my sire’s family – came over as prominent members of the Virginia Company, though we lost most of our wealth after the civil war.” He gave the curious Dominant a small smile. “We were on the wrong side.”

“The Lecters are an old family, but we too are not what we once were.” Robert offered as he readjusted himself in his seat. “We were cousins to Mindaugas, the first and only King of Lithuania. Unfortunately he wasn’t very popular; he was assassinated as were all his children, and we lost most of our power. The majority of the nobility at the time were rival Roux clans and they very happy to see us go.”

Lithuania was hardly the first country to claim several Roux in their nobility, though Ezra could think of very few that could boost to have a Roux King.

“Sadly, we were too busy in-fighting to realize that we’d gained the attention of the great Hunting clan of the Teutonic Knights and they brought their considerable wrath down upon our country. The Humans say it was a Christian crusade against pagan Lithuania, but it was perhaps the largest organized attempt to kill off an established Roux colony.

Hannibal’s namesake – Hannibal the Grim – lived around that time. He was renowned for managing to turn the Golden Horde away from Lecter lands, keeping them autonomous even after Lithuania and her Baltic allies fell. We survived regime changes, rebellions, civil wars, and two World Wars - all while managing to maintain that independence – only to lose it to Communists, of all things.”

“Oh yes, the dirty Reds. McCarthyism was all the rage when I was coming into age here in the States.”

Robert laughed before giving him a sharp grin. “Forgive me, I slipped into lecture mode there, didn’t I? I am a historian by trade and I can ramble, especially regarding my family’s personal history.”

“You’re a historian? Hannibal rather led me to believe you were a man of leisure.”

“Oh, I am that. I certainly don’t need to work. Though one needs to fill their time with something; I chose teaching history.” The Dominant said as he switched lanes. “I teach at several universities in Paris.”

“You’re so very prestigious,” Ezra said, only half-joking, “compared to myself. I just repair boat motors.”

“ Wealth and a title do not make a man, Ezra.” A hand reached over the short distance, catching his own from where it was arched over the heat register. “And you are hardly ‘just’ anything. If you were, you would never have caught my eye.”
Ezra gave him a pleased smile, before letting his hand drift back to the heater. “Why are you alone, Robert? And don’t tell me you just never found the right Roux. You’re handsome, wealthy, respectful; I have a hard time believing Submissives weren’t throwing themselves at you in Europe and a mate would have ‘filled your time’ quite nicely.”

Robert was silent for a long time – long enough that Ezra began to fear he may have inadvertently stumbled into something quite painful. After a moment the Dominant fished a cigarette case from the side console. “Ezra, if you could…”

“Of course.”

The case was filled with the easily recognized white and gold of Davidoff cigarettes and Ezra pulled one out, packing it against the case expertly before accepting the offered zippo and lighting it. He took one drag, the flavor of the tobacco exploding across his tongue, before he handed it over.

“Thank you, ma puce. Have one for yourself if you wish.” Ezra did want one though he normally didn’t smoke and he used the light from the lighter to observe the expression on the other Roux’s face. Robert looked…distant. “I have had my dalliances in the past – as my nephew would be quick to tell you. The occasional widowed Submissive, a handful of Humans, but there was only one who I ever believed I could take for a mate. She was a Japanese performer I met in my first few years in Paris. Her name was Murasaki.”

Ezra nodded slowly, wearily. Unlike the west, Submissives in Asia were raised to refer to themselves using feminine or neutral parts of speech. Their soft features and slender bodies often meant that many could successfully pass themselves off as female and Ezra had been told that while it was not done so much in modern times, it was considered a sign of good breeding to successfully do so in the older days.

Those that couldn’t or chose not to do so still found a path, as few would blink an eye at a powerful man having a gay lover alongside his wife, and many Dominants took a Human for a wife and kept their Submissive mates as ‘mistresses.’

“Her family fled Japan at the end of the Meiji period. Her line had been Samurai for centuries and fought the pull of Westernization on Japan. In the end, they lost. Most of her clan was exterminated during or after the Satsuma Rebellion. A lesson, to be sure; the politics of Humans are no place for Roux.

When I met her, she’d been reduced to doing modified Japanese dances in the Red District. When I say reduced…well, she made quite a bit of money in her dancing. She was beautiful, exotic, and ultimately a ‘he;’ she did well for herself. She owned the theater she performed in, owned a spacious apartment in a good neighborhood…but for Murasaki, who still held herself to the same impossible standards of her old life, the shame was unforgivable.

We courted for years, nearly a decade, but I could never convince her to mate with me. Her heart belonged to Japan – or rather the memory of her Japan – and nothing I could do was ever enough win her love and I was too foolish and prideful to give her up. Eventually she left Europe to return to Japan, to relearn the country it had become. I was…bereft. In the end it was Hannibal that saved me, though I dare say the boy doesn’t know it. I shudder to think what my more youthful, impulsive self would have done without the responsibility of my nephew.”

To spend so long courting someone was almost unheard of and from a purely social standpoint an utter humiliation. A Dominant that couldn’t secure a Submissive after so long and yet kept chasing them…well, if Ezra didn’t know Robert already, his opinion of the Dominant would have definitely been negatively shaped.
Emotionally…what would that be like? Ezra couldn't imagine it. Even with his ill-fated mating, their courtship had been a desperate thing packed with more want and hormones than had ever been impossible. Wild horses could not have dragged Ezra from John’s side and – for however temporary it turned out to be – nor could they have removed John from his. And it seemed the same with Hannibal and Will. To be locked in a courting by a love match – convinced you’d found your mate – only to be led on for nearly a decade, than left behind?

Ezra reached out hesitantly, resting his hand over Robert’s thigh in the lightest of touches. He could not imagine what Robert had gone through. The Dominant gave him a small smile.

“Do not look so grim for me, dear heart. In the end, I found myself relieved that she had left. I had no idea how unhealthy that relationship was until Murasaki returned to Japan. And I feel…I believe that had it been true love – the kind that makes a mating successful and full of life – I would have been willing to abandon Paris to follow her. And yet I did not.”

“Don't be so sure of that,” Ezra murmured darkly, pulling his hand back into his lap as he stared out over the darkened scenery, “I once had that kind of love, the kind that drove my matehood. And you can see how that ended up for me.”

The Submissive hesitated…but Robert had shared his pain and if there was ever to be anything between them, what happened with John needed to be explained.

And so he spoke.

At first, Ezra’s sentences were stilted – picky things, things that demanded time to form in his mind before being spoken – but soon they were tumbling from him without care. Ezra told of how he had met Johnathan Graham shortly after moving to Louisiana, on one of his first trips to New Orleans. He spoke how tired he was, how exhausted living on his own had become after the death of his brothers, and he spoke of how handsome, how gentle John had been with him.

Ezra spoke of their short but intense courting, of the tenderness that his Dominant had handled him. Of the love – the love that radiated through everything – and how after only a few short weeks of courting, Ezra had decided to allow John to share his heat with him. It had been easy enough to arrange; between the World Wars and the Great Depression, neither of them had any family left to act as a chaperon or to ask permission of. And they were already both already fairly old; Ezra was in his seventies when he’d met John and the Dominant was five years older himself.

His tone glowed as he spoke of the joy of carrying Will, how charming and beautiful his bunny had been as a baby, even after the disastrous birth. There had only been the two of them, no family or Submissives to aid at all, done in one of their various guest bedrooms to try and save the master’s mattress. It had been a lonely and seemingly endless ordeal to Ezra. One only remembered in flashes of pain and blood.

His voice dipped to almost nothing as he spoke of the failed heats that had followed, of the miscarriages and lost cubs. Of the visit to a Submissive Roux in Florida, one of the few who had gone to medical school and managed to successfully transfer and adjust that knowledge to the Roux form, and of the stunning news of that such a late-in-life pregnancy had left him with a barren womb.

And lastly Ezra spoke of waking up one morning alone; of finding a simple note underneath his hairbrush in John’s sprawling cursive, of an emptied bank account, a missing Mercedes, and the bleak realization that his mate had not only left them, but left them practically paupers.

Robert said nothing the entire time and Ezra did not glance over once, even as he was unsure of the reason for this avoidance. After a moment Robert reached out, taking Ezra’s hand and pressing a
chaste kiss to it, before letting it drop to warm against his thigh. The Dominant did not try to comfort or offer any soothing platitudes – nor did he need to, Ezra already knew that the Lecter Dominants were nothing like his former mate – and for that Ezra was grateful beyond words.

Anything else would have been insulting.

The silence in the car was heavy, one that spoke of age and broken dreams – of two creatures that had seen too much of life, who had both experienced the unpleasant realization that the destruction of one’s personal world did not mean the cessation of the real one and no matter how they felt the sun rose every morning, bringing with it responsibilities that would not wait for their attention.

And yet despite this – or perhaps because of it – the wounds of the past seemed to cut at Ezra less than ever before, as if by sharing the burden with someone who truly understood it had lessened it as a whole.

Ezra squeezed Robert’s hand tightly and felt for the first time a tender hope in chest; perhaps these last few years would not be so very lonely after all. It would be a lie to say that he had not considered the thought of Robert and himself before – the idea had sprung, fully formed, on its own violation the very first time they’d met. Ezra hadn’t allowed himself to entertain the idea though, at least not as he had been the past few hours.

“Do you intend to court me, Robertas?”

“No. I intend to mate you.”

He wanted that, Ezra realized. Or at the very least he wanted the chance to see he and Robert in that way. As adult Roux, both who had successfully raised cubs to adulthood, the rules and requirements surrounding their courtship was fairly nonexistent. While they did not need a chaperon, they would in a sense have one given that one of them would almost always be with either Will or Hannibal in the following months. It was almost unheard of for a mating pair to be left alone during a heat or a whelping if any family or friends were around.

Which meant that the coming months would be utterly bereft of personal privacy and while normally the Submissive would hardly notice such a thing now…now there was an itch – a very old itch – that was flaring instantly across his skin. When the next exit sign advertised a Hilton, Ezra instructed Robert to pull off so they could get a room.

That earned him an intrigued look, but Robert wisely said nothing in response as he pulled off. He left the Dominant with a keycard and instructions to park the car and call Hannibal with an excuse as he made his way up to the room, stomach twisted with gleeful anticipation. It was a mundane room, done in beiges and white with a large king bed, but Ezra paid it very little attention other than to pull the curtains shut.

He stripped unhurriedly, taking the time to hang up his clothing with care. This set was the only ones he’d had left after they had to burn his bloody ones and he’d need to look somewhat put together when they arrived home. The aging Roux stood in front of a full length mirror posted on the wall, head cocking from side to side as he took in his features with a critical eye.

Ezra rather thought he was still attractive for his age. He laid his hands across his hips and belly. He’d only lost a bit of muscle tone, his waist still trimmed and flat, and he’d only gained a little extra weight around the hips. Not bad for a hundred. There was a quiet click behind him, the sound of the door opening and closing, before Robert’s reflection appeared behind his own.

A muscled arm wrapped around his waist, pulling him back against Robert’s clothed chest and the
contrast made Ezra shudder. An open mouthed kiss was pressed against the curve of his neck, the older Roux’s voice low with interest. “You are a stunning creature.”

Ezra let his head fall back against Robert’s shoulder, arching into the Dominant’s touch. “Do you really think so?”

“Mm. You are exquisite, a masterpiece,” there was a sharp nip against his neck, “a feast.”

Ezra turned in Robert’s grip, kissing him fervently as he began to peel off the Dominant’s many layers, hands roaming happily over every inch of skin as it was exposed to him. Robert stopped him at his trousers, holding the Submissive’s hands gently but firmly. “Are you sure, Ezra?”

“Oh, I’m positive.” He purred, nipping at Dominant’s lower lip before pulling away and spreading himself languorously across the hotel duvet. “I need this, Robert. It’s been far too long.”

The Dominant kneeled on the end of the bed, crawling up like a big cat until he settled above Ezra, pupils blown wide. “I still intend to court you after this.”

“You better, or I’ll tell Hannibal you stole my virtue.”

There was a chuckle against the soft shell of his ear before Robert inhaled deeply, lungs expanding until their chests brushed against each other. “How long is long?”

Ezra shivered as he was guided onto all fours, legs spreading as he leaned down on his forearms, back bowing as his hips kicked up. Even after all these years, the lordosis was as instinctive as it had been in his youth. There was a sharp inhale behind him as wide hands ran down the length of his back to his hips and further down, fingers dipping between his cheeks to nudge gently at his hole.

“Long–”

“–Kristus, you’re tight–”

“–as in long.” Ezra gasped, head dropping to rest against the mattress as a finger was gently eased into him. He moaned, whimpering as he bit into a knuckle, hole quivering around the digit that worked carefully yet efficiently to stretch him. He was more than wet enough – thank god – but years of nothing but his hands had left his entrance too tight. The muscles of his anal cavity were far looser than a Human’s, never really needing the strength to contract and pass waste, but like any other muscle it needed to be stretched to keep limber.

A cock it may take easily enough, but after so long a knot could tear him. After all these years, Ezra was almost a virgin again. Except that he wasn’t and the Submissive had every intention of taking Robert’s knot. Who knew the next time they’d have a moment alone again?

When the Dominant was four fingers in Ezra could take no more, pushing back against the long digits until they never truly left him. “Enough, god enough.”

“Mylimasis, you are still far–”

“Don’t make me beg, Robert.”

“As you wish.”

And then Robert was filling him.

The Submissive gasped, fingers digging into the cover, eyes rolling back into his skull at the glorious
feeling. Robert’s cock filled him perfectly, the hard curve bottoming out and Robert didn’t wait for him to adjust – not that Ezra would have wanted him to – hilting himself in one strong push, groaning and growling against the skin of Ezra’s shoulder. “So perfect around me, Ezra, so tight.”

“Don’t you dare stop” He growled out, a hand reaching back to fist harshly in the Dominant’s hair. “Don’t you fucking dare.”

Robert obeyed instantly, hips drawing until only the head remained inside before slamming in to the root in one fluid move – hard enough that Ezra nearly face planted into the duvet before catching himself at the last moment. Robert set a grueling pace, one that promised to leave bruises on his cheeks and hips and slammed the headboard against the wall.

And Ezra loved it – loved every moment of it, loved it so completely and so loudly that their neighbors began to pound at the wall in complaint. He should be ashamed – wailing like a cat in heat at his age! – but the Submissive could hardly care less. This was where he belonged, Ezra thought in dazed pleasure, mouth open and eyes blind from ecstasy. How had he ever lived so long without this?

Ezra could feel the knot now, the increasing tug on his rim with each outward thrust a sweet promise. How he longed for it, longed for the feeling of being completely pinned by a Dominant, trapped by his knot and arms and yet safer still than in any other moment in his life. Ezra whimpered, reduced to his most basic, squirming and chasing Robert’s cock on each withdraw, begging shamelessly for the Dominant to knot him.

Above him Robert was cursing in a heavy stream of Lithuanian, sweat dripping from his brow and down across Ezra’s neck and shoulders, hips beginning to falter in their cadence, rhythm hitching as the Dominant became trapped in the narrow need of his own approaching orgasm. It drove the Submissive into a frenzy and he used the last of his strength to lurch up, pressing fleeting kisses against Robert’s neck and chin. The Dominant snarled, a hand pinning him down roughly by nape. Ezra keened, still on his knees only by Robert’s shoring hand, as for the first time in nearly thirty years he was tied.

He didn’t remember blacking out, but it must have happened because one moment he was drooling into the duvet and the next he was cradled carefully atop Robert, boneless and content with the burn of long forgotten muscles and the pleasantly plugged feeling that came with being knotted.

Robert seemed incredibly pleased with himself, smirking down at Ezra from around the filter of his cigarette. “Back again, ma pace? I hope that satisfied you much as it did I. I’m not as young as I used to be, I don’t know if I can repeat that performance again tonight.”

The entire room smelled of musk and sex mixed with the floral notes of the wall mounted air-freshener. The pillows had been kicked off the bed (they were, he realized abruptly, facing down the wrong side of the bed) as had the decorative cover. Behind him the headboard had left a dent in the wallpaper, and the picture above it hung lopsided, knocked halfway free from its bracket. There was no way in hell that what they had been up to could be mistaken for anything other than sex.

Ezra could not have been more pleased.

He leaned forward – barely muting the moan at the tugs against his rim that came with every shift – to capture that smirk in a content kiss. “More than enough; you forget that I’m only two years younger than you, Robert. I’m just as far over the hill as you are.”

“I do forget,” the Dominant teased, pinching Ezra’s rear, “when faced with the sight of your beauty.”
“Flat–” he broke off in a large yawn, “–ter.”

“I think your John was very much a fool,” Robert mused, fingers tracing patterns across Ezra’s bare back as he took a long hit off his cigarette before holding it up to Ezra’s lips. “If I had met you when I was younger, I would have never allowed you out of my sight. Or my bed.” There was a rueful sigh, “…ah, but then you would not have your bunny William.”

“No.” Ezra agreed as he exhaled, snuggling into the broad chest he was perched upon as he watched the smoke curl across Robert’s features. He’d forgotten the perfection of being tied, of how it made the Submissive feel so complete, and he was practically giddy with it. “There would be no bunny William for me – or for Hannibal.”

“True.” He agreed, “and I could not think to deprive my nephew of his beloved intended in any situation.” A hand slid down to between their legs, gently prodding at where they were joined and Ezra moaned, squeezing the knot hard at the mere thought of Robert pulling out and the Dominant cursed, knot pulsing with another orgasm. “You are sinful.”

“I am enjoying myself.” Ezra corrected as he crossed his arms across the older Roux’s chest, resting his chin upon them. “Robert?”

“Hm?”

“Would you still have wanted me if I’d met you instead of John?”

Would you still want me if you’d met me when I was already older, when I was seventy and nearing middle-aged? Would you have wanted me knowing what I’ve told you?

Those sharp eyes glanced down at him, intense and embarrassingly knowing. “You are defined by far more than your reproductive organs, Ezra, regardless of what age I would have met you at.”

Which was not the answer to the question he’d asked at all, but one that Ezra would gladly take regardless.

As loathed as Will was to move, he allowed himself only a half-hour of lying together with Hannibal. He put the Dominant in charge of washing his bed spread (the hope was that the duvet and cover would be washed and dried before Ezra returned home) as well as taking the pack outside. Normally the dogs would be fine on their own, but the pups were still very young and even with the protection of their mother and other packmates, they still faced many dangers from the woodland surrounding them and Will didn’t like them going out unattended.

Will himself threw open the windows in his bedroom and the hallways in an attempt to air out the upstairs before climbing into the shower for yet another wash. He cleaned himself thoroughly, fingers scrubbing the scented soap into his skin and tried not to think too much about what had just happened. It was hard though, when his hands could still feel the delicious weight of Hannibal’s cock in them.

It wasn’t the first dick Will had ever seen (he had fooled around a little in college, just to try and figure out what the hell the big deal was) but none of the Human ones he’d seen had ever incited anything but disinterested at the best of time and disgust at the worst. But Hannibal’s…the level of mind-numbing want was something the Submissive was completely unprepared for. With the solid length in his hand, the knot a swollen mass against his wrist, Will had been willing to throw away everything – months of careful courtship, Ezra and Robert’s approval, all of it – for the chance to feel it inside him.
Just the thought of that hard flesh parting him, finally reaching that spot inside him that ached – the one that Will could never quite reach no matter how hard he tried...the Submissive groaned, leaning against the tile wall as he let his fingers drag over his half-hard cock. Why did his heat have to be in March? Yes, it was drawing ever closer, after all the date today was February 28th. But Will wanted it now – wanted to be able to have Hannibal now.

He felt impatient, antsy, and it was the same feeling that he’d had for the past two weeks. He felt it even more so now after what had happened with Tobias. Will was so ready for the next step, to cement his bond with Hannibal, to watch his stomach swell with a baby - to make it clear to any with eyes that he belonged solely to Hannibal. The Submissive groaned, cursing his thoughts as he squeezed his cock once before letting his fingers slip behind, shivering at how swollen and open his passage felt, still stretched from their previous activities.

Will slipped two fingers in, whining as he worked himself to a quick completion, lost in the fantasy of Hannibal’s body, of being held down on all fours as he was fucked relentlessly, Will’s belly fat with a cub and dragging across the fabric of their duvet.

Between the attention of his hands - already skilled in the knowledge of what his body liked after weeks of practice - Will knew he wouldn’t last long. Not that he had planned too, not with Hannibal waiting downstairs, and he shivered with a thrill of dark desire at the thought of touching himself so soon, with his intended only separated from him by a floor. The idea of how dirty it was, how wanton and shameless, drove him over the edge quickly.

He finished rinsing himself afterwards, dressing quickly in a pair of warm fleece pajama pants and a long sleeve grey shirt. In all honesty, Will really had meant to wear this particular outfit straight from the first shower. He’d forgotten his clothing in his room, so eager was his haste to erase any lingering aspect of Tobias from his skin, and it had all really been as innocent as that. It was a lucky mistake in Will’s book, though, as what it had brought about was something the young Roux would never regret.

He found Hannibal at the tail end of drying off the dogs, Buster only beginning to struggle against the Dominant’s hold when Will came into sight. He greeted the beagle mix with a grin and pet, before stepping into Hannibal’s waiting arms. He nuzzled into the Dominant’s touch, feeling some of his anxiety leave him at the familiar touch. Both Roux were still effected by their forced parting and it reflected in the way they sought each other, neither willing to be more than a few feet away from each other long.

He allowed Hannibal to lead them into the living room and grinned at the spread his intended had set for them. A roaring fire was going strong, several dogs warming their bellies before it, and the coffee table held a collection of cut bread and cheeses, and a fresh pot of tea rested next to it. Will plopped ungracefully down on the couch, snuggling into the fleece blanket that had been spread over the cushions before pulling the edges up to wrap around himself.

“Tea?”

“Yes, please.” Will confirmed happily, reaching down to pluck Nona up, letting the squeaking pup curl in a ball on his lap. He was handed a cup of Earl Grey – made to his favorite specifications, just enough cream to make the dark brew slightly cloudy – and a plate of honey bread stacked with cheese which the Submissive ate contently “Have you heard anything else from Daddy or your uncle?”

“Mm, Robert was very clear that the burn and bury had taken quite a while. They’ve decided to take a small rest at a hotel, so we should look for them around eight or nine this morning.” Hannibal
explained as he made up his own cup and settled next to Will. He leaned eagerly into the tall form and fought the urge to purr as his Dominant automatically wrapped an arm around him. “Warm, darling?”

From underneath the cloak he’d made from the fleece blanket - completely with an improvised hood - Will grinned. “Quite. Should we put a movie on? We never did get a chance to watch *The Birds.*”

The movie had barely begun before Will’s lids were growing heavy, his breath lulling into the steady pattern of sleep. Hannibal’s hand rested lightly against his nape, guiding him to rest his head in the curve of his shoulder, head resting against his own. “Sleep, Will.”

The Submissive obeyed.

The Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane kind of always looked like a prop in a movie or a television show. That was certainly true this morning, as the place was absolutely crawling with cops. From where he was mid-smoke break, Matthew Brown snorted disdainfully.

Like seriously, what was the point? What did they think they were going to be able to achieve by gathering in mass? They already had the killer in custody; Abel Gideon had been found literally red handed, pleased as a peach by his latest kill and ready to scream his newest claim from the ramparts. There was no actual investigation to be done, so he couldn’t help but see the whole thing as massive waste of funding. From where he stood in the midst of an intense conversation with a stern black man, Matthew’s boss Dr. Chilton was in his element. The man was practically glowing with self-importance, hands on his hips as he shook his head with a perfected look of exasperated gloating.

God, Matthew had never hated anyone more.

Frederick Chilton was like a living representation of everything that disgusted him; vain and pompous beyond all measure, he was a man who seemed to believe that he was entitled to greatness by simply being born, when in reality only redeeming quality was his ability to sign paychecks on time. Chilton was always chasing something - anything - for the chance to stumble into fame. This time he clearly thought he’d found it, finally achieved his ticket to the big times. In Dr. Abel Gideon; murder, sociopaths, and self-proclaimed Ripper.

Honestly, Matthew didn’t understand how people who were so highly educated could be so stupid. Anyone with half a brain could see that Gideon wasn’t the Ripper. Of course, Matthew did have a slight advantage over the rest of them.

A Roux could always recognize the work of their own after all.

Not that he would be stepping up to correct his boss of his assumptions anytime soon. It was bad enough that Chilton even knew his kind existed – that he knew that Matthew was a Roux at all. It was that knowledge – the fear of what Chilton could do if he chose to expose him – kept the young Dominant his virtual slave.

It was Matthew’s own fault.

His sire and carrier had been killed in a house fire when he was still really young, and given the sparsity of the Roux community there hadn't been any of his kind to contact, much less to take him in. The Roux were a dying breed, with family sizes smaller than ever, and that often meant a loss of support. There were no uncles to ride in and save Matthew, no close friends or family. His sire used to talk about a nation-wide way of communicating between families, but damned if he’d never decided to share that particular piece of information with Matthew before he’d died.
Really, he'd just been lucky that his parents had kicked the bucket when he was twelve; old enough to hunt for himself despite whatever home the state put him in. His first kills had been sloppy and unpracticed – he’d only ever hunted under his fathers’ steadying hands before, only allowed to occasionally play bait or help butcher the bodies – but the school of necessity had taught him to be a better killer.

Everything had been going well until he'd failed one psychological exam and been flagged by Child Protective Services. Matthew had been in a terrible mood, hungry and tired of being shuffled from family to family (because no matter how he acted, the Human fosters always seemed to sense something off about him) and had perhaps answered the social workers questions a bit too truthfully. After that, no agency wanted to place him in a home, not with his diagnosis of 'violent borderline sociopathic tendencies' and the families that would take him usually ended up being proved unfit within a series of weeks, months at the best. And then along came Frederick Chilton, doing his required hours for his doctorate with CPS, who had been assigned his therapist by the state. Chilton had been just smart enough to recognize that there was something off about Matthew, something more than just being a sociopath. It was more out of an urge to study and document than any real affection or care that made the Human decided to become Matthew’s foster parent.

And the very first thing the good Doctor had decided to do was to give his brand new spanking son a full physical.

The results – blood work, X-rays, CAT scans, MRI scans – fuck, every scan you could have – were locked up and hidden in a safety deposit box somewhere, with very specific directions that they were to be sent to various universities and governmental agencies if anything happened to Chilton. If he disappeared, the info was released. If he died, the info was released. If he was in a coma or a vegetative state, the info was released. If he *split a fucking nail*, the info was released.

Because you see as badly as Frederick Chilton wanted fame - fame he could have had by exposing the Roux race - it seemed he enjoyed having a pet monster a lot more. Or perhaps it was that he realized that if one existed, other must as well, and feared being killed by another. For whatever reasons, he was willing to keep the information secret, but at a price.

At first Matthew had been furious, resentful, ready to act. He’d entertained the idea of torturing Chilton until he spilt the beans, until he sung the location of the box, but the idea had seemed very intimidating to a fourteen year old and Matthew couldn't quite go through with it. It didn’t help that every hour that Chilton spent at home was filled with long hours of study and intense ‘therapy.’ He would even wake Matthew up out of a dead sleep at whatever hour he got home from whatever social event was hot that season, just so he could talk and test out his newest theories. Or just to harp about how lucky he was that a beast like Matthew had found someone like Frederick, to educate and civilize him, to provide him with all the wondrous gifts that money could buy, that allowed him to go out and hunt when in needed.

As if that was a right to be given and not one provided by nature.

The fact that those Matthew usually was allowed to kill were people who had wronged Chilton somehow, or stood in the way of the Human’s agenda, was apparently neither here nor there. Equally unimportant was how thin the young Dominant was, his growing body forced to develop on a carefully rationed food plan. Chilton was a fickle bastard; Matthew never knew when his next meal was going to come.

Oh, but he kept himself fed. No amount of blackmail was ever going to be enough for Matthew to let himself starve to death. When things got too bad he would sneak out and nab himself a prostitute or one of the homeless, people who wouldn't be missed and Chilton would probably never hear of. But
mostly he spent his off-hours wallowing in his despair and boredom. In the beginning he had searched – searched for any sign of where the box could be – and waited. Waited for Chilton to misstep, to make that mistake that would allow Matthew to end his miserable existence. And yet the Human never seemed to, seemingly hyperaware that while he may have the wolf trained and leashed, the beast would still leap at the chance to snap his neck should he ever trip.

And so the years passed. First one, then two, then four and Matthew was still no closer to finding anything than before. When eighteen had come and Matthew became a legal adult in the eyes of the government, the only thing that changed was that he was gifted the pool house to call home. Matthew was no closer to finding a way out than he had been at fourteen. And so he stayed with Chilton, as a bodyguard, butler/maid, and fucking slave. Eventually he’d just given up and decided to focus on graduating first high school, then college and before Matthew knew it, he’d spent nearly a decade of his life of in service. It had become his normal. Now, at twenty-four, the Dominant had pretty much become resigned to his fate.

Speak of the cocksucker, he will appear.

Chilton was making his way over, a lip curled up in disgust. “Matthew, what have I told you about smoking? It’s a disgusting habit, put it out at once.” The Roux sneered. “Matthew.” Rolling his eyes, Matthew did, purposely flicking the still smoking cigarette onto the walkway. “Now was that so hard, my boy?”

“Don’t call me that.”

The Human shook his head disapprovingly, arms on his hips. “I don’t understand why there has to be this aggression between us. Have I not given you everything? A beautiful place to live, a BMW and that Italian motorbike you wanted, an education at the finest private schools and nursing college, and all I ask is for is a little respect and compliance.”

“Freedom would be a nice change.”

That earned him a flat look coupled with an equally unamused tone. “Matthew, don’t be smart. Now, there are a pair of my colleagues coming within the hour to examine the murder site and to evaluate Gideon. One of them – a Dr. Hannibal Lecter – is a very valuable peer of mine. I want you to text me the moment he arrives, then take them the long way to my office. I don’t want to be caught at unawares. And you will be on your best behavior, am I clear, young man?”

“Crystal.”

“Good.” Chilton moved to pat his shoulder, aborting the move at the last moment under the force of the icy hatred on Matthew’s face. “Well then. As soon as Lecter arrives now.”

Matthew watched him go, unnaturally still, jaw clenched as he fought off every instinct and drive in his body that was screaming at him to go after the portly bastard and destroy him. After a moment the Roux blinked, movement restored to his body as he lit another cigarette. After a moment he dug out his phone and googled Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Might as well know the prick - and he would be a prick. Any 'colleague' of Chilton had to be - looked like.

He blinked at the first image that popped up from the search, confused.

How strange, Dr. Lecter seemed almost familiar.

Chapter End Notes
So there, we have Matthew and the next/finishing plot device. But just to be clear there will be no love triangle between Matthew-Will-Hannibal. Matthew is only twenty-four here, that's at least six years underage, and neither Will nor Matthew will be viewing each other in a sexual manner. In case you were wondering, Chilton is in his forties - a contemporary of Hannibal - and he fostered Matthew in his thirties, so they've known each other for nearly ten years.

And yeah, Ezra's family were slave owners. I figured Roux would have zero problems with slavery.

I apologize for the errors, I'm editing as I can but I'm gonna be stuck on patrol forever.

Hope you guys enjoyed!
Engagement: Addressing New Affairs

Chapter Summary

“You…” Will paused, undoubtedly to collect his thoughts, ”adopted him, when he was–”

“Twelve, he’d just turned twelve I believe.”

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long to get out; both the Roux stories have been giving me hell.

Now beta-ed by Felicia.

Should be noted that Matthew’s mentality is closer to that of a fourteen/fifteen year old.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will woke in degrees.

There was a warm weight settled atop him and the sense of being pinned filled him with such contentment that he was almost willing to let himself to fall back asleep, hovering just in that gentle place between sleep and alertness. Hannibal’s breath rustled his hair, the Dominant seemingly still sound asleep.

At some point he had moved them so that they lay stomach down on the couch and Will must have been really out of it not to have noticed. It felt wonderful; he felt so safe and warm underneath Hannibal’s heavier form. It made him ache with want. The Submissive was so ready to have this, and he shivered at the thought of waking every morning to this.

He shifted, spreading his legs slightly, letting one fall down the side of the sofa. The move eased the strain on his hips and brought his attention to Hannibal’s morning erection, a solid heat along his buttocks. Will bit his lip – considering – before dipping back to press against it. Hannibal’s breath caught, the action all that more obvious when felt, and Will bit back on the urge to moan. His hips rolled almost outside his control, growing wet and open at the exquisite feeling of the Dominant’s hard cock.

“William.”

Hannibal’s voice was adorable sleep-heavy, a low timbre that made the lust inside Will swell even more. A mouth nipped at his throat and he obediently craned his neck back, the Dominant latching on immediately. Hannibal’s hips pressed up against his own and Will quivered at the feel of it, at how right it all was.

“Don’t stop.” Will begged, fingers digging into the fabric of his sofa as he met each thrust. “You feel so good.”
Hannibal groaned, grinding against him, hands sliding across Will’s sides before gripping his hips, guiding their rocking into something more beneficial. “Your ass is a sin, darling.”

Will strained until he could catch his intended’s mouth with his own, feeling even more aroused by the sound of Hannibal cursing, something the proper Roux rarely ever did. Their tongues meet eagerly, kissing passionately and without hesitation. God, he wanted this. He wanted Hannibal inside him, wanted the feel of the Dominant’s knot plugging him, filling his barren womb. Will wanted a cub so badly – wanted Hannibal’s cub – wanted to watch as his stomach grew fat and large, feel the fluttering of his baby inside him. Why couldn’t his heat just come?

Heats were a grand affair. He and Daddy would have a large meal, dining together for the last time before Will (and by default, single Ezra) would no longer be considered a ‘Graham.’ Later Will would bath himself thoroughly, cleaning every inch of his skin. Ezra would help him with everything, with the bathing and dressing, and the two of them would stay up and speak throughout the night, waiting for his heat to strike.

Then after – after Hannibal would find him and Will would finally be able to feel that gorgeous length he was rutting against inside him. Will’s hand squirmed in between his hips and the sofa, eagerly yanking his sweats down (and his boxers too, in his haste) and cried out at the overwhelming feeling of so much against his bare skin. The Dominant made a truly inhuman sound above him as the scent of his slick filled the air.

The weight on his back was suddenly gone, but Will barely had time to recognize it before he was being pulled up by his hips and Hannibal’s wonderful, wicked tongue was at his thighs. The younger Roux moaned, the sound muffled by the cushion as he went utterly limp, held up only by Hannibal’s tight grip. A hot tongue was lapping up his thighs, lapping and sucking, stroking and swirling, until Will felt mad with it. He nearly bucked off the couch when Hannibal drew one of his impotent balls into his mouth.

The Dominant suckled on it delicately, his mouth painfully warm around the sensitive organ. It slid from Hannibal’s mouth only to be replaced by its twin inside. Will was lost in the feeling, voice drawn out in one long whine that only grew louder as his length was treated with an equal amount of attention.

It was as if Hannibal was determined to taste every inch of his lowers, and the Dominant didn’t draw back until Will’s length and sack was dripping with his saliva. Fingers pulled his cheeks apart and Will swore he could feel Hannibal’s hungry gaze, but Will twisted away at the first brush of hot air.

He pushed Hannibal back until he was up on his hands and knees, turning and wiggling until the Submissive had flipped his position completely, eye level with the monstrous swell of Hannibal’s erection. He freed it without hesitation, licking his lips as he took in the long, curved length. It was a gorgeous cherry red, the head almost a deep maroon and glossy. Hannibal let out a low, mournful sound when Will’s tongue flicked out against the slit. He lathed the hot flesh with attention, humming happily at the musky flavor.

“I…shouldn’t let you do this.” Hannibal gasped out, head hanging low to stare at Will, mouth slightly parted.

“You’re not letting me do anything.” Will countered before sucking the head into his mouth. He nursed hungrily on it, trying to will his throat lax enough to take more and more of the length. Hannibal let out an almost beleaguered goan before yanking Will’s cheeks apart and diving in, attacking his hole with such ferocity that the Submissive nearly choked.

They feasted on each other for the longest time, Will’s slick leaking from him so quickly that even
Hannibal’s greedy tongue and mouth could hardly catch it all. The curve of Hannibal’s dick felt so perfect pressing against Will’s throat as he strove to take even more of it, pushing his inexperienced mouth to take more of the hard flesh.

Will felt himself grow tighter, muscles tightening as he clenched down on the probing tongue, heartbeat nearly rabid in his chest. Two fingers slid in around Hannibal’s tongue, stretching his hole widely and Will toppled into release with a cry, the sound strangled around the dick in his mouth. 

The Dominant let out a loud groan, hips thrusting down roughly as his cock hardened until it was like steel, the muscle rippling. Will’s hands sought out Hannibal’s knot, the flesh hot and throbbing beneath his palms, and squeezed as hard as he could. Only moments later he was rewarded with a mouthful of Hannibal’s essence, thick and salty, a concentrated dose of his intended’s scent. Will swallowed down as much as he could and mourned that which escaped. When Hannibal finished after several long pulses, Will pulled back enough to let the dick escape, licking any trace of semen from the wilting flesh and his own lips until Hannibal was nearly shaking with oversensitivity and the Dominant finally pulled away.

He was immediately bundled up into Hannibal’s lap, chest to chest as his lips were taken in an impassioned kiss. They settled against each other lazily once again, Will’s head resting in the cradle of Hannibal’s shoulder and neck, hands stroking each other’s bodies, the Dominant’s limp cock and hard knot nestled against his soaked crack. Their gentle soothing was interrupted by the harsh trill of Will’s cell phone.

The Submissive nearly screamed when he saw Jack’s number and Hannibal’s expression was furious, but Will still found himself answering it.

“What?” The word was practically a growl.

Well, just because he answered didn’t mean that Will had to be nice about it.

“Nice to talk to you too, Will.” Jack greeted dryly. “I need your help.”

“Jack, I don’t–”

“Just hear me out.” Jack interrupted quickly. “This will be the last time, I promise. You do this for me and I’ll sign your severance papers – no fuss.”

“You…know that I’m planning to quit?”

“I’d have to be an idiot not to have seen that coming, Will.” The agent said in such a tone that Will could almost hear the eye roll. “I need you on this, Will. It’s about the Ripper. I think we’ve got him.”

Will stiffened, heart racing, and his intended’s arms tightened immediately in response to his apparent distress. “W-What?”

“There is a patient at Baltimore State Hospital, Dr. Abel Gideon, who has confessed to the crimes.” Will nearly melted against Hannibal in relief, free hand clutching the Dominant tightly as he tried to take deep, calming breathes through his nose. “Well, after he butchered a nightshift nurse. Her murder – the placement of the body – it fits the MO. And he was institutionalized around same time the last cycle ended.” There was a sigh. “I hate to give Frederick Chilton any type of gratification, but…this could be the real deal.”

“Of course, Jack. I’ll be right there.”
“Excellent, I need you down at the hospital five minutes ago. And–”

“I’m bringing Hannibal.”

There was a long silence and for a moment Will thought the agent would object, but there was an annoyed sound – a smacking of the lips perhaps – and Jack relented. “Fine. But he better have something useful to add to it.”

Will exchanged an amused look with Hannibal as Jack hung up abruptly. “Apparently you’ve been caught.”

“So it seems.” Hands stretched across his back, pressing him closer for a kiss. “It appears that the Ripper will get his dramatic end after all.”

Against his lips, Will grinned.

The hospital was awash with police and Hannibal sighed at it as he led Will across the courtyard, a hand splayed protectively over the small of his back. Will was still yawning, blinking bleary eyed at a coffee Hannibal had secured for them from a nearby gas station. Will has napped soundly on the ride over and Hannibal had no doubt that his little mate was still exhausted from his ordeal and their morning activities. Hannibal was loathed to take him from the security of the Graham house, where they could have rested and recovered at ease.

Ezra had also been less than pleased, the annoyance in his soon to be father-in-law’s voice when Hannibal had spoken with him unhidden. Ezra didn’t seem to be able to comprehend that Will was willing to leave the safety of his home for Jack Crawford of all people. If it wasn’t for the serendipity of Gideon’s (most grandiose, yet convenient) claims, Hannibal would have never allowed his Will to leave at all.

As it was, Hannibal wasn’t letting his intended out of his sight again.

“Where do you suppose Jack is?”

“Oh, at the very center of it I would imagine.”

Will snorted, leaning back slightly into his touch. “Not if Chilton has anything to say about it. That man would rather drop dead than share the spotlight.”

“Too true, my love.” Hannibal agreed. He nodded towards a nurse-orderly that was making his way towards them. “Ah, look. I believe we have a…”

The words trailed off into nothing as the young man came closer. Or rather, the young Roux. A Dominant cub to be more precise, if the gentle scent of honey and blood that hung about him was anything to go by. Next to him Will went completely stiff, his own sweet Submissive scent spiking. So far into a courting and conversely so close to a heat, Will’s hormones had to be off the map, reacting to the smell of a juvenile Roux with full force.

The cub had frozen as soon as he’d come close enough to scent, eyes wide and mouth slack in a manner that made him seem far younger than he most likely was. His was tall, form thin and sallow-skinned, and his sweet scent curdled, heavy with fear. The emotion wasn’t nonsensical; in fact it was to be expected when faced with two unknown adults. Despite this, the sight of it made something strange stir in himself and the Dominant recognized it distantly as concern.

Perhaps William was not the only one affected by pre-bonding hormones.
The cub took a hesitant step backwards, than another, before turning on his heel and walking quickly (it was more of a trot than anything else) away and disappeared behind the corner of the hospital. Will let out a disappointed sound, glancing up at Hannibal worriedly before starting after him.

Hannibal caught him gently by the waist. “Not now, darling.”

“But–!” Will objected, glancing from Hannibal to where the cub had retreated.

“I know, but we need to deal with Gideon first.” He pressed a kiss to his intended’s forehead.

“Besides, we don’t want to call any undue attention to the boy, do we?”

“No,” Will admitted begrudgingly, “but Hannibal, he didn’t look well.”

The Dominant would have to agree. He nosed at the Submissive’s curls, smiling softly – still giddy at how easily the two could touch now – as Will leaned into the contact. “We can find him before we leave.”

“Just to make sure he’s alright.”

“Yes.” Hannibal agreed as he lead Will back towards the steps. The Submissive allowed it, but he kept glancing over his shoulder, bottom lip captured between his teeth. “William, I know you’re concerned but I need you to concentrate,” Hannibal admonished gently, “I’ll need you firmly in the present for this to work.”

Will blushed, looking abashed, and apologized quickly. “Of course, I’m sorry.” He squeezed Hannibal’s hand tightly, “thanking you for doing this for me Hannibal.” Those beautiful greys gazed up at him fondly, “I know what this means to you and…and I can’t wait until we have a baby of our own to fuss over. I’ve been thinking about it a lot lately.”

“I can’t say I haven’t entertained the idea myself.” He leaned down, just close enough to ensure his words would be heard by no-one but his intended, “indeed, the image of you swollen with my cub – nearly bursting from the weight of him – has haunted me from nearly the first moment I met you, my dear Will.”

Will turned a bright red, flushing with embarrassment even as the scent of his arousal flared around them, and Hannibal’s answering grin was sharp.

“Hannibal, you’re terrible.” Will admonished around a laugh, the sound still hanging in the air as his face smoothed over and became the blank, yet somehow still petulant, expression he seemed to only ever wear while on a case. It aged Will’s face by years, making his beautiful features grim and hard, and Hannibal let his own pleased expression fade as they made their way towards the booming voice of Jack Crawford.

Fredrick saw them first, face going first dark and then bright with false pleasure as he stepped around Crawford to hurry over to them. “Hannibal! Dr. Graham, what a surprise. I had no idea you’d arrived.” There was strange note to that, the dark haired man glancing around them as if looking for something. “I hope you were able to find us alright, I had sent an orderly to meet you.”

“He must have been delayed.” Hannibal offered with a smile of his own, taking Fredrick’s hand in a too-tight grip that left the Human scrambling not to express his discomfort. “It was no bother.”

“He must have been delayed.” Hannibal offered with a smile of his own, taking Fredrick’s hand in a too-tight grip that left the Human scrambling not to express his discomfort. “It was no bother.”

“Still,” Fredrick insisted, crossing his hands behind his back in what he must have assumed was a hidden attempt to stretch his injured hand, “I’ll make sure that Mr. Brown is properly criticized. You see, Matthew is actually my adopted son.” Fredrick confined, voice smug. “He has been since he was just a small boy.”
Hannibal’s smile turned sharper with displeasure and he caught the flare of alarm on Will’s face, as well-hidden as it was. How the hell had Fredrick Clinton managed to get a hold of one of their children? It couldn’t be the truth – because if it was...the idea was too alarming to be given merit. What it meant for their kind was far too dangerous.

“He was quite troubled, but I felt like I had to give back. I’ve been so blessed, I had to share it with another life.” Fredrick continued, nodding seriously, “he’s a good boy for the most part, but I’m afraid sometimes he takes our relationship as permission for him to avoid his duties around the hospital.” The Human gave a shrug, as if to say ‘what can you do?’ “Kids.”

“You…” Will paused, undoubtedly to collect his thoughts, "adopted him, when he was–”

“Twelve, he’d just turned twelve I believe.” Hannibal’s hands curled by his side, barely keeping them from reaching out to strike the smug Human as he thought of the pale and sickly form of the cub, “Matthew’s been with me ever since. He makes me quite proud,” the smile didn’t falter, “most days. And I dare say he’s taught me as much about the world as I’ve taught him. But! We’re not here to talk about my family, are we? Come,” he paused dramatically, face growing somber, "are you ready to meet the Ripper?"

Hannibal kept himself from reaching for his alarmed Submissive out of force of will alone, biting back his own snarl of impatience, heavily aware of Will's worry and discomfort. He wanted to rend Fredrick Chilton apart; he'd always despised the man, and the idea of what the Human could know about them was as sickening as what he might have done to the cub – to Matthew Brown - was.

Instead he gave Fredrick his most charming smile, gesturing for him to lead the way, greeting Jack with a considerate hello, and followed the pair into the bloody exam room. First things first; the Ripper needed to retire.

The ground keeper’s hut was dusty and musty, the small shack abandoned after the department had been absorbed into the janitorial unit. It was an ancient thing, practically falling apart and covered in mold. No one ever came here anymore, disgusted if not by the dirt than the smell. It was Matthew’s sanctuary; a place he came to hide when Chilton and the staff got too much for him to handle. It was filled with his precious things – various knickknacks he’d collected over the years. Stupid, strange, worthless little things mostly – but they were Matthew’s.

The young Dominant was sitting in one of the office chairs he’d snuck out there, chewing on his thumb nail as he tried to figure out what the hell he was going to do. It was nearly three-thirty, which meant that Matthew would have to report in for the mid-watch employee briefing. On average, Matthew worked around eight to sixteen hour shifts depending on if anyone called off. This meant that he usually ended up in all three pre-shift meetings; the seven AM one, as well as the three-thirty and six-thirty PM one, and his absence would be noted.

It was a lot of work (especially as Matthew found being around Humans so long incredibly boring) but he liked it for the most part. At the very least, the long shifts gave him an excuse to stay away from the house and Chilton. On good days he could even pretend his life wasn't his.

Matthew knew that his ‘father’ was going to pissed that he didn’t do what he was supposed to with Drs. Lecter and Graham, but in all honesty, when he’d caught scent of the older Roux, Matthew had freaked. Though they hadn’t done it yet, it was clear that the two were intending to mate, and what little he remembered from his parents’ lessons meant that Matthew knew it was a dangerous time for any other Roux to be around them.

Dominants were extremely possessive of their mates by default, but this was doubly so in the time
before they’d actually mated the Submissive they were courting. It was not unheard of for them to kill a Dominant on sight rather than risk them interacting and sabotaging - or winning away - their intended. He also remembered something vaguely about Dominants being known to kill non-blood related, pubescent Roux, and those two facts combined together had sent Matthew fleeing with his tail between his legs.

But he had to report in. Chilton would flip his absolutely shit if he didn’t. Matthew had only recently been promoted to head orderly, and his absence wouldn’t be tolerated by any means. The chances that he’d run into the other Roux were rather high with the police still working on processing the scene and gathering interviews from the huge staff and it was that fact that was giving his pause.

Matthew was so conflicted.

Because as much as he feared for his life, the young Dominant found he almost desperately wanted to see the doctors – the very first of his kind he’d seen since he was a boy – again. And Dr. Lecter probably wouldn’t do anything in front of anyone anyway. And if Matthew was completely honest, death would probably be better than this continuous life of a slave.

As the half-hour drew closer Matthew let out a low grumble and stood, pulling his scrub bottoms from where he’d tucked them into his socks for protection from the grungy ground in the shack, and steeled himself. He had to report in, there was no way around it. Nodding determinedly to himself, Matthew opened the door – and came face to face with Dr. Graham.

The Submissive looked startled for a moment – the afternoon light bright and harsh behind him, giving the older Roux a strange halo as it peaked around and through his curls – before his features softened with a smile. “Hello.” Dr. Graham greeted genially, “my name is Will, would you mind if I come in and speak with you a bit?”

“I…sure.” Matthew managed lamely, stepping back to allow him into the dirty space. Dr. Graham glanced about it, expression unchanging before taking a seat on the edge of the empty ground keeper’s desk.

“So, you know my name…” The Submissive said, smile muting as his head cocked to side, eyes curious, “what’s yours?”

“Oh, I’m Matthew.” He said after a moment, eyes darting to the open door. Where was the Dominant? Surely Dr. Lecter was going to rip his head off once he realized that his intended was alone in a secluded shack with him. “Matthew Brown, I’m one of the Head Orderlies here.”

The smile grew again, eyes crinkling. “Well, Matthew. It’s nice to meet you. I’m sorry if we scared you earlier.”

He was very beautiful, the young Dominant thought suddenly, in the same gentle way his own carrier had been. He didn’t let himself think about his carrier, Johnathan, very often (he only allowed those wistful memories out at his most desperate, when he felt he could go on no further) but Matthew had never forgotten him. Somehow, Dr. Graham had that same kind smile that his Daddy once had and something inside the young Roux surged painfully to see it again.

“But I promise, neither Hannibal or I – Hannibal’s my intended, the Dominant you saw with me earlier. He’ll be here soon, he had to stop back at the car – meant to do that.” Dr. Graham explained earnestly, “we weren’t expecting to see another Roux here. It was quite a surprise for all of us, I think.”

Matthew twitched slightly, the alarm on his phone vibrating in his pocket; it was time for the
meeting, but he didn’t move. He kept his attention on Dr. Graham – on his Daddy’s smile.

“You know, I actually just had the same thing happen yesterday. I think there are more of us and around Baltimore and D.C. than we think.” Dr. Graham continued on, seemingly unaware of the intense attention he’d garnered from Matthew. “I know it’s dangerous and the elders won’t like it much, but I really think we ought to have some sort of way of contacting each other. Like a social group or something; with the internet there is really no reason why we couldn’t do that if we were careful enough. People form private clubs all the time; like the Elks or the Freemasons.” Those bright grey eyes were suddenly back on Matthew, “do you think your parents would be interested in something like that?”

Matthew blinked, stunned to find that he’d been staring at Submissive’s mouth for nearly the entirety of his speech. He swallowed harshly, staring down at his white keds. “They’re dead.”

“Oh.” The smile faded from Dr. Graham’s face. “I’m sorry.”

Matthew shrugged. “It was a long time ago.”

A sharp knock saved the moment from becoming even more awkward and Matthew winced to see Dr. Lecter standing there, a large lunch box hanging over his shoulder. “Good afternoon, mind if I join you?” He held up the box, “I’ve taken the liberty of grabbing some lunch from the car. Have you had yours yet young man?”

Matthew blinked, confused as to what the hell was happening, before shaking his head slowly. “Uh, there isn’t much to sit on in here, and everything’s dirty so…”

“There was picnic benches out by the–”

“No!” Matthew interrupted than instantly winced, hands flying up as he apologized quickly for interrupting the elder Dominant. “I mean, I’m not–” supposed to be out here, “…can we just eat in here, if that’s alright?”

Dr. Lecter watched him coolly for a moment before setting the box down on the desk, zipping it open and handing a plastic container first to Dr. Graham before holding one out for Matthew. “Then I suppose we’ll just have to make do. It won’t be the first time I’ve had a meal standing up.”

“I used to eat standing up constantly when I was still teaching full time,” the Submissive said cheerfully as he cracked the lid open, accepting a fork as it was offered to him. The smell of a well cooked meal made the nearly starved Roux’s stomach to grumble loudly. The doctors exchanged an amused look while Matthew ducked his head, hiding his mortification by opening the container in his hands.

It was a gorgeous looking meal, like something he’d expect out of the five-star restaurants Chilton frequented and not from a home-brought plastic container he brought his lunch in. A fork appeared in his line of vision and Matthew accepted it quickly, muttering a thanks before digging in and gathering a heaping forkful.

Matthew knew that he probably looked base to the older Roux, but the moment the well-cooked food touched his tongue – the subtle notes of Human flesh exploding in his mouth – Matthew ate voraciously with little thought to manners or concern for etiquette. It had been so long since he had something so delicious, so filling. Already his stomach was humming happily, a warmth filling his being as he finished off most of the container in only a few hasty forkfuls.

He only stopped because his throat ached with thirst, so he balanced the contained on one hand as
he reached over for his water and uncapped it with his other hand. Matthew took a quick sip, glancing back over at the other Roux (who he’d honestly kind of forgotten for a moment there) and was alarmed to find that neither had even begun to eat their food. Dr. Graham’s expression was deeply concerned, a fierce frown on his face, fork resting – forgotten – amongst his meal. Dr. Lecter’s face was harder to read, but his russet eyes watched Matthew with a frightfully knowing look. The young Roux swallowed the water quickly, the back of his neck and ears hot with embarrassment.

“Matthew,” Dr. Graham started hesitantly, voice soft with caution, “when was the last time you ate?”

“I hunt.” The words came quickly; loud and defensive, Matthew clutching the food closer unconsciously. It was shameful to be seen like this, so weak and helpless, half-starved and a shadow of what he was supposed to be. Especially in front of Dr. Lecter, who was everything Matthew wasn’t.

Dr. Lecter was a magnificent Dominant, a true example of what their species could become. Tall and broad, handsome and sophisticated, with a controlled strength that seemed to radiate from him, Matthew felt both awed and dwarfed by his presence.

“But you don’t,” Dr. Lecter mused, “or at least not enough for what you need. But is that because you lack the skill to do so, or is it because you can’t?”

Matthew shivered, officially freaked out. It sounded almost like Dr. Lecter knew he was leashed – but that was impossible. No one knew about him and there was no way that Chilton would have just shared that information with either Dr. Lecter or Dr. Graham; the arrogant man considered one his rival and the other below him.

“I hunt.” He repeated, firmer this time and he forced himself to set the food down, the act far harder than could be imagined. Neither of the older Roux had any idea of the position the three of them were in, of what Chilton would do - what he would make them do - if he found out that they were also Roux. Matthew would rather die than see any other of his kind enslaved because of his own mistakes. “I’m late for rounds, Dr. Chilton will be mad.”

He stepped towards the door, only to stop as Dr. Lecter’s arm extended into his path. A slim, elegant business card was held between two fingers. “This is the address to my office, as well as my work number.”

Matthew stared at the card, torn, but Dr. Lecter seemed content to wait him out. A shout of his name (Chilton’s high pitched, nasally voice echoing loudly across the yard to his sensitive ears) made his decision for him, and Matthew’s took the card, hiding it quickly between his ID badge and the list of ten-codes the hospital used before hurrying out the door.

Again the older Dominant halted him, shocking him by calling his name out – which he was certain Dr. Lecter hadn’t been able to overhear earlier. “Why don’t you stop by on Monday. Anytime. I’ll keep the day open for you.”

Matthew licked his lips, gritting his teeth as his name was called again – angrier now – from behind him. “Yeah, I’ll try.”

Then he willed himself away from the two adults and the food, something strange and twisting and warm blooming in his chest. He refused to admit it felt like hope.
Poor Matthew. He doesn't really understand his kind. :(

The next chapter will be longer, I just had to get past the meeting scene since that was what was giving me a hard time. I really, really struggled with this chapter so I'm sorry if it's not up to par. I'm fairly confident the next chapter won't be such a rude, unruly bitch to me, so cheers to that. I'll get it up as soon as my work schedule permits. Please be patient! Fanfiction doesn't pay (sadly) and my sister has also recently been very sick (we thought it was cancer but she just had a very bad infection) so my free time is hard to find sometimes, but all my stories are a priority!

I hope you all enjoy, this chapter's been the worse one so far (at least to me) but the next ones already starting to shape fairly easily, thank god. Hope you liked it!
Interlude: A Family Begins to Settle

Chapter Summary

There was a snort against his cheek and to his bewilderment, when his intended pulled back his expression was rueful, “oh Hannibal, I don’t know if that’s adorable or tragic.”

Chapter Notes

Sorry, I had to take this chapter down for a second and fix it before putting it back up. Unbeated. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Hannibal listened to the soft sound of the Graham Submissives talk as he smoked one of his uncle’s cigarettes, letting the expensive tobacco taste curl over his tongue. Robert was next to him, leaning against the porch railing, watching as the dogs circled the puppies, old enough now to play (abet clumsily) outside now. Mago was amongst them, brought over by Hannibal and Will on their return from the city.

The Submissives had been cooking since they’d arrived back from the hospital to find Robert and Ezra waiting, the later with no small amount of concern. Hannibal’s soon-to-be father-in-law hadn’t been impressed by their outing so close to Will’s kidnapping, and much of that irritation and accusation was turned on Hannibal, but his mate had stepped in, defending him amply and masterfully deflecting his Ezra's ire by erupting into conversation about Matthew Brown.

The older Submissive had been hooked almost immediately, visibly horrified by the idea - as were they all - of one of their own being raised by a Human. Ezra already had their main course in a crock pot, some southern style stew called ‘Hoppin’ John with Greens,’ and the sweet scent of slow-cooking Human flesh filled the kitchen as Ezra shook his head over and over again as Will's story grew, lips a thin line of fury. And Will told the story in great detail, leaving nothing out as he explained Chilton’s adoption and probable abuse of the cub.

They spoke of possible repercussions and implications, on both the cub and the Roux species as a whole as they were wrist deep in batter, dipping green tomatoes as they plotted and seethed with a vicious maternal fury. There was little that was so protected in their society as an orphaned cub. Unlike those unlucky few who may die at the hand of hunters or their carrier’s new mate, an orphaned cub was free from all political and social markers that may exist within a Roux family.

It was their duty – no, it was their privilege – to raise the cub. Not only was it the only correct thing to do (and leaving an orphaned cub once found was considered the height of vulgarity) but it also had a fairly strong biological element to it as well. The cub would bring with it a new bloodline, a chance to freshen up the genetic pool in what was usually a rather small community, and was undoubtedly were the taboo of leaving orphaned cubs to die came from.

As it was, it had taken every inch of Hannibal’s charm and persuasion to convince Will to leave the hospital without the cub, and the Dominant knew that it bothered his intended immensely that they
had done so. Hannibal could understand; it bothered him just as much to think of Matthew under a neanderthal like Chilton's control.

But it did not bother him as much as uncle did in that moment.

::So:: Hannibal murmured, turning away from the appealing sight of the cooking Submissives, ::did you at least buy him dinner first?::

::Watch your tone, little wolf.:: Robert snapped sharply, a growl lining the words as he ashed his cigarette into the yard, ::I'm not so old that I can't bend you over my knee.::

Hannibal snorted, but when he spoke next his voice was calm, neutral – but it had lost none of its edge. ::I told you to stay away from him.::

::You are not my keeper,:: Robert drawled slowly, flicking the lit cigarette away, eyes narrowing, ::nor are you his.::

It was a dangerous thing, questioning another Dominant about his actions (especially about a mating, especially when they were your familial elder) but Hannibal had no fear of the fight that may come of it. He would not be silenced, not when it came to the wellbeing of the Grahams, to his intended’s family.

::Ezra Graham is more than one of your conquests, uncle.:: Hannibal spat out, taking a tone he’d only ever used with Robert a handful of times and all when he still had the excuse of youth to soften it. ::He’s a Roux I respect incredibly highly, and if you think for one moment I’ll sit by and watch you treat him like one of your pet Humans or those desperate Submissive whores you –::

Hannibal hit the side of the house hard enough to knock the mounted outdoor thermometer from the siding, a hand fisted in his hair and yanking it back while a forearm cut into his throat, the angle forcing him up on his tiptoes. Robert’s features were pulled into a fierce snarl, blue eyes bright with a fury Hannibal had never seen on the composed man’s face before. Hannibal moved to break free, feeling rage bubble in his own chest - the instinctive need to answer another Dominant’s challenge, the burning urge to defeat and destroy the interlope who dared touch what was his - but Robert had survived his many years for a reason and intercepted the move with ease, slamming Hannibal’s head harshly against the siding once more, stunning him.

::Never refer to them as that,:: Robert growled out, voice more violent than Hannibal had ever heard it, ::you are only just now starting to grasp what it is to have a mate. You have no idea what those widows have gone through in their loss, or what loneliness feels like for a Roux in their last stages of life who was never as so lucky as to find a Will of their own. So don’t you dare sully them with such a dirty word.::

::Ezra Graham is not one of your playthings.:: Hannibal snarled back, head snapping forward to bash against his uncle’s forehead. Robert’s head snapped back with the impact, but his grip was unrelenting and the arm across his throat dug in harder, hard enough for Hannibal to see stars. Robert’s expression was murderous, his nose and lips a bright red as he cracked his neck, trying to release some of the tension Hannibal’s unexpected strike had wrought.

“Robertas.”

The name was razor sharp, a demand that could not be disobeyed, and both Dominants’ head snapped to the porch door. Ezra stood there, face cold and dark, a large slicing knife in his hand, the long blade pointed harmlessly downwards and yet its threat unmistakable. Will stood less than a pace behind him, face pale and frightened as his eyes fluttered from Hannibal’s pinned form to his uncle.
The sight of his mate’s horror brought rational back harshly and Hannibal felt as if he’d come out on the other side of a dense fog, suddenly unaware how things had escalated to blows.

He and Robert rarely physically fought – and never more than what could be counted on one hand – and the younger Lecter looked down to realize that his nails were digging cruelly into the meat of his uncle’s sides. He released him abruptly, hands falling limp by his side as he eyed the furious Robert wearily.

“Release my son’s intended.” Robert was still, unmoving, as he watched the Submissive, but Ezra’s will was immovable. “Now.”

The pressure around his throat disappeared and Hannibal sagged back down onto his feet, watching wearily as Robert stepped back, hands straightening first his light over coat than the fit of his gloves. Blue eyes snapped up to glare at him and Hannibal felt his lips part in surprise at the emotion he found there. ::Ezra never was, nor will he ever will be, a plaything to me.::

When his uncle turned on his heel, marching off the porch and across the backyard, Ezra cursed, making an aborted attempt to follow before stilling and swirling around and jabbing a finger in Hannibal’s direction. “Don’t you think for a moment that I don’t know what that was about, Hannibal Lecter. I’m an adult and so is your uncle. Don’t do it again.” And then he was gone, sprinting across the lawn after Robert’s rapidly retreating form.

The second he’d stepped off the porch, Hannibal found himself with an armful of Will. His arms came around his intended’s waist on instinct, wincing as Will’s fingers carded through his hair, feeling out the raised bump there carefully.

Hannibal didn’t respond to the careful touch or worried questions, eyes locked on the scene unraveling in front of him.

His uncle had made it all the way into the open meadow before Ezra had caught him, the heavy fog that had followed such a rainy afternoon hovering around the tall grass eerily. As he watched Ezra reached up and cupped Robert’s face, seemingly utterly unafraid of the Dominant’s anger, talking heatedly up into it. An insistent tugging of his hair brought Hannibal’s attention back to his own Submissive. Will was staring up in concern, only just starting to get his color back. “Hannibal, if you don’t answer me I swear I’m going to do something very impolite. Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, it’s hardly a bruise.” He reassured as William’s hands drifted down to his shoulders, his head bending to nuzzle at Hannibal’s jaw, seeking tactile comfort. Hannibal drew him closer, leaning into the motion until their cheeks rested against each other. There was a shaky breath against his ear, Will relaxing into the tight hold. “What on earth was that about? He hit you so hard; I could feel the house shake from the kitchen.”

“I may have misstepped.” Hannibal admitted slowly, “I expressed my concerns about my uncle and your father’s recent…activities.”

There was a snort against his cheek and to his bewilderment, when his intended pulled back his expression was rueful, “oh Hannibal, I don’t know if that’s adorable or tragic.”

“You’re not concerned about this?”

“Hannibal,” Will asked slowly, brows furrowed, “my father’s been alone for a very long time. He was happier today then I’ve seen him in – well, ever. Unless you tell me there is a reason why I should be alarmed, than no, I’m not. Daddy can take care of himself.”
In the meadow, Hannibal watched as Ezra’s hands locked around Robert’s neck, pulling the blond’s head down until their foreheads rested against each other. The tension left his uncle’s form abruptly, an arm wrapping around Ezra’s waist while the other reached up to cup Ezra’s cheek. It took Hannibal a moment to understand what he was seeing. Ezra was gentling Robert, successfully. None of the Submissives he’d ever seen his uncle with had ever even attempted such an act, not that Robert would have ever allowed them to, too cowed by the sight of Robertas Lecter’s fierce temper.

“So it seems.”

Will smiled up at him, the motion gentle, before shaking his head with a laugh and burrowing further into his arms. “It was very sweet, though. Unnecessary, but very sweet.”

The forest was filled with sound of evening, the birds having finally returned with the promise of the approaching spring, and Robert did his best to draw peace from them. Ezra’s hand was a warm weight in his own, the Submissive leading him with ease and familiarity through the wood. Ezra had decided a walk was for the best after Robert’s argument with Hannibal, to give both parties a chance to calm themselves (and, as Robert rather expected, to give Will a chance to calm Hannibal).

Ezra had correctly guessed the catalyst for the fight, rolling his eyes in derision both at his nephew’s gall and what he deemed ‘a fine example of Dominant dick-waving.’ But despite Ezra’s obvious displeasure that a fight had taken place on his very doorstep – for which he had every right to be displeased, Robert certainly wasn’t proud of himself for losing his temper - most of the Submissive’s irritation seemed to lie with Hannibal. It was a fact that while Robert found immensely pleasing, was also one that he found quite worrisome.

Because despite their argument, Robert wished nothing but happiness for his hardheaded nephew, for the blond little cub he’d raised to adulthood, and he did not wish anything to jeopardize Hannibal’s engagement with Will. If that was to happen because of any of Robert’s actions – the elder Dominant would be devastated.

How would he ever look his brother in the eye in the afterlife?

“You could still take him over your knee.” Ezra said with a sigh, fingers squeezing his own as he interrupted the silence of their walk, “or if you like I can do it.”

“Now that would be a sight to see, mylimasis.” Robert said with a chuckle, stilling their movement and tugging until the Submissive let him pull him close, eyes soft as he watched Ezra’s head settled against his shoulder. Robert wasn’t blind; he knew that had their fight accelerated into something more as most Dominant fights did (even those amongst family members often lead to violence) Ezra would have intervened, just as Roux Submissives had been doing for ages. He would have intervened, stopped the fight through one means or another, and Robert knew that had that happened it would not have ended well for him.

The Dominant didn’t blame him for that though, there was little about Ezra Graham that did not speak of his undying, unbridled loyalty and love to his son. Regardless of whatever was growing between the two of them, Ezra would never have jeopardized his son’s future.

Just as Robert would do nothing to jeopardize his nephew’s. “Hannibal’s intentions were well-meaning, even if his execution left much to be desired.”

“Oh?”

“I have not been celibate in my years, Ezra,” Robert began, refusing to be ashamed of his actions and
yet feeling an unexpected tug of nervousness all the same. “There have been other Submissives, widowed or those who like myself had never found a mate. It was never anything serious, nothing that would have lasted; that wasn’t what any of us wanted.

But Hannibal could never understand that. He viewed our dalliances as debauched, even a cruelty on my part.” He brought his hand to curl around Ezra’s nape, marveling as the leather clad appendage easily blanked the entire thing. “He cares deeply for you and your son, he wanted to protect you from that.”

“Does he need to?” Ezra asked, voice hard. “Am I another debauchery?”

Robert paused, a denial on his lips and took a moment to marvel at how quickly it had come, before brushing a kiss across the Submissive’s curls and inhaling his scent; a scent that still carried the undernotes of Robert’s own. “No. I meant what I said, Ezra. I intend to mate you. Nothing else will suffice.”

The Dominant met Ezra’s questing mouth in a deep kiss and it grew long without any thought, lips parting many times only to meet again and again before Robert pulled away. Ezra leaned heavily against him, lips swollen and skin flushed, peering hotly up at him from underneath thick lashes. “You two should stay the night. If you would like to, I mean.”

Robert chuckled, feeling his gut tighten with arousal as Ezra’s scent surrounded them, undisturbed by the stagnant air. He knew better than to expect anything with William and Hannibal still in the house, but Robert could not deny the lust this Submissive woke so easily in him.

“I doubt Hannibal will be very eager to return to Baltimore tonight, too much has happened in the last few days.” He brushed his thumb over the Submissive’s cheekbone, watching him intently. “I certainly have no desire to leave.”

Robert wondered if he should be concerned about how much he meant that, how everything inside of him rebelled at the idea of leaving Ezra Graham behind. Something of the thought must have shown on his face, for the Submissive’s eyes widened before drifting half-massed, his smile a slow, genuine thing. Another kiss was gifted to him; a short burst of warmth, a sweet act that somehow made Robert feel far shorter for breath than their activities the night before had.

“Come on,” Ezra said softly, recapturing his hand and leading him back towards the house, “I was right in the middle of cooking you know, you dramatic thing you. If the tomatoes are burnt I’m blaming you.”

Robert quickened his step until he was besides Ezra and he slipped his arm around the shorter Roux’s waist pulling him close as they walked, “I hate to disappoint, but I actually rather enjoy burnt tomatoes.”

“Oh, Robert, you are a terrible liar. You should know I’m going to make you eat all the burnt ones now.”

Robert chuckled, “I suppose that’s only fair.”

It was hardly the first time Will had shared a bed with his father, yet somehow it seemed completely strange and alien now. It probably had something to do with the fact that he had Hannibal had fooled around in the very spot his father was now sitting in, but what was done was done. There weren’t words to describe how grateful Will was that he took the time to wash his sheets (twice) and to air out the house. As it stood his room smelt of nothing but Will and his dogs, but he still found himself...
blushing with hot guilt as his father stretched up across the middle of his bed – right where he and Hannibal had been.

They were sharing a bed tonight so that Robert could sleep in Ezra’s bed and Hannibal on the fold out in the couch downstairs. The room was quiet save for the soft sound of *I Love Lucy* that was playing lowly on Will’s bedroom TV, but he wasn’t watching the show. His head was in Ezra’s lap, legs stretched out so far his feet hung off the bed, eyes closed in pleasure as his Daddy finger-combed his hair.

Every now and then Ezra would chuckled at something on the show, sometimes quoting the lines along with Lucille Ball, and Will basked in the happy sounds. Because his father was happy. It wasn’t like Ezra had been terribly depressed or sad before, it wasn’t like all of his childhood memories of his father were of him sobbing in regret and depression – in fact, Will rarely ever so Ezra emote anything that could possibly be considered depressive. That part of his Daddy wasn’t to be shared with Will. Ezra kept his feelings to himself, confiding his sorrows in no one, and Will had never understood it until he’d taken some in-depth college courses on the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl and began to learn more about the time period that had shaped his father as a Roux.

But still, just because he rarely showed it didn’t mean that Will hadn’t always been aware that his Daddy had been left wanting, needing - lonely. While he hadn’t really seen the attraction to Robert coming (but, to be fair, Will hardly knew the other Roux) he couldn’t say he minded. Will wished he’d had more time to get to know the type of Roux Robert was, but he wasn’t as nearly as upset as Hannibal had apparently been had at first.

Of course, Will’s opinion was biased; it was shaped by how much lighter his father seemed, as if he’d shed his old skin and gotten a new one, one that left him more resilient and joyful.

“So…did it really take you ten hours to clean up?” Will asked slyly, eyes opening lazily as he grinned up at his father. “Or did you and Robert take the time to get to know each other better?”

Ezra’s grin could only be described as Cheshire. “A gentlemen never kisses and tells, William.”

"That's literally never stopped you before." Will shook his head as he rolled onto his stomach, wrapping both arms tightly around his father’s waist as he rested his head on Ezra’s thigh. “I’m not going to judge you or anything, Daddy. I just want to understand. Are you happy? Is this casual or… well, not casual?”

“My, my, so many questions.” Ezra chuckled, fingers returning to his hair, this time twirling it into tighter curls.

“Daddy.”

“Don’t look so serious, bunny.” There was a soft sigh. “I’ll admit that I’ve surprised myself with how much I enjoy having a Dominant again, and Robert…well, Robert’s a very dignified Roux, much like his nephew, and just as stubborn – and handsome. He’s expressed his own interests in me but…let us just leave it at that for now, my darling boy. What will happen between me and Robert will happen, but that’s not important. What’s important is you.”

Will shook his head, arms curling tighter around his father’s shapely hips. “You’ve always put me before everything. I want you to be happy, Daddy. I want you to be first for once.”

“Oh, Will.” A kiss was pressed against his forehead, the angle awkward with their positioning. “I promise after your heat we can talk about my love life all you want. But nothing is ever going to be more important to me than your future, bunny. You’ll understand when you have a cub of your
“You mean if it ever comes.” Will muttered sullenly, focusing longingly on the low murmurings of his intended, deep in conversation with Robert from where they were having a late evening smoke on the back porch with the dogs.

The two Dominants had excused themselves from the house shortly after dinner, taking the Graham pack out for a walk. When they’d returned a half-hour later, whatever tension that may have been between the two of them had finally been gone. Will was glad of it; the sight of the two Lecter Dominants at each other’s throats had been terrifyingly gut-wrenching. He never wanted to see anything like that again.

“Will –”

“I know, I know. ‘Patience is a virtue.’” He interrupted sullenly and was rewarded with a piercing pinch at the base of his neck, hard enough to make him jump and the skin to twist harshly, jolts of pain shooting down his spine.

“Don’t interrupt,” Ezra rebuked sharply, voice cold, and then – as if a switch had been flipped – softer, calm again; “I’d actually been meaning to talk to you about that. You’re on the cusp of heat, I can smell it.”

“What?” Will’s head snapped up, eyes wide. “But Hannibal didn’t smell –” The Submissive cut himself off abruptly, but it was too late to take the words back.

“Oh he didn’t, did he?” Ezra said dryly, expression both unimpressed and unsurprised. “Don’t look at me like that bunny, I don’t care what you did as long as your virtue is still intact. It is, isn’t it?”

…that rather depended on the definition of ‘intact.’ Did having Hannibal’s cock in his mouth count as having his virtue besmirched?

“We just petted some more.” Will admitted into his father’s hip, cheeks burning and too embarrassed to look up. It was technically true; they really hadn’t done anything more than heavy petting and… well…Ezra didn’t need to know about the blow job. It was impossible to tell if his father believed him, the sound he made a non-committal sort of ‘ahhing,’ but he didn’t press the issue.

“Well, I certainly can understand how that may have come to have happen given the recent events.” Ezra’s voice faltered on the last word, coming desperately close to breaking.

They had yet to talk about Will’s kidnapping and the younger Submissive knew that they may never speak of it beyond that first, desperate greeting and long moment of reassurance outside of Tobias’ cabin. His father was a very strong person, very little had ever managed to faze him, but Will knew that Ezra’s inability to foresee Tobias’ actions or to find him afterwards had shaken him to his very core. And as with all things that managed to upset Ezra deeply, it would most likely never be spoken of again.

Will’s kidnapping would be locked away, left to rise and fall with the tide of Ezra’s thoughts, banished to the same place the memories of his Sire and lost brothers were kept.

“But your heat is coming.” Ezra insisted, “I’d say within the week. I’ve known your scent profile by heart since you were born, bunny, I think it’s safe to say that I can scent even the faintest sweetening of a heat gearing up. In a few days the cramps will come, than there will be some spotting. How much blood comes is different for everyone, it may be very little or quite a bit, but to Hannibal it will be siren call. There will be no hiding from him – or any Roux – what’s about to happen to you. We
must be prepared, bunny.”

Will’s heart raced in his chest, overwhelmingly happy at the thought of finally ending his courtship with Hannibal and yet at the same time oddly terrified. Ezra smiled down at him knowingly, fingers splaying out to cradle his head.

“We’ll need to start preparing the woods immediately; Hannibal will no doubt be getting advice from Robert as soon as they scent your impending heat, so we’ll have to be extra clever.”

“You’ve been planning for this forever,” Will pointed out, leaning into his father’s touch, “I think you started brainstorming a Trial the day I was born.”

“Oh, that I have. No matter how badly I want grandchildren, no Dominant is going to be putting anything in my baby-bun unless he’d passed every test. Even once he does, when he scents your heat you’ll probably be the saner one of the two of you. In fact, there’s a couple of things I remembered the other night about knotting that I want to go over with you.”

Will choked on his own spit, eyes the size of dinner plates at the implied information there. Remembered about knotting… remember about…while he was knotted with – no. Nope, no. Not going there, Will thought with a shudder, rolling off his father.

“What?” Ezra asked, puzzled at his reactions. “You’re going to need to stretch to fit everything without hurting yourself and I can’t guarantee that Hannibal will be in the right mind to do so by the time everything’s said and done. So,” one of his father’s hands curved into an ‘o,’ “the heat will help with loosening you up somewhat – but, well, you’re a virgin so it can’t take all that away. Again, you need to remember to stretch yourself, preferably before Hannibal arrives in case he can’t, and you’ll want to do it.” Will watched, mouth slack, as Ezra proceeded to slowly breech it with two fingers of his opposite hand, crooking and spreading the digits, “like this. You’ll need to at least take four…”

Ezra paused, expression growing distant with thought. His hand open and flexed, palm curving around the air as he stared at his empty grip thoughtfully, fingers wiggling as if he was counting.

“Actually, if Hannibal is anything like his uncle you made need five and the better part of some knuckles.”

“Dad! Oh my god!” Will shrieked, horrified with the realization that the flexing/gripping motions Ezra was making with his hand was him trying to recall Robert Lecter’s knot size, before going bright red as the low conversation outside came to an abrupt halt.

“Is everything alright?” Robert called from outside and Will’s face grew even hotter at the sound of the Dominant’s voice, moaning as he buried his face in his pillow, unable to stop picturing Robert’s knot - and by default his cock - since his Daddy had oh-so-informatively shown it to him.

“Just fine, dear.” Ezra called back, voice rich with laughter. “William, come now, pull your head out of there. It’s just sex.”

“I’m never going to be able to look my Uncle-in-law in the face because of you!”

“Oh don’t be dramatic. If I really wanted to scar you, I would have told you we had to pay for room damages to the hotel.”

“Daddy!”
Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys liked it. I wanted to take a moment to have the Lecter-Graham household settle before shit gets wild with Chilton, Matthew, Gideon and Jack.
Interlude: A Changing Scent

Chapter Summary

Robert was watching him with a rather knowing expression, that damnable smirk still on his lips as he kicked the kitchen chair out with his socked foot. ::Sit, nephew. It is time that you and I have a rather overdue talk.::

Chapter Notes

Think of this as a coda to the last chapter.

Un-beated.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will wasn’t sure what woke him, only that it was very early (so early that the sun had yet to rise) and his father was hogging the bed. He sent Ezra an annoyed look, the older Submissive sprawled overttop the mattress like a giant, unforgiving swastika, before allowing himself to roll the scant few inches needed to be off the bed.

Ezra gave a low murmur at the movement before stretching out to take the remaining space of the bed. Will rolled his eyes as he pulled on a pair of sleep pants and a shirt, unsurprised in the least with his father's gluttony. He made his way noiselessly from his bedroom, certain that now that he was awake he would not be able to fall back asleep, which was unfortunate as it was so early that his pups simply looked at him with veiled interest before lying back down.

He crept down the stairs, pausing at the foot of the steps in indecision before stepping into the living room. Hannibal was still asleep, looking quite cramped despite the fact that they’d pulled the full sleeper mattress out for him to use. Will stood by the pull out, watching the sleeping Dominant with fond eyes. He leaned over, gently tugging the sheet and cover free and untangling it before recovering him. Will pressed a kiss to Hannibal's brow, his heart warm and heavy with the realization that his scent had become so familiar and safe to the Dominant that Hannibal didn’t even twitch at his presence.

He padded into the kitchen, flipping on the small lamp on the counter as he yawned and took the kettle off its hook. It was too early for coffee, but some hot chocolate wouldn’t go astray and Will found himself oddly craving something sweet. He fished out the milk, humming to himself as he filled the kettle and put it to boil. He decided he wanted toast to, toast loaded with everything, and he pulled out a butter and three different jams, the loaf of bread clasped between his teeth by its plastic wrapper. He turned, shutting the fridge door with a practiced sway of his hips – and froze.

Robertas Lecter was standing in the open kitchen door frame, eyes kind even as his lips were slanted in amusement. “Good morning, Will.”

Will was suddenly aware of the picture he made, standing there in the dim kitchen with his arms full of food, the bread bag in his mouth – and his favorite pair of Pluto pajamas, complete with a
matching decal on his t-shirt of the repeating print on his pants.

He must look like a child.

He let the bread bag fall from his mouth, catching it in the cradle of his arms, and managed a “Good
morning, Robert,” with as much dignity as he could scrape up.

The twitch of the Dominant’s lips grew into something more, the wrinkles around his eyes crinkling
handsomely. “You’re up quite early. Couldn’t sleep?”

“No,” Will said with an awkward shrug as he set his bounty down, “I guess not. Would you like
some toast? Or some hot chocolate?” The youngest Graham winced, hot chocolate. Robert was a
grown Roux, “or I could make you some tea or coffee, of course.”

“Hot chocolate sounds divine,” Robert answered as he stepped carefully over a slumbering Bull and
sat at the kitchen table, “and I wouldn’t say no to toast if you’re offering it.”

Will busied himself, trying to ignore the fact that a Dominant he knew very little about (even if
Robertas was to be his uncle-in-law and was in some sort of relationship with his father) was
watching his every move. He hesitated when he went to pull the coffee mugs out, forgoing any one
of his Pluto cups for two simple black and tan ones. He set them down on the table, pulling the
chocolate mix his father had gotten from his last trip to Brazil out and scooping several generous
scoops into each mug.

“William.” The Submissive froze, hand twitching slightly and nearly spilling a powder all over the
table. Robert was watching him, face earnest. “Please don’t be afraid of me.”

Will swallowed harshly, nodding once before forcing himself to sit across from the intimidating
Roux. “I’m sorry, I don’t mean to be rude.”

“Hardly that.” Robert soothed, giving him a winning smile that was nearly - eerily - a copy of one of
Hannibal’s. “I just wish for us to get to know each other better. You make Hannibal very happy, and
I can’t tell you how much that pleases me.”

“You make Daddy happy,” Will said softly, clasping his mug tightly despite the fact that it was
empty. He needed to do something with his hands. “And I’m – well, that makes me happy.” He
paused, gathering his thoughts. “I would never dream of telling you what to do with your business,
or to tell Daddy his, but please…just be careful. My father is a wonderful person; he’s done
everything for me as long as I can remember. I would never want to see him unhappy. It would
make me…very upset.”

It wasn’t quite the ‘shovel’ talk that Will would have given if he was braver and had far less morals,
but it seemed that Robert understood the seriousness of what his fumbled words were trying to
impart.

“I assure you, William, I will do everything in my power to keep Ezra content.” Robert’s words were
gentle, as if speaking to a spooked horse, and if Will wasn’t so nervous he would have been slightly
offended. “I’ve been looking for your father for a very long time, longer than I’d care to admit.”

Will felt his nervousness soften into something kinder for both of them at the admission, the tension
in his shoulders draining. It wasn’t a romantic declaration in the traditional sense, but it still was very
much one. Will couldn’t imagine what it would have been like if he’d had to keep looking for
Hannibal; how many Tobias’ could he have taken before he’d fallen into despair?

It struck him then, that he wanted Robert to be happy as well as Ezra, and more than just because he
was Hannibal’s beloved uncle. He’d been very lucky, Will knew, to find Hannibal in his very first courting. And he was further graced to have Hannibal be such a fine, upstanding Dominant that he never feared the abandonment his father had experienced. Even if Robert and Ezra were entering their golden years, Will wanted them both to have the chance to experience that certainty. What he had with Hannibal was a true connection that went beyond a biological call to mate, a chance to form a bond not out of need but love and trust.

“I’m glad you found what you were looking for, Robert.” Will said quietly, still taken by his thoughts.

He stood as he caught the faint hiss of the kettle, pulling it off before it could sing, and carefully poured the hot milk. He mixed up the cups, warning Robert to wait for it to cool a bit before preparing toast for them both. Only once he had the plates down (and pulled out some precut grapefruit his father had made earlier, taking the liberty to sprinkle salt over Robert’s as well his own to soften the harsh aftertaste) did Will allow himself to settled across the blond again.

He fixed the Dominant with an eager gaze, suddenly taken with an idea that would not leave him be. “So, tell me. What was Hannibal like a child?”

“Insufferable,” came the immediate response and Will was barely able to smother his laughter. “But I suppose you want details. To be honest I don’t know where I should start – Hannibal was quite impulsive as a youth.”

“Impulsive? Hannibal?” He couldn’t imagine his steady, calculating intended as such. “Oh now I have to know.”

"I warned him once that this very conversation might happen one day." Robert mused, clearly amused. "At the time he did not believe it would ever come or that he would care. The first of that statement has already heen proven false, I suppose you and I will see how true the later stands."

"Please," Will leaned in eagerly, elbows resting heavily and ungraciously on the table in his interest, "tell me everything."

Hannibal woke to the sound of soft conversation and even softer laughter. He blinked bleary up at ceiling of the Graham living room, before kicking off the blankets with a sigh. He made his way towards the source of the noise, pausing in the hallway as he took in the sight of his uncle and Will together in the kitchen. They were sitting quite close, Robert’s chair having been physically dragged around the round table so that they sat opposite yet parallel to each other, both chuckling.

Empty plates and mugs were pushed towards the center of the table and the whole of the kitchen was bathed in a soft, yellowy light from a single lamp, the gentle light softening both Roux’s features and making them seem young and flawless in their beauty.

The entire scene spoke of a familiarity that should not have been there and Hannibal felt a flair of jealousy – ugly and hot – at the sight of their merry making, at the sight of that small, gentle smile of Will’s (that belong solely to him) given with such ease to his uncle. He was well aware of the absurdity of it; Robert was hardly a threat to his claim and yet seeing another Dominant so at ease with his William was obnoxious.

He cleared his throat, catching both Roux’s attention as he stepped into the small kitchen. William’s face lit up – his smile growing unabashedly wide and happy and the sour feeling in his stomach dissolved at the sight of it. “Good morning, Hannibal. We didn’t wake you did we?”
“No darling,” he said softly, leaning in to press a soft kiss to his intended’s forehead, long fingers stroking slightly tangled curls, and Will nearly melted at the caress, eyes drifting close at the sweet touch, “I wake about this time every morning.”

“Oh, good.” Will’s smile grew far more mischievous, “Robert was just telling me about your childhood. Something truly interesting about a Swiss ambassador’s son and a rather impromptu holiday to Rome?”

Hannibal sent a glare at his smirking uncle. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

Will made a soft sound of disbelief, shaking his head. “Of course you don’t. I could hardly believe it myself.” The Submissive stood with a yawn, gathering up the dirty dishes before setting them in the sink. “I’m going to go see if Daddy’s awake and maybe take a shower. Robert and I have eaten, but coffee’s in the press and please, help yourself to anything in the fridge.”

Will turned to leave, pausing only to give first Hannibal a chaste kiss on the cheek and then Robert, but he hardly registered the movements. Because everything in Hannibal had gone very still, every inch of his awareness focused with a terrible intensity on the sweet, almost floral addition to Will’s scent, and the world narrowed down to nothing but its haunting notes. It wasn’t until he heard Will’s bedroom door open and close that Hannibal’s mind made the connection to what such a shift meant and his attention snapped so sharply over to his uncle his neck cracked.

Robert was watching him with a rather knowing expression, that damnable smirk still on his lips as he kicked the kitchen chair out with his socked foot. ::Sit, nephew. It is time that you and I have a rather overdue talk.::

Chapter End Notes

A short little thing, but I liked it. Up next: Matthew, Matthew, preparations for a heat, and Matthew.
Chapter Summary

There was a slick sound, followed by a distinctive squishing sound and Will felt his face flush, gut twisting with arousal.

“What are you doing?”

“What do you think I’m doing, Will?”

Chapter Notes

Un-beated.

Sorry about the wait, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

As loathed as Hannibal was to leave William on Monday morning, it was something that couldn’t be helped, but still he lingered longer than he should of in William’s house, unwilling to leave his intended. Perhaps he would have felt more comfortable with the idea if he’d been able to leave Robert behind to watch over the Graham Submissives, but both had been very clear in their wish to have an empty house. The biting irritation he felt was lessened by the knowledge that the two had most likely wanted the two Dominants gone so they could prepare for William’s heat, but still...

Hannibal had dropped Robert off downtown, his uncle intent on experiencing some of Baltimore’s culture while he was in town before they were to meet up for dinner. Hannibal was glad for the space. As much as he respected his uncle, having another Dominant so close constantly was grating. Hannibal climbed the stairs to his office – he always insisted on the stairs over the elevator, better for the heart and lungs – and was in the middle of fishing out his phone (just to send a good morning text to William, just to check) when a pale, scraggly figure standing just before his office’s doors caught his attention.

The cub looked only slightly better than he had at the hospital, freshly showered and groomed in an ill-fitting sweater jacket, polo, and khakis. Matthew’s head shot over to look at him the moment he stepped fully into the hall, eyes widening as he took a step backwards, only to abort the move before it was completed. Hannibal felt his lips twitch in amused approval as the frightened cub seemingly steeled himself, shoulders straightening as he stood taller.

“Good morning, Dr. Lecter.” Matthew greeted, hand held out cordially.

Hannibal took the offered hand, allowing his approval to show in the minute softening of his features. “Good morning, Matthew. You’re quite prompt, good boy.”

The cub all but flushed at his words and Hannibal felt his amusement grow. He unlocked his office, holding the door open and chuckled as Matthew stepped inside, mouth dropping open at the sight of
Hannibal’s massive private library. The older Dominant set his brief case down, smirking as Matthew wandered over, pursuing the bookcase.

“Do you enjoy reading?” Hannibal asked as he made his way to his kitchenette.

“Yes.” Matthew answered without hesitation. Thankfully Hannibal had some chicken and mushroom crepes that should still be edible, but he still examined them with a critical eye, unwilling to serve the malnourished cub anything that could have gone off. Matthew was seemingly absorbed in a book he’d pulled down, the cub’s voice low as he read aloud. “At o deorum quidquid in caelo regit, terras et humanum genus.”

“But, o any of the gods in the heavens ruling, the lands and the human race.” Hannibal translated easily as he slid the crepes into the oven to warm. “Horace has always been a favorite of mine. Do you read Latin?”

“Yeah, I taught myself.”

“Very commendable.” Hannibal praised, head cocking to the side as the simple extolment made the young Dominant blush heavily once more. “Latin is a beautifully underappreciated language. So many people only seek to learn it for medical purposes and miss entirely the point.”

“I like languages.” Matthew mumbled, bringing a hand up to rub at his neck, embarrassed.

“You may borrow it if you like.”

The cub’s head snapped up, alarmed. “Oh no, I couldn’t possibly-”

“Nonsense, I insist. Who am I to deny the education of our young? Now, would you like some coffee?” Matthew nodded, clutching Hannibal’s copy of Horace’s *Epodes* tightly. He made them each a cup before guiding the nervous boy towards a pair of overstuffed chairs. “I have some crepes I made last week – still quite delicious, if I say so myself, heating. They’ll be ready in a few minutes. Is the coffee not to your liking?”

“Huh?” Matthew blinked, seemingly breaking the spell he’d been under - he’d been staring blankly at the older Dominant - reaching for his cup almost without thought. “No, I’m sure it’s fine. Thank you.”

“Have you taught yourself any other languages?”

The cub fidgeted, eyes locked on his coffee. “German. And Italian. Some Norwegian. And Spanish. I need Spanish for most of the orderlies that work at the hospital.”

“Do you enjoy working with the mentally ill?”

“I became a nurse.”

“Hm,” Hannibal agreed, sipping his own drink, “but that’s not what I asked, is it?”

Matthew finally looked away from his cup, frowning heavily. “…it’s what Chilton wanted.”

*No honorific,* Hannibal noted, *and a deep echo of dislike surrounding Fredrick’s name.* Though, the Dominant mused, he’d be resentful too if he’d been raised and – if Hannibal’s beliefs were correct – shackled by a Human.

“Oh, I see. I suppose it must have been difficult for you to go against your adoptive father’s wishes.”
Matthew tensed, the frown growing more pronounced. “And if you could have gotten your way what would you have gone to college for?”

“Linguistics,” Matthew admitted slowly, the tone more on par with one admitting a deeply dark secret, “or maybe Anthropology? Humans’ develop so interesting for how boring they are.”

“Too true.” Hannibal agreed and began to ask more questions along that vein. He kept the questions vague and casual – all revolving around what the cub would have liked to do if he could – and coupled them each with encouragement and when appropriate praise. The boy had a quick mind and a deeply felt set of opinions – both things that would have made living under Fredrick Chilton yoke rather difficult.

By the time the oven had dinged Matthew had become quite comfortable, the tense lines of his body relaxed as he slumped against the leather, his brown eyes deeply curious and attentive, practically hanging off every word Hannibal had to say. The boy dug into the food with the same ferociousness that he had that day in the hospital and Hannibal discretely gave him the majority, his own hunger sated by a full breakfast Will had made earlier.

Matthew hardly noticed, too intent on his food.

Afterwards Hannibal moved them closer to the his fireplace, a flick of the remote turning the gas on (gaudy, he much preferred wood but the building codes would not allow for it) and shuffled the cub into the chair closest to it. He kept his questions up until there was a steady flow of information – one way, naturally – and slowly the image of just who Matthew Brown began to paint itself.

He was very young for his age, his emotional growth stunted undoubtedly by years of growing up in an isolated bubble. Matthew was highly aware of this, embarrassed and apologetic for the holes in both his formal education and Roux culture, yet clever enough to hide or deflect away from them. Yet despite this, there was also a deeply rooted arrogance and pride – not necessarily bad traits to have in a young Dominant, but quite dangerous if they remained ungrounded. They talked into lunch – to which Hannibal treated them to some of Ezra’s left over stew from last night – and of which Matthew ate again with just as much gusto as he had earlier. The sight of such hunger was annoying and again Hannibal pushed a second helping onto the eager cub.

Afterwards, Hannibal was explaining some of the finer points of Lithuanian (he’d already ordered two primers and an entry level grammar book from a local bookstore with his tablet) while he watched Matthew fight to stay awake. It seemed to be a difficult battle – the cub was exhausted if the heavy bags under his eyes were anything to go by – and with a belly full of food, warmed by the insistent heat of the gas fire, Hannibal supposed it could be forgiven. Ever few seconds his head would droop forward, only to snap back up, blinking hard. After a handful of minutes of this, Matthew seemingly lost, going lax and limp. Hannibal stood quietly, reaching for a nearby afghan and draping it over the slumbering form. Matthew jerked at the contact, slivers of brown staring hazily up at him. He let out a murmur of denial, hands reaching to push the blanket away, but Hannibal shook his head.

“Sleep.” Hannibal admonished, stilling the cub’s movements. Matthew blinked heavily twice and then went still once more.

He picked up their dishes, putting them to soak in the sink as he mused on the strange, unlooked sense of protectiveness he felt towards the gangly youth. Perhaps it was a natural thing; Roux were after all immensely protective of all their young and his body was producing hormones at an unusually high rate, preparing him for his upcoming mating. Still, it would have made more sense is Matthew had been a prepubescent Submissive, not another Dominant. Perhaps it was just the grating idea of a Human like Fredrick Chilton raising - rather poorly - one of their own that was eliciting
such a response.

Hannibal shook his head, frowning as he watched how easily and completely Matthew slept. It was abnormal. A Roux cub, especially one so close to adulthood, shouldn’t be comfortable enough to sleep so soundly in the proximity of an unknown Dominant. It was hardly unheard of for adult Dominants to kill of unrelated cubs and Matthew had shown an appropriate amount of fear in Hannibal’s presence in their earlier meeting to be unaware of such a fact of life. It spoke not only of how poorly Matthew must have been feeling – how undernourished he truly must be, physically and emotionally – to sleep so quickly and trustingly in Hannibal’s presence.

Twelve years was a very long time to be separated from the guiding influence of an adult and it reflected harshly on Matthew. Hannibal doubted that the boy would be ready for what was to come after his Change. Perhaps if the next six years were spent in intense study Matthew may fair a better chance, but nothing could replace a childhood of instruction and observation. Simply put, Matthew was developmentally stunted; missing social ques and woefully unprepared to take part in the complicated and delicate world of adult Roux.

But before anything could be done, Hannibal needed to break whatever hold Fredrick had on the boy. The hatred Matthew held for the Human was poorly hidden (most likely even to Chilton) and he could only surmise that Chilton was somehow blackmailing the Roux to keep him so obedient. The matter of the blackmail was worrying, though it could just as easily be nothing at all. Fredrick had gained stewardship of Matthew at twelve – a young age for a Roux, who often took longer than their Human counterparts to mature emotionally – and it could simply be a case of brainwashing. Matthew may be held in check by something that a twenty-four year old Roux would have scoffed at, but was very intimidating to a twelve year old one.

Hannibal brought his tablet out again, sending an email to a college who worked in Family Services with the request that Matthew’s case file be sent to him. It was a stretch, but there was a chance that Matthew’s information had been scanned and uploaded when they moved from the old filing system to digital. Even if it hadn’t and was buried deep in a dark basement, his friend owed Hannibal a rather massive favor and he doubted she’d fail him.

A shrill ringing sound filled the small office about an hour into the nap and Hannibal rose without thought to silence it, digging through Matthew’s sweater with a frown of distaste – the thing was ragged and practically threadbare – before pulling out his cellphone. He pushed a side button, muting the call, unsurprised to see Chilton’s name on screen. The phone foolishly had no lock and Hannibal perused its contents unashamedly, finding several language learning apps, as well as a well-stocked Kindle one, and a few games. His contacts were few; two different numbers for the hospital, one labeled ‘Asshole’s House,’ charming, and Chilton’s office and mobile numbers. Hannibal put the ringer on silent, setting the phone on the table next Matthew before returning to his seat.

It was nearing four o’clock (and nearly twenty missed calls from Fredrick) when Matthew began to stir and Hannibal glanced up from his digest, an eyebrow raise as he watched him stretch languorously. Matthew let out a jaw cracking yawn, a hand coming up to rub at under his eye. Despite his nap, the cub seemed like he could use a few more hours, and for a moment Hannibal wondered if he was going to simply curl up on the chair and go back to sleep.

But then Matthew seemed to remember where he was all once, going very still as he stared at Hannibal from over his frozen hand, lips parting in blatant horror.

The light of the fire seemed to place up the animalistic features of Dr. Lecter and for one startling moment Matthew felt pinned by those strange, maroon eyes, like some misfortunate prey of a big cat. The young Dominant took a steadying breath, trying to beat away his mortification. “I fell asleep?”
How could he have fallen asleep? And in front of Hannibal Lecter, no less! How easily the other Roux could have snapped his neck – or done any other number of horrible things – and ended him. In fact, Matthew could hardly believe that the older Dominant hadn’t. Surely nodding off mid-conversation was considered very rude.

“You did,” Dr. Lecter answered, seemingly undisturbed as he set his tablet on a nearby end table, “quite soundly, too. I dare say you were in need of it. Did you sleep well?”

“I…yes.” Matthew stumbled, obvious off-kilter. “I apologize, I didn’t mean to…I mean, that was rude of me.”

“Think nothing of it,” he dismissed with a wave of his hand and Matthew felt some of the tension leave his frame. He may just make it out of this alive. It seemed as if Dr. Lecter was (somehow, wonderfully, miraculously) not offended by his impromptu nap. “May I ask if you have trouble sleeping?”

“Not when I get it,” Matthew said with a quirked smile. He always slept well when he got it, which was really wasn’t as often or as much as Matthew would like. Still he didn't usually sleep as hard as he’d slept just now – which was a queer but undeniable fact, and the heavy pull around his eyes and sour taste in his mouth was proof of just how out of it he had been. “I work a lot at the hospital.”

Which was an understatement; his schedule made even the most senior nurses blanch, but Chilton liked it and honestly it was better than staying at home and spending more time with the demanding Human.

“I see. Saving up for something special perhaps?” The older Dominant asked as he handed Matthew a still hot cup of tea. “Earl Grey, I find it particularly soothing in the mornings. I thought you may like a cup.”

“Oh…thanks.” Why was he always just giving things to him? Matthew couldn’t understand it. He felt his smile mute slightly, nervous. “Not really.” Most of his money went right back to Chilton, but damn it all if he was going to admit that. “We’re kind of understaffed right now is all. Lots of people get fired by Chilton. He can’t stand idiots. More quit,” he felt his grin perk back up, “they can’t stand an idiot either. He’s not very popular.”

Dr. Lecter chuckled quietly and Matthew glanced about as he sipped his tea, eyes falling on his phone. That was weird. He’d thought he’d left his phone in his jacket so not to appear rude. He reached out for it, flicking it on – and froze, mouth dropping open in horrified shock. “Nineteen missed calls? Oh shit – he’s going to flip.” Matthew panicked, jumping to his feet and sending an afghan tumbling to floor. What the – where had that come from? He picked it up quickly, apologizing as he folded it haphazardly and set it on the chair. He fumbled ungracefully to get his sweater jacket on in his haste, a finger flying across the screen as he typed an excuse to Chilton. The man would never lower himself to text back, but Matthew knew that he still read any sent to him. He spelled out something about his phone dying while he was at the library, praying Chilton would buy it as he made his way around the chair and towards the exit, worrying his bottom lip.

He was not in the mood for one of Chilton’s tantrums.

“Are you leaving?”

Matthew froze, head snapping back to stare at him. He’d somehow – impossibly – had forgotten the older Roux was there. “Yeah, I got to fly. He gets kind of crazy when he doesn’t hear from me right away. Um, thanks for everything Dr. Lecter. And again, sorry I fell asleep. I promise it wasn’t
because I wasn’t enjoying our conversation.”

“As I said, think nothing of it.” Dr. Lecter assured as he stood. “It is a shame you have to leave so soon, I’m meeting my uncle soon for dinner and I was rather hoping you’d join us.”

“Your…” Matthew gaped at him, torn between an unexpected want and a deep, biding need to get the hell away before another Lecter showed up. “I would have liked that, but I really have to go.”

“Matthew,” Dr. Lecter called out, his voice halting him mid-motion, “are you sure you don’t wish to stay?”

He…kind of did, it was so nice being with another Roux, not having to hide or fake shame for what he was, even if the idea of another Lecter was terrifying. But there was no way Chilton wouldn’t freak if he was any later than he was now. He started towards the door again. “I’m sorry, but I really do need to go. I don’t know what he wants, but he’s worse when I make him wait.”

“Matthew.” He froze once more, his car keys hanging limp from his fingertips, inches from the table they’d been resting on. “I cannot help you if you do not let me.”

Matthew slumped, leaning heavily against the table. “I…”

Dr. Lecter was suddenly beside him, his approach as silent as it was startling, and the cub jerked at his appearance. This close the older Dominant’s presence was everywhere and where all adult Dominants like this? He didn’t remember his sire ever feeling so powerful. It was simultaneously intimidating and somehow comforting, and a withered part of Matthew almost wanted to lean into the strong figure next to him, to bury his face in Dr. Lecter’s chest like he used to do with his sire.

Instead he pulled away, arms crossing unhappily. “I have to go.”

Why wasn’t he telling him? Matthew should just explain, than Dr. Lecter and Dr. Graham could stay as far away from Chilton as possible. There was no need for their lives to become as f*cked up as his own, especially not when they’d been so nice to him. But the words just didn’t seem to come, because Matthew didn’t want Dr. Lecter to know how stupid he’d been. Now that he was (slightly) sure that the older Dominant wasn’t about to end his existence at any moment, he’d really enjoyed today.

Once he told him…Dr. Lecter would disappear surely, the need to protect his new mate would override anything else. And he’d be too disgusted by the position Matthew had put them in to want to see the younger Roux again. Not that Matthew blamed him. He was disgusted too. He just – he just didn’t want this to end yet. It been so long since he’d been around another Roux…

“Alright,” Dr. Lecter soothed, “I certainly don’t want you to be in any trouble. I would like you come by and see me again, however. Tomorrow, on your lunch hour perhaps? I have nothing scheduled from noon to three, if that helps.”

“I…yeah, okay.” Matthew agreed, shoving his hands into his pocket. “I think I can make one work.”

He’d tell them about it tomorrow.

Yeah.

Okay.

Tomorrow.
“You’ve spoiled me,” William greeted as he sprawled out over his bed, phone cradled close to his ear.

There was a low chuckle. “Have I?”

“Yes.” The Submissive said with a sigh as he rolled onto his stomach. “I’m going to miss you tonight. Your body is unnaturally warm and it’s so cold for March.”

“I assure you my body heat is well within the normal range for a Dominant Roux,” Hannibal said, amused. “How was your day, darling?”

“Long.” Will admitted with a yawn. They’d spent most of the days in the woods, preparing it for Will’s heat. Years ago, when Will had first purchased his house, Ezra had come up and helped him build a cabin in the woods. Well, he said ‘cabin’ but in reality it was more like a shack. Abet a very nice shack, but a shack. It had a little window that looked out over a bubbling stream complete with a screen, cheap but well sanded wood floors, and a beaten old wood burning cast iron stove that Ezra had traded something to someone god knows where years ago in Louisiana, and a tin roof that made sweet little sounds when it rained.

When they’d first built it Will had scoffed at the idea of ever needing such a place, stunned at his father’s confidence and (as Will had thought at the time) rather blind opportunism that he’d one day need a mating den. Ezra had looked horribly smug as they’d hauled bundle after bundle to it today, and though he hadn’t said it, the ‘I-told-you-so’ hung heavily in the air all day.

Most of it was provisions; food stuffs and bottle water, all things that were would need little to no preparation besides a quick heat up on the stove. Wood – so, so much wood and didn’t Will’s arms just ache from chopping all of it? – for the stove and piles of blankets, quilts, and downy comforters for the bed, thick rugs for the icy floor. They’d even had to bring a mattress out, which had been an adventure to be remembered, the two Submissives having to take breaks every few minutes to try and figure out the best way to maneuver it through the dense wood, all while keeping it from touching the ground, the dogs a merry group underfoot.

But their hard work had paid off; the shack was completely stocked and actually appeared habitable. They’d be back in the woods tomorrow, though for a slightly more nefarious reason. While Will would be waiting in the warmth and relevantly safe shack, Hannibal would be required to track him through the woods – and through Ezra’s booby-traps, fake trails, and lord knows what other devious things his father had planned. The Hunt, his father had cheekily called it.

It was supposed to be the last and final test. It was some strange hangover from the old days, from before Humans had become truly settled and were more hunters and gathers than farmers, and one that Will was unsure that other Roux still followed – well, perhaps they did but had modified it, after all not everyone lived on the edge of a national park – but Ezra Graham was nothing if not a traditionalist.

Normally the task would be easy for a Roux of Hannibal’s stature, but under the influence of Will’s heat…well, when Hannibal found him it would be a very well deserved victory. And he had not doubt that it was a ‘when’ and not an ‘if.’ Hannibal was a fine Roux, Will doubted he’d ever meet another so fine, and he knew that his intended would find him. Will was supposed to spend the day in the nude, hot and bothered, taken to the edge by his own heat while he waited for his mate-to-be found them.

“A busy day in the woods?”

“Hannibal,” Will warned, but he only laughed.
“Don’t worry, I won’t ask.”

“Good, because Daddy said he’d skin me – and you – alive if he even suspected I was giving you hints.” Will chided as he stretched, toes curling contently under the warmth of his flannel sheets.

“I don’t need hints.”

Will’s eyes fluttered, cock twitching hungrily at the low timber of those sure words. “I know you don’t. I wish my heat was here,” he admitted, breathless as he pressed his hips down against his mattress, “I’m so tired of waiting.”

There was the sound of rusting (Hannibal sitting up? Perhaps lying down) and then a sigh. “I know, Will.”

“It won’t be long, though.”

“No, it won’t be.” Hannibal agreed. “I could smell your heat on you when I left this morning, building just under your skin. It was all I could do to leave you.” Will bit his lip, breath hitching as he ground harder against the mattress. “I can’t imagine how lovely you’ll smell when it’s on you,” the Dominant’s voice dipped even lower, “I wanted to bend you over the kitchen table and take you right there. I think your father knew.”

“Don’t mention Daddy right now,” Will panted, hips rocking his very awake cock harder.

“Are you touching yourself, William?”

“No, just – just against the mattress.” He flipped his pillow until it was lengthwise against his chest, wrapping his arms tightly around it as he carefully kept the phone balance against his shoulder and cheek.

“Are you? Are you grinding your little cock against your bed?” Will moaned, letting the phone tumble onto the pillow as he muffled the sound against it. Were they really doing this? Oh god, it looked like they were. “Are you wet, širdelė?”

“Not yet, I’m – I’m hard.” His hips were squirming though and Will could feel his hole spasm, the starts of aroused slick moistening it. He kept his eyes closed, trying to pretend that the pillow was Hannibal’s toned chest, that his mate was here with him, saying those dirty words into his ear.

“Undress.”

Will’s eyes snapped open, the illusion lost. “But it’s cold!”

Another low chuckle. “Just your bottoms then.”

“…okay.” Will kicked them free, shivering as his skin slid across the roughened flannel. “They’re off.”

“Mm, good.” There was a slick sound, followed by a distinctive squishing sound and Will felt his face flush, gut twisting with arousal.

“What are you doing?”

“What do you think I’m doing, Will?”

“Touching yourself,” he breathed out, hips grinding harder.
“Yes.” Hannibal all but hissed, the sound guttural. “Roll onto your back. Lift your legs up, if I was there I’d want to be able to see all of you. Up high, spread yourself.” There was a pause as Will obeyed, panting at the odd feeling, sheets spread wide over his knees. “Are you wet yet, darling?”

“God, yes.”

There was a grunt, the slick sounds growing more rhythmic. “Lick your hand, get it very wet. My mouth is very wet, do you remember?”

Will whimpered, hesitating for only a moment before he began to lick at his palm, and the sound his tongue made seemed overly loud in the quiet of his bedroom. He was careful to lick between his fingers, coating the lengths generously, as he would Hannibal’s cock, wishing violently it was the real thing.

“Did you do as I asked?”

“Yes,” Will managed, voice strangled as he watched in odd fascination as a long string of salvia connecting his lip to his thumb stretched than broke.

“How wet?”

“V—Very, very wet.” There was a vocalization of some kind, barely loud enough to be heard, and Will barely waited for Hannibal’s instructions before he was stroking himself, fucking up into his hand. “Oh, oh.”

“Darling,” Hannibal panted.

“What,” Will’s voice croaked and swallowed, licking his lips before trying again, “what are you doing?”

“Stroking myself; I like to play with the head, to pull the glans apart and watch my seed spill out from the slit.” Will whimpered; he could see the image as clear as if he was there. “Are you fingering yourself?”

“Yes!” Will cried, uncaring if he was loud as he dove four fingers inside, his other hand still glued to his dick.

“Are you very wet? I am, just the thought of you makes my cock weep. It’s everywhere, I’ll have to buy new pajamas at this point.” God, how could Hannibal still sound so composed? Breathless, aroused, but still so put together. “It’s such a waste – my seed only belongs inside of you. Down that creamy throat or inside your tight hole. You want that? After we’re mated I will never spill myself outside of you. I’m going to fill you with my sons, William, take you every night as you grow thick with them.”

“Yes, oh please.”

There was no mistaking the sounds in his room, nor what was happening in Hannibal’s. The Dominant was grunting almost every other sentence now and Will imagined Hannibal’s cock – that beautifully large, curved thing – thrusting up into his hands. Suddenly his fingers were not enough and Will looked around desperately, a slick hand snatching his hair brush from its place on his nightside table. He let out a deep, throaty moan as he slid the handle in, head snapping back as he immediately began to fuck himself with it.

“What have you done?”
“My brush,” Will choked out and there was an answering curse from Hannibal, “the one I told you about. Wish it was you. Want you here, want you inside me, want your knot plugging me up—”

“I’m close, Will.” Hannibal bit out, for the first time sounding harried.

“Oh god, me too.”

“Put the phone down.”

“What?”

“Put it down next to your hole,” the Dominant demanded roughly, “I want to hear you fuck yourself.”

Will whined, shoving the phone down between his legs as he sped up the brush, cock throbbing against his belly at the idea of just what Hannibal was hearing. He came abruptly, entire body locking up as his cock spurted weakly against his stomach. It took him an absurd amount of time to remember the phone from where it was lying weakly between his legs, but after a moment Will managed to pull it up to his ear.

“I love you.” Hannibal greeted, voice hoarse.

“I love you, too.” Will murmured, curling onto his side, uncaring of the various liquids that stained his lowers. “…there’s no way Daddy missed all that.”

“I’m afraid for once I am in the same boat, Robert’s room is across the hall.”

“My god, we’re ridiculous. Phone sex, what are we teenagers?” Will let out a bark of a laugh, muffling it only just in his pillow, smile growing wider as Hannibal joined in. He waited until the pleasant sounds had drifted off to add a soft, “I want you here with me.”

“Soon, darling.”

Not soon enough, he thought grumpily, but did not voice it. Instead he pulled his shirt off, using it to clean his belly and thighs the best he could before padding over to his dresser and pulling out a new one and a pair of boxers. He crawled back into bed, nose wrinkling at the now massive cold spot in the center of his bed. He scooted over to the very edge to avoid it. “Talk to me.”

“About what?”

“Anything.” Will sighed, eyes drifting shut tiredly. “I just want to hear you.”

“…did I ever tell you that I killed a bear? I was very young, only seven, and I was with my father and a few of his men. Lithuanian summers not that different from here, but the woods—”

Matthew was exhausted. He collapsed against his sofa, boneless, and felt so tired he could hardly keep his eyes open as he watched the lazy spin of his ceiling fan.

Luckily Chilton had bought his excuse of getting caught up at the library and not noticing his phone had died, but the Human had read him the riot act. He didn’t dare raise a hand to Matthew, but it was annoying as hell and a true test of his willpower not to snap the over glorified, pompous asshole’s neck every time he ranted and raved about how good he was to Matthew, about how he’d spoiled him, and maybe Matthew needed to spend more time at the hospital, maybe he didn’t need Matthew to kill that deceitful bitch that had negatively reviewed his last article, maybe he’d go through more
conventional means and *maybe* Matthew could just go hungry for another few weeks.

Fucking god, he wanted him dead *so badly.*

And perhaps some of the difficulty he was having with rolling over and presenting his belly tonight came from spending so much time with Dr. Lecter. The Dominant was easily everything Matthew ever wanted to be, and perhaps being around him had woken something long repressed inside of him. Matthew was meant to be so much more than this, he knew it. Hannibal Lecter had just reaffirmed that, reminded him of it.

There was a knock on the pool house door and the young Roux barely kept in his angry growl as he threw himself to his feet, stalking over to the fragile glass things and vowing if it was Chilton coming for round two he was going to rip his throat out, proof or no. But it wasn’t Chilton standing there but a private delivery service, which was weird because no one ever came to the pool house, they always went to the main house. But the delivery wasn’t for Chilton. It was for him.

Matthew signed for the box, the large thing balanced awkwardly in his arms, before glancing nervously at the main house. But Pavarotti (Chilton liked to blast opera when he was upset) was still blaring and none of the silk curtains had moved, and when Chilton did not suddenly appear, demanding red faced to know who had sent him something, and Matthew hurriedly stepped back inside, shutting the door and drawing the blinds.

He set the box on his small dining room table, eyeing it suspiciously for a moment before fishing out a knife to cut the tape away. He popped it open, eyes widening as he pulled out a woolen coat. It was nice. Thick and black, it felt warm and sturdy in his hands and Matthew perked up at the thought of wearing it in his shed during his smoke break. A pair of Burberry gloves and a matching scarf were tucked into its pocket and Matthew put the butter soft things on, flexing his hands before he wrapped the equally scarf around his neck and pulled the coat on.

Surely this couldn’t have actually been meant for him, even his name was on the delivery slip. So what if wasn’t? If these had been meant for Chilton he could pry them off Matthew himself, they were way to warm and comfortable to give up. It wasn’t like he had a hundred similar coats and gloves in his closet. But they *were* meant for him, Matthew realized with no small amount of surprise as he pulled a simple card from the coat pocket. The card stock alone was probably more expensive than anything that he owned and Matthew ran his finger relevantly over the engraved golden bee before flipping the card open. Bold but neat print was written on the inside.

Matthew,

*It is unfortunate you had to leave so soon, my uncle was quite saddened to have missed you. I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday at one o’clock. I’ve taken the liberty of buying your something more appropriate for Baltimore’s winters. Do try and take better care of yourself. The meal should still be warm, but if not place it in the oven at 350 for no more than five minutes. Be sure to remove it from the plastic first.*

- H

Sure enough, there was a warmer in the box and when Matthew unzipped it a heavenly aroma wafted out of it. A peak inside the tupperware revealed a thick steak, with generous helpings of mashed potatoes, and some sort of vegetable melody. A second tupperware was filled with a moist,
dewy chocolate cake. Matthew licked his lips, stomach gurgling hungrily.

Yet even with the food removed, the box was still not empty. The copy of Horace’s poems that Dr. Lecter had said he could borrow was resting at the bottom, along with several books about Lithuanian. Matthew moved the box, sitting at the table as he dug into the food eagerly, fork hardly leaving mouth as he cracked open the Lithuanian primer. Today was easily going to be the best he’d eaten in ages.

*I’m gonna get fat if this keeps up,* Matthew thought cheerfully as he chewed, *better save some for tomorrow though, just in case.*

Chapter End Notes

Eh, too much? Sexy time and Matthew fluff I mean? Porn always make's me like - uh, is this good? Because really, how can you tell if you're writing good porn? I was slightly nervous to write bemused!hormonal!unwillinglyparental!Hannibal, but that's what I did...so...yeah. I figure that Matthew would have missed some major developmental milestones, just like human children do when they're raised in isolation, so he's just not quite there for his age group. He will probably have the same attachment issues (overly or not at all) like they do. He needs a little extra help. Hope you guys liked!

See you next update.
Chapter Summary

“Of course you are.” Ezra said with a laugh, pressing their cheeks together, “this is no little thing we’re talking about.” His father spread his hands wide, gesturing out to the forest, “this is your first heat, this is your wedding, we are talking about here. If you weren’t nervous, then I’d be worried. Now, daylight’s burning. I’ve got to finish these last few traps, and while I do I want you to just sit and relax, and,” Ezra stood with a wink, twisting in a way that he was glancing at Will over his shoulder, his rump ridiculously accentuated before shaking it slightly, “enjoy the view.”

Chapter Notes

Un-betaed, and not my favorite chapter, but one needed to progress the plot. Which has been fighting me. For months. Dick story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Daddy?” Will asked from where he was carefully angling his BBQ pulled *pork* and radishes sandwich at a better angle to take a bit from, a strategically placed napkin keeping the meat from sliding free. “Don’t you think we may be going a bit…I don’t know, overboard?” He gestured back down the hidden path, which was heavily booby trapped. Once Will was in heat, the entire trail would be doused heavily in deer urine, making it impossible to catch the young Submissive’s scent and forcing Hannibal to rely on other means of tracking. “I mean, we do want Hannibal to actually find me.”

From where he was in the midst of setting up a log drop trap, Ezra looked up, puzzled. “Oh, I don’t think so. Maintaining a level of difficulty is sort of the point of a Trial, bunny.” The older Graham’s head tilted to the side. “Unless you think it’s too much for Hannibal.”

“No!” Will said quickly, far too loudly, and then had to duck his head to hide his mortified blush. “Of course not, I have full confidence that Hannibal would be able to navigate it safely to me. I guess I’m just…nervous? Or impatient maybe?”

Ezra’s expression softened, climbing over the gathered logs and reaching to brush a gloved hand through Will’s curls. “I know it’s hard when you’re facing something this big, but try not to worry so much. Besides, I *may* have talked a bit with Robert. Hannibal is no stranger to tracking in the woods, apparently he was quite the woodsman when he was cub.”

Will shook his head with a snort, fishing out his father’s sandwich as he plopped down into the camping chair next to his own. “You know the rules say you’re not supposed to be giving any hints.”

“Psh,” Ezra said with a wave of his sandwich laden hand, “as far as I’m concerned Hannibal’s already proven himself. The Trial is more like a…tradition, then a necessity at this point.” Will sighed, staring down at his half-eaten sandwich, unsure if he wanted to finish it or not. “Something
“I think I’m done,” Will said as he re-wrapped the sandwich and put it back in the cooler. “I don’t know what’s been going on with my appetite. One minute I’m famished and the next – usually when I’m in the middle of eating – I lose all interest.”

“It’s the heat, sweetie.” Ezra patted his hand comfortingy. “It’s best not to force yourself. Your systems will be out of whack until about a week or so after you heat, then it should right itself. Or not, if you’re carrying.”

“Is there a chance I won’t be?” Will asked, biting his lip in concern. That was just the worst outcome he could think of. The Submissive had always just assumed that a shared heat equated a pregnancy, but he knew that it wasn’t always so. Roux were not the most fertile creatures, which in part had a reason that their numbers were so few, and the pregnancy itself was a harsh experience, one that was incredibly draining on the Submissive’s body.

“There is,” Ezra said slowly, setting his sandwich down primly on his lap to give his full attention to his son, “I know I’ve taught you this when you were younger.”

Will looked away, nervous that his attentive father would see too much if he didn’t. He knew it wasn’t unheard of for a Roux to have a heat or two before falling pregnant, but the idea of having to wait so long was disheartening. As was the (admittedly illogical) feeling of failure the idea filled him with. Hannibal had been so perfect in his courting; he’d been gentle and conscientious, had shown himself to be a more than adequate provider and protector…Will wanted to be just as perfect in response. And even though he didn’t think Hannibal would be angry (disappointed, perhaps, but who wouldn’t be?) if he failed to start carrying after their first heat, Will knew he would be devastated with himself.

Gloved hands caught his jaw, forcing him to look back. “If you aren’t carrying by the end of your first heat, you do know that is no reflection upon you? As a rather new, yet very dear friend of mine stated so eloquently, we are defined by far more than our reproductive organs.”

Will let out a weary sigh. “I know. I don’t understand what I’m feeling. I’m excited for the heat, for what’s to come with Hannibal, yet I’m also…”

“Scared?”

“Yes,” the younger Submissive breathed out, leaning heavily into his father’s comfortable form. “I don’t know why I am.” He glanced over his shoulder at the small hut that Will had spent most of the day cleaning and outfitting with fresh linens, wood for the small pipe stove, and enough sealed water and meals to keep him and Hannibal comfortable for the duration of the his heat. “We’ve gotten everything taken care of and I know we’re ready, but I am.”

“Of course you are.” Ezra said with a laugh, pressing their cheeks together, “this is no little thing we’re talking about.” His father spread his hands wide, gesturing out to the forest, “this is your first heat, this is your wedding, we are talking about here. If you weren’t nervous, then I’d be worried. Now, daylight’s burning. I’ve got to finish these last few traps, and while I do I want you to just sit and relax, and.” Ezra stood with a wink, twisting in a way that he was glancing at Will over his shoulder, his rump ridiculously accentuated before shaking it slightly, “enjoy the view.”

“Daddy, gross.”

“Not gross, hot. Your old man’s still got it, you know.”
“Trust me, I know.” Will said dryly, rolling his eyes. “You haven’t let me forget it.”

Ezra just laughed, hands wrapping around the rope and giving a mighty pull, hoisting the stacked logs easily into the air.

Hannibal rolled his eyes at his uncle, who was walking the bounds of his office in a slow pace, face placid and yet somehow so **judging**. He waved his hand dismissively at the older Dominant. :-Go on, say it.::

::Say what, little wolf?:- He gave Robert a flat look, annoyance climbing even higher as the Roux stirred his coffee demurely. ::=Oh come now, Anya, I haven’t the faintest idea what I’ve done to deserve such a dower face:::

::Perhaps that I would have had an office three times this size - ::and grandeur- ::- if I had remained in France:::

::Well it seems I don’t have to state the obvious now do I?:- Robert said cheerfully, ::as it is you’re clearly doing just fine for yourself. Besides, I find myself starting to rather…appreciate what America has to offer. Especially lately:::

Hannibal hid his scowl behind cup; as if he wanted to hear of Robert’s conquests with Ezra. :-The boy will be here soon, do try and keep yourself from scarring him too much:::

::I assure you my only concern is for the cub’s wellbeing:.- There was a hesitant rap on the office door and Robert’s smile turned positively sharkish. :-Ah, speak of the devil:::

Hannibal fought an abortive move to answer it himself, foiling the motion into a series of barely there twitches, sighing as Robert strolled to the door and threw it open. As predicted, Matthew tentative smile and greeting froze at the sight of the looming Dominant, expression whiting out to one of fear and horror. He was clad in the winter outfit that Hannibal had purchased for him, the dark wool making the wash-out of his skin all that much clearer, and the Dominant felt his lips shift upwards in approval at how much better the smooth, clean lines of a designer cut fit him. Still, perhaps a hat should be added…it had begun to warm up but it was still unseasonably cold in the evenings.


::Uncle:: Hannibal warned lowly, standing from his desk and crossing the space in a handful of steps. “Good evening, Matthew. I’m glad to see that the coat was the correct size. Please, come in. Would like some coffee?” Matthew nodded hesitantly, eyes still locked on his uncle’s form. Hannibal took him by the elbow, sending Robert an annoyed look even as his uncle’s frown twitched into in amusement. “This is my uncle, Count Robert Lecter.”

“I’m…sorry,” Matthew said slowly as he unbuttoned his coat and loosened the scarf, but didn’t make any move to remove them. “I didn’t mean to be rude.” He was wearing a pair of scrubs underneath and smelled heavily of the asylum, clearly he’d just come from work, and Matthew shifted uncomfortably, hands balling slightly by his side. “I can’t stay for long, Dr. Lecter. I just wanted to – to thank you for the gifts.” Matthew looked down at his feet, face ashamed, and Hannibal watched, brows furrowed as the cub pulled the jacket and scarf off, holding it out as if for him to take. “The coat is really warm and…and nice.” He finished lamely.

Hannibal took the offered clothing, but didn’t move. “Is everything quite alight?”

“I was stupid,” Matthew said quickly, words almost mashing together, and his ears burned bright
with humiliation. “I wore them to work today and Chilton noticed, because…of course he did. I was really stupid to think he wouldn’t. He demanded that I return them.”

“Not because they were from me.” Hannibal mused, distaste for the Human so strong he could practically taste it, but he kept his tone neutral and light. “…no, you haven’t told him we’ve been meeting. He believes you have a rich lover, then? Perhaps an older one willing to buy you things.”

Matthew nodded, looking even more embarrassed and painfully aware of Robert’s presence in the room. “He doesn’t want me to be a whore.” He mumbled quietly. “Not that he's one to talk with the type of women he buys,” Matthew mumbled and Hannibal smirked, amused and with an utter lack of surprise at the idea that Fredrick would use prostitutes. Suddenly a pair of fierce eyes snapped up to look at him, hard and determined. “But I didn’t let him know it came from you. I wouldn’t let him see the card.”

“Very wise. It would only be counterproductive if he was to learn of our friendship at this stage.”

The word friendship seemed to strike the cub hard, his eyes widening comically before he ducked his head down with a shy, pleased smile. Hannibal glanced discretely at his uncle, fighting smirk at the way the older Dominant was staring at the cub in something like concealed horror. It was one thing to explain the situation, to discuss it openly and with the idea of evaluation, but it was another to see a cub of their own kind so culled by a Human master.

“We’re friends?”

“At least I would like to think so. Of course, I wouldn’t dare to presume if it were to go against your own wishes.”

“No,” the cub said quickly, “no, I’d like that.”

Hannibal gifted him with a warm smile, reaching out to place a hand on the boy’s shoulder. “Than that is what we shall be. Now you said you had to be leaving us soon?”

Matthew’s expression darkened. “I’m off duty and Chilton will be busy with Agent Crawford most of the night on the Gideon thing, but I don’t want to risk it. I’ll just head back to the house. I’ve got some cleaning I’ve got to get done anyway.”

“Nonsense,” Robert interrupted, a fierce scowl on his face and the cub jolted in surprise at the sudden reminder of the older Dominant’s presence. Matthew took a small, abortive step towards Hannibal, as if moving to seek his protection, before thinking twice about it. Still the move had been noted and it sparked that same strange, dense feeling of protection that had haunted Hannibal since their first meeting. “You’ll come to dinner with me and Hannibal. If Chilton won’t be home he can’t miss what isn’t there.”

“Oh no, I couldn’t possibly—”

But Robert had already plucked the coat and scarf from Hannibal’s hands. He tried not to garner too much amusement from Matthew’s panicky shocked look as his uncle slid the scarf around his neck, pulling it tight. “This is called a European Knot and it is the only way a gentleman wears his scarf. Now pay attention, I won’t be repeating myself. You fold the scarf in half at the middle, careful to align the edges. Hold the bend like so – bring the loose ends through, pull snug – and there, already you look half the sight you were.”

Robert shook the coat out, a look of revulsion on his face as he pulled out the pair of balled up gloves.
“Gloves are never just shoved into a pocket, nor rolled up into a ball like a half-skinned piece of hide. Gloves are removed one finger at a time and if you must put them in your pocket they are to be folded like so. A good pair of gloves does far more to complete an outfit than most imagine. Any Roux worth his salt will have at least two – in black and brown…this is a plaid, really, Hannibal? At times a third pair in navy will do if you feel the black is too formal and of course white – preferably goat skin – for formal events. Gloves should always be removed when shaking hands, unless it’s too cold…or the person particularly unpleasant.”

Hannibal turned away to hide the smile on his face, amused at both Matthew’s shell shocked expression and how his hands flew about in a fidget, unsure where to put them or what to do as Robert both lectured and dressed him. He almost wondered if he should give the boy a notepad to write it all down.

“This coat style is called paletot, and luckily for you there are very little rules on how it should be worn. You may button the top button or not, depending on the weather, but your shirt sleeves should never peak out of the bottom. Image,” Robert paused as he accepted his own coat and scarf from Hannibal, “is everything, after all. Don’t you agree?”

Matthew nodded, eyes wide.

“Now will you remember all that?” The cub nodded frantically but Robert shook his head as he eased his own gloves on. “Never mind, I shall purchase you the appropriate etiquette books so you may study them.”

It was like looking into a mirror, Hannibal mused as he ushered the still stunned boy from his office and looked the door. Though Hannibal had never been as lost as Matthew had with his noble origins, that entire exchange could have easily been from his own childhood. It meant little – certainly not that Robert was feeling any type of affection towards the cub, but if there was one thing that his uncle absolutely could not stand it was sloppiness. Even if Matthew was only going to be in their presence for handful of hours, Robert would ensure he looked the part. Still, though he he doubted that Matthew would see it the same way, his uncle’s impromptu lecture on proper dressage of outerwear was in its own peculiar way a brand of acceptance. Which boded well in getting the older Roux’s aid. Hannibal had no illusions that he would soon be too busy for the boy, especially with Will's heat and possible pregnancy coming and the type of single-minded, intense re-education that Matthew would require.

Hannibal may to be busy, but perhaps not Robert.

He would need to play his cards very carefully and very lightly. Neither Ezra nor Robert would react well if they thought they were being manipulated. An introduction to Robert was only the first step, and hardly the most important one. No, that lay with Ezra Graham. If done correctly, the Submissive would take one look at the pathetic form of Matthew and then Ezra's maternal instincts would take care of the rest. After that - well, after that Robert's protection and guidance would follow. Despite his own curiously conflicting feelings on their relationship, Hannibal had a full confidence that where Ezra went, Robert would follow. If his uncle was as serious about a mating as he'd claimed, he’d do whatever it took to maintain his new mate's happiness. His uncle would have no choice but to take Matthew in, and once he was a member of his house, pride alone would force Robert's hand in correcting Matthew's deficiencies.

But first, Hannibal had to make sure that his uncle's oppressive presence didn't scare the cub to death.

Matthew wasn’t quite sure what was happening.
He walked a pace behind the older Dominants, listening as they drifted between English, French, and Lithuanian. He’d gone to his appointment with the intentions of returning the gifts and cutting off further contact – if only to protect both Dr. Lecter and his mate from Chilton’s greedy hands. And yet here he was, first climbing into the back of Dr. Lecter car then walking behind him and up the stairs to his home for dinner, wrapped up tightly in the very gifts he’d meant to return.

It was…bewildering, to say the least.

Matthew almost wanted to object again, but Count Lecter (seriously, he was a frickin’ Count, Matthew didn’t even think those still really existed anymore) was more than slightly terrifying. Matthew almost didn’t want to take his coat off at all when they entered into Hannibal’s impressive entryway, concerned that he’d do it wrong and receive another lecture. On how he dressed. Like he was five years old and still struggling with how to work his zippers and ties his shoes. Being the sole subject of Count Lecter's - frankly intense and overwhelming - attention had been odd. Not bad, just odd. It was as if it was the first time that someone had ever actually looked at him and seen Matthew, and god knows that Chilton hadn't given enough of a shit to correct him on how he dressed.

Hannibal was watching him expectantly, a hand out for his coats, and so Matthew carefully removed his jacket and scarf, a weary eye following Count Lecter as he wandered off, still talking in Lithuanian at a lazy pace. He took his time on his gloves, slowly pulling them off each finger before folding them and tucking them into his pocket, and tried his very best to ignore the knowing look Dr. Lecter was giving him as he did so.

“My uncle can be a quite utilitarian when it comes to manners and etiquette, especially with cubs. A reflection I suppose of those old eastern block mentalities.” Hannibal said in passing as he hung Matthew’s jacket up. “I wouldn’t take it to heart.”

“No, it’s fine. It’s good to know, no one ever told me anything like that before.” Matthew said quietly and was only slightly surprise he meant it, eyes darting towards the area where Count Lecter had disappeared. “Is it really alright that I’m here? I’m not like imposing or anything, am I? I don’t want to interrupt any family time.”

“I would not have invited you if I did not wish you here.” Hannibal assured him as he led them into a giant kitchen and guided him to sit at the small eat in table. "As I told you before, my uncle was very eager to meet you.”

Matthew hardly believed that to be the truth, which he could hardly be blamed for by the way Count Lecter snorted as he rejoined them, a tray of sausage and crackers in one hand. “Have some,” the eldest Dominant said as he laid it down on the table between them. “It’s quite good, my nephew is an excellent chef. It’s from a rather portly customs agent that had some rather peculiar prejudices against foreigners given his occupation.”

“Oh yeah, thanks.” Matthew pulled one of the meat laden crackers, taking a hesitant bite of it. It was ridiculous; he felt like he was a toddler having tea with the queen. If the impromptu coat lessen hadn’t been embarrassing enough (and the gloves, oh man, the glove thing) Matthew found himself concerned about how to eat the crunchy snack without looking like some sort of back water bumpkin.

If either Roux was aware of his discomfort they said nothing – or much more likely simply ignored it – and the two engaged in a cheerful conversation about a new gallery they were going to visit over the weekend (of which Matthew knew nothing), and about the opera they’d seen the night before (of which Matthew really, seriously knew nothing) and the young cub was starting to really feel out of his depth as he nibbled on his cracker and sausage, eyes flickering from one Dominant to the other as they talked.
They were such powerful Roux; the two had such presence in the room that left Matthew feeling simultaneously freaked out and awed, intimidated and envious. Maybe it was because they were nobility? His memories of his father hardly carried such a presence, but then again it had been his dad. Matthew had never felt frightened or awed by either of his parents. He was embarrassed to say that he’d probably eaten more of the crackers and sausage then both of the Lecters combined, but he was still so hungry and everything tasted so good. Weirdly, the strangest thing happened as the conversation carried on; occasionally they would stop for his input or opinion and despite the fact that Matthew was sure he sounded like an ass on most of his responses – because lord knows he didn’t know what the hell he was talking about half the time – both Dominants seemed to really listen to what he had to say, providing gentle admonishments or corrections when he was wrong or just as brief acknowledgements when he’d made a fair point. Unbelieving, Matthew found himself relaxing, maybe even enjoying himself.

By the time dinner was being served – a handmade soup that looked like something out of a cooking magazine centerfold but Hannibal insisted was one of his more ‘low-brow’ attempts – Matthew was at ease enough to give his own opinions on the translation of the Horace poems Hannibal had lent him. His knowledge of Latin and his burgeoning forays into Lithuanian seemed to surprise Count Lecter and Matthew did his best not to show how the elder Lecter’s approval made his pride grow. The soup was amazing; some sort of lemony dill base filled with vegetables and chunks of perfectly seasoned meat served with warm, gooey soft garlic bread, and after dinner they stepped out on Hannibal’s back porch (a wide thing that overlooked an expansive garden for a neighborhood so close to the city) and shared a tumbler of bourbon and a cigar – though Matthew was not offered the latter.

Matthew tried not to look as out of place as he felt as he sipped the rich liquor, but he felt so dwarfed by the Dominants on either side of him. Still he was enjoying himself, so much so that he allowed himself the same mistake he’d made the last time he’d relaxed around Dr. Lecter; he forgot the time. His cellphone jolted angrily in his pocket and Matthew felt his stomach drop even before he unlocked the screen and read the messaged.
No punctuation, no capitalization. Just ‘where are you.’ Oh shit, Chilton still wasn’t supposed to be home for at least another hour, but even so Matthew knew he’d stayed way longer than he’d meant to. God he was in for it when he got home. There was no way that Chilton wasn’t going to believe he hadn’t been out ‘gallivanting’ with the sugar daddy he thought Matthew had. He groaned, rubbing at his forehead. Then went any chance for hunting this weekend at all. Good thing he had eaten so much tonight, even if it did make him look like a pig, since that was probably the only thing that Matthew was going to get to eat for some time.

“Matthew?” Hannibal asked, voice concerned.

“I have to go.” He said, pushing off the steps, “Chilton came home early, I – I have to go now.”

“Ah, yes, Chilton.” Count Lecter purred around an exhale of smoke. “That’s your Human owner, correct? Is this how you live your life? He tugs at your leash and you coming running?”

“He’s not my owner!” Matthew denied loudly, even as he felt his cheeks heat in humiliation at the truth in the title. “Look, you don’t understand. It’s complicated.”

“I would hope so,” Count Lecter said flatly, “for him to make you jump to so eagerly. Does he hit you?”

“No, of course not.”

“Fuck you, then?”

“What?” Matthew gaped, utterly repulsed by the mere idea. “Of course not. I would never allow
that.”

“Mm, so you say.”

He fumed, hands flexing angrily by his side. The emotions he was feeling were complicated; a mix of humiliation and sadness, coupled with a fierce hatred not only for Chilton but for Count Lecter, who dismissed what Matthew was trying to do so easily. There was no way he could know that Matthew was trying to protect them – protect their whole race – but how little he thought of him was making the young Dominant’s vision bleed red. Especially with how nice the evening had been going. Who had Matthew been kidding? He’d never fit in with the Lecters, he was an idiot to think they’d even tolerate his presence out of anything more than pity.

“Uncle.” Hannibal warned, “I’m sure that Matthew has his reasons.”

“Oh, I’m sure.” Count Lecter took another hit of his cigar. “Reasons I’d love to hear. Let the cub explain why he’s whored himself out to a Human. Tell me, is that why he was so angry at the idea of you having a lover? Is he afraid to share? Perhaps that’s why he adopted you so young – Humans can be so debased in their sexual perversions. Perhaps it’s for the best your parents are dead, at least this way your Sire doesn’t have to see his Dominant son bending over –”

“I’m no one’s whore and don’t you dare talk about my father!” Matthew snarled, eyes narrowed, shaking with his anger. “You have no idea what I’ve had to do for – for all of us!”

“Oh, I’m sure. Getting on your knees is quite the sacrifice.”

“He knows, you rude, arrogant – he knows what we are! He took me for all these scans and tests when he got me, built up whole profiles on Roux biology. And if anything happens to him or I don’t listen he’ll publish it. I’m just trying to protect you, all of you, you ass!”

He saw the alarm that bloomed on both Dominants faces (serves them right, he thought darkly, they should damn well be alarmed) before turning on his heel, frustration making his body tense and his shoulders sit high. Matthew stormed down the steps, set to stalk out of the garden and return home to lick his wounds – and never, ever go near either Lecter Dominant again – and let out a startled sound as he stepped onto the icy cement and his foot flew out from beneath him.

Hannibal let out a curse, dropping the cigar as he dove forward – too late to keep the flustered cub from bashing his head against the wrought iron railing, but quick enough to keep him from an even more painful landing against the cement stairs. He caught Matthew, balanced awkwardly on separate frozen stairs, the boy’s unmoving body a heavy weight in his arms. He sent his far-to-amused looking uncle a glare.

::Well, at least the boy has spirit.::

::Was provoking him really necessary? He would have told us in his own time.::

Robert shrugged. ::Patience was never one of my stronger virtues, nephew, and it’s hardly my fault if the boy lets himself be worked up so easily.::

::He is younger than he appears, mentally a child —::

::Who you are currently allowing to bleed out in your backyard. Bring him inside and see to his head, then we will discuss how to handle this Chilton.::

Hannibal sighed, annoyed at rather age-old tendency of his uncle to take all his carefully laid plans
and highjack them. ::This could have been done in a manner that would have traumatized the boy less,:: he growled out as he maneuvered Matthew up the stairs in back to the house. ::This information – while upsetting – has existed for years. A few more days would have done no one any harm and would have allowed for Matthew for a more therapeutic resolution to this mess.::

Robert snorted. ::Once William’s heat hits, rescuing wayward cubs and their 'therapeutic resolutions' will be the least of your concerns. Even more so after Will is with cub. No, this is something that must be handled immediately if it is something you wish for to be done at all. Ezra believes the heat will strike any day now, he half expected it to begin today..::

Hannibal froze, Matthew’s weight forgotten as he stared off at nothing. Almost immediately his mind was over taken with the image of Will caught in the midst of heat, body shaking and skin flushed, his hole soaked and open, just begging for Hannibal to knot –

Fingers snapped in front his face, a smirking Robert watching him with shrewd eyes. ::Such daydreams are best left for private – where they can’t assault my nose. Besides, the cub is bleeding all over your vest. ::

::As if I didn’t have to scent you and Ezra’s activities for days afterwards.:: Hannibal snapped with little heat, refusing to be embarrassed at the heavy scent of arousal he’d leaked into the air. ::Do something useful and get my medical kit. And call Ezra. We’ll need him and Will here tonight if they can be spared.::

Chapter End Notes

Robert’s a little shit, lol. Next chapter will be the last one before Will's heat hits and will pretty much solely focus on Matthew, Hannibal, and Robert. Poor Chilton doesn't know what's coming, lol. Hope this didn't disappoint, I know I kept you all waiting for a long time. I don't know why I got hit so freakin' hard with writers block (for all of the Roux series) but I did. I needed to get this chapter out to get the plot moving and I probably rewrote it a whopping five or six times.
Chilton’s house was a gaudy thing, Hannibal noted from where he stood in the Human’s kitchen, eyeing the white (really, how out of date) cabinets and mismatched marble countertops. He wrinkled his nose against the heavy smell of potpourri, bringing a gloved finger out to run along a dusty strip of countertop with disgust. And Matthew said he cleaned regularly, Hannibal tisked. He looked up as Robert entered the room, a thick folder in his hands.

::I found it.::

::So you did.:: Hannibal mused, reaching out to take it. He flipped through the folder, expression growing more thunderous as he read the reports. ::We will have to kill them all,:: he said as he memorized the name of the doctors and lab technicians, ::and anyone they may have told. This will take much longer than I thought.::

Which was a prospect that the Dominant did not relish, not with Will's heat nearly on their doorstep. Hannibal itched to be close to his intended mate. The idea of spending so much time away from his Submissive - his Submissive, who was this very moment in Hannibal's house, undoubtedly smelling ripe and sweet with pre-heat, made his nerves fray even further. Hannibal did not like it. He did not like feeling so out of control. The waiting was driving him mad and it had only been a handful of days. What would he feel like if Will's heat didn't come for a full week? Hannibal didn't know if he'd survive it - or if Robert would.

::Don’t you worry about that.:: His uncle said as he leaned against the refrigerator, expression unpleasant. ::Ezra and I will handle that. In the coming month all I want you to focus on nothing but putting a cub in William.::

::Uncle.:: Hannibal admonished softly, though the sound was not without humor. ::My, you’re not eager to see the Lecter line continued at all, are you?::

His uncle shrugged, pushing off the fridge. He closed the small space between them and Hannibal couldn’t help the tension he felt gather in his frame, even though he knew that Robert would no more
hurt him then he would cut off his own hand. Being around another Dominant was always trying, even if they were blood related, especially so since Hannibal was courting. His own hormones were running rampant in his system, gearing him up for the prospect of entering a rut once Will’s heat scent triggered it, and he was filled with the conflicting urges to protect and fuck, to fight and kill.

Robert reached out and Hannibal went completely still, eyes narrowing and feeling as if he was a rubber band stretched tight, ready to strike out at any moment, as soft leather grazed across his forehead, pushing an errant bang out of his face. ::...I am not long for this world.:: his uncle said softly, squashing the violent feelings out of sheer shock alone, ::and I would see you content and happy before I left it. I could not bring myself to face your father if I did not.::

Hannibal felt something in his throat swell, the disagreeable and practically foreign feeling of melancholy making it hard to swallow. Despite everything, it seemed that Hannibal had never really given any true thought to how old his uncle was becoming until he'd come to visit, and the younger Dominant felt no small amount of guilt at the thought. If he had never meet William, if Robert had never come out to observe their courting, would he have ever had really realized how close he was too loosing him? Or how lonely Robert truly was? He reached out slowly, his fingers curling ever so lightly around the dangling hem of Robert's sleeve, the plastic of the suit crinkling under the pressure.

::You speak as if you are on death's door.:: Hannibal grumbled, uncomfortable with the depth of his feeling, ::I think you have more time yet, if for no other reason than to stay around and annoy me.::

Robert smiled at him, the wrinkles that were unnoticeable normally pulling around his lips and eyes. ::Perhaps, little wolf.::

There was the sound of a key in a lock, the creak of the front door opening, and both Dominants froze. They stepped away from each other silently, matching set of Cheshire grins bright in the muted room before both disappeared into the darkness.

Will watched, amused, as his father fluttered about and fussed around the sleeping cub. Matthew’s forehead had already begun to take on a nasty bruise above his eyebrow, the flesh dark and hot to the touch, raised slightly around a small cut from where he’d struck his head. He looked small and young, though most of that could be because everyone looked younger when they slept, and that Hannibal’s guest bed was giant, dwarfing the sleeping figure.

“Ninety-nine point five,” Ezra muttered, shaking the thermometer that he’d had held wedged in the unconscious boy’s mouth, “at least he doesn’t have a temperature.” Will nodded in agreement, smoothing the heavy duvet that was draped over the still form. Roux temperatures always tended run higher than Humans, and Will couldn’t count the times that people thought he’d had a low grade fever because of it. Across from him Ezra sighed. “But if he doesn’t wake on his own in an hour I’m going to wake him, just to be sure he doesn’t have a concussion.”

“Come on, daddy, the coffee should be ready by now.” Will plied, nearly dragging the concerned Submissive from the room. It took all of his willpower not to snort or laugh at the worried look his father threw over his shoulder as they left. Ezra was a natural worrywart and that came out even stronger when cubs were involved. Even Human children found nothing but a caring paternal force waiting for them when Ezra was around, so deeply ingrained was his maternal instincts.

As predicted, Hannibal’s ridiculously expensive coffee machine had finished doing…whatever the hell it did, and a pot was waiting for them. Will made it the way they both liked it – no cream, three spoons of sugar, and pressed one into Ezra’s hands. “I’m sure he’ll be fine,” Will said as he led them over to Hannibal’s kitchen table to sit, “I’m more concerned about Hannibal and Robert.”
Only the elder Lecter had been waiting for them when they’d entered the house. Hannibal had already been in his car, waiting in the street, and the two only had a handful of moments to stare longingly at each other before Ezra had tugged him inside. With Will’s heat being so close, their contact would be minimal – preferably none at all – until it hit. Will missed his Dominant.

It was an absurd thought; they’d only been separated for three days, but it was what it was. His heat was close. Will could feel it lurking just around the corner, ready to overwhelm him, and his body was reacting accordingly. His stomach cramped painfully, his lower back aching as his insides twisted and tensed, and everything felt far too hot. But anytime Will tried to take off his sweater or sneak out into the bite of the early spring air, Ezra would appear out of nowhere and herd him back inside or tug the woolen thing down. To add insult to injury, Will was also wearing a pad. The thing sat awkwardly in his underwear (briefs, not Will’s usual choice of boxers, which only added to his discomfort) and was an unfortunate necessity; until his heat struck, the Submissive would occasionally bleed as his systems geared up for their fertile time.

Will was so uncomfortable it was almost a joke. He sighed, his discomfort obvious as he shifted in his seat, trying to find a way to ease the pressure he felt in his lower belly. On top of everything, Will was filled with worry for the Lecter Dominants. When Robert had explained just what Chilton had done, Will had actually been stunned into silence. So had Ezra, which was truly a feat. Robert had a plan though, as did Hannibal, and after promising to handle it Robert had pressed a fleeting kiss to his father’s cheek – but only nodded in Will’s direction, he knew better then to try and touch him so close to his heat, Ezra would have ripped his hands off – and left.

It had been two hours since then, two hours with no word. Will tried not to worry, but it was hard. He let out a soft huff into his coffee; maybe he was more like his father than he thought. Ezra watched him from over his own cup, both elbows resting crudely on the table top as he watched him.

“Try not to worry so much, sweetie. I’m sure they’re doing fine.” Ezra reached across the table, taking Will’s hand in his own and squeezing tightly. “This will all be over soon; an unpleasant memory that will fade in the face of your heat. Don’t you worry about Chilton, Robert and Hannibal will handle that. We just need to have faith.”

“I know,” Will grumbled, bringing a hand up to rub at his jaw in irritation. “I know that they’re more than capable of handling themselves. I just…I don’t know. Everything just feels so off kilter. My heat’s going to start any moment and here we are, sitting in my intended’s kitchen, tending to a developmentally stunted cub whose been raised by a man whose apparently been threatening to expose us for years. How can I possible be calm right now?”

Ezra sighed, shrugging, and for once at a loss of how to comfort him. Or perhaps he just knew that he couldn’t. This close to his heat, Will’s anxiety was out of control and there was little either one of them could do about it. It would help if there was a quiet place he could retreat to, like his bedroom or the woods that he knew so well, but Matthew’s health took priority over that, hands down. The poor cub, Will couldn’t imagine what he’d had to go through these past couple of years. To lose your parents and then to be adopted by someone like Chilton, to be forced into servitude when he should have been happy and carefree, going to college and living and learning about life…it made something inside Will burn hotly with hatred.

He vowed that his cubs would never have something like that happen. If Hannibal and himself died, Will would make sure that Ezra or Robert took them. Or, if it came to it and both elderly Roux were dead, he would ensure that Spencer and Derek took them. He and Spencer texted frequently and had quickly become friends, far quicker than Will had thought possible, and for someone who had struggled to relate to his Human peers for the entirety of his life, that in itself was precious.
Oh, Will knew better than to think that they’d ever do anything more than grab coffee or lunch, or perhaps the occasional shopping trip together. If they were truly lucky, they may manage a dinner or some other get together with the Dominants involved once a year or so. Dominant Roux were clearly not meant to be together in small spaces, nor for any extended period of time, but why did that mean that Submissives couldn’t?

Will leaned back in his seat with a frown, pondering the thought. In fact, why did it matter how frequently they saw each other if they were only ever alone? If Spencer never brought Derek to their get togethers and Will never brought Hannibal, was it any real great harm? As much as he loved his daddy (and Will did, quite a bit) there was something so nice about the teasing text messages he and Spencer exchanged. Something so fulfilling. Why should the Submissives have to suffer from territorial issues if they never involved their mates or overtook each other’s homes and property?

And who was to say that it hadn’t been like that once, when Roux were more in number? Before they’d become so scare that Hannibal could claim the entirety of the East side of Baltimore as his territory, there used to be whole colonies of Roux, gathered together and living in close (well, what counted for close among their kind) proximity. Why couldn’t they form something like that now? Even if these communities were consisted solely of Submissives meeting together once a month for coffee and cakes, it would still be better than what they had now.

If something like that had existed when Matthew was a cub, you could pretty solidly bet that he wouldn’t have ended up in foster care at all, much less in Chilton’s hands. In fact, something like that – something like a social and social work minded community – was needed now more than ever. They were so few in number; Roux were certainly not invincible. Though they were hardier and more long lived then their Human counterparts, they could die from illness or injury just as easily. There could very easily be other cubs like Matthew, struggling to make it on their own or among Human families.

If every major city had a…a lifeline of sorts, of Submissives than there was a better chance that no one would fall through the cracks again. Why, in Baltimore alone there was already two – he and Spencer – and Spencer’s mate’s family consisted of several Submissives who were spread out in major cities across the South. And Robert had already mentioned that he knew the Specters, two sets of mates who controlled two separate boroughs in New York. If Will reached out and explained his idea, they could have a very wide reaching and thorough net. If someone couldn’t take an orphaned cub in one city for whatever reason, they could reach out to another, and another, until they found an appropriate home.

Will sat back in his seat, pre-heat pains forgotten.

And surely the other Submissives would know of others, through their siblings or their siblings mates, and through chance encounters with other Submissives in other cities. And it could be about more than just cubs. If a Roux got caught, he could reach out and – if he was lucky – use the network to escape and go into hiding. And if more Submissives knew each other, they could introduce their cubs to each other, especially when they came of age, and encourage matings. If they did this right, this could be the start to boosting their numbers. Matings could happen younger if they weren’t just counting on randomly running into each other or the off chance that a Roux would catch the news and see sight of a Submissive’s courting kill. And younger matings could mean more cubs, which in turn would mean larger families and…

He could…he could do this, Will realized with a strange feeling of awe. He could make this happen. This could…this could change everything.

Across from him, Ezra was watching him intently. “Bunny? Something on your mind?”
Will swallowed, took a deep breath, and told him.

Ezra’s mind was reeling, as it had been for the past few hours since Will had told him of his plan. He stepped into the cub’s room, moving quietly across the wood floors as he reached out and checked Matthew’s cheek. Still no fever. Ezra let himself fuss over the blankets, making sure the still boy was tucked in, before stepping back. His mind was still going in circles, caught by his son’s words. Pride warred with stunned incredibility in his chest. Will’s idea was hardly a bad one, but could something like that be implemented? While Submissives were more easy going then their Dominant counterparts when it came to interactions, all it would take was one wrong move or perceived insult to set off a blood feud, and they were so few in number already...

But wasn’t it the fact that they were so few in numbers why something like this ‘social network’ that Will was talking about be necessary? Perhaps Ezra was just too old, too caught up in the old ways – the very same ways which had helped drive their numbers so low – to really see and grasp the idea.

Ezra let out a huff, a small smile on his face. He’d never been so proud of his bunny as he was now. If Will could pull it off…well, maybe Ezra wouldn’t have to die so worried. And he was worried. Now that he had found Hannibal for Will it had lessened to some extent and the Submissive was more than content with the knowledge that he’d be leaving his bunny with a mate and children on the way. But what of his grandchildren’s fate? Of his great-grandchildren? What world would they live in? To what extent would their numbers continue to fall?

It was something that he vowed to talk about with Robert as soon as he could. The idea, while risky, held more than enough merit. And Robert knew a large number of Roux – either doctors, bankers, or lawyers – who served as keystones for the larger Roux community. This…this could be done, Ezra realized with a sharp intake of breath. This could actually be done if handled correctly. They’d have to tweak the rules a bit and the Submissive knew that there would be some (probably old farts like himself, remnants of the older generations) that wouldn’t like it, but it could be done.

In his pocket his cellphone vibrated softly and Ezra leaned over, pressing a gentle kiss to the uninjured side of Matthew’s forehead before stepping out into the hallway, shutting the door until only a crack of light from the hallway illuminated it. He pulled his phone out, a happy smile pulling at his lips as he saw Robert’s name. He answered it with a hushed voice, moving further away from the door. “Hello, darling. How’s the hunting?”

“It went rather well, Hannibal’s finishing with him as we speak.” Robert’s voice was like a balm to his ears, and Ezra allowed himself one long moment to simply enjoy the peace it installed him, marveling at how quickly and well their relationship had developed. But then again, neither he nor Robert were young bucks. They were old and they knew it, just as they knew what they wanted in life, and both were too tired for games. It was sheer luck that their wants aligned as well as they did. “It turns out that there are no other copies. Chilton was too nervous that someone would go ahead and publish the information and take all the glory of finding the first true sentient race other than Humans.”

Ezra sighed as he stopped in front of another bedroom door. Poor Matthew, all these years he’d been living under a threat that was far smaller than he’d realized. “Well, that’s one headache taken care of at least. Will you two be home soon?”

“Perhaps another hour or two. I’ve decided to let Hannibal have a little bit of fun,” Robert admitted ruefully, “he and the good doctor apparently have had quite the history together, and he’s been so wound up lately. It’ll be a good way to work it out of his system.”

Ezra hummed softly, quietly pushing a door open. He was almost immediately struck with
Hannibal’s scent, so thick in the room that it was like a physical force, and eyed the sight of his son, naked for one of Hannibal’s undershirts and his briefs, laying spread eagle across the covers, chest rising and falling in rapid succession, expression utterly miserable. “You may want to hurry him a long a bit.”

“Oh?”

“Will’s in heat.”

There was a long, meaningful silence on the other end of the line. “Do you have time to get him home?”

“Most likely, but I can’t bring myself to try and make him.” Ezra admitted, crossing the space to sit on the end of the bed, hands carding through sweat slick locks. “He’s only in the first stage, but it is his first. It’s hit him faster than any other will.”

“The Trial?”

“By my accounts Hannibal’s already fulfilled it with Tobias.” The Submissive said softly, trying to ignore the annoyed tug at the thought of his cleverly planned out obstacle course in the woods, and smiled gently at his son as fever bright eyes turned to look at him.

“Hannibal?”

“Soon, darling,” Ezra said, hushing Will like he was a much younger Roux, stroking his cheeks with the back of his knuckles. “Bring him home, Robert. I don’t like seeing my baby like this.”

 “…I’ll send Hannibal ahead. It won’t take me long to finish this and scrub the house. We can use Chilton’s meat as a stand-in until we can gather the supplies from Will’s home.”

“Sounds like a plan.” Besides him Will let out a low groan, curling tightly in on himself as both hands pulling at his hair. Ezra worked on free, grasping it tightly in his own. “Hurry.”

“He’ll be there soon.” A heartbeat of silence, “you’ve done well, Ezra. He’s ready.”

“I hope so,” the older Submissive murmured as the line went dead, trying to squash the concern bubbling in his chest, “I truly do.”

Chapter End Notes

I know it’s short, but it needed to be a stand alone chapter just for the idea that Will proposes and to tie up Chilton and Matthew. There will be two more far longer chapters of heat, and then two more for an epilogue. And then that’s it; the end.
Heat: A Long Awaited Mating, Part 1

Chapter Summary

There are things that his father had done to try and prepare Will over the years for the moment his heat would hit. He realized now, as he panted open mouthed into Hannibal’s ridiculous high-count sheets, that they had all been in vain. Because nothing could have ever prepared Will for this.

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, so sorry for the wait! This chapter fought me like you wouldn't believe and real life has been super, super crazy. My job is very demanding and often when I get home, I don't have a lot of energy to much other than decompress. I appreciate your guys patience and I swear I haven't forgotten this series or story. But without further ado, here is chapter one of the long awaited heat.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There are things that his father had done to try and prepare Will over the years for the moment his heat would hit. He realized now, as he panted open mouthed into Hannibal’s ridiculous high-count sheets, that they had all been in vain. Because nothing could have ever prepared Will for this.

It felt like his entire body was rebelling against him. It had started with the spotting; just a small amount, little dots of red that he hadn’t even really noticed on his boxer briefs. With everything that had been going on, Will hadn’t even put two and two together to realize his body was officially in pre-heat. And then the blood began in earnest – flowing from him enough for Will to employ a pad. But Matthew was injured and Hannibal was handling Chilton and…well…the Submissive had thought he’d had more time. Preheat was supposed to be days, not hours.

But then the cramps had hit, terrible cramps that felt like someone had punched through his hips and into his insides to twist and pull, to rend apart his uterus. Sharp, biting pain that stole his breath. And with the cramps, came nausea and a hectic fever that seemed to be unquenchable. Ezra had rushed him upstairs, had squirrelled him away in Hannibal’s bed – stripped naked and surrounded by the Dominant’s scent.

It was the sweetest, cruelest torture imaginable.

To be surrounded by his intended’s scent while the man was still so far away! Will cried out, hands tightening around the sheets and yanking as he dug his hips fruitlessly against the mattress. The cramps had finally passed, but in their stead was the worse type of ache; a clawing hunger, a throbbing want that made his leaking hole clench and unclench around nothing. Will ached to push something inside him – something, anything – to ease the ache, but he needed his hands to grip the bed so he could have enough leverage for his cock. Hannibal’s sheets were undoubtedly comfortable to sleep in – like lying on a silky cloud – but they were to slick to provide any type of real stimulation, especially as coated as they were with Will’s fluids.
And Will was leaking, seemingly from everywhere. Slick slid in lazy torrents from his hole, colored pink by the occasional spurt of blood while his cock seemed to weep endlessly, and despite his best efforts to maintain some sort of composure, Will’s desperate pants left dark, wet patches against the vanilla colored sheets. He was so wet.

And where was Hannibal? Surely his daddy must have called him so why…why wasn’t he here?

Will let out a groan, grinding down even harder, and prayed that something would happen to end the circling hell he seemed to find himself in.

Ezra sat on the steps of the grand, three level Victorian home that Hannibal owned, a bottle of very expensive red opened by his side. Matthew was waiting in the SUV, the heat cranked up and Matthew swaddled like a much younger Roux then he was. The wound on the young Dominant’s head was swollen and angry, and he was still quite disoriented, Ezra believed he would survive it with little long-term effects.

Ezra glanced over his shoulder at the front door, before humming under his breath and taking a deep drink of the red. He’d had such plans. The course he built in the woods would be a challenge to any Dominant, even one as smart and quick as Hannibal Lecter. Really, Ezra was a little put out. While Human mothers may dream of their daughter’s wedding, a Submissive Roux put all that energy into simulating a decent enough Trial.

But…oh well.

Hannibal had more than proven himself. In the last few weeks; in fact, Hannibal had proven to be everything Ezra had ever dreamed of for a mate for his bunny. He let his elbow rest on his knee, check cradled by his hand, and waited. Will’s heat should have taken longer to come on, given them more warning, and for there to only to be a day or two of preheat was bizarre. Ezra could only believe it had something to do with all the stress of the kidnapping and the arrival of Hannibal in Will’s life. Perhaps the fact that Will was eating properly in the first time in a long while? As it was, he could only hope that Hannibal would arrive soon and ease his baby’s suffering.

It didn’t take long. Ezra felt his lips twist into a smile when Hannibal’s car came flying into the driveway, placing the wine glass back on a wicker deck table, before standing.

The Dominant was nearly wild, his eyes wide and his skin flushed, and Ezra felt his grin grow. He approached the anxious Dominant from where he’d frozen on the walk, reaching out to pet his chest affectionately.

“Treat him right, dear,” Ezra cautioned, voice soft and smooth, “or I’ll rip your dick off and make you eat it.” Hannibal nodded jerkily, the maroon of his eyes fever bright. “Well? What are you waiting for? Go on, then.”

Ezra chuckled as the Dominant all but sprinted up the stairs and into the house. Ezra shook his head, going to wait in the SUV. Robert would be here soon, ready to settle in for the long haul. One of them would be posted here throughout the heat to keep any of the Humans – Jack Crawford in particular – away. They wouldn’t be able to enter the house of course, Hannibal was sure to lock it down like a fortress, but it would be a blood bath for any Human who tried to interrupt the mating.

Matthew let out a small, confused sound when Ezra entered and the Submissive hushed him, fussing over the blanket wrapped around him and turning up the heat. Ezra turned on NPR, leaned his car seat back, and waited.
Hannibal’s house had never felt so alien and so welcoming as it did now, saturated with the scent of Will’s heat. The scent was the most alluring thing he had ever smelt; a mix of something almost floral, perhaps a hint of cinnamon, and with a strange, almost liquid heat to it. It made his cock harden even further, already at half mass from the moment Hannibal had heard his intended had entered heat.

He flipped the locks of the door before stripping in the entryway, clothing thrown about to lay in uncaring piles. His skin felt too tight and hot, like he had a fever, and Hannibal nearly tripped over his own feet in his haste to climb the stairs. He threw open the door, staggering inside and leaning heavily against a bookcase as Will’s scent hit him like a physical wall. For a long moment he could barely move, could barely breathe, his eyes were locked on the most arousing display he’d ever seen in his life.

Will was struggling on his bed, limbs drawn tight as he rolled his hips in a near continuous humping drag against Hannibal’s sheets. The Dominant growled, the sound vicious and deep, and the Submissive froze before flipping onto his back. Will’s chest was heaving (so was Hannibal’s, mouth opened to catch even more of that alluring heat scent), his nipples hard pebbles of pink on a chest so flushed and sweaty he seemed to shine; an Adonis brought to life.

Hannibal was moving before he knew it, responding without thought to the desperate and heart broken mews and whines his mate was making. And Will was his mate. Will was his now, Hannibal’s, and after tonight, no one would ever be able to question that. After tonight, Will would be tied so closely to him that only death would separate them.

Thought made Hannibal so hard it hurt, and a spasm of his dick sent a glob of come dripping from his weeping dick. He blanketed the thinner form with his own, catching Will’s eager mouth in a dominating kiss, his tongue spearing inside almost frantically. Finger nails dug into his back, leaving raised welts in their wake as they dragged down. He rutted shamelessly against his mate, their cocks sliding together with a messy, wet sound.

And Will was so wet. So terribly, wonderfully wet.

Hannibal broke the kiss with a snarl, digging his teeth in a deep bite to Will’s neck that had the Submissive shrieking in pained delight. Hannibal thrust down hard, grinding their hips together until prickles of pain blossomed.

“Mine,” Hannibal growled out and any other time he’d be alarmed at how quickly his mind was becoming addled. But this was the way of heats; while both pairs were driven nearly to madness with the need to mate, it would be Hannibal that would gradually lose any thoughts other than to couple. Soon, he would be nothing more than the animal he was – driven only by the instinct to mate and keep any from interrupting them.

It would be up to Will to keep them fed, to keep them hydrated, to think.

Hannibal – one who never enjoyed being out of control of any of his facilities – was strangely floored by the idea. He broke away from Will’s neck, lips bright with blood and slipped down to the nearest nipple, groaning at the taste of Will’s skin. The Submissive was just as vocal, legs splaying wide to fit him between them, a hand wrapping tightly in his hair, pressing his mouth down demandingly.

“Where – Where were you?” Will asked, frantic, “I waited so long. Why did you make me wait?”

Hannibal worried the nipple between his teeth before pressing a loving kiss on it. “I’m here now, darling. I’ll never leave you again.”
He would promise Will anything in that moment, with his hot little body against him, so wet and ready for him. Will could ask anything of him and Hannibal would see it done. It should be frightening, that amount of power this Submissive had over him, but Hannibal only felt liberated from it.

This was what the last few months had been building up to. All that work, all those nights of denying himself, for this. All for this.

He slid down Will’s body, hands pinning squirming hips still. For a moment he took in the sight of the hard little cock, foreskin pulled down low to reveal a swollen and nearly purple head. He marveled at it, scented it, dragged his tongue over its head in a loving lick. Will whined, the sound loud and begging, and Hannibal hummed as he pressed a kiss to it. Pre-come was sliding down the sides, nearly clear and potentless, and it was the best taste that Hannibal had ever encountered.

He followed the spurs’ paths licking and mouthing at the throbbing skin, basking in the way that each contact drove Will even louder, even more wilder. He drew the tight bawls into his mouth, sucking each lightly, warming them, grip tightening to keep Will still and in place. Only when Will was practically cursing him did he move his mouth up, wide tongue tracing the vein underneath Will’s cock to the tip.

Hannibal licked his lips, staring at the small little slit hungrily before ducking down and taking the head in his mouth. Will screamed, hands flying behind him to claw at the sheets, and Hannibal’s eyes closed in heady delight when his mouth was instantly filled. He drank it all greedily, taking everything his little mate had to offer. He suckled until Will was growing hard under his tongue once more, the feel of the muscles inflating with blood almost making him want to bite.

He drew off with a satisfied pop, meeting Will’s questing lips. The kiss was loving, almost gentle compared to the ferventness that drove them, and Hannibal did his damnest to pour every inch of his admiration for his Submissive in it. He let his fingers dip down, massaging a taut tummy before sliding further down, past the eager cock and tight balls, further down to where that wonderful, tight little furl of muscle waited for him.

Hannibal played with it, rubbing his fingers over the pucker lovingly. He stroked it, massaged it, as he thoroughly mapped every inch of Will’s mouth. The Submissive was sobbing now, hips jerking down to try and get Hannibal inside, and the Dominant wondered at his own restraint, impressed and awed with himself. Everything in him wanted to simply sheath himself in that tight heat, to claim Will so thoroughly, to pump him full until it was overflowing, until there was no chance but for Will to be pregnant with his cubs.

But after so long…to finally be able to touch at free will, to have no rules, no regulations – nothing. Hannibal dipped two fingers in, biting back a choked moan at the tight heat that met him. He started a furious pace at once, slamming his fingers in unforgivingly, grinding his cock against Will’s hip.

“H-Hannibal,” his beloved whimpered, seemingly overcome, “oh please, please fuck me.”

The curse was a light match to gasoline and Hannibal cursed, rutting his fingers in harder. “Is this what you want, little one? Do you want my cock? Want me to fill you up?”

“Yes,” Will cried out, lost, “God, yes. Please, mate me. I want that, I want you inside me. Fill me up, make me carry – Hannibal, please!”

Hannibal tore his fingers free, Will’s slick in such an abundance that a thick, stretchy string flew out with him, panting their thighs. “As you wish,” Hannibal all but snarled, lining his cock up and pushing in. He let out another growling snarl, a victorious sound, as his hips came to rest against that
perky, tight ass that had haunted his dreams since the first moment he’d seen it.

For a moment they both stilled, overwhelmed by the feeling of **rightness**, the connection seemingly soul-deep. Will let out a sigh of relief, hands curling around his neck as he pulled Hannibal down. The kiss dissolved into an open mouth pant, nothing more than sharing air as Hannibal began to move, pulling out – eyes rolling up as every inch of the tight, velvety hot channel fought to keep him in, tightening to the point where pleasure and pain mixed into something new.

From there, it became a blur. Hannibal hips worked at a frantic pace, sweat soaking every inch of his body, making the space between them humid and sticky, and he tightened his grip when Will’s hips nearly slipped free because of it. Will was whispering to him; filthy, wonderful things. Promises of blond hair cubs with dark eyes, of his stomach growing fat and full of his seed and child, of **family**, and Hannibal was lost.

Will’s hole was so wet it made the most obscene, slurping sounds with each slam of his cock. Hannibal loved it. The sounds of their mating was the most glorious symphony, Will’s moans and cries the most alluring aria. He was unaware how long their coupling was; it seemed both timeless and nothing but fleeting moments when Hannibal felt the knot at the base of his engorged cock swell.

Will went absolutely mad at the feel of it, his lithe hips slamming back to meet his with such a fervor that the skin of Hannibal’s hips stung with each impact. The Submissive was practically howling, head whipping side to side, incoherent with need.

“Y-Yes, Hannibal. Please, knot me.” Will gasped, eyes bright with unshed tears.

Hannibal groaned, pressing his lips to Will’s once more. He had so many things he wanted to say, so many promises, so many flowered declarations to give. What came out was a broken series of “mine, mine. My mate. **Tight.**”

When it came, the orgasm was like a punch. Hannibal groaned, every muscle drawn so tight he felt like he was going to split his skin at the seams. His jaw clenched, eyes wide as his hips drove further, his knot too swollen to pull out yet still driven to get utterly, impossibly, deeper. His hand flew out, knuckles blossoming in pain as they slammed into the headboard enough to dent the wood, bellowing when he finally found release.

Beneath him Will went limp, his cock spending weakly onto his stomach, eyes distant and content. Hannibal felt like he was coming for ages, balls drawn tight to the point of pain, his spend coming and coming and coming.

Finally, it came to an end. Hannibal collapsed atop his mate, shaky as newborn colt, feeling a deep contentedness and a raw vulnerability he’d never experienced before. Will was shushing him, his voice soft and love filled, his hands combing Hannibal’s sweat soaked hair from his face. Hannibal pressed into the touch, eyes closed and entire body aching.

“Alexander,” Will mused, voice warm, “for our first.”

Hannibal couldn’t help the helpless, fond gaze as he stared down at his mate, taking in the flushed and deeply pleased features. The love he felt was indescribable, and he marveled at how it seemed to overflow from his heart, filling his chest and limbs until he could think of nothing else other than how utterly and irrevocably in love with the Submissive he was.

He could not find the words; couldn’t even begin to find a way to form them. Instead he burrowed into his mate’s neck, mouth a hot brand against the welt the bite had left there, and took shelter in
Will’s warm arms. He trembled, hands slipping beneath them both to draw Will even closer, until there was no space between them.

Will just hummed, his hands a soothing touch against his back and neck.

“Alexander Lecter. Ezra for a middle name if he’s a Submissive, Robert if he’s a Dominant. What do you think?”

Hannibal let out a huff, shaking his head, and kissed his mate’s full mouth. “Beautiful. He will be beautiful.”

And Hannibal had no doubt he would be.

All of their children would be.

Chapter End Notes

Chapter two will hopefully be up soon. I'm glad to see you guys! There will be one more chapter with heat and sexy times, some good old Robert and Ezra fluff, now including baby Mathew, and an unexpected visit! And then two chapters left in the series. Omg, we're getting close to the end. I can't even believe it.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!